# UNICEF Moldova Terms of Reference

**National Individual Consultant, serving as a team lead to support the Ministry of Education and Research in the review and development of the new National Curriculum documents**

**Location:** Chisinau

**Duration and timeline: 70 working days,** during November 2024 – June 2025

1. **Background**

The Republic of Moldova embraces an education policy that is consistent with the European and international education standards that responds to the current issues and needs of the education system and its beneficiaries. Aligned with the objectives of the [Development Strategy “Education 2030”](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136600&lang=ro)  (DS), the education system still faces challenges related to the quality of education and poor learning outcomes. Improving the quality of education is part of Moldova's integration efforts, as education is a cornerstone for economic development, social cohesion, and overall progress.

The creation of an effective, innovative, and inspiring learning and development environment summarizes the vision of all policy strategic documents. In a rapidly changing world, children need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and competences needed to thrive in the 21st century. The projected trajectory of the planned curriculum reform initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) is influenced by both international trends, such as globalization, international student assessments, and the need for defining the knowledge and abilities that are seen to be most valuable in a society and necessary to prepare the children for the future.

Against this background, Moldovan students score consistently less than the average Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries across all PISA scores. The average score for science for 15-year-olds is 411 points compared to the average 476 in OECD countries, with a considerable gender discrepancy of 30 points – girls scoring better than boys. Similar differences are noted across the other two subjects assessed: reading literacy – 419 points for Moldova compared to 476 for OECD, and in mathematics, with 414 compared to 472[[1]](#footnote-2). At the same time, there is a significant difference in student performance based on the socio-economic status: advantaged students outscore less advantaged students across all measured competencies.

UNICEF as grant agent and coordinating agency of a GPE System Capacity Grant, supports the MER in the curriculum reform. The overarching objective of the proposed project is to develop and institutionalize a comprehensive curriculum evaluation and development process within the general education system. This initiative aims to address the deficiencies highlighted in the existing curriculum framework, particularly considering the poor performance of Moldovan students in international assessments.

Based on the above, UNICEF Moldova is seeking the technical assistance of a national consultant to support the MER in the review and development of the new National Curriculum documents.

# Purpose of the assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to support the MER in the review and development of the new National Curriculum documents. The national consultant will serve as a Team Lead and a member of the team of experts in the process of review and development of the new National Curriculum. He/she will also be responsible for the facilitation of the public consultations at the national level.

# Objectives of the consultancy

The national consultant will be responsible for achieving the following objectives:

1. Serve as a team lead /coordinate the national consultants work in the:

* Revision of the existing Reference Framework for National Curriculum (RFNC) to ensure full alignment with the education sector policies
* Leading and coordination of the national consultants work in the development of the Reference Framework for National Curriculum
* Leading and coordination of the national consultants work in the development of a robust Methodology for the Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation
* Leading and coordination of the national consultants work in the development of a robust Methodology for the Curriculum Development

1. Design the concept of the public consultations on the vision of the new National Curriculum
2. Draft the study methodology, evaluation tools, data sources, structure, and presentation format
3. Conduct analysis of integrated curriculum approaches in other countries to identify the best practices for the development of a comprehensive curriculum framework
4. Conduct analysis of the basic and extension curriculum structure in other countries
5. Draft a report/synthesis study with findings from the conducted consultations, analysis to ensure alignment with educational sector policies, etc.
6. Summarize and process the data provided by the experts within the Working Group (WG) and presenting the integrated report to the MER for validation
7. Develop the RNCF, the structure of the basic and extension curriculum/ at own choice (high school grades - pilot schools that will pilot the innovative framework plan)
8. Conduct analysis of how to integrate cross-curricular topics into the curriculum based on the experience of other countries
9. Design the structure of the integrated subject curriculum/ at students’ choice for pilot schools that will pilot the innovative framework plan
10. Design innovative framework plan models (primary, lower/upper secondary levels, choice of subjects and standards)
11. Compiling all sections delivered by experts, reviewing, and editing the draft of the RFNC
12. Organization and facilitation of public consultations regarding the FNC
13. Preparation of the integrated report completed with all the target groups involved at the consultation stages
14. Analysis of the operational curriculum development methodology for previous editions of the national curriculum.
15. Elaboration of criteria and indicators to assess the comprehensiveness of the newly designed curricula for the school subjects
16. Conduct national consultations of the drafts developed.

# Details of how the work should be delivered

The consultant will be responsible for leading the team of experts that will be selected by UNICEF to work on the review and development of National Curriculum documents. The key responsibilities include:

* facilitate clear communication with the team members, MER, and UNICEF
* track the progress of activities, by regularly reviewing performance against goals and making adjustments as necessary
* provide constructive feedback to the members of the team on the process of documents development and quality of deliverables
* validate and provide quality assurance for all deliverables prepared by the team, before submission to MER and UNICEF

During the assignment, the consultant will be guided by the Concept of School Curriculum Development[[2]](#footnote-3) developed by the MER. He/she will take into consideration the Government’s priorities related to the education sector priorities, including the Development Strategy Education 2030, the SDG targets, as well as the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030".

The consultant will work in close collaboration with MER, including the General Department of Policies in the Field of General Education, National Agency for Curriculum and Evaluation (NACE) and UNICEF and ensure the reach out and engagement of broad audience during the assignment.

In convening national consultations, provide support to MER in following the next **three principles**:

* **Adopt a whole-of-government approach**, ensuring multi-sectoral representation beyond education, to include health, social protection, food and nutrition, labour, environment, and connectivity.
* **Include multiple constituencies** to ensure meaningful engagement of the full set of education stakeholders. They could be the voices of students and youth organizations, teachers and teacher associations, girls and young women, civil society groups, parliamentarians, the private sector, development partners, education advocates, community and religious leaders, academia.
* **Focus on youth**, with whom the transformation in education starts.

1. **Deliverables and delivery dates**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tasks** | **Deliverable** | **Timeline\*** |
| ***Activity 1. Organization of public consultations on the vision of the new National Curriculum*** | | |
| Design the concept of the public consultations on the vision of the new National Curriculum and provide support in the organization | The public consultations concept on the vision of the new National Curriculum designed | 4 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **4 working days in November 2024** |
| ***Activity 2. Review the existing RFNC to help address the forms of exclusion, gender inequities and to ensure full alignment with the education sector policies*** | | |
| 1. Drafting the study methodology, evaluation tools, data sources, structure, and presentation format | The methodology of the study developed | 5 days |
| 1. Drafting a report/synthesis study with findings to address forms of exclusion and how the RFNC ensures the alignment with educational sector policies, etc. | Report/synthesis study with findings | 5 days |
| 1. Summarizing and processing the data provided by the experts within the Working Group (WG) and presenting the integrated report to the MER for validation | Integrated validation report submitted to MER and UNICEF | 3 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **13 days, during October – November 2024** |
| ***Activity 3. Develop a new gender responsive and inclusive RFNC*** | | |
| 1. Developing the concept, structure, format for drafting/ presentation/ design, and consulting it with the MER | The concept, structure, format for drafting/presentation/design and consulted with the MER | 2 days |
| 1. Analysis of integrated curriculum approaches in other countries | The report with the results of the curriculum analysis based on the experiences of other countries (in Romanian) | 4 days |
| 1. Analysis of the basic and extension curriculum structure in other countries | The report with the results of the curriculum analysis based on the experiences of other countries (in Romanian) | 2 days |
| 1. Developing the section *The structure of the basic and extension curriculum/ at your choice (high school classes - pilot schools that will pilot the innovative framework plan)* | The structure of the basic and extension/ advanced curriculum/ at choice (high school classes - pilot schools that will pilot the innovative framework plan) | 2 days |
| 1. Analysis of how to integrate cross-curricular themes into the curriculum based on the experience of other states | The report with the results of the curriculum analysis based on the experiences of other countries (in Romanian)  The model for cross-curricular themes integration | 2 days |
| 1. Developing the section *Elaboration of the structure of the integrated subject curriculum/ at students’ choice for pilot schools that will pilot the innovative framework plan)* | The structure of the integrated subject curriculum/ at students’ choice | 4 days |
| 1. Developing the section *Innovative framework plan models (primary (national school), secondary school (national school) and high school and innovative (multiple subjects of choice) and standard* | Innovative framework plan models (primary (national school), secondary school (national school) and high school and innovative (multiple subjects of choice) and standard | 3 days |
| 1. Compiling all sections delivered by experts, reviewing, and editing the draft of the RFNC | The draft of the RFNC | 4 days |
| 1. Organization and facilitation of public consultations of the RFNC | * 1 Round Table (max. 125 participants) * Interim Report completed with the Target Group | 3 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **26 working days, during October – November 2024** |
| **Activity 4. Development of a robust Methodology for the Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation** | | |
| 1. Drafting the study methodology, evaluation tools, data sources, structure, and presentation format | The study methodology, evaluation tools, data sources, structure, and presentation format developed | 3 days |
| 1. Analysis of tools and evaluations methods used in other generations of curricula evaluation | Report on curriculum evaluation methodology previous editions | 3 days |
| 1. Elaboration of the section *The process of evaluating the school curriculum (the purpose, destination and procedural description of the curriculum evaluation, exemplifying the experience of other states in the evaluation of the curriculum)* | Narrative section and description of tools used in curriculum evaluation elaborated | 3 days |
| 1. Elaboration of the section *Criteria and indicators for evaluating the completeness of the curriculum designed for the subject* | Criteria and indicators for evaluating the completeness of the curriculum designed for the subject | 3 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **12 working days, during February – March 2025** |
| **Activity 5. Development of a robust Methodology for Curriculum Development** | | |
| 1. Drafting the study methodology, evaluation tools, data sources, structure, and presentation format | The study methodology, evaluation tools, data sources, structure, and presentation format | 3 days |
| 1. Analysis of the operational curriculum development methodology for previous editions of the national curriculum | Report on curriculum development methodology previous editions | 3 days |
| 1. Elaboration of the section *Criteria and indicators for development the completeness of the curriculum designed for the subject* | Criteria and indicators for the completeness of the curriculum designed for the subject | 3 days |
| 1. Organization and facilitation of public presentation to academia, civil society, etc. | * 1 Round Table (max. 125 participants) * Interim Report Completed with the Target Group | 3 days |
| 5. Develop the Final Report | * Final report presented to MER and UNICEF * Summary report (up to 6 pages) in English * Summary of results in PPT in English | 3 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **15 working days, during May – June 2025** |
| **Total:** |  | 1. **days** |

*\* Exact deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signature.*

1. **Reporting requirements**

The consultant will report to the UNICEF Education Officer, who will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance on the performance and all other necessary support so to achieve objectives of the consultancy, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work.

All activities and deliverables undertaken by the consultant shall be discussed and planned in consultation with UNICEF. The consultant is expected to deliver each component of the workplan electronically (Word format) in Romanian. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to the UNICEF Education Officer, with the MER in copy.

# Performance indicators for evaluation of results:

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

* + - Completion of tasks specified in ToR.
    - Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables.
    - Quality of work.
    - Demonstration of high standards in cooperation and communication with UNICEF and counterparts.

# Qualifications and experience

* + - Advanced academic degree in education science/policy, social studies and/or another relevant field.
    - A minimum of 8 years of professional experience in the development of curricula for general education
    - Proven experience in conducting broad national public policy consultations in the education sector.
    - Proven experience in gender equality and inclusivity in education
    - Demonstrated experience in working with government institutions.
    - Strong networking and stakeholders’ engagement skills.
    - Relevant experience in working with UN Agencies will be an asset.
    - Fluency in Romanian and working knowledge of English is required.

1. **Content of technical proposal**

* Relevant experience with similar type of assignments (max 300 words)
* Proposed approach and methodology (max 1500 words), including:
  + Timeline and milestones
  + Risk and mitigation measures
  + Ethical considerations and how the consultant will address them

Annex: Short Sample or links to related work previously conducted by the consultant.

In addition, please provide your Curriculum Vitae.

1. **Content of financial proposal**

The applicant should fill in the Financial Offer Template and specify an all-inclusive fee in MDL, to complete the tasks/deliverables described in the Terms of Reference. Other expenses directly related to the ToR assignments and deliverables such as: (translation/interpretation costs, local transportation etc.) may be included in the financial offer unless specified that UNICEF will cover them separately (see paragraph 14 and 15 below).

The final selection will be based on the principle of “best value for money” i.e. achieving desired outcome at lowest possible fee. If not provided by ToR, UNICEF will not reimburse costs not directly related to the assignment. This contract does not allow payment of off-hours, medical insurance, taxes, and sick leave.

1. **Evaluation criteria for selection**

The candidate is expected to reflect in the submission the qualifications, knowledge and experience related to the requirements listed above. Technical evaluation will be performed through a desk review of applications, evaluation of technical proposals, and if necessary, may be supplemented by an interview.

The total amount of points to be allocated for the price component is 30. The maximum number of points (30) will be allotted to the lowest price proposal of a technically qualified offer. Points for other offers will be calculated as Points (x) = (lowest offer/ offer x) \* 30.

The selection process is aimed at selecting the applicant who obtains the highest cumulative score (technical evaluation + financial offer evaluation points) following “best value for money” principle.

1. **Payment schedule**

The payment will be linked to the following deliverables upon satisfactory completion and acceptance by UNICEF:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Deliverable (delivered according to the timeline agreed upon with UNICEF)** | **Proportion of payment** |
| Deliverable 1, 2 | 40% |
| Deliverable 3, 4 | 40% |
| Deliverable 5 | 20% |

UNICEF reserves the right to withhold all or a portion of payment if performance is unsatisfactory, if work/outputs are incomplete, not delivered for failure to meet deadlines.

1. **Definition of supervisory arrangements**

The consultant will work under the oversight of the Education Officer of UNICEF Moldova, and in close coordination with the Education Specialist. Payments will be rendered upon successful completion of each task, as per the schedule outlined above.

1. **Work location and official travel involved**

The work will be performed mainly remotely and will only require participation in meetings at MER, or other locations within Chisinau. The UNICEF office will facilitate introductions to key informants.

1. **Support provided by UNICEF**

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the consultant/s and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work. UNICEF will provide an initial package of relevant documents and available research, and an initial list of relevant experts and counterparts to work with. UNICEF will also request relevant data – as agreed upon with the consultant – from relevant government counterparts.

1. **Child Safeguarding**

Is this project/assignment considered as “[Elevated Risk Role](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/DHR-ChildSafeguarding/DocumentLibrary1/Guidance%20on%20Identifying%20Elevated%20Risk%20Roles_finalversion.pdf?CT=1590792470221&OR=ItemsView)” from a child safeguarding perspective?

   YES     NO           If YES, check all that apply:

**Direct contact role** YES       NO 

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of direct interpersonal contact with children, or work in their immediately physical proximity, with limited supervision by a more senior member of personnel:

**Child data role** YES      NO 

If yes, please indicate the number of hours/months of manipulating or transmitting personal-identifiable information of children (name, national ID, location data, photos):

More information is available in the [Child Safeguarding SharePoint](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/DHR-ChildSafeguarding/SitePages/Amendments-to-the-Recruitment-Guidance.aspx) and [Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/DHR-ChildSafeguarding/DocumentLibrary1/Child%20Safeguarding%20FAQs%20and%20Updates%20Dec%202020.pdf)

1. **Ethical considerations**

The Consultant will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines[[3]](#footnote-4). The consultant should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty while interacting with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Consultant should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information. The Consultant can use documents and information provided only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.

As per the [DHR PROCEDURE ON CONSULTANTS](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/portals/RF/Regulatory%20Framework%20Library/DHR%20Procedure%20on%20Consultants%20-%20DHR_PROCEDURE_2018_005.pdf), together with the Notification letter, the consultant will be sent the [link on UNICEF’s learning platform, Agora](https://agora.unicef.org/course/view.php?id=15620), containing UNICEF policies on Prohibiting and Combatting Fraud and Corruption; Prohibition of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority and other relevant policies for their information and acknowledgment. The selected candidate must complete the applicable mandatory online courses on UNICEF’s learning platform prior to signature of contract.  All certificates should be presented as part of the contract.

1. **Other considerations**

Individuals engaged under a consultancy will not be considered “staff members” under the Staff Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and UNICEF’s policies and procedures and will not be entitled to benefits provided therein (such as leave entitlements and medical insurance coverage). Their conditions of service will be governed by their contract and the General Conditions of Contracts for the Services of Consultants. Consultants are responsible for determining their tax liabilities and for the payment of any taxes and/or duties, in accordance with local or other applicable laws.

The selected candidate is solely responsible to ensure that the visa (if applicable) and health insurance required to perform the duties of the contract are valid for the entire period of the contract.

UNICEF offers reasonable accommodation for consultants with disabilities. This may include, for example, accessible software, travel assistance for missions or personal attendants. We encourage you to disclose your disability during your application in case you need reasonable accommodation during the selection process and afterwards in your assignment.

1. <https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=MDA&treshold=10&topic=PI> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/concept-26-aprilie-compressed_6630a85a97a2e.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. UNEG Guidelines <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)