



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	Evidence-based policy making and socio-economic expert
Duty Station:	Republic of Moldova, Chisinau
Reference to the projects:	"Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges in Moldova" and "Accelerating a Just Energy Transition in Republic of Moldova"
Contract type:	Individual Contract
Assignment type:	National Consultant
Contract duration:	May 2024 – December 2025
Expected workload:	320 working days
Indicative starting date:	28 March 2024

1. BACKGROUND

Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges in Moldova

Moldova is facing a compound crisis of energy and food security, curtailed economic growth, growing inflation, limited institutional capacities and divisions in society, aggravated by the continuing socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The influx of refugees presents an additional challenge that requires sustained attention and support from the international community.

Without urgent intervention, the deepening socio-economic, energy, food and human security crises has the potential to derail the trajectory of development, and drastically increase human suffering of people in Moldova, whether Ukrainian refugees, third country nationals, or Moldovan citizens (including those from minority ethnic groups). There are risks of massive outmigration and brain drain, as an immediate impact of the worsening of the socio-economic situation, depleting the country of its major asset: human capital.

The overall objective of the intervention, implemented with the financial support of the Government of Japan, is to protect human security and enhance the resilience of the Republic of Moldova, in order to address the multifaceted and interconnected challenges of the current socioeconomic, food and energy shocks.

The three specific objectives of the "Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges in Moldova" project are:

- Specific objective 1: to enhance people's energy security through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and energy-efficient production;
- Specific objective 2: to enhance food security by supporting the government to implement its Food Security Strategy, thereby strengthening the capacities of agricultural producers affected by the compound crises;
- Specific objective 3: to enhance community security by strengthening the capacities of the police service and community actors to deliver on the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

With this project, UNDP ensures that immediate humanitarian assistance is complemented by development efforts across three core insecurities (energy, food, community) to protect and maintain vital systems, structures and a capacity to support Moldova's resilience.

Accelerating a Just Energy Transition in Republic of Moldova

Since October 2021, Moldova has experienced significant increases in gas prices due to tight global energy markets and changes to the contract with its main gas supplier, Gazprom. During the winter of 2021-2022, gas prices surged to levels three to four times higher than previous years, severely impacting Moldova's public finances and the affordability of gas for vulnerable citizens. The situation worsened with the onset of the war in Ukraine, leading to reduced gas supplies and further price hikes, contributing to a sharp rise in inflation and exacerbating energy crisis impacts on Moldova, including dependency on Ukrainian electricity supply.

The compounded challenges of supply shortages and price volatility have placed Moldova at risk of deepening energy poverty among households, with over 60% spending significantly more than 10% of their income on energy. The crisis

has prompted urgent assessments by UNDP and the Government to understand and address energy vulnerability, leading to the conceptualization of immediate and long-term response strategies.

In response, the Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund (EVRF) was established by Law 241/2022, activated on September 1, 2022, aiming to mitigate the impact of increased energy costs on poor and vulnerable households through on-bill compensations and energy efficiency programs. The EVRF represents a partnership among the Government, private sector energy providers, and UNDP, with funding sourced from the Government and international partners. Despite its targeted approach, the EVRF has identified areas for improvement, including extending coverage to more households, especially in rural areas reliant on firewood.

The project focuses on enhancing the EVRF's effectiveness in addressing energy vulnerability and promoting energy security amidst the ongoing crisis. Objectives include supplementing government efforts to provide targeted compensations, improving the operational and institutional framework of the EVRF, and enhancing communication and partnership mobilization. Additionally, the project aims to support energy efficiency and the adoption of green technologies within the residential sector and critical infrastructure, leveraging big data and innovative solutions to reduce consumption and integrate renewable energy sources.

This initiative underscores a multifaceted approach to combat energy vulnerability in Moldova, emphasizing the need for immediate relief for vulnerable households while fostering long-term resilience through energy efficiency and sustainability measures.

2. OBJECTIVE AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The Project seeks to contract a National Consultant (hereinafter "the Consultant") to provide evidence-based policy making and socio-economic expertise for policy and program design and evaluation, as well as for development and deployment of socio-economic and macroeconomic analysis tools.

The Consultant is expected to work closely with the Project teams, partner institutions and stakeholders in order to deliver professional, effective, and qualitative contributions to the Project's policy making support interventions.

Under the direct supervision of the Project teams and the UNDP Moldova Policy Specialist, the Consultant is expected to carry out the following tasks:

- Provide support on the evidence-based policy making, conceptualization and development of assessment-related initiatives that enable current and future interventions to address the multifaceted and interconnected challenges of the current socio-economic, food and energy shocks;
- Support on the evidence-based policy making in the areas of poverty-related initiatives;
- Support the energy-related assessment of the national energy vulnerability reduction, from the perspective of current impact(s), and long-term strategic options and opportunities;
- Provide advisory on the development of mid-term macroeconomic forecast and integration of macroeconomic policy analysis, with respect to the socio-economic vulnerabilities associated with the poly crisis faced by the Republic of Moldova;
- Perform any other relevant activity-related tasks, as requested by the Project Manager and/or Policy Specialist, for the successful implementation of the assignment.

3. KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

Key activities and deliverables	Tentative timetable
Activity 1: Support the conceptualization and development of assessment-related initiatives that enable current and future interventions to address the multifaceted and interconnected challenges of the socio-economic, food and energy shocks <i>Note: activity pertaining to the interventions of the "Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges in Moldova" project</i>	
Deliverable 1.1: Micro-simulation model for evidence-based policy making purposes and policies' distributive impact analysis (developed and/or adapted).	by 30 June 2024 20 WDs
Deliverable 1.2: Capacity building provided to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and to the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization on the usage of micro-simulations for policy analysis purposes. Guidelines on implementation of the micro-simulation model.	by 15 September 2024 20 WDs

Activity 2: Support the evidence-based policy making in the areas of poverty-related initiatives <i>Note: activity pertaining to the interventions of the "Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges in Moldova" project</i>	
Deliverable 2.1: Research paper guiding programmatic interventions in the area of mitigating food security inequalities in Moldova, including from the perspective of the national multi-dimensional poverty analysis.	by 15 September 2024 20 WDs
Deliverable 2.2: Research paper guiding governmental policies and programs in the area of mitigating energy vulnerability inequalities in Moldova, including from the perspective of the national multi-dimensional poverty analysis.	by 15 September 2024 25 WDs
Activity 3: Support the energy-related assessment of the national energy vulnerability reduction, from the perspective of current impact(s), and long-term strategic options and opportunities <i>Note: activity pertaining to the interventions of the "Accelerating a Just Energy Transition in Republic of Moldova" project</i>	
Deliverable 3.1: Research paper assessing the impact of the governmental policies and programs in the area of energy vulnerability reduction (post impact analysis).	by 30 December 2024 30 WDs
Deliverable 3.2: Research paper on long-term strategic options and opportunities guiding programmatic interventions in the area of energy vulnerability reduction.	30 March 2025 35 WDs
Deliverable 3.3: Report and ex-ante impact assessment of the EU integration on welfare and social protection of governmental policies.	by 30 June 2025 40 WDs
Activity 4: Advisory on the development of mid-term macroeconomic forecast and integration of macroeconomic policy analysis, with respect to the socio-economic vulnerabilities associated with the poly crisis faced by the Republic of Moldova <i>Activity pertaining to both projects' interventions</i>	
Deliverable 4.1: Introductory course for the delegated staff of the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization on the use of structural models in policy analysis, with an emphasis on Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) models. <i>Note: the deliverable will include the course outline and report on its delivery/implementation to MEDD representatives.</i>	by 30 June 2024 30 WDs
Deliverable 4.2: First redaction of a CGE static model to be used for applied research and policy analysis objectives, co-developed with the MEDD staff.	by 30 October 2024 35 WDs
Deliverable 4.3: Second recursive-dynamic redaction of CGE model to be used for applied research and policy analysis objectives, co-developed with the MEDD staff.	by 30 July 2025 30 WDs
Deliverable 4.4: Development of regulatory framework for the integration of the CGE model in the core business processes of macroeconomic forecast and policy analysis. <i>Note: the deliverable will include the model outline and confirmed report on its integration</i>	by 01 December 2025 35 WDs

Note: Deliverables and the final timeline can be amended or specified for the purpose of the assignment.

All deliverables should be agreed with Project and be provided in electronic copy.

Payment will be made upon the successful completion of the tasks assigned.

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The timeframe for the work of the Consultant is planned for the period May 2024 – December 2025. During this time, the Consultant is expected to work a total of 320 working days (part-time consultancy).

The assignment shall be performed in close coordination with the Project Teams, under the guidance and supervision of Projects Managers and Policy Specialist.

For the duration of the assignment the Project will provide the Consultant with the necessary information and materials for the fulfilment of the assignment.

The fulfillment of the assignment will include desk reviews, development of analytical tools, reports and documents, as well as facilitation and participation in associated meetings and/or public events.

All communications and documentation related to the assignment will be in Romanian and/or English.

5. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Payments will be disbursed in tranches upon submission and validation of deliverables by the project teams (certifying that the services have been satisfactorily performed) and their subsequent approval by the Project Manager(s) and/or Policy Specialist.

Travel

Travel cost is not envisaged under current assignment.

6. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

Academic Qualifications:

- University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Finance, or other relevant fields.

Experience and knowledge:

- At least 5 (five) years of progressive experience (at the national and/or international level) in the field of economic policy development and enhancement.
- At least 3 (three) years of experience in providing advisory and capacity building support in the area of macroeconomic analysis and forecast, using domain-specific tools and approaches.
- At least 3 (three) years of experience in the collection, assessment and processing of statistical data for socio-economic policy analysis.
- Proven record in coordinating assignments with policy impact assessment components will be considered a strong advantage.
- Proven record in contributing to the conceptualization of macroeconomic analysis models will be considered a strong advantage.
- Previous experience within an UNDP Project and/or other international organization(s) will be considered an advantage.

Competencies:

- Ability to perform and deliver expected results in a fast-paced working environment.
- Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently.
- Strong analytic capacity and ability to identify relevant findings and prepare analytical documents in a clear and concise manner.
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively and build meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders.
- Fluency in Romanian (verbal and written) is a must.
Strong knowledge of English considered as an advantage.

Personal qualities:

- Responsibility, flexibility and punctuality, ability to meet deadlines and prioritize multiple tasks.
- Proven commitment to the core values of the United Nations, in particular respecting differences of culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, HIV status, disability, and sexual orientation, or other status.

7. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

- Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating Financial proposal in Annex 2

Upload the signed version of the filled in Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment. Annex 2 to the Offeror's letter, incorporating the Financial Proposal, shall be filled in mandatorily and includes the detailed breakdown of costs supporting the all-inclusive financial proposal.

The Financial Proposal shall be additionally submitted directly in the system. Please ensure there are no mathematical errors and that amounts from Offeror's Letter to UNDP Confirming Interest and Availability match with your offer in the system.

- Duly updated CV with at least 3 references.

Important notice: applicants who have the statute of Government official / public servant will be asked to submit the following documentation:

- a no-objection letter in respect of the applicant received from the Government, and;
- certification in writing by the employer to be on official leave without pay for the entire duration of the individual contract.

8. EVALUATION

Initially, individual consultants will be short-listed based on the following minimum qualification criteria:

- University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Finance, or other relevant fields.
- At least 5 (five) years of progressive experience (at the national and/or international level) in the field of economic policy development and enhancement.
- At least 3 (three) years of experience in providing advisory and capacity building support in the area of macroeconomic analysis and forecast, using domain-specific tools and approaches.
- Citizen of the Republic of Moldova.

The short-listed individual consultants will be further evaluated based on the following methodology:

Cumulative analysis

The award of the contract shall be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated / determined as:

- a) responsive/ compliant/ acceptable, and
- b) having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

* **Technical Criteria weight** – 60% (300 pts);

* **Financial Criteria weight** – 40% (200 pts).

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 210 points for the Technical Evaluation shall be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Winning candidate

The winning candidate will be the candidate who has accumulated the highest aggregated score (technical scoring + financial scoring).

Criteria	Scoring	Points Obtainable
<u>Technical</u>		
University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Finance, or other relevant fields	<i>Bachelor's degree – 5 pts. Master's degree – 10 pts.</i>	10

At least 5 (five) years of progressive experience (at the national and/or international level) in the field of economic policy development and enhancement.	<i>5 years – 15 pts., each additional year of experience – 5 pts. up to a maximum of 40 pts.</i>	40
At least 3 (three) years of experience in providing advisory and capacity building support in the area of macroeconomic analysis and forecast, using domain-specific tools and approaches.	<i>3 years – 15 pts., each additional year of experience – 5 pts. up to a maximum of 30 pts.</i>	30
At least 3 (three) years of experience in the collection, assessment and processing of statistical data for socio-economic policy analysis.	<i>3 years – 15 pts., each additional year of experience – 5 pts. up to a maximum of 30 pts.</i>	30
Proven record in coordinating assignments with policy impact assessment components will be considered a strong advantage.	<i>more than 4 years – 20 pts; up to 4 years – 10 pts; no experience – 0 pts.</i>	20
Proven record in contributing to the conceptualization of macroeconomic analysis models will be considered a strong advantage.	<i>more than 4 years - 20 pts; up to 4 years – 10 pts; no experience – 0 pts.</i>	20
Previous experience within an UNDP Project and/or other international organization(s) will be considered an advantage	<i>Each assignment – 2 pts. up to a maximum of 10 pts.</i>	10
Subtotal Technical Scoring		160
<u>Interview</u> (The first three candidates who passed technical evaluation criteria with the best score shall be invited for an online interview and pass the cumulative analysis)		
<u>Interview</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated knowledge of the current socio-economic context, economic policy development and enhancement (<i>none – 0 pts, limited ≤ 5 pts, good ≤ 25 pts, strong ≤ 35 pts</i>) • Perceived ability to perform and deliver expected results in a fast-paced working environment (<i>none – 0 pts, limited ≤ 10 pts, good ≤ 25 pts, strong ≤ 35 pts</i>) • Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently (<i>none – 0 pts, limited ≤ 10 pts, good ≤ 20 pts, strong ≤ 30 pts</i>) • Demonstrated interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively (<i>none – 0 pts, limited ≤ 5 pts, good ≤ 20 pts, strong ≤ 30 pts</i>) 	130
Belonging to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment*	<i>No – 0 pts, Yes – 5 pts.</i>	5
Proficiency in Romanian (mandatory) and English (optional)	<i>2.5 pts each (5 pts total)</i>	5
Subtotal Interview Scoring		140
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		300

Financial	
<p>Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula:</p> <p>$S = F_{min} / F * 200$ (<i>S – score received on financial evaluation</i>);</p> <p>Fmin – the lowest financial offer out of all the submitted offers qualified over the technical evaluation round (<i>F – financial offer under consideration</i>)</p>	200

** Under-represented groups in UN Moldova are persons with disabilities, LGBTI, ethnic and linguistic minorities, especially ethnic Gagauzians, Bulgarians, Roma, Jews, people of African descent, people living with HIV, religious minorities, especially Muslim women, refugees, and other non-citizens. **Please specify in CV, in case you belong to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment.***

Winner

The winner is the candidate who cumulatively scored the maximum number of points (technical result + financial result).