**UNICEF Moldova**

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**Terms of Reference**

**Individual consultancy for the development of the Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS) regulation and instruction manual/guide to ensure accurate data collection and efficient management.**

**Location:** Home-based

**Duration and timeline: 22 working days** (within August – September 2023 period)

1. **Background**

The Education Sector Analysis was performed in 2019 and informed the preparation of the education strategy, including a detailed problem analysis and efficiency of the sector. To ensure the continuous and sustained access to education for all children and in line with Moldovan authorities' efforts to achieve the objectives of SDG4, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) in cooperation with UNICEF, as Grant Agent and Coordinating Agency for Education Sector Programme Implementation Grant (ESPIG) under the partnership with Global Partnership for Education (GPE), has developed a new long-term “Education 2030“ Development Strategy (DS). The DS explores the education sector within the international, regional, and national context and sets out the education policy of the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the strategic directions of actions required for solving the identified issues.

According to the DS one of the issues that the education system is facing is related to the inefficient application of ICT in education and lack of functional management in the process of education digitalization. Over recent years, more actions have been taken aimed at enhancing ‘digital literacy competences’ of teachers and pupils/students. The extent to which digital skills are used in the teaching-learning-assessment process and the insufficient capacity to effectively use the latest generations of interactive multimedia educational software are still a problem.

According to the ‘Social and Economic Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 Pandemic on vulnerable Groups and Economic Sectors in the Republic of Moldova’ report, the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the Moldovan education system were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, concluding specifically for education that the most socially disadvantaged children had difficulties in accessing remote education. The access to on-line education of children with disabilities was limited where no accessibility provisions were available, the Roma were at risk of being left behind given poverty levels, lack of access to IT equipment and potential discrimination. Remote learning remained a challenge for about 16,000 students and 3,000 teachers who did not have access to ICT technology (laptop, tablet, or access to internet). The consequences of the pandemic and the move to alternative online learning were potentially very damaging. Due to poor access to the internet, insufficient financial resources allocated for digitalizing the education sector and their inappropriate use, the availability of ICT in education institutions remains low, hampering the implementation of computer-assisted training and digital education management.

Failure to prioritize digitalization in policy documents, insufficiency of mechanisms for implementing ICT standards, lack of mechanisms for assessing and certifying digital competences, lack of a systemic vision on the equipment and assistive technologies, focused efforts of ongoing in-service training on digital literacy and less on digital pedagogy led to specific consequences and risks that should be addressed. Building inclusive and open ecosystems means a strong interconnection between policy framework, inclusive digital infrastructure, capacity building and awareness raising. These are interconnected challenges that should be embedded into the general process of digital transformation, with a focus on upstreaming the children who are at risk of digital exclusion. In addition to addressing the challenges mentioned, it is crucial to recognize the importance of building 21st-century skills among students in Moldova. As the world rapidly evolves in the digital age, students need to develop competences such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy to thrive in the 21st century. These skills enable students to adapt to changing environments, become active participants in the digital society, and contribute effectively to the economy.

One of the objectives of the new education strategy is to facilitate the digital transformation of the education sector. To achieve this important goal, UNICEF supported MER to develop a programme proposal, and successfully secured financing through the GPE Multiplier Fund for 2022-2025. The funding is solely used for digital transformation of the education sector. Based on a competitive process and its valuable experience and expertise in education globally and nationally, UNICEF was identified as Grant Agent (GA) and Implementing Agent (IA) for the Multiplier Fund, the Digital Innovation of Moldovan Education System Programme.

Based on the above, UNICEF Moldova is seeking for technical assistance of a national consultant to support the MER with the **development of the EMIS regulation and instruction manual/guide to ensure accurate data collection and efficient management.**

1. **Purpose of the assignment**

The purpose of this consultancy is to develop the **EMIS regulation and instruction manual/guide to ensure accurate data collection and efficient management.** These policy documents will provide the necessary regulatory framework to streamline data processes, from data entry and quality control to analysis and reporting. The development of these policies will also contribute to the strengthening of the EMIS, thus improving its effectiveness as a tool for evidence-based decision-making within the education sector.

1. **Objectives of the consultancy**

The objective is to create a detailed EMIS regulation and provide instruction guide/manual to ensure high-quality data management across schools, thereby, not only aiding in precise data delivery to entities such as the National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Finance, but also enabling the effective use of data for developing comprehensive educational policies and strategic initiatives.

1. Details of how the work should be delivered

The work should be delivered by conducting an initial assessment of the current EMIS system, then creating comprehensive policy documents including EMIS regulation and instruction manual/guide. The consultant will conduct relevant interviews and focus group discussions with MER departments, local education departments, National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), e-Government Agency Moldova and other relevant institutions.

The **draft Government Decision concerning the use of EMIS** will include, but not be limited to:

* Clarification of roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in EMIS, including data collectors, data processors, and data users.
* Elaboration on data collection process including the frequency, categories, types, and methods, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all aspects of education.
* Guidelines for data protection, outlining how data privacy will be ensured in accordance with national and international regulations.
* Framework for data archiving, detailing how data will be securely stored, preserved, and retrieved.
* Guidelines for data interoperability to ensure compatibility and data sharing across different national systems and platforms.

The **EMIS instruction manual/guide** will include, but not be limited to:

* Detailed instructions on the frequency and timing of data updates to ensure the relevance and accuracy of information.
* A comprehensive list of the types of data to be updated, including student performance, school resources, teacher qualifications, etc.
* Clear assignment of responsibilities for each process to ensure accountability.
* Step-by-step guidelines for entering, updating, verifying, and submitting data, including troubleshooting tips for common problems.
* Procedures for requesting assistance and support, including contact information for technical support and clear instructions for submitting help requests.
* Provision of resources for further learning and skill development, to support users in effectively using EMIS.

Thepolicy draft Government Decision and EMIS instruction manual will be developed based on Ministry’s regulations and Government decision no. 601/2020 regarding the approval of the Education Management Information System concept. This activity will be caried out in collaboration with the relevant departments of the MER, e-Governance Agency of Moldova, and other relevant institutions. Also, the service provider will support the public consultation and will incorporate the feedback and finalize the EMIS regulation.

1. Deliverables and delivery dates

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| **NO.** | **Tasks** | **Deliverable** | **Timeline\*** |
| 1. | - Conduct desk review of documentation on EMIS and analyze the data collection/update/interoperability process, including national and international best practices and policies applied, available national studies, evaluations and reports, and data from relevant institutions. | The desk review report containing main findings and recommendations for policy development | 3 working days |
| 2. | - Conduct relevant interviews and focus group discussions with MER departments, UNICEF, Centre of ICT in Education (CICTE), e-Governance Agency Moldova, local departments of education, educational institutions, and other relevant actors  - Apply analytical methodology and tools to interviews and data | -List of interviewed institutions/people  - A summary report on the key findings | 5 working days |
| 3. | Develop the draft of the Government Decision and EMIS instruction manual/guide (Romanian) and submit to the MER and UNICEF for review and comments | First draft of the Government Decision and Order instruction manual/guide developed | 10 working days |
| 4 | Based on received feedback, finalized versions of both documents are submitted for official approval and implementation. | Final drafts of Government Decision of EMIS regulation and of Order of EMIS instruction manual/guide developed | 2 working days |
| 5. | Following the public consultations, the consultant will support MER with the finalization of the documents. | Public consultation conducted and final version of the Government Decision provided to MER | 2 working days |
|  | **Total:** | | 22 working days |

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

1. Reporting requirements

The consultant will work under the guidance of the UNICEF Project Officer and in close collaboration with UNICEF Education. The consultant will report to the UNICEF Project Officer with the Education Officer and Education Specialist in copy, who will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance on his/her performance and all other necessary support so to achieve objectives of the consultancy, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to consultant’s 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 (in Word format) in Romanian and/or in English. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to the Project Officer by email, with the Education Officer in copy.

1. 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.

1. Qualifications and experience

* University degree in Information Technology, Communication and Information Engineering, Law, Business and Administration, or equivalent qualifications in a relevant field.
* Minimum 5 years of working experience in the relevant field.
* Proven experience in providing consultancy services in area of ICT and/or digitalization of the education sector.
* Proven experience in policy development and analytical work (i.e. Government Decision development, programmes, action plans etc).
* Demonstrated experience of work with the international institution/organization in the digital sector is a strong asset.
* Demonstrated experience of work with the Government and/or e-Governance Agency of the Republic of Moldova in the education sector is an asset.
* Excellent analytical thinking, verbal and written communication skills both at technical level and policy level.
* Fluency in Romanian and working knowledge in English is required. Knowledge of another official UN language or a local language is an asset.

1. **Content of technical proposal**

The applicant shall title the email e.g. Application Development of the **EMIS regulation and instruction manual/guide** and attach the following:

* 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 to complete the tasks/deliverables described in the Terms of Reference in MDL.

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.

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

In case when a Moldovan resident is selected for contracting, MDL will serve as contract currency, converted at the UN exchange rate applicable at contract signature date.

**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.

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| *Technical evaluation criteria for selection* | *Evaluation Scale Points* |
| 1. Academic degree in Information Technology, Communication and Information Engineering, Law, Business and Administration, or equivalent qualifications in a relevant field | 5 |
| 1. Minimum 5 years of working experience in the relevant field | 15 |
| 1. Proven experience in providing consultancy services in area of ICT and/or digitalization of the education sector | 15 |
| 1. Proven experience in policy development and analytical work (i.e. Government Decision development, programmes, action plans) | 10 |
| 1. Demonstrated experience of work with the international institution/organization in the digital sector is a strong asset | 5 |
| 1. Demonstrated experience of work with the Government and/or e-Governance Agency of the Republic of Moldova in the education sector is an asset | 10 |
| 1. Excellent analytical thinking, verbal and written communication skills both at technical level and policy level | 5 |
| 8. Fluency in Romanian and working knowledge in English is required. Knowledge of  another official UN language or a local language is an asset | 5 |
| **Total score (minimum 50 points required for technical qualification)** | **70** |

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. **Estimated cost of contract**
2. **Payment schedule**

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

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| **Deliverable**  **(delivered according to the timeline agreed upon with UNICEF)** | **Proportion of payment** |
| Deliverable 1 & 2 | 30% |
| Deliverable 3 & 4 | 60% |
| Deliverable 5 | 10% |

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 Project Officer and Education Officer of UNICEF Moldova. 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 may require local travels in order to conduct in-person visits and interviews with the different government authorities, as per their availability. The consultant is expected to cover costs, arrange and schedule such visits, including transportation. The UNICEF office will facilitate introductions to key informants.

1. Support provided by UNICEF

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the work, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to the performance and quality of work. MER and 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:

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**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):

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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 Contractor will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines[[1]](#footnote-2). The Contractor should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty while interacting with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Furthermore, the Contractor should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information. All participants should be informed about the context and purpose of the Assessment, as well as about the confidentiality of the information shared. The Contractor is allowed to use documents and information provided only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.

As per the [DHR PROCEDURE ON CONSULTANTS AND INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTORS](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 contractor 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 or individual contract 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 and Individual Contractors. Consultants and individual contractors 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.

Selected candidates are subject to confirmation of fully vaccinated status against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) with a World Health Organization (WHO)-endorsed vaccine, which must be met prior to taking up the assignment. It does not apply to consultants who will work remotely and are not expected to work on or visit UNICEF premises, programme delivery locations, or directly interact with communities UNICEF works with, nor to travel to perform functions for UNICEF for the duration of their consultancy contracts.

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. UNEG Guidelines <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)