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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job Title:	National consultant to participate to the evaluation of applications to the Innovation Challenge Scheme, supporting innovative business start-ups, under the Network of Career Development Centers in Moldova Project
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract (IC)
Duty Station:	Chisinau, Moldova and home based
Expected workload:	up to 12 working days
Duration:	November-December, 2016

BACKGROUND

The [Network of Career Advisory Centers in the Republic of Moldova Project](#) aims at promoting relevant employment and self-employment in Moldova through the development of soft skills of unemployed to develop and executive substantive individual job search and employment plans, as well as entrepreneurial skills of highly motivated beneficiaries to start-up new businesses at local level. In doing so, the Project is implementing two distinct but inter-linked components, i.e. employability and entrepreneurship.

As it regards the **employment component**, the SYSLAB methodology is applied. It includes trainings, simulations, individual counselling and other tools to develop the soft skills of skilled unemployed to search and get relevant employment, making best use of their skills, knowledge, academic background, previous work experiences, competencies and interests. It nevertheless includes a specific training module on generic business planning (BPS), that is stimulating creative thinking towards potential self-employment pathway.

As it regards the **entrepreneurship component**, the Project is implementing a tailored methodology that includes trainings and coaching for motivated beneficiaries. Such component is open towards potential beneficiaries with or without specific business ideas, with different levels of understanding of entrepreneurship and different skills. It aims to provide a company-style enabling environment for individual and group work that starts with theoretical trainings, combined with practical business and financial planning exercises, and coaching. It further permits access, on a competitive basis, to a seed-fund for matching support towards the initiation of new start-ups.

Both components are under implementation by a network of 5 Career Advisory centers located in Chisinau, Rezina, Balti, Comrat and Cahul, each having a dedicated team.

The seed-money fund

The seed-money fund is created jointly by UNDP Moldova, through the entrepreneurship component of the Network of Career Development Centres in Moldova Project and Starnet SRL, as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the mentioned parties. The Parties to the MoU will equally contribute to the implementation of the seed-money fund, both in terms of financial resources and knowledge. The overall goal of the fund is to pilot financial non-reimbursable support to direct beneficiaries in full-time groups in all Career Advisory Centers opened as part of the Project to spur innovative business start-up. More specifically, the fund will (a) complement the entrepreneurial training courses offered by staff in Career Advisory Centers, (b) will promote only business start-ups that have at least an innovative element as part of the business model and (c) will permit for scaling-up the intervention with additional support from private sector and the Project.

Key **specific objectives** of the seed-money fund are:

- (a) Promote entrepreneurship spirit and support emerging entrepreneurs;
- (b) Promote various forms of innovations in business start-ups;
- (c) Promote creation of new decent jobs;
- (d) Offer equal opportunities for men and women and various vulnerable groups to conduct a socially responsible innovative entrepreneurship.

Potential applicants to be considered for the financial support shall be direct and full-time beneficiaries in SYSLAB Centers, should have passed at least 10 (ten) out of 15 training modules on entrepreneurship as part of the teaching curriculum, should have a viable business model developed with support from SYSLAB staff and presented in full-time groups, and have innovative component as part of their business idea.

Social entrepreneurship

In addition, the Project runs a competition on supporting **innovative social entrepreneurship development**, as per the ICS here: <http://www.undp.md/tenders//tnddetails2/1357/>

Main objectives of the ICS to support social entrepreneurship are:

- to promote and stimulate social entrepreneurship for solving pressing societal challenges, including lack of jobs, job opportunities, income generation schemes, and similar.
- to stimulate development of innovations within Moldovan SMEs, local business associations, potential entrepreneurs with innovative ideas and expansion motivation, business incubators' graduates, public-private partnerships, start-ups by providing financial awards for market-oriented new or improved products, services and technologies with high commercialization potential;
- to pilot and evaluate experiments by sourcing innovative solutions from private or public sector or mixt for tackling the unemployment phenomena through social entrepreneurship, by involving socially excluded groups or making for-profit ideas from private/public sector work for the benefit of socially marginalized or excluded groups.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTANCY ASSIGNMENT

The overall objective of the consultancy is to provide an independent evaluation of the applications for the ICS on innovative business start-ups and ICS on innovative social entrepreneurship development, based on

the specific selection criteria part of the Manual for both ICSs. The specific criteria set for ICS on innovative business start-ups as well as ICS on innovative social entrepreneurship include:

- Innovativeness criteria: degree of innovation, impact and risks
- Market criteria: market size, market access and risks
- Project quality criteria: project team, methodology and planning approach, deliverables
- Financial evaluation criteria: feasibility and explanation of costs, matching funds availability and financial capacity of applicants

SCOPE OF WORK AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

The scope of the assignment is to support the Project in the selection of the best applications to both ICS competitions. For the ICS on innovative business start-ups, there are over 40 beneficiaries enrolled in the entrepreneurship groups of the Centres and who are planning their business start-up with support from the Centres. The Project expects that at least half of the beneficiaries will apply to the ICS. Those who intend to do so, should submit the following documents to the ICS:

- Application form, based on a defined template and including business model canvass
- Financial plan, based on a defined template
- Supporting documentation, depending on the specific case and details in the application form

Under the ICS on social entrepreneurship, 2 application phases will be undertaken: application with a concept note and full application process.

The consultant shall review and assess such applications based on a specific set of criteria, as well as based on the presentations delivered by the applicants, and recommend the best applications to be awarded under the ICSs. The independent consultant shall lead the process of selection of the best full applications, based on specific selection criteria agreed in the ICS Manual. The envisaged deliverables with the implementation timeframes are listed below.

KEY EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Deliverable(s)	Deadline
Evaluate applications under the ICS on innovative business start-ups in accordance to the evaluation criteria set forth in the ICS manual (up to 3 w/d)	By November 10, 2016
Participate in the interviewing with the pre-selected applicants and provide inputs for the minutes of the evaluation process to be presented to the Project Board (up to 3 w/d)	By November 15, 2015
Evaluate concept applications under the ICS on social entrepreneurship (up to 2 w/d)	By November 10, 2015
Evaluate full applications under the ICS on social entrepreneurship and participate in the interviewing with the pre-selected applicants. Provide inputs for the minutes of the evaluation process to be presented to the Project Board (up to 5 w/d)	By December 10, 2015

ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

The consultant will work under direct supervision of the Project Manager. The consultant will sign a declaration of impartiality before starting the assignment. Technical assistance and logistical support to the consultant will be provided in the framework of the UNDP Policy analysis, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Employment Promotion Projects Implementing Unit (PIU) of UNDP Moldova. Disbursements will be performed based on the successful completion of each of the phases and methodological steps in the process.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Academic Qualification

- University Degree in business administration, economics, business law or other relevant fields;

Experience

- At least three (3) years of experience in consulting or facilitating business start-ups, including at the level of business incubators and/or start-up companies;
- At least two (2) years of experience in evaluation of project proposals and/or grants applications in various national programmes related to business development. Similar experience in the field of broad innovations into SMEs, as defined by OECD, is a strong advantage;

Competencies

- Strong analytical and report writing skills in such areas as: local economic development, innovations in business and business development;
- Knowledge of social entrepreneurship;
- Knowledge of the national innovations system in the Republic of Moldova or EU systems is a strong advantage;
- Excellent communication and teamwork skills;
- 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.

Language requirements

- Fluency in written and spoken Romanian or Russian. Knowledge of English would be an asset.

UNDP Moldova is committed to workforce diversity. Women, persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic or religious minorities, persons living with HIV, as well as refugees and other non-citizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are equally encouraged to apply.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

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