
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	National Consultant on Cluster Development and Private Sector Support
Duty Station:	Chişinău (with limited travel to Cahul and Ungheni Municipalities)
Section/Unit:	EU4Moldova: Focal Regions Programme (EU-funded)
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Starting Date:	May 2021
Duration of Assignment:	May 2021 – December 2021, up to 55 working days

Job Content

I. BACKGROUND

The EU4Moldova: Focal regions Programme (further on referred as Programme) is based on the European Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2018 in favour of the Republic of Moldova and is funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund.

The overall objective of the five-year Programme is to strengthen the economic, territorial and social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova through smart, green, inclusive, sustainable and integrated local socio-economic growth as well as by improving the standards of living of the citizens in the focal regions of Cahul and Ungheni.

To this end, this Programme will address also the urban-rural divide as well as regional disparities, stimulate economic growth and job creation, refurbish and upgrade some social and technical infrastructure in selected areas (smaller towns and villages) while taking into account climate change and a gender perspective in the activities of the Programme.

Specific objectives:

1. To strengthen transparency, accountability of local public authorities and citizen participation in local governance processes in the focal regions.
2. To improve citizens' access to quality public services and utilities in the focal regions.
3. To create employment opportunities for men and women in the focal-regions and improve the attractiveness of the focal regions for investors and entrepreneurs.
4. To promote the smart specialization of the economy of the focal regions through the development of the clustering and value chain approach in key economic sectors.

The Programme objectives will be achieved through measures targeted at: (i) capacity building to support the implementation and monitoring of local economic development plans; (ii) civil society engagement in local planning, governance processes and basic social service delivery; (iii) provision of investment funding in support of the creation and/or development of social and technical infrastructure which, combined with the outcomes from interventions (i) and (ii) above, will have an immediate, visible and tangible impact on employment creation, the standard of living of the population in the focal regions.

Specific context

Focal regions of Cahul and Ungheni will receive support to become more attractive for investment, job creation and entrepreneurship. Each focal region will be supported to rise above their current status of 'declining economic periphery' and implement a consistent package of 'economic turnaround' measures, aiming to improve their domestic and international image as 'emerging regional growth poles' with conducive business environment and amplified investment and entrepreneurship activities.

The business development components of the programme will focus on attracting new business to appear and exiting companies to flourish. The activities of the programme will aim to support and improve business and a number of start-ups created and stabilized, as well as existing companies stimulated for expansion and growing, as well as new entrants to look the regions investment. Also, a special attention will be drawn to social entrepreneurs' pilots to address social needs and improve local economic environment.

This activity will complement and correlate with cluster creation and consists of providing support in the implementation of 'Cluster Development Plans' directed towards supporting the key sectors of local economies to grow, expand and succeed.

Along the above, each focal region will be supported to improve the competitiveness of its territorial economy thorough restructuring and strengthening its major economic sectors into strong and dynamic territorial clusters, oriented towards exporting to EU market and integrated into stable and high-margin value chains.

II. SCOPE OF WORK

The **overall objective** of the consultancy is to support EU4MOLDOVA: Focal regions Programme in its efforts to provide private sector development assistance by adapting to the value chains approach and build capacities of private sector to develop associations/clusters based on mutual advantage and common agenda, provide quick wins assistance solutions.

To ensure adequate achievement of the specific objectives and implementation of all planned activities, the Programme is seeking a qualified and experienced Cluster Development and Private Sector Support consultant to perform the assignment in Cahul and Ungheni focal regions.

III. TASKS AND ESTIMATED WORKLOAD

The EU4Moldova: Focal regions Programme already started, within its other components, to support the local stakeholders to elaborate and promote the Joint Economic Growth Agenda in the focal regions. Local economic groups composed of important stakeholders from local public administration, businesses, local association to start several exercises related to local economic development were created and organized. These activities provided methodological support in conducting a joint Participatory Appraisal of the Competitive Advantage (PACA) of the focal regions and setting up the Territorial Economic Development Associations (TEDA) in Cahul and Ungheni municipalities. As the result of PACA and TEDA exercise, for each Focal Region a Low Carbon Economic Development Roadmap (LCED) was developed (detailed information can be accessed here). The Road Map developed for each Focal Region focused on the following aspects:

- Identification of economic area vs. administrative area

- Identification of key relevant value chains (4 for each Focal Region)
 - Cahul region – tourism, shepherding, table grapes, wine making
 - Ungheni region – tourism, carpet production, furniture production, strawberries
- Identification of motivated stakeholders
- Further steps for implementation of LCED initiatives

At the same time in order to ensure adequate implementation of all planned activities, the Programme launched tendering procedure in identifying local company in order to provide consistent and comprehensive methodological guidance, conceptualization and development of business clusters, including Stakeholder Review, `Joint Development Platform` Institutionalization, Cluster Mapping, Local Environmental challenges and opportunities, and Detailed 5-year development plans.

Taking into consideration all mentioned above the main role of the experienced Cluster Development and Private Sector Support consultant is to assist the focal regions local business actors and Programme team in strategic consultancy on business development matters and the correlation with the identified clusters with particular focus on greening and sustainability, analysis of economic and financial activity of legal entities within each cluster, conceptualization of ToRs (activities resulted from 5-year development plan), assessing, developing and evaluation of the technical documents. Also, the consultant will be responsible for collecting and disseminating information related to the mentioned areas, ensure on-site visits, supervision and monitoring of implemented business projects and clusters as well as providing advice and strategic inputs for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) support mechanism, investment attraction based on cluster development approach.

Implementation of SME support mechanism and social entrepreneurship pilot component consists of 6 main phases:

- Preparation – establishment of all necessary documentation, evaluation and selection criteria and other documents needed for call launch;
- Launch – the information is published in the media and potential applicants are invited to apply to the current call;
- Competition – potential applications are informed and trained through various information events by the competition deadline;
- Evaluation – received applications and aggregation of data needed to technically evaluate the proposals and selection of beneficiaries;
- Implementation- selected beneficiaries receive the non-reimbursable financial assistance and targeted coaching. This stage to be carried out by Contractor for SME support;
- Post-implementation – monitoring of goods received and further support in long-term mentorship.

The specific role of Individual Consultant related to SME support mechanism will be mainly focused on integration of cluster development aspects in the application guidelines for preparation phase and proposals for trainings/Coaching for the implementation phase.

For the given purpose, the Cluster Development and Private Sector Support consultant will carry out the following tasks:

Tasks, Activities & Deliverables <i>(provision of deliverables of required content and quality is the only criteria for consultant's payment)</i>	Estimated work volume <i>(used at the submission stage)</i>	Tentative timeframe <i>(subject to coordination/adjustment with EU4MD project team)</i>
I. Provide support and strategic inputs for SME support mechanism on the main products and activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs for SME support mechanism. Integration of cluster development aspects in the beneficiary's selection guidelines/criteria under preparation stage and prioritization of cluster development under evaluation stage. Quarterly coordination meetings with Local consultants on Business Development and SME Support Contractor, as well as other Business Consultants which may be hired by the Programme. Methodological guidance for local consultants. Integration to cluster development activities in trainings/Coaching provided by SME Support Contractor. 	up to 12 working days	
Deliverable I: 1st Intermediate Progress Report Report on SME support mechanism integration to cluster development		By June 30, 2021
II. Provide support for monitoring and evaluation of the services and deliverables to be produced by the cluster development Contractor selected by Programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and evaluate the quality of services provided by the Contractor responsible for Conceptualization and development of business clusters, including Stakeholder Review, and `Joint Development Platform` Institutionalization, Cluster Mapping, and Detailed 5-year development plans. Providing assistance to the Project team in validation, examination and verification of compliance with the purpose of task referring to the deliverables presented by Cluster development Contractor. Provide assistance to the Project team in drafting tender related documentation for 8 clusters support actions as a result of Stakeholder review and Detailed 5-year development plan. 	up to 21 working days	
Deliverable II: 2nd Intermediate Progress Report Report on the monitoring and evaluation of cluster development contractor services and deliverables		By September 30 th , 2021
III. Provide support in analysing and organizing local key economic sectors into dynamic growth-oriented clusters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing assistance to the Project team in identification of investment attraction opportunities and analyses for continuous cluster development in both Focal Regions. Providing support in analysis of economic and financial activity of legal entities within each cluster as well as identification of types of risks in the related business activity. 	up to 21 working days	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in other business development activities related to organization of local key economic sectors into dynamic growth-oriented clusters and other related fields. Identify key local/global environmental challenges (including climate change) and opportunities that are to be considered in each value chain. 		
Deliverable III: 3rd Intermediate Progress Report Report on analysing and organizing local key economic sectors into dynamic growth-oriented clusters, investment, business development, risk mitigation, environmental challenges dimensions.		By December 10 th , 2021
Deliverable IV: Final Progress Report	1 working day	By December 15 th , 2021
Total number of working days estimated	Up to 55 working days	

Note: The indicated tentative timeframe 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 the assignment. The provision of the envisaged deliverables approved by the Programme shall be the only criteria for Consultant's work being completed and eligible for payment/s.

All activities under this assignment shall be performed in a gender-sensitive manner and applying human rights-based approach. All the required analysis and activities should be focused on circular economy approach considering environmental challenges and trends.

Language of the deliverables: All deliverables shall be submitted in Romanian language.

The timeframe for the delivery of each activity/output per community/project shall be coordinated and agreed in advance with the EU4MOLDOVA: Focal regions Programme.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Consultant will work under direct supervision of Project Manager/Business Development, Project Officer/Investment Attraction and in close cooperation with Project Officers – Coordinators for focal regions. This is a home-based assignment with limited visits to Cahul and Ungheni municipalities. On-line/remote communication is preferred. Up to 5 visits per region (10 in total) can be included in the consolidated financial offer, stipulating transport costs. The detailed topics, agenda and action plan of the visits shall be coordinated by the Program. All the above-listed deliverables shall be endorsed by the Programme Manager within 14 calendar days from their submission.

Payment for provided services

Payments will be made post factum on a lump-sum basis, upon submission and approval of deliverables stated in point III and certification by the Programme Manager that the services have been satisfactorily performed.

Confidentiality

Materials provided to the consultants and all proceedings within the consultancy contract shall be regarded as confidential, both during and after the consultancy. Violation of confidentiality requirements may result in immediate termination of contract.

V. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

The following qualification criteria shall be applied for the selection of the consultant:

Education:

- University degree in economics, business administration, financial management or other relevant related area

Experience:

- At least 7 years of consultancy experience participating in business/economic development and/or project/programmes design;
- Availability of specialized certificate/s in Finance, Bookkeeping, Auditing would constitute an advantage. Membership in professional associations will have an advantage;
- Experience in making economic-financial analysis of enterprises and/or risk/SWOT analysis related to business development aspects of an enterprise (*based on provided evidence: reports, outputs, proving such experience must be presented together with the application package*);
- Experience in evaluating and monitoring deliverables/outputs/results of the project implementation (*based on provided evidence: reports/outputs of previous monitoring activities must be presented together with the application package*);
- Experience in writing Terms of References for services in the fields of economic development (*based on provided evidence: ToRs proving such experience must be presented together with the application package*);
- Experience of collaborating with Business Associations (*evidence: list of business associations including the topic and year must be presented together with the application package*).
- Experience of working with UN agencies and/or international organizations, and/or European/donor funded development projects/programs will be considered an asset.

Competences:

- Computer proficiency, including knowledge of MS Office products (Word, Excel, Power Point);
- High level of responsibility and organization capacities, creative approach to solving issues;
- Excellent communication and reporting skills;
- Ability to meet deadlines and prioritize multiple tasks;
- Ability to maintain the confidentiality of information obtained on a business basis and to protect the interests of the employer (in this case UNDP).

Language requirements:

- Excellent command of written and spoken Romanian and Russian are required. Knowledge of English is an asset.

The United Nations Development Programme in Moldova is committed to workforce diversity. Women and men, persons with different types of disabilities, LGBT, Roma and other ethnic, linguistic 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.