



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job Title:	National Consultant for conducting an accessibility assessment of regional centers for social service provision
Duty Station:	Chisinau, Moldova
Reference to the project:	01003900 / Digital Transformation of Social Protection in the Republic of Moldova
Contract type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Expected duration of the assignment:	December 2025 - February 2026
Expected workload:	25 working days
Indicative starting date:	1 December 2025

I. Background

In alignment with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) transformative process, through the launch of three major reforms, namely that of social services (RESTART); that of the National Employment Agency (NEA); and that of the State Labour Inspectorate, UNDP is currently supporting the reform process through its “Digital Transformation of Social Protection” Project, which, through the deployment of digitalization, seeks to enable and coordinate the different reform strands being implemented by the Ministry. One of the aims of the Project is to revitalize local social service provision in Moldova focusing on creating accessible and user-friendly premises for regional centers, equipped with the required technology and business processes. From an institutional and service provision perspective, the single-window approach will be applied to the (offline) services offered by regional centers, mirroring and complementing the single window approach to social protection digitalization, led nationally by the MLSP.

Support is envisaged for mapping the offered services, re-engineering front and back-office processes, and drafting a model design for all regional offices, based on the one-stop-shop principle (access to most social protection services ensured in one place). Relevant digital tools will be identified and integrated to simplify service management and facilitate communication with beneficiaries.

At the core of this support will be green office practices and the human-centered design approach, in which UNDP has accumulated considerable expertise, to ensure that the redesign of service processes and the layout of offices truly meet the requirements and expectations of the users and workers in an environmentally and institutionally sustainable manner.

Concurrently, the project prioritizes the professional development of the centers’ personnel, ensuring a skilled, empathetic workforce capable of delivering high-quality, user-centric services. This integrated

approach promises an enhancement in the effectiveness and accessibility of local social services, aligning with broader goals of community well-being and support.

II. Scope of Work

The Project seeks to contract a National Consultant (hereinafter “the Consultant”) to conduct a comprehensive accessibility assessment of 10 regional centers for social service provision (ATAS), using a “user safari” approach to simulate actual beneficiary journeys, ensuring that the regional centers are accessible to all categories of beneficiaries. For the purpose of this assignment, accessibility is understood broadly as both physical and procedural accessibility, encompassing not only persons with disabilities but also older persons, parents with children/strollers, individuals with diverse needs, people with mental health issues and all other categories of beneficiaries to be defined in the framework of the assessment. The Consultant is expected to formulate a detailed report with recommendations on the necessary steps for improving both physical and procedural accessibility of beneficiaries of the one-stop-shop model in the field of social assistance for enhancing universal access and user experience.

The Scope of Work of the assignment is to:

- Define categories of beneficiaries and develop an assessment methodology/form;
- Conduct an start-to-end “user safari” journeys for all identified categories of beneficiaries: an anticipated number of at least 15-20 focus groups/interviews (ensuring minimum 1 FG/interview with each identified category of beneficiaries) in each of the 10 regional centers;
- Assess alignment with related legal framework, EU standards and best practices on universal access and user experience;
- Produce an Accessibility assessment Report, highlighting documented findings, barriers and enablers;
- Formulate an Report with recommendations on necessary steps for improving both physical and procedural accessibility of beneficiaries of the one-stop-shop model in the field of social assistance for enhancing universal access and user experience, and implementation timeline/roadmap;
- All deliverables shall apply the Human Rights Based Approach and explicitly integrate Gender Analysis and corresponding collection/analysis of gender statistics/disaggregated data, and make specific recommendations based on findings.

III. Expected Deliverables

No.	Deliverables	Estimated Workdays	Estimated Delivery Date
1	Conduct the field assignment using the “user safari” approach in each of the 10 ATASs in Ialoveni, Orhei, Ungheni, Edinet, Soroca, Balti, Falesti, Cahul, Causeni, Hincesti: • Stakeholders and beneficiaries mapping, Assessment methodology/form (duly coordinated and endorsed with UNDP and MLSP) and preparatory work for field assignment. • Conduct focus groups/interviews with beneficiaries and representatives of partner institutions, including directly involved staff in service provision processes;	up to 15 w.d, of which 10 w.d. fieldwork.	by 20 January 2025

	- Identify barriers and enablers in service provision: (access to the building (availability of public transportation, clear signage, pathways, entry ramps, etc.) and within the building and its various spaces (offices and rooms, waiting areas, bathrooms, children-friendly spaces, single window accessibility, etc.); - Assess alignment with related legal framework, EU standards and best practices on universal access and user experience; Deliverable: Accessibility Assessment Report, including the results of the focus groups/interviews and detailed annexes with findings for each of the 10 ATASs		
2	Formulate recommendations on necessary steps for improving both physical and procedural accessibility of beneficiaries of the one-stop-shop model in the field of social assistance for enhancing universal access and user experience, based on related legal framework, EU standards and best practices on universal access and user experience. Develop a prioritized list of actions (quick wins with low-cost, high-impact) and long-term improvements, including implementation timeline/roadmap. Deliverable: Report with recommendations for improving accessibility	up to 5 w.d.	by 10 February 2025
3	Presentation and validation with stakeholders of the Accessibility assessment report and Recommendations for improving accessibility Deliverable: One (1) Workshop conducted	up to 2 w.d.	by 15 February 2026
4	Updating of deliverables (2-3) in alignment with recommendations from the stakeholders validation workshop Deliverable: Final report	up to 3 w.d.	by 28 February 2026

IV. Institutional Arrangements

The Consultant is expected to work in close collaboration with the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and its subordinated institutions (in particular RESTART Team and Territorial Social Assistance Agencies) and the National Office of Social Insurance, in coordination with the UNDP team (Employment and Social Protection Programme Specialist, Project Manager, Social Protection Manager, and Project Analyst), in order to deliver professional, effective, and qualitative contributions aligned with the scope of work.

V. Financial arrangements

Payments will be disbursed in tranches, upon submission and approval of the deliverables, and a certification by the Project Manager and UNDP Moldova Programme Specialist/Cluster Lead that the services have been satisfactorily performed.

Travel:

All expenses associated with the travel of the National Consultant during his field missions shall be included in the financial proposal submitted by the candidates.

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 instalments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e., upon delivery of the services specified in 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 the daily fee, taxes, travel, per diems and the number of anticipated working days).

VI. Confidentiality

Materials provided to the Consultant 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.

VII. Qualifications and skills required

I. Academic Qualifications:

- University degree in social sciences, social assistance, public policy, architecture/urban planning or related fields.

II. Years and sphere of experience:

- Minimum 5 (five) years of experience in accessibility, inclusive service delivery or technical advisory/consultancy roles in respective fields;
- Minimum 2 (two) prior assignments working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, its subordinated institutions and/or other public institutions relevant to service provision;
- Minimum 1 (one) relevant research and analytical report writing/consultancy in social policy, disability issues, or related topics or other areas relevant for the assignment;
- Working experience in the social protection sector and/or government institutions is an asset;
- Working experience with international organizations, including UN Agencies, will be an asset.

III. Competencies:

- Strong knowledge of the national legal framework in the fields of social protection and accessibility;
- Strong understanding of EU standards and best practices on universal access and user experience;
- Strong analytical and facilitation skills;
- Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently;
- Ability to perform and deliver expected results in a fast-paced working environment;
- Fluency in Romanian. Good working knowledge of English would be an asset.

IV. Personal qualities:

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

The UNDP 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, are particularly encouraged to apply. ***Please specify in the CV, in case you belong to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment.***

VIII. Documents to be included when submitting the proposal:

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

- Personal updated CV, indicating all past positions held and their main underlying functions, their durations (month/year), the qualifications, as well as the contact details (email and telephone number) of the Candidate, and at least three (3) the most recent professional references of previous supervisors. References may also include peers.
- Proposal (Motivation Letter, maximum length: 1 page): 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 projects);
- Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating financial proposal in Annex 2.

Upload the signed version of the filled-in Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment. 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.

The Financial Proposal shall be additionally submitted directly in the system. Please ensure there are no mathematical errors and that amounts from Offeror's Letter to UNDP Confirming Interest and Availability match with your offer in the system.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

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.

IX. EVALUATION

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

- University degree in social sciences, social assistance, public policy, architecture/urban planning or related fields.
- Minimum 5 (five) years of experience in accessibility, inclusive service delivery or technical advisory/consultancy roles in respective fields;
- Minimum 2 (two) prior assignments working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, its subordinated institutions and/or other public institutions relevant to service provision.
- Citizen of the Republic of Moldova

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** would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Criteria	Scoring	Maximum Points Obtainable
Technical evaluation criteria		
University degree in social sciences, social assistance, public policy, architecture/urban planning or related fields.	• Bachelor's degree or equivalent – 20 pts • Master's degree or above –30 pts	30
Minimum 5 (five) years of experience in accessibility, inclusive service delivery or technical advisory/consultancy roles in respective fields	• 5 years of experience – 30 pts, • each additional year - 10 pts each, • up to 50 pts	50
Minimum 2 (two) prior assignments working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, its subordinated institutions and/or other public institutions relevant to service provision.	• 2 assignments – 30 pts, • each additional assignment - 10 pts each, • up to 50 pts	50
Minimum 1 (one) relevant research and analytical report writing/consultancy in social policy, disability issues, or related topics or other areas relevant for the assignment	• 1 research – 30 pts, • each additional report - 10 pts each, • up to 50 pts	50
Interview evaluation criteria (demonstrated technical knowledge and experience; communication/ interpersonal skills; initiative; creativity/ resourcefulness). Only the first 5 applicants that have accumulated the highest technical score shall be invited to the		

interview.		
Working experience in the social protection sector and/or government institutions is an asset	• 3 years of experience – 15 pts. • each year – 5 pts, • up to 25 pts	25
Working experience with international organizations, including UN Agencies, will be an asset	• each assignment – 10 pts., • up to 20 pts	20
Strong knowledge of the national legal framework in the fields of social protection and accessibility	• Strong – 30 pts., • satisfactory – 20 pts., • limited – 10 pts., • no – 0 pts.	30
Strong understanding of EU standards and best practices on universal access and user experience	• Strong – 25 pts., • satisfactory – 15 pts., • limited – 5 pts., • no – 0 pts.	25
Knowledge of Russian will be an asset	• Russian - 10 pts.	10
Belonging to under-represented groups	• No – 0 pts, • to one group – 5 pts., • to two or more groups – 10 pts.	10
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		300
Financial		
Evaluation of submitter 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

* 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.

Winning candidate

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