

UNICEF Moldova
Terms of Reference

National Individual Consultancy: Project Manager (PM)

Project Title: Digital Innovation of Moldovan Education System

Location: Chişinău, Moldova (outposted to the Ministry of Education and Research)

Start Date of Consultancy: November 2022

Duration of contract: 11,5 months (with possible extension, based on performance evaluation)

Type of employment: Full-time

1. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic underlined the importance of digital transformation globally and nationally. In response to these new challenges, digital innovation and transformation became one of the highest priorities for the Moldovan system of education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during lockdowns, many students did not have access to ICT and were unable to continue their education online due to lack of devices, connectivity issues, as well as limited teacher knowledge of, and experience with online learning and teaching methods and lack of digital skills. Despite a rapid response, the COVID-19 pandemic had a marked impact on education. Reports¹ indicated that most pre-existing vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including:

- Most socially disadvantaged children experienced the greatest challenges in accessing remote education.
- Despite government and donor efforts, there is still a shortage of available IT equipment and disparities in access to devices, with 75% of vulnerable children and youth lacking devices, and 50% not being connected to the internet.
- Around 7% of children were enrolled in a school that was not able to ensure remote learning, and 21% in schools that ensured it only partially.
- Remote learning remained a challenge for about 16,000 students and 3000 teachers which do not have access to ICT technology.

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 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. 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 funding proposal and a programme, and successfully secured financing through the GPE Multiplier Fund for 2022-2025. The funding will be 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) for the Multiplier Fund.

¹ https://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/library/inclusive_growth/social-and-economic-impact-assessment-of-covid-19-in-the-republi.html

The Multiplier Grant will be used to establish the education ICT/Digitization policy and strategic framework which will allow for a prioritized approach to providing ICT resources from the programme to the most disadvantaged. In the medium-term it is expected to contribute to improved learning outcomes, retention of children in the system, increased enrolment of minorities and greater system efficiency through timely evidence-based decision making, improved access for the most vulnerable and improved learning outcomes across the sector, as a result more children accessing better digital learning materials managed by trained teachers.

In the longer run, the Multiplier Grant Programme is expected to improve the way in which ICT is used through identifying the core areas of the curriculum that can benefit from digital support and provide the materials and strategies for teachers to use them. Also, the system efficiency will be improved by better data collection and use by managers and administrators, through strengthening the current Education Management Information System (EMIS) and building the data management capacities of relevant staff. In this context, a modality to follow children through the system and so better identify children at risk of falling behind or dropping out of school will be established.

To implement the above-mentioned programme, a Programme Implementation Unit (PIU) will be established to assist MER, therefore UNICEF is seeking for the national consultant who will serve as a Project Manager (PM) to coordinate relevant activities.

2. Purpose of the assignment of the consultancy

The Project Manager (PM) will manage planning, implementation, and reporting of the Multiplier Grant Programme. The incumbent will serve as the Head of the PIU and manage its team (Finance and Procurement Specialist, M&E Specialist and Project Assistant) to ensure effective delivery of project activities, outputs, and results. He/she will also serve as the technical lead of the PIU and technical advisor to the MER.

The consultancy is expected to be carried out within the period November 2022 – September 2023 (with possibility of extension).

3. Objectives of the consultancy

- Assume general responsibility for the day-to-day management, planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting on all project objectives and activities.
- Ensure effective coordination of the activity of the Multiplier Grant Programme Steering Committee (MGPSC) Secretariat.
- Facilitate communication, collaboration, and networking within the project, including with relevant donors, regional organisations, NGOs, and key stakeholders involved in the project.

4. Details of how the work should be delivered

The Project Manager (PM) will become the leader of the PIU and along with other complementary personnel, Finance and Procurement Specialist, M&E Specialist and Project Assistant will work together as a team to achieve the programme outcomes.

Under the supervision of the UNICEF Moldova Education Officer (NOB), the incumbent will oversee the implementation of the Multiplier Grant Programme and work with MER, Office of the Deputy-Prime Minister for Digitalization, Ministry of Finance, LPAs, national and international NGOs, private sector, etc. to implement

the Multi-Annual Work Plan (MAWP) and report on project activities, outputs, and results on a timely basis. The Project Manager (PM) will be responsible for all technical, planning, managerial, monitoring, reporting and progress of the programme.

5. Deliverables

Tasks	Deliverable	Timeline*
Support in the elaboration of the Programme Operation Manual (POM) and the MAWP	POM, MAWP elaborated and approved	By end of December 2022
Support in establishing the project account	Project account secured	By end of December 2022
Organization of the meeting of the MGPSC to approve POM and MAWP	MGPSC meeting secured Minutes of the meeting signed with MER and UNICEF	January 2023
Ensure the development of Terms of Reference for consultants and contractors	ToRs prepared	Throughout the year, as per MAWP
Insurance of the successful management of the programme through the development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project reports. ▪ Drafts and final contracts. ▪ Action plans for training and capacity building programmes. ▪ Minutes of meetings for confirmation of the expressions of interest/ proposals. ▪ Notifications of contracts awarded. ▪ Other reports and documents as required** 	Management documentation available	Throughout the year, as per MAWP
Provide all programme outputs to the MGPSC for approval	Outputs provided	Throughout the year, as per agreed frequency with MER and MGPSC
Submit quarterly narrative reports to the MGPSC, adjustments and changes to the next quarter activity plan	Reports submitted	Quarterly

*** Exact deliverables and deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signature.**

** All relevant materials e.g., concepts of the meetings, agenda, lists of participants PPTs, visual presentations, minutes etc. will be presented for endorsement to MER and UNICEF, as indicated above.

More details can be found in the Annex to the current ToR.

The Project Manager (PM) shall:

- Coordinate and monitor the activities described in the MAWP and report to the MGPSC, Local Education Group (LEG), GA.
- Assist and support the stakeholders, relevant units of MER involved in the implementation of the activities related to ICT.
- Ensure management including managing risks, assessing activities, developing recommendations of the contracts related to development/procurement of ICT.

- Coordinate and monitor the implementation of the contracts related to ICT; perform the risk and vulnerability assessment of the IT activities.
- Assist the Financial and Procurement Specialist by providing technical feedback during the selection process of the companies that will be mainly in charge of the programme activities related to ICT solutions.
- Ensure consistency between various project elements and related activities provided or funded by programme partners.
- Monitor the progress and adjust ensure the completion of activities, suggest, and constantly prepare programme reviews where required to ensure that it meets programme standards.
- Maintain daily communication and working relationships with MER, MGPSC, GA, GPE Secretariat etc. by communicating successes and new developments and actively brief them on opportunities for cooperation.
- Participate in field visits to supervise the progress of the beneficiaries on project implementation as required by the POM.

6. Reporting requirements

The Project Manager (PM) will report directly to the Director of the Programme (Minister or State Secretary) from MER, MGPSC and other relevant bodies and stakeholders. Quarterly narrative reports will be elaborated and submitted to the MGPSC for progress review, agreement of adjustments and changes to the next quarter activity plan. At the annual meetings organized by the MGPSC, a specific report on the programme progress will be presented and discussed with the invited stakeholders.

The UNICEF Education Officer (NOB) will regularly communicate with the Project Manager (PM) 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 his/her performance and quality of work.

All activities and deliverables undertaken by the incumbent shall be discussed and planned in consultation with the GA. The Project Manager (PM) is expected to deliver each component of the workplan electronically (in Word format) and in English. At each stage, the deliverable shall be sent to the MGPSC, with the UNICEF Education Officer (NOB) in copy.

7. 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.

8. Qualifications and experience

- Advanced academic degree in Information Technology, Communication and Information Engineering, Informational Management, Information Security, Software Engineering, or equivalent qualifications in a relevant field.
- A minimum of 5 years of professional experience in project management, including the management of IT solutions.
- Experience in design/implementation or monitoring of development programmes in IT. Previous experience with international funding organizations will be considered as an asset.
- Familiarity with the education system of the Republic of Moldova and special education needs.
- Demonstrated experience of aligning project goals with wider development frameworks for long term benefits and understanding of cross-sectoral national planning processes.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills, both at technical level and policy level.
- Advanced knowledge of English and strong writing skills required.
- Fluency in Romanian is required. Knowledge of Russian is desired.

9. Content of technical proposal

- Cover Letter containing information on similar experience and assignments, references in the past 5 years (max. 300 words)
- CV (*Curriculum Vitae*)

Annex: Short Sample or links to related work previously conducted by the consultant, evidence in the form of job completion certificate, contracts and/or references.

10. Content of financial proposal

The financial proposal shall specify an all-inclusive monthly fee in MDL requested for the tasks described in the present ToR, based on the full-time work schedule envisaged. The payments will be rendered based on the monthly reports on performed duties and implemented activities.

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 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.

11. 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 will 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 $\text{Points (x)} = (\text{lowest offer} / \text{offer x}) * 30$.

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.

12. Payment schedule

The payments will be rendered monthly, as per the agreed fee and consistent to the numbers of days worked, after approval of deliverables reflected in the contract and subsequently, as approved and reflected in the monthly task schedules, in line with the specifications of the point 5 above.

All deliverables must be timely submitted, in line with the agreed timeliness’ of the monthly priority schedules, as specified under point 5 above. Monthly reports must be approved in writing by Director of the Programme (Minister or State Secretary) from MER and UNICEF before payment is effectuated.

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.

Deliverable (delivered according to the timeline agreed upon with UNICEF)	Proportion of payment
November 2022 – September 2023	Monthly fee payable at the end of each month

13. Definition of supervisory arrangements

The Project Manager (PM) will work under the oversight of the Director of the Programme (Minister or State Secretary) from MER, LEG, MGPSC, GA.

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

14. Work arrangements and official travel involved

The incumbent will serve in the located offices of MER and manage the PIU to ensure effective delivery of project activities, outputs, and results. Home-based teleworking as a temporary alternative working arrangement can be applied whenever necessary, although not on a full-time basis.

MER will provide the Consultant with necessary support to complete the assignment: project documents necessary for assignment accomplishment, necessary work conditions, including office space, telephone, fax and other office equipment and supplies.

The work will require local travels to conduct in-person visits and interviews with the different local authorities, as per their availability. The UNICEF office will facilitate introductions to key informants.

The Individual Contractor will be entitled to Paid Time Off (PTO) credit at the rate of one-half days (1.5 days) for each full month of service, to be credited on the last calendar day of the month.

15. Support provided by UNICEF

UNICEF will regularly communicate with the specialist and provide feedback and guidance and necessary support so to achieve objectives of the programme, 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. 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:

17. Ethical considerations

The Contractor will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines². 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, together with the Notification letter, the contractor will be sent the link on UNICEF’s learning platform, Agora, 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.

18. 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

² UNEG Guidelines <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>

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.

Details of how the work should be delivered

At the initial stage, the POM will be developed by the PIU with MER. It will define the country context and objectives of the programme, the programme theory of change, descriptions of the key areas of support, gender and inclusive education requirements, programme management and fiduciary management. PIU will also develop the MAWP that will describe the vision and policy priorities, identification of the key strategies for achieving the programme deliverables, including the human, technical, and financial resources required, remedial actions, costing and financing, development of a realistic costed action plan, defining the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation arrangements. MAWP will provide a framework for budget and management decisions by outlining staged implementation of activities, with information on timing, roles, responsibilities, and costs.

Technical working groups will be created, and in-depth discussions will be held with various stakeholders, particularly, members of the LEG, all departments of MER, LPAs, Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development, Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance (RCPPA), Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance Service (PPAS) and Resource Centres in Educational Institutions (RCEI), District Deputy Heads responsible for social issues, Heads of Education and Financing Departments, school principals. Meetings with key personnel involved in education at both strategic and operational levels will be held to gain different perspectives on common issues, especially regarding the key strategic priorities and activities under the operational plan. The key objective of in-depth working groups with all partners will envisage the development of the concept of the national education digital standards, the achievement of long-term strategic outputs and outcomes in the process of the education sector digitization. The programme will cover primary and secondary education and will recognize the need for coherence among subsectors. The learner will be defined as the central beneficiary of the education system, with recognized rights and needs.

PIU will strengthen the ministerial capacity in the field of education sector digitization by supporting MER departments and ensure timely activity and procurement and disbursement of funds on a day-to-day basis the management of the programme. The MER will be responsible for the coordination of the process, organization of capacity building activities, formulation of key strategic priorities, provision of inputs on behalf of MER and drafting specific parts of the programme documentation. High level strategic and policy decision making is the responsibility of the Government and specifically the MER. In the spirit of aid effectiveness MER established the LEG which has the role of supporting the Ministry in policy and strategic discussions as well as ensuring that there is coherence, complementarity, and coordination around different activity.

The final stage will include the equipment of general education institutions with appropriate communication technologies, phased in-service training for all teachers and administrators; improved educational management information system (EMIS); enhanced system resilience to respond to crises.