

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Job title:	National Consultant to conduct Gender-Responsive Conflict Analysis on the Left Bank of the Nistru River and Security Zone
Reference to the project:	Advanced Cross-River Capacities for Trade Project (AdTrade)
Type of contract:	Individual Consultant (IC)
Languages Required:	English, Romanian, Russian
Expected Duration of Assignment:	33 working days, June – September 2025
Location:	home-based

1. BACKGROUND

UNDP Moldova's current Country Programme Document (CPD) 2023-2027 aims to assist Moldova in achieving a more cohesive, inclusive, just, and resilient society with improved quality of life for everyone. The CPD focuses on four main outcome areas:

1. Just and Inclusive Institutions and Equal Opportunities for Human Development: Ensuring that institutions deliver human rights and evidence-based, gender-responsive services for all, including the most vulnerable people in Moldova.
2. Participatory Governance and Social Cohesion: Promoting accountable, transparent, human rights-based, and gender-responsive governance that empowers all individuals to participate in and contribute to all spheres of life.
3. Enhanced Shared Prosperity in a Sustainable Economy: Facilitating inclusive, competitive, and sustainable economic development, with equitable access to decent work and productive employment for all.
4. Green Development, Sustainable Communities, and Disaster and Climate Resilience: Supporting green and resilient development, sustainable use of natural resources, and effective climate change and disaster risk management.

UNDP Moldova's extensive efforts to support women's economic empowerment are evident through its dedicated programs. The Country Office has been actively integrating the gender dimension into a broad range of thematic areas, making sure women's specific vulnerabilities, unique experiences and voices are reflected in initiatives and changes across systems and sectors, from employment and social protection, education, governance and community development, anti-corruption and social cohesion to climate change adaptation and disaster management, green economy and sustainable energy, and climate-smart agriculture and forestry.

UNDP Moldova recognizes women's contribution to confidence- and peace-building efforts seeking to rebuild trust and consolidate communities around a nucleus of shared values and aspirations that would guarantee respect for and fulfilment of human rights, attainment of societal stability and prosperity. UNDP Moldova is deeply committed to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda of the United Nations and the effective implementation of landmark international documents such as the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) reiterating the crucial role women play in confidence- and peace-building initiatives, as well as humanitarian response, community reconstruction and promotion of social cohesion. In line with this global approach to women as promoters and agents of change, UNDP advances women's broader participation and leadership at all levels of decision making, ensuring that women's specific needs are thoroughly addressed and that they are empowered to meaningfully contribute to the restoration of confidence, economic stability, and growth.

The Advanced Cross-River Capacities for Trade Project (AdTrade) is a transformative initiative that strengthens economic resilience and social cohesion between the communities on both banks of the Nistru River. It recognizes that women's economic empowerment is fundamental for the advancement of the economic development. AdTrade focuses on integrating women-led SMEs into cross-river trade networks, positioning them as crucial actors in confidence-building efforts and economic development. In response to the on-going needs in crisis times and disruptions in international trade, the project provides targeted assistance to women entrepreneurs navigating new compliance frameworks and economic constraints.

Through gender-responsive business models and advocacy measures, AdTrade aims to create inclusive economic opportunities by supporting women-led businesses in improving market access, leadership engagement, and financial resilience. The project also invests in STEAM education for girls on the left bank, promoting their entry into high-value industries and closing long-term gender gaps in the labour market. Recognizing the importance of sustainability, AdTrade facilitates energy-efficient solutions for women-led businesses, reducing costs and positioning them at the forefront of the green economy.

AdTrade fosters women's cross-river networks, creating opportunities for peer learning, business collaboration, and shared economic interests, which are fundamental for a confidence-building and inclusive climate. By focusing on economic empowerment, institutional change, and crisis resilience, AdTrade advances the WPS pillars of Participation and Relief and Recovery, ensuring that women emerge as leaders in various economic sectors.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The National Consultant will support the UNDP **Advanced Cross-River Capacities for Trade Project (AdTrade)** team in conducting a gender-responsive conflict analysis on the left bank of the Nistru River and the Security Zone. A gender-responsive analysis is "a systematic study of the gendered causes, structures, stakeholders and dynamics of conflict and peace". This analytical exercise explores the underlying gender dynamics and looks at women's position with regard to root causes of conflict.

To successfully conduct the gender-responsive analysis, the National Consultant will consider the following:

- assessment of the differentiated impact of fragility, across its different phases, on women and girls (including access to assets and resources; participation in social and economic activities)
- analysis of the roles and contributions of women and girls at different phases of the confidence building, economic activities, including in promoting dialogue, providing care, supporting communities
- addressing how societal norms contribute to creating opportunities for women and girls, including as active participants in confidence-building and resilience-building efforts and economic development
- mapping of key actors and networks, including formal and informal structures (e.g.: women's groups to business associations, local community organisations)
- design and implement a research methodology relying on quantitative and qualitative methods, and cultivating a participatory approach (e.g., consultations with diverse women's groups and civil society organisations)

From the UNDP perspective, the gender-responsive analysis will seek to answer the following questions:

- (1) What are the predominant perspectives on the underlying causes of the fragility in inter-community relations? How do these perceptions differ or align across various groups, across different societal roles such as civilians, community leaders, and those involved in social cohesion, peacebuilding and confidence building initiatives?

- (2) What types and levels of issues or practices are present in the context? To what extent are gender considerations integrated into these processes and what is the ratio of representation at various levels?
- (3) Who is involved in initiatives that aim to promote economic stability and resilience, and in what capacity? What communities or constituencies do these actors represent, and how might recognizing and supporting women's roles within societal structures foster inclusive and sustainable social cohesion (e.g., through leadership, access to land and resources, or community engagement)

3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Under the supervision of the Project Team and the Gender & Inclusion Analyst, and in coordination with the designated International Consultant, the National Consultant will undertake the following:

1. Develop the research methodology:

- Locate useful bibliographic resources and create a dedicated knowledge repository
- Conduct a detailed literature review, identify available data and principal information gaps to be addressed
- Design the research, with the description of quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection
- Describe the data analysis approach and process, based on the types of methods applied
- Consider research limitations and ways to overcome them
- Indicate methods to verify the validity and reliability of the findings
- Consider the ethical implications of research
- Conduct consultations with the civil society organisations and business support organisations, regarding the methodology of the analysis, as to integrate all relevant perspectives
- Integrate a stakeholder analysis into the research design to map formal and informal actors influencing confidence-building dynamics and peacebuilding processes. This should include an assessment of decision-making power, resource access, and systemic or structural barriers to participation
- Validate the research methodology with the project

2. Conduct the Gender- Responsive Conflict Analysis and present results:

- Carry out a mapping exercise for key informers, identify a pool of candidates (individuals, informal / formal groups, organisations etc.), establish contact, confirm commitment, arrange data collection formats (focus groups, interviews etc.)
- Conduct the full series of in-person and remote data collection events, as per the agreed methodology; record and centralize information
- Complete the extended data analysis; produce (1) a detailed report on findings; (2) a summary brief; (3) a visual presentation of the main findings (e.g., PPT slides)
- Present the research to UNDP senior management and staff in a dedicated session

4. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES:

Description of deliverables	Estimated workload	Delivery time
1. Develop and present for approval research methodology and calendar of planned activities: a) Develop research methodology (2 days) b) Conduct consultations with stakeholders, including CSOs (1 day) c) Conduct desk review (5 days)	8 days	By July 25, 2025
2. Draft gender-responsive conflict analysis: a) Conduct focus group discussions and interviews (7 days) b) Conduct analysis of data gathered and draft the report (10 days) c) Include a short case study (1–2 pages), highlighting key insights or success stories from the analysis (2 days) and a summary brief analysis (2 days)	21 days	By August 25, 2025
3. Presentation of the gender-responsive conflict analysis: a) Delivery of a presentation in PPT format, with findings and results (3 days) b) Delivery of one online session to present the results to UNDP staff (0.5 day) c) Delivery of online workshop to present the results to UNDP partners and stakeholders (0.5 day)	4 days	By September 25, 2025
Total number of working days	33 working days	

5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS:

The timeframe for the work of the Consultant is planned for June – September 2025. During this time, the Consultant is expected to work a total of up to 33 working days.

All communications and documentation related to the assignment will be in English.

The Consultant will work under the overall guidance and direct supervision of the UNDP AdTrade Project.

All deliverables shall be approved by the UNDP Moldova Gender and Inclusion Analyst and AdTrade Project Manager.

6. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

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

Travel

Limited domestic travel is envisaged under the current assignment.

In the case of unforeseeable travel, payment of travel costs including tickets, lodging and terminal expenses should be agreed upon, between the respective business unit (UNDP AdTrade project) and Individual Consultant, prior to travel, and will be reimbursed.

7. QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS REQUIRED:

QUALIFICATIONS

Academic Qualifications/Education:

- University degree in social sciences or related field
- Qualifications related to comprising components on gender, gender in fragile settings, peace studies would be highly desirable

Experience:

- At least 10 years of demonstrated research experience in social sciences (e.g. substantial academic work, publications etc.)
- Prior demonstrated experience working in / on the left bank of the Nistru River and the Security Zone would be a strong asset
- Proven experience conducting participatory assessments related to fragility, social dynamics, or gender equality, including demonstrated familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and data interpretation
- Prior experience with UNDP or the UN Systems in general, particularly in the areas of gender or peace and security
- Demonstrated experience in working with national stakeholders and stakeholders from the left bank of the Nistru River, and the Security Zone, particularly on issues related to gender or peace and security.
- Excellent analytical skills and demonstrated experience in comprehensive research.
- Excellent writing and presentation skills, including the ability to write comprehensive reports, tailored briefs (e.g., policy makers, academia, public) and compile visual presentations of complex data.

Language skills:

- Strong writing, editing, and oral communication skills in English, Romanian and Russian.

COMPETENCIES:

Corporate competencies:

- Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN's values and ethical standards
- Promotes the vision, mission, and strategic goals of UNDP
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability
- Treats all people fairly without favouritism
- Fulfils all obligations to gender sensitivity and zero tolerance for sexual harassment

Functional competencies:

- Strong analytical, reporting and writing abilities
- Strong interpersonal skills, communication and diplomatic skills, teamwork ability
- Good time management, meeting deadlines
- Strong leadership and team management skills
- Ability to work under pressure and stressful situations

8. DOCUMENTS TO BE INCLUDED WHEN SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

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

- Signed and filled-in Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating Financial Proposal in Annex 2 (in USD, specifying a total requested amount per working day, including all related costs, e.g. travel fees, phone calls, etc)
- Proposal (motivation letter) explaining why the applicant is the most suitable candidate for the assignment, including previous experience
- Duly completed and signed CV and the contact details of at least 3 references
- Copies of professional certificates, if available
- Statement of Health for Individual Contractors

Important notice:

The applicants who have the statute of Government Official / Public Servant prior to appointment will be asked to submit the following documentation:

- a no-objection letter in respect of the applicant received from the Government, and;
- the applicant is certified in writing by the Government to be on official leave without pay for the entire duration of the Individual Contract.

A retired government official is not considered in this case a government official, and as such, may be contracted.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

If an applicant is employed by an organisation/company/institution, and he/she expects his/her employer to charge a management fee in the process of releasing him/her to UNDP under Reimbursable Loan Agreement (RLA), the applicant must indicate this at this point and ensure that all such costs are duly incorporated in the financial proposal submitted to UNDP.

9. EVALUATION

The national consultant will be short-listed based on the following minimum qualifications criteria:

- University degree in social sciences or related field
- At least 10 years of demonstrated research experience in social sciences (e.g. substantial academic work, publications etc.)

- Citizenship of the Republic of Moldova

The selected consultant will further be assessed according to the following methodology:

Cumulative Analysis:

The contract will be awarded to the consultant whose proposal obtained the highest score according to the weighted technical and financial criteria, formulated for this request

*Specific weight of technical criteria – 60% (300 p.)

*Specific weight of financial criteria – 40% (200 p.)

Candidates who scored a minimum of 210 points will participate in the financial assessment.

Criteria	Scoring	Maximum points
University degree in social sciences or related field	Bachelor's degree – 20 pts Master's degree – 30 pts PhD degree – 40 pts	40
Research experience in social sciences (e.g. substantial academic work, publications etc.), minimum 10 years	10 years - 40 pts, each additional year - 10 pts, up to max 70 pts	70
Qualifications related to comprising components on gender, gender in fragile settings, peace studies	Each relevant training/certificate - 10 pts, up to max 30 pts	30
Experience working on the left bank of the Nistru River / Security Zone, or other fragile environment	1 year - 10 pts, up to max 50 pts	50
Number of assignments in conducting similar or relevant analysis, general academic research or in-depth/ multi-level analysis	1 assignment - 10 pts, up to max 60 pts	60
Experience working with international organizations	1 assignment – 5 pts, up to max 35 pts	35
Fluency in English, Russian and Romanian, is required for this assignment	Each language – 5 pts	15
Maximum technical result		300
Financial Assessment		
Submitted financial proposals will be assessed according to the following formula: $S = F_{\min} / F * 200$ S – the achieved result of the financial assessment; Fmin – the lowest financial proposal of all those submitted, which were qualified during the technical assessment; F – The financial proposal to be reviewed.		200