

RFP No.: 22/02494: EU4MD/ Technical Assistance related to the successful implementation of Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance Program for clusters in the Focal Regions.

SECTION 5: TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROJECT TITLE: EU4MOLDOVA: FOCAL REGIONS PROGRAMME

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

General Background:

The EU4Moldova: Focal regions Programme (further on referred as Programme) is based on the European Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2018 in favour of the Republic of Moldova and is funded by the European Union and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Children's Fund.

The overall objective of the five-year Programme is to strengthen the economic, territorial and social cohesion in the Republic of Moldova through smart, green, inclusive, sustainable and integrated local socio-economic growth as well as by improving the standards of living of the citizens in the focal regions of Cahul and Ungheni.

To this end, this Programme will address also the urban-rural divide as well as regional disparities, stimulate economic growth and job creation, refurbish and upgrade some social and technical infrastructure in selected areas (smaller towns and villages) while taking into account climate change and a gender perspective in the activities of the Programme.

Specific objectives:

To strengthen transparency, accountability of local public authorities and citizen participation in local governance processes in the focal regions.

To improve citizens' access to quality public services and utilities in the focal regions.

To create employment opportunities for men and women in the focal-regions and improve the attractiveness of the focal regions for investors and entrepreneurs.

To promote the smart specialization of the economy of the focal regions through the development of the clustering and value chain approach in key economic sectors.

The Programme objectives will be achieved through measures targeted at: (i) capacity building to support the implementation and monitoring of local economic development plans; (ii) civil society engagement in local planning, governance processes and basic social service delivery; (iii) provision of investment funding in support of the creation and/or development of social and technical infrastructure which, combined with the outcomes from interventions (i) and (ii) above, will have an immediate, visible and tangible impact on employment creation, the standard of living of the population in the focal regions.

Specific context

In the context of the above stated purpose and objectives, a Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance Program for clusters in the focal regions is launched. Existing clusters will benefit from financial assistance through the clusters' management institution/entity. Financial support will be provided for the acceleration and development of existing clusters in urban and rural areas from Cahul and Ungheni regions, especially those run or having a positive impact on women and young people, a higher degree of innovation and digitization of activities, and a positive impact on the environment.

The key objective of the present initiative is to assist the beneficiaries (clusters) in urban and rural areas in implementation of innovative ideas and creation of new jobs. The main financial activities cumulatively for Both Regions are as follows:

Up to eight (8) clusters (from both Focal Regions), are envisaged to receive support up to EUR 100,000 each. Each beneficiary will assure at least 10% of own monetary contribution.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The Focal Regions Programme is looking for company/organization, or companies/organizations, or consortium of companies/organizations to support Emergent Clusters in Cahul and Ungheni regions in successful implementation of Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance Program through technical assistance related to procurement of equipment/goods/works/services, coupled with training, coaching, consulting, awareness raising and promotion activities, to stimulate the entrepreneurship culture through clustering approach of the Focal Regions.

KEY TASKS/ACTIVITIES AN EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The Contractor shall take full responsibility for the execution and delivery of the following tasks and outputs to achieve the objectives of the assignment as described below:

- 1. Task 1. Methodology development:** preparation of methodological approach and detailed work plan for the implementation of tasks, which would include, inter alia:
 - Topics and methodology for the advanced trainings and support activities including coaching for cluster management unit, individual consulting for cluster members.
 - Detailed description of procurement procedures and monitoring of proper use of the received goods and services provided by Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance Program for clusters in the focal regions; provision of logistical/administrative support to beneficiaries.
 - Methodology for monitoring/evaluation of achieved results.
 - Capacity building of the Cluster Management Unit, involvement in project activities, re-using its venue and contacts.

- 2. Task 2. Advanced Training:**
 - Development of customized training programs focused on cluster development as tool on supporting the processes of increasing competitiveness on local and regional levels.
 - Elaboration of continuous professional training programs and subsequent assistance in negotiating with internal and external partners focused on the development of project proposals in accordance with strategic development plans.
 - Customized training related to the integration of innovative smart and green technologies in cluster development.

- 3. Task 3. Support and Coaching** programme for the beneficiary
 - a) Support for the elaboration of technical specifications for the purchase of equipment, goods, and services.
 - b) Ensure continuous individual legal and financial support related to collaboration with public administration, regional development, investment attraction, competitiveness, and cluster development
 - c) Support to the cluster management in the elaboration of a work plan, including detailed approach to the development of managerial capacities
 - d) Providing mentoring services to cluster management proper administration of financial resources as well as resource mobilization, in accordance with their strategic development plans.
 - e) Monitor usage of purchased goods/equipment
 - f) Providing marketing assistance in participating in promotional events, fairs, and exhibitions at national and international levels – assistance in organizing at least 2 events.

- 4. Task 4. Specialized consultations to beneficiaries**
 - Ensure availability of at least 12 on-demand consultations in specific fields required by the beneficiaries (for example strategic planning; market analysis, product improvement, branding and promotion (digital marketing), quality management, energy efficiency, etc).

- 5. Task 5. Financial analysis**
 - Under the non-reimbursable financial support program, up to eight (8) eight clusters (from both Focal Regions) to receive non-reimbursable financial support . The funding will be offered in several instalments to the cluster management institution/entity (with the status of a legal entity) In this respect, Contractor is required to provide the analysis and expertise of the narrative and financial reports submitted by each cluster management entity, as requested by the EU4Moldova- Focal Regions Programme.

The Company is expected to hire a Financial consultant for verification of the intermediary and final financial reports submitted by grantees regarding their compliance with UNDP Finance and Procurement Rules and Regulations; offer direct/ phone/ emails consultancy during procurement and reporting process.

The narrative and financial reports, with all required confirmation documents will reflect the implementation of the previous instalments received under the Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance Programme.

6. Task 6. Summing-up

Ensure compilation of data sheets for success stories of each beneficiary. Performance indicator collection

KEY DELIVERABLES AND INDICATIVE TIMEFRAME

Deliverables	Indicative timeframe
<p>Task 1. Project Initiation. Preparation of methodological approach and detailed work plan for the implementation of tasks detailed work plan and timeline agreed with UNDP/EUD.</p> <p>R1. Inception Report</p>	2 weeks since contract signature
<p>Task 2. Advanced Training. Develop training program focused on cluster development as tool on supporting the processes of increasing competitiveness on local and regional levels. Elaboration of continuous professional training programs in negotiating with internal and external partners focused on the development of project proposals in accordance with strategic development plans. Customized training related to the integration of innovative smart and green technologies in cluster development.</p> <p>R2. Advanced Training Report containing the above-mentioned deliverables</p>	8 weeks since submission of Task 1
<p>Task 3. Support and Coaching. Review of Beneficiaries business plans developed during the application process. Continuous individual coaching and provision of business support services to the cluster management unit (up to 12 hours/month/per Beneficiary for 5 months) Monitor Purchase of eligible goods and services according to approved procedure Beneficiaries monitored monthly during a 5 months' period for proper use and operation of procured goods received.</p> <p>R3. Support and Coaching Report containing the above-mentioned deliverables</p>	40 weeks since submission of Task 2
<p>Task 4. Specialized consultations to beneficiaries Providing at least 12 on-demand consultations in specific fields required by the beneficiaries.</p>	During contract duration
<p>Task 5. Financial analysis Performing financial analysis of the progressive reports provided by each cluster in refer to the capitalization of the instalments received under the Non-Reimbursable Financial Assistance Programme.</p> <p>R4. Summing-up containing the deliverables T4 and T5</p>	48 working days for this specific task will be required during contract duration
<p>Task 6. Summing-up Collecting performance indicators and data sheets for success stories of each beneficiary</p>	2 weeks since submission of Task 3
<p>Task 7. Final Report R5. The Contractor shall submit a Final report, presenting the results of the consultancy, containing an analysis of the results achieved by the project and each beneficiary. Repot</p>	1 week since submission of Task 6

Deliverables	Indicative timeframe
<p>should contain lessons learned of assignment addressing the key findings, major conclusions, and recommendations.</p> <p>R5. Summing-up containing the deliverables T6 and T7</p>	

All deliverables shall be endorsed by UNDP and provided in Romanian language (unless specified otherwise), both in hard and electronic copies.

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Contractor will be awarded a contract with UNDP for the delivery of services applied for and will work under the guidance of designated Project Officer and supervised by the Business Development Project Manager, reporting to the Programme Manager. The Programme will provide all available relative documentation, facilitate first contacts and communication with stakeholders.

The **Contractor will be responsible for arranging all necessary local transportation (travel is conditioned by the circumstances dictated by the pandemic) and logistics arrangements (except were indicated that the Programme will take care of), obtaining all needed permissions and establishing and maintaining of good working relationships with all involved parties.**

DURATION OF WORK

The estimated duration of services is 15 months. The expected time of commencement of contract is November 2022. UNDP will require maximum of 14 (fourteen) days (depending on the implementation stage) to review the deliverables, provide comments, approve or certify acceptance of deliverables.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE SUCCESSFUL SERVICE PROVIDER AT VARIOUS LEVELS

The offers will be evaluated based on their compliance with the general requirements specified below:

Be a legally registered entity.

At least 5 (five) years of practical experience in the fields related to local economic development, identification of investment opportunities, business development Public Private Partnership initiatives. Smart specialization and value chains analyses will be considered an advantage.

At least 2 (two) contracts in providing consulting, business support and coaching services to businesses entities in Moldova.

At least 3 (three) years of experience of working with the relevant multi-stakeholder economic environment in Moldova, facilitating cooperation between private sector and Public Authorities (Central, Local), Public Institutions and Public Agencies in Moldova - evidence: list of relevant institutions the Company has been cooperating with, including the topic and year must be presented together with the application package.

Work for UNDP/UN Agencies/donor funded/EU projects will be considered an advantage.

Average turnover for the past 3 (three) years shall not be below 85,000 US\$ (in case of consortium applicable for lead company only).

The **minimum key personnel** required for the contract implementation shall meet the following requirements:

TEAM Leader:

At least 7 (seven) years of experience in managing projects related to economic analyses, business administration, economic research.

A strong advantage represents the experience in developing strategic analysis documents for eco-friendly and green business development and strategic development plans on local and national level.

Work for UNDP/UN Agencies/donor funded/EU projects will be an advantage.

Excellent written and spoken Romanian and English skills. Russian is an asset.

Marketing Expert:

At least 5 (five) years of working experience with product launches and/or integrated marketing campaigns.

Proven experience in conducting market research to find answers about consumer requirements, behavioural changes, habits and trends.

Demonstrating expertise in various areas (content development and optimization, advertising, events planning etc.)

Good command of written and spoken Romanian skills. English and/or Russian are considered as an asset.

Sales Expert:

At least 5 (five) years of working experience with business development projects, providing advisory services for companies, in performing market and competitive research.

Proven experience in application of sales techniques based on field experience.

Working experience in target focal regions / municipalities is an advantage.

Good command of written and spoken Romanian skills. English and/or Russian are considered as an asset.

Agribusiness expert:

At least 5 (five) years of experience of working with or in Agribusiness, preferably in the prioritised commodities (berries and grapes), ability and demonstrated experience of designing and appraising business cases

Solid understanding of value chain and stakeholder engagement

Good command of written and spoken Romanian skills. English and/or Russian an asset.

Tourism expert:

At least 5 (five) years of relevant professional experience with proven expert knowledge in the field of tourism and eco-tourism, expertise with operators and related stakeholders in the area

Proven experience in product development, organise special and seasonal events and festivals as well as providing business advice.

Good command of written and spoken Romanian skills. English and/or Russian are considered as an asset.

Finance expert

At least 7 (seven) years of consultancy experience preparing financial plans and developing financial models and risk assessments

Proven expertise in evaluating cost structures and revenue streams, preparing financial forecasts and budget reports

Good command of written and spoken Romanian skills. English and/or Russian are considered as an asset.

The company to prove the potential for hiring experts on demand in the fields of textiles and furniture. The Contractor could consider other personnel if it is required for the successful implementation of the present assignment, however, only the above listed will be evaluated against evaluation criteria in Section 4.

Tenderers shall provide information on the Project Team proposed to manage this assignment outlining details including:

Extent of experience of each of the proposed team members.

Details of their respective qualifications and relevant experience.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND SERVICE LEVEL

Conformity with the set time-frame;

Prior coordination of activities with the Programme team;

Submitted reports must present the reference to official and reliable sources used, as well as provide recommendations.

PRICE AND SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The contract price is a fixed output-based price regardless of extension of the herein specific duration;

All the costs associated with the contract implementation must be presented in Forms J and K, representing the Financial Proposal (please see Form 7: Proposal Forms). Please, ensure that no other documents are

disclosing your financial proposal apart from Forms J and K. Non-compliance with this instruction may result in rejection of the proposal received;

UNDP will effect payments to the Contractor after acceptance by UNDP of the deliverables submitted by the Contractor upon achievement of the corresponding milestones according to the schedule below:

MILESTONE/DELIVERABLE	PERCENTAGE of the total contract price	TARGET DATE for payment
Milestone 1 (related to successful completion of Deliverables 1 & 2)	30%	by 16 December 2022
Milestone 2 (related to successful completion of Deliverables 3 -5)	30%	by 31 March 2023
Milestone 3 (related to successful completion of Deliverables 6&7)	40%	By 27 January 2024

In case the deliverables are submitted and accepted earlier than the tentative timeframe, the disbursements will be made earlier than planned.