**UNICEF Moldova**

**Terms of Reference**

**Tittle: National Individual Consultant to support Ministry of Education and Research (MER) in the Republic of Moldova in the coordination of the Refugee Response to ensure the inclusion of refugee children in the Moldovan education system.**

**Location: MER -** Chisinau, Republic of Moldova.

**Duration:** **6 Months** (1 June – 1 December 2024)

**Reporting to:** UNICEF Moldova Country Office (MCO) Education Specialist

**Background**

Two years into the conflict in Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter referred to as Moldova) has seen an influx of over 970,000 individuals seeking refuge from the crisis. Of this staggering number, approximately 120,000 refugees, 44 percent of whom are children, currently reside in Moldova, constituting nearly 4 percent of the country's total population (Source: UNHCR Data Portal).

In response to this crisis, several sector coordination working groups were established under the Inter Agency Refugee Coordination team including for the Education sector. An Education Refugee Sector Working Group, under the leadership of MER, was established to enhance and strengthen the coordination of partners’ education interventions devoted to support the Government of Moldova in providing access to quality and inclusive education in safe and protective learning environments for refugee children living in Moldova.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the temporary protection measures in January 2023, almost on year after the war on Ukraine, as an exceptional measure to provide protection, including access to services, to displaced persons from Ukraine who meet the eligibility criteria. Beneficiaries of temporary protection have access to employment, accommodation, education for children, emergency and primary healthcare as well as social assistance services. The application to acquire temporary protection status started in early March 2023 and the deadline was extended again for another year starting from 1 March 2024. Under the leadership of MER, UNICEF co-chairs the Education Refugee Working Group Working which provides the appropriate evidence-based, professional expertise in support to the MER in Education in Emergencies planning and policy making. One of the key roles of the Education Refugee Working Group is to support the MER in integrating emergency planning and response capacity into a standardized Ministry function.

Despite all collaborative efforts, Moldovan schools are still witnessing a low enrolment rate of Ukrainian children. An estimated 37,000 school-age refugee children residing in the Republic of Moldova, and only 2,314 Ukrainian children are enrolled in kindergartens and schools according to MER data in March 2024. The remainder is believed to be learning online at home, while connecting to the online learning platforms of the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in Ukraine. This was also backed by the main findings of the Education Assessment and the MSNA, where around 54% of the sampled 794 households with children confirmed that their children were still receiving education online in the school year 2022/2023 while connecting to Ukrainian learning platforms.

Consequently, UNICEF MCO plans to support the MER by contracting the services of a national individual consultant to be based at the MER in Chisinau, with the purpose of strengthening MER’s capacity to manage the Education in Emergencies and ensure inclusion of refugee children in the Moldovan education system; this support is especially relevant given that MER and partners need to respond to the refugee crisis particularly on access to quality education and enrolment in schools, as well as to protect the gains towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is envisaged that such efforts will ensure a continuum of action between the emergency response and a mechanism for longer term preparedness planning that will help bridge the humanitarian-development nexus and ensure the implementation of the temporary protection measures to facilitate the access of refugee children in the Moldovan educational system.

1. **Purpose of the individual consultancy**

This consultancy aims to support the coordination and management of emergencies at the MER, including the ongoing process of capacity strengthening and institutionalizing emergency response within the ministry. The consultancy aims to extend the technical assistant (TA) that will be placed within the MER as a team member.

1. **Specific purpose of the individual consultancy**

The specific purposes of the consultancy a to:

(i) work closely with the MER management, relevant Heads of Directorates, Education Refugee Working Group and partners to support the MER in planning and responding to Education in Emergencies (EiE), and act as a focal point for refugee response and emergency at the MER. The consultant is also expected to work with the Ministry of Education and Research to strengthen the EiE functioning and liaising with the of Education Refugee Working Group.

(ii) Strengthen capacity of MER staff managing emergency response and coordination at national and district level including monitoring activities, data collection, assessments roll-out and information sharing.

1. Details of how the work should be delivered

Under the direct supervision of the UNICEF Education Specialist, the consultant will be integrated within the MER and will collaborate with the State Secretary at MER and work closely with the Education Refugee Working Group co-chairs (UNICEF and UNHCR), as well as partners and all relevant Heads of Directorates (HDs) at the MER.

1. Deliverables and delivery dates

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Deliverables** | **Timeframe** | **Percentage of payment** |
| 1. Support the MER in planning and coordinating the activities of the Education Refugee Working Group | 6 Education Sector Working Group meetings are conducted every month with clear meeting minutes developed and action points closely followed up by MER. | Last Thursday of each month. | 10% |
| 1. Conduct capacity development of relevant MER staff on EiE | At least 1 MER staff capacitated on different EiE components. | June – July 2024 | 15% |
| 1. Support planning and roll out of assessments conducted by partners and under the leadership of MER whenever needed. | At least 1 assessment conducted in coordination with MER. | August – September 2024 | 10% |
| 1. Support the MER staff in information management and data collection sharing regarding refugee children enrollment and attendance in schools. | Provision of 6 monthly disaggregated data reports on refugee children enrolled in schools by age, sex, education level and geographic location and provide trend analysis. | June – December 2024 | 5% |
| 1. Support MER in the development and roll-out of an Action Plan based on the Road map for the Full Inclusion of Refugee Children in the Education System in Moldova by 2027. | Action plan developed based on the MER Road Map as well as monitor action plan implementation. | June 2024 | 40% |
| 1. Submit Final Report to UNICEF covering:  * The enrollment procedure updates. * Key achievement and bottlenecks. * Support to UNICEF and the Implementing Partners (IPs) IPs in coordinating EiE projects and activities within the MER. * Assessments conducted.   Reports will be developed using a template to be shared by UNICEF | 1 Final Narrative Report. | December 2024 | 20% |

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

1. Reporting requirements

The consultant will report to UNICEF Education Specialist who will regularly communicate with the consultant and provide feedback and guidance on his/her performance and all other necessary support 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 Moldova Country Office. The consultant is expected to deliver each component of the workplan electronically (in Word format) in Romanian and English. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to UNICEF Education Specialist by email, with the Deputy Representative and Emergency Coordinator 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 the ToR.
* Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables.
* Quality of work.
* Demonstration of high standards of cooperation and communication with UNICEF and with counterparts.

1. Qualifications and experience
   * + Advanced University Degree in Education, Social Sciences or related field.
     + Minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in education policy development.
     + Proven experience in leading cross-sectoral education teams or another social field.
     + Proven experience of displaying very good analytical skills (copies of previous strategic, analytical works involving multidisciplinary teams to be provided).
     + Demonstrated strong knowledge of the education system in Moldova.
     + Familiarity with international, EU and European Commission policies and benchmarks in education and best European practices in the field of education.
     + Demonstrated experience of work with the Government of the Republic of Moldova in developing education strategies or another social field.
     + Fluency in Romanian, good command of English, both oral and written.

# Content of the 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 the Financial Proposal

The applicant should fill in the Financial Offer Template and specify the consultancy fee in MDL, to complete each deliverable. The fee must **be all-inclusive, reflecting also all associated administrative and transport/travel costs.**

The final selection will be based on the principle of “best value for money” i.e. achieving the desired outcome at the lowest possible fee.

The payment will be done upon the completion of each deliverable as detailed in the above matrix. If not provided by ToR, UNICEF will not reimburse costs not directly related to the assignment.

UNICEF will not pay further fees not detailed and included in the financial offer. The contract will 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 made in 5 instalments, upon submission and acceptance of the deliverables stipulated in the deliverables table above.

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

1. Definition of supervision arrangements

The selected consultant will work under direct supervision and in close consultation with UNICEF Education Specialist. Fees will be rendered upon written approval by the UNICEF Supervisor, and contingent upon the quality and achievement of deliverables.

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the selected consultant and provide formats for reports, feedback and guidance on performance and all other necessary support to achieve objectives of the document, as well as remain aware of any upcoming issues related to expert’s performance and quality of work.

1. Work location and official travel involved

The consultant will work within the MER premises in Chisinau. MER will secure an office and other work equipment.

The work might require local travels to conduct meeting, assessments, in-person visits and interviews with the different government authorities and partners.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, UNICEF will facilitate the contact with the MER and other relevant stakeholders and will provide timely feedback to all deliverables to be presented by the consultant. If need be, UNICEF will provide support in contacting other relevant stakeholders during the assessment process.

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:

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 CONSULTANT](https://unicef.sharepoint.com/sites/portals/RF/Regulatory%20Framework%20Library/DHR%20Procedure%20on%20Consultants%20-%20DHR_PROCEDURE_2018_005.pdf)S, 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 their 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)