



TERMS OF REFERENCE

- **Job title:** Individual Consultant on Agronomy to undertake a Feasibility study for the establishment of the modern infrastructure for growing forest reproductive material (a National Center for Forest Genetics and Seminology and 3 regional centers for industrial growth of forest reproductive material)
- **Duty Station:** Republic of Moldova, Chisinau
- **Reference to the project:** Capacity building for climate action in the Republic of Moldova
- **Contract type:** Individual Contract (IC)
- **Contract duration:** up to 50 working days during June– November 2026
- **Indicative starting date:** June 2026

1. BACKGROUND

The Republic of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as Moldova) has undergone a profound socio-economic transformation since gaining independence in 1991. While the country has achieved sustained economic growth over the past decade, its economy remains relatively undiversified and highly vulnerable to external shocks, particularly those induced by climate variability. Agriculture continues to play a central role in Moldova's economy, employing a significant portion of the population and contributing substantially to Gross Domestic Product. However, this sector is especially sensitive to climate extremes such as droughts, floods, and temperature fluctuations, which are becoming more frequent and severe. Forests and forest ecosystems also play a critical role in supporting climate resilience, protecting soil and water resources, and maintaining ecological stability, yet they are increasingly exposed to climate-related stressors.

Over the past 130 years, Moldova's climate has become markedly warmer and drier. Scientific assessments and long-term meteorological data indicate a trend toward a semi-arid climate, with projections showing further reductions in precipitation and increased evaporation rates. These changes pose serious risks to water availability, agricultural productivity, forest health, public health, and infrastructure resilience. Moldova ranks among the most climate-vulnerable countries in Europe, and the medium- to long-term impacts of climate change are expected to intensify across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. In the forestry sector, climate change is expected to affect species distribution, regeneration capacity, pest and disease dynamics, and the long-term viability of forest ecosystems. Ensuring the availability of climate-resilient forest reproductive material is therefore a key component of sustainable forest management and climate adaptation strategies.

Despite these challenges, Moldova has demonstrated strong political commitment to climate action. The country submitted its third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) in 2025, informed by the outcomes of the first global stocktake. It sets ambitious, legally binding targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 71% by 2030 and 75% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels, aiming for climate neutrality

by 2050. It includes strong methane reduction goals and integrates adaptation priorities across agriculture, energy, forestry, health, transport, and water. The strategy is aligned with EU climate goals and Moldova's accession process, supported by laws and national programs such as the Low Emissions Development Programme (LEDP) 2030 and National Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NCCAP) 2030. Significant investments are planned in renewable energy, energy efficiency, public infrastructure, and forest expansion. Moldova emphasizes a just transition, gender-responsive planning, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. The country has established robust monitoring and reporting systems and is preparing for participation in international carbon markets.

Importantly, Moldova's climate policy framework emphasizes inclusive and equitable climate action, prioritizing the involvement of vulnerable groups such as women, local communities, and low-income communities in decision-making and benefit-sharing. This approach reflects Moldova's commitment to a just transition, ensuring that climate resilience efforts do not exacerbate existing inequalities, and that the benefits of climate investment are shared broadly across society.

Institutionally, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) serves as the National Designated Authority (NDA) for the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and is responsible for environmental protection, climate change policy, and natural resource management. The National Commission on Climate Change (NCCC), chaired by the Prime Minister, is mandated to coordinate climate policy implementation across sectors. However, both the MoE and NCCC face capacity constraints that limit their ability to effectively plan, coordinate, and monitor climate action.

To address these challenges, the GCF Readiness grant aims to strengthen Moldova's institutional architecture for climate governance, enhance technical capacities, and improve knowledge management systems. The project will support the operationalization of the NDA and NCCC, mainstream climate priorities into national and sectoral policies, and develop a pipeline of bankable climate finance proposals. It will also promote the development and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned to inform future programming.

The Readiness support specifically targets four critical barriers:

1. Limited capacity for coordination of climate action – including weak inter-institutional mechanisms and under-resourced climate governance bodies.
2. Insufficient planning and mainstreaming of climate action – with climate risks not adequately integrated into national and sectoral development strategies or budgets.
3. Limited financing, funding, and budgeting for climate action – with a heavy reliance on external donor support and limited capacity to develop bankable proposals.
4. Inadequate data, knowledge, and information management – including outdated climate data, weak dissemination platforms, and limited access to evidence-based decision-making tools.

By overcoming these barriers, the project will contribute to Moldova's ability to meet its national, regional, and global climate commitments, while building long-term resilience and sustainable development pathways. To support the implementation of Moldova's climate commitments, targeted capacity building is essential across institutions, sectors, and communities. The Readiness grant includes several outputs that directly address institutional strengthening, gender-responsive planning, and climate-resilient technologies.

The Republic of Moldova is implementing ambitious afforestation and forest landscape restoration programmes, aligned with national strategies and the EU Forest Strategy 2030. Achieving these targets requires a reliable, climate-resilient, and quality-assured supply of forest reproductive material (FRM)

that complies with national legislation and relevant EU/OECD standards. However, existing analyses highlight persistent structural constraints in the national FRM system, including limited use of certified seed sources, insufficient long-term seed storage capacity, limited production of forest reproductive material with protected root systems, weak genetic control, and high vulnerability of production to climate variability.

In this context, and in line with NDA Readiness Project Activity 4.5.3.1.1, which supports the preparation of feasibility studies and technical groundwork for priority climate investments, the establishment of a National Center for Forest Genetics and Seminology (NCFGs) and 3 regional centers for industrial growth of forest reproductive material (RCIGFRM) is envisaged as a cornerstone investment to modernize the forest reproductive material supply chain and strengthen Moldova's capacity to deliver climate-resilient afforestation at scale. To operationalize this activity, a feasibility study is required to identify the most suitable location for the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM and to define the technical and functional specifications that will inform the subsequent architectural and engineering design phase.

Given the multidisciplinary nature of the assignment—spanning forest genetics, seminology, land suitability, agro-climatic and water considerations—the work will be carried out by two complementary consultants: (i) a Forestry Specialist, and (ii) an Agronomist. Together, these experts, will ensure that the feasibility study, site selection process, and technical design inputs for the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM are fully compliant with national legislation, consistent with relevant strategic priorities, and aligned with climate-resilient land and natural resource management principles. The assignment will ensure that land, soil, water, and agro-climatic conditions do not pose constraints to the long-term operational continuity, climate resilience, or environmental sustainability of the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM, and that essential resources and utilities can be reliably secured under conditions of climate stress and extreme weather events. Furthermore, the assignment seeks to ensure that land, water, and agro-climatic considerations are fully and systematically integrated into the site selection decision, and that the future design of the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM is appropriately adapted to site-specific conditions, supports climate-resilient functionality, and enables efficient, sustainable, and uninterrupted operation over the long term.

2. OBJECTIVE AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The Agronomist shall be responsible for providing specialized expert input to ensure that the feasibility study, sites selection, and subsequent design of the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM are grounded in a robust assessment of land suitability, soil conditions, water availability, agro-climatic characteristics, and environmental constraints.

The Agronomist shall ensure that the proposed NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM are located and configured in a manner that supports long-term operational sustainability under current and projected climate conditions, taking into account climate-related risks such as droughts, heatwaves, floods, and extreme weather events.

The Agronomist shall contribute to the identification and comparative assessment of candidate locations, ensuring that the selected sites offer reliable access to land, water resources, and essential utilities, and can sustain continuous operation under climate stress.

Furthermore, the Consultant shall provide technical inputs to the functional and technical specifications for the design of the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM, ensuring that site preparation, infrastructure requirements, and resource-use considerations are compatible with climate-resilient, environmentally sound, and operationally efficient solutions, in compliance with applicable national regulations and good international practice.

In addition, the Agronomist shall review relevant international practices related to forest nursery systems, forest reproductive material production, and climate-resilient land management approaches applied in comparable forestry infrastructure projects. Lessons learned from these practices shall be reflected, where relevant, in the feasibility study and in the development of site selection criteria and technical specifications for the proposed centers.

To achieve the objective, the Consultant shall have the following responsibilities:

A. Review of Agro-Environmental Policy, Legal, and Regulatory Framework Relevant to Site Selection and Infrastructure Development

- Review national legislation and policies related to land tenure, land use planning, soil protection, water resources management, irrigation, and environmental protection to identify permitting, zoning, and regulatory requirements relevant to land allocation, site preparation, construction, and operation of the NCFGs and 3 RCIGFRM.
- Review national strategies and programmes related to climate change adaptation, land degradation, and sustainable resource management with implications for site feasibility, to ensure full consistency with strategic priorities, and alignment with climate-resilient land and resource management principles.
- Identify environmental and land-use constraints affecting candidate sites and define compliance requirements to be reflected in feasibility analysis, site selection, and technical specifications.
- Identify risks related to non-compliance and mitigation measures.
- Where relevant, review applicable international guidelines and standards related to forest reproductive material production, nursery site selection, and sustainable land management to ensure consistency with recognized good international practice.

B. Assess land suitability, soil conditions, and agro-climatic characteristics and water resources, utilities, and environmental constraints of the candidate sites, contributing to climate-integrated multi-criteria site selection and comparative assessment

- Assess lands suitability, including soil type, fertility, bearing capacity, drainage, and erosion risk.
- Identify constraints related to land degradation, compaction, or contamination.
- Analyse agro-climatic conditions, including temperature regimes, precipitation patterns, drought frequency, and heat stress.
- Assess projected climate change impacts on sites performance and operational reliability.
- Assess availability, quality, and sustainability of water resources for operational and auxiliary needs.
- Evaluate access to and reliability of utilities, including electricity, communications, and access roads.
- Identify environmental sensitivities, restrictions, and risks associated with candidate sites.
- Propose mitigation measures and resource-efficient solutions.
- Define land-, soil-, water-, and climate-related criteria for sites selection.
- Integrate climate resilience indicators into the multi-criteria framework.
- Assess candidate sites using agreed criteria and scoring methods.
- Participate in joint evaluation and validation of site rankings with the Forestry Specialist.
- Provide recommendations regarding minimum agronomic conditions required for nursery production, seedling growth, irrigation efficiency, and long-term soil productivity, ensuring that the selected sites can support the operational requirements of forest reproductive material production systems.

C. Develop agronomic and site-specific functional and technical specifications for climate-resilient design

- Prepare detailed inputs related to sites preparation, soil stabilization, drainage, and erosion control.
- Define technical requirements related to water supply, irrigation, stormwater management, and resource efficiency.
- Specify performance parameters to ensure operational reliability under variable climatic conditions.
- Define site-level spatial requirements affecting building placement, access roads, utilities corridors, and buffer zones.
- Ensure that site layout supports operational efficiency, environmental protection, and climate resilience.
- Ensure flexibility and scalability under changing climatic and operational demands.
- Ensure that agronomic and site-specific requirements comply with national land-use, environmental, and water regulations.
- Ensure alignment with climate-resilient infrastructure principles and good international practice.
- Verify that specifications integrate resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Provide agronomic input to ensure that the spatial configuration and infrastructure planning of the NCFGS and RCIGFRM support efficient nursery operations, appropriate water management, and sustainable soil use over the long term.

3. KEY DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

	Key deliverables	Estimated workload	Tentative deadline
1.	<p>Agro-Environmental and Land-Use Assessment Report for the NCFGS and 3 RCIGFRM</p> <p>Note: The deliverable shall consist of a structured agro-environmental and land-use assessment for the NCFGS and the three RCIGFRM, covering applicable regulatory and permitting requirements, key land, soil, water, environmental, and climate-related considerations affecting site suitability and operational sustainability, as well as preliminary agronomic and environmental criteria to inform site selection and feasibility analysis.</p>	10 w.d.	July 2026
2.	<p>Land, Water, and Agro-Climatic Suitability Assessment Report for the NCFGS and 3 RCIGFRM</p> <p>Note: The deliverable shall consist of a comparative agro-environmental and site feasibility assessment for the NCFGS and the three RCIGFRM, including application of land, soil, water, environmental, and climate-resilience criteria within the multi-criteria site selection framework, together with site-specific assessments, analysis of agro-climatic risks, utility feasibility, environmental constraints, mitigation measures, and technical justification supporting the ranking and validation of preferred locations.</p>	35 w.d.	August 2026

3.	Agronomic and Site-Specific Requirements for Climate-Resilient Design Note: The deliverable shall consist of a set of agronomic, land-related, water, and environmental technical requirements for the design of the NCFGs and the three RCIGFRM, including structured recommendations on site preparation, soil stabilization, drainage, water management, environmental protection, and resource efficiency, ensuring compatibility with site-specific conditions and long-term climate-resilient operation.	5 w.d.	September 2026
----	--	--------	----------------

Note:

**The deliverables and the activity timeline can be amended or further specified for the purpose of the assignment. All deliverables should be agreed with UNDP and be provided in an electronic copy. Payment will be made upon the successful completion of the assigned tasks. All activities under this assignment shall be performed in a gender-sensitive manner and applying human rights-based approach.*

4. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

This is a part-time consultancy. The timeframe for the work of the Consultant is planned for June 2026 - November 2026. All communications and documentation related to the assignment will be in Romanian and English.

The consultant is expected to maintain close communication with the Ministry of Environment, “Moldsilva” Agency and the UNDP Project Manager. The Consultant will also collaborate closely with the Forestry Specialist engaged under the same assignment to ensure coherence between agronomic, environmental, and forestry-related aspects of the feasibility study.

All deliverables shall be submitted in Romanian.

The UNDP Project will provide administrative and logistical support in the organization of the envisaged events, meetings and/ or consultations.

Before submission of deliverables, the consultant will discuss the draft documents with the parties involved so that final products reflect their comments.

5. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables. Payment will be made upon the successful completion of the tasks assigned and submission of the assessment report. Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. Payments will be made upon the successful completion of the tasks assigned upon submission and validation of deliverables (certifying that the services have been satisfactorily performed). To assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals the financial proposal shall include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including fee, taxes, communication costs, travel, per diems, and number of anticipated working days).

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Materials provided to the Consultants 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:

- Advanced university degree (Master’s level or higher) in Agronomy, Soil Science, Land Management, Environmental Sciences, Water Resources Management, or a closely related field.
- Additional training in climate change adaptation, environmental impact assessment, or sustainable land and water management is an asset.

Experience and knowledge:

- Minimum 8 years of relevant professional experience in agronomy, land suitability assessment, soil and water management, or agro-environmental analysis.
 - Proven experience in applying national legislation and regulations related to land use, soil and environmental protection, including permitting, compliance, and regulatory advisory in activities implementation..
- Proven experience in contributing participating to in feasibility studies, or site selection and multi-criteria assessment processes, including water resource availability, drainage, and environmental constraint analysis. .

Competencies:

- Advanced knowledge of land suitability assessment, soil science, water resources, and agro-environmental systems, with direct application to infrastructure siting, design, and development.
- Ability to assess complex land, agro-climatic, and environmental conditions and translate findings into practical, site-specific recommendations.
- Proven ability to integrate climate risk considerations (droughts, floods, extreme events) into site assessment and infrastructure planning.
- Ability to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams and engage with government institutions and technical stakeholders.
- Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and commitment to delivering high-quality outputs within deadlines.
- Fluency in Romanian is required, knowledge of English and Russian will be an asset.

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

8. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

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

- 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.

- Duly completed and updated personal CV and at least 3 references.
- Motivation Letter: *outlining suitability for the assignment, including relevant experience in similar projects. Please address each qualification item by item, with supporting information and links/copies of relevant documents.*

Note: *Please, refer to the Individual Procurement Notice of this recruitment for a more detailed information on the application and selection process.*

Important notice: 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

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

- Advanced university degree (Master's level or higher) in Agronomy, Soil Science, Land Management, Environmental Sciences, Water Resources Management, or a closely related field.
- Minimum 8 years of relevant professional experience in agronomy, land suitability assessment, soil and water management, or agro-environmental analysis.
- 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:

- 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 and Scoring	Maximum Points Obtainable
Technical	

Advanced university degree (Master's level or PhD) Agronomy, Soil Science, Land Management, Environmental Sciences, Water Resources Management, or a closely related field. <i>(Master's degree – 5 pts; PhD – 10 pts).</i>	10
Additional academic training or certification in climate change adaptation, environmental impact assessment, or sustainable land and water management is an asset. <i>(No – 0 pts, one training or certification – 5 pts, two or more trainings and certifications – 10 pts).</i>	10
Minimum 8 years of relevant professional experience in agronomy, land suitability assessment, soil and water management, or agro-environmental analysis. <i>(8 years – 15 pts, each additional years – 2,5 pts up to max. 25 pts).</i>	25
Proven experience in applying national legislation and regulations related to land use, soil and environmental protection, including permitting, compliance, and regulatory advisory in activities implementation. <i>(2 assignments – 10 pts, each additional assignment – 10 pts up to max. 30 pts).</i>	30
Proven experience in participating in feasibility studies, or multi-criteria assessment processes, including environmental constraint analysis. <i>(2 assignments – 10 pts, each additional assignment – 2,5 pts up to max. 15 pts)</i>	15
Technical scoring	90
Interview (demonstrated technical knowledge and experience; communication/ interpersonal skills; initiative; creativity/ resourcefulness). Only the first 3 applicants that have accumulated the highest technical score shall be invited to the interview.	
Advanced knowledge of land suitability assessment, soil science, water resources, and agro-environmental systems, with direct application to infrastructure siting, design, and development. <i>(Limited – 5 pts, fair – up to 20 pts., good – up to 30 pts, very good – up to 50 pts).</i>	50
Ability to assess complex land, agro-climatic, and environmental conditions and translate findings into practical, site-specific recommendations. <i>(Limited – 5 pts, fair – up to 15 pts., good – up to 25 pts, extensive – up to 40 pts).</i>	40
Proven ability to integrate climate risk considerations (droughts, floods, extreme events) into site assessment and infrastructure planning. <i>(Limited – 5 pts, fair – up to 20 pts., good – up to 30 pts, very good – up to 40 pts).</i>	40
Ability to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams and engage with government institutions and technical stakeholders. <i>(Limited – 5 pts, fair – up to 15 pts., good – up to 25 pts, extensive – up to 30 pts).</i>	30
Strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and commitment to delivering high-quality outputs within deadlines. <i>(Limited – 5 pts, fair – up to 10 pts., good – up to 15 pts, extensive – up to 20 pts).</i>	20
Fluency in Romanian is required, knowledge of English and Russian will be an asset. <i>(Romanian – 10 pts; English – 5 pts; Russian – 5 pts, max. 20 pts).</i>	20
Belonging to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment* <i>(No – 0 pts, to one group – 5 pts, to two or more groups – 10 pts).</i>	10

Total interview scoring	210
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.***

<u>Financial</u>	
<p>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</p>	200

Winning candidate

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