



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title:	National Consultant – Nutritionist, to support with modernizing public nutrition in kindergartens
Project:	UNDP Moldova Policy Unit
Reporting to:	UNDP Policy Specialist
Duty Station:	Chisinau, Moldova
Contract Type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Duration:	up to 20 working days in the period April 2020 – June 2020
Start date:	17 April, 2020

1. BACKGROUND

The management of public nutrition in the Republic of Moldova is decentralized. In Chisinau, the public nutrition is managed by the General Division on Education of Chisinau Municipality, following the food safety standards of the National Agency for Food Safety. The local authorities have made significant efforts to manage the nutrition system at the highest level and improve its quality. In support to that, the previous Government has put in place an action plan to improve the public nutrition¹, which has not materialized. Recent developments in the public nutrition tells us there are many aspects to be improved, including the quality of the menus, a fairer and a more sustainable procurement process, better monitoring and evaluation, constant evaluation of the impact of improved processes.

The deficiencies in the public nutrition system, and specifically at the level of kindergartens, have been reflected through media during the last years and refer to the quality of delivered products, quality of food prepared at kindergartens' premises, transparency in the procurement system, among others. Those created a public distrust not only among parents, who want better nutrition for their kids, but also among private sector companies who want a more transparent acquisition process.

¹ https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/plan_08-07-873_30.10.2019_1.pdf

According to FAO, nutrition has an important role to play in kids' cognitive development, with a well-balanced nutrition supporting the cognitive development, and malnutrition negatively affecting the ability of children to stay in school and to learn throughout childhood². While in the Republic of Moldova the hunger has been reduced significantly, reducing malnutrition in all its forms, which is registered among children and other vulnerable groups, is a priority for Moldova (SDG 2.2).

In this context, the Mayorality of Chisinau has partnered with UNDP Moldova to develop and put in place a modernized public nutrition program in kindergartens, which is to reply to the actual challenges in the system. The modernized program will ensure it integrates efficiency, transparency and international food standards, and also addresses the SDG target 2.2. related to reducing malnutrition among children.

The modernized public nutrition program will follow these principles:

- Transparency – transparency of the system and its components, actors, procedures, results, impact, etc.
- Participation – wide engagement of all stakeholders in the system, including parents, kids, personnel of the educational institutions, private sector, vendors, etc.
- Fair competition – apply international standards to procurement, logistics, and so on when it regards the selection of the participants to the system
- Best value for money
- Integration and concentration – wholistic view on the system and integration of its components to ensure highest standards of quality
- Externalization – external credible partners are connected for transitory period to re-design and implement the new system
- Impact evaluation – robust impact evaluation is conducted to understand and evaluate the transformation produced by the system

The components of the modernized public nutrition program:

Modernization of the public nutrition system in kindergartens in Chisinau Municipality has three key components:

1. improvement of the quality of the nutrition (in terms of calories, quality and structure of the menu for kids, diversity of the produce, quality of the monitoring system),
2. improvement of the quality of the procurement and distribution processes (centralization of the procurement, modernization of the acquisition mechanism in line with international standards and good practices, implementation in practice of the principle of 'best value for money', modernization of the distribution and logistics and monitoring) and

² Quoted in FAO Nutrition guidelines and standards for school meals, 2019, at <http://www.fao.org/3/CA2773EN/ca2773en.pdf>

3. promotion of healthy diets in public kindergartens.

To support the process, UNDP Moldova is looking for support from several area consultants, including a nutritionist, with responsibilities of the nutritionist described here below.

2. DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT

The goal of the assignment is to support with improving and modernizing of the current nutrition system from municipal pre-school education institutions. Under this assignment, the consultant is expected to undertake the assessment of the existent standards and norms in nutrition, including menus, and support with their modernization and alignment to the international standards.

The Nutritionist will cover the consultancy related to the following aspects:

- Evaluation of the current system of nutrition in kindergartens: existent standards, norms, applied practices in food preparation, applied menus;
- Development of a vision and recommendations for modernization of nutrition in public kindergartens;
- Operate the consulted and accepted adjustments to the related documentation;
- Contribute to preparing the recommendations for modifications to the public regulations/ laws/ norms to make them aligned to the new vision. The legal consultant will be responsible for this part;
- Contribute to the development of the Project Document for the development and putting in place of the modernized public nutrition program in municipal kindergartens.

The consultant will take into consideration the international level guidelines, standards, and norms governing public nutrition system. The Nutritionist will consult the standards related to the compatibility and incompatibility of nutrients while revising the menus, the standards related to food preparation, and will undertake public (online) consultations with kids and parents to identify kids' tastes for food as to guide on what is perceived as "delicious food".

UNICEF has developed the new standards in public nutrition for kids' age of 3 to 7 years old, including nutrients' norms, daily recommended quantities, menus, which will be put available to the Nutritionist upon the start of the assignment. The Nutritionist will take these analytic products as inputs for the consultancy work.

The consultant will work in consultation with UNDP Policy Specialist and legal consultant, seeking relevant inputs and support during the consultancy.

UNDP will provide all necessary support for undertaking needed consultations and meetings, and will participate, upon necessity, to the meetings.

UNDP Moldova will be developing the Project Document for the intervention and will seek inputs and support from the Nutritionist during project document drafting.

3. KEY DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

SN	Deliverables	Tentative schedule
1	The vision and recommendations for modernization of nutrition in public kindergartens, with assessment of the current system of nutrition in kindergartens as the background information.	by end of April 2020
2	Proposed modernized nutrition program. Organize online public consultations with kids and parents and integrate the outcomes into the proposed program.	during April – May 2020
3	Support with the approval of the new menu/structure and nutrition norm/standards with the relevant state regulatory bodies	during May – June 2020
4	Suggestions for the modifications to the public regulations/laws/ norms to make them aligned to the new vision	during April – May 2020
5	Inputs to the development of the Project Document	by end of April 2020

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Language

Most of the communications and documentation related to the assignment will be in Romanian, though English will be also used as working language, especially for screening through the international level documentation and interacting with various counterparts

4.2 Timeframe

The timeframe for the work of the national consultant is tentatively planned between April and June, 2020.

4.3 Financial arrangements

Payment will be distributed in several installments, upon submission and approval of final deliverable and certification by UNDP Policy Specialist that the services have been performed satisfactorily.

5. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

5.1 Academic qualifications

- Master degree or Bachelor degree with experience and training/courses in one or more of the following disciplines: Nutrition, Public Health, Dietetics, Food Engineering; Pediatrics and/or Endocrinology, with knowledge of nutrition/healthy diet standards; Candidates with a combination of education background in nutrition and medical related areas will be given priority.

5.2 Work experience

- At least 3 years of progressive experience in food-based public nutrition, or a combination between pediatrics/endocrinology and public nutrition;
- Demonstrated experience in applying international guidelines and standards governing public nutrition system in delivering previous consultancies;
- Experience in applying EFSA standards and/or Global Nutrition Monitoring Framework (GNMF) of the WHO is a strong advantage;
- Strong research, analytic, and report writing skills demonstrated through previous experience in developing analytic products and/or reports;
- Excellent communication, convening and teamwork skills.

5.3 Competencies

- Fluency in Romanian and English. Knowledge of Russian will be an asset. English is needed for researching the European standards in public nutrition.
- Proven commitment to the core values of the United Nations, in particular, respecting differences in culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, HIV status, disability, and sexual orientation, or other status.