

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for a Company/Organization to support the assessment of the HIV services from a gender perspective and ensure piloting of up to 2 gender sensitive services

Duty Station:	Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
Type of contract:	UN Women Institutional Services Contract
Languages required:	Romanian, Russian and English
Expected duration of the assignment:	Up to 6 months, from February until mid-June 2023
Programme:	131570, UNAIDS UBRAF 2022; Ending Violence against Women

Background

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. Placing women's rights at the center of all its efforts, UN Women leads and coordinates the United Nations system efforts to ensure that commitments on gender equality and gender mainstreaming translate into action throughout the world.

The work of UN Women in Moldova is guided by its new Country Strategic Note 2023-2027, aligned with the [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Moldova \(2023-2027\)](#), [UN Women Global Strategic Plan](#), National Programs and Strategies and aims to contribute to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Strategic Note focuses on four main areas: 1) Ending Violence against Women; 2) Women's Leadership and Governance; 3) Women's Economic empowerment and 4) Humanitarian and Peace development nexus and UN Coordination on Gender equality.

Gender inequality, besides a series of negative social consequences, contributes also to the spread of HIV. Violence against women and HIV/AIDS represent some of the major public health problems affecting the right to reproductive and sexual health of millions of women around the globe. Gender inequality and violence against women can increase infection rates and reduce the ability of women and girls to cope with the epidemic. Often, women have insufficient access to reliable information about HIV/AIDS and existing preventive measures. Women still face barriers in the negotiation of safer sex with men, because of unequal power dynamics. Different forms of violence, including sexual violence, a widespread violation of women's rights, as well as male controlling behaviors further exacerbates the risk of HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Many women, living with HIV, struggle with stigma and exclusion. Women widowed by AIDS or living with HIV may face property disputes with in-laws, a situation which may be exacerbated due to women's limited access to justice to uphold their rights. Moreover, regardless of whether women are living with HIV or not, besides carrying out traditional household activities and raising their children, they generally assume a disproportionate burden of care for HIV-infected members of their family. This, in turn, may prevent women from a full access to education and employment.

According to the latest data, Moldova has a concentrated HIV epidemic in key populations. Based on the results of the last IBBS Survey carried out in 2016 - 2017, the prevalence of HIV in IDUs is 13.9% in Chisinau, 17.0% in Balti and 29.1% in Tiraspol. The general HIV prevalence in the country is about 0.3%. At the end of 2018 there was estimated to be about 18,000 PLWH on both banks of Dniester River. At the end of 2018, 12.764 cases were registered cumulatively with HIV, 9.288 living with HIV and –being aware of their HIV status: 4.938 – male and 4.212 – female.

Available data and statistics confirm that domestic and sexual violence are still widespread violations in the Republic of Moldova. According to the first prevalence study [“Violence against Women in the Family”](#) carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics and commissioned by UN Moldova in 2011, 6 out of 10 women from urban areas and 7 out of 10 women from rural areas in Moldova have experienced at least one form of violence (psychological, economic, physical or sexual) at the hands of their husband/partner during their lifetime, and 1 out of 10 was exposed to all forms of violence. Gender-based violence is socially accepted by more than half of women under certain circumstances. In fact, half of all women will experience physical violence, more than a quarter have at least once experienced it, and one out of eight women reported their experience of sexual violence (Women's Vulnerability to HIV and AIDS in the Republic of Moldova, 2010). Research revealed that HIV infection has a strong negative impact on people's quality of life, leading to emotional, psychological and material problems. The vast majority of people living with HIV face high rates of poverty, with incomes either right at or below the minimum necessary. The proportion of people who reported insufficient incomes to cover their basic needs is higher among young people up to 29 years of age, single and widowed persons, as well as among the unemployed and poorly educated strata of society (Socio-Economic Status of Persons Living with HIV, Chişinău, 2012).

UN Women's response

UN Women brings gender equality and human rights perspectives into its work on empowering women and combating HIV and AIDS. We spearhead strategies entailing clear links with factors propelling the epidemic, such as violence against women, denial of legal rights and women's limited participation in decision-making and in income generating activities. Our most important strategy is empowering women and guaranteeing their rights so that they can protect themselves from infection, overcome stigma, and gain greater access to treatment, care and support.

Our programmes help to amplify the voices of women living with HIV through strategies that promote their leadership and meaningful participation in all decisions and actions to respond to the epidemic. We seek avenues to integrate gender equality and women's rights into strategies, policies, budgets, institutions and accountability frameworks. Some of our initiatives address the multiple intersections between HIV and violence against women, while others advance access to justice for women in the context of HIV, with a focus on critical property and inheritance rights.

The programmes are guided by key global norms and standards, such as the 2016 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: On the Fast-Track to Accelerate the Fight against HIV and to End the AIDS Epidemic by 2030, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Sustainable Development Goals. In June 2012, UN Women became the 11th cosponsoring agency of UNAIDS, an important step towards ensuring that gender equality is at the heart of global action on HIV and AIDS.

In the Republic of Moldova, in past years UN Women has worked on reducing the burden of stigma and discrimination against women and men living with HIV by applying innovative tools and approaches. During 2018-2019, in collaboration with UNAIDS, an initiative group of women living with HIV conducted research on the [“Realization of the rights on reproductive health of women living with HIV”](#) which measures social and economic barriers that women living with HIV face on both banks of Dniester River. The research has identified significant barriers hampering the respect for the rights of women living with HIV, influenced by factors, such as: insufficient information, reduced access to health services due to social, economic barriers, high stigma and discrimination. 26% of respondents reported suicidal thoughts, feelings of loneliness (44%), isolation from friends and relatives (42,7%), lack of family support (23%), fear and panic related to HIV diagnosis (61,3%), reduced self-esteem (39,7%), shame (59,3%) and depression (67,7%). As a response to that, a road map on the de-stigmatization of people living with HIV was developed to address stigma and discrimination at three levels: societal, institutional, and individual.

During 2020, UN Women in collaboration with a national NGO and with involvement of women champions from the field has conducted a mentoring programme for women living or affected by HIV to strengthen abilities on topics related to self-knowledge, toxic relationships, identification of abusive behaviors, methods, and recourses of confronting abusive behaviors. As a result, 42 WLHIV or women vulnerable to HIV from different regions of the country, including from left bank of Dniester River, have better understanding and strengthened abilities on topics related to self-knowledge, toxic relationships, identification of abusive behaviors, methods, and recourses of confronting abusive behaviors. In addition to this, in 2020, UN Women conducted an analysis of the national HIV and AIDS prevention and control programme from a gender perspective and supported the development of a gender-transformative, responsive and sensitive training toolkit for professionals working in different relevant domains, including right holders, in collaboration with UNAIDS Moldova. In order to strengthen the impact of the interventions, and the long-term efficient application of gender-transformative, responsive, and sensitive HIV programming, through accessibility to continuous learning opportunities for professionals and new staff working in the field, UN Women has supported the development of an e-learning course "[HIV and Gender](#)" on applying gender-transformative, responsive, and sensitive HIV programming.

Taking into consideration the above-described challenges which PLHIV, especially women living with HIV face and the earlier work done in the field, the agency wishes to further engage a national company/NGO in order to conduct the assessment of the HIV services from gender equality perspective based on UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT), adjustment and piloting in at least 2 NGOs for more gender inclusive responses.

Scope of work and results

Under the overall guidance and direct supervision of EAW Program Analyst, the national company/NGO in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders will conduct the assessment of the HIV services from gender equality perspective based on UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT), adjustment and piloting in at least 2 specialized NGOs for greater gender inclusive response.

For this, the selected company/organization should ensure the fulfillment of the following tasks:

1. **Develop the detailed work plan** including timelines, brief description of the activities to be undertaken and methodology to be used;
2. **Develop the methodology for the assessment** of the HIV services from gender equality perspective based on [UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool \(GAT\)](#);
3. **Conduct the assessment** of the HIV services from gender equality perspective based on UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT);
4. **Propose relevant adjustments of improvement** to some HIV services from gender equality perspectives, in consultation with PLWHIV and women champions* and other relevant actors in the field;
5. **Conduct piloting of proposed improvements of services** for more gender inclusive responses in collaboration with at least 2 NGOs and other relevant actors in the field;
6. Develop some communication materials as leaflet about gender sensitive services for awareness raising purposes in Romanian, Russian and other relevant languages;
7. **Develop a final report** on the assignment conducted, including lessons learnt, challenges and opportunities identified.

* "Women champions" or "Positive deviance" are women that found a solution to end stigma, discrimination, violence in their lives, who know their rights, are sharing their experiences for empowerment of other women; and are advocating for their rights in the processes of development of relevant laws, strategies, policies and services.

Deliverables and timeframe

The selected company/organization will be responsible for completion the following specific activities and deliverables, comprising of the main milestones:

#	Activities and Deliverables	Tentative timeframe for accomplishment of task
1	Detailed work plan developed.	Mid-February 2023
2	Methodology developed for the assessment of the HIV services from gender equality perspective based on UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT);	End-February 2023
3	Assessment and improvements proposed of the HIV services from gender equality perspective based on UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool (GAT);	End-March 2023
4	Report on the piloting of proposed improvements of services for more gender inclusive responses in collaboration with at least 2 NGOs and other relevant actors in the field;	End May 2023
5	Final report submitted, including the documentation of the best practices (lessons learnt, challenges and opportunities identified)	Mid – June 2023

All deliverables should be agreed with UN Women and be provided in English, in electronic copy.

Duration of the assignment

It is expected that the selected company/organization shall begin work in **February 2023** with work being completed until **mid-June 2023**, in conformity with the indicative timeframe described under “Deliverables and Timeframe” section.

Management arrangements

The selected company/organization will work under direct supervision of the UN Women Programme Analyst on EAW and in collaboration with UNAIDS Moldova representative. The selected company/organization is expected to provide highly qualified consultants for this specific assignment, with appropriate skills and expertise. UN Women will provide all the necessary informational materials for a better understanding of the context and for the successful fulfilment of the assignment.

Performance evaluation

The company/organisation’s performance will be evaluated on the basis of such criteria as: timeliness, responsiveness, initiative, communication, accuracy, and quality of the products delivered.

Financial arrangements

Payment will be made in 5 instalments, upon successful completion of deliverables and certification of final report by UN Women that the services have been satisfactorily performed. The company shall be responsible for all administrative, logistical, travel arrangements and costs in fulfilling this assignment.

Requirements to the company/organization

- Legal entity officially registered in Moldova with full capacity to act;
- At least 5 years’ experience working in the field of HIV/AIDS;

- At least 5 years' experience working with underrepresented groups (providing services, peer to peer support and capacity buildings) with main focus in the area of human rights and gender equality;
- Previous experience working with international organizations, particularly UN Agencies would be an asset;

Requirements to the task team of the company/organization

The organisation of the task team is of ultimate importance. The task team shall include one team leader and several qualified team members. The required experience of the project team shall be explicitly described in their CVs and shall include the following requirements:

Team Leader (Project Coordinator)

1. At least university degree in human rights, development studies, public health and/or other related areas relevant for the assignment;
2. At least five (5) years of experience as a team/group leader/manager in undertaking assignments in HIV-related projects;
3. At least two (2) years of experience in gender equality, gender mainstreaming;
4. Proven experience in working with international organizations (successful experience in working with UN agencies) is an asset;
5. Working knowledge in spoken Romanian, Russian, English are required.

Qualified team member/s

1. At least university degree in human rights, gender studies, development studies, public health and/or other related areas relevant for the assignment;
2. At least 1 team member with at least 3 years of experience in reviewing documents, strategies for gender mainstreaming;
3. At least 1 team member with at least 3 years of experience in HIV field;
4. Proven experience in working with international organizations (successful experience in working with UN agencies) is an asset;
5. Working knowledge in spoken Romanian and Russian are required. Working knowledge of English would be considered as an asset;

Values and competencies

Core Values:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Cultural sensitivity and respect for diversity
- Gender sensitiveness and empathy towards women's rights issues
- Respect for UN principles

Core Competencies:

- Good leadership skills
- Ability to work in teams
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Building partnerships

- Sensitiveness and empathy with vulnerable people and people from disadvantaged groups.

The Team Leader/Project Coordinator shall provide UN Women with frequent updates on the progress of the assignment and other relevant aspects of the work. The entire team is responsible for the content and quality of all the deliverables and making sure that they are in line with the objectives set for this contract.