**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**for a National Consultant to support the Economic Council to the Prime Minister to develop a roadmap focused on women economic empowerment interventions.**

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| **Duty Station:** | **Moldova** |
| **Languages required:** | **Romanian, English and Russian** |
| **Application deadline:** | **10 March 2021** |
| **Starting date:** | **15 March 2021** |
| *(date when the organization is expected to start)* |
| **Expected duration of the assignment** | **March – November 2021** |
| **Duration of contract** | **Up to 112 days** |
| **Contract Type:** | **SSA** |
| **Project:** | **00098990 (Women Economic Empowerment)** |

**Background**

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

Through its programmes and projects, UN Women is providing technical assistance to national partners (governmental and non-governmental), including private sector, in the implementation of existing international and national commitments to women’s rights and gender equality, it facilitates networking and exchange of good practices and advocates for women’s rights and gender equality in all areas of life.

The work of UN Women in the Republic of Moldova is guided by its [Country Strategic Note for 2018-2022](http://moldova.unwomen.org/en/biblioteca-digitala/publicatii/2018/03/strategic-note-summary), aligned with [the Republic of Moldova–United Nations Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development 2018–2022](http://md.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/moldova/docs/pub/strateg/UNDAF%20Moldova%20EN.pdf), [the Global Strategic Plan of UN Women for 2018-2021](http://www.unwomen.org/en/executive-board/documents/strategic-plan-2018-2021), the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2017-2021 (NSGE), and aims to contribute to the gender-responsive implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/post-2015)

The overarching vision of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/apc/agenda-2030) is inclusive and sustainable growth with its promise to leave no one behind. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, target 5.5. calls to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of the decision-making in political, economic and public life”. Gender equality is mainstreamed throughout the SDGs, including SDG 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth”. Gender equality by 2030 requires urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women’s rights in private and public spheres. At its core, the economic empowerment of women depends on the quantity and quality of paid employment, the provision or absence of public services, the amount of unpaid care work borne by women, as well as coverage or lack thereof under core social and labor protections.

The [UN Women Strategy for Moldova 2018-2022](http://moldova.unwomen.org/en/biblioteca-digitala/publicatii/2018/03/strategic-note-summary) focuses on three main areas where gender equality gaps are still present: 1) strengthening women’s participation in politics and decision making, **2) advancing the economic empowerment of women** and 3) preventing and combating violence against women and girls. To achieve progress under these areas, UN Women works with variety of national and international partners and as part of different national and regional initiatives.

One of the three priority areas of UN Women in its SN2018-2022 is advancing the economic empowerment of women. Women’s access to income, through decent employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and social security are a foundation for women’s economic empowerment and the achievement of substantial equality.

**Rationale**

In 2020 Moldova has been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. Started as a health crisis, pandemic had an unprecedent socio-economic impact on Moldovan economy overall. The GDP in 2020 is estimated to register a decline by 7.2%, poverty is expected increase to about 13%. Most of the investment activity was postponed or canceled due to uncertainty. A dramatic and sudden loss of demand and revenue for SMEs caused reduction of jobs or wage cuts of employees, many of whom transferred to work remotely. It is expected to have 70,000 jobs lost, of which the majority in trade and hospitality, followed by agriculture and industry. Young workers and micro firms are expected to be affected the most.

In addition to that, the pandemic revealed and, at the same time, worsened the gender inequalities, having a disproportionate effect on women and, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political, and economic systems which are, in cycle, amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.

The health of women overall was severely impacted by COVID-19 because of the reallocation of resources and priorities, including sexual and reproductive health services. Economic and social stress was amplified because of restricted movement and social isolation measures, and gender-based violence has been increasing exponentially. Moreover, the unpaid care work has increased, with children permanently or temporarily out-of-school and day care facilities. The need to care for older persons was also increased, thus putting additional burden on women.

Compounded economic impacts are felt especially by women and girls who are generally earning less, saving less, hold insecure jobs or depend on social benefits. The situation of the underrepresented women - returned emigrants, minorities, elderly, women with disabilities etc. - worsened significantly.

As COVID-19 unprecedentedly hit the economic activity of the businesses in Moldova, women were hit as well, either in their roles as business owners and managers, especially from the industries that were hit hardest by COVID-19, such as tourism, food service, retail, and entertainment, or as wage workers in the sectors particularly effected by the pandemic crisis, such as health, education, retail, HORECA, etc.

In the early stages of the pandemic and during the previous year, the Moldovan Government adopted and implemented a set of sound measures meant to help the most affected companies and protect and stimulate entrepreneurs regardless the economic sectors. These included: credit interest rate subsidy program, VAT reimbursement program, subsidy program for technical and stationary unemployment, grant scheme to support digitalization of SMEs, grant scheme to support internationalization of high-growth potential SMEs, a credit guarantee product for the companies affected by the pandemic, as well as many other measures to improve business resiliency to crisis. Recently, the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure developed [a set of measures to redress the negative impact of COVID-19](https://mei.gov.md/sites/default/files/propuneri_de_masuri_economice_in_contextul_covid-19.pdf) on economy in general, and particularly on the activity of the SMEs.

Although women, especially from underrepresented groups, were hit the hardest by the pandemic crisis, most of the support measures (implemented and planed) are gender blind. To date, there are no available studies that estimate the impact of the state support measures on entrepreneurship with particular focus on the impact of these measures from gender perspective.

In 2020, with the support of the UN Women, a set of recommendations and legal amendments were presented and debated at the Economic Council meetings, among which: barriers to employment for women, equal pay gap and alternative childcare solutions. The Economic Council Secretariat took an active role in promoting these matters, by building on its members’ expertise and engaging relevant public and private stakeholders.

Considering the uncertainty of economic situation in the country these recommendations must be supported further. An efficient private-public dialogue at the ministerial and inter-ministerial level can lead to a rigorous and practical recommendations aimed to catalyze economic empowerment of women. Such a roadmap can be then used to implement actions to help women improve their incomes, productivity, and ultimately, their communities.

**Scope of Work**

The objective of this call is to support the Economic Council to the Prime Minister to (1) develop a roadmap to catalyze actions for women's economic empowerment in Moldova, including on reducing the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis and, (2) when needed, draft amendments to legislative acts with argumentation note to support the changes exposed in the roadmap.

To achieve the above objective, UN Women Moldova is seeking to hire a national consultant (hereinafter “the consultant”) who will implement the following:

**Task 1.**

Review the status of measures that were initiated and discussed within the Economic Council. Identify the barriers and bottlenecks (if any) and propose an action plan to speed up the process.

**Deliverable:** Report on the status of measures currently under the supervision of the Economic Council, including the recommendations on further actions.

**Task 2.**

Review the SMEs support measures implemented by the Government to support the companies overcome the COVID-19 crises from gender perspective and develop an analytical report with findings and recommendations. The report should be presented and discussed with the members of the Economic Council and should provide the inputs for the overall Roadmap.

**Deliverables**: Analytical report on gender impact of the state measures on combatting the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis, at least one meeting organized within the Economic Council on issues related to women economic empowerment.

**Task 3.**

Identify measures / specific interventions (e.g., through surveys, data analysis, interviews etc.) that need to be initiated under the guidance of the Economic Council. The process of selecting the interventions must be participative with active involvement of the private sector representatives, the governmental entities, CSOs and development partners. The identified interventions should be presented in a form of a Roadmap agreed by the Economic Council members.

**Deliverables**: Public presentation of the Roadmap, preliminary (draft version) and final version of the Roadmap.

**Task 4**

Follow-up on measures identified within the roadmap development exercise. The consultant will be responsible to implement all the activities necessary to ensure that the gender response is included in public policies. The activities might include, but not limited to, development of argumentation notes to legislative amendments, meetings with stakeholders, participation in public-private dialogue, provision of expertise opinion on various matters, etc.

**Deliverables:** Implementation roadmap with recommendations on gender responsive public policies.

**Deliverables and Timeframe:**

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| **Deliverables** | **Estimated workload (workdays)** | **Timeframe** |
| 1. A report on the status of measures currently under the supervision of the Economic Council. The report should include the status review and recommendations on further actions.
 | 3 | March, 19 |
| 1. Analytical report on gender impact of the state measures on combatting the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
 | 15 | April, 08 |
| 1. A meeting organized within the Economic Council aimed to debate the issues related to women economic empowerment
 | 5 | April, 20 |
| 1. Survey on the women economic empowerment topic, at least 30 responses collected.
 | 10 | May 5 |
| 1. Draft version (70% completion) of the Roadmap on women economic empowerment, that will be consulted with the EC members.
 | 12 | Mai, 21 |
| 1. Public presentation of the RoadMap, the findings and recommendations, participation in the debates, on the EC platform. Submission of the final version of the Roadmap.
 | 10 | June, 08 |
| 1. Draft amendments to the normative acts, with argumentation notes, where needed, that would reflect the roadmap recommendations, meetings with stakeholders, participation in debates related to implementation of the Roadmap.
 | 52 | October, 30 |
| 1. Final report on the work performed by the consultant under the current assignment.
 | 5 | November, 10 |
| **TOTAL number of working days (maximum)** | **112** |

All the deliverables should be agreed with UN Women and be provided in Romanian in electronic copy. A summary of the final report and the recommendations should be provided in Romanian in electronic copy.

**Management arrangements**

Organizational Setting:

* The Consultant will work under overall guidance of the UN Women Programme Specialist.
* The consultant is expected to join the team of the Economic Council Secretariat and work under the direct supervision of the Head of the Economic Council Secretariat.
* The Consultant should liaise with local counterparts, public institutions, civil society organizations and business associations, development partners and private sector representatives to collect and validate the recommendations and collected data.

Contributions: UN Women will put at the disposal of selected individual all available materials and necessary information for tasks achievement and will facilitate the meetings, as needed.  During assignment’s related missions, the National Consultant may use the facilities of the office (i.e. internet access, printing, copying, local phone calls, etc.). She or he is expected to use her or his own personal computer. Strict safety measures should be maintained throughout the work of the Consultant.

**Travel**

No travels are envisaged under the current assignment. In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between UN Women and the National Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed.

**Duration of the assignment**

The total duration of this assignment is tentatively planned for up to 112 working days starting on 15 March 2021 with task being accomplished by November 10, 2021. The consultant is responsible for accomplish the deliverables set up in the table “Deliverables”.

Note: The mentioned number of working days has been estimated as being sufficient/ feasible for the envisaged volume of work to be completed successfully and is proposed as a guideline for the duration of assignment. It cannot and shall not be used as criteria for completion of work/assignment. The provision of envisaged deliverables approved by the UN Women Deputy Representative shall be the only criteria for International Consultant’s work being completed and eligible for payment/s.

**Performance evaluation**

Consultant’s performance will be evaluated against such criteria as: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, accuracy, and quality of the products delivered. All reports must be provided in English, electronically.

**Financial arrangements**

Payment will be disbursed upon submission and approval of deliverables and timesheets with actual days worked and certification by UN Women’s responsible staff that the services have been satisfactorily performed.

**Competencies:**

**Core Values:**

* Respect for Diversity.
* Integrity.
* Professionalism.
* Work ethics.

**Core Competencies:**

* Knowledge and Sensitivity Regarding Gender Issues.
* Accountability.
* Creative Problem Solving.
* Effective Communication.
* Strong analytical skills.
* Inclusive Collaboration.
* Stakeholder Engagement.
* Leading by Example.

Please visit this link for more information on UN Women’s Core Values and Competencies: <http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/about%20us/employment/un-women-employment-values-and-competencies-definitions-en.pdf>.

**REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE**

**Education:**

* Completed university degree, preferably in Social Science, Law, Economics, International Development, or related. Masters’ degree or higher will be considered as advantage.

**Experience:**

* At least 3 years of experience in data collection and data analysis.
* At least 2 years of experience generating summaries and writing reports or papers. Experience in gender impact assessment would be considered as an advantage.
* At least 1 year of experience in developing planning documents or participating in the planning process.
* Work experience and confirmed knowledge in the field of gender economics or business support.

**Other skills and Language Requirements:**

* Fluency in written and oral Romanian, Russian and English.
* Proven analytical skills and critical thinking.
* Proven time management and self-discipline skills.
* Very good communication and presentation skills. High level of presentability.
* Understanding of gender related issues confirmed by work, education or volunteering experience.
* Experience in using various digital tools and programs for online work and communication.

**EVALUTATION PROCEDURE**

Interested candidates are invited to submit their online applications by February 25, 2021 with the following documents.

* Duly filled Personal History Form P11 and the CV
* Letter of Intent to include a brief overview about which of your previous experiences makes you the most suitable candidate for the advertised position.
* Financial proposal – specifying a total lump sum amount for the task specified in Terms of References. The Financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (daily rate).  Please see ANNEX I and ANNEX II.

If possible, previous reports, studies, and analysis performed by the Consultant should be attached to the application.

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

* Completed university degree.
* At least 3 years of experience in data collection and data analysis, ability to read and comprehend complicated data.
* At least 2 years of experience in generating summaries and writing reports or papers.
* At least 1 year of experience in developing planning documents or participating in the planning process.
* Fluency in written and oral Romanian, Russian and English.
* Understanding of gender related issues confirmed by work, education or volunteering experience.

The short-listed individual consultants will be further evaluated based on a cumulative analysis scheme, with a total score being obtained upon the combination of weighted technical and financial attributes. Cost under this method of analysis is rendered as an award criterion, which will be 30% out of a total score of 500 points.

Evaluation of submitted offers will be done based on the following formula:

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where:

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| T | is the total technical score awarded to the evaluated proposal (only to those proposals that pass 70% of maximum 360 points obtainable under technical evaluation); |
| C | is the price of the evaluated proposal;  |
| Clow | is the lowest of all evaluated proposal prices among responsive proposals; and  |
| X | is the maximum financial points obtainable (150 points) |

Technical evaluation will be represented through desk review of applications and further interview will be organized if needed, depending on the short-listed candidates’ qualifications.

**A) Technical Evaluation**: The technical part is evaluated based on its responsiveness to the Terms of Reference.

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| **No.** | **Criteria for technical evaluation** | **Max. points** |
| 1. | **Completed university degree***(20 pts for minimum required degree, up to 10 points for additional degree or trainings, 10 points for a degree in Social Science, Law, Economics, International Development, or any other related to the assignment fields, Master’s Degree or higher - 10 points/each, all up to a maximum of 50 pts.)* | 50 |
| 2. | **At least 3 years of experience in data collection and data analysis, ability to read and comprehend complicated data.***(2 years – 20 pts, each additional year – 10 pts, up to a maximum of 50 pts)* | 50 |
| 3. | **At least 2 years of experience in generating summaries and writing reports or papers***(2 years – 20 pts, each additional year – 10 pts, up to a maximum of 50 pts)* | 50 |
| 4 | **At least 1 year of experience in developing planning documents or participating in the planning process ~~at the ministerial level~~.** *(1 year – 10 pts, each additional year – 10 pts, up to a maximum of 50 pts)* | 50 |
| 5. | **Understanding of gender related issues confirmed by work, education or volunteering experience***(15 pct for trainings and 15 pct for work and/or volunteering experience in the field)* | 30 |
| 6. | **Fluency in written and oral Romanian, Russian and English.**(*English – 10 pts, Romanian -10 pts, Russian– 10 pts)* | 30 |
| 7. | **Interview** | **100** |
|  | **Maximum total technical scoring:** | **360** |

**B) Financial evaluation:** In the Second Stage, the financial proposal of candidates, who have attained minimum 70% score in the technical evaluation, will be compared.

**Winning candidate**

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

Please note that only applicants who are short-listed will be contacted.

*In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system (DAW, OSAGI, INSTRAW and UNIFEM), which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment.*

*The United Nations in Moldova is committed to workforce diversity. Women, persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic or religious minorities, persons living with HIV, as well as refugees and other non-citizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are particularly encouraged to apply.*