# UNICEF Moldova

# Terms of Reference

**National Individual Consultant to support the Ministry of Education and Research in the review and development of the new National Curriculum documents for the sections related to the taxonomy of competencies and innovation**

**Location:** Chisinau

**Duration and timeline: 42 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 for the selected sections. The consultant will also conduct the public consultations and develop the reports on the results of public consultations.

# Objectives of the consultancy

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

1. Review the existing Reference Framework for National Curriculum (RFNC) to help address the forms of exclusion and to ensure full alignment with the education sector policies.
2. Analysis of the structure of the school curriculum based on the experiences of other countries.
3. Elaboration of the taxonomy and set of competences that will be included in the Reference Framework for the National Curriculum (RFNC).
4. Elaboration of the new generation disciplinary curriculum structure.
5. Elaboration of specifications for new curricular products: Digitization and innovative platforms.
6. Development of the section *Competencies: Specific to subjects, competency units (sub-competencies)* of Methodology for the Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation
7. Drafting of the section *Criteria and quality indicators in curriculum development for the STEAM education field* of the Methodology for the Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation
8. Development of a robust Methodology for Curriculum Development
9. Conduct national consultations of the drafts developed.

# Details of how the work should be delivered

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 be part of a team of experts and will work under the guidance of a lead expert selected by UNICEF. He/she 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, research institutions and university networks.
* **Focus on youth**, with whom the transformation in education starts.

# Deliverables and delivery dates

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| **Tasks** | **Deliverable** | **Timeline\*** |
| ***Activity 1. Review the existing Reference Framework for National Curriculum (RFNC)*** | | |
| 1. Develop a report/study aimed at addressing forms of exclusion and ensuring direct connections with policies in the educational sector (*Component - Achieving educational goals, the taxonomy of competencies, and implementation through the curriculum and ensuring interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary connections, integrating new educational approaches*) and its completeness for the subject-specific curriculum based on the proposed study methodology. | Report on main findings | 3 days |
| 1. Develop recommendations and methodological tools in drafting the new RFNC to address forms of exclusion and ensure direct connections with policies in the educational sector (Component - Achieving educational goals, the taxonomy of competencies, and implementation through the curriculum and ensuring interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary connections, integrating new educational approaches) and its completeness for the subject-specific curriculum based on the proposed methodology. | Recommendations and methodological tools for improving the new RFNC to ensure the fair and justified distribution of instructional time per competence (criteria and their rationale). | 4 days |
| 1. Conduct public consultations based on the draft report/study (preparing the agenda, identifying the target group). Drafting the report on the public consultations conducted with the identified target group. | * 1 round table x 0,5 day facilitated * Report on the public consultations conducted with the identified target group. | 1 day |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **8 days, in November 2024** |
| ***Activity 2. Develop a new gender responsive and inclusive RFNC*** | | |
| 1. Develop the section: *The Curriculum competency system. Developing the taxonomy and set of competencies as an integral part of the RFNC, the methodology for integration into the structure of subject-specific curricula*, as well as exemplifying the specific methods for developing these competencies through subject-specific curricula. | The taxonomy of competencies and the methodology for integrating them into the structure of subject-specific curricula, along with examples of specific methods for developing these competencies across all school subjects. | 4 days |
| 1. Analysis of the curriculum structure for compulsory subjects in the standard educational plan based on the experience of other countries. | The report with the results of the curriculum analysis based on the experiences of other countries (in Romanian) | 2 days |
| 1. Develop the section *Curricular documents. Developing the structure for a new generation of curriculum for school subjects*, excluding integrated subjects, of the RFNC and the step-by-step algorithm for subject curriculum authors. | The structure of the new generation curriculum and the operational algorithm for subject curriculum authors. | 3 days |
| 1. Develop the Implementation *of the National Curriculum. Developing Specifications for New Curricular Products: Digitization and Innovative Platforms* of the RFNC | Specifications for developing new curricular products: Digitization and Innovative Platforms developed | 3 days |
| 1. Conduct public consultations of the RFNC - 1 Round Table (max. 125 participants). | * 1 Round Table (max. 125 participants) * Interim Report Completed with the Target Group | 2 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **14 days, during November - December 2024** |
| **Activity 3. Development of a robust Methodology for the Evaluation of Curriculum Implementation** | | |
| 1. Development of the section *Evaluation of the component "competencies: specific to subjects, competency units (sub-competencies)"* | The section *Evaluation of the component "Competencies: specific to subjects, competency units (sub-competencies)”* developed | 5 days |
| 1. Development of the section *Criteria and indicators for evaluating the learned/assessed curriculum. Methodological tools and Instructions for experts* | The section *Criteria and indicators for evaluating the learned/assessed curriculum. Methodological tools and instructions for experts* developed | 5 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **10 working days, during February – March 2025** |
| **Activity 4. Development of a robust Methodology for Curriculum Development** | | |
| 1. Development of the section component *"Competencies: specific to subjects, competency units (sub-competencies)"* | The section Component *"Competencies: specific to subjects, competency units (sub-competencies)"* developed | 4 days |
| 1. Drafting of the section *Criteria and quality indicators in curriculum development for the STEAM education field. Methodological tools and instructions for experts* | The section *Criteria and quality indicators in curriculum development for the STEAM education field. Methodological tools and instructions for experts* developed | 3 days |
| 1. Online presentation of the draft to academia. | * Online presentation delivered * Report on the results of the public consultation | 1 day |
| 4. 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 | 2 days |
| **Subtotal:** |  | **10 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.
    - 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.

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 | 30 % |
| Deliverable 4 | 30% |

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, 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 mainly performed 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. Individual 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 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)