

TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. Job Title: National Consultant to Support Outreach and Business community Engagement for 12 Business Incubators

B. Duty Station: Home based with travels to 12 Business Incubators

C. Project reference: Resilient Communities through women empowerment project, phase 2

D. Contract type: Individual Contract (IC)

E. Contract Duration: 90 working days during February 2026 – January 2027

F. BACKGROUND:

During August 2024 – July 2028, UNDP will implement the Project “Resilient Communities through Women Empowerment, Phase 2”, funded by Sweden and Norway.

The Project aims to enhance gender-responsive climate resilience in Moldova by integrating gender considerations into climate policies, empowering women leaders, and promoting climate-smart solutions. It aligns with national priorities and the Moldova 2030 National Strategy, addressing climate change adaptation and environmental protection. The project also supports the Government Programme on Gender Equality (2023-2027) and contributes to energy-related objectives, enhancing domestic energy production and affordability.

As a continuation of the Resilient Communities Project, phase I, UNDP Moldova intends: i) to enhance the understanding on climate change and gender empowerment matters, via synergetic engagement of public authorities from both national and local level; ii) to expand the pool of experts on gender&climate nexus through fellowship programmes, knowledge management portal etc and with participation of the NGOs<and, iii) to foster cooperation among the main local stakeholders – LPAs, community members and women-led businesses which all contribute to addressing the same priority issues identified in the Sustainable Energy and Climate Actions Plans (SECAPS);

Expected Results:

The project envisions a transformed landscape where climate action and gender equality converge, resulting in stronger communities and enhanced climate resilience. This transformation is driven by a set of expected results:

Outcome 1: Capacities of national and local authorities to advance gender transformative climate change actions are enhanced. This result is achieved through mainstreaming climate and gender into policy frameworks and enabling multi-stakeholder engagement. It ensures that climate and gender considerations are integrated from national to local levels, fostering a comprehensive response to the challenge.

Outcome 2: National and local women's leadership in climate actions is expanded and advanced. The project achieves this by enabling education, capacity-building, and a gender-specific leadership fellowship program. Empowering women as leaders and change-makers in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts is key to fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

Outcome 3: Women led climate-smart solutions are identified, supported and replicated among women groups and target communities. The project supports the implementation of climate-smart activities in households and women-led agri-businesses, fostering sustainable practices and generating economic opportunities. These solutions are grounded in gender-sensitive approaches, enhancing women's resilience and community well-being.

Outcome 4: Women-led climate-smart solutions are disseminated, and societal awareness is raised. The project conducts information campaigns, contributes to development of the gender-sensitive climate change knowledge management portal, and ensures project visibility. By showcasing success stories and

engaging multiple stakeholders, the project promotes a culture of climate awareness and gender-sensitive actions.

Specific background:

As part of Outcome 2, the Project will implement a comprehensive capacity-building and institutional strengthening programme focused on gender equality and climate resilience for key local stakeholders. Business incubators, as essential ecosystem actors providing business development services, will be a central target group for this support.

Business incubators currently deliver a wide range of services, including the provision of production and office spaces, business consulting and mentoring, facilitation of access to finance, development of business partnerships, and organization of training activities tailored to local entrepreneurial needs. Collectively, the network maintains an annual portfolio of more than 294 resident companies across sectors such as agriculture and agro-processing, services, manufacturing, creative industries, and technical specializations.

In the context of the evolving climate and energy crises, business incubators hold significant potential to act as multipliers of green, resilient, and gender-responsive practices at the local level. To leverage this role, the Project will support 12 business incubators through a targeted support aimed at strengthening their institutional and human capacities in the areas of gender mainstreaming, climate-sensitive business development, and adaptive practices.

In addition to the strengthening of internal systems and service delivery capacities, a key area of intervention will focus on **enhancing the ability of business incubators to proactively identify and reach potential beneficiaries, particularly women engaged in agriculture and related value chains. The Project will provide hands-on guidance and field-based training to incubator teams on outreach methodologies, beneficiary identification, and business community engagement approaches. This will include support for mapping local opportunities, identifying underserved women entrepreneurs (including informal actors), and expanding the incubators' local SME communities.**

Based on in-depth assessments of needs and development priorities, the Project's interventions will focus on strengthening these institutions not only as service providers but also as active community connectors. Efforts will aim to expand their local SME communities, increase their visibility among underserved groups, and improve their capacities to support business greening and the adoption of climate-sensitive adaptive measures. Through this dual focus, internal development and external outreach, business incubators will be better positioned to drive inclusive, sustainable, and climate-resilient local economic growth.

G. SCOPE OF WORK AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS:

The National Consultant will work under the supervision of the Project manager and Project Officer and will be responsible for strengthening the outreach, beneficiary identification, and community-engagement capacities of 12 business incubators participating in the Project. The assignment will combine hands-on technical guidance, individualized mentoring, and field-based coaching, ensuring that each business incubator develops practical and context-specific approaches for identifying and engaging potential beneficiaries particularly, women active in agriculture and related value chains.

The Consultant will carry out, but not be limited to, the following tasks:

- **Develop Outreach Framework:** Review existing outreach practices, communication channels, and community engagement mechanisms within each business incubator. Based on this, to prepare individualized action plans for each business incubator, including practical tools, recommended approaches, and resource needs for effective outreach.
- **Support to BI in deployment of outreach events:** Conduct on-site coaching sessions with incubator staff to reach women agri-producers with business activity or start-ups at household level, including community mapping, door-to-door approaches, on-site consultations, and direct engagement with

women in agriculture. Co-organize events jointly with incubator teams as per developed outreach plans and practice beneficiary identification and engagement techniques in real settings. Organize at least 1 event per BI such as - local outreach events, including fairs, exhibitions, community market days, or sector-specific gatherings aimed at identifying and engaging potential beneficiaries.

- **Strengthen Database of BI with new local business contacts:** Support incubators in expanding their database with new businesses, mainly women led economic activities in agri-sector.
- **Facilitate Knowledge Sharing and partnerships:** Organize at least one group session or peer-to-peer exchange among business incubators to share good practices, challenges, and lessons learned. Facilitate participation of BI Board member at these events in order to facilitate valuable partnerships.

H. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMEFRAME

The consultant is expected to produce the following deliverables:

item no.	DELIVERABLES	Estimate Workdays	Tentative timeframe
	Tasks		
1	<p>Work plan and methodology for the assignment – Prepare a brief inception report outlining the methodology, detailed workplan, and outreach tools to be used.</p> <p>Deliverable 1 – Work plan and methodology for the assignment</p>	2 w.d.	February 2026
2	<p>Outreach Action Plans: Visits to 12 Business Incubators conducted and individualized outreach action plans for each of the 12 business incubators provided.</p> <p>Deliverable 2 – 12 visits conducted and 12 documents to be submitted</p>	24 w.d.	March 2026
3	<p>Support for visibility and information campaigns for Business Incubators: At least one visibility campaign conducted with each Business Incubator.</p> <p>Deliverable 3 – Report on 12 planification meetings wit BI teams carried out and 12 conducted campaigns to be submitted</p>	24 w.d.	April 2026
4	<p>Events coordination: Organize at least 1 event per BI, part of the designed outreach plans such as - local outreach events, including fairs, exhibitions, community market days, or sector-specific gatherings aimed at identifying and engaging potential beneficiaries.</p> <p>Deliverable 4 – Report on coordinated 12 events to be submitted</p>	Estimated 2 days per event, total 24 w.d.	October 2026
5	<p>Strengthen Database of BI with new local business contacts: Online training for BI on tools for data collection, profiling, and follow-up of potential beneficiaries. Facilitate expanding the database with at least 3 (three) women led agribusinesses per BI.</p> <p>Deliverable 5 – Database with details of newly reached companies</p>	10 w.d.	October 2026

6	<p>Share of good practices: Submit a report for 1 event - the group session or peer-to-peer exchange of good practices among business incubators with participation of Board members of BI.</p> <p>Deliverable 6 – Report on the conducted activity to be submitted</p>	4 w.d.	October 2026
7	<p>Final Report: Deliver a final report documenting activities implemented, progress achieved by each incubator, lessons learned, recommendations for sustaining and scaling outreach efforts.</p> <p>Deliverable 7 – Final report to be submitted</p>	2 w.d.	November 2026
			Total 90 days

I. ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING:

The Consultant will work under the direct supervision of the UNDP Project Manager and Capacity Building and Outreach Project Officer. The Consultant should liaise with the relevant stakeholders for delivery of the assignment tasks. The consultant will provide deliverables in Romanian in electronic copies and according to the timeframe from the deliverables table. The Project Manager should approve the deliverables.

J. 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 TOR. To assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lumpsum amount (including the daily fee, taxes, and the number of anticipated working days).

Travel

All envisaged travel costs related to the Project activities shall be covered by the Project.

K. 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 the contract.

L. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED:

Academic Qualifications:

1. Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in Economics, Social Sciences, Communication or related field or any other relevant field.

Years and sphere of experience:

2. At least 7 years of experience in local development and community engagement
3. At least 5 years of experience in working directly with local stakeholders, including local public authorities, business support organizations, SMEs, and community groups, in participatory planning or

project development.

4. Demonstrated experience in providing technical assistance, coaching, or field-based support to local institutions or business development structures.
5. Experience working with women's groups, rural communities, or agricultural value chains will be considered a strong asset.

Competencies:

6. Demonstrated ability to support the development of local policies, action plans, outreach and communication strategies, or community engagement frameworks.
7. Excellent communication, facilitation, and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work directly in the field with diverse local stakeholders.
8. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to propose practical and context-tailored solutions.
9. Fluency in Romanian and Russian is required for this assignment.

Personal qualities:

10. Adherence to UN's values and ethical standards.
11. Cultural and gender sensitivity.
12. Strong communication and interpersonal skills.

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.

M. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

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

1. 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.
2. 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);
3. CV and 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.

N. EVALUATION

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

- Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in Economics, Social Sciences or related field or any other relevant field.
- At least 7 years of experience in local development and community engagement.

- 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:

1. responsive/compliant/acceptable, and
2. 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
Technical		
Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in Economics, Social Sciences or related field or any other relevant field.	Bachelor's - 10 pts; Master's - 15 pts; Ph.D. - 20 pts	20
At least 7 years of experience in local development and community engagement	7 years - 30 pts; each additional year - 5 pts; Max. - 50 pts	50
At least 5 years of experience in working directly with local stakeholders, including local public authorities, business support organizations, SMEs, and community groups, in participatory planning or project development.	5 years - 30 pts; each additional year - 5 pts; Max. - 50 pts	50
Demonstrated experience in providing technical assistance, coaching, or field-based support to local institutions or business development structures.	each assignment - 5 pts; Max. - 20 pts	20
Experience working with women's groups, rural communities, or agricultural value chains will be considered a strong asset.	each assignment - 10 pts; Max. - 40 pts	40
Working experience with UNDP or other international organizations	each assignment - 10 pts; Max. - 20 pts	20
Subtotal desk review Scoring:		200
Interview		

Interview (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"> • Demonstrated ability to support the development of local policies, action plans, outreach strategies, or community engagement frameworks. (<i>none – 0 pts, limited – up to 20 pts, good – up to 40 pts, strong – up to 60 pts</i>) • Excellent communication, facilitation, and interpersonal skills, including the ability to work directly in the field with diverse local stakeholders. (<i>none – 0 pts, limited – up to 10 pts, strong – up to 20 pts</i>) • Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to propose practical and context-tailored solutions. (<i>none – 0 pts, limited – up to 5 pts, good – up to 10 pts, strong – up to 15 pts</i>) 	95
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
Subtotal desk review Scoring:		100
Technical Total:		300
Financial		
Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula: $S = F_{min} / F * 200$ <i>S – score received on financial evaluation; F_{min} – the lowest financial offer out of all the submitted offers qualified over the technical evaluation round; F – financial offer under consideration.</i>		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 from Asia and other underrepresented nationalities. Applicants from these groups are encouraged to apply and must indicate their affiliation in the motivation letter.

Winning candidate

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