



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title:	ICT specialist (to be part of a Team of experts for the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP))
Project:	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
Reporting to:	MLSP, guidance to be provided by the Policy Specialist and Energy Cluster Lead, UNDP Moldova
Duty Station:	at the premises of the MLSP, Chisinau, Moldova
Contract Type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Duration:	90 working days during September 2022 - February 2023

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 will supply Moldova gas at a price of about \$450-500/1000 cubic meters. Gas tariffs for most users are expected to double or triple—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.

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. Combined with the

country's on-going macroeconomic and epidemiological distress, the gas shock 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.

Another instrument of the Fund dedicated to the energy vulnerable households is the subsidies for implementation of energy efficiency measures which will include replacement of the old energy intensive home appliances, as well replacement the windows, thermal insulation of building envelope and renovation of the individual heating systems.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the assignment is to provide support to the Government/ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) implementation of the National Energy Vulnerability Fund (EVF) Informational System for on-bill compensation for energy and for the subsidies (Vouchers Programme and Green Homme Programme) dedicated to energy efficiency measures for the most vulnerable households in Moldova, evaluate the impact of the compensations on the energy poverty in Moldova, as well as develop technical requirements to additional functional modules needed for advanced development of the EVF. Specifically, the ICT specialist will ensure development of the ICT related infrastructure of the Fund, it's costing, as well as the recommendations on integrations and interoperabilities with the EGA systems and protocols.

The support will include:

- Specific ICT detailed concept of the Energy Vulnerability Fund;
- Support in development and overseeing of the Concept and Regulation of the Information System 'Registry for Energy Vulnerability'; overseeing the contracted company for the EVF Information System development; develop a training guide for Information System users and undertake their training;
- 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, algorithm for the issuing of the vouchers, other;
- Detailed description of the ICT solution for the on-bill compensation mechanism and subsidy programme (Vouchers Programme and Green Homme Programme); support for the approval of the mechanism by the Government;
- Development of a ICT specific mechanism to evaluate the impact of the subsidy program;
- 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 online module for issuing the vouchers, including overseeing the contracted company to develop the module, contributing to its improvement, testing and support;
- 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 related ICT infrastructure;

- Other related tasks.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Scope of work

The ICT specialist, in tandem with other technical experts, will lead on the conceptualization, development, and support to the implementation of the EVF. In particular, the ICT specialist will propose and consult suitable methodological approaches to the development of the ICT infrastructure of the EVF and recommendations on integrations and interoperabilities with the EGA systems and protocols. The expert will review and incorporate the good practices from the region, make use of existing and new capacities to be used for the development of the EVF.

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.

b. Deliverables and Timeline

The consultant is expected to produce the following deliverables:

Deliverables	Deadline
1. Development and overseeing of the Concept and Regulation of the Information System ‘Registry for Energy Vulnerability’; overseeing the contracted company for the EVF Information System development. Detailed description of the ICT solution for the on-bill compensation mechanism and subsidy programme; support for the approval of the mechanism by the Government;	September – October 2022
2. 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; Development of a ICT specific mechanism to evaluate the impact of the vouchers program	September - October 2022
3. Report on the provided support for description of the online module for issuing the vouchers, overseeing the contracted company to develop the module, contribution to its improvement, testing and support	October – November 2022
4. Support with ICT related issues in implementation of the EVF and monthly reporting on progress	September– February 2023

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The consultant will work from the premises of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection. He/she will use data available in Romanian, English and Russian, and will produce all the deliverables in English and Romanian languages. Shall the deliverables need to be translated into Russian; the project will cover the translation costs.

All deliverables must be quality reviewed and accepted by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and UNDP Policy Specialist and UNDP’s Energy/Environment Cluster Lead. The payments will be disbursed in several instalments, upon the completion of the deliverables.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

Qualifications and Experience

- Master's degree or equivalent in the field of IT management, computer sciences, computer engineering or other relevant discipline;
- Excellent knowledge of the ICT policies and regulatory framework of the Republic of Moldova;
- Minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience in planning, design, development, implementation, and maintenance of information systems;
- Proven previous experience (at least 2 previous assignments) in actively participating in the work related to conceptualization of Databases, IT Registers and/or IT Systems;);
- Excellent knowledge and understanding of the phases related to set-up and subsequent functioning of a National IT Informational System;
- Previous experience in working e-Government projects or similar;
- Demonstrated interpersonal and diplomatic skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with stakeholders at all levels and to present ideas clearly and effectively;
- 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.