



APPLICATION GUIDELINES

EXPORT ACCELERATOR INITIATIVE

**BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR EXPORTING COMPANIES
FROM BOTH BANKS OF NISTRU RIVER**

IN THE FRAME OF THE ADVANCED CROSS-RIVER CAPACITIES FOR TRADE (ADTRADE) PROJECT

July 2021

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I. CONTEXT

As a result of the pandemic restrictions, the sales volumes of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) decreased considerably. The MSMEs from the left bank of the Nistru River were influenced by the COVID-19 related restrictions as well. This has been caused mainly by demand decrease, free movement restrictions, limited access to raw materials or supply interruptions (especially for imported raw material), distribution chain disruptions, labor productivity decrease. It has been more than one year since we are faced with unprecedentedly challenges generated by the global pandemic of COVID-19, imposing loss of revenues for households and businesses. The economy has been severely affected, and the Gross Domestic product decreased by 7% in 2020.

The current export acceleration initiative aims at strengthening the export potential of the MSMEs from both banks of Nistru river to diversify the markers and expand of exported range of products. The initiative also envisages to facilitate cross-river cooperation and expand access of Transnistria enterprises to trade mechanisms available on the right bank. The above shall be achieved by allowing left bank private sector to access opportunities offered by the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and the UK-Moldova Strategic Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement (SPTCA) arrangements, contributing to an environment of trust and cooperation across the river.

The current initiative is implemented in the frame of the UNDP Advanced Cross-River Capacities for Trade (AdTrade) Project, with the financial assistance of Sweden and United Kingdom. The overall objective of the AdTrade Project is to secure that men and women on both banks of the Nistru River have better livelihoods and living conditions, due to an improved cross-river cooperation to access the opportunities offered by Moldova's external trade arrangements, contributing to an environment of trust and cooperation across both banks. The AdTrade Project envisages provision of methodological and practical assistance in establishing long-term trade links and promotion of exports, by supporting existing companies or by launching new businesses, thus contributing to new jobs, especially for women and vulnerable groups.

II. INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

The initiative is intended to enhance the capacities for cross-river trade and exports of companies from both banks of Nistru river. During the next 24 months, the 30 selected companies will benefit from tailored **business development support** which will enable them to comply with sanitary, phytosanitary, technical, quality, environmental and social corporate responsibility standards of the export partners. The target group of the current call are mostly the MSMEs, but larger companies in strategic sectors, that can have a demonstrative positive effect on vulnerable groups (e.g. textile companies), are also eligible.

Exporting companies and those with export potential are invited to submit requests for support aimed to increase the company competitiveness to access new export markets or increase their presence on export market. Complex support will be provided to selected companies to enhance their capacities, to overcome export barriers, allowing them to access the European markets under the DCFTA and SPTCA regulations, while improving their competitive advantages.

Potential services for strengthening the company's capacity are listed below:

- I. **Enhance the way of doing business** – re-engineering of business processes, individualized professional counselling, technological expertise, etc;
- II. **Digitalization of commerce** - – integration with international marketplaces, development of on-line shops and web pages, implementation of the CRM systems, etc;
- III. **Promotion** – establishment of effective promotion tools and communication channels (including social and digital media), brand development, development of product packaging, assistance in PR activities, production of promotional materials including multimedia and cooperation with media resources, participation at exhibitions and business events, etc;
- IV. **Support for cross-river trade and access to new export markets** – export readiness assessment, market entry plans, export planning and implementation, partner and market researches, elaboration of marketing price and cost analysis, etc;
- V. **Certification support in adopting quality management standards** - ISO 22000, ISO 9001, ISO 14 000, HACCP, GLOBAL G.A.P., Corporate Social Responsibility etc;
- VI. **Product compliance and trade formalities** – research on sanitary / phytosanitary norms, labelling requirements, research of import duties, taxes and import procedures, information on banking and non-banking tools for foreign trade financing, international payment tools and modalities, etc;
- VII. **Other services** aiming to enhance the company competitiveness and export potential.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND APPLICATIONS

Applicants that meet the minimum conditions presented below will be considered eligible:

- Demonstrate that it is ready to export products/services or is already exporting them;
- Have at least 2 years of active experience on the market;
- Are registered as a legal entity and operates on the right or left bank of Nistru river;

- Have an annual turnover of up to 2,500,000 USD/ (50 million MDL), and/or have up to max 249 employees except companies that demonstrate positive impact on vulnerable groups.

Ineligible costs:

- Administrative costs (salaries, rent of premises, utilities, telephone etc.);
- Procurement of machinery, equipment, other goods;
- Procurement of services which have already been paid through other programmes or financing instruments. However, co-financing by other organizations could be considered if informed in advance;
- Covering of costs, losses, taxes and penalties (including differences in exchange rates), debts to third parties;
- Procurement or rent of land or premises;
- Expenditures to procure or produce alcoholic beverages, tobacco items, munition, luxury products, other goods prohibited based on UN regulations, including the ones related to gambling organization;
- Cash payments.

IV.APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Interested companies will submit a package of documents, which include:

- A. Application form, according to the Annex 1.
- B. Copy of the registration certificate;
- C. Copy of the financial reports for the last 2 years;

Note: There is no limit for the number of services/activities to be requested to be covered by AdTrade sources, however the final decision will be taken based on evaluation process and is subject to funds availability. Solicited services shall be described in enough details to allow a coherent evaluation of the application.

The Application Form and Applicant's Guidelines are posted on the UNDP in Moldova website (<http://www.undp.md/tenders/index.shtml>). These documents can also be received by sending a request at the following e-mail: cornelia.panico@undp.org.

The Application will be sent in electronic format via email at natalia.iachimov@undp.org and cornelia.panico@undp.org before the deadline 12 of August 2021, 16.00 o'clock. Message subject: EOI /Export Accelerator II.

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//Export Accelerator II", as mentioned above.

Clarifications regarding the application may be requested from natalia.iachimov@undp.org or cornelia.panico@undp.org.

V. 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. Only the projects that passed the administrative verification stage shall be admitted for the next evaluation stage.

Stage II: Projects' qualitative assessment. This stage is carried out by the Evaluation Committee based on the evaluation criteria. The projects receiving the biggest number of total points shall be recommended for financing and approval by the Project Steering Committee.

The applications will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Score
Competitiveness of business, relevance of selected market niche	30
Capacity to export / availability of ready to export products/services	30
Experience and capacity of the company in the field related to the submitted business idea	20
Commitment of the applicant to co-finance the requested services (%) will be considered a strong advantage.	20
Quality of the submitted application.	20
Consider gender mainstreaming and HRBA principles (businesses managed by women or those which will impact the livelihoods of vulnerable groups)	20
Total	140

VI. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. MONITORING

Beneficiaries commit to attend all relevant activities organized by the AdTrade Project, dedicate time and resources to absorb the services provided in the frame of current initiative, and share their experiences as a result of the received support. Beneficiaries will facilitate monitoring visits at their premises for the AdTrade Project team and other relevant stakeholders (audit missions, media, etc.). All information collected in the process of monitoring provided by the applicant will be subject of non-disclosure and confidentiality and shall be used solely to evaluate the results of this initiative or for the visibility purposes.