



TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. Job Title:	National Consultant for development of institutional assessment and capacity building report for operationalization of the digital National Farmers Registry
B. Duty Station:	Republic of Moldova, Chisinau
C. Project reference:	Promoting Rural Agriculture Development and Quality Employment for The Most Vulnerable
D. Contract type:	National Consultant
E. Duration of assignment:	January – June 2026, 60 working days

F. Background:

The project **Promoting rural agriculture development and quality employment for the most vulnerable (EMAG)** is financed by the European Union and implemented by UNDP to support Moldova's transition from crisis response toward long-term resilience, inclusive growth, and EU-aligned reforms. Building on EU-Moldova priorities in employment, labour market modernization, and agricultural governance, the project promotes an integrated approach that links employment services, social protection, and agricultural support through digitally enabled service delivery. By strengthening institutional capacities and modernizing core digital public services - particularly those serving vulnerable rural populations - the project aims to improve access, transparency, and effectiveness of public support measures, while contributing to Moldova's broader reform agenda on modernization, social inclusion, and sustainable rural development.

In 2025, the Republic of Moldova continues to navigate a challenging socioeconomic and geopolitical context. The country is transitioning from crisis response to longer-term resilience building, while its reform agenda – centered on economic modernization, energy transition, and governance strengthening – is being tested amid rising regional risks, growing public expectations, and constrained fiscal space.

Agriculture remains a central sector of the Moldovan economy, employing over one-fifth of the workforce and contributing around 12% of GDP. Including food processing, the agri-food sector accounts for 16% of GDP and 45% of total exports. Moldova's fertile land supports diverse production and underpins the rural economy. However, the sector is characterized by a dual structure: large, competitive enterprises coexist with numerous small, low-productivity farms. Informality is widespread, with more than half of salaried agricultural workers employed without formal contracts.

Digital modernization of public services in both employment and agriculture is progressing but remains uneven. Key institutions continue to operate with fragmented data systems, weak interoperability, and limited analytical capacity. These gaps hinder policy implementation, reduce the effectiveness of subsidies and services, and limit the state's ability to engage the most vulnerable rural populations.

In this context, the project Promoting rural agriculture development and quality employment for the most vulnerable seeks to contribute to labour market inclusion and agricultural modernization through digitally enabled service delivery. UNDP's engagement is focused on integrated and inclusive approaches – linking social protection, employment, and agricultural services through modern digital infrastructure and case management. Building on past experience in digital governance and service modernization, the initiative is well positioned to deliver scalable results that can be institutionalized and sustained beyond the project's duration. It will contribute to Moldova's broader objectives of fostering decent work, rural development, and sustainable EU-aligned transformation.

The project aims to strengthen Moldova's institutional and digital governance systems in order to expand access to employment and modernize agricultural service delivery for vulnerable rural populations. Its focus is on enabling hard-to-employ individuals and farmers to benefit from more efficient, inclusive, and

transparent public services.

On the employment side, the initiative seeks to make social protection and labour market services more accessible and better integrated, supported by digitally re-engineered institutional frameworks.

In agriculture, the project will help farmers across the country, including smallholders and underrepresented groups, access modernized services that are transparent, equitable, and aligned with Moldova's reform agenda and EU commitments.

The project directly supports Moldova's EU accession process by advancing the implementation of the Reform Agenda, in particular subdomain 1.7 on agriculture and subdomain 4.3 on employment and labour markets.

Within the agricultural sector, the initiative contributes to the operationalization of the digital National Farmers Registry (dNFR) and the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS), both of which are prerequisites for Moldova's compliance with the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) requirements under Chapter 11. The project also aims to strengthen transparency and accountability in agricultural governance through the introduction of conditionality and compliance mechanisms.

Institutional support will be provided to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) and the Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture (AIPA) to reinforce their capacity to manage digital tools, improve administrative frameworks, and ensure transparent subsidy management. These reforms will be complemented by inclusive outreach measures to ensure equitable access to digital agricultural services for smallholders, women, and rural youth, fostering resilience and participation across rural communities.

National digital transformation framework

At the global level, UNDP's long-term vision is to create a world in which digital technology is an empowering force for people and the planet. Digital technology is recognized as a fundamental force for change in this century, reshaping economies, governments, and civil society, and influencing almost every aspect of development. The profound consequences and exponential pace of digital transformation demand both localized action and global leadership to reimagine development in a digital age.

In a rapidly evolving digital landscape, amplified by the challenges and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgency for digital transformation has been brought to the forefront. UNDP's Digital Strategy 2022-2025 prioritizes harnessing the potential of digital technology to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Recognizing this imperative, the Government of the Republic of Moldova, with UNDP's support, has embarked on an ambitious journey to harness the opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution. This initiative aims to transform public institutions and society through a holistic and inclusive approach, ensuring that the benefits of digitalization are widespread and sustainable.

As a cornerstone of this effort, the Moldovan Government adopted the Digital Transformation Strategy for 2023-2030 (DTS), a forward-looking initiative developed with significant contributions from UNDP Moldova. The strategy underscores Moldova's commitment to digital innovation and a "whole-of-society" approach, ensuring inclusivity and sustainability in digital transformation. The DTS is aligned with global best practices and supports a range of objectives, including:

- expediting digital transformation across all sectors;
- integrating digital tools in public administration and the private sector;
- simplifying interactions between citizens and the state;
- addressing the digital divide and ensuring inclusive access to digital benefits;
- advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Agricultural governance

Moldova's National Action Plan for EU Accession for 2024-2027 includes over 1,300 actions aimed at legislative and structural reforms necessary for EU integration. The Plan incorporates recommendations from the European Commission's November 2023 report, focusing on enhancing the legislative framework and implementing concrete measures to align with EU standards.

The provisions of Chapter 11 on Agriculture and all Common Agricultural Policy requirements, which must be fully met to conclude the negotiation process, underscore the necessity for the digitalization of the agricultural sector, provision of accurate agricultural data, and the presence of functional agricultural information registries and systems, including the establishment of an **Integrated Administration and Control System**¹.

The IACS represents a complex administrative apparatus essential for transparently administering and managing agricultural interventions. It operates using electronic means to gather alphanumeric and

geospatial data, ensuring data interoperability. The digitalization of the agricultural sector, the development of digital tools, and the implementation of electronic governmental systems will significantly support the harmonization of the national agricultural sector with EU standards and accelerate negotiation activities.

Moreover, the development of the IACS is closely linked to the design of policy interventions and accessibility to Common Agricultural Policy funds, thereby reshaping economies, particularly in agricultural and rural development areas. The IACS must be operated by an accredited Paying Agency, which requires compliance with accreditation criteria regarding the internal control environment and certification of information systems. Therefore, digital transformation interventions are crucial for the Republic of Moldova to achieve compliance with EU Common Agricultural Policy standards and open further fundraising opportunities.

This necessitates strengthening the digitization of agricultural registries and systems for administering and managing agricultural subsidies, particularly those operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) and the Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture (AIPA). Consequently, MAFI and AIPA have embarked on a comprehensive journey to harness the potential of digitalization through the initial steps of implementing the Integrated Administration and Control System. The first priorities are establishing the digital National Farmer Registry (dNFR), followed by the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS). Setting up these comprehensive IACS elements involves complex actions and requires technical and expert support from external counterparts, including UNDP assistance.

The MAFI and AIPA initiatives for establishing the IACS align seamlessly with the government's framework, including the Digital Transformation Strategy for 2023-2030², a forward-looking initiative developed with support from UNDP Moldova underscoring the country's commitment to embracing digital innovation, and the National Strategy of Agricultural and Rural Development for 2023-2030³.

Fully in line with the aforementioned strategies, the initiatives to develop a digital National Farmer Registry (dNFR), as a core element of the IACS system, began in 2023 with strong support from UNDP. This effort is part of the "Moldova Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova" project, funded by the Government of Japan.

In this context, UNDP supported MAFI and AIPA in delivering the conceptual, legal, and regulatory framework for developing and operating a digital National Farmers Registry as a component of the national IACS, in line with EU standards. This included data collection and validation actions, community engagement framework implementation, developing the digital National Farmers Registry information system platform (software component), and ensuring data exchange with other governmental systems.

The development of the dNFR concept was based on the national legal and institutional setup. Required legal and institutional amendments to support the integration and operation of the Register have been elaborated. The pilot dNFR system, including basic LPIS functionalities, has been successfully developed and presented to the Ministry. Several key milestones have marked this transformative journey:

- Development of the dNFR pilot⁴: UNDP successfully developed and piloted the digital National Farmers Registry (dNFR), establishing a robust platform for tracking and managing agricultural data.
- Extensive field data collection: Two rounds of comprehensive data collection were conducted, each covering approximately 10,000 small farmers, providing crucial information to refine and optimize the system.
- Piloting of AI and LPIS: Advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS), were piloted to enhance land parcel identification, crop monitoring, and overall data accuracy.
- IACS development roadmap⁵: A comprehensive roadmap for the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) was developed and approved by the Government, setting the stage for full-scale deployment of the system.
- Enhancement of the legal framework: UNDP supported essential legal adjustments to advance food security, implement poverty reduction measures⁶, and promote digital transformation in agriculture.

¹ European Parliament / 2021 / Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy: eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02021R2116-20220826&qid=1713653701114

² Government of the Republic of Moldova / 2023 / Digital Transformation Strategy 2023-2030, mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STD_EN.pdf

³ Government of the Republic of Moldova / 2023 / Decision no. 56 regarding the approval of the National Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development for the years 2023-2030, available at: legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136318&lang=ro

⁴ UNDP, *The National Digital Farmer's Registry of Moldova has reached the testing phase*

⁵ Government of the Republic of Moldova, *Draft Governmental Decision on the Integrated Administration and Control System and the establishment of the "Farmers' Registry" Information System*

These milestones have translated into significant improvements in data analytics and resource management for agencies such as MAFI and AIPA, empowering them to make informed decisions based on reliable data. Extensive training and capacity-building programs have ensured that both farmers and government officials are equipped to adopt and effectively use the dNFR and related systems, ultimately enhancing agricultural productivity and streamlining policy implementation.

Moreover, the use of satellite imagery and AI for land management has enabled precise land parcel identification and crop monitoring, improving the efficiency of agricultural land management. The successful pilot and subsequent roadmap for the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) – a system designed to monitor farm economic performance – resulted in a draft concept that provides critical insights, with further development planned to align full-scale implementation with EU standards.

Overarching this effort, a comprehensive IACS implementation Roadmap for 2024-2027 has been drafted and presented to the Ministry, being approved in August 2024⁷.

In this context, UNDP will continue to support the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) in operationalizing the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) roadmap, complementing institutional commitments outlined in the EU-Moldova Growth Plan and further reinforcing Moldova's efforts toward sustainable agricultural development and successful EU integration.

G. Objective:

The Project seeks to contract a National Consultant (hereinafter “the Consultant”) to assess AIPA’s institutional and staff capacities to effectively use the dNFR and to draft an institutional development and capacity strengthening plan, including training of AIPA central and territorial staff.

H. Scope of work and expected outputs:

Under the direct supervision of the Project Manager and the UNDP Moldova Policy Specialist, the Consultant is expected to carry out the following tasks:

- Review the current dNFR-related operational context at AIPA, including existing internal procedures, roles/responsibilities, and end-to-end workflows for: (i) registration of farmers under dNFR, (ii) data submission/population support to farmers, (iii) verification/validation of data, and (iv) data processing for AIPA operational needs.
- Assess AIPA institutional capacity (governance, staffing, coordination with territorial units, tools, and change management readiness) to ensure effective and sustainable use of dNRF.
- Assess staff skills and learning needs for AIPA central and territorial personnel involved in dNRF-related processes (including digital skills, data quality/verification practices, use of dNRF functionalities, and basic data processing).
- Develop an Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening Plan for AIPA to improve dNRF adoption and use, including: objectives, priority actions, roles, training approach, SOP outlines, implementation timeline, and practical monitoring indicators.
- Design and deliver a training programme for AIPA central staff and territorial representatives on using dNRF.

⁶ National Bureau of Statistics, [The National Bureau of Statistics \(NBS\) has conducted experimental calculations of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index](#)

⁷ Government of the Republic of Moldova, [Draft Governmental Decision on the Integrated Administration and Control System and the establishment of the "Farmers' Registry" Information System](#)

I. Expected Deliverables:

Key activities and deliverables	Tentative timetable
Activity 1: Assess AIPA's institutional and staff capacities to effectively use the digital National Farmers Registry. Deliverable 1: Analytical report on AIPA's current institutional set-up and staff capacities for effective dNRF use, including identified gaps, operational recommendations, and a prioritized set of actions to strengthen dNRF adoption.	Deliverable 1 by 15 March 2026 25 WDs
Activity 2: Develop a targeted institutional development and capacity strengthening plan for AIPA to ensure sustainable operationalization and effective use of the digital Farmers Registry. Deliverable 2: AIPA Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening Plan (dNRF-focused), including proposed governance and workflow adjustments, roles and responsibilities, capacity building approach, implementation timeline, and monitoring indicators.	Deliverable 2 by 15 April 2026 20 WDs
Activity 3: Deliver a practical training session for AIPA staff and territorial representatives on dNRF use and registration of farmers. Deliverable 3: Training package and completion report for 80 participants, including agenda, training materials (presentations/exercises), participant list, and a brief training results summary, confirming delivered abilities to use dNRF functionalities. Note: UNDP/AIPA will facilitate logistic arrangements of venue and invitations for the trainings	Deliverable 3 by 15 May 2026 15 WDs

J. Organizational Setting:

The timeframe for the work of the Consultant is planned for the period January - June 2026. During this time, the Consultant is expected to work a total of 60 working days.

The assignment shall be performed in close coordination with the UNDP Project Manager and representatives and/or assigned experts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry.

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 English and Romanian.

K. Financial arrangements:

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 the daily fee, taxes, and number of anticipated working days).

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

Travel

No travel is envisaged in the framework of the current assignment.

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.

L. 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.

M. Qualifications and skills required:

I. Academic Qualifications:

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

II. Years and sphere of experience:

- Minimum 7 years research experience in areas of agriculture, agriculture related registries, governance, food security, public sector reforms, or economic resilience;
- Previous experience in conducting research papers, designing feasibility studies with multidisciplinary teams in economics, governance, agriculture, food security, public sector reforms, or economic resilience;
- Previous proven experience in carrying out and/or managing projects related to economic analysis;
- Experience in working with UN agencies is an asset.
- Fluency in Romanian, English and Russian;

III. Competencies:

- Ability to perform and deliver expected results in a fast-paced working environment.
- Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently.
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively and build meaningful partnerships with all stakeholders.
- Strong leadership and project management skills;

IV. 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 noncitizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are particularly encouraged to apply.

N. 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;
- CV and at least 3 references.
- Statement of Health for Individual Contractors

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.

O. Evaluation

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

- University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Agriculture, or other relevant fields;
- At least 7 years research experience in areas of agriculture, agriculture related registries, governance, food security, public sector reforms, or economic resilience;
- Demonstrated experience (minimum 1 record) in conducting research papers, designing feasibility studies with multidisciplinary teams in economics, governance, agriculture, food security, public sector reforms, or economic resilience
- Citizenship 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:

- responsive/ compliant/ acceptable, and
- 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
<u>Technical</u>		
University degree (or higher) in Economics, Business Administration, Agriculture, or other relevant fields	Bachelor's degree – 5 pts. Master's degree – 10 pts.	10
Minimum 7 years research experience in areas of agriculture, agriculture related registries, governance, food security, public sector reforms, or economic resilience.	7 years – 35 pts., each additional year of experience – 5 pts. up to a maximum of 45 pts.	45
Demonstrated experience in conducting research papers, designing feasibility studies with multidisciplinary teams in economics, governance, agriculture, food security, public sector reforms, or economic resilience	One record – 20 pts, each additional record - 5 points, up to a maximum of 40 pts.	40
Experience in working with UN agencies	Each assignment - 5 pts, up to max 20 pts;	20
<u>Interview</u> (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.		
Previous proven experience in drafting action plans in agricultural field, compliant to governmental requirements and carrying out consultation rounds	None – 0 pts, one record – 20 pts, each additional record - 10 points, up to a maximum of 50 pts.	180
Proven capacities of team-oriented work, abilities of planning and organization	None – 0 pts, limited – 10 pts, good – 25 pts, strong – 35 pts	
Ability to analyse, plan, effectively communicate, organise and fulfil the planned results	None – 0 pts, limited –10 pts, good –25 pts, strong – 35 pts	
Ability to attain results and meet deadlines, maintaining high quality standards	None – 0 pts, limited –10 pts, good –20 pts, strong – 30 pts	
Demonstrated interpersonal and diplomatic skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with	None – 0 pts, limited –5 pts, good – 10	

stakeholders at all levels and to present ideas clearly and effectively	pts, strong –15 pts	
Fluency in English, Romanian and Russian languages	5 pts per language –15 pts total	
Belonging to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment	No – 0 pts., to one group – 2,5 pts., to two or more groups – 5 pts.	5
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		300

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

Financial	
<p>Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula: $S = F_{min} / F * 200$ 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</p>	200

Winning candidate

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