



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job Title:	National Consultant to support the transfer of the soft-skills development methodology to National Employment Agency and specialists of the Youth-centered Skills Observatory and Experimentation Lab
Type of Contract:	Individual Contract
Duty Station:	home based, with site visits to several locations in Moldova
Expected workload:	up to 44 working days
Duration:	June – November, 2017

BACKGROUND

Unemployment is one of the most pressing socio-economic issues in the Republic of Moldova. The national labor market is a complex system that is witnessing dramatic challenges, related to a low number of vacancies compared to the existing demand in jobs on the market, significant skills mismatch, low labor productivity, regional disparities, discriminatory practices faced by many vulnerable groups etc. Public employment service modernization is slow and available public resources are too scarce and often spent inefficiently. Against such a background, the Government of the Republic of Moldova, with the support of UNDP Moldova and other development partners, is drafting the new Employment Strategy that is trying to put employment on top of the national development agenda. At the same time, pilot projects and policy experiments could support incremental progress in implementing this new strategy, by helping to identify cost-efficient solutions through a rigorous impact assessment, and upscaling/replicating the most successful ones.

The unemployment rate fluctuated over the last years and increased in 2015 to 4.9%, compared to 3.9% (2014). In 2015, the distribution of economically active population and employed population by sex was rather balanced: 50.5% for men and 49.5% for women for active population and 50.2% for men and 49.8% for women for employed persons. Overall, activity and employment rates for men was slightly higher compared to women, i.e. 45.1% and 42.3%, compared to same indicators for women – 39.9% and 38.4% respectively.

In Moldova, unemployment is a widespread phenomenon for youth aged 15-24 y. In 2015 the unemployment and employment rates for youth stood at 12.8% and 18.2% respectively. This is partly explained by the lack of skills, opportunities and resources that youth have to enter labor market, or an amalgam of all three aspects. The core barriers for youth to enter labor market are: lack of skills (about 40% of respondents), lack of opportunities (app. 30%) and lack of resources (about 30%), based on the analysis of the micronarratives collected from youth in the period November 2015 – March 2016. Usually employers require at least some work experience (at least one year) and this impedes many recent graduates to enter labor market, under the conditions when internship programs or employment guarantee schemes are almost inexistent and not promoted. Low wages also discourage youth to apply to existent jobs on labor market and encourage them to migrate for work abroad. Employment and unemployment rates for women aged 15-24 y.o. were 15.5% and 13.5% (2015). Unemployment rate for this specific group is rising.

NEETs group (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) is rather large, accounting for about 30.8% (2015) in total youth population. Women in NEETs prevail and the problem is due to lack of flexible arrangements in potential work places, household obligations (i.e. non-paid work, lack of facilities and daycare services, lack of opportunities and, in some reported cases, lack of resources to access public employment promotion and career orientation services.

The mismatch in skills, both due to a gap between supply and demand, and to underutilization of existing skills, is one important impediment for youth employment. Coupled with low wages for entry-level positions and discriminatory practices (young women in particular), this causes youth exclusion and other social issues.

The preliminary analysis of the evolution of the number of unemployed and jobs available reveal a Beveridge curve moving downwards, whereby the number of jobs available is decreasing and the number of unemployed is rising. In tandem with bold urbanization, in particular growing population in the capital city, and concentration of jobs in big cities, the tensions on the labor market are rising, compounded by discriminatory practices, various forms of discrimination, and perpetuation of low pay and similar.

Experimentation with low-cost solutions to promote employment and employability is inexistent. NEETs and skilled unemployed, as well as other specific groups of unemployed, are unable to benefit from employability and career advisory services as the latter is almost inexistent. The impact of the public employment promotion services is not evaluated.

At the moment, the public employment service lacks a modern training curriculum able to qualitatively support speedy (re)employment, thus generating potential savings. Despite being very much needed, no soft skills trainings are provided. Career advisory services are under-developed leading offer to either under-utilization of skills or incapacity to access existing jobs.

During 2013-March 2017, UNDP implemented the network of career advisory centers/services at the national level that were promoting the employability of skilled unemployed through the development of their soft skills. The experience of the UNDP centers shows that acquiring and applying the needed soft skills is conducive to increased employability results. The achieved employability target for the direct beneficiaries in UNDP career advisory centers stood on average at 70%.

CONTEXT

UNDP Moldova contracted a think-tank to conduct an experiment and measure the impact of a development intervention through a single arm Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT). The intervention consists of slightly modernizing the existing public employment service curriculum, by introducing specific and tailored training courses to improve the soft-skills of unemployed, based on the experience of UNDP in this area, and amended consultations for the period following the training courses. The experiment consists of testing and evaluating the intervention against the standard/existing package of services offered by the National Employment Agency. The exercise is part of the Youth-centered Skills Observatory and Experimentation Lab supported from UNDP Catalytic and Scaling-up Facility for Europe and the CIS.

The content of the training program to develop the soft-skills in unemployed was developed by the career advisors from the Career Centres and consisting of 5 training modules, part of the soft-skills development methodology. Further on, UNDP Moldova intends to contract a consultant to adjust the modules based on the recommendations of the company undergoing the RCT and transfer the soft-skills development methodology to the National Employment Agency and staff of the Observatory.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The main objective of the assignment is to support the implementation of the RCT through transferring of the soft-skills development methodology to NEA and specialists of the Observatory. The support involves training content adjustment, delivery of the ToT to NEA and Observatory specialists and monitoring of the implementation of the modules by the selected National Employment Centres, both for the Pilot, as well as for the Trial phases of the RCT. In all the stages of the assignment, the consultant will continuously interact with UNDP Project Management, NEA, and the staff of the Observatory, ensuring a continuous flow of information and timely involvement of the Observatory staff in the activities related to the current assignment.

The soft-skills development methodology to be implemented consists of a soft-skills training program divided in 5 modules, and amended consultation phase for a maximum of 3-month period.

The main purpose of the Pilot phase of the RCT is to test the applicability of soft-skills development methodology on the National Employment Service. Two Employment Centres will be selected for the Pilot phase. The first Centre will implement the training program, during a period of 5 weeks, and the amended consultations during a period of up to 3 months. The second Centre will implement only the amended consultations, for a period of up to 3 months.

The main purpose of the Trial phase is to implement the tested methodology on several randomly selected National Employment Centres and measure the impact of such intervention on the employability of registered unemployed.

The training program organised around 5 modules is to prepare the jobseeker for independent job search journey. They cover the subjects related to job announcements searching and analysis, motivation and application letters,

competence mapping, successful CV, communication and presentation techniques, successful interviews. All modules include both: theoretical, as well as practical part with simulations, case studies, exercises and homework. The amended consultations is structured in a way that the jobseeker is made responsible for his/her own jobseeking journey, including goal setting and reporting on the successes and failures, taking necessary lessons and doing better planning. A weekly employment plan template is provided as support tool for this phase.

KEY EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

Below are the requested deliverables under the respective assignment:

Key deliverables	Nr. of working days	Timeframe
The PILOT		
Review and incorporate the changes proposed by the contracted think-tank to 5 training modules, suggest any required changes	0.5	By 5 June, 2017
Adjust the training concepts, PPPs and exercises to reflect the changes made to the modules by think-tank running the RCT. Share adjusted slides with UNDP/ think-tank	2	
Develop short presentation to serve as guidelines on working with the jobseekers (methodology and principles on how to conduct trainings (e.g. how to keep them engaged during presentations), incorporation of motivational values, etc). Share slides with UNDP/ think-tank	2	
Incorporate any final amendments to slides suggested by UNDP/think-tank	0.5	
Attend "train the trainer" session to be delivered by the think-tank implementing the RCT on Phase 2 Consultations	1	6 June, 2017
Conduct the training for the NEA specialists and staff of the Observatory on Phase 1 modules	7	8-16 June, 2017*
Further train the NEA Specialists and staff of the Observatory on Phase 2 consultations	1	19 June, 2017*
Monitor the piloting of the training and consultation phases conducted by NEA specialists and provide corrective guidance upon necessity. Involve the staff of the Observatory in the monitoring process. - At Phase 1 + Phase 2 centre, attend at each one Phase 1 training session per week for at least 3 weeks (up to 3 days in total) then attend 2 further days over next weeks to observe consultations (up to 2 days in total) - At Phase 2 centre, attend for 3 days over first weeks to observe consultations (up to 3 days in total) Develop and submit a summary report on observations and conclusions over the implementation of the Pilot phase, including recommendations for the adjustment of the 5-module program, if necessary.	8	26 June – 28 July, 2017
The TRIAL		
Review the 5-module training program based on the approved recommendations from Pilot phase, if necessary (up to 1 day)	1	By 5 August
Conduct the training for the selected NEA specialists on Phase 1 modules and Phase 2 consultations	10	By 25 August*
Monitor the piloting of the training and consultation phases conducted by NEA specialists and provide corrective guidance upon necessity (number of centres are to be determined after the Pilot phase). Involve the staff of the Observatory in the monitoring process – up to 10 days in total	10	By 15 November

Develop and submit a summary report on observations and conclusions over the implementation of the Trial phase, as well as recommendations for the analytic paper to be developed as part of the Youth-centered Skills Observatory and Experimentation Lab.	1	By 20 November
Total	44	

*the exact dates will be confirmed with the National Employment Agency

Expected Results from the assignment:

- Defined and final 5-module training program for the public employment service curriculum;
- NEA employment specialists fully equipped with the needed knowledge and experience to run the training program and amended consultations on their own;
- Observations and conclusions on the results of the assignment, as well as recommendations for the analytic paper to be developed as part of the Youth-centered Skills Observatory and Experimentation Lab timely submitted to UNDP.

ORGANIZATIONAL SETTING

The consultant will work under direct supervision of Projects Implementing Unit (PIU) Project Manager or Officer and in close cooperation with the National Employment Agency. The consultant will be responsible to arrange his/her transportation for the site visits and as well the logistical arrangements for such purpose.

TRAVEL:

Travel is envisaged to several locations in Moldova, for monitoring purposes. Up to 18 visits (round trips) to various NEA Centres are to be undertaken by the consultant. An average price for public transportation shall be included in the financial offer and will be reimbursed by UNDP based on the real expenses incurred. The training sessions with NEA specialists will take place in Chisinau. In case of additional unforeseen travel, this should be agreed in advance with the Project manager and costs reimbursed based on the valid travel documentation submitted.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Education:

- University degree in Human Resources Management, Education, Communication, Psychology, Sociology or other field from Social Sciences. Master degree in the mentioned area/s is an advantage. Additional training and certification in preparation and delivery of trainings (or TOTs) and/or M&E would be an asset.

Experience:

- At least three (3) years of progressively responsible experience is required at the national or international level in the field of career development, human resource training or management, communication, teaching or related fields;
- At least one (1) year of experience in developing and/or delivering trainings (or ToTs) on career development or other related fields;
- Practical experience in dealing with the local job market and/or supporting unemployed people access relevant employment is a strong asset;
- Previous experience in development assistance or related work for a donor organization, governmental institutions, NGO/think-tank or private sector / consulting firm is a strong advantage;
- Proficient user of computers and office software packages (MS Word, Excel, PPP, Prezi, etc).

Knowledge and competencies:

- Fluency in both oral and written Russian and Romanian. 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 mentioned in the Section "Key expected deliverables" and certification by UNDP Project Manager that the services have been satisfactorily performed.