



Programme for Advancement of Women's and Girls' Access to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics in Transnistria Region.

APPLICANT'S GUIDE

Implemented under the Advance Cross-river Capacities for Trade (AdTrade) Project

January 2023

CONTEXT

UNDP is committed to making gender equality a basic human right and a necessity for a sustainable world, a reality. Women's empowerment and gender equality are vital to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which envisions a world “of universal respect for human rights and human dignity” in which “every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed.”

The UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 provides a road map to elevate and integrate gender equality into all aspects of UNDP's work to reduce poverty, build resilience and achieve peace in communities and territories, helping to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the strategy defines the following priorities and key solutions: (i) Contribute to gender-equal and sustainable economies; (ii) Help reinvigorate inclusive governance, participation and women's leadership; (iii) Support equal societies to build resilience; (iv) Put gender equality at the heart of caring for people and the planet; (v) Close gender gaps in access to modern energy; (vi) Accelerate the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

On the right bank of Nistru, women and girls occupy only 31% of jobs in the ICT sector and only 19% of digital professions. Only 4.6% of the girls studying in higher education choose **STEM (Science, Technologies, Engineering and Mathematics)** as their study profile. As a result, women get jobs with a lower level of qualification and, respectively, of remuneration in this sector. Women's salaries in the information and communication technologies sector (ICT) are by 33% lower than of men. The access to ICT and the Internet is not equal. The share of households led by women who have a computer and Internet access is by 11.7 p.p. lower than of households led by men. Moreover, the differences grow with time: the access to computers and Internet of households led by men grows faster than of households led by women. In the past three years, the number of ICT businesses led by women has been growing faster (by 28%) than those led by men (24%)¹, while gender gaps have been declining. Women-led companies pay the highest salaries in ICT and the number of employments is higher in such companies. If this trend continues, the gender gaps among ICT businesses will decrease. The state of play on the left bank still has to be explored.

STEM literacy is critical to developing the quality labour force, as it opens doors to employment in every industry, sector and profession, not just in traditional STEM fields. STEM education also creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and enable the next generation of innovators.

STEM sciences are key in forming competent and competitive labour force for engineering and technical professions. An increasing number of sectors of the economy will need exact sciences in the future, including agriculture. Promoting highly paid specialties and professions among women, including the masculinized ones, and eliminating the stereotypes present in the society about professions and occupations related to women, would contribute to enhancing women's access to STEM.

The Advanced Cross-River Capacities for Trade (AdTrade) Project, implemented by UNDP with the financial assistance of Sweden and UK, launches a Small Grants Programme (hereinafter – the

¹ Study *Women and men in the information and communication technologies sector*, National Bureau of Statistics. December 2019



Programme) aiming at supporting the advancement of women's and girls' access to STEM. The Programme encourages cross-river transfer of knowledge and skills through establishing partnerships between academia, schools, civil society organisations and private sector from both banks of the Nistru river.

ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The current Programme is focused on supporting the advancement of digital literacy of women and girls, especially those from disadvantaged groups (including Roma, people with disabilities, HIV, survivors of domestic violence, living in rural areas, etc.), as well as for the advancement of the access to STEM of women and girls from the left bank of the Nistru.

Based on this call of proposals, three pilot initiatives on the left bank of the Nistru river will be selected. The call accepts applications from a consortium of civil society organisations (CSOs) and: academia, schools or private sector from the left bank, in partnership with CSOs, academia, schools or private sector from the right riverbank. Cross-river transfer of knowledge and skills is strongly encouraged. The selected projects will receive support of up to **30,000 USD** in the form of procurement of goods and services to be implemented for a period of maximum **9 months**.

The project ideas may focus on:

- creating suitable STEM learning environments in selected universities, colleges, educational centers or schools through endowment with necessary equipment (i.e. IT class, equipment for laboratory, etc., also, small refurbishment works for creation of good learning conditions are accepted);
- increasing public awareness of the importance of women and girls' involvement in STEM education and their importance in leading the innovative economy;
- enhancing digital literacy training for girls and women especially for those from disadvantaged groups: including Roma, people with disabilities, HIV, survivors of domestic violence, living in rural areas, etc.;
- mobilize private sector actors to provide education and job internship opportunities for women in STEM/ICT-related careers;
- establishing a public-private partnership on STEM to strengthen the implementation of the strategic STEM directions and activities;
- especially are encouraged trainings, exchange of experience activities etc. with the participation of target groups from both banks of the Nistru river;
- other area related to promotion of women in STEM.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Project ideas meeting the following eligibility criteria will be admitted in the contest:

- application submitted by a civil society organisation from the left bank of the Nistru in consortium with: academia, schools, or private sector from the left bank in partnership with CSOs, academia, schools or private sector from the right riverbank;

- application foresees the allocation of at least 60% of the budget to STEM learning infrastructure improvements in selected universities, colleges, educational centers, or schools through procurement of goods/equipment (i.e. IT class, equipment for laboratory, etc. also, small refurbishment works for creation of good learning conditions are accepted);
- one civil society organisation, as the main applicant, can submit at most 2 (two) applications, involving different academia and/or schools.

Non-eligible expenditures:

- procurement of second-hand goods and equipment;
- expenditures for ceremonies, events, celebrations, but also for procuring or producing alcoholic beverages, tobacco items, munitions, luxury products, other goods prohibited based on UN regulations, including the ones related to gambling organization;
- cash payments;
- costs for obtaining approvals, endorsements and authorizations;
- labour remuneration, other than consultancy for STEM promotion and project management costs supported by the civil society organisation;
- any costs incurred before the signature of the financing contract (including the costs related to project development);
- costs for developing feasibility studies;
- taxes, including VAT, commission fees, etc.;
- losses due to foreign currency fluctuations;
- costs of procurements or activities that have been previously covered from other sources.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Potential beneficiaries, meeting the conditions of the present call, may apply by submitting the application, which shall include:

- application form, to be signed by the main applicant and consortium partners such as academia and /or schools or private sector;
- project budget;
- copy of the registration certificate of the main applicant and consortium partners.

The Application may be filled in Romanian, Russian or English languages. Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

Under the respective Grant Program, the main applicant may submit at most two applications, involving different academia and/or schools.

The application files and the Applicant's Guide are posted on UNDP Moldova website (<http://www.undp.md/tenders/index.shtml>). These documents also may be received by sending a request in this respect to the following e-mail: roman.turcan@undp.org.

The Application will be sent in electronic format via email at dmitrii.parfentiev@undp.org and roman.turcan@undp.org before the deadline 17 February 2023, 23.59 o'clock. Message subject: EOI /Grant Programme/STEM.



The applications sent via any other means shall be rejected. The incomplete applications or those submitted after the set deadline shall not be reviewed. The applications submitted via email shall not exceed 20 MB. The applications over 20 MB shall be divided into several messages and the subject of every message should indicated “part x of y” besides “EOI/Grant Programme/STEM”, as mentioned above.

Clarifications regarding the application may be requested from dmitrii.parfentiev@undp.org or roman.turcan@undp.org.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

Selection shall be based on such principles as merit, transparency, equality and rational use of funds. The evaluation of project proposals includes two stages:

Stage I: Administrative verification. This stage will verify the eligibility of the submitted projects and that of the applicants, the available expertise of the main applicant, as well as the relevance and financial reliability of the budget. Only the projects that passed the administrative verification stage shall be admitted for the next evaluation stage.

Stage II: Applications’ qualitative assessment. This stage is carried out by the Evaluation Committee based on the evaluation criteria. The applications receiving the highest scoring shall be recommended for financing and approval by the Project Steering Committee.

Evaluation criteria for project proposals

Evaluation criteria	Score
Propose intervention explore innovative ideas to find sustainable and transformative solutions, including the application of new tools, to ensure women’s and girls’ proactive engagement in STEM learning	40
The application proves clear positive impact on vulnerable groups, including Roma, people with disabilities, HIV, survivors of domestic violence, living in rural areas, migrants who recently returned home etc.;	20
Relevance and consistency of the budget	20
The main applicant has experience in implementing development projects:	
• 1 - 2 projects	10
• 3 - 4 projects	15
• 5 projects or more	20
Total	100