United Nations Development Programme

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Date: 17.08.2022

Country: Republic of Moldova

Description of the assignment: Energy data scientist (to be part of a Team of experts for the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP)

Project name: Addressing the impacts of the energy crisis in the Republic of Moldova: Initiating solutions toward energy security and energy poverty; Policy and Strategic Unit, evidence-based policy support to the MLSP on energy poverty and support to most energy vulnerable groups of population

Period of assignment/ services: September 2022 - February 2023, 90 working days

Proposals should be submitted online, by pressing the "Apply Online" button, no later than **31.08.2022, 16:00 GMT+3 Moldova time.**

Requests for clarification only must be sent by standard electronic communication to the following e-mail: maria.tarigradean@undp.org
UNDP will respond by standard electronic mail and will send written copies of the response, including an explanation of the query without identifying the source of inquiry, to all applicants.

1. BACKGROUND

Since early March 2020, the Republic of Moldova is confronting a complex health and socio-economic crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. As summarized in the SEIA, the crisis is underscoring the importance of LNOB challenges in Moldova, due to shrinking incomes and expenditures, limited access to health and education, and challenges for local businesses due to supply disruptions and plummeting demand at home and abroad. The war in Ukraine will significantly affect poverty in Moldova, with two important emerging forms of poverty becoming more prominent, including energy and food poverties.

During the second half of 2021, these developments played out against a backdrop of the European gas crisis, when gas prices spiked above $1000/cubic meter (5-10 times 2020 levels). Moldova's gas import contract with Russia's Gazprom expired in October 2021; and with a new negotiated contract, Gazprom is suppling Moldova gas at a price of $650+ for 1000 cubic meters. Gas tariffs for most users spiked—at a time when the country is experiencing the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and when heating needs are ratcheting up in the face of the on-coming winter. Electricity prices equally increased, on average by 40%.

The acute gas supply crisis in Moldova has also been subject of discussions within the Moldova-EU Association Council meeting on October 28, 2021. The EU and Moldova stressed the importance of resilience against any potential efforts by third parties to use energy as a geopolitical lever. The Association Council recalled the importance of continued energy market reform to strengthen competition and transparency in this sector. The EU has urged Moldova to ensure that the energy sector reform demonstrates full respect of the Energy Community acquis and is in line with the EU Third Energy Package. The EU side confirmed its support to the objective of Moldova for integration into the EU energy system and market, an important step being the recent synchronization of its electricity network with the Continental European Network (CEN).

Moldova is therefore facing exorbitant prices for those supplies it can obtain. For a country in which nearly two thirds of the population was living on less than $10/day before the pandemic began, in which spending on food and energy absorb the vast majority of vulnerable household incomes, and which generates the lion's share of its electricity from gas, this price shock can have significant crisis implications. More than 50% of the population could be considered energy poor (HHs that spend more than 10% of their income on energy threshold). Combined with the country's on-going macroeconomic and epidemiological distress, the gas and electricity shocks also poses major risks to the government's reform program, which seeks to strengthen Moldova's alignment with European and global good governance practices and is central to Moldova's hopes for achieving the SDGs.

In response to this unfolding crisis and in order to systemically tackle the energy poverty and vulnerability, the Moldovan Government is planning to create an Energy Vulnerability Fund (EVF) to compensate most vulnerable households for the increase in the tariffs for electricity, natural gas and heating in the upcoming cold period of 2022-23 and beyond. The planned compensations will be on-bill and the resources will come from a national Energy Vulnerability Fund – a blended fund that will include public budget resources and other resources, including from the development partners.

2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ANALYTICAL WORK

The objective of the assignment is to provide support to the Government/ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) to develop and implement a National Energy Vulnerability Fund (EVF) for on-bill compensation for energy for most vulnerable households in Moldova, as well as evaluate the impact of the compensations on the energy poverty in Moldova. Specifically, the expert will provide assistance in the development of the concept of the Fund and data integration, its costing, as well as the estimation of the national minimum energy consumption basket taking into consideration the context, the energy vulnerability profile of the HHs and other elements.

The support will include:

- Specific detailed concept of the Energy Vulnerability Fund;
- Detailed description of the on-bill compensation mechanism; support for the approval of the mechanism by the Government;
- Supporting the government in providing data-driven evidence with regards to decision-making and the implementation of the EVF Development of a specific mechanism to evaluate the impact of the on-bill compensations;
- Development of a specific mechanism to evaluate the impact of the vouchers program to help energy vulnerable families to replace old energy-consuming appliances;
- Development of policy or position briefs on the implementation of the EVF, including mainstreaming the use of data for decision-making with regards to energy poverty and vulnerability, energy efficiency;
- Detailed description of the online application module, including contributing to its improvement, testing and support, and its interoperability with other relevant Government systems and datasets;
- Detailed description of the key variables for the application process, the algorithm for the categorization of the HHs depending on their level of energy vulnerability, algorithm for the verification of the applications/applicants, other;
- Development of the data related regulatory framework related to the implementation of the Program, including examining the approaches regarding the implementation of the program and related legislation and organizing information campaigns and training on the implementation of the Program and related legislation;
- Support in the implementation of the above;
- Costing for the EVF;
- Other related tasks.

The Energy data scientist, in tandem with other technical experts, will lead on the conceptualization, development, and support to the implementation of the EVF. In particular, the expert will propose and consult suitable methodological approaches to the development of the EVF and the compensation package, taking into consideration the energy poverty and vulnerability in Moldova. The expert will review and incorporate the good practices from the region, make use of existing and new evidence to be used for the development of the EFV.

The direct beneficiary of the Assessment report is the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, as well as other subordinated agencies and other line ministries.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Qualifications and Experience

- Master's degree or equivalent in the field of data, big data, AI, social sciences, energy economics, statistics, or related fields;
- Thorough understanding of the energy market and energy poverty in Moldova;
- Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience in research in areas related to energy poverty and vulnerability and social protection; experience in working with new types of data (including big data) is an important advantage;
- Experience in working with new types of data (including big data);
- Previous proven analytical experience in the areas of energy, energy poverty and vulnerability, access to energy, other;
- Previous energy sector related experience in development assistance or related work for a donor organization, governmental institution, NGO, or private sector;
- Advanced research skills and capability of producing analysis using quantitative and qualitative data (references to documents to be provided), AI, big data, development of new algorithms;
- Proven experience in convening partners, organizing, and leading strategic meetings, facilitating policy dialogues in areas related to energy, energy poverty and vulnerability;
- Strong leadership and team management skills.

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent quantitative and qualitative research skills;
- Proven capacity to produce reports and analyses in English;
- Consistently ensures timeliness and quality of work;
- Innovative and creative thinking;
- Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude;
- Excellent interpersonal and teamwork skills;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Ability to facilitate group processes, including when tensions arise.

Language:

- Proficiency in Romanian and English. Knowledge of Russian is an asset.

The UNDP 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. Please mention in CV if you belong to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment.

4. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

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

- CV, including information about past experience in similar assignments and contact details for at least 3 referees;
- Brief description of why the individual considers him/herself as the most suitable for the assignment;
- Offeror's Letter confirming Interest and Availability with financial proposal (in USD, specifying the total lump sum amount). Financial proposal template prepared in compliance with the template in Annex 2.

Important notice: The applicants who have the statute of Government Official / Public Servant prior to appointment will be asked to submit the following documentation:

- a no-objection letter in respect of the applicant received from the Government, and;
- the applicant is certified in writing by the Government to be on official leave without pay for the entire duration of the Individual Contract.

5. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in installments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR.

In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including fees, taxes, travel costs, accommodation costs, communication, and number of anticipated working days).

6. EVALUATION

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

- Master's degree or equivalent in the field of data, big data, AI, social sciences, energy economics, statistics, or related fields;
- Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience in research in areas related to energy poverty and vulnerability and social protection.

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 and 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 total technical scoring would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Criteria	Scoring	Maximum Points Obtainable
Technical		
• Master's degree or equivalent in the field of data, big data, AI, social sciences, energy economics, statistics, or related fields	*Master's degree – 10 pts.;* *Ph. D degree – 15 pts.*	15
• Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience in research in areas related to energy poverty and vulnerability and social protection	*Seven (7) years – 30 pts., each additional year of experience – 5 pts., up to a maximum of 45 pts.*	45
• Proven experience in convening partners, organizing, and leading strategic meetings, facilitating policy dialogues in areas related to energy, energy poverty and vulnerability	*Three or more assignments – 25 pts.;* *One or two assignments – 15 pts.;* *No assignments – 0 pts.*	25
Interview: Please note that only the top 5 ranked (that accumulated the highest technical score) applicants shall be invited for the interview		
Interview	• Thorough understanding of the energy market and energy poverty in Moldova: *extensive < 40 pts., satisfactory < 30 pts., limited < 20 pts., no– 0 pts.;* • Previous energy sector related experience in development assistance or related work for a donor organization, governmental institution, NGO, or private sector: *5 and over projects/assignments – 40 pts., 3-4 projects/assignments – 30 pts., 1-2 projects/assignments – 20 pts., no over projects/assignments – 0 pts.;* • Experience in working with new types of data (including big data)*: over 3 assignments – 30 pts., 2 assignments – 20 pts., 1 assignment – 10 pts., no assignments – 0 pts.*; • Previous proven analytical experience in the areas of energy, energy poverty and vulnerability, access to energy, other; *extensive < 35 pts., satisfactory < 20 pts., limited < 10 pts., no experience – 0 pts.;* • Advanced research skills and capability of producing analysis using quantitative and qualitative data (references to documents to be provided), AI, big data, development of new algorithms: *extensive < 30 pts, satisfactory < 20 pts, limited < 10 pts, no– 0 pts.;* • Strong leadership and team management skills: *excellent < 20 pts., satisfactory < 10 pts., limited – 0 pts.;* • Knowledge of English, Romanian and Russian - *up to 5 pts each. (15 pts. total).*	210
Belonging to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment[1]	• *No – 0 pts., to one group – 1,5 pts., to two or more groups – 5 pts.*	5
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		**300**

[1] Under-represented group in the area of assignment are (men/women). 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.

Financial	
Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula: **S = Fmin / F * 200** **S –** score received on financial evaluation; **Fmin –** the lowest financial offer out of all the submitted offers qualified over the technical evaluation round; **F –** financial offer under consideration	**200**

Winning candidate

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

ANNEXES:

ANNEX 1 – TERMS OF REFERENCES (ToR)

ANNEX 2 – INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS