Strengthening the National Statistical System Joint UN Project

TERMS OF REFERENCES

Team of (one international and two national) consultants to develop options for implementation of EU NUTS regulation in Moldova

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Consultancy requested:	Team of 3 consultants
	1) one expert in EU regional development strategic and planning issues (international, as **team leader**)
	2) one expert in regional development of the Republic of Moldova (national, **policy expert**)
	3) one expert in statistics (national, **statistics expert**)
Contract type:	Individual Contract modality
Duty station:	Home based and 2 missions to Moldova (for the international expert)
Estimated Duration:	March- May 2014, up to 30 full working days for each consultant, plus 15 days for leading task
Contracting Authority:	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Main beneficiary:	Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions, State Chancellery
Main stakeholders:	National Bureau of Statistics of RM, other CPAs and LPAs
Reference to Project:	UN Joint Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System, donor Government of Romania
Activity 7:	"Improvement of availability and reliability of regional statistics for decision-makers of the Republic of Moldova", component 2

BACKGROUND

The main challenge of the regional policy of the Republic of Moldova is to ensure balanced sustainable economic and social development at the sub national level, solving the issues related to regional disparities Therefore sustainable regional development is an imperative assumed by the Government of Moldova, which has also confirmed its commitment to fairly/equally distribute the opportunities/chances for regional development throughout the country. This is confirmed both at the legislative level[1] and at the strategic planning level[2]. Successful implementation of the regional policy will foster and accelerate the development of the country as a whole, where the ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life of the citizens, wherever they live on the territory of Moldova.

Both, the implementation of transparent and efficient mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of regional development process, as well as the production and timely reporting of regional statistics, are the two specific objectives of the National Strategy of Regional Development.

The local authorities will be able to increase their role in completing the process of local development, to develop feasible policies for the local/regional development and to increase the capacity of different stakeholders at local level to implement these policies, only when sufficient evidence is made available through statistics.

Good, reliable regional statistics have to be available in order to provide an adequate basis for analyzing regional development and disparities and for well-informed development of economic and policy decisions in the field.

The generation of disaggregated sub national level data has been increased especially in the recent years, when the needs for information based decision of central and local public authorities, managers, investors, analysts and other users regarding sustainable regional development increased significantly. So, the necessity to ensure data availability, quality and comparability of socio-economic data at sub national level has been significantly increased.

Considering the aspirations of Moldova's European integration, it is very important that the regional statistics, relevant for the country, to be compiled in compliance with the pertinent EU standards and best practices, taking into account the peculiarities of the Republic of Moldova. The basis for compilation of relevant and comparable statistics represents the

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[1] Law No. 438 as of 28.12.2006 on regional development of RM. http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=320885
[2] Government Decision No. 158 as of 04.03.2010 on approval of National Strategy on regional development, as well as the Activity Program Government of the Republic of Moldova European Integration: Freedom, Democracy, Welfare 2011-2014, http://www.gov.md/doc.php?l=ro&idc=445&id=3729

application of appropriate classifications, including that of territorial units for statistics, NUTS[3] classification being used for these purposes in EU being a geocode standard for referencing the subdivision of countries for statistical purposes, with three NUTS levels.

Currently, a *Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System of RM* is implemented by the Government of the Republic of Moldova in partnership with UNDP and other 4 UN agencies, as well as the Government of Romania, and aims at improving data collection, production, dissemination and use of statistical information with particular attention to national needs and official statistics overall conformity with international, in particular EU, standards.

The project's purpose is also to contribute to the improvement of quality regional data made available to decision-makers and planners within the Moldovan central, regional and local government system so that government policy and planning on regional development at all levels is properly informed.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The compilation and dissemination of regional statistics in the Republic of Moldova is done, depending on the available data collection instruments, at the following levels:

Data disaggregation levels	Data collection tool /source	Legal basis for compilation of territorial breakdown data surveys
rayon/ municipality	Statistics mainly based on the data collected through exhaustive surveys: all public institutions and economic entities with 20 employees and above	Classification of administrative-territorial units[4]
development regions	Statistics mainly based on the data collected through exhaustive surveys: all public institutions and economic entities with 20 employees and above	Law on regional development[5]
statistical zones	Statistics mainly based on the data collected through sample surveys on households – Labour Force Survey, Household Budget Survey, etc.	Classification approved by the National Bureau of Statistics. The disaggregation by statistical zones slightly differs from that by development regions.
local administrations	Statistics based on the data collected through censuses (population / agricultural censuses. These kind of low level's disaggregated regional data are potentially also available through administrative registers, held by national and local public authorities.	Classification of administrative-territorial units

The development regions of the Republic of Moldova (presented below) differ a lot by their sizes (as regards the population number) – from circa 156 thousand people in the Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia until 987 thousands in the Center region.

Development regions	Administrative-territorial units	Population of the region (according to 2004 Population Census)
North	Municipality Balti, rayons/districts Briceni, Donduseni, Drochia, Edinet, Falesti, Floresti, Glodeni, Ocnita, Riscani, Singerei, Soroca	969,299
Center	Rayons Anenii Noi, Calarasi, Criuleni, Dubasari, Hincesti, Ialoveni, Nisporeni, Orhei, Rezina, Straseni, Soldanesti, Telenesti, Ungheni	987,603
South	Rayons Basarabeasca, Cahul, Cantemir, Causeni, Cimislia, Leova, Stefan Voda, Taraclia	524,497
Autonomous Territorial Unit Gagauzia		155,700
Chisinau Municipality		712,218
Transnistria	Administrative-territorial units situated on the left side of Nistru river, including municipalities Tiraspol and Bender	580,000

Hence, considering the criteria on setting up the territorial units according to EU NUTS classification, the actual development regions fit into the NUTS limits of two levels:

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[3] Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics OR Common classification of territorial units for statistics, REGULATION (EC) No 1059/2003 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 26 May 2003, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/nuts_nomenclature/introduction

[4] Classification of administrative-territorial units is developed by NBS according to the Law no. 764-XV as of 27.12.01 on administrative-territorial organization of RM, Law no. 123-XV as of 18.03.03 on local public administration, and their ulterior adjustments

[5] Law no.438-XVI as of 28.12.06 on the regional development of the Republic of Moldova

- Level 2 - 800 - 3000 thousand population: North and Center development regions
- Level 3 - 150 – 800 thousand population: South, mun.Chisinau, ATU Gagauzia and Transnistria regions.

From the perspective of the **alignment** of the Republic of Moldova to the EU standards, in both legal and statistical fields, it is important to gradually implement and apply, also, the statistical classifications, in particular NUTS so that the informational needs of society in data disaggregated in regional perspective, internationally comparable, are met.

This step is determinant for both the assurance of spatial and time **comparability** of sub-national statistical data of the R. of Moldova with the EU statistics during the integration of the country into the European community, as well as for provision of reliable evidences in the process of regional development **funding**, in particular from the EU sources.

Thus, the elaboration and implementation of the national classification NUTS in the Republic of Moldova, taking into consideration the advanced experience of EU states, in particular the new member-states, represents a big challenge of high political, economic and social impact for ensuring a balanced development of settlements and reduction of regional disparities in the country.

Because the breakdown of regions according to NUTS should be performed with providence, considering multiple normative/legal, institutional, political, cultural, social, geographic, environmental and economic aspects, an exhaustive study should be conducted to allow the most appropriate identification of statistical territorial units for the Republic of Moldova and elaboration of the national NUTS classification.

Regional division of the country aims to provide a single and coherent territorial breakdown for the collection and development of regional statistics, harmonized with EU standards. Further, from economic point of view this will ensure the eligibility for aid from European funds for regional development (for those regions whose development is lagging behind) that is assessed at NUTS 2 level. For more info on NUTS please see the Annex to ToR.

OBJECTIVES OF CONSULTANCY ASSIGNMENT

The Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System is to hire a team of **one international consultant and two national consultants** with relevant experience who will **develop feasible options for the most appropriate sub-division of the country territory taking into consideration the NUTS regulations, other EU relevant requirements and best practices, as well as the national specifics.**

Once being acknowledged, the most appropriate statistical sub-division of the country out of proposed options will be sought and possible ways for its accomplishment will be developed. The proposed different versions of the country sub-division would be accompanied by justified pros and cons being recommended or checked-out with the local specialists as well as staff of specialized institutions from Romania and/or other countries with advanced experience and similar country's context and characteristics.

Thus, based on the comprehensive study fulfilled by the consultants in close cooperation with national counterparts, the beneficiary stakeholders will be provided with the national NUTS classification and proposals of adjustments to the legal framework on regional organisation.

SCOPE OF WORK

Under the current assignment the Joint UN Project on Strengthening the National Statistical System, in collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions, State Chancellery, National Bureau of Statistics and Project team, are looking for the following expertise on the part of the team of international and national consultants:

(A) To conduct a study in order to develop a set of options for most appropriate statistical sub-division of the country taking into consideration the NUTS regulations, other EU relevant requirements and best practices, as well as the national particularities;

(B) To develop feasible draft(s) of national NUTS classification;

(C) To propose corresponding adjustments to the legal framework;

(D) To make recommendations for regional data collection according to the proposed classification.

TASKS and RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to achieve the envisaged objectives, the group of consultants, under the conceptual guidance of Team Leader and overall supervision of the Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions, State Chancellery, NBS & Project, will have the following major responsibilities and perform the following activities:

Activity 1. Undertake desk review *[remotely and/or during mission 1]*
*[task valid for **team-leader, policy expert** and **statistician**]*

Each member of the experts' team will undertake the desk review through thorough analysis of the background and reference materials:
- o Current legal framework regarding regional development and the administrative-territorial organization of the Republic of Moldova[6] and specific provisions on the actual organisation of the country into 6 development regions,
- o Documents related to NUTS classifications and to other relevant EU regulations, as well as the best practices, especially of new EU member states, with advanced experience regarding the country division into territorial units compliant with NUTS and with the similar socio-economic conditions, development environment, territory size, number of population, etc.

Activity 2. Formulate own approaches and working methodology *[remotely and/or during mission 1]*
*[**Team-Leader** responsible for the task with the support and participation/inputs of other two team-members,]*

The team of experts will propose its own approach and working methodology for the accomplishment of the current assignment, will draft a detailed action plan and final expected reports content and outline, encompassing the above-mentioned objectives and components, and discuss them with the beneficiary institutions and national stakeholders (Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions, State Chancellery, NBS and Project team). The working methodology will be consulted and **jointly agreed** with the stakeholders.

The approach and methodologies to be applied should result in outputs which will be compliant with NUTS regulation and other relevant EU standards on regional breakdown and best European practices so that the elaborated national regional division harmonised with NUTS regulation could serve as a basis for the examination at political level to be taken into account when the Law No. 438-XVI as of 28.12.2006 will be adjusted.

Experts will agree, based on consensus and under the leadership of Team Leader, on the structure/content of reports/deliverables to be developed by each expert per specific task undertaken and the team.

Activity 3. Carry out extensive consultation with relevant counterparts and stakeholders *[during missions 1&2]*
*[**Team-Leader** responsible for the task with the support and participation of other two team-members]*

Given the specifics of assignment, an extensive consultation with relevant counterparts and stakeholders with regard to the topics and tasks of present ToRs would be a mandatory element of the working approach of the whole team of experts at all stages of assignment, in particular tasks no. 4, 5, 6, 7 described below. Stakeholders to be consulted would include, but not be limited to:
- Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions
- State Chancellery
- National Bureau of Statistics
- National Council for Regional Development Coordination
- Regional Development Councils North, Center and South
- Regional Development Agencies North, Center and South
- Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova
- Local public authorities
- NGOs
- Project team
- Development partners of MRDC (GIZ Project "Modernisation of local public services in the Republic of Moldova")

This consultation should help to identify, among other things, the optimal options to develop the territorial classification harmonised with respective EU standard (NUTS), nevertheless taking into consideration the current administrative-territorial organisation of the country and its division into development regions.

Possible methods to carry out the consultation include:
- o one-day workshop/s with discussion, exchange of experience, brainstorming;
- o field visits;
- o in-depths interviews and/or focus-groups with relevant stakeholders,
- o use of statistical and administrative data to elaborate options of country organization into territorial units in line with NUTS, etc.

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[6] Law no.438-XVI as of 28.12.06 on the regional development of the Republic of Moldova, Law no. 764-XV as of 27.12.01 on administrative-territorial organization of RM, Law no. 123-XV as of 18.03.03 on local public administration, and their ulterior adjustments.

Activity 4. **Undertake situational analysis of the current policy framework and development context of Moldova and evaluation of the country preparedness from the perspective of its harmonisation with NUTS Regulations** *[remotely]*
*[National **policy expert** responsible for the task under the conceptual guidance and participation of **Team leader**]*

Such analysis will aim at assessing the current status of regional development policy and context in the country, actual and potential implementers and beneficiaries of future NUTS-compliant distribution, areas and/or sectors potentially influenced/affected by the NUTS division, needs to be covered and constraints (as well as type of those constraints). Another important element to be assessed includes the outputs to be generated by the country harmonization with NUTS (e.g. fundraising, efficiency of funds' distribution, etc.). These elements will be correlated with the latest changes in the normative and regulatory framework, reforms and strategic priorities at the regional/local and national levels.

This will help to identify the existing inconsistency with EU standards as it regards regional organization/distribution of the country and to think over the possible ways of its further adjustment.

The analysis will also include the appraisal of Moldova's comparative analysis versus other EU countries which passed through NUTS alignment, Moldova's advantage, its weaknesses and limitations, lessons learned and mistakes to be avoided. Such EU states, with similar country context and characteristics as Moldova, to be referred for comparison, will be identified/exemplified by the Team-leader who will present their experiences and best practices as his/her inputs to the described task.

The level of coverage of informational needs in the field of regional development by available territorial statistics will receive a special attention of experts. Thus, among other things, this activity should help to identify gaps in the coverage of users' needs as it regards the application of statistics for evidence-based policy-making.

Activity 5. **Validation of the first findings with the national counterparts and stakeholders** *[remotely and/or during mission 1]*
*[**Team-Leader** responsible for the task with the support and participation of other two team-members]*

The conclusions and findings resulted from activity 4, will be presented to the main national counterparts and stakeholders. They will be explained/advised on possible topics, such as: peculiarities of the NUTS regulation, its linkage with requirements for regional statistics, advantages of NUTS regulation's application for the country, linkages with the regional development policy at international/EU and at national levels, roles and responsibilities being shared by relevant institutions/ stakeholders, as well as EU views on possible options for improvement of regional breakdown in accordance with the Moldova's regional development policy and aspirations, taking into account EU standards and best practices.

In accordance with the received feedback the next activity will be undertaken. The main Government stakeholder for activities 4, 5 and 7 are the Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions and the State Chancellery who should endorse the developed outputs and drafted classification.

Activity 6. **Identify possible options for most appropriate statistical sub-division of Moldova taking into consideration the requirements for regional statistics and of NUTS regulation, as well as the national specifics** *[remotely]*
*[**Team leader** (at the conceptual level) and **statistician expert** (as technical execution) are responsible for the task]*

Once being acknowledged by the Government, the most appropriate statistical sub-division of the country will be sought and feasible options/scenarios for its accomplishment will be developed taking into consideration the requirements for regional statistics and the requirements of the NUTS regulation, as well as the national specifics, in particular related to the status of Gagauzia ATU and Transnistrian region. One core (most feasible) and 1/3 complementary options will be proposed taking into consideration the minimum and maximum thresholds for the size of the NUTS regions.

The proposed different variants of the country sub-division would be accompanied by justified pros and cons being recommended, validated with the specialists of the National Bureau of statistics of RM, and may be checked-out with the local specialists as well as staff of specialized institutions from Romania and/or other countries with advanced experience and similar country's context and characteristics.

The important stage of the task includes the analysis of statistical and administrative data available at sub-national level to identify the criteria (normative/institutional, analytical, etc.) used for the optimal division of the country into development regions compliant with NUTS. Using these data, taking into consideration the current administrative-territorial organisation of the country and the cultural, historical aspect, as well as the relevant EU standards and practices, the national NUTS classification will be drafted using economic criteria.

Also, the current organisation of the national statistical system and future perspectives in the context of national statistics alignment to EU standards in statistics will be taken into consideration. This new classification should render the regional structure more homogeneous in terms of population size. Economical, historical, cultural and other factors should be carefully considered in order to identify best way to develop regional breakdown of the country and thus, elaborate national NUTS classification.

The mentioned criteria should ensure the country division in development regions which would be favourable first of all for the sustainable development of regions, reduction of disparities among them one of the modalities being through accessing the programs for regional development funded from the national, local budgets and external sources. One of the main analytical/economic criteria used for division according to national NUTS would be the eligibility of regions to access EU funds for regional development. The national NUTS should contain, similar to EU NUTS classification, 3 levels.

The main Government stakeholder for activity 6 is the National Bureau of Statistics who should endorse the developed outputs and drafted classification. Therefore, the specialists of NBS, but also National Institute of Statistics of Romania (Project's partners), will contribute with provision of guidance from the statistical point of view (namely EU standards and requirements in statistics) on undertaken activity, and will provide feedback on drafted reports and experts conclusions.

Activity 7. Develop a comprehensive feasibility report on Moldova's alignment with EU NUTS statistical territorial classification *[remotely and/or during mission 2]*
*[**Team leader** responsible for the task with participation/inputs from the **policy** and **statistician experts**]*

The main results, finding and conclusions of the outputs resulted from activities 4, 5, 6 will be integrated into one final homogenous product, described in a reader-friendly language and format.

The report will contain, but not be limited, the situational analysis of the current status. It will describe the importance and meaning of NUTS alignment, for each of the developed division scenarios the strengths and weaknesses, influence factors, feasible impact, benefits (from statistical, economic, political, financial, funding opportunities, strategic and planning, regional development implementation, participation in trans-border cooperation projects, other points of view) for the country resulting from NUTS alignment, etc.

Also, the respective report will contain conclusions, recommendations and practical measures, to be undertaken by the Government and other concerned stakeholders, aimed to gradually implement the NUTS classification and further approximate to EU standards related to territorial statistics thus enabling improved, evidence-based policy planning, programming, monitoring, evaluation and greater comparability with EU regions. Recommendations provided to public authorities will be based on the analysis performed in preceding activities.

The MRDC, together with the State Chancellery, in collaboration with other Government counterparts, will have the task to ensure the sustainability of the obtained results and, thus, to lobby & promote the most relevant and appropriate option for country's distribution according to NUTS regulation, which includes the most advantages for Moldova. The described involvement and participation of the mentioned institutions is crucial as they have the appropriate competence of political decision and will have to undertake the next step on factual implementation of the country's division on the basis of selected option. Therefore, the produced document should represent a conceptual background for the planned organization of development regions and a consistent justification for the Government officials.

The document will contain a roadmap with main short-, medium- and long-term actions to be undertaken by the Government, from the policy/strategic perspective and in statistical sector, estimation of resources (human, institutional, financial, other kind) pertinent to NUTS alignment, main actors and beneficiaries, execution time-schedule, eventual functional changes of the institutions which might be needed to attain the NUTS objectives, etc.

MRDC, the State Chancellery and its Regional Development Agencies will be the main beneficiaries of the Project's outputs aimed to respond to the Ministry's needs. For this reason, these institutions are expected to provide indicative guidelines on their expectations during the whole assignment and play the leading role of approvers and promoters of the outputs produced within activities 4-7, consequently the team of consultants will endorse the produced reports (and proposed adjustments to the legal framework) with these institutions and the Project team, taking into consideration comments, proposals, objections and other feedback provided by the latest.

The synthesis of the expected report will be undertaken by the team leader and coordinator of the whole process. Thus, in addition to described above tasks, the team-leader will ensure the scientific homogeneity of the final product.

Other activities: *[tasks for **all experts**, throughout the assignment]*

- *Establish and maintain a dialogue* with national counterparts and stakeholder, consultants, Project staff;
- *Advocate for the delivered results* and contribute to the increase of awareness and understanding of partner institutions regarding the importance and the role of NUTS approximation for the process of EU association/integration;
- Support the organisation and undertake *public presentation* of results with the participation of concerned partners (national stakeholders and concerned institutions, think-tanks, academia, CSOs, international community), gather and consider their feedback. *[during mission no.2]*
- Develop an *activity report* on consultancy undertaken, including stages passed, resources used, results obtained versus expected, impact of obtained results, risks overcome, problems faced, lessons learned, conclusions and next stage recommendations.

The work of consultants will be led by a **TEAM LEADER**, function cumulated by international expert besides the tasks related to the area of his/her competence. Thus, the Team Leader will be **responsible for coordination and consistency of produced reports** and additional to the above mentioned tasks, the Team leader would have to:

1. process the inputs provided by the members of expert team and set up a common work plan and the methodology;
2. distribute the tasks among the team members and observe their execution;
3. ensure a common/harmonized approach to the topics and tasks of assignment;
4. provide guidance to the team members throughout the stages of assignment on actions, structure & content of reports to be developed by each expert and the team as a whole;
5. coordinate the process of consultation with the Project's key partners and relevant stakeholders to validate the key findings of produced reports, to collect and consider their feedback and recommendations for improvement;
6. develop, with the contribution of team members, the synthesis report on the main outputs of assignment;
7. provide overall management and coordination of the experts' work, supervision of tasks and activities under the present assignment.

The consultants will ensure a high level of analytical thinking, efficient communication and cooperation with MRDC, State Chancellery, NBS, Project staff and other relevant institutions and is/are expected to perform a team-work together with the other experts hired and specialists of named institutions for the successful fulfilment of the formulated tasks.

DELIVERABLES and TIMEFRAME

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

#	Deliverable	Tentative timeframe	Team Leader	Statis-tician	Policy specialist
1.	Inception report on **planning** of assignment: - Working approach & methodology by stages of assignment - Vision on organisation of consultation process with the national counterparts - Detailed Action Plan, including outputs' deadlines - Distribution of tasks among expert team members and assistance requested from Project and its partners	In 1 week from contract date	R	S	S
2.	Draft report on **situational analysis and evaluation of the country preparedness** from the perspective of its harmonisation with NUTS Regulations	In 4 weeks from contract date	G	S	R
3.	Draft report on **possible options for most appropriate statistical organisation/division** of Moldova	In 3 months from contract date	G	R	--
4.	Draft **feasibility report on Moldova's alignment with EU NUTS** statistical territorial classification	In 4 months from contract date	R	S	S
5.	**Final feasibility report on Moldova's alignment with EU NUTS** (*taking into consideration the feedback received from MRDC, State Chancellery, NBS, INS-Romania and Project*)	In 5 months from contract date	R	S	S
6.	**Handouts** and **public presentation** of outputs to national stakeholders and concerned counterparts	In 5 days after submission of final feasibility report	R	R	R
7.	**Activity report** on undertaken assignment (including stages passed, inventory of resources used, results obtained versus expected, impact of obtained results, risks overcome and problems faced, lessons learned, recommendations etc.) plus documentation related to the conducted work	In 5 days after the approval of key deliverables	R	R	R

(Note 1 on abbreviations used: G — provides guidance, R and grey — is responsible for deliverable, S—supports and/or contributes)

All the deliverables should be agreed with the Coordination Team (consisting of representatives of MRDC, State Chancellery, NBS, from the management and concerned divisions, Project staff) and be provided in Romanian and English, in electronic version.

The success of given activity can be ensured only by team work of all partners involved via active participation at all the stages of the assignment and the contracted consultants should play the role of guarantor of these joint effort.

The activities under the present assignment are expected to commence at the **end of March** and be completed by **end of May, 2014**. The consultancy presumes up to **30 working (full) days per each of three consultants and additional 15 days for the team leader function. Two missions (of 5 days) to Chisinau are envisaged**. The consultant/s will be

assisted by the staff of MRDC, State Chancellery, NBS, and the Project personnel for conceptual and technical aspects of the assignment.

Note: The mentioned number of working days has been estimated as being sufficient/ feasible for the envisaged volume of work to be completed successfully and is proposed as a guideline for the duration of assignment, and it can not be used as criteria for completion of work/assignment. The provision of envisaged deliverables approved by the Project and its partners and concerned national stakeholders would be the only criteria for the Contractors work being considered completed and eligible for payment/s.

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION OF THE CONSULTANCY WORK

The successful accomplishment of the present assignment and delivery of expected results should:
- Provide recommendations of different variants of country territorial organization accompanied by justified pros and cons;
- Reflect country's ability to adhere to internationally accepted statistical standards - NUTS;
- Priorities identified within the assessed topic, being integrated in one framework, will represent a full picture of country needs required for the approximation to NUTS which will help donors to easier decide and make reliable commitments;
- Support the development of a coherent activity plan including an appropriate mix of actions, actors and resources required to implement NUTS;
- Help central and local authorities to build their capacities and gather knowledge on related topics;
- Increase data users and decision-makers' awareness on the role and importance of statistical division for the strategic development of the country and for policy efficiency and operability, as well as the preparations for the EU integration;
- Guide on better alignment of data collection instruments, along with improved statistical practices in the country, that will substantially increase the availability, timeliness, and reliability of key statistical regional indicators;
- Identify gaps and areas of concern on further & continuous improvement of regional statistics;
- Help the concerned Government counterparts to plan their future efforts on strategic planning, capacities building;

EXPECTED SUPPORT TO THE CONSULTANT/s
The Project and its national partners (MRDC, State Chancellery, NBS) will be supporting the consultant/s by:
- Nominating the focal point to be included in the Coordination Team and provide the necessary support to the expert/s;
- Providing the (list of) available materials, regulatory documents available, results of previous work, which relate to the problematic of assignment;
- Offering guidelines on the legal and institutional framework of the partner institutions thus ensuring that the undertaken analysis conforms with the overall assignment's objective and sectorial/national priorities;
- Providing indicative guidelines on their expectations during the whole assignment and playing the role of approvers and promoters of the outputs;
- Endorsing promptly (within 10 days period) documents submitted by the consultant/s;
- Providing (if need confirmed) working places for the consultant/s at MRDC and NBS if required.

INSTITUTIONAL and MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

In order to achieve the given objective the assignment should be undertaken by a group of national consultants led by an international team leader who shall be assigned as coordinator of the whole process and ensure the scientific homogeneity and consistency of the final products.

The group of consultants is expected to work in a close cooperation with the national counterparts at the MRCD, State Chancellery, NBS, and the UNDP staff, and keep them updated on the progress on decadal basis.

The Team Leader is expected to coordinate his/her work with the national consultants involved in supporting the present assignment and guide their work.

QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES
The following qualification criteria will be applied during the selection of the 3 consultants:

Qualification criteria	Regional development expert, Team Leader	Statistician	Policy specialist
EDUCATION:			
1. Advanced degree in public policy, development, economics, statistics, social and/or other related science	☒ Economic/ public policy / social sciences	☒ Statistics, economics	☒ Economic/ public policy / social sciences
2. Other formal education relevant for the assignment	☒	☒ incl. statistical analysis software (SPSS, STATA, etc.)	☒
EXPERIENCE:			

3. At least 5 years of relevant **professional experience** in applied area/s of expertise	☒ strategic planning and implementation of EU regional policies, socio-economic analyses of EU regions, with the use of regional statistics	☒ methodological work and production of territorially disaggregated statistics (preferably official) in Moldova, following the international/EU standards	☒ planning, design and implementation of regional development or related areas in Moldova, following EU standards and/or best practices
4. Experience including substantial participation in **analytical** works (thematic analysis, assessments, evaluations, reviews, policy advisory**,** or research work) in applied area/s of expertise	☒ analytical work on: regional development, planning, strategic thinking, evidence-based monitoring in EU	☒ analytical work on: statistical indicators production and evidence-based monitoring	☒ analytical work related to Moldova's current policies, programs, strategies in regional development
5. Development and/or implementation of relevant national/EU classifications	☒ Development and implementation of relevant EU classifications in statistics	☒ Development of national classifications, also in compliance with EU/international requirements	☒ Use of national classifications
6. Experience of participation in **policy-making** processes	☒ provision and use of evidences for planning, monitoring and evaluation of regional development policies in EU countries and *(as asset)* in Moldova	☒ production and use of data for monitoring and evaluation of policies in Moldova (in particular in regional development or related fields)	☒ evidence-based planning, designing, monitoring and evaluation of policies in Moldova (in particular in regional development or related fields)
7. Previous experience in **coordination/leading of /participation in** complex team-works, joint research activities, moderating working groups, organizing national/local level consultation events	☒ coordination/leading	☒ participation	☒ participation
8. Experience of **collaboration with Government/s**, in particular in area/s relevant for the present assignment	☒ Governments of EU countries and *(as asset)* in Moldova	☒ Government of the Republic of Moldova and *(as asset)* in EU countries	☒ Government of the Republic of Moldova and *(as asset)* in EU countries
9. Experience of **work with development partners**, in particular EU, UN/UNDP	☒ experience in international projects managed/funded by EU institutions, in particular specialised in regional development and statistics	☒ experience in international projects focused on statistics	☒ experience in international projects focused on regional development
COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS:			
10. Strong **knowledge** and understanding of area/s of expertise applied	☒ regional development, planning, strategic thinking, evidence-based monitoring, but also EU classifications, in particular in statistics	☒ functioning of official and/or administrative statistics (concepts, regulatory framework, EU/UN standards, best practices, classifications)	☒ national strategic context in regional development and/or related fields at all levels (national, sectorial, regional perspective and EU practices)
11. **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)	☒	☒	☒
12. English and Romanian **languages** proficiency;	☒ Excellent English, knowledge of Romanian and/or Russian is an asset	☒ Romanian-excellent, Good skills in oral and written English	☒ Romanian-excellent, Good skills in oral and written English
PERSONAL QUALITIES AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS:			
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	☒	☒	☒

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Contractor's performance will be evaluated against such criteria as: timeliness, responsibility, initiative, communication, accuracy, quality of the delivered products and their conformity with the present ToRs.

All reports shall in be submitted to the Project Manager who is responsible for approving the reports and deliverables (with prior coordination with the Coordination Team created under the present assignment). The National Project Coordinator will supervise the progress and quality of each stage and the overall process.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Payments will be disbursed in instalments upon submission and approval of high-quality deliverables and certification by National Coordinator & Project Manager, that the services have been satisfactorily performed.

REFERENCE and SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- National Development Strategy Moldova 2020, http://particip.gov.md/categorylist.php?l=ro, approved through Law no. 166 as of 11.07.2012, http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=345635;

- Regional development strategic papers at the national and regional levels: Regional Development Strategy 2010-2012, http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=333914, Regional Development Strategy 2013-2015, http://mdrc.gov.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=144&id=2363&t=/Transparenta-decizionala/Proiecte-de-documente/Proiectul-Hotaririi-de-Guvern-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-Strategiei-Nationale-de-Dezvoltare-Regionala-2013-2015

The **Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics** is a geo-code standard for referencing the subdivisions of countries for statistical purposes. The standard is developed and regulated by the European Union, and thus only covers the member states of the EU in detail. The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics is instrumental in the European Union's Structural Fund delivery mechanisms.

For each EU member country, a hierarchy of three NUTS levels is established by Eurostat; the subdivisions in some levels do not necessarily correspond to administrative divisions within the country. A similar statistical system is defined for the candidate countries and members of the European Free Trade Association, but they are not technically part of NUTS governed by the regulations.

Note that not all countries have every level of division, depending on their size.

The NUTS classification (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics) is a hierarchical system for dividing up the economic territory of the EU for the purpose of[7]:
- The collection, development and harmonization of EU regional statistics.
- Socio-economic analyses of the regions.
    - NUTS 1: major socio-economic regions
    - NUTS 2: basic regions for the application of regional policies
    - NUTS 3: small regions for specific diagnoses
- Framing of EU regional policies.
    - Regions eligible for aid from the Structural Funds (Objective 1) have been classified at NUTS 2 level.
    - Areas eligible under the other priority objectives have mainly been classified at NUTS 3 level.
    - The Cohesion report has so far mainly been prepared at NUTS 2 level.

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[7] http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/nuts_nomenclature/introduction