



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

<b>Job title:</b>	SME Engagement Consultant
<b>Duty Station:</b>	Republic of Moldova, Chisinau
<b>Reference to the project:</b>	Resilient and Inclusive Markets (PRIM)
<b>Contract type:</b>	Individual Contract
<b>Assignment type:</b>	National Consultant
<b>Contract duration:</b>	March 2023 – December 2024
<b>Expected workload:</b>	110 working days
<b>Indicative starting date:</b>	01 April 2023

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Swiss-UNDP project “Resilient, Inclusive Markets in Moldova” (PRIM) is set to contribute to the promotion of integrated approaches to inclusive and sustainable local economic development and employment creation, in partnership with ILO and SDC, targeting both local populations, as well as returning migrants and refugees.

Previous and ongoing SDC – UNDP efforts to address the positive impact of migration and engage migrants in local socio-economic development, along with design and piloting of local economic developments models and partnerships shaped a favorable enabling environment to expand the current work and take it to another level. In this context, Moldova has a number of comparative advantages that can be harnessed to steam up the growth, broaden its geography, and make it more socially inclusive.

In order to do so, UNDP Moldova will further advance the successful LED interventions by scaling up the focus from local to (micro)-regional, while at the same time leveraging revenue generation, strengthening business support services and value chains to increase the competitiveness of local economy, retention of human capital and facilitate local socio-economic development.

The role of the SMEs, including owned and led by migrants, is crucial, being potentially the most efficient transmission between the economic growth and welfare of the employed persons, particularly in the remote rural communities and small towns. Also new political and socio-economic development required new approaches, taking into consideration the need to build more resilient, inclusive, and innovative local communities and local markets.

Hence, the strategic goal of the PRIM project is to enhance the SMEs-based sustainable economic development and promote equal access to decent work at the local and (micro)-regional levels, targeting both local populations, as well as returning migrants and refugees. It leverages the enhanced multi-stakeholder cooperation, improved business support services and complementary regulatory frameworks at the level of individual communities and micro-regions.

The Project will enhance sustainability of the results from the previous efforts supported by the Swiss Government, shape them to new political and socio-economic developments, by embracing and promoting relevant policy and community-action innovations and by ensuring engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of local development solutions for building responsive institutions, inclusive economy, and resilient communities.

In light of the regional security environment that is expected to remain turbulent even in the most optimistic scenarios, the Project is intended to bring a valuable contribution to the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus at the local/regional level.

The strategic goal of the PRIM project is to enhance the inclusive, competitive, and sustainable economic development, and promote equal access to decent work at the local and (micro)-regional levels, by leveraging the enhanced multi-stakeholder cooperation, improved business support services and complementary regulatory frameworks. The Project targets three interrelated Outcomes.

As part of Outcome 1, policy and institutional frameworks create an empowering environment for inclusive and sustainable economic development in the targeted economic sectors.

Outcome 2 assumes that local/regional communities including private sector representatives, meaningfully cooperate in cluster formats to enhance value chains and improve their competitiveness.

As part of Outcome 3, the people of Moldova, especially women, youth, returning migrants and refugees, will benefit from improved economic opportunities in the pilot micro-regions.

## 2. OBJECTIVE AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The Project seeks to contract a National Consultant (hereinafter "the Consultant") to provide local capacity development support to the Project Team in the implementation of key activities under the Project's second Outcome. She/he is expected to work closely with the Project Manager, Project Component Manager, beneficiary localities and stakeholders in order to deliver professional, effective, and qualitative contributions to the Project's community-level interventions.

Under the direct supervision of the Project Manager and in collaboration with the Project Component Manager and Senior Project Officer, the Consultant is expected to carry out the following tasks:

- Provide support to the PRIM project in identifying sectoral regulatory gaps related to the targeted value chains through advisory support and expertise (particularly in the field of SME development, employment, and overall business activity).
- Provide support to the PRIM project on the conceptualization of feasible mechanisms for SME to facilitate the access to finance and diaspora financial engagement in national/local economic development.
- Contribute to the design and piloting of a facilitation/incentives mechanism for boosting employment within the SMEs from the selected value chains.
- Advise on the enhancement of the National Employment Agency's capacities to increase its engagement with the private sector beneficiaries from the targeted micro-regions (via its territorial offices).
- Perform any other relevant activity-related tasks, as requested by the Project Manager and/or Policy Component Manager, for the successful implementation of the assignment.

## 3. KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

Key activities and deliverables	Tentative timetable
<p><b>Activity 1:</b> Support on the conceptualization/enhancement of at least 2 feasible mechanisms for SME to facilitate access to finance and diaspora engagement in national/local economic development—provided to the Project</p> <p><b>Deliverable 1:</b> Concept on at least 2 feasible mechanisms for SME to facilitate access to finance and diaspora engagement in national/local economic development, consulted with stakeholders. (Draft concept to be delivered at least three weeks in advance for consultations with stakeholders).</p>	<p><b>Deliverable 1</b> by 15 May 2023 <b>21 WD</b></p>
<p><b>Activity 2:</b> Support the identification of sectoral regulatory gaps faced by participants of the three selected micro-clusters as part of the economic analysis of the value-chains<sup>1</sup></p> <p><b>Deliverable 2:</b> Proposal on the sectoral regulatory gaps faced by the participants of the selected micro-clusters. Draft proposal to be delivered at least three weeks in advance for consultations with stakeholders</p>	<p><b>Deliverable 2</b> by 30 August 2023 <b>21 WDs</b></p>
<p><b>Activity 3:</b> Support the conceptualization and piloting, and monitoring of a facilitation/incentives mechanism for boosting employment within the SMEs in the selected value chains – provided to the Project</p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.1:</b> Draft concept of a facilitation/incentives mechanism for boosting employment within the SMEs in the selected value chains</p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.2:</b> Final concept of a facilitation/incentives mechanism for boosting employment within the SMEs in the selected value chains</p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.3:</b> Field visits and activity report on the piloting and monitoring of the mechanism for quarter IV 2023</p>	<p><b>Deliverable 3.1</b> by 30 June 2023 <b>16 WDs</b></p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.2</b> by 30 August 2023 <b>10 WDs</b></p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.3</b> by 15 November 2023 <b>6 WDs</b></p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.4</b> by 15 February 2024</p>

<sup>1</sup> Note: activity to be conducted as part of a team of experts

<p><b>Deliverable 3.4:</b> Field visits and activity report on the piloting and monitoring of the mechanism for quarter I 2024</p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.5:</b> Field visits and activity report on the piloting and monitoring of the mechanism for quarter II 2024</p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.6:</b> Field visits and activity report on the piloting and monitoring of the mechanism for quarter III 2024</p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.7:</b> Field visits and activity report on the piloting and monitoring of the mechanism for quarter IV 2024</p>	<p><b>6 WDs</b></p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.5</b> by 15 May 2024 <b>6 WDs</b></p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.6</b> by 15 September 2024 <b>6 WDs</b></p> <p><b>Deliverable 3.7</b> by 15 November 2024 <b>6 WDs</b></p>
<p><b>Activity 4:</b> Advisory on the enhancement of the National Employment Agency's capacities to increase the capacities of its territorial employment offices to effectively engage with the private sector beneficiaries from the targeted micro-regions provided to the Project</p> <p><b>Deliverable 4:</b> Draft report containing recommendations on training subjects for NEA's territorial staff</p>	<p><b>Deliverable 4</b> by 30 August 2023 <b>12 WDs</b></p>

*Note: Deliverables and the final timeline can be amended or specified for the purpose of the assignment. All deliverables should be agreed with Project and be provided in electronic copy. Payment will be made upon the successful completion of the tasks assigned.*

#### 4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The timeframe for the work of the Consultant is planned for the period March 2023 – December 2024.

During this time, the Consultant is expected to work a total of 110 working days (part-time consultancy).

The assignment shall be performed in close coordination with the Project Team, under the guidance and supervision of the Project Manager and Policy Component Manager.

For the duration of the assignment the Project will provide the Consultant the necessary information and materials for the fulfilment of the assignment. Priority shall be given to both office-based and field work.

All communications and documentation related to the assignment will be in Romanian.

#### 5. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Payments will be disbursed in tranches upon submission and validation of deliverables by the Policy Component Manager (certifying that the services have been satisfactorily performed) and their subsequent approval by the Project Manager.

#### 6. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

##### Academic Qualifications:

- University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Finance, or other relevant fields.

##### Experience and knowledge:

- At least 3 (three) years of progressive experience (at the local or national level) in the field of economic policy development, enhancement, and support programme implementation for SMEs. Recent work experience at local level will be considered a strong advantage.
- At least 2 (three) years of experience in providing advisory and capacity building support for SMEs.
- Proven record in coordinating, monitoring, and/or evaluating projects with private sector and employment support components will be considered a strong advantage.
- Proven record in contributing to the conceptualization and/or implementation of a private sector support program will be considered a strong advantage.
- Previous experience within an UNDP Project and/or other international organization(s) will be considered an advantage.

##### Competencies:

- Ability to perform and deliver expected results in a fast-paced working environment.
- Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently.

- Strong written and communication skills, with analytic capacity and ability to identify relevant findings and prepare analytical documents in a clear and concise manner.
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively and build meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders.
- Fluency in Romanian (verbal and written) is a must. Strong knowledge of English considered as an advantage.

#### **Personal qualities:**

- Responsibility, flexibility and punctuality, ability to meet deadlines and prioritize multiple tasks.
- Proven commitment to the core values of the United Nations, in particular respecting differences of culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, HIV status, disability, and sexual orientation, or other status.

*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.*

### **7. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS**

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

- Signed and filled-in Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating Financial proposal in Annex 2 (in USD, specifying a total requested amount per working day, including all related costs, e.g. fees, phone calls etc.). Annex 2 to the Offeror's letter, incorporating the Financial Proposal, shall be filled in mandatorily and includes the detailed breakdown of costs supporting the all-inclusive financial proposal;
- Proposal (Motivation Letter): explaining why they are the most suitable for the work including previous experience in similar Projects (please provide brief information on each of the above qualifications, item by item, including information, links/copies of documents for similar comprehensive studies);
- Duly updated CV with at least 3 references.

**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.

### **8. 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. 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)

#### Travel

All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to join duty station/repatriation travel. In general, UNDP should not accept travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket. Should the IC wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do so using their own resources.

In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit and Individual Consultant, prior to travel and will be reimbursed.

### **9. EVALUATION**

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

- University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Finance, or other relevant fields.
- At least 3 (three) years of progressive experience (at the local or national level) in the field of economic policy development/enhancement and support programme implementation for SMEs, and
- At least 2 (three) years of experience in providing advisory and capacity building support for SMEs.

The short-listed individual consultants will be further evaluated based on a 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 Technical Evaluation shall be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Criteria	Scoring	Points
University degree (or higher) in Economics, Finance, Business Management, or other relevant fields.	<i>Bachelor's degree – 5 pts. Master's degree – 10 pts.</i>	10
At least 3 (three) years of progressive experience (at the local or national level) in the field of economic policy development, enhancement, and support programme implementation for SMEs	<i>no – 0 pts; 3 years of experience – 30 pts; each additional year – 10 pts, up to a total of 50 points;</i>	50
Work experience at the local level in the field of economic policy development, enhancement, and support programme implementation for SMEs in the last 5 years is a strong advantage	<i>no – 0 pts; each additional year of experience – 5 pts. up to a maximum of 20 pts.</i>	20
At least 2 (three) years of experience in providing advisory and capacity building support for SMEs	<i>no – 0 pts. 2 years – 20 pts; each additional year of experience – 5 pts., up to a maximum of 30 pts.</i>	30
Proven record in coordinating, monitoring, and/or evaluating projects with private sector and employment support components	<i>no – 0 pts. 1 year/record – 10 pts; each additional experience – 5 pts. up to a maximum of 20 pts.</i>	20
Proven record in contributing to the conceptualization and/or implementation of a private sector support program	<i>no – 0 pts. 1 year/record – 10 pts; each additional experience – 10 pts. up to a maximum of 30 pts.</i>	30
Previous experience within an UNDP Project and/or other international organization(s)	<i>more than 2 years -10 pts; up to 2 years – 5 pts; no – 0 pts.</i>	10
<u>Interview</u> *The first three candidates who passed technical evaluation criteria with the best score shall be invited for an online interview and pass the cumulative analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrated understanding of the subject matter, and of the role to be performed by the consultant (<i>none – 0 pts, limited – 10 pts, good – 20 pts, strong – 30 pts</i>)</li> <li>• Demonstrated interpersonal and diplomatic skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with all stakeholders to present ideas clearly and effectively (<i>none – 0 pts, limited – 10 pts, good – 20 pts, strong – 30 pts</i>)</li> <li>• Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently</li> </ul>	130

	<p><i>(none – 0 pts, limited – 10 pts, good – 20 pts, strong – 30 pts)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong written and communication skills, with analytic capacity and ability to identify relevant findings and prepare analytical documents in a clear and concise manner</li> </ul> <p><i>(none – 0 pts, limited – 10 pts, good – 20 pts, strong – 30 pts)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong knowledge of the English and Romanian languages – 5 pts each. (10 pts total)</li> </ul>	
<b>Maximum Total Technical Scoring</b>		<b>300</b>

<b><u>Financial</u></b>	
<p>Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula:</p> <p><b><u><math>S = F_{min} / F * 200</math></u></b></p> <p><b>S</b> – score received on financial evaluation;</p> <p><b>F<sub>min</sub></b> – the lowest financial offer out of all the submitted offers qualified over the technical evaluation round;</p> <p><b>F</b> – financial offer under consideration</p>	<b>200</b>

#### Winning candidate

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