



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	National Legal Expert, Digital Platform Regulation
Duty station:	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
Reference to the project:	Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova (EDMITE III)
Contract type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Contract duration:	20 working days during June – December 2026
Starting date:	June 2026

1. Background:

The UNDP's "Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova" project aims to fortify Moldova's democratic processes against internal and external threats such as cyber operations, information manipulation, and illicit political financing. Running from August 2024 to December 2028, the project focuses on three main areas: improving oversight of political finance, strengthening electoral institutions to withstand cyber and information threats, and deepening civic engagement to foster an informed and inclusive electorate.

This assignment directly supports these goals by addressing acute vulnerabilities in the digital information space. The Republic of Moldova, like many democracies, faces significant challenges from foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), which increasingly exploits online platforms. [Recent analysis](#) highlights several key structural risks. It is noted that Moldova's digital information environment is fragmented, digital and social media technologies are highly exploitable for malicious purposes, and content moderation policies from global platforms are often inconsistent and lax. A critical vulnerability is the existence of significant gaps in media and Internet regulations, where the mandate of national regulatory bodies does not adequately cover the online sphere. This regulatory gap allows disinformation and FIMI to spread with minimal accountability, posing a direct threat to electoral integrity and national security. These challenges are globally recognized, with a recent Report of the Secretary-General noting that elections are increasingly marred by "the spread of misleading or false information" (A/80/277, para 33).

This work is also directly aligned with Moldova's national reform priorities as part of its EU accession process. The government's 'Roadmap on the Functioning of Democratic Institutions' (approved by [Gov. Decision 276/2025](#)) prioritizes measures to 'counter disinformation, information manipulation, and foreign interference in an electoral context' (Objective 2), including aligning with the EU Regulation on transparency and targeting of political advertising (Action 1.2).

As Moldova advances on its EU accession path, aligning its digital regulatory framework with European standards, such as the Digital Services Act (DSA), is both a necessity and an opportunity. There is an urgent need for expert, comparative analysis to help Moldovan stakeholders (government, parliament, regulators, and civil society) understand the available options and design a regulatory model that is effective, compliant

with international human rights standards (particularly freedom of expression), and tailored to Moldova's specific context. This consultancy is designed to provide that high-level, specialized guidance.

In this context, UNDP intends to engage a National Legal Expert to provide specialized national legal expertise in support of the EDMITE project. The Expert will ensure the systematic integration of Moldova's legal and regulatory framework into all relevant project activities. This includes supporting consultations conducted at national level and translating the outcomes of international regulatory analysis into draft legislative and regulatory options adapted to the national legal system of the Republic of Moldova.

Building on analytical assessments, comparative regulatory analysis and policy options related to digital platform regulation, the National Legal Expert will play a key role in operationalizing these findings within Moldova's normative framework. The Expert will ensure that international regulatory models and recommendations are transformed into legally sound and context-appropriate proposals that reflect national constitutional principles, existing legislation, and regulatory practices.

Working closely with the EDMITE project team, the National Legal Expert will support legally focused consultations and expert cooperation with public authorities, Parliament, regulatory bodies, civil society and media stakeholders. The Expert will ensure consistent consideration of Moldova's current laws, institutional arrangements and enforcement mechanisms, while contributing to the development of preliminary draft legislative and regulatory options tailored to Moldova's specific information environment challenges. This role is essential to ensuring coherence between international comparative analysis and well-grounded national policy and legislative development.

2. Scope of work and expected outputs:

The expected output for the National Consultant's assignment is to provide comprehensive legal and procedural support throughout the analytical and consultative process related to the development of policy and legislative options for digital platform regulation in Moldova. The National Legal Expert will ensure the accurate integration of Moldova's national legal and regulatory framework into the reviews, consultations, and draft outputs elaborated by the International Consultants, including the Preliminary and Final Regulatory Options Papers. The assignment will focus on translating and adapting comparative international and European regulatory models into legally sound, coherent, and implementable national legislative and regulatory options, considering Moldova's constitutional framework, institutional mandates, EU integration commitments, and freedom of expression standards. The National Legal Expert will contribute with legal analysis, clarify national legal constraints and opportunities, support stakeholder consultations with national legal insights, and review draft deliverables to strengthen their legal feasibility and applicability, thereby directly contributing to the quality, relevance, and implementability of the International Consultants' final outputs.

In order to achieve the stated objective, the Consultant will have the following responsibilities:

- Prepare an Inception Report outlining the scope of inputs and support to be provided, as well as the workplan for the implementation of the assignment. All reporting, coordination, communication, and collaboration shall be carried out exclusively through the Project team under the supervision of the UNDP Project Manager to ensure effective implementation of the assignment;
- Provide substantive inputs in the process of desk review of the national regulatory framework covering the assessed area and facilitation of the consultation process. In this regard, the Consultant will identify and submit a list and copies of the relevant national legal framework, provide translation of short excerpts from the national regulatory framework covering the assessed area, draft list of relevant key stakeholders (state institutions and CSOs, etc) to be engaged in the consultation process.
- Prepare and provide a comprehensive analytical report mapping and assessing the Republic of Moldova's existing national legal and regulatory framework relevant to digital platform regulation, including media legislation, electronic communications law, competition law, and personal data

protection legislation. The report shall identify key legal, regulatory, and institutional gaps, constraints, and inconsistencies in relation to the regulatory options and policy approaches developed by the International Expert Team and shall serve as an evidence base for further policy development and regulatory recommendations.

- Participate in selected stakeholder consultations and participatory workshops alongside the project experts. Within the scope of the assignment 10 - 15 consultation activities are envisaged.
- Provide consolidated national legal expertise and written legal annotations to clarify the interaction between the international regulatory models proposed under the project and the Republic of Moldova's existing legal framework. This includes legal assessment of the Preliminary Regulatory Options Paper, evaluation of the compatibility of proposed regulatory models with national legislation, constitutional requirements and international human rights obligations, and identification of legislative gaps requiring amendment or reform, while supporting informed stakeholder engagement.
- Based on the Final Regulatory Options Paper, develop a package of legislative proposals or targeted legislative amendments that would implement the preferred regulatory option(s) in Moldova's national legal system, ensuring consistency with existing legislation and compatibility with EU standards;
- Prepare and submit to the Project Team a final report documenting all activities undertaken, key findings, and recommendations for further steps in the legislative process.

3. Key deliverables and tentative timetable:

	Key deliverables	Estimated Workdays	Tentative timeframe
1.	Prepare and submit an Inception Report outlining the scope of the assignment, planned inputs and support, methodology, and detailed workplan, including a comprehensive Analytical Report mapping and assessing the Republic of Moldova's national legal and regulatory framework relevant to digital platform regulation. The analytical report shall identify key legal, regulatory, and institutional gaps and constraints in relation to the proposed regulatory models.	3 WD	30 June 2026
2.	Legal annotations on the Preliminary Regulatory Options Paper, identifying compatibility of proposed regulatory models with national law and flagging legislative gaps; and participation in selected stakeholder consultations and workshops	8 WD	31 August 2026
3.	Draft legislative proposal(s) or targeted legislative amendments implementing the preferred regulatory option(s) in Moldova's national legal system, ensuring consistency with existing legislation and compatibility with EU standards	8 WD	31 October 2026
4.	Final report documenting all activities undertaken, key findings, and recommendations for further steps in the national legislative drafting process	1 WD	15 December 2026

4. Administrative arrangements:

The timeframe for the work of the Consultant is planned for the period June – December 2026, with an estimated level of effort of up to 20 working days, as outlined in the present Terms of Reference and the tentative timetable of deliverables.

The assignment will be carried out under the supervision of the UNDP Project Manager, who will formally endorse all deliverables, with technical oversight provided by the UNDP Chief Technical Advisor. All outputs and reports produced under this assignment shall be submitted to the Project Team and shall be subject to technical validation and approval by the Chief Technical Advisor prior to their acceptance.

The Consultant is expected to work in close coordination with the UNDP project team, UNDP International Consultants, associated experts, and relevant national stakeholders, including public authorities, regulatory bodies, Parliament, civil society organizations, and media actors, as relevant to the assignment. The Project will provide access to all necessary background documentation and facilitate coordination with relevant counterparts, including the organization of meetings, consultations, workshops, and expert discussions required for the successful implementation of the assignment.

All communications and documentation related to the assignment shall be conducted in Romanian and English, in line with project needs. Draft deliverables shall be discussed with relevant stakeholders and the Project Team, as appropriate, prior to finalization, to ensure that comments and inputs are adequately reflected.

Written communication with national partners and stakeholders shall be coordinated in advance with the UNDP Project Manager. The Consultant shall keep the Project Manager informed of all relevant interactions undertaken in the context of the assignment. No reports, draft documents, or analytical materials may be shared, or disseminated to third parties without the prior written approval of the Project Manager and the Chief Technical Advisor, in accordance with UNDP procedures.

5. Financial arrangements

The financial proposal shall specify a total all-inclusive amount, clearly indicating the applicable payment modality and linking payments to specific, measurable qualitative and quantitative deliverables, as defined in the present Terms of Reference.

Payments shall be output-based and shall be made upon satisfactory delivery of the services and outputs specified in the TOR. For the purpose of facilitating the evaluation and comparison of financial proposals, the financial offer shall include a detailed breakdown of the total amount, including the proposed daily fee, applicable taxes, and the estimated number of working days.

Payments shall be disbursed in instalments, in accordance with the delivery schedule set out in the TOR, upon submission and endorsement of deliverables by the UNDP Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) and approval by the UNDP Project Manager, certifying that the services have been satisfactorily performed and that the deliverables meet the required technical and quality standards.

6. 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.

7. Qualifications and Skills required

Academic Qualifications:

- Master's degree (or 5 years' university degree) in Law.

Experience and knowledge:

- At least 7 years of demonstrated experience working in legal, electoral or public administration field;
- Demonstrated experience in conducting comparative legal analysis, research, and assessment on law related matters, including prior assessment of international, regional, or EU legal frameworks

and comparative practices, and provision of legal inputs, analysis, or advisory support to national public institutions engaged in legislative drafting, regulatory development, or legal harmonization processes (e.g. Ministry of Justice, State Chancellery, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, or relevant regulatory authorities). Experience working with international organizations, including UN Agencies, USAID, EU-funded projects, the Council of Europe, etc. is an advantage.

- Proven professional involvement in the direct application of the Republic of Moldova's national legal system and legislative procedures, evidenced through prior assignments involving national-level legal analysis, annotation, drafting, or review of legal or regulatory acts in force in Moldova, particularly in areas such as media law, electronic communications, data protection, administrative law, or other sectoral regulation.

Competencies:

- Strong knowledge and understanding of the Republic of Moldova's legal and regulatory framework relevant to the regulation of digital and online platforms, including media law, electronic communications law, personal data protection, and administrative law, with a focus on legislative drafting, legal compatibility assessment, and regulatory analysis.
- Strong sense of initiative and ability to work both independently and within a team;
- Fluency in Romanian language (verbal and written) is a must. Knowledge of English is an advantage and will facilitate effective engagement with the International Expert team and with international reference materials.

Personal qualities:

- 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;
- Excellent analytical, writing and research skills;
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with all stakeholders and to present ideas clearly and effectively;
- Responsibility, 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, as well as refugees and other non-citizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are particularly encouraged to apply.

8. Documents to be included when submitting proposals:

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

- Duly completed and signed updated personal CV and at least 3 references.
- Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating financial proposal (in USD) in Annex 1.
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 your offer in the system.
- Technical proposal (incl. brief description of experience, approach, and methodology for the completion of the assignment);

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.

9. Evaluation

Individual consultant will be short-listed based on the following minimum qualification criteria:

- Master's degree (or 5 years' university degree) in Law.
- At least 7 years of demonstrated experience working in legal, electoral or public administration field.
- Citizenship of the Republic of Moldova

The short-listed individual consultant 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 and Scoring	Maximum Points Obtainable
Technical evaluation	
Master's degree (or 5 years' university degree) in Law. <i>(Master's degree – 30 pts., PhD degree – 40 pts.)</i>	40
At least 7 years of demonstrated experience working in legal, electoral or public administration field <i>(7 years – 40 pts., each additional year – 5 pts., up to max. 80 pts.)</i>	80
Demonstrated experience in conducting comparative legal analysis, research, and assessment on law-related matters, including prior assessment of international, regional, or EU legal frameworks and comparative practices, and provision of legal inputs, or advisory support to national public institutions engaged in legislative drafting, regulatory development, or legal harmonization processes (e.g. Ministry of Justice, State Chancellery, Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, or relevant regulatory authorities).	80

<i>(each assignment – 10 pts.; up to max. 80 pts.)</i>	
Proven professional involvement in the direct application of the Republic of Moldova’s national legal system and legislative procedures, evidenced through prior assignments involving national-level legal analysis, annotation, drafting, or review of legal or regulatory acts in force in Moldova, particularly in areas such as media law, electronic communications, data protection, administrative law, or other sectoral regulation. <i>(each assignment – 10 pts.; up to max. 80 pts.)</i>	80
Experience working with international organizations, including UN Agencies, USAID, EU-funded projects, the Council of Europe, etc. <i>(Yes– 5 pts.; No – 0 pts;)</i>	5
Fluency in Romanian language (verbal and written) is a must. Knowledge of English is an advantage and will facilitate effective engagement with the International Expert team and with international reference materials. <i>(Fluency in Romanian - 5 pts., English – 5 pts., both 10 pts.)</i>	10
Belonging to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment* <i>(No – 0 pts., to one group – 2.5 pts., to two or more groups – 5 pts.)</i> <i>* 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.</i>	5
Maximum Total Technical Scoring	300
<u>Financial</u>	
Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula: <u>S = Fmin / F * 200</u> 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

10. Winning candidate

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