

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	Two National Consultants to conduct the Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Development Strategy “Moldova Europeana 2030” (NDS 2030)
Reference to:	National Development Strategy “Moldova Europeana 2030”
Contract type:	2 Individual Contractors (IC)
Duty station:	Chisinau, Moldova
Contract duration:	8 months, November 2026 - July 2027
Starting date:	November 2026
Expected workload:	50 working days per each consultant

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The National Development Strategy “Moldova Europeana 2030” (hereafter “NDS” or “the Strategy”) is the Government of the Republic of Moldova's fundamental long-term strategic vision document. It sets out the country's main directions of development and translates Moldova's international commitments – including the EU–Moldova Association Agreement, the country's status as an EU candidate country, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the reform agenda linked to Moldova's Growth Plan – into national priorities, objectives, indicators and targets. Through these commitments, the NDS reflects Moldova's aspiration to become a modern, democratic and prosperous European state, grounded in the rule of law, social solidarity and sustainable development.

The NDS guides the actions of the Government and public authorities and institutions within a shared vision of development and serves as the foundation for the entire national strategic planning system. It defines national priorities and directions of intervention that will guide sectoral policies through 2030.

In accordance with the NDS, approved through Law No. 315/2022, and Government Decision No. 386/2020 on strategic planning, a mid-term evaluation of the NDS is to be carried out. The evaluation will examine how the measures set out in the NDS have been implemented, assess progress against intermediate targets, and identify directions for adjusting the final objectives for the period remaining until 2030. The mid-term evaluation is not merely a technical exercise in analyzing indicators; it is a strategic process of collective reflection on the changes observed – including for vulnerable groups and different segments of society – intended to support the adaptation of the NDS to the changing socio-economic, institutional and geopolitical realities.

The importance of this evaluation stems from its dual function of accountability and learning. On one hand, the evaluation ensures transparency and accountability to citizens and development partners by showing how public resources have been used and what results have been achieved in implementing strategic objectives. On the other hand, it provides a solid basis for institutional learning, allowing the identification of positive experiences, obstacles encountered, and solutions to improve the national policy framework.

The evaluation process will be conducted within the institutional framework established by the State Chancellery, in cooperation with line ministries, local public administration authorities, development partners, and civil society. The exercise will be guided by the **Guide for Mid-Term and Ex-Post Evaluation of Public Policies**, as well as by international good practice promoted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union, adapted to the specific context of the Republic of Moldova.

A central element of the evaluation is the analysis of the NDS's coherence with the European integration process and with the country's international commitments, including alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EU policy objectives 2024–2029. The mid-term evaluation will also have a prospective dimension, focused on anticipating emerging challenges – demographic change, climate vulnerabilities, regional geopolitical developments, accelerated digital transition, or administrative capacity constraints – that may affect the achievement of the NDS objectives.

This Terms of Reference has been developed on the basis of the **Mid-Term Evaluation Methodology for the SND “Moldova European 2030”** (hereafter “the Methodology”), approved/endorsed within the institutional framework described above, which the selected experts shall apply, operationalize and, where necessary, refine in dialogue with the State Chancellery during the inception phase.

To carry out this assessment, given the scale, complexity and multi-sectoral nature of the exercise – covering the entire NDS strategic ecosystem – two national consultants shall be contracted. Individual consultants will be selected through a competitive procurement process, managed by the UNDP on behalf of the UN partners supporting the State Chancellery in this exercise, in full compliance with applicable UN procurement rules, regulations and policies.

In the spirit of responsible and engaged partnership, UNDP will assume the procurement procedure for this consultancy and will ensure the overall supervision jointly with the RCO and State Chancellery.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to analyze the performance of the National Development Strategy “Moldova European 2030” by applying the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, namely:

- Relevance – the extent to which the Strategy responds to the needs of the population, national priorities and international commitments, including the European integration process;
- Coherence – the degree of internal consistency of the Strategy and its alignment with other national and sectoral policies and strategies;
- Effectiveness – the level of achievement of the planned objectives and intermediate results;
- Efficiency – the way in which available resources (financial, institutional, administrative) have been used to achieve results;
- Sustainability – the likelihood that results achieved will be maintained, and progress will continue, beyond the period evaluated.

The evaluation will also examine the functionality of the governance, coordination and monitoring mechanisms, as key determinants of the Strategy's implementation performance.

The evaluation will apply a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), in line with relevant international standards, ensuring that human rights principles – including children's rights and gender equality – are integrated into the analysis, methods and conclusions, with particular attention to equity, inclusion and non-discrimination dimensions, especially within the relevance, effectiveness and impact criteria.

The evaluation will generate the evidence needed by central public authorities to:

- update the NDS in line with Moldova's evolving socio-economic context and European commitments;
- improve strategic and budgetary coordination between the national and sectoral levels;
- strengthen the evaluation culture and the capacity for evidence-based planning.

2.2. Subject of the evaluation

The subject of the mid-term evaluation is the NDS 2030 itself, as the country's overarching strategic planning framework document. The evaluation covers the whole of the NDS's intervention logic, including:

- the 10 general objectives and their associated specific objectives;
- the way these objectives are integrated into sectoral strategies and programmes;

- the impact indicators, measured against the intermediate targets set for 2025;
- the institutional and budgetary mechanisms for implementing the NDS.

The subject of the evaluation is therefore not limited to the NDS document itself, but extends to the entire strategic ecosystem it generates, including its implementation instruments – in particular the National Development Plan (PND) and relevant sectoral strategies (selected according to their relevance to the NDS objectives). The final delimitation of the evaluation subject is to be validated (or adjusted) jointly by the State Chancellery and consultants during the inception phase.

2.3. Scope and boundaries

Considering the NDS's role as an integrating strategic document, the mid-term evaluation will be carried out at the level of the entire strategic framework, including its derived instruments. The consultants will not limit themselves to a formal analysis of the NDS but will also examine how it has been implemented and operationalized through the PND and sectoral strategies. The evaluation will cover, at minimum:

- Analysis of the relevance and coherence of the NDS's strategic objectives in relation to development priorities and international commitments in force at the time of the evaluation;
- Assessment of aggregate progress in achieving the intermediate targets;
- Examination of the alignment between the National Development Plan (PND), the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework and the NDS;
- Analysis of the extent to which sectoral strategies and programmes have taken up and translated the NDS's priority objectives and directions. Given the large number of sectoral strategies, these will be analyzed selectively, based on their relevance to the NDS objectives, and treated as part of the NDS implementation chain rather than evaluated in their own right;
- Analysis of how the human rights-based approach, including promotion and protection of children's rights and gender equality principles, are integrated into the implementation of the NDS.

Where specific areas, objectives or indicators cannot be evaluated for objective reasons (e.g., lack of data, structural reforms in transition, institutional changes), the consultants will explicitly document these limitations, explain their impact on the validity of the conclusions, and propose compensatory measures (data triangulation, qualitative estimates, proxy analysis).

The evaluation will apply the six OECD/DAC evaluation criteria — relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability — adapted to the specifics of the NDS and the Moldovan development context, with a cross-cutting focus on gender equality and social equity. Indicative evaluation questions per criterion, to be refined and finalized in the evaluation matrix during the inception phase, include the following.

- Relevance – Is the NDS doing the right things?
- Coherence – How well do the interventions fit together?
- Effectiveness – Are the intended things being achieved?
- Efficiency – Are resources being used well?
- Impact – What difference is the NDS making?
- Sustainability – Will the changes last?
- Cross-cutting Questions.

The consultants will maintain a flexible approach capable of integrating emerging issues, such as new security challenges, the green and digital transitions, or demographic change, which may affect the NDS's relevance and results.

The mid-term evaluation of the NDS will be conducted within a clear institutional arrangement that guarantees analytical independence, process transparency, and the quality of deliverables.

2.4. Key Institutions and Their Roles

- Inter-ministerial Committee for Strategic Planning – the highest strategic-level body for approving the NDS mid-term evaluation report.

- Council for the Coordination of Sustainable Development (CCDD) – oversees the mid-term evaluation process; approves the institutional and methodological framework (including the methodology, implementation calendar and interim/final deliverables); validates the final evaluation report; and ensures the integration of conclusions and recommendations into the SND review process.
- State Chancellery – supervises and coordinates the overall evaluation process, ensuring its technical and administrative management; facilitates access to information and data from public authorities and institutions and partners involved; ensures inter-institutional and development-partner dialogue; organizes validation workshops together with the consultants and ministries; ensures compliance with public consultation procedures and civil society participation; provides the secretariat for the Inter-ministerial Committee and the CCDD; and approves the final methodological framework and tools (e.g., questionnaires).
- Ministries, other central public administration authorities and public institutions – participate actively in the evaluation by contributing to and validating findings and recommendations; provide data for the NDS's development impact indicators (Table 5 of the NDS) and information on implementation of the general objectives and achievement of the 2025 intermediate targets; validate the main challenges and factors that may affect the achievement of the final 2030 objectives; and contribute to the interpretation of results.
- National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) – validates data for official statistical indicators used in the evaluation, ensuring methodological consistency and compatibility with national statistical standards; provides methodological support; supplies updated statistical series or directs the consultants to available statistical products; and supports the updating of indicator passports.
- UN partner agencies provide technical and procurement assistance to the State Chancellery, oversee the selection and contract management of individual consultants, and support quality assurance in a manner that respects the independence of the evaluators and the State Chancellery's leadership of the substantive evaluation process.

2.5. Governance and Independence Principles

- Separation of management and evaluation functions: The State Chancellery will act as a process coordinator without influencing the analytical conclusions of the evaluators;
- Independence of the evaluators: consultants engaged must be selected based on professionalism, relevant experience and the absence of conflicts of interest;
- Quality assurance mechanisms: all interim deliverables (inception, interim, preliminary and final reports) will be subject to a structured review and validation process (see Section 8).

The consultants will apply and operationalize the approved Mid-Term Evaluation Methodology for the NDS “Moldova Europe 2030”, structured around key methodological steps, summarized below. The consultants must detail, in their technical proposal and inception report, how they will operate each step:

- Step 1 – Clarifying the Purpose and Subject of the Evaluation, clarifying Institutional Roles and Responsibilities;
- Step 2 – Reconstructing the Intervention Logic;
- Step 3 – Developing the Evaluation Matrix;
- Step 4 – Operationalizing the Evaluation Process (Data Collection and Analysis);
- Steps 5-6 – Preparing the Deliverables (public consultations and validation).

The consultants will review and update Table 5 of the NDS, verifying baseline values, collecting current values for each indicator, and comparing current values against the 2025 intermediate targets and the 2030 final targets.

The documentary analysis will constitute the first stage of the collection process, aiming to reconstruct the intervention logic for each area, identify objectives and indicators, and extract reported values. The consultants will systematically review relevant selected policy documents, monitor reports, normative acts adopted during the implementation period and administrative data sources, building an analytical basis on which the subsequent stages of collection will be supported.

In the process of collecting administrative data through different methods (online questionnaires, interviews, thematic focus groups, etc.), the results obtained will be processed descriptively and used in triangulation with the other sources.

The evaluation process will respect principles of confidentiality, integrity, and responsible data use. All information collected through interviews, group discussions or online questionnaires will be treated with strict ethical rigor; responses will be presented in aggregated or anonymized form, and individual quotes will only be used with the explicit consent of the respondent. The consultants will document potential conflicts of interest and ensure analytical independence from the institutions being evaluated; all data sources used will be presented transparently, and methodological limitations or information gaps will be explicitly stated in the report.

The reporting process will ensure clear and transparent communication of findings, conclusions and recommendations at each stage of the evaluation, following the format, structure and presentation requirements of the approved methodological framework.

The individual consultants will be managed under the overall guidance of the UNDP Moldova Country Office, in its capacity of Implementing Partner, ensuring compliance with UNDP evaluation standards and requirements, as well as with State Chancellery evaluation standards.

The evaluation will be conducted by two National Consultants who will support data collection, field visits, stakeholder consultations, and the preparation of inputs to the evaluation report. They will also develop the deliverables by providing relevant information and ensuring that all inputs reflect the national context of the project.

3. **DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAME FOR THE EVALUATION PROCESS**

The table below reflects the draft Calendar for the NDS mid-term evaluation, covering the substantive deliverables. All dates remain indicative and are to be validated and adjusted by the State Chancellery, the partnering UN agencies and the contracted consultants, including through monthly progress-monitoring meetings. The methodological steps and related activities may overlap where appropriate. Applicants are expected to propose, in their technical proposals, a realistic sequencing of activities and allocation of resources that ensures sufficient time for data collection, analysis, stakeholder engagement and quality assurance. The detailed implementation calendar will be reviewed and finalized during the inception phase.

Deliverables table:

Deliverable	Description	Approval level	Estimated workload*	Indicative timeline	Leading agency
<u>Deliverable 1: Inception report</u>	Scope/subject clarification; Institutional roles and clarification governance mechanisms; Round 1 interviews (methodological validation)	The institutional/ methodological framework, the calendar and the Inception Report validated in dialogue with State Chancellery and RCO	4 days each	10 November 2026	UNDP
<u>Deliverable 2: Results-impact chain</u>	The reconstruction of the results-impact chain for the SND's 10 general objectives; consultations with line ministries and responsible authorities	Validation with State Chancellery and RCO	5 days each	25 November 2026	UNDP
<u>Deliverable 3: Evaluation matrix</u>	Alignment of evaluation questions with OECD/DAC criteria; definition of indicators, data sources and analysis methods; data-collection	State Chancellery approval and RCO	6 days each	31 December 2026	UNHCR

	responsibilities and calendar				
<u>Deliverable 4: Operationalization</u>	Data collection & analysis: verification of baselines and collection of current values (SND Table 5); territorial/sectoral analysis (IITSD); online surveys (citizens and business community)	Thematic validation (working groups)	5 days each	28 February 2027	UNDP
<u>Deliverable 5: Interim Report</u>	Progress, economic/social/institutional impacts, constraints and lessons; public consultations	Validation with State Chancellery and RCO (public consultations)	10 days each	30 April 2027	UNDP
<u>Deliverable 6: Final Report</u>	Integration of round consultation feedback; CCDD validation	Final approval by the State Chancellery and RCO	20 days each	31 June 2027	UNDP
Total Consultant 1			50 days		
Total Consultant 2			50 days		

Note: Each candidate shall submit a separate application through the Quantum Supplier Portal for each of the following positions:

- **Position 1**
- **Position 2**

Joint applications submitted by a team of two candidates are not permitted. Each candidate must apply individually and submit a separate application for each position.

The Consultants will provide all deliverables in Romanian in electronic copies and according to the schedule in the deliverables table.

Each Consultant shall contribute equally to the delivery of the assignment and shall have an equivalent level of responsibility, involvement, and level of effort throughout the assignment. The Consultants shall jointly contribute their respective expertise and ensure that all deliverables are prepared in accordance with the agreed requirements, quality standards, and timelines.

For reporting purposes, each Consultant shall provide and submit their respective inputs separately as part of the required deliverables. The individual contributions of each Consultant shall clearly reflect an equivalent level of effort and involvement in the assignment. The Consultants shall be jointly responsible for ensuring the consistency, quality, and completeness of their respective inputs and overall deliverables.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The timeframe for the work of the National Consultants is planned for the period **November 2026 – July 2027**. During this time, the Consultants are expected to work a total of up to 100 working days in total (50 days per IC).

The Consultants will work under the overall guidance of State Chancellery and RCO. All deliverables shall be submitted to a final screening and approval by the State Chancellery and RCO.

This NDS Mid-Term Evaluation is commissioned and managed by UNDP Moldova CO. **UNDP will sign contracts for Deliverables 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 listed above and UNHCR in Moldova will contract the Consultant/Consultants based on the UNDP conducted procurement process for Deliverable 3.**

The National Consultant shall have not been involved in any aspect of the project's preparation, formulation, or implementation, including the drafting of the Project Document. The Consultant must be free from any actual or perceived conflict of interest related to the project's activities. Any prior involvement

in the project or conflict of interest will result in disqualification from the selection process.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Responsible for assessing the general and specific objectives of the NDS, providing substantive analysis of progress, challenges, and prospects for achieving results;
- Able to ensure data collection and analysis, identify relevant information sources, conduct in-depth analysis for the NDS areas, formulate evidence-based findings and conclusions, and provide sectoral and cross-cutting recommendations;
- As needed, consultants will collaborate with other experts with specific competencies (e.g. economic, social, institutional, environmental, governance/digitalization), integrated into the overall thematic expertise to ensure coherence and complementarity of the analyses.

5. EVALUATION AND REQUIRED COMPETENCES

The National Consultants should have the following credentials and competencies:

Minimum requirements to qualifications and experience:

Education:

- Advanced university degree (Master or higher) in economics, public policy, social sciences, development studies or a related field.

Experience:

- Minimum 5 years of proven relevant professional experience in conducting national or international evaluations of public policies, strategies or programmes,
- Experience in applying OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and theory-based evaluation approaches;
- Demonstrated experience in conducting complex, multi-sectoral evaluations involving mixed-method data collection (desk analysis, surveys, interviews, focus groups) and stakeholder consultation processes;
- Experience in applying human rights-based and gender-sensitive evaluation approaches.

Knowledge:

- Strong analytical, writing and facilitation skills;
- Previous experience working with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, other national governments or UN agencies/international organizations is an advantage.

Language requirements:

- Fluency in Romanian. Knowledge of English is an advantage .

Corporate Competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modeling the UN's values and ethical standards;
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UN Agencies;
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability;
- Treats all people fairly without favoritism;
- Fulfills all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment.

Functional Competencies:

- Strong analytical, reporting and writing abilities
- Strong interpersonal skills, communication and diplomatic skills, teamwork ability
- Good time management, meeting deadlines
- Strong leadership and team management skills
- Ability to work under pressure and stressful situations.

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);
- Technical proposal, with a realistic sequencing of activities and allocation of resources that ensures sufficient time for data collection, analysis, stakeholder engagement and quality assurance;
- Proposal (Motivation Letter) explaining why the applicant are the most suitable candidate for the assignment, including previous experience;
- Duly completed and signed CV and the contact details of at least 3 professional references.

Important notice: The applicants who have the statute of Government Official / Public Servant prior to appointment will be asked to submit the following documentation:

- a no-objection letter in respect of the applicant received from the Government, and;
- the applicant is certified in writing by the Government to be on official leave without pay for the entire duration of the Individual Contract.

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

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

If an applicant 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 applicant must indicate this at this point and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

Evaluation

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

- Advanced university degree (Master or higher) in economics, public policy, social sciences, development studies or a related field;
- Minimum 5 years of proven relevant professional experience in conducting national or international evaluations of public policies, strategies or programmes.
- Citizenship of Republic of Moldova.

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

Cumulative analysis

The award of the contract shall be made to the two individual consultants 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 and Interview 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	Maximum Points Obtainable
Technical Evaluation		
Advanced university degree (Master or higher) in economics, public policy, social sciences, development studies or a related field	Master's degree – 30 pts.; PhD Degree – 50 pts.	50
Minimum 5 years of proven relevant professional experience in conducting national or international	5 evaluations/ assignments – 60 pts;	85

evaluations of public policies, strategies or programmes	each additional evaluation/assignment – 5 pts; up to maximum 85 pts.	
Experience in applying OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and theory-based evaluation approaches	Minimum 2 relevant prior assignments – 30 pts., each additional assignment – 5 pts. up to maximum 50 pts.	50
Demonstrated experience in conducting complex, multi-sectoral evaluations involving mixed-method data collection (desk analysis, surveys, interviews, focus groups) and stakeholder consultation processes	Minimum 2 evaluations / stakeholder consultations processes officially published and/or produced – 22 pts; each additional product – 6 pts; up to maximum 40 pts.	40
Experience in applying human rights-based and gender-sensitive evaluation approaches	Minimum 2 relevant prior assignments – 15 pts., each additional assignment – 5 pts. up to maximum 25 pts.	25
Previous experience working with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, other national governments or UN agencies/international organizations is an advantage	Minimum 2 relevant prior assignments – 15 pts., each additional assignment – 5 pts. up to maximum 25 pts.	25
Strong analytical, writing and facilitation skills	No – 0 pts., Yes – 10 pts	10
Fluency in Romanian. Knowledge of English is an advantage	Romanian: yes – 5 pts, no - 0 pts English: yes - 5 pts, no - 0 pts,	10
Belonging to the group(s) under-represented in the UN Moldova and/or the area of assignment*	No - 0 pts, to one group - 2.5 pts, to two or more groups - 5 pts	5
Total Technical Score		300

** Under-represented group 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.*

Financial	Maximum Points Obtainable
Submitted financial proposals will be assessed according to the following formula: $S = F_{min} / F * 200$ S – the achieved result of the financial assessment; F_{min} – the lowest financial proposal pf all those submitted, which were qualified over the technical assessment; F – financial proposal to be reviewed.	200

Winning candidates

The winning two candidates will be the candidates, who have accumulated the highest aggregated scores (technical scoring + financial scoring).