

Terms of Reference

Assignment:	Two National Experts on Institutional Trust and Conflict Sensitivity Research (2 Lots)
Duty Station:	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
Project reference:	"Enhancing social cohesion in Moldova through dialogue and community empowerment" Phase II (SCPI-II) Project
Contract type:	Individual Contract (IC)
Lot 1 (Lead):	Survey Design and Institutional Trust Specialist (45 w.d.)
Lot 2:	Survey Design and Conflict Sensitivity Specialist (45 w.d.)
Duration of assignment:	July 2026 – December 2026 (90 working days)
Indicative starting date:	July 2026

I. Background:

The "Enhancing social cohesion in Moldova through dialogue and community empowerment" SCPI Phase II Project is a four-year Joint Project (April 2026 - March 2030) implemented under Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with financial support from the Government of Switzerland.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen social cohesion, democratic resilience, and sustainable peace across target communities in Moldova, by institutionalizing social cohesion as a function of governance at both national and local levels. The project responds to the erosion of social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova, driven by overlapping structural and external shocks. Persistent low trust in institutions, regional and identity-based polarization, demographic decline and ageing, widening intergenerational gaps, regressive gender norms, and socio-economic disparities have weakened the social contract. The spillover effects of the war in Ukraine, refugee presence, disinformation, and repeated electoral cycles have further intensified horizontal tensions between groups and vertical distrust between citizens and institutions. Existing responses to social friction remain fragmented and project-based, with limited institutionalization of dialogue, mediation, and participatory governance practices.

As part of its monitoring and evidence-building objective, the SCPI-II Project will conduct a comprehensive social cohesion data collection and analysis exercise in 2026 to measure trust in institutions, relationships and cooperation among different community groups, and the use rate of alternative conflict-resolution processes in Briceni, Edinet, Soroca, Ocnita, Donduseni, Orhei (Pelivan), Causeni, Comrat, Taraclia, Basarabasca, Stefan Voda, Balti, Ungheni, Sangerei and Nisporeni.

UNDP seeks to recruit two National Experts working across two separate lots. Expert A (Lead) will lead the survey design, research methodology, and institutional trust measurement components, while expert B will be responsible for the conflict sensitivity and situational analysis components.

II. Scope of work and expected outputs:

The Consultants will collectively deliver the full scope of the assignment across two complementary lots. Each expert bears primary responsibility for their designated deliverables, while maintaining active coordination to ensure methodological coherence.

The Consultants will be responsible for conducting the conflict analysis, providing quality assurance, methodological support and technical oversight for the data collection exercise, as well as high-level analytical support in the development of the assessment report.

Lot 1 (Lead) - Expert A: Survey Design and Institutional Trust Specialist

Expert A will be responsible for research design, survey instrument development, methodological oversight, and high-level data analysis. Specific tasks include:

1. Research Methodology and Survey Design. Develop the methodological package for the assessment, including the survey design, indicator framework, and data collection instruments. The methodological package shall ensure alignment with project objectives and facilitate the measurement of institutional trust, community cooperation, and the use of alternative conflict resolution mechanisms.

The Research Methodology and Survey Package shall include, but is not limited to:

- Inception Note and Workplan;
- Assessment methodology;
- Sampling framework and rationale;
- Survey questionnaire;
- Focus group discussion protocols;
- Indicator matrix linking project outputs to measurable variables;
- Mapping of relevant SCORE/STMM indicators and datasets;
- Data analysis and disaggregation framework;
- Recommendations for instrument refinement following review and validation.

2. Technical Oversight and Quality Assurance. Provide methodological oversight and quality assurance support throughout the data collection process to ensure consistency, reliability, and methodological rigor.

The technical oversight and quality assurance support shall include, but is not limited to:

- One (1) enumerator training (6h);
- Review and validation of survey instruments during piloting and pre-testing;
- Quality assurance recommendations for data collection processes;
- Monitoring notes on fieldwork implementation and data quality;
- Coordination inputs and technical clarifications provided to relevant stakeholders involved in the assessment process
- Technical notes regarding quality assurance review processes.

Technical participation and methodological support during open-ended interviews conducted by the survey service provider contracted by UNFPA), including guidance and observation of data collection processes. For the scope of the assignment, 7 methodological quality assurance missions (including stakeholder coordination, and methodological clarifications provided during data collection).

3. Data Analysis and Reporting. Lead the analytical review and interpretation of collected data and prepare the Baseline Report presenting findings against project indicators and objectives.

The support shall include, but is not limited to:

- Data validation and consistency checks;
- Calculation and interpretation of project indicators;
- Analysis of institutional trust, community cooperation, and alternative conflict resolution;
- Identification of key findings, trends, and evidence gaps;
- Analytical notes and recommendations to support project implementation & outreach;
- Preparation and presentation of findings (2 in-person presentations).¹

The Baseline Report shall contain, but is not limited to, the following sections:

- Executive Summary;
- Assessment Methodology;
- Indicator Framework;
- Quantitative Findings;
- Qualitative Findings and Analysis;
- Institutional Trust Analysis;
- Community Cooperation Analysis;
- Analysis of Alternative Conflict Resolution Practices;
- Conclusions and Recommendations.

Lot 2 - Expert B: Survey Design and Conflict Sensitivity Specialist

Expert B will be responsible for integrating conflict sensitivity considerations into the research design, data collection methodology, and analytical framework of the assessment, as well as producing conflict analysis outputs informing the overall Baseline Assessment.

1. Conflict-Sensitive Components for Research Methodology. Develop conflict-sensitive methodological brief for the assessment design, ensuring that the survey instruments, indicators, and data collection approach adequately reflect local conflict dynamics, identity-related considerations, social tensions, and intergroup relations.

The methodological brief shall include, but is not limited to:

- Conflict sensitivity analytical framework;
- Mapping of relevant conflict-sensitive dimensions and indicators;
- Recommendations for questionnaire design and refinement;
- Recommendations for focus group discussion protocols and open-ended interview guides;
- Conflict-sensitive measurement considerations for institutional trust, community cooperation and alternative conflict resolution mechanisms;
- Conflict sensitivity annex and recommendations for integration into the final methodological package.

¹ All organizational costs are to be covered by UNDP.

2. Conflict-Sensitive Data Collection and Quality Assurance. Develop conflict-sensitive guidance and monitoring note to inform the implementation of fieldwork activities.

The Guidance Note shall include, but is not limited to:

- Locality-specific conflict sensitivity guidance notes;
- Enumerator guidance on sensitive questioning approaches;
- Review notes and recommendations following piloting and pre-testing;
- Conflict-sensitive quality assurance recommendations for fieldwork implementation;
- Monitoring and observation notes from participation in selected field activities and up to 15 open-ended interviews.

3. Conflict Analysis and Reporting. Conduct a conflict sensitivity analysis report and prepare analytical products interpreting assessment findings through a conflict analysis lens.

The report shall include, but is not limited to:

- Conflict sensitivity analysis report covering all target localities;
- Analysis of conflict drivers, social tensions and intergroup dynamics;
- Conflict-sensitive interpretation of quantitative and qualitative findings;
- Recommendations for conflict-sensitive project implementation and community engagement;
- Conflict Analysis Chapter for integration into the Baseline Report;
- Summary brief and co-presentation of findings (2 in-person presentations).²

III. Expected Deliverables and Timeframe:

Deliverables are organized by lot. The two experts will coordinate across deliverables to ensure coherence.

LOT 1 (Lead) - Expert A: Survey Design and Institutional Trust Specialist		
Key Deliverables	Working Days	Timeline
Deliverable 1.1. One (1) Research Methodology and Survey Package – Integration of conflict sensitivity analysis, assessment methodology, sampling framework, survey questionnaire, focus group protocols, indicator matrix, SCORE/STMM integration framework, and revised versions following review and validation from UNDP.	15 w.d.	by 21 September 2026
Deliverable 1.2. One (1) Methodological quality assurance package, including training materials, completion of one (1) enumerator training, fieldwork monitoring notes from seven (7) monitoring QA missions, and quality assurance recommendations.	15 w.d.	by 30 October 2026
Deliverable 1.3. One (1) Baseline Report and Stakeholder Presentation – Drafting and finalization of the Baseline Report, incorporation of comments & conflict analysis, preparation of presentation materials, and co-presentation of findings and results.	15 w.d.	by 30 November 2026
Total Working Days - Lot 1	45 w.d.	

² All organizational costs are to be covered by UNDP.

LOT 2 - Expert B: Conflict Sensitivity Specialist		
Key Deliverables	Working Days	Timeline
Deliverable 2.1. One (1) Conflict Analysis Report - Desk review, conflict mapping, indicator framework, review of SCORE/STMM evidence, locality profiles for all 16 target localities.	15 w.d.	by 31 August 2026
Deliverable 2.2. Conflict-Sensitive research design package, including sixteen (16) locality-specific conflict sensitivity guiding notes, conflict-sensitive recommendations for survey questionnaires and discussion guides, locality-specific risk flagging, and recommendations for integration into the final assessment methodology and data collection instrument.	10 w.d.	by 21 September 2026
Deliverable 2.3. Conflict-Sensitive data collection and quality assurance package, including fieldwork monitoring notes, participation in up to fifteen (15) open-ended interviews, conflict sensitivity observations, identified risks, mitigation measures, quality assurance recommendations, and methodological guidance notes arising from field implementation (1.w.d. per interview).	15 w.d.	by 30 October 2026
Deliverable 2.4. Conflict Sensitivity analysis package, including one (1) Conflict Sensitivity Analysis Chapter for integration into the Baseline Report, interpretation of quantitative and qualitative findings through a conflict analysis lens, analytical recommendations, executive summary, and co-presentation of results.	5 w.d.	by 30 November 2026
Total Working Days - Lot 2	45 w.d.	

IV. Institutional arrangements:

The timeframe for the work of the Consultants is planned for July – December 2026.

Both experts will work under the overall guidance and direct supervision of the UNDP Project Manager. All deliverables shall be technically reviewed and endorsed by the UNDP Project Manager.

The two experts are expected to coordinate actively with each other throughout the assignment to ensure methodological coherence, particularly in the design of the survey instrument and the preparation of the Baseline Report. A brief joint inception meeting with the UNDP project team will be organized at the outset of the assignment.

The Consultants will work directly with UNDP project team and in close coordination with UNFPA project team, the data collection company, as well as other contracted parties, including UNFPA's Social Cohesion and Grievances Expert. Coordination with national and local stakeholder is envisioned throughout all contract implementation.

The consultants shall not be responsible for the operational management of data collection teams. Data collection activities will be implemented by a separately contracted survey service provider. The consultants will provide methodological guidance, technical quality assurance, and analytical support.

All communications and documentation related to the assignment will be in English. No reports or documents should be published or distributed to third parties.

V. Travel:

Both positions envision travel to project target localities, including left-bank localities. The Project will provide transportation for all field visits. Travel requirements for each expert will be coordinated with the UNDP Project Manager to avoid duplication while ensuring adequate coverage.

VI. Financial arrangements

Payments will be disbursed in instalments upon the submission and approval of the deliverables, and a certification by the UNDP Project Manager that the services have been satisfactorily performed. The financial proposal shall specify a total lump sum amount, including a breakdown of the daily fee, taxes, and number of working days.

VII. Confidentiality

Materials provided to the Consultant and all proceedings within the consultancy contract shall be regarded as confidential, both during and after the consultancy.

VIII. Qualifications and skills required

Lot 1 - Expert A: Survey Design and Institutional Trust Specialist

Academic Background: Master's degree (or equivalent 5-year university degree) in Sociology, Statistics, Political Science, Public Policy, International Relations, Social Sciences, or a related field.

Professional Experience:

- Minimum 5 years of progressively responsible professional experience in survey research, public opinion research, M&E, policy analysis, or related field.
- Experience conducting, commissioning, or analysing surveys in Moldova relevant to social cohesion, governance, trust, or peacebuilding.
- Experience providing methodological support, quality assurance, or technical oversight for large-scale surveys.
- Previous experience working with international organizations, UN agencies, or donor-funded projects is considered an asset.

Competencies:

- Demonstrated knowledge of survey methodologies, questionnaire design, sampling approaches, and data quality assurance.
- Demonstrated understanding of social cohesion, institutional trust, conflict sensitivity, and community engagement concepts.
- Demonstrated analytical skills, including interpreting survey findings and translating evidence into recommendations and reporting products.
- Stakeholder engagement, coordination, and ability to manage complex assignments.
- Understanding of Moldova's social, political, and community cohesion context, including regional and identity dynamics.

Language Requirements: Fluency in English and Romanian (written and spoken) is required. Knowledge of Russian is considered an asset.

Lot 2 - Expert B: Survey Design and Conflict Sensitivity Specialist

Academic Background: Master's degree (or equivalent 5-year university degree) in Peace and Conflict Studies, Political Science, International Relations, Sociology, Public Policy, Development Studies, or a related field.

Professional Experience:

- Minimum 5 years of progressively responsible professional experience in conflict analysis, peacebuilding, social cohesion assessments, governance analysis, or related fields.
- Experience conducting conflict analysis, social cohesion assessments, or governance assessments in Moldova or comparable contexts.
- Experience providing conflict-sensitive guidance or oversight for survey-based or M&E exercises.
- Previous experience working with international organizations, UN agencies, or donor-funded projects is considered an asset.

Competencies:

- Demonstrated knowledge of conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding, social cohesion, democratic resilience, and community engagement concepts.
- Demonstrated understanding of survey research methodologies and conflict-sensitive indicator development.
- Demonstrated analytical skills, including experience interpreting conflict dynamics and translating evidence into recommendations.
- Stakeholder engagement, coordination, and ability to manage complex assignments.
- Understanding of Moldova's political, regional, and identity dynamics, including left-bank context.

Language Requirements: Fluency in English and Romanian (written and spoken) is required. Knowledge of Russian is a strong asset, particularly for engagement with left-bank communities.

IX. Documents to Be Included When Submitting the Proposals

Candidates apply for one specific lot. Applications should clearly indicate the lot for which the candidate is applying.

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. If an Offeror is employed by an organization/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the Offeror must indicate at this point, and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal

submitted to UNDP.

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). Examples of analytical products (reports, assessments, studies, research papers, conflict analyses, survey reports, or similar documents) where the applicant was an author.
3. CV and at least 3 references.

Important note: The potential candidates should clearly state in the 'Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability' for which of the two positions they apply. The candidates may apply for both positions, and this should be clearly stipulated in the letter, with the possibility to be selected only for 1 position. Please also note that applications submitted jointly on behalf of a group of applicants will not be considered under this competition. Each applicant must submit a separate individual application.

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.
- A retired government official is not considered in this case a government official, and as such, may be contracted.

X. Evaluation Method Minimum qualification criteria (for both Lots):

- Master's degree in a relevant field (see Section VIII for lot-specific requirements).
- Minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience (see Section VIII for lot-specific requirements).
- Citizen of the Republic of Moldova.

Cumulative analysis: 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.

Lot 1 (Lead) - Expert A: Scoring Table

Criteria and Scoring	Max Points
Technical	
Master's degree in Statistics, Sociology, International Relations, or related field (15 pts); PhD (20 pts).	20
Minimum 5 years of progressively responsible professional experience in survey research, public opinion research, M&E, policy analysis, or related fields (5 years - 30 pts; each additional year - 5 pts, up to 50 pts).	50

Experience conducting, commissioning, or analysing surveys in Moldova relevant to social cohesion, governance, trust, or peacebuilding (1 assignment – 5 points; up to 20 pts).	20
Experience providing methodological support, quality assurance, or technical oversight for large-scale surveys (1 assignment – 5 points; up to 20 pts).	20
Previous experience with international organizations (Yes - 10 pts, No – 0 pts).	10
Subtotal desk review Scoring:	120
Interview	
Demonstrated knowledge of survey methodologies, questionnaire design, sampling approaches, and data quality assurance (Strong - 40 pts; Satisfactory - 30 pts; Limited - 20 pts; None - 0 pts).	40
Demonstrated understanding of social cohesion, institutional trust, conflict sensitivity, and community engagement concepts (Strong - 40 pts; Satisfactory - 30 pts; Limited - 20 pts; None - 0 pts).	40
Demonstrated analytical skills, including interpreting survey findings and translating evidence into recommendations and reporting products (Strong - 30 pts; Satisfactory - 20 pts; Limited - 10 pts; None - 0 pts).	20
Stakeholder engagement, coordination, and ability to manage complex assignments (Strong - 25 pts; Satisfactory - 20 pts; Limited - 10 pts; None - 0 pts).	35
Understanding of Moldova's social, political, and community cohesion context, including regional and identity dynamics (Strong - 20 pts; Satisfactory - 15 pts; Limited - 10 pts; None - 0 pts).	20
Fluency: English (10 pts), Romanian (5 pts), Russian (5 pts).	20
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.) * 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.	5
Subtotal Interview:	180
Maximum Total Technical Scoring	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

Winning candidate: The candidate who have accumulated the highest aggregated score (technical + financial). Each consultant will be contracted separately and will be contractually responsible for the deliverable assigned to their respective LOT.

Lot 2 - Expert B: Scoring Table

Criteria and Scoring	Max Points
Technical	
Master's degree in Peace and Conflict Studies, Political Science, International Relations, or related field (15 pts); PhD (20 pts).	20
Minimum 5 years of progressively responsible professional experience in conflict analysis, peacebuilding, social cohesion assessments, governance analysis, or related fields. (5 years - 30 pts; each additional year - 5 pts, up to 50 pts).	50
Experience conducting conflict analysis, social cohesion assessments, or governance assessments in Moldova or comparable contexts (1 assignment – 5 points; up to 20 pts).	20
Experience providing conflict-sensitive guidance or oversight for survey-based or M&E exercises (1 assignment – 5 points; up to 20 pts).	20
Previous experience with international organizations (Yes - 10 pts, No – 0 pts).	10
Subtotal desk review Scoring:	120
Interview	
Demonstrated knowledge of conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding, social cohesion, democratic resilience, and community engagement concepts (Strong - 40 pts; Satisfactory - 30 pts; Limited - 20 pts; None - 0 pts).	40
Demonstrated understanding of survey research methodologies and conflict-sensitive indicator development (Strong - 40 pts; Satisfactory - 30 pts; Limited - 20 pts; None - 0 pts).	40
Demonstrated analytical skills, including experience interpreting conflict dynamics and translating evidence into recommendations (Strong - 30 pts; Satisfactory - 20 pts; Limited - 10 pts; None - 0 pts).	20
Stakeholder engagement, coordination, and ability to manage complex assignments (Strong - 25 pts; Satisfactory - 20 pts; Limited - 10 pts; None - 0 pts).	35
Understanding of Moldova's political, regional, and identity dynamics, including left-bank context (Strong - 20 pts; Satisfactory - 15 pts; Limited - 10 pts; None - 0 pts).	20
Fluency: English (10 pts), Romanian (5 pts), Russian (5 pts).	20

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.) <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.</i>	5
Subtotal Interview:	180
Maximum Total Technical Scoring	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

Winning candidate: The candidate who have accumulated the highest aggregated score (technical + financial). Each consultant will be contracted separately and will be contractually responsible for the deliverable assigned to their respective LOT.