Funded by the European Union

Expert-Grup Centru Analitic Independent

Institutul pentru Politici și Reforme Europene

Fundația Soros Moldova

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for selecting experts
for the implementation of the "Consolidating the Consumer Protection Framework in Moldova" Project

1. Brief project description

Donors: European Commission and Soros Foundation Moldova
Implementation period: January 2024 – December 2026
Project total budget: EUR 784,285.00 EUR

AO Centrul Analitic Independent Expert Grup (further EG), as lead partner, in consortium with the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (further IPRE) and Soros Foundation Moldova, started in January 2024 the implementation of the EU Grant Contract "Consolidating the Consumer Protection Framework in Moldova" (project duration 30 months).

The general objective of the project: overall objective of the Action is that consumer rights are known and enforced in Moldova. It contributes to fulfilment of the global objective of this call for proposals to strengthen CSOs' capacity in the process of implementation of the Association Agreement, including at local level, considering that consumer protection is a key component of the association agenda and European integration process. Namely, it corresponds to Lot 2 of the call: support implementing rights-based consumer protection through advocacy activities. It will be addressed by the Action through two complementary specific objectives (SOs).

Specific objectives (SO):

1. SO 1. Government of Moldova has increased its capacities to enforce consumer protection legislation approximated with the EU acquis - will follow the top-down approach by targeting the policy makers. It will consist mainly of technical assistance that will allow the Government to speed up the harmonization process with EU acquis in the area of consumer protection.
2. SO 2. Consumers in Moldova increased their knowledge and capacities to promote their rights – will follow the bottom-up approach, by empowering the mass-media and civil society to promote consumer protection and raise the level of information and awareness in the society around this issue.

The main activities of the project are:

- OP 1.1. Comprehensive mapping of institutions in the field of consumer protection;
- OP 1.2. Gap analysis between the current situation in Moldova related to consumer protection framework and EU directives in this field;
- OP 1.3. Set of recommendations for relevant institutions to adjust the legal framework in line with the mentioned gap analysis;
- OP 1.4. Software that allows for quick classification, sorting, and processing of petitions and, at the same time, allows consumers to track the status of their petition;

- OP 2.1. Awareness raising campaign on consumer protection;
- OP 2.2. 5 sub-grants for mass-media;
- OP 2.3. European Consumer Centre established based on the requirements of the EU Acquis and relevant Directives;
- OP 2.4. A subgrant of EUR 60,000 for the setting up of the European Consumer Center (mainly, for hiring of key personnel).

Target groups and final beneficiaries of the project:

The Action will be implemented for 3 key target groups (TGs).

TG1 comprises the Ministry of Economy and Digital Development and its subordinated State Inspectorate for Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection, as well as the entire constellation of institutions responsible for consumer protection, given the high fragmentation of the institutional framework in this area (table nr 1).

Table 1. Main public authorities that are dealing with consumer protection

Sector	Main public authority responsible for consumer protection	Subordinated public authority responsible for consumer protection
Non-foodstuffs, services, metrology	Ministry of Economy and Digital Development	State Inspectorate for the Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection
Health	Ministry of Health	National Agency for Public Health
Transport	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	National Motor Transport Agency National Naval Agency Civil Aeronautic Authority
Constructions	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Agency for Technical Supervision
Telecommunications	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	National Agency for Regulation of Electronic Communications and Information Technologies
Tourism	Ministry of Culture	State Inspectorate for the Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection
Non-banking financial sector	National Bank of Moldova National Commission for Financial Market	National Commission for Financial Market
Banking financial sector	National Bank of Moldova	National Bank of Moldova
Foodstuffs	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry	National Agency for Food Safety
Energy, water and sewage	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	National Agency for Energy Regulation

Needs & Constraints: low capacities to align the legal and institutional framework to EU Acquis, poor inter-institutional coordination, lack of proper digital tools to manage consumer petitions and low credibility

among consumers. The Action will address these needs and constraints through technical assistance in finetuning the legal and institutional framework in line with EU Acquis and development (OP1.1-OP1.3) and implementation of the digital tool/software for management of consumer petitions (OP1.4), under SO1.

TG2: civil society. Needs & Constraints: low information and awareness about consumer rights and mechanisms to promote consumer protection, underfunding and poor organization of civil society that is working in this area. The Action will address these needs and constraints by supporting the creation of the European Consumer Center (OP2.3-2.4), as well as through the awareness campaign (OP2.1) under SO2.

TG3: mass media. Needs & Constraints: like civil society – low awareness, but also capacities to reflect consumer protection issues in their activity. The Action will address these needs and constraints by supporting 5 media CSOs, including through sub-grants (OP2.2), and by providing content for the awareness and visibility campaign (OP2.1) that will be implemented also through mass-media, under SO2.

2. Scope of the assignment and key activities to be conducted by the selected experts

The scope of this assignment is to contract: one expert on consumer protection that will assist the contracted project manager and the entire project team in the implementation of the project Activity 1.4.3: Implementation of the Software that allows for quick classification, sorting and processing of petitions and, at the same time, allows consumers to track the status of their petition. The software will be elaborated as a module of the e-Democracy platform, and the role of the expert will consist in monitoring the proper transposition of the user story functionalities described in the ToR, into digitalized workflows. In this regard, the expert will collaborate closely with the Project coordinator, the IT project manager and the entire extended consultation group composed of representatives from the 12 consumer protection authorities.

3. Deliverables and Timeline of project activities

Deliverables	Timeline of project activities
(i) monthly monitoring reports on the software implementation; (ii) software developed and functional; (iii) user manual about software functionalities.	November 2025 -October 31st 2026

4. Allocation of expert days

For the realization of this task, the expert will have allocated **20 expert days** as indicated below.

Deliverables	Estimated effort (days)
Assistance in the proper transposition of the user story ToR into digital workflows and in the proper implementation of the software.	20
Total days allocated	**20**

5. Requirements for experts

- Education/training: Master's degree in a relevant area such as: law, economics, management, engineering, public administration etc;

- General professional experience: minimum 3 years of relevant work experience in the consumer protection related field, public administration, legislative approximation, economic impact assessments etc;
- Experience of implementing IT projects and governmental IT solutions;
- Ability to effectively communicate with national institutions, stakeholders, and beneficiaries; excellent analytical, teamwork, presentation, and communication skills.

6. Evaluation grid

The evaluation of the applications will be carried out in two stages:

Stage 1: Analysis of the technical offers according to the specified criteria with the respective scoring, including verification of compliance with the ToR.

Stage 2: Analysis of financial offers and calculation of the score according to the unique calculation formula.

In the first stage, the technical offer, submitted by each expert, will be evaluated against the minimum compliance requirements as follows:

Evaluation criteria	**Points (max)**
Master's degree or higher in a relevant area such as: law, economics, management, engineering, public administration etc;	25
Minimum 3 years of relevant work experience in the consumer protection field, public administration, legislative approximation, economic impact assessments.	35 (3 years – 30 points, plus 1 point for every additional year of experience up to a maximum of 35 points)
Experience of implementing IT projects and governmental IT solutions	30 (1 project -5 points, 2 projects 10 points, 3 projects and more 30 points)
Proven ability to effectively communicate with national institutions, stakeholders, and beneficiaries; excellent analytical, teamwork, presentation, and communication skills.	10
Total	**100**

The minimum qualification score for the technical offer – 75 points.

During the second stage, the Evaluation Committee will examine only the financial offers of the bidders that meet the minimum qualification score following the evaluation of the technical offers, mentioned above.

The evaluation score (maximum 100 points) will be established by weighting technical offer against financial offer on an 80/20 basis. This is done by multiplying:

- the scores awarded to the technical offers by 0.80;
- the scores awarded to the financial offers by 0.20.

Contracts will be awarded based on the most economically advantageous offers established based on the best quality/price ratio.