**UNICEF Moldova**

**TERM OF REFERENCE**

**Individual consultancy on supporting the development of Social Policies and Public Finance Management.**

**Location:** Chisinau, Moldova and/or remote (based on agreement with selected candidate)

**Duration and timeline: 106 workings days** (within a 11-month period from September 2024 to July 2025)

1. **Background**

National policy reforms have paved the way for Moldova to achieve SDGs. Many reforms still need to be further developed and implemented to support Moldova's inclusive growth. Moldova's social policies are grappling with several challenges, including coverage gaps that leaves the most deprived groups without support, fragmented programs that hinder effective service delivery, and ineffectiveness of social spending that prevent resources from reaching those who need them the most.

The Government launched transformative reforms of its Social Protection and Education systems to enhance governance, quality and access. With technical assistance provided by UNICEF, both Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the Ministry of Education and Research developed strategy documents on the development of social assistance and education, both of which were called RESTART reforms. Within this, the Ministries intend to improve access to social protection and education services and strengthen financial sustainability. Technical interventions provided by UNICEF aim to strengthen the local line offices and ensure better coordination between the central and local levels. UNICEF also seeks to support the mobilization, allocation, and utilization of domestic public financial resources to enhance social outcomes and reduce poverty and inequality.

For this purpose, technical assistance on governance and management, structural reforms, public finance, administration of the delivery chain, and capacity building are provided. The responsibility for the overall social protection and public finance technical assistance of the work lies with the UNICEF Social Policy Section, whereas education streamlines lies with UNICEF Education section.

1. **Purpose of the Consultancy**

The consultant will support UNICEF and key partners in implementing current activities on social policy, carry out costing assessments of various interventions with main focus on education and social protection, administration based on need and delivery of key programmes and strengthen the capacity of key partners at national and local levels.

1. **Objectives of the Consultancy**

The two primary objectives of the consultancy are as follows:

* **Support the provision of UNICEF's technical assistance in social policy reforms.**The consultant will support the UNICEF Social Policy team, collaborate with other UN agencies, social sector ministries, government entities, CSOs, and other stakeholders. This will involve supporting, reviewing, and refining the activities and outputs, as well as drafting concept notes on good practices, administration and delivery chain, and public finance management for social protection and education, including refugee integration (e.g. costings, programme adjustments). The consultant will participate in coordination meetings with UN agencies, MLSP, MER and other stakeholders.
* **The consultant will play an important role in sharing knowledge and capacity building, including management, legal framework, administration, digitalization, shock-responsive, public finance (costings and funding formulas) and other modules.** Working closely with Social Policy Team and collaborating with national and local authorities, including the technical teams, and policy specialists, the consultant will deliver capacity-building and knowledge sharing activities to government staff (at national and local levels).

The consultant is also expected to be responsive to additional tasks related to her/his area of expertise and within the scope of this TOR, as requested by the UNICEF Social Policy Specialist. The consultant should be ready to perform related tasks in support of the country office objectives related to administration system strengthening, and capacity-building goals and objectives as part of technical assistance in the area of Social Policy.

1. **Details of how the work should be delivered.**

The consultancy requires a part-time engagement and aims to provide technical, coordination and advocacy support to UNICEF in child-sensitive policies, public finance management (with focus on social protection and education) and capacity-building. The consultant will participate in weekly meetings with the Social Policy Team and UNICEF team to update the work progress, challenges, and implementation of work. The consultant will develop a detailed working plan under the guidance of UNICEF’s Social Policy Specialist and in coordination with the Education Specialist.

1. **Deliverables and delivery dates**

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| **Tasks**  | **Deliverables**  | **Timeline\***  |
| **Activity 1:**  1. Review relevant documents, publications, data and reports, including the Project Document on Digitalization of Social Protection, RESTART reform strategy document, Public Finance Management documents, Capacity Building Modules, Education policy documents (including but not limited to Strategy “Education 2030”, Inclusive Education Development Program in the Republic of Moldova, 2024-2027), and other relevant documents. Consult with UNICEF and develop a work plan for the consultancy.

 1. Provide technical assistance in integrating refugees from Ukraine into national social protection and education, carry out analysis, identify good practices and cost estimates, and elaborate various variables and scenarios, as well as policy and legal implications on the extension of coverage.
 | * Consultancy working plan for 2024 and 2025

       * A policy brief on the integration of refugees into national social protection programmes

  | 10 working days (by 27 September 2024) |
| **Activity 2:**  1. Contribute to designing a ‘Cash Plus’ model to scale up and sustain effective and inclusive social policies for children, especially during emergencies and humanitarian settings.

 1. Provide technical assistance on public finance management, focusing on costing and financing gap estimates and fiscal analysis of social policy-related sectors (education and social protection) and contribute to fiscal space analysis
 |  * Cash plus framework
* Concept note on Shock-Responsive social protection
* A fiscal space analysis is reviewed and finalized
* Costing estimations for integration of refugees into national social protection and education systems
 | 22 working days(by 29 November 2024) |
| **Activity 3** 1. Provide technical assistance on social spending on social protection, support and contribute to budget brief and estimations, including analysis of social expenditure.

 1. Provide technical assistance on public finance for education, analysis of education spending, including its efficiency and effectiveness, and develop a new financing formula for inclusive education and monitoring tool for implementing the new funding formula for preschool education kindergartens.
 |  * Contribute to budget brief on social protection (10-15 pages)

  * New financing formula for inclusive education
* New monitoring tool for implementation of the new funding formula for kindergartens
 | 18 working days(by 31 January 2025) |
| **Activity 4**  1. Contribute to the cross-sectoral development of the European Child Guarantee Framework and implementation of EU Social Rights Pillar recommendations.

 1. Contribute to development of e-learning platform/modules on social protection, define the interventions and associated capacity and technology requirements.

  |  * European Child Guarantee is reviewed and finalized
* Concept note on e-learning platform
 | 16 working days (by 28 March 2025)  |
| **Activity 5**1. Provide technical assistance on governance and network reorganization of education departments, support and contribute to policy dialogue, and impact analysis of expenditure.

 1. Contribute to capacity building on effective administration, legal framework, administration, digitalization, shock-responsive social protection and public finance.
 |  * Concept note on network reorganization of education departments (10 - 20 pages)

 * Deliver at least 3 workshops at national and local levels
 | 20 working days (by 30 May 2025)  |
| **Activity 6** 1. Provide technical support to the UNICEF Social Policy team, supporting them with developing and reviewing technical reports, preparing brief analyses, and costing interventions for social policy-related sectors.
 |  * At least 6 technical reports reviewed.
* Cost universal childcare benefits
* Final report on deliverables (10 pages)

  | 20 working days (by 31 July 2025) |

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

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the individual consultant, under the guidance of UNICEF, will:

* Review and adjust as necessary the policy briefs and documents and work plan for the assignment, including the data collection, as per UNICEF recommendations.
* Conduct briefing and de-briefing meetings with UNICEF, as well as other partners as required;
* Review and adjust if necessary, the desk review of relevant documents and brief notes;

Changes to the agreed dates for deliverables must be mutually agreed in writing by UNICEF and the consultant.

1. **Reporting requirements**

The consultant will report to the UNICEF Social Policy Specialist, 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. Also, the consultant will work closely with the Education Specialist and Social Policy Team.

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 deliverables electronically (in Word format) and in English. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to the Social Policy Specialist and Education Specialist (education deliverables), with the Social Policy Team members 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**

Technical background and experience required:

* Advanced university degree (Masters, or PhD) in political and social sciences, economics, social sciences, public policy or international development policy.
* Ten years of professional experience in social policy and/or public policy is required.
* Extensive experience in qualitative analysis and quantitative work is required.
* Knowledge of social policy system of Moldova, or Eastern European countries is advantage.
* Demonstrated ability to produce clear, succinct analytical policy briefs is required.
* Previous research experience on social policy related sectors, such as child protection, education, or health is strong asset.
* Demonstrated relevant working experience with government officials and local authorities, and UN agencies is a strong advantage.
* Proficiency in written and oral communication skills in English is required. Knowledge of Romanian and Russian is a strong advantage.
1. **Content of technical proposal**

Please provide your Curriculum Vitae.

* At least two samples of reports or policy briefs in Romanian and English
* At least two samples of costings estimations
1. **Content of financial proposal**

The applicant should fill in the Financial Offer Template and specify the consultancy fee, per day of work, requested for the tasks described in the Terms of Reference in USD, as well as breakdown of international travel and daily subsistence allowance (DSA) costs if applicable (as specified in paragraph 14 of this ToR).

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 Moldova national is selected, MDL will serve as contract currency, converted at the UN exchange rate applicable at contract signature date.

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:

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| **Deliverable (delivered according to the timeline agreed upon with UNICEF)**  | **Proportion of payment**  |
| * A detailed working plan for 2024-2025 and policy brief on the integration of refugees into national social protection programmes
 | 10%  |
| * Cash plus framework, Concept note on Shock-Responsive social protection.
* A fiscal space analysis and costing estimations for integration of refugees into national social protection and education systems
 | 20%  |
| * Budget brief on social protection (10-15 pages)
* New financing formula for inclusive education
* New monitoring tool for implementation of the new funding formula for kindergartens
 | 20%  |
| * European Child Guarantee
* Concept note on e-learning platform
 | 15%  |
| * Concept note on network reorganization of education departments (10 - 20 pages)
* Deliver at least 6 workshops at national and local levels
 | 20%  |
| * At least 5 technical reports reviewed.
* Cost universal childcare benefits
* Final report on deliverables (10 pages)
 | 15% |

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 Social Policy Specialist 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 will require in-country missions, in order to conduct in-person visits and interviews with the different government officials. The consultancy work envisages 10 missions up to 33 working days in Chisinau, Moldova.

The consultant is expected to cover costs, arrange and schedule such visits, including transportation. The UNICEF office will facilitate introductions to key informants.

**16. 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. 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.

**16. Child Safeguarding**

Is this project/assignment considered as “Elevated Risk Role” 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 and Child Safeguarding FAQs and Updates

**17. Ethical considerations**

The Consultant will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines1. 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. 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 can use documents and information provided only for the tasks related to these terms of reference.

As per the internal PROCEDURE ON INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS, together with the Notification letter, the consultant will be sent the link to 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.