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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
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Швейцарское управление по развитию и сотрудничеству



APPLICATION GUIDE

CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO SELECT THREE MICRO-REGIONS AS BENEFICIARIES OF THE “RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE MARKETS IN MOLDOVA” PROJECT

This Guide describes the rules and procedures for submitting applications for the Call of Proposals to select three micro-regions as beneficiaries of the Swiss-UNDP project “Resilient and Inclusive Markets in Moldova”, to pilot the assistance for local economic development on the basis of the micro-clustering concept

1. BACKGROUND

The Swiss-UNDP project “Resilient and Inclusive Markets in Moldova” (PRIM) is set to contribute to the promotion of integrated approaches to inclusive and sustainable local economic development and employment creation, in partnership with ILO and SDC, targeting both local populations, as well as returning migrants and refugees.

Previous and ongoing SDC – UNDP efforts to address the positive impact of migration and engage migrants in local socio-economic development, along with design and piloting of local economic developments models and partnerships shaped an enabling environment to expand the current work and take it to another level. In this context, Moldova has several comparative advantages that can be harnessed to steam up the growth, broaden its geography, and make it more socially inclusive.

To do so, UNDP Moldova will further advance the successful LED interventions by scaling up the focus from local to (micro)-regional, while at the same time leveraging revenue generation, strengthening business support services and value chains to increase the competitiveness of local economy, retention of human capital and facilitate local socio-economic development. The role of the SMEs, including owned and led by migrants, is crucial, being potentially the most efficient connection between the economic growth and welfare of the employed persons, particularly in the remote rural communities and small towns. The new political and socio-economic development require new approaches, which consider the need to build more resilient, inclusive, and innovative communities and local markets.

The strategic goal of the PRIM project is to enhance the inclusive, competitive, and sustainable economic development, and promote equal access to decent work at the local and (micro)-regional levels, by leveraging the enhanced multi-stakeholder cooperation, improved business support services and complementary regulatory frameworks.

The project will enhance sustainability of the results from the previous efforts supported by the Swiss Government, shape them to the new political and socio-economic developments, by embracing and promoting relevant policy and community-action innovations and by ensuring engagement of all relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of local development solutions for building responsive institutions, inclusive economy, and resilient communities. In light of the regional security environment that is expected to remain turbulent even in the most optimistic scenarios, the project is intended to bring a valuable contribution to the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus at the local/regional level.

In this context, the Swiss-UNDP project “Resilient and Inclusive Markets in Moldova” announces
THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO SELECT THREE BENEFICIARY MICRO-REGIONS

TERMINOLOGY

Micro-region – compact geographic territory with similar economic specialization, represented by at least 5 level-one territorial administrative units from one or several close districts.

Micro-cluster – geographic concentration (on the territory of at least 5 level-one territorial administrative units) of at least 10 private companies and interconnected institutions from the same value chain.

Value chain – a series of consecutive steps for transforming and moving a product (within the micro-region) from raw material until selling it to the final consumer.

2. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO BENEFICIARY MICRO-REGIONS:

The three micro-regions beneficiaries of the PRIM project (which will include at least five level-one territorial administrative units), **will be eligible** for a comprehensive package of **technical and financial assistance in order to advance the local economic development** on the basis of micro-clustering, including for:

- creating, institutionalizing and advancing the development of micro-clusters (including financial assistance of up to **USD 400 thousand per micro-cluster**).
- identifying and implementing certain innovative solutions for digitalizing the business processes (including financial assistance of up to **USD 40 thousand per micro-cluster**).
- supporting innovative initiatives for developing and promoting local investment offers.
- developing entrepreneurial skills and local capacities, including study visits.

3. IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The proposed activities and assistance are to be implemented in the period **April 2023 – December 2024**.

4. ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

Any micro-region in the Republic of Moldova that includes at least 5 level-one local public administrations, located close to each other.

Except for:

- Ungheni and Cahul districts, beneficiaries of the "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme.
- Rezina and Soroca districts, beneficiaries of the Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs), implemented by the International Labour Organization.

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The following minimum criteria should be met to consider the applicants eligible:

1.	Micro-region	<p>The applications shall be submitted jointly by a local partnership composed of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ at least 5 Local Public Authorities (1st level / towns, villages, communes) and▪ at least 5 private sector entities representing a similar value chain. <p><i>The localities from Ungheni and Cahul districts, beneficiaries of "EU4Moldova: Focal Regions" programme and from Rezina and Soroca districts, beneficiaries of the Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) implemented by ILO, are not eligible.</i></p>
2.	Applicant	<p>The proposals can be submitted by an applicant partner, which can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ a level-two LPA or the Executive Committee of ATU Gagauzia.▪ a sectoral, local, regional and national business association.▪ a Local Action Group (LAG); or

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one of the 5 level-one LPAs which are part of the micro-region.
3.	Population	Each micro-region should have at least 12,500 inhabitants (total for all partner settlements listed in the proposal)
4.	Partnership	The application shall confirm the commitment of local partners to pro-actively cooperate for the institutionalization and advancement of a thematic micro-cluster, based on a feasible and substantiated development concept for job creation at the local level and value chain upgrade.
5.	Local co-financing	The applications shall confirm the commitment of the local partners to co-finance the potential investment interventions (<i>both in-kind and financially</i>) in the amount of at least 40% (<i>of which – at least 25% financial</i>).

6. APPLICATION FILE

The complete application package shall include the following documents/materials:

- **Application Form** filled in either in Romanian or Russian.
Handwritten Application Forms will not be accepted.
The Application Form template is attached to this Guide, and can also be requested from Mr. Radu Tucan, PRIM Project Coordinator (radu.tucan@undp.org).
- **Statement of Commitment and Partnership**, signed by all partners from the private and public sector.
- **Other relevant materials** to complement the proposal's justification.

The Application Package can be sent by email no later than the **23rd of February 2023**, at **23:00**.

- to Mr. Dorin Toma, PRIM Project Manager: dorin.toma@undp.org
- copy to Mr. Radu Tucan, PRIM Project: radu.tucan@undp.org

Note: Applications sent may not exceed 15MB.

Applications larger than 15 MB should be split into several messages and each message subject should indicate its sequence, together with the title of the message 'PRIM – Call for proposals / part 1 of 2'.

All submissions shall be confirmed by a reply within one business day.

If you do not receive a confirmation by email in this timeframe, please, contact the UNDP Project by phone: (+373) 62 100 251.

Incomplete applications or applications submitted after the deadline shall not be examined.

7. PROPOSALS ASSESSMENT

Stage I: Preliminary assessment

During this stage, the UNDP Project will verify the administrative compliance and eligibility of the applications, including if:

- the application file is complete, and the Application Form is filled in accordingly.
- the applicants meet the eligibility criteria (mentioned above, in Section 5).

Stage II: Technical assessment of proposals

During this stage, the compliance of the proposals with the objective and the priorities of the Swiss-UNDP project "Resilient and Inclusive Markets in Moldova" will be verified.

Technical evaluation criteria	Points obtainable
<p>Does the application present a clear and feasible business development vision in relation to the targeted value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant's vision is clear and feasible: 15 - 20 points ▪ The applicant's vision is clear and feasible, yet not fully detailed: 5 - 14 points ▪ The applicant's vision is not clear and/or feasible: 0 - 4 points 	20
<p>What is the potential socio-economic impact on the micro-region as result of the development and upgrade of the targeted value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The proposal is perceived as having a high relevance/impact from the perspective of socio-economic development of the micro-region: 15 - 20 points ▪ The proposal is perceived as having a moderate relevance/impact from the perspective of socio-economic development of the micro-region: 5 - 14 points ▪ The proposal is perceived as having a limited relevance/impact from the perspective of socio-economic development of the micro-region: 1 - 4 points 	20
<p>Do applicants represent local stakeholders (public and private) committed and motivated to promote the enhancement of the targeted value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The commitment/ motivation of the leadership is perceived as strong: 1 - 3 points ▪ The commitment/ motivation of the leadership is perceived as moderate: 4 - 6 points ▪ The commitment/ motivation of the leadership is perceived as limited: 7 - 8 points <p>Additional 1-2 points will receive applications, where the private partners are represented by women, migrants and/or vulnerable groups</p>	10
<p>Does the micro-region have a critical mass of private entities representing the value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 5 private sector entities: 6 - 10 points (<i>1 point per each additional entity</i>) ▪ 5 private sector entities: 5 points 	10
<p>What is the micro-region's potential for further job creation and/or job enhancement in the targeted value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 150 new or better jobs envisioned: 8 - 10 points ▪ 100 – 150 new or better jobs envisioned: 5 - 7 points ▪ Less than 100 new or better jobs envisioned: 1 - 4 points 	10
<p>Does the micro-region have a feasible potential for increase of (business) turnover in the targeted value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The potential for business turnover increase is perceived as strong: 8 - 10 points ▪ The potential for business turnover increase is perceived as moderate: 5 - 7 points ▪ The potential for business turnover increase is perceived as limited: 1 - 4 points 	10
<p>Does the applicant have a clear and feasible vision on enhancing the resilience of the targeted value chain from the perspective of the ongoing crisis and energy/climate change resilience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant's vision is perceived as very clear and feasible: 8 - 10 points ▪ The applicant's vision is perceived as moderately clear and feasible: 5 - 7 points ▪ The applicant's vision is limited in terms of clarity/ feasibility: 1 - 4 points 	10
<p>Does the applicant have a feasible approach towards solutions towards implementing digitalization solutions for the upgrade of the targeted value chain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than 2 digitalization solutions proposed and deemed as feasible: 9 - 10 points ▪ Two digitalization solutions proposed and deemed as feasible: 6 - 8 points ▪ One digitalization solution proposed and deemed as feasible: 1 - 5 points 	10
Total points obtainable	100

Stage III: Selecting the beneficiary micro-regions

The **top ranked three (3) applications** shall be selected and recommended to the Steering Committee for appointment as PRIM project beneficiaries.

The additional three (3) following ranked applications (fourth, fifth and sixth) shall be included in the reserve list (in the eventuality of withdrawal of one of the three top-ranked applications).

Note: during the assessment, PRIM Project reserves the right to use alternative methods for checking the submitted information and the potential of conducting the project activities in the micro-region (including performing documentation field visits).

8. INFORMATION SESSIONS

PRIM Project will conduct 5 (five) information sessions for potential applicants, in order to discuss the details regarding the objectives of the Call for Proposals, the project methodology and the application procedure.

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday, 01 February 2023	10:30	Chişinău
Thursday, 02 February 2023	10:30	Bălţi
Friday, 03 February 2023	10:30	Cimişlia
Tuesday, 07 February 2023	10:30	Comrat
Tuesday, 14 February 2023	11:00	online format

Note: To attend the information sessions, potential applicants are required to register at:

https://rebrand.ly/prim_info_session

The details about the information sessions, including the location or Zoom link, will be communicated to the registered persons at least two days prior to each event.

During the online session scheduled for the 14th of February 2023, simultaneous translation (Romanian-Russian) will be ensured.

Transportation expenses related to the information sessions will not be covered by the PRIM project.

9. ANNEXES:

1. **Application Form** (in English, Romanian and Russian, in Word format).
2. **Statement of Commitment and Partnership** (in English, Romanian and Russian, in Word format).