

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Republic of Moldova

Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project

Credit No.: 7027-MD

Reference No.: MD-PIU-NORLD-508538-CS-INDV

Assignment Title: Individual Consultant for Technical Assistance and Coordination Support for Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development in the WSS Sector

Date: August 20, 2025

Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project (MWSSP) is a World Bank-financed Project implemented by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD).

The NORLD now invites eligible Individual Consultants (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank’s “Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers” November 2020 (“Procurement Regulations”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the „Open Competitive Selection of Individual Consultants” method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

The objective of this assignment is to provide advisory, facilitation, and coordination support to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD) for achieving the short- and medium-term priorities in the WSS sector.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be found at the NORLD web page: <https://www.ondrl.gov.md>

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 09 00 to 16 00 hours.

The applications should include letter of Expression of Interest, CV, and related recommendation letters, if any, together with a copy of CV **in WORD format**.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by fax, or by e-mail) by **September 5, 2025, 16:00 o’clock**, Moldova time, indicating the assignment title in the subject line.

To confirm their qualifications, candidates may be invited for an interview or a written test. Qualified women, with relevant skills for this activity, are strongly encouraged to apply.

P.I. National Office for Regional and Local Development,

Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)
Implementation of the Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project
(P173076)

**Technical Assistance and Coordination Support for Ministry of Infrastructure and
Regional Development in the WSS Sector**

within the
P.I. National Office for Regional and Local Development

I. MOLDOVA WATER SECURITY AND SANITATION PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Government of Moldova (GoM) is currently implementing a project supported by the World Bank (IDA) financing the **Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project (MWSSP)**. The Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project directly supports the Government's commitment to Sustainable Development Goal No.6: to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene by 2030 through its Action Program and the National Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy 2014-2028.

The World Bank's Water Security Diagnostic and Future Outlook¹ showed that there are several pressing challenges to Moldova's water security, such as (i) inequalities in access, inadequate quality of water supply in small towns and weak performance of service providers; (ii) poor environmental health and environmental pollution due to lack of sanitation and wastewater collection and treatment; (iii) weak institutions, fragmented financing streams and unresolved reform areas which hinder programmatic delivery of services.

Access in water supply and sanitation (WSS) is constrained by large coverage gaps in rural areas, compounded by income status. Compared to other countries in the Danube region, the share of population with access to basic water and sanitation services in Moldova is low. The gap between urban and rural remains one of the largest in Europe and is one of the key water security issues the country is facing. Based on JMP-data², gains were made in rural water supply access to drinking water services from piped networks, from 33 percent in 2000 to an estimate 40 percent in 2017, while urban piped service remained almost stable at 85 percent.

Household Budget Survey (HBS) (2018) data provides the picture on national access to a public piped water supply being 70 percent, with urban access at 92.4 percent and rural access at 52.2 percent. However, the water quality of rural piped system is often compromised and below drinking water quality standard. Those not served by public centralized systems rely on so-called self-supply, through private shallow wells. Around one in three people rely on self-supply for their drinking water with 80 percent of wells not compliant with drinking water norms (e.g.

¹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34809>

² Joint Monitoring Program data is derived based on linear extrapolations using national survey data and JMP population estimates; discrepancies between nationally reported data can be found due to differences in estimation methods and definitions. See also: <https://washdata.org/data>

nitrites, e-coli). The poorest quintile of the rural population faces the largest obstacles to get connected to a public system and is least able to invest in private piped supply by wells (9 percent), with 42.2 percent of the poorest households collecting water with buckets or carts. In 2018, out of a total of 1,220 centralized water systems, 1,168 were functional, although performance data is not systematically available.

In response to these challenges, the Project Development Objective (PDO) of the MWSSP is **to increase access to safely managed water supply and sanitation services in selected rural areas and towns, and to strengthen institutional capacities for water supply and sanitation service delivery**. Strengthening institutional capacities for water supply and sanitation service delivery refers to both national level planning and sector development capacities, as well as to improved operational efficiency and delivery at utility level.

The Project will have four components:

Component 1: Increasing access to safely managed WSS services in selected rural areas and towns This component will develop new and rehabilitate existing WSS infrastructure and WASH facilities in rural areas and towns, thus expanding access and quality of services for households, businesses, and public institutions and supporting resilience. Component 1 supports climate adaptation through (a) providing reliable centralized water supply protecting vulnerable households from drought and poor water quality; (b) improving wastewater systems, sanitation, and WASH facilities, reducing environmental exposure to pathogens exacerbated by flooding, particularly in towns facing frequent flooding; and (c) ensuring climate-resilient design of all infrastructure for robust functioning under extreme weather events. It consists of two subcomponents:

Subcomponent 1.1: Expanding access and quality of WSS services. This subcomponent will finance climate-resilient investments in towns and rural areas. This includes the following:

(a) **Water supply investments:** Expansion and rehabilitation of the regional water systems for water supply production and distribution, and service connections for LPAs in selected districts, including the preparation of relevant technical studies and management documents; technical supervision; and citizen engagement activities. This refers to water supply infrastructure in two preliminarily identified subprojects, that is, regional water system expansion for LPAs in Cahul District and the ATU of Gagauzia and a regional water supply system with a surface water treatment plant in Riscani District. Many LPAs, particularly in the south (Cahul) as well as in the northern part along the Prut (Riscani), face shortages of water in the summer, with shallow wells/springs posing a challenge such as in the Prut cluster villages, in the Vulcanesti town, and other villages in Cahul District.

(b) **Wastewater investments:** Expansion and rehabilitation of wastewater systems in selected towns, including the construction and rehabilitation of sewer networks and service connections, and the construction of new wastewater treatment plants, including the preparation of relevant technical studies and management documents; technical supervision; and citizen engagement activities. This refers to two preliminarily identified subprojects in Sorooca and Comrat towns. There are areas in the Comrat town that face frequent flooding, and the Sorooca town is also vulnerable directly on the right bank of the Dniester. The project will support the assessment of flood risk and impact at the household level and, in addition to ensuring resilient design of infrastructure, provide measures to reduce the impact of floods where possible.

(c) **Pilot for on-site household sanitation:** selected rural or peri-urban villages, will benefit from the improvement of on-site household sanitation following a demand-led approach through the provision of technical assistance, the implementation of information campaigns, and the carrying out of civil works. The pilot will be co-financed through the ADA grant. This pilot will demonstrate the use of climate-resilient low-cost technologies for rural sanitation.

Subcomponent 1.2: Improving resilient WASH facilities in public social institutions. This subcomponent will finance works, goods, consulting services, non-consulting services and training/workshops to realize climate-resilient WASH facilities in HCFs and education institutions and implement hygiene education and behavior change communication program.

Component 2: Strengthening institutional capacity at national and local levels for WSS service delivery. This component focusses on institutional capacities of national and subnational entities and WSS operators for management, planning, regulation and reform implementation, and performance improvement of service providers for green, resilience, and inclusive service delivery. At the national level, development of plans, policies, and regulatory documents will support climate adaptation through climate-resilient planning, and at the local level, performance improvements will deliver climate benefits through reduction of NRW and improvement of energy efficiency. It consists of two subcomponents:

Subcomponent 2.1: Building national institutional capacity for WSS. This subcomponent aims to strengthen critical functions of facilitating and implementing WSS sector reform, investment planning and monitoring, and sector modernization and build capacities to this end of the assigned lead unit/entity within MIRD's structure. It finances goods, non-consulting services, consulting services, and training/workshops for activities that strengthen institutional capacities for planning, financing, economic regulation, performance monitoring, professional development, and the revision and development of new policies and normative documents.

Subcomponent 2.2: Improving performance of WSS service providers. Subcomponent 2.2 will finance works, goods, consulting services, non-consulting services, and training to support the implementation of a prioritized rolling multiyear PIP of selected WSS operators involved under Subcomponent 1.1. WSS operators will carry out annual assessments on PIP implementation and KPIs, including publication of results and feedback rounds with customers. The financing for selected WSS operators will be allocated based on results. Investments and TA activities identified in the PIPs are based on utility diagnostics and include, but are not limited to, the following: improving technical and commercial operations, improving financial management (FM), HR management, and organization and strategy aspects, including improving asset management systems and inventories, energy efficiency, NRW reduction programs, water metering practices and equipment to improve climate resilience, water safety, and business continuity, and enhancing responsiveness to customers.

Component 3: Project management and coordination. This component will finance operational costs, consulting services, non-consulting services, goods, and training to finance the overall project management cost, including the project team at the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), implementation support consultants at the regional level within MIRD's RDAs for environmental and social standards implementation, and, at the national level, MIRD as the project implementing entity (PIE). It will finance training costs, including for capacity building in procurement, environmental, and social standards, specialized short-term implementation

support consultants, financial audits, project communication and citizen consultations, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

Component 4: Contingent emergency response component (CERC). A provisional zero-amount component is included, which will allow for rapid reallocation of credit/loan proceeds from other components during an emergency under streamlined procurement and disbursement procedures. This component allows the Government to request the World Bank to recategorize and reallocate financing from other project components to cover emergency response and recovery costs.

II. CONTEXT OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The Government of the Republic of Moldova (GoM), with support from the World Bank through the Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project (MWSSP), is committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goal No. 6 – ensuring universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene by 2030. The Project also supports the implementation of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy 2014–2028.

Despite progress in recent years, the water supply and sanitation (WSS) sector in Moldova continues to face significant challenges, including:

- large disparities between urban and rural access to WSS services;
- quality and reliability issues in rural piped water supply;
- insufficient wastewater collection and treatment coverage;
- fragmented institutional responsibilities and regulatory gaps;
- limited capacity of WSS operators to deliver efficient and sustainable services.

To address these challenges, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD) has identified a set of short- and medium-term priorities for the sector, including:

1. Aligning the national WSS legal and regulatory framework with EU legislation;
2. Developing mechanisms for the implementation of the EU WSS regulatory framework;
3. Promoting institutional and legislative reforms to improve sector governance;
4. Supporting the regionalization of WSS services;
5. Strengthening the capacity of WSS operators;
6. Identifying mechanisms for compensating vulnerable groups for connection costs;
7. Supporting the implementation and coordination of investment and technical assistance projects with external partners.

Given that the Department of WSS Policies within MIRD is recently established and the staff are new to the sector, MIRD requires **institutional advisory support** to effectively coordinate reforms, review deliverables prepared under the MWSSP, liaise with development partners, and facilitate decision-making processes.

The consultant engaged under these Terms of Reference will **not develop the core strategic or legislative documents**, but will provide **technical assistance, advisory inputs, facilitation, and coordination support** to MIRD, ensuring that proposed measures and reforms are well-aligned with sector needs, EU requirements, and international good practices.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this assignment is to provide **advisory, facilitation, and coordination support** to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD) for achieving the short- and medium-term priorities in the WSS sector, by:

1. Assisting MIRD in the process of aligning the national regulatory framework for the WSS sector with EU legislation;
2. Supporting MIRD in the review of mechanisms for implementing the EU-compliant WSS regulatory framework;
3. Advising on the promotion of institutional and legislative reforms;
4. Providing feedback and inputs on policy frameworks and draft normative acts prepared by other actors;
5. Supporting discussions and planning regarding the regionalization of WSS services;
6. Advising on the preparation of capacity development initiatives for WSS service providers;
7. Assisting in the assessment and discussion of compensation mechanisms for vulnerable population groups;
8. Facilitating coordination for the implementation of investment and technical assistance projects with external partners.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the "Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project", according to the provisions of the Project Appraisal Document.

The Consultant shall undertake the following obligations and tasks:

The Consultant shall provide **technical assistance and facilitation services** to MIRD and NORLD, including but not limited to:

1. Participating in meetings, working groups, and consultations on WSS sector reforms and investment projects;
2. Reviewing and providing recommendations on draft laws, policies, strategies, and technical proposals prepared by other entities;
3. Supporting the organization of stakeholder consultations and donor coordination meetings;
4. Assisting in monitoring the progress of externally financed investment and technical assistance projects;
5. Facilitating communication between MIRD, NORLD, WSS operators, LPAs, and development partners;
6. Identifying and presenting relevant international good practices applicable to Moldova's WSS sector;
7. Providing ad-hoc technical advice to ensure consistency between sector reforms and investment projects;
8. Supporting the preparation of summaries, briefing notes, and presentations for MIRD management based on materials developed by other parties.

IV. DELIVERABLES

Table. 1 Details of key deliverables and time lines

cc	Deliverable	Deadline
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1.	The Consultant will have to submit monthly progress reports, which will state activities performed by the Consultant, according to the TOR, during the appropriate month, including the required time. The monthly reports will be in the form of time sheet. The Consultant will enclose, as part of the report, the materials developed within realization of the activities (deliverables).	by the 25th date of each month
2.	At the end of the Contract period the Consultant will present the Final Report, which will incorporate all activities performed.	no later than 2 weeks from the date of contract completion

Note:

All deliverables will be provided in electronic form and in hard copies. The language of the deliverables shall be Romanian.

V. TIMING

This assignment is a part-time assignment (maximum 10 days per month) expected to begin in September 2025. The contract will be signed for a period of 12 months.

Subject to Consultant's satisfactory performance, the contract may be renewed, but no more than the Project closing day.

VI. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Consultant will report to and work under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

The Ministry will provide working space, office equipment and communication facilities (including access to the Internet), as well as any other necessary means and support for Consultant to carry out this assignment.

The Consultant will submit monthly progress reports on the activities performed.

The monthly report should be a subject to approval by the delegated persons from the Department of Water Supply and Sanitation Policies (as a Lead WSS Unit) and State Secretary responsible for regional development policies.

VII. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

General Qualifications - 25 points:

- University degree in **public administration, law, engineering (water/sanitation), regional development** or a related field – *10 points*
- Minimum **5 years of relevant professional experience** in the water supply and sanitation sector, infrastructure development, or public policy – *10 points*
- Demonstrated experience in **advisory roles**, facilitation, and technical assistance to government institutions or international organizations – *5 points*

Adequacy for the Project - 55 points:

- Proven **experience in reviewing and providing feedback** on legal, regulatory, or policy documents related to WSS or public infrastructure – *15 points*

- Experience in **coordination and facilitation** of meetings, workshops, and consultations with multiple stakeholders (ministries, LPAs, operators, donors) – *10 points*
- Proven track record in **monitoring and reporting** on externally financed investment projects – *10 points*
- Knowledge of the **institutional and regulatory framework** for the WSS sector in Moldova, including Law 303/2013 and related legislation – *10 points*
- Ability to identify, adapt, and recommend **international best practices** relevant to Moldova's WSS context – *10 points*

Language and Relevant Experience - 20 points:

- Proficiency in **Romanian** (mandatory) – *5 points*
- Working knowledge of **Russian** – *5 points*
- Good command of **English** (written and spoken) – *5 points*
- Proficiency in **MS Office** and ability to prepare concise reports, presentations, and briefing notes – *5 points*

Scoring and Selection

- Minimum score to qualify for the interview stage - 70 points out of 100
- Candidates will be ranked according to their total score - the highest-ranked candidate will be invited for contract negotiations.
- To confirm their qualifications, candidates may be invited for an interview or a written test.
- Qualified women, with relevant skills for this activity, are strongly encouraged to apply.

X. CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

All data and information received from MIRD, P.I. NORLD and other stakeholders for the purpose of this assignment is to be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these Terms of Reference. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to P.I. NORLD. The contents of written materials obtained and used in this assignment may not be disclosed to any third parties without the expressed advance written authorization of the NORLD.