

UNICEF Moldova

Terms of Reference

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

Location: MER - Chisinau, Republic of Moldova.

Duration: 6 Months (1 September 2023– 1 February 2024)

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

Background

The war in Ukraine has had a devastating humanitarian impact on children and families from Ukraine. UNHCR estimates that as of August 2023, roughly 5.8 million refugees from Ukraine have fled Ukraine since late February 2022 and are currently present in European countries.

The Republic of Moldova shares a large border with Ukraine. Since late February 2022, Moldova has faced a huge humanitarian crisis with large influx of refugees entering Moldova due to the conflict in Ukraine. According to the UNHCR Data Portal, currently there are 109,226 Ukrainian refugees remaining in Moldova, including 50,092 children.

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 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 till the 13th of August 2023. 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 (around 4% out of the total number of children residing in Moldova). According to the latest numbers provided by MER in June 2023, only 1,819 children are officially enrolled in schools, of which 704 children are enrolled pre-schools.

Consequently, UNICEF MCO plans to support the MER n through a consultant to be based at the MER in Chisinau to strengthen the 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 and development nexus and ensure the implementation of the temporary protection measures to facilitate the access of refugee children in the Moldovan educational system.

2. 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.

3. Specific purpose of the individual consultancy:

The specific purposes of the consultancy are 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 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.

4. Details of how the work should be delivered

Under the direct supervision of the EiE Specialist the consultant will be embedded within the MER and will have a technical reporting line to the State Secretary at MER and will 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.

5. Deliverables and delivery dates

Activity	Deliverables	Timeframe	Percentage 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	Once every month.	20 %

	points closely followed up by MER		
2. Conduct capacity development of relevant MER staff on EiE	3 of staff capacitated on different EiE components	September – December 2023	10 %
3. Support planning and roll out of assessments conducted by partners and under the leadership of MER whenever needed.	2 assessments conducted in coordination with MER.	September – December 2023	10 %
4. Support the MER staff in information management and data collection sharing regarding refugee children enrollment in schools.	Provision of 6 monthly disaggregated data reports on refugee children enrolled in schools by age, sex, education level and geographic location. 3 of communication and media campaigns key message on EiE that are developed with the support of the EiE consultant.	September – February 2023	30 %
5. Submit monthly reports to UNICEF: - the enrollment procedure updates - key achievement and bottlenecks - Support UNICEF and the Implementing Partners (IPs) IPs in coordinating EiE projects and activities within the MER Reports will be developed using a template to be shared by UNICEF	6 Monthly reports	Every last day of the month	30 %

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

6. Reporting requirements

The consultant will report to UNICEF EiE 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 MCO. 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 EIE Specialist by email, with the Deputy Representative and Emergency Coordinator 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 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. Content of the Financial Proposal

The applicant should fill in the Financial Offer Template and specify the consultancy fee in MDL per deliverables and specify the rate per day. The payment will be done upon the completion of each task as detailed in the above matrix. The fee must be all-inclusive, reflecting also all associated administrative and travel costs.

Other expenses related to the ToR assignments and deliverables, such as: (translation/interpretation costs, logistics) may be included in the financial offer unless specified that UNICEF will cover them separately (see paragraphs 13 and 14 below).

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.

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.

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 if necessary, may be supplemented by an interview.

<i>Technical evaluation criteria for selection</i>	<i>Evaluation Scale Points</i>
1. Advanced University Degree in Education, Social Sciences or related field.	10
2. Minimum of 5 years of relevant professional experience in education policy development.	15
3. Proven experience in leading cross-sectoral education teams or another social field.	5
4. Proven experience of displaying very good analytical skills (copies of previous strategic, analytical works involving multidisciplinary teams to be provided).	5
5. Demonstrated strong knowledge of the education system in Moldova	15
6. Familiarity with international, EU and European Commission policies and benchmarks in education and best European practices in the field of education.	5
7. Demonstrated experience of work with the Government of the Republic of Moldova in developing education strategies or other social fields	10
8. Fluency in Romanian, good command of English, both oral and written	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 $\text{Points (x)} = (\text{lowest offer} / \text{offer x}) * 30$.

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

13. 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

14. Definition of supervision arrangements

The selected consultant will work under direct supervision and in close consultation with UNICEF Chief of Education and Adolescent. 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.

15. Work location and official travel involved

The consultant will be based in the MER premises in Chisinau. MER will secure an office and other office furniture.

The work might require local travels to conduct meeting, assessments, in-person visits and interviews with the different government authorities and partners. In this case, MER will cover the consultant expected costs, arrange and schedule such visits, including transportation. UNICEF will only be responsible to pay for his/her DSA once travel has been confirmed.

16. Support provided by UNICEF

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. **17. 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](#)

18. Ethical considerations

The Contractor will ensure that the process is in line with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines¹. 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.

19. 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 (COVID19) 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

¹ UNEG Guidelines <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/102>

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.