

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

**for selecting a service provider (consulting company / expert / group of experts) to develop a capacity building programme for public institutions responsible for regional and local development policy in the context of the EU candidate country status of the Republic of Moldova**

**Eligible applicants:** Consulting company / expert / group of experts possessing vast experience in the field of regional and local development, incl. principles of the EU regional development policy.

**Beneficiary institution:** Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development of the Republic of Moldova

**Contracting entity:** Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova

**Type of contract:** Service contract

**Contract duration:** approx. August – December 2023

**Application deadline:** 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2023, 11.00 a.m.

### **Purpose of services:**

To develop a capacity building programme for the staff of the public institutions responsible for regional and local development policy development and its' implementation, in the context of the EU candidate status of the Republic of Moldova. The programme is elaborated on the request of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development of the Republic of Moldova (MIRD).

### **Context:**

[Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova](#) (SFPL in MD) is a representative office of the Polish state treasury foundation ([Solidarity Fund PL](#)) established to contribute to development of the partnering countries. The Fund is guided by the Board chaired by the minister of foreign affairs responsible for cooperation for development. The Fund is an implementing partner of Polish cooperation for development program – Polish aid.

For the last 10 years SFPL in MD cooperates with MIRD to contribute to development and efficient implementation of regional and urban policies, incl. urban revitalization, capacity building programmes, practical exercises and tailor-made projects of the central public authorities, regional institutions, and local authorities in the field of local development. In the new context of the Republic of Moldova's pre-accession to the EU, specific expertise and capacities on planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting under shared management is scarce. For enabling the main stakeholders to assimilate and manage in a proper way the aspects of the EU regional policy a comprehensive plan to prepare the institutions responsible for regional and local development is needed. Development of the program was included as one of the actions in the annual action plan of MIRD for 2023.

SFPL in MD initiates a call for a service provider to develop the capacity building programme. The document will create the basis for the MIDR's partnering institutions to build their capability to implement regional and local development policies in line with the main principles of the EU regional policy and consequently it will be expressed in a good understanding of the EU specific provisions for regional development and will reinforce the institutional capacities to absorb cohesion funds in the future.

### **Existing general legal framework:**

- ⇒ [National strategic, legislative, and normative framework on regional and local development in the Republic of Moldova](#)
- [Law No. 315 of 17.11.2022](#) for the approval of the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030"
- [Law No. 438 of 28.12.2006 on regional development in the Republic of Moldova](#)

- Government Decision No. 40 of 26.01.2022 on the approval of the National Regional Development Strategy of the Republic of Moldova for the years 2022-2028 ([NSRD: 2022-2028](#))
  - Government [Decision No. 916 of 16.12.2020](#) on the approval of the National Program for the Development of Growth-Pole Cities in the Republic of Moldova for 2021-2027
  - Government [Decision No. 23 of 10.01.2022 on the Single Program Document for 2022-2024](#)
- ⇒ Existing institutional framework for regional development policy implementation in the Republic of Moldova
- [Law No. 27 of 10.02.2022 on the National Fund for Regional and Local Development](#)
  - Government [Decision No. 172 of 16.03.2022](#) for the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the National Council for the Coordination of Regional and Local Development
  - Government [Decision No. 152 of 09.03.2022](#) for the approval of the Regulation on the management of financial resources of the National Fund for Regional and Local Development
  - Government [Decision No. 127 of 08.02.2008 on measures to implement Law no. 438/2006 on regional development in the Republic of Moldova](#)
  - [Government Decision No. 271/2022 on the organization and functioning](#) of the Public Institution National Office for Regional and Local Development
- ⇒ EU framework, without being limited to:
- [Association Agreement](#) between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part, 2014/2016 (incl. [DCFTA](#))
  - [EU cohesion](#) and structural policy, strategic and regulatory frameworks (incl. necessary conditions to be met for the Republic of Moldova to benefit after EU integration)
  - European pre-accession structural funds
  - [Global Europe 2021-2027](#): Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)

**Need for elaboration** derives from:

- ⇒ The priority objectives stipulated in [the Government's Action Programme "Moldova of Good Times"](#) – capacities development for assimilation of development funds, incl. strategic selection of priorities, evaluation, design, procurement, and quality assurance (III. General Objectives); and strengthening capacities to coordinate external assistance and establishing a sustainable mechanism to monitor the implementation of large projects, to increase the absorption capacity of available external funds (VI. Sectoral Policies, Good Governance).
- ⇒ The action no. 10.78 of the Republic of Moldova [Government's Action Plan 2023](#) (chapter 10): development of a capacity building programme for regional and local development institutions, with a reference to the [Association Agreement](#), and aligns with the recommendations translated within Chapter 22 of the [Commission Staff Working Document of 01.02.2023](#).
- ⇒ The assessment of the EU, based on the [Analytical Report following the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council Commission Opinion on the Republic of Moldova's application for membership of the EU](#), 01.02.2023 – as Moldova is at an early stage of preparation in the area of regional policy. Besides the legislative framework that needs to be aligned to the EU acquis, the Moldova's administrative capacity and experience is insufficient to meet the requirements of EU regional policy in terms of large-scale funds implementation.

- ⇒ The new concept of the regional development reflected by the [NSRD: 2022-2028](#) refers to the European trends of changing the approach to regional development, by achieving Objective 3: strengthening the institutional framework and administrative potential in the management of regional and integrated urban development projects. Thus, a major opportunity of the NSRD 2022-2028 is to synchronize with the cycle and priorities of the EU's regional policy.
- ⇒ The one of the five priorities as part of the EU support package for the Republic of Moldova under the [Economic and Investment Plan](#) (EIP), referring to strengthening administrative capacity and increasing the participation of Moldova in EU programmes.

**The goal** of developing capacity building programme for public institutions responsible for the regional and local development policy and its' implementation is to ensure an efficient mid-term planning and designing the measures on increasing knowledge, strengthening capabilities of the relevant stakeholders in understanding the principles of the EU regional policy and cohesion funds management and its' adaptation to the local context, in the sense of their qualitative preparation for the pre-accession phase (theoretical and conceptual elements, awareness and practical skills, behaviours and attitudes).

**Task:** Develop a ready to be implemented capacity building programme for public institutions responsible for the regional and local development policy and its' implementation.

#### **Target group:**

The programme is addressed mainly to the employees of the public administration institutions responsible for the regional and local development policy and its' implementation, incl.: Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development; 5 Regional Development Agencies (RDAs); Regional Development Councils (RDCs), and National Office for Regional and Local Development (NORLD).

*The final target group is expected to be defined by the service provider when submitting the first 2 deliverables and will be agreed with MIRD.*

#### **Objectives:**

- Elaboration of the tailor-made capacity building programme according to the country-specific context and authorities-peculiar needs.
- Designing training activities and capacity building measures in a realistic way, taking into consideration all relevant factors of timeline and expertise.
- Developing a comprehensive capacity building programme able to stimulate the participants awareness of the EU 'philosophy', strengthening their skills, increase the knowledge and a high level of understanding of policy, strategic and regulatory frameworks as precondition for the management and implementation of pre-accession instruments and EU funds/policies.

#### **Duties:**

- Develop a results-based work & methodological plan for providing the required consultancy services, including tasks, indicators for measuring progress, and timelines.
- Conduct a capacity assessment of institutions mentioned above (Target group), analysing their current needs, strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in terms of administrative capacity, mainly regarding the EU policy and funds. Propose the final target group.
- Based on the conducted review to develop a capacity building programme with a defined curriculum (incl. thematic modules), learning modes (certain forms of training) and specific terms, incl. recommendations on relevant expertise / case studies / EU tools, etc. applicable for the country-specific context (approx. 2-3 example-countries close to Moldova peculiarities).
- Develop an implementation roadmap for mid-term (approx. 3-4 years).

- Formulate recommendations on related elements of the regional development policy and processes of the Republic of Moldova in the context of the EU pre-accession phase or other relevant aspects.

#### Responsibilities:

- The process of programme elaboration will be carried out considering certain proposals and recommendations in coordination with the organizational team (SFPL in MD and its validation by MIRD).
- Each deliverable should be agreed with SFPL in MD and approved by MIRD, at least via email.
- Regular communication and reporting to SFPL in MD on the tasks progress (monthly).
- Provide a final report on activities conducted, achievements, lessons learned and recommendations.
- Estimation of possible risks in the process of fulfilling the assumed tasks and announcement to SFPL in MD.
- All deliverables should be in English, an advantage will be the Romanian versions of the documents.

#### Deliverables:

No.	Deliverables	*Deadline
1.	Results-based work & methodology plan for the provision of the required consultancy services, including tasks, indicators for measuring progress, and timeline.	4 working days after contract signing
2.	Capacity assessment of institutions responsible for the regional and local development policy and processes (context analysis, needs, solutions, perspectives, incl. field visit reports, interviews/ questionnaires, etc.). The target group defined.	20 working days from acceptance of deliverable no. 1 by SFPL in MD and MIRD
3.	Capacity building programme and its presentation to SFPL in MD and validation by MIRD (long / text version)	25 working days from acceptance of deliverable no. 2 by SFPL in MD and MIRD
4.	Road map: Capacity building programme – short version ( <i>the format to be defined together with the provider in dialogue with MIRD and SFPL in MD</i> ).	7 working days from acceptance of deliverable no. 3 by SFPL in MD and MIRD
5.	Final Report on the activities conducted (including achievements and challenges), recommendations and lessons learned ( <i>the report template will be defined together with the provider in dialogue with MIRD and SFPL in MD</i> ).	7 working days from acceptance of deliverable no. 4 by SFPL in MD and MIRD

*\*Note: the final periods and deadlines will be defined at the contracting phase by the SFPL in MD in cooperation with MIRD. The estimated final term for delivering the capacity building programme is the middle of December 2023.*

#### Reporting:

It will be reported to the SFPL in MD and MIRD.

### Requirements for applicants:

- Legal entity registered in the Republic of Moldova and / or other states /consortium of legal / individuals (it is encouraged that group members to be both specialists from the Republic of Moldova and from other states) or individual (resident or non-resident of the Republic of Moldova).
- Experience in providing consultancy services, conducting analyses / studies / evaluations, and developing strategies / programmes in the field of EU regional policy or related fields – at least 3 years. An advantage will be experience in developing capacity building programmes in a similar context of candidate status to EU.
- Experience in working with national (Moldova – will be an advantage) and EU institutions/ organisations in the field of regional and local development, structural funds, or related fields.
- The provider has a team of consultants with education and/or experience or the individual has education and/or experience in EU project management, regional development policy or other relevant fields.
- The provider or members of the expert team have participated, from the last 3 years, in the elaboration of at least two policy/ study/ evaluation documents, etc. for state institutions and/or external development partners.

### The dossier will contain:

1. Portfolio – experts' CVs with relevant experience as specified above (incl. contact data, copy of the identity act, bank information) / company's CV (experience, contact data, bank information); min. 2 references (contacts of at least 2 beneficiaries of similar services from the last 3 years), and other relevant attachments (e.g. example of similar tasks realised previously – studies/ analyses; diplomas of the experts in the fields, etc.).
2. A work plan (max. 5 pages), including terms of implementation & proposed methodology.
3. Financial offer (without VAT/net).

### The following documents (as appropriate) will be attached to the dossier:

1. Enterprise registration certificate issued by the State Registration Authority (or other related public institutions from other states).
2. License / Activity authorization.
3. Other relevant documents

The dossier must be sent to the email address: [procurements@solidarityfund.md](mailto:procurements@solidarityfund.md) with the title of the message: **Services – Capacity Building Programme – Regional Development, specifying the application format in the content of the message (email): company, expert group, or independent expert.**

**Application deadline: August 14, 2023, 11:00 a.m.**

### Selection and evaluation procedure:

A committee of at least 3 members will evaluate the components of the dossier according to the following criteria:

- Submission of the complete set of the requested documents and their correspondence with the Terms of Reference (maximum score – 10 points).
- Relevant experience, including qualifications and professional skills according to the Terms of Reference (maximum score – 25 points).
- Applicable methodological approach (maximum score – 25 points).
- Financial offer (maximum score – 20 points).
- Interview of candidates (maximum score – 20 points).

The assessment according to the criterion "financial offer" will be based on the following formula:

$P = P_{min}/P_{of} \times 20$  points, where:

Pmin - the lowest proposed price

Pof - price presented in the examined offer

P - the number of points awarded to the tender examined according to the price criterion, rounded to the full number.

The selected provider will be contacted to negotiate the contract.

*\* The applicant has the right to establish independently the confidentiality limits of the provided data and to mention which of the attached documents to the offer are confidential.*

*\*\* Personal data will be processed by Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova exclusively for the purpose of carrying out the procurement process, in accordance with the provisions of the legislation in force. Individuals have the right to portability of the provided data and rectification. Personal data will not be transmitted to other third parties without the prior consent of the applicant. If you have any questions about your personal data, you can contact us at [info@solidarityfund.md](mailto:info@solidarityfund.md).*

*\*\*\* For the transparency purpose of the procurement process, the results of the auction with information on the selected provider will be published on the Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova website. Participation in the auction by sending documents signifies acceptance of the publication of the results of the contest, except for information marked as confidential.*

*\*\*\*\* Until signing the Service providing Agreement, the selected Service Provider shall sign a declaration of conformity.*