

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Republic of Moldova

Moldova Water Security and Sanitation Project

Credit No.: 7027-MD

Reference No.: MD-PIU-NORLD-499542-CS-INDV

Assignment Title: Strategic Planning consultant to provide support to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development in the implementation of the Subcomponent 2.1.

Date: September 5, 2025

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

Objectives: The objective of this assignment is to support the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD) in the development of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Development Plan and to support the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development in the capacity development the newly constituted Department of Water Supply and Sanitation Policies.

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

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.

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 19, 2025, 16:00 o’clock, Moldova time, indicating the assignment title in the subject line**.

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)

Strategic Planning consultant to provide support to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development in the implementation of the Subcomponent 2.1.

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

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>

with drinking water norms (e.g. nitrates, 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 adaption 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 Soroca and Comrat towns. There are areas in the Comrat town that face frequent flooding, and the Soroca 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. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this assignment is to support the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD) in the development of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Development Plan and to support the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development in the capacity development of the newly constituted Department of Water Supply and Sanitation Policies.

III. SCOPE OF WORK

After the recent central public authority reform in August 2021, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development took over the responsibilities for the management in the field of water supply and sanitation. During the meeting of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on December 7, 2022, it was approved the Government Decision by which the structure of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development was completed and a new subdivision „Department of Policies in the Field of Water Supply and Sanitation” was created.

Therefore, taking into consideration that 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, it is necessary to increase the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development for the implementation of the planned actions under sub-component 2.1 „Building national institutional capacity for WSS”, through the following tasks:

1. Support for the elaboration of the National Water Supply and Sanitation Development Plan (NWSSDP) and the prioritized investment program, including:
 - Support in monitoring the progress of implementation and act as the focal point in the name of the Ministry for coordination of activities related to development of the NWSSDP;
 - Support in examination of the draft document developed by the consulting company;
 - Support for other technical aspects regarding development and approval process of the NWSSDP.

2. Support the coordination of the hired experts for the development or revision of the normative documents/standards in construction for water supply and sanitation;
3. Support the coordination of the hired experts for modification or completion of the legislative documents in the field of water supply and sanitation;
4. Support the Ministry in promoting the service regionalization in the field of water supply and sanitation project, and also tariff compliance;
5. Support to the new Department of Water Supply and Sanitation Policies (as the Lead WSS Unit) in the elaboration of efficient planning and regulation on responsibilities / attributions;
6. Identify needs for training for the newly constituted Department of Water Supply and Sanitation Policies;
7. Participate at the meetings with the MIRD and PIU (constituted under the P.I. NORLD) representatives and other relevant stakeholders;
8. Upon completion of the assignment, provide a final report on activities performed;
9. Other tasks related to the process of monitoring the implementation of activities planned within the subcomponent 2.1 of the project "Security of water supply and sanitation in Moldova".
10. Organize and facilitate the meetings of the Working Group established under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development for the coordination of activities related to WSS and territorial planning, including:
 - Preparing the agenda and necessary materials for the meetings (bi-weekly or monthly, as agreed with the Ministry);
 - Presenting progress updates and reporting on the status of ongoing activities;
 - Drafting the official minutes of the meetings and ensuring their circulation to all participants for validation.

IV. DELIVERABLES

Table. 1 Details of key deliverables and time lines

cc	Deliverable	Deadline
1.	Progres monthly report (the report will include description of the realized tasks an the number o hours/days worked for the each task, according to a teamplate proposed by the PIU)	by the date 25th of each month
2.	Minutes of the Working Group meetings (prepared and circulated after each meeting)	within 5 working days after each meeting
3.	Final report	no later than 2 weeks from the date of completion of the contract

V. TIMING

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

Subject to Consultant's satisfactory performance, the contract may be renewed until December 2026, 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 – 30 points:

- University Degree in urban planning, territorial planning, architecture, civil engineering or other relevant fields;
- Previous experience with international organizations or donor-funded projects in the WSS and/or urban/territorial planning sector;

Adequacy for the Project – 50 points:

- Minimum 5 years of proven experience in providing consulting services to the public sector;
- Proven experience in the elaboration of territorial/urban planning documentation at national, regional or local level (e.g., general urban plans, zoning plans, territorial development strategies);
- Experience in integrating sectoral policies (such as water supply and sanitation, housing, environment, climate resilience) into territorial and spatial planning;
- Proven experience in the development or revision of normative and legislative documents in accordance with national methodologies;
- Knowledge of EU policies and legislation in the fields of territorial development, urban planning, and water supply & sanitation;
- Knowledge of EU approximation mechanisms and alignment of national legislation with EU acquis;
- Familiarity with international best practices in strategic planning, spatial planning and infrastructure investment programming;
- Ability to coordinate multidisciplinary teams (urban planners, engineers, economists, legal experts) and to ensure coherent integration of WSS aspects into the National Territorial Development Plan;
- Ability to analyze, plan, communicate effectively with stakeholders and present ideas clearly and effectively;
- Possession of a valid technical-professional certification (atestat) in the field of constructions, urbanism or territorial planning will constitute an advantage.

Language and Relevant Experience - 20 points:

- Proficiency in English and Romanian languages;
- Computer skills (MS Office, GIS applications).

VIII. 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.

NOTE: Qualified women, with relevant skills for this activity, are strongly encouraged to apply.