

TERMS OF REFERENCES

National consultant to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework on operation of the Joint Information Service Bureaus and its impact on the socio-economic development at raion level

Potential Applicants:	Specialist with expertise in monitoring and evaluation and data use
Expected Duration of Assignment:	Up to 30 working days during August-mid October, 2013
Reference to Project:	UN Joint Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System Participating agencies UNDP and UN Women
Project Activity:	Activity no.3. Capacity building
Contract type:	Individual Contract
Contracting Authority:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Beneficiary:	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Joint Information and Services Bureaus, local public administration

BACKGROUND

Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of RM (Statistics Project) is currently implemented by the UNDP, UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA and ILO, in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics and aims at improving data collection, production, dissemination and use of statistical information with particular attention to national needs and overall conformity of official statistics with international standards. One of the Statistics Project's intended results is the **improved use** of available disaggregated statistics by different categories of data users in particular for evidence-based monitoring of policies, development strategies, programmes, etc.

In parallel, UN Women in partnership with the Government of Moldova (Ministry of labour Social Protection and Family and the Ministry of Economy), with financial support from the Government of Sweden, are implementing another Program on *Women's Economic Empowerment through increasing Employability in the Republic of Moldova*, which was designed to address the needs of the rural and sub-urban population, especially poor women in exercising their social and economic rights through increasing access to quality information and services in employment and social protection areas. This will be achieved through improving local services, building capacity of the relevant institutions as well as improving policy and legislation based on the gaps identified through their practical application on the ground.

The strategic planning and administration of public resources at any level of decision-making becomes efficient when **needs** and rights of the population, in particular vulnerable ones, are properly **secured and addressed**, and when the public authorities have sufficient capacities to **justify** their **decisions** and actions by relevant evidences. On the other hand, population, being sufficiently informed and willing to take use of the available evidence for their own benefit, has more opportunities to participate and influence decision-making and hold the authorities accountable for their actions.

Successful monitoring of state policies, through the use of statistical indicators, helps to measure society's problems and affairs and contributes to good governance at different levels by showing how the Government is using its institutional resources to manage these problems. The production of reliable statistics and **use of statistical data for evidence-based** policy design and monitoring is fundamental to human development, the achievement of the MDGs and further approximation to EU standards for the Republic of Moldova.

By 2014, the Government of the Republic of Moldova, among its governance objectives¹ has (i) to encourage the local/regional initiative and promote the cooperation between the central and local public administration, and (ii) to perform a balanced regional development by ensuring consistency between national sectoral policies and economic policies for local development. On the other hand, the Governing Plan incorporates also the commitment of the current Government in the domain of gender equality, detailed in objectives focused on equal opportunities in socio, economic, political and decision-making areas and relevant activities.

In the context of decentralization process launched in the country, the local authorities will be able to increase their role in completing the process of decentralization, to develop feasible policies for the local/regional development and to increase

¹ Activity Programme of the Government of RM "Freedom, democracy, welfare" <http://www.descentralizare.gov.md/doc.php?l=ro&idc=253&id=658>, Government Action Plan for 2011-2014 approved through Government Decision no. 179 as of 23.03.2011

the capacity of different stakeholders at local level to implement these policies, only when sufficient evidence is made available through official and/or departmental statistics.

An important tool for increased efficiency and responsiveness of any reform and/or measure, which can ensure gender responsive policy planning and resource allocation, as well as service access and delivery, is statistics disaggregated by multiple parameters/dimensions. Different communities and groups of men and women in Moldova have diverse needs (based on their different roles and responsibilities in society) and unequal access to opportunities and resources, including capacities and means by which they can support various local services financially.

The collection and analysis of data disaggregated by multiple forms of vulnerabilities helps to examine differences in women's and men's lives, including those which lead to social and economic inequity for vulnerable people, to apply this understanding to national, sectoral and local policy development and service delivery and to achieve positive change for people subject to discrimination based on gender or other factors, which make them vulnerable. Thus, applying analysis based on the multiple-dimensions disaggregation of data at the very early stage and throughout the whole process of any reform, including monitoring and evaluation, removes the probability of eventual policy planning and resource management on the basis of wrong or assumptions and inaccurate/confusing stereotypes.

SPECIFIC CONTEXT

Related to Joint Information Service Bureaus

The UN Women's Program on *Women's Economic Empowerment* is aimed at addressing the needs of the rural and sub-urban population, especially poor women, in exercising their social and economic rights through increasing access to quality information and services in employment and social protection areas.

With support of Women's Economic Empowerment program, new concept of service provision was introduced on local level, based on "one-stop-shop" or "one window" approach² through establishment in August 2010 of Joint Information Service Bureaus (JISB) becoming operational up to day in 16 rayons of Moldova. This enabled bringing together around nine services, focused on the areas of employment, social protection, SME development, land cadastre, agriculture and etc., thus providing opportunity for local population to benefit from JISB coordinated services and receive guidance and advice in concerned fields addressing challenges at the local level. This new approach to service delivery at the local level directly contributes to the realization of the Governmental Programme on "European Integration: Liberty, Democracy, Welfare" for 2011-2014, and especially its priorities under the chapter related to provision of Quality Public Services for all.

As a result of JISB operations as of 31 December 2012, 5,400 people received information and services from local service providers, out of whom 60% were women and 82% from rural areas. In total, the JISB service providers carried out 275 sessions at districts level and 72 visits of mobile teams in villages. JISB model has been recognized by the Government as an effective mechanism to reach out to rural population with provision of public services, and hence, budgetary allocations have been provided from the state budget for their maintenance, and nationwide replication included in Government action plan.

In addition to the specific service provision improvement, some focus would be placed on improving monitoring the implementation of national and sector policies in practice, so that "one window" can create a feedback mechanism for the national policies and legislations. In this regard, the program is aiming at facilitating elaboration and practicing of **monitoring forms** to be used by members of "one window" service as well as the JISB users/beneficiaries, where they will report **inconsistencies, proposals for policy or legislation amendments** and other relevant remedies required at the policy level directly to the National Policy making bodies. It is needless to say that this approach is fully in line with the Regulatory Reform launched by the Government and will be implemented in full compliance with the norms and regulations under the reform.

Related to statistical data

In the last few years, significant efforts have been made to increase the availability of **multi-dimensional disaggregated statistical data** (in particular in social fields)³ at the national and regional levels⁴, produced by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). System of statistical indicators is under continuous improvement and harmonization with international standards⁵.

Huge volume of **administrative data** is being produced by a variety of institutions (i.e. central public authorities and, to some extent, local public authorities) which, from the official statistics point of view, unfortunately, lack efficient quality

² The methodology itself proved its sustainability and efficiency in the CIS countries, namely in Ukraine and Russia, to name few, under the facilitation of USAID BizPro initiatives earlier in the 2000s.

³ The availability of statistical data has been increased through the development and dissemination of statistical, analytical, methodological and graphical publications (on living standards, employment and unemployment, start-up and development of enterprises, approaches to social exclusion, impact of crisis on poverty, impact of prices growth on population wellbeing, education, demography) in a easy-to-use format representing concrete responses to the needs formulated by the data users, mainly public administration.

⁴ 4 statistical regions: North, Center, South, mun. Chisinau

⁵ Harmonized set of development indicators, at the national level, in a gender sensitive manner in the context of the MDGs/Sectors was developed in the Republic of Moldova and then revised through prioritization according to the intervention domains of the National Programme for Ensuring the Gender Equality 2010-2015. Also, national indicators to monitor the social exclusion and social cohesion has been developed for the first time and made available. The review through gender lens has been undertaken for the statistical indicators on labour market and living conditions, e-development, criminality and justice.

control mechanisms and methodological consistency, including knowledge of and experience on applying statistics for evidence-based policy-making or advocacy purposes. Capacities of most of the respective data producers/providers are weak accompanied by insufficient coordination and cooperation among institutions and the NBS. Administrative data produced by different sources is therefore not linked or fully computerized, and general users are being confused by **differing figures from different sources**, undermining the credibility of the National Statistical System in Moldova. Additionally to statistical data of NBS, very few institutions producing administrative data collect sex-disaggregated (taking into account multiple discrimination, e.g. age, national and sexual minorities, disability, territorial) on systematic basis, in particular at the local level.

Also, the lack of **updated** comprehensive **gender sensitive data** on **local** (rayion) level, disaggregated by multiple dimensions, is an issue which hampers the effective designing and implementing of targeted policies and programmes and evidence-based resource allocation by socio-economic fields and territorial location.

Even if generation of disaggregated data has been increased in the recent years, still an uneven understanding of the benefits from the use of (gender sensitive) statistics by the staff of central and local public administration, the need for pertinent capacity building on sustainable basis is vivid. As a result, the official statistics is weakly and inefficiently used by the data users, in particular the policy-makers, and the administrative statistics mainly serves for the internal purpose of the institutions which produce it.

The problems of availability, quality, comparability and use noted above are characteristic for the big range of socio-economic data at local level which are important to policy makers, managers, entrepreneurs, investors, analysts and others. It is important to identify and gradually resolve these problems by exploring various approaches.

Within the context of these Projects, UN Women and UNDP are to strengthen national capacities to **enhance the statistical data use** for official monitoring and evaluation of strategic (national and sectorial) documents' implementation, as well as alternative analysis of state policies in different fields, local initiatives and piloted activities, etc. Special focus will be put on fostering the capacities of JISBs partners and their cooperation with various data producers as it regards knowledge creation and evidence generation regarding the impact of the policies and legislation on women and men employment/employability, empowerment, social protection, entrepreneur activity, etc.

OBJECTIVES OF ASSIGNMENT

The United Nations Development Programme Moldova, in partnership with UN Women, through their Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System, is seeking to employ **a national consultant**, with relevant experience, **to develop the monitoring and evaluation framework on JISBs operation and the impact they have on the public services provided to population at local level, socio-economic situation of the local population**, in particular in the fields of employment, social protection, SME/business, etc.

The respective framework/system, when being set up, will be tested through concrete data gathering from available sources of official and administrative statistics and, on the basis of data analysis (undertaken for the purpose of justification of the functionality of the product), will be fine-tuned.

The objective of the assignment is to provide national stakeholders with a functional M&E practical tool to be used, first of all, by representatives of the public services and the local public administration for evidence-based and gender sensitive policy-making and evaluation in the fields of concern (in particular employment, social protection, SME/business, etc.) at the local, but also national levels.

The sought framework will combine:

- monitoring, as a continuous assessment of the implementation of JISBs activities in relationship to what was planned or expected according to predetermined activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact of JISBs beneficiaries; and
- evaluation, which is a periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact of initiatives in relation to stated objectives.

All activities under the present assignment will be correlated to the needs of key-stakeholders and in compliance with the national legislation (including Law on Official Statistics), and other national and sector policy and regulatory documents in compliance with international standards in statistics and relevant best practices of other countries.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The deliverables produced by the hired Consultant are expected to:

- Provide a system (set) of indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the JISBs' operation and its impact on the women and men;
- Help JISB identify service provision areas where men and women, young and elderly, etc. require specific attention and specific approaches, by having disaggregation of indicators;
- Provide for clear linkages of the M&E Framework with creating evidences within JISB operation, learning and improving, planning, informed decisions etc.;
- Increase awareness and knowledge of data users (in particular LPAs and JISBs representatives) to better understand regional statistics and to refine and improve policy measures that promote the development of public services at local/regional level;

- Help central and local authorities to build their capacities and gather knowledge on efficient use of statistics for evidence-based monitoring & evaluation on related topics.

In a medium run, the expected results could contribute to the further adoption of a common monitoring and evaluation system for the public services to be provided to the population through the 'one window' approach. This harmonized set would be afterwards used for collecting data and information for local situation monitoring as well as for application at the policy and decision-making levels. It will contribute to the achievement of the outcome which envisages increased resources, structures, procedures, incentives and capacities of the Key service providers to implement policies at the local level that promote and protect women's human rights to access employment and social protection.

The National Consultant will ensure a high level of analytical thinking, efficient communication and cooperation with JISBs members/specialists, data producers, UN Women and UNDP and other relevant institutions and is expected to perform a team-work together with the specialists of named institutions for the successful fulfillment of the formulated tasks.

TASKS and ACTIVITIES

In order to achieve the envisaged objectives, under the overall supervision of the UNDP and UN Women, the Consultant will have the following major responsibilities and perform the following activities:

Activity 1. Desk review through analysis of the main background and reference materials related to JISBs functioning :

- Background documents on the concept of JISBs and "one window" approach;
- Regulations on functioning of JISBs;
- Description of the JISBs information system and inflows;
- Available tools (forms, questionnaires, lists, registers, etc.) for recording the JISBs' activities and performance;
- Report on Assessing the efficiency of the Joint Information and Services Bureaus (JISB) by Magenta Consulting, 2013;
- Results of previous activities undertaken by the Statistics and UN Women Projects, including the available draft Set of indicators to monitor the activity of JISBs;
- resources containing useful information and indicators available in JISBs' areas at the regional/local level: printed and electronic publications, methodologies, relevant legislative and policy documents for socio-economic sectors to be covered;

Activity 2. Propose own approach and working methodology for the accomplishment of the current assignment, draft detailed action plan and an outline on the structure and content of the M&E framework and discuss them with the team of UN Joint Project on Statistics and concerned national stakeholders.

Activity 3. Draw up and describe a holistic monitoring and evaluation framework for the operation of JISBs providing improvements to the structure of available M&E indicators' matrix and complementing it with the conceptual items/elements of the future M&E framework.

- The consultant will have the task to make a detailed description of the M&E framework. This description of the framework should contain the understanding of how this is going to be used, for what purposes and by whom, avoiding too general sentences. Links to creating evidences, learning and improving purposes, planning, informed decisions, etc. will be described. The various stages of the M&E cycle, to include, inter alia, planning, monitoring, reporting, evaluating, learning, decision making, are very important parts to be carefully described, with roles and responsibilities, timing and possible actions, so that the regular collection of indicators would have a follow up and become a useful tool.
- Besides a table with monitoring indicators, the M&E framework will describe all processes and data flows within the M&E cycle. It should basically answer the question: so what if we have this value of an indicators? What's next?
- Also, the available draft set of M&E indicators (*to be handed to the national consultant*) could be adjusted or complemented, if need is confirmed, with additional/new indicators, accompanied by their description (with possible dimensions for data disaggregation), which might be relevant for the addressed thematic.
- The main Annex to the M&E framework will comprise the comprehensive set of M&E indicators to be used by the concerned counterparts. Additional to the set of indicators practical guidelines on its use for the purpose of evidence-based monitoring & evaluation will be proposed.

Activity 4: Test the functionality of the developed set of M&E indicators

- The improved set of M&E indicators will be tested through gathering of concrete and actual data from one JISB (to be selected by UN Women):
 - (i) JISBs information system - extracting data regarding the indicators of JISBs' performance/regular activity (*access to the system to be facilitated by UN Women*), as well as
 - (ii) available sources of official and administrative statistics (in particular the administrative statistics of the public services represented in JISBs) - gathering data regarding the reference/correspondence and impact indicators which describe the situation at the raion level.

The UN Women will facilitate the access to data regarding the JISBs' activity and outputs.
- Adjust/fine-tune the developed set of indicators and its description – if the testing confirms this need.

Activity 5: On the basis of the developed and tested set of M&E indicators, to develop an example/prototype analysis/report of a JISB operation

- The outline and structure of report should be coordinated with the UN Projects and main beneficiaries in advance;
- The developed paper should represent an example on how data provided by the developed M&E framework can be used by the JISBs' managing authorities for the regular monitoring of the functioning of the Bureaus, their activity and progress. The report might also reflect the analysis of the evolution of public services (represented in JISBs) provided to local population and due to the possible impact of JISBs functioning. Particular focus of the analysis will be put on the fields of employment, social protection, SME/business, etc.

The report will be developed on the basis of collected/gathered data and comprise the analytical analysis of the socio-economic development of the rayon, from the perspective of population (women & men) being served/covered by the public services which are part of JISBs.

Activity 6: Make a presentation to JISBs regarding the content of the JISBs' M&E framework and provide guidance on how to use it

- Make a presentation of the developed monitoring framework, explain how this framework is to be used and by whom, on the basis of what evidences. The presentation will represent a validation of the developed M&E framework with the local stakeholders.

Other activities:

- Develop the activity report on undertaken consultancy, including attained outputs, conclusions and next stage recommendations.

DELIVERABLES, EXPECTED OUTPUTS and TIMEFRAME

Performing the mentioned above activities, the Consultant will be responsible for delivering of the following outputs, comprising the main milestones:

No.	Deliverables and Outputs	Tentative timeframe
1.	- Detailed approach and working methodology aimed to achieve the assignment's objectives, including: a. tools, analysis techniques, etc. to be applied by envisaged stages; b. detailed Action Plan, including timelines and dates of outputs' delivery;	In 1 week from contract date
2.	- Description of the M&E framework for JISB; - Brief outline and structure of the prototype analytical report on the basis of JISBs' M&E indicators	In 3 weeks from contract date
3.	Draft JISB report (example) on the basis of the developed M&E framework	In 4weeks from contract date
4.	Final analytical report (after consideration of received comments)	In 5 weeks from contract date
5.	Hard and digital files produced during or as a result of the accomplished activity	In 6weeks from contract date
	Presentations used for JISB M&E Framework	
	Narrative completion report on accomplishment of assignment) and use of funds, in electronic and hard copies. The report will include stages passed, inventory of resources used, results obtained versus expected, impact of obtained results, risks overcome and problems faced, lessons learned, recommendations etc.	

The activities under the present assignment are expected to commence at the middle of August 2013 and end by the middle of October, 2013.

All the deliverables should be agreed with the representatives of UN Projects' staff and be provided in Romanian and English, in electronic copy.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The selected Consultant is expected to work in a close cooperation with the national counterparts and the UNDP and UN Women Projects staff, and regularly keep them updated on the progress.

The Contractor will make sure the exercise follows the agreed upon time schedule and will be accountable for the quality delivery of the outputs to the UNDP Project Manager, who will approve contractor's deliverables in coordination with UN Women specialists.

QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED

The consultant complies with the following qualification criteria:

Education:

- University degree in the area of social, economic and/or other science related to areas of assignment;

Experience:

- At least 3 years of working experience in the **designing M&E systems** and/or undertaking **monitoring and evaluation** of development interventions;
- At least 4 years of proved previous working **experience** consisting of substantial participation in **analytical** (thematic analysis, assessments, evaluations and/or reviews, etc.) and/or policy advisory works in the economic and social area/s/**fields**;
- **Proved** practical experience of work related to the **use of statistical data, evidences and informative** materials, but also related to data collection and/or production;
- Experience of collaboration with **Government** (specifically at the local level) in area/s relevant for the present assignment;
- Experience in working with **development partners** (in particular UN/UNDP) and nongovernment organizations, in particular in area/s relevant for the present assignment;

Competencies and Skills:

- Excellent **analytical**, writing and communication **skills**;
- Familiarity with the **national context** (legal and policy framework) related to the areas of assignment concern and international practice;
- Romanian **language** proficiency; Good skills in oral and written English;
- Ability to analyse, plan, communicate effectively orally and in writing, draft reports, solve problems, organize and meet expected results, adapt to different environments (cultural, economic, political and social);
- Good interpersonal skills, solid judgment/decision making, initiative and creativity;
- Ability to be independent, impartial and credible in a challenging environment;
- Availability to work with UN and Project's national stakeholders during the indicated/approved period;
- Adherence to UN's values and ethical standards;
- Cultural and gender sensitivity.

DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING THE PROPOSALS

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/information to demonstrate their qualifications:

1. Technical Proposal including:
 - brief explanation of how the Applicant responds to each of the qualification requirements and why he/she is the most suitable for the work;
 - own vision and working approach in undertaking the assignment;
2. Personal information (as a detailed CV or as a Personal History Form /P11) including records on past experience in similar projects/assignments and concrete outputs obtained;
3. Financial proposal (in USD, specifying a total lump sum amount and the number of anticipated working days).