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TERMS OF REFERENCE

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| Job Title: | National consultant to facilitate the co-design and co-development of the Smart Employment Planner software concept |
| Type of Contract: | Individual Contract (IC), overall estimated workload – up to 20 w/d |
| Duty Station: | Chisinau, Moldova |
| Expected duration of assignment: | August – November 2015 |

BACKGROUND

The development of human capital is viewed as a prerequisite for an inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Moreover, it is increasingly seen at the cornerstone for both advanced and emerging economies seeking to speed up economic development and address the challenges posed by the global economic crisis.

From the development perspective, the labor plays critical role for Moldova's socio-economic modernization, as it is one of the few resources available in the country. However, long hailed as a country with abundant labor resources, Moldova has increasingly found that labor (mostly as quality, but also quantity) has become its major development constraint¹, with Moldova's labor endowment suffering considerably in the last two decades. The prospects for the quantity of labor force available in the future are not necessarily brighter given continuous outward migration and dire demographic outlook.

This loss in the labor force was only partly offset by the improvements in the labor productivity, which remained the lowest in the CEE and Western CIS region². Capital and skill endowments are amongst chief determinants of the labor productivity³. In their turn, the skill endowment is largely dependent not only on the quality of the country's education system, but also on training programs provided by various institutions.

The Innovative Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Employment Project was designed to establish career centers in five most important regions of Moldova with the goal to train and assist qualified unemployed and graduates in obtaining relevant employment in Moldova, preventing brain-waste, as well as brain-drain, and supporting economic growth of the country. At present five SYSLAB Centers are already operational, i.e. Chisinau, Cahul, Balti, Rezina and Comrat.

1 Ana Popa, Alex Oprunenco, Report on Analysis of Constraints to Economic Growth, Government of Moldova, 2010

2 Ibidem

3 Alex Oprunenco, Policy Brief 01/2012, UNDP Policy Unit

FOCUS OF THE SYSLAB PROJECT

The Project is designed to establish career centers in five most important regions of Moldova with the goal to train and assist qualified unemployed, graduates and returning migrants in obtaining relevant employment in Moldova, preventing brain-waste, as well as brain-drain, and supporting economic growth.

The Project will achieve the following **objectives**:

1. Provide new technologies to labor market authorities;
2. Provide motivated labor force to private and public sectors;
3. Provide graduates with a better chance for relevant employment in Moldova;
4. Give unemployed improved employability.

Overall, the project shall contribute to the development, adaptation and implementation of new tools, technology and methods, for career development, job search and entrepreneurship in Moldova.

The Career Centers are focusing on the below **target groups**:

- new graduates, in order to prevent them from unemployment and to create job opportunities, and hence reduce/prevent brain-drain;
- unemployed irrespective of age, gender, ethnic background or education or work experience;
- returning migrants.
- single parents.

In achieving the project goals, the gender balance aspect will be taken into consideration, offering equal opportunities to both women and men to benefit from the Centers' services.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND IMPACT OF THE INTERVENTION

The specific objective of the intervention is to complement the services offered by the existing network of SYSLAB centers and reach out highly motivated skilled unemployed who are not capable to participate in full-time activities in any of the existing centers. More specifically, the intervention aims to co-design and co-develop a software solution, available online and offline, which would simulate the career advisory services and help unemployed plan out and reach their employment goals. Potential beneficiaries are unemployed women taking care of children, disabled, and youth not having sufficient means to cover cost of daily transportation to the existing SYSLAB centers. These persons often apply to UNDP Centers for individual consultations, which result in some cases in relevant employment. This is particularly the case of very motivated persons, capable to manage their job seeking agendas, pursuing very clear plans in mapping vacancies, etc. Authorities on local labor market are in many ways partially disconnected with the fast changing picture of unemployed and lack real time information on what are the needs of skilled unemployed, how these are searching for jobs, what kind of jobs are preferred, etc. Being partly disconnected means un-capable to promptly react and help skilled unemployed to enter local labor market. This is the case for skilled unemployed doctors/medical staff, teachers from rural areas, accountants, who are motivated to find a job.

The proposed solution, absolutely new to the market, **Smart Employment Planner** (SEP) will thus respond to two needs: First, it will allow unemployed who cannot afford daily commuting to the career development centers to enjoy career support in remote mode; and secondly, will provide the labor market policy makers “ethnographic” disaggregated data to inform labor market policies design and implementation. The software

will consist of: **Employment Planner**, **Forum**, **Job Seeker**, and **Alumni Network**, all on one platform available online and offline.

The planner shall work on mobile devices as well. It will generate daily and weekly employment individual plans, after proper registration. The planner, when used online, will permit real time interaction with the database, so that depending on the progress in job seeking, the system would update the plans and tools available, including short quizzes, online tailored courses, simulation videos. The online Forum would permit employed and unemployed to feed in real time data on labor opportunities, vacancies, and issues at community levels. The Seeker would allow to registered users to search in an online database of vacancies that will be placed by employers and career advisors in existing UNDP employability centers. Jobs announcements will be placed in “baskets” by field, specialization, complexity, type, location and trustworthiness. The Alumni Network ensures that the registered user remains in the system after graduation and could provide support to new registered members on Forum or similar.

The estimated impact on unemployed is that the Smart Planner software is used by at least 200 users per year and the employability of the users reaches at least 50%, i.e. at least 100 unemployed get a relevant job per year. The qualitative impact is improved livelihoods for at least 200 users and their families. At community and central levels policy makers have a real time information on job seeking pathways and behaviors, dynamics on labor market, employability problems and possibility to analyze user solutions. As the platform will be available for people from both banks of the Nistru River, including for unemployed in the conflict Transnistrian region, it will further consolidate access to labor market and build trust in local institutions.

SPECIFIC DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall:

- Uptake the generic concept and prototype of the Smart Employment Planner, developed by the Project team in preliminary consultations with the end-users;
- Conduct 4 focus groups with main future direct beneficiaries of the software, i.e. unemployed *women, youth, disabled and returning migrants*; develop a tailored questionnaire for the FGs; develop narrative summaries of the key needs perceived by targeted groups as it regards employment, job-seeking, job application, interaction with private sector and local authorities, job retention, among others, as well as to discover what is the expected level of the IT skills in our target audiences;
- Conduct 1 focus group with representatives of the private sector and 1 FG with representatives of the public authorities in charge of labor policies development and implementation;
- Organize a so-called Living Lab involving beneficiaries from various groups and conduct 4 structured co-design workshops involving interested and motivated unemployed, representatives of private sector and public authorities, to focus on key software instruments, i.e. **Employment Planner**, **Forum**, **Job Seeker**, and **Alumni Network**. Each co-design session shall last for up to 1 w/d and result in a draft prototype and a detailed manual for each instrument, to include description and functional characteristics;
- Conduct 1 final co-design session to combine the previously developed 4 manuals and ensure that the proposed software architecture and content is suitable for several devices, in particular PC and mobile phone; provide narrative and a detailed chart on how the various instruments shall be linked to each other to ensure maximum efficiency for the end-user and robustness of the software;

- Conduct a 1 w/d testing exercise once the software is developed and provide inputs for its improvement, based on the analysis of the needs and findings in the co-design phase.

Key deliverables for the trainer:

| Deliverables | Deadlines |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Conduct 4 focus groups with main future direct beneficiaries of the software, i.e. unemployed <i>women, youth, disabled and returning migrants</i> | By August 20, 2015 |
| 2. Set-up a “Living Lab” and organize and conduct 4 co-design creative workshops and develop technical manuals for the main Planner instruments | By August 27, 2015 |
| 3. Conduct one final co-design and co-development session to integrate existing 4 instruments into a logical functional chain and develop a TOR for the software developer | By September 18, 2015 |
| 4. Conduct the testing exercise of the demo version of the Smart Employment Planner software on selective skilled unemployed | By end November 2015 |

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Education:

- University degree in business administration, economics, public administration, social sciences, law or related areas. Additional training and certification in conducting co-design and co-development interventions is required.

Experience:

- At least two (2) years of progressively responsible experience is required at the national or regional levels in co-design and co-development of similar software solutions or training courses.
- At least three (3) years of progressively responsible experience in analysis of local labour market trends.

Competencies:

- Previous experience in development assistance or related work for a donor organization, governmental institutions, NGO/think-tank or private sector / business consulting firm is a strong advantage.
- Experience in the usage of computers and office software packages (MS Word, Excel, etc).
- Proven commitment to the core values of the United Nations, in particular, respecting differences of culture, gender, religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, age, HIV status, disability, and sexual orientation, or other status. Adherence to UN’s values and ethical standards.

Language Requirements:

- Fluency in both oral and written Romanian and Russian is a must; knowledge of English is a strong advantage.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Contractor's performance will be evaluated against timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, accuracy, and overall quality of the delivered products.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Payments will be disbursed in several installments, upon submission and approval of deliverables, and certification by UNDP Moldova Project Manager that the services have been satisfactorily performed.