



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	National Consultant on Inter-community Cooperation Regulatory Framework
Duty Station:	Republic of Moldova, Chisinau
Reference to the project:	-
Contract type:	Individual Contract
Assignment type:	National Consultant
Contract duration:	July 2026 – November 2026
Expected workload:	a total of 65 working days
Indicative starting date:	July 2026

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Over recent years, UNDP has supported both central and local authorities in conceptualizing, piloting, and institutionalizing inter-community cooperation (IMC) mechanisms, which have become a cornerstone of Moldova’s broader public administration modernization agenda and its alignment with European standards on multi-level governance and subsidiarity.

A central component of this effort has been the practical experience and evidence generated through UNDP’s support in Cahul and Ungheni regions, where inter-communal cooperation models were tested, adapted, and refined in collaboration with local public authorities. Through these pilots, UNDP facilitated the establishment of functional cooperation structures, supported the development of joint service initiatives, and introduced integrated planning instruments. The Cahul and Ungheni experiences demonstrated operational feasibility, efficiency gains, and cost-sharing benefits of inter-community cooperation —providing tangible proof that collaborative management models can respond more effectively to local needs and service delivery gaps. These pilots also helped identify critical regulatory bottlenecks and institutional constraints, generating the practical insights that informed the drafting and refinement of Law No. 17/2023 on Inter-Community Development Associations (IDAs).

Building on these field-tested lessons, Law No. 17/2023 now establishes the formal legal basis for creating, operating, and governing IDAs as structured mechanisms for service integration, territorial development, and shared institutional capacity across Local Public Authorities. While the law provides the primary legal foundation, its effective implementation requires the Government to revise and establish a coherent, functional, and comprehensive secondary regulatory framework, including methodologies, operational procedures, model statutes, templates, and institutional coordination mechanisms.

2. SPECIFIC PROJECT BACKGROUND

The implementation of Law No. 17/2023 on Inter-Community Development Associations (IDAs) represents a core structural component of Moldova’s ongoing public administration reform and territorial development agenda. The law introduces a consolidated legal framework designed to

operationalize inter-communal cooperation mechanisms, enabling Local Public Authorities (LPAs) to jointly plan and deliver essential public services, to coordinate territorial investments, and to enhance administrative efficiency through shared institutional arrangements. However, the full functionality of this legal framework depends on the coherent and comprehensive package of secondary regulatory acts.

Effective implementation requires an integrated system of methodological tools, operational procedures, standardized templates, governance models, and regulatory adjustments that will guide LPAs and central institutions in the establishment, functioning, oversight, and sustainability of IDAs. This includes clarifying institutional mandates, defining operational and managerial procedures, establishing financial and reporting obligations, and aligning inter-communal governance mechanisms with Moldova's medium-term public policy and budget frameworks. Moreover, to ensure compliance with the EU acquis and good European practices, the secondary regulatory framework must incorporate principles of subsidiarity, multi-level governance, service integration, performance-based management, and cooperative territorial planning.

The State Chancellery, as the central coordinating authority for local public administration policy, plays a lead role in developing and validating the secondary regulatory instruments required under Law No. 17/2023. To support this process, UNDP seeks to engage a specialized expert who will provide technical assistance for the review of the existing normative environment, identification of gaps and inconsistencies, revision of existing acts, and formulation of institutional coordination mechanisms. This technical support will contribute to establishing a coherent, implementable, and EU-aligned regulatory framework that enables effective inter-community cooperation and strengthens the capacity of IDAs to function as operational entities capable of delivering integrated services and accessing national and external financing.

3. OBJECTIVE AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Overall Objective. The objective of this assignment is to provide specialized legal, institutional, and operational expertise to support the State Chancellery in reviewing, updating the regulatory framework required for the full and effective implementation of Law No. 17/2023 on Inter-Community Development Associations (IDAs). The expert will ensure that all regulatory instruments are coherent, aligned with the EU acquis and European best practices, and informed by the practical lessons generated through UNDP-supported inter-communal cooperation initiatives in Cahul and Ungheni regions.

Expected Outputs

Comprehensive Review and Gap Analysis of the Existing Regulatory Framework

A detailed legal and institutional assessment identifying inconsistencies, gaps, overlaps, and areas requiring regulatory adjustment to operationalize IDAs under Law No. 17/2023, including alignment with EU principles of subsidiarity, multi-level governance, service integration, for delegating local public administration (LPA) responsibilities to the IDA and shared administrative functions.

Revised and Updated Existing Regulatory Framework and Operational Instruments

A complete set of revised normative acts (regulations, standard templates, model statutes and agreements, etc.) required to guide the establishment, functioning, and oversight of IDAs, incorporating lessons learned from the practical IMC experience in Cahul and Ungheni.

Validated Regulatory Package through Structured Consultations and interinstitutional approval

The revised normative acts incorporate feedback from the State Chancellery, relevant central public authorities, local public authorities, existing Intercommunity Development Associations (IDAs), and development partners. All inputs consolidated into a consultation report documenting stakeholder contributions, resulting amendments, and the technical justification base for the final regulatory package.

Final Revised Regulatory Framework Ready for Government Submission

A fully finalized, legally sound, and operationally revised and coherent package of normative acts — supported by explanatory notes, methodological justifications, and implementation guidance—ready for submission to the Government for approval and national roll-out.

4. KEY ACTIVITIES, DELIVERABLES AND TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

The assignment will require the completion of the following tasks and involve the provision of the following deliverables:

Key activities and deliverables	Tentative timetable
<p>Task 1: Provide a working Methodology and a detailed Action Plan for the implementation of activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participate in an inception meeting and provide a presentation explaining the approach, methodology, schedule of the detailed activities for each consultant and expected results / deliveries of the assignment. <p><u>Deliverable under Task 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inception Report, containing working Methodology, detailed Action Plan for the implementation of activities and expected Deliverables. 	<p>by July 2026</p> <p>up to 5 working days</p>
<p>Task 2. Comprehensive Legal and Institutional Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a full legal mapping of the normative acts currently regulating inter-community cooperation and related public administration functions, including Government Decisions, regulations and other legal provisions related to the Law 17/2023. ▪ Identify normative inconsistencies, legal gaps, overlaps, and obsolete provisions that may hinder the operationalization of IDAs. ▪ Review institutional mandates of local public authorities, LPAs, and existing inter-community entities to determine where clarifications or adjustments are needed in secondary legislation. ▪ Benchmark of the provisions of the legislation of the Republic of Moldova against EU standards, European best practices, and regional IDA models to ensure coherence with recognized principles of inter-communal cooperation. <p><u>Deliverables under Task 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report on assessment of screening the existing legislation and identification of gaps and required updates 	<p><u>By August 2026</u></p> <p>up to 20 working days</p>
<p>Task 3. Revising and Updating the Regulatory Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise Government Decisions required to implement Law No. 17/2023, including those regulating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishment procedures for IDAs, - governance and decision-making structures, - responsibilities and competencies of IDAs, - financial management and reporting obligations, - cooperation arrangements between LPAs and central public authorities. ▪ Propose amendments to existing sectoral regulations where alignment with Law 17/2023 is required (e.g., public services, budgeting, planning, procurement, human resources). <p><u>Deliverables under Task 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full set of draft regulations 	<p>by September 2026</p> <p>15 working days</p>

Key activities and deliverables	Tentative timetable
<p>Task 4. Stakeholder Consultations and Validation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize and facilitate structured consultations with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Chancellery leadership and technical staff, - Relevant central ministries (finance, regional development, public services, legal affairs), - Local Public Authorities (urban and rural), - Existing inter-community entities and regional development actors, - Development partners and civil society stakeholders. ▪ Collect, analyze, and integrate feedback received during consultations to refine draft normative acts. ▪ Prepare a consolidated Consultation Feedback Report, documenting inputs, rationale for accepting or rejecting proposed adjustments, and alignment with legal standards. <p><u>Deliverables under Task 4:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updated documents based on multi stakeholder consultations 	<p>by October 2026 10 working days</p>
<p>Task 5. Finalization and Submission of the Regulatory Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce final versions of all normative acts and accompanying documentation. ▪ Prepare an implementation roadmap to support nationwide roll-out of the IDA model. ▪ Deliver a complete legal and operational package ready for Government approval. <p><u>Deliverables under Task 5:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final legally vetted package; presentations; explanatory notes 	<p>By October 2026 10 working days</p>
<p>Task 6. Final Report</p> <p>The Final Report will describe the contribution provided in implementing activities, obtained results, lessons learned, accumulated best practices and recommendations for subsequent activities in this area.</p> <p><u>Deliverable under Task 6:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development of the Final Report on implemented activities 	<p>By November 2026 5 working days</p>
Total (estimated)	65 working days

Note: Deliverables and the final report can be amended or 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 tasks assigned. All activities under this assignment shall be performed in a gender-sensitive manner and applying human rights-based approach.

5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The timeframe for the work of the National Consultant is planned for the period July– November 2026. During this time, Consultant is expected to work a total of 65 working days, depending on consultation schedules and iterative drafting cycles with the State Chancellery.

The assignment shall be performed in close coordination with the UNDP, under the guidance and supervision of the Project Coordinator and in coordination with the Project Associate.

Consultant' performance will be evaluated following such criteria as: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, accuracy, and quality of the products delivered.

All deliverables shall be submitted in Romanian and Analytical Reports translated in English.

All travel expenses are the National Consultant's responsibility and shall be included in the consolidated financial offer.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The contract will be structured as a lump-sum agreement, with all costs payable upon completion of the deliverables at the end of the contract period. Payments will be disbursed upon submission and validation of the final deliverables by the Project Manager.

7. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

Academic Qualifications:

- Master's degree in Law, Public Administration, Governance, or related field.

Experience and knowledge:

- Minimum 7 years of professional experience in public administration, legal drafting, or territorial governance.
- Demonstrated experience in drafting normative acts or policy documents for Government.
- Prior experience with inter-community cooperation, decentralization, or EU-aligned reforms is a strong asset.
- Familiarity with Moldova's local public administration framework.

Competencies:

- Strong knowledge of Moldovan legal drafting standards.
- Demonstrated analytical, communication, and facilitation skills.
- Ability to work with diverse stakeholders and manage consultation processes.

Personal qualities:

- Strong sense of initiative and ability to work independently.
- Demonstrated capacity of team-orientation work, excellent planning, and organizational skills;
- Sensitivity and respect for human rights and gender equality
- Responsibility, flexibility and punctuality, ability to meet deadlines and prioritize multiple tasks.

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 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:

- 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.).
- 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);

- Duly updated CV.

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

Initially, individual consultants will be shortlisted based on the following minimum qualification criteria:

- Master's degree (or higher) in law, Public Administration, Governance, or related field.
- Minimum of 7 years of professional experience in public administration, legal drafting, or territorial governance.
- Citizen of Republic of Moldova

The short-listed individual consultants will be further evaluated based on the following methodology:

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 will be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Criteria	Scoring	Points Obtainable
<u>Technical evaluation</u>		
Master's degree in law, Public Administration, Governance, or related field.	<i>Master's degree – 20 pts. Phd degree 30 pts</i>	30
Minimum of 7 years of professional experience in public administration, legal drafting, or territorial governance.	<i>7 years – 15 pts., each additional year of experience – 5 pts., up to a maximum of 35 pts.</i>	35
Prior experience with inter-community cooperation, decentralization, or EU aligned reforms is a strong asset.	<i>no – 0 pts. 4 years – 10 pts.; each year 5pts up to – 50 pts.;</i>	50
Proven experience in drafting normative acts or policy documents for Government.	<i>no – 0 pts. experience in 2 acts – 10 pts.; each additional act– 5 pts., up to a maximum of 50 pts.</i>	50

Proven experience in reviewing and drafting regulatory frameworks, including translating legal provisions into practical institutional and operational arrangements	<i>no – 0 pts. experience in 2 acts – 10 pts.; each additional act– 5 pts., up to a maximum of 40 pts.</i>	40
Demonstrated ability to cooperate effectively with central and local public authorities and development partners ((e.g. briefing notes, facilitation of consultation processes, contribution to policy or technical documents, institutional support activities etc.)	<i>no – 0 pts. 4 years – 10 pts. each year 5pts up to – 40 pts</i>	40
Working knowledge of the Republic of Moldova’s local public administration legal and institutional framework (competencies, financing and oversight of LPAs).	<i>no – 0 pts. 4 years – 10 pts.; each year 5pts up to – 40 pts.;</i>	40
Proven experience within an UNDP Project and/or other international organization(s) will be considered a strong advantage	<i>1 assignment 5 pts 2 assignments 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 yes - 5 pts</i>	5
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		300

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

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