Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Mid-term Review of the Cooperation Strategy Republic of Moldova 2018-2021

Terms of Reference for the Key Consultant

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, March 2020

1.   Introduction and background

These Terms of Reference (ToR) concern the mid-term review of the 2018-2021 Cooperation Strategy (CS) for the Republic of Moldova (RM), which defines the Swiss engagement in the country for the mentioned period.

The 2018-'21 CS for RM is implemented by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova (SCO-M), which is the Swiss diplomatic representation in Moldova, under the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). SCO-M is part of the SDC Department for Cooperation with Eastern Europe (CEE), Eurasia Division.

The Swiss engagement in the Republic of Moldova has the following *overall goal*: To enhance the well-being of Moldova's population and the cohesion of Moldovan society, with a special focus on the inclusion of excluded groups.

Switzerland will achieve the overall goal through interventions in three thematic domains:

*   *Domain 1: Health* – Men/boys and women/girls effectively enjoy essential healthcare services and act responsibly with regard to their own health.
*   *Domain 2: Local Governance* – Women and men, with a special focus on excluded ones, are actively involved in local governance, shaping the development process of their local communities and effectively enjoying quality services.
*   *Domain 3: Economic Development and Employment* – Better functioning market systems in selected sectors and localities increase the quantity and quality of jobs and provide net additional income to women and men, specifically benefiting excluded groups.

Switzerland promotes *gender equality, good governance* as well as *conflict-sensitive programme management (CSPM)* transversally and addresses *migration & development* as a cross-cutting issue in its domains of interventions and its priorities.

The mid-term review of the CS is part of the cycle management of CS and is therefore part of the planning, monitoring and reporting processes. The ultimate responsibility for the management and supervision of the review rests with the SCO-Moldova. The SDC's review manager is Caroline Tissot, the Head of Cooperation at the SCO-M: caroline.tissot@eda.admin.ch .

2.   Objectives and scope of the mid-term review

The **goal** of this mid-term review is to help SCO-M and SDC's management in strategic and operational steering, improving aid effectiveness and in preparing the ground for the next CS. The review will focus on learning and steering, as well as inform the management regarding a potential extension of the current CS.

The mid-term review will strive to achieve the following **objectives**:

*   To assess – through a mutual learning process – whether SDC and its partners reach the strategic objectives, as defined in the CS, and to appraise the efficiency of the strategic and operational steering mechanisms, including the ability to adapt to contextual changes;
*   To timely build the foundation for defining the key elements for the new CS (domains, transversal themes, modalities), also taking into consideration the new Dispatch on international cooperation 2021-2024;
*   To assess the relevance and coherence of the Swiss development cooperation in Moldova to national development results and as part of the development partners' contribution (added value);
*   To assess the Swiss contribution to strengthening the health sector in Moldova and advise on the future of this domain of intervention;
*   To identify good practices and innovative approaches and to identify key factors, which enhance or hinder aid performance and results achievements as well as share experiences in managing CS.

3. Review approach, areas and questions

The **review approach** is based on a relatively high degree of standardization, and a stronger involvement of internal resources (participation of SDC peers) to promote institutional learning. The mid-term review will take into consideration the different strategic decisions made in relation to the current CS (based on the relevant documents provided by the SCO-M).

The review shall address the following **four Review Areas (EA)**:

RA 1:   Context analysis (referring to both the partner country and the Swiss context)

RA 2:   Relevance and appropriateness of the projects/program portfolio with regard to the domains of intervention of the current CS

RA 3:   Implementation of the current CS and its programme and project portfolio

RA 4:   Results of the current CS in relation to the results at country level.

The following is the **indicative list of review questions**. The list of questions will be finalized by the review team (external consultant and SDC-peers), based on discussions with the SCO-M and SDC Eurasia division.

Review Area 1: Context analysis (referring to the partner country context, the region and to the Swiss context)
1.1 Positioning and adaptation of CS with respect to country and regional context as well as Swiss policies
1.1.1. How well does the CS (strategic orientation, overall goal, domains of intervention and transversal themes, global challenges) reflect the development priorities, set by Moldovan government and the policies of the Federal Council Dispatch (FCD)? 1.1.2. Which changes in the context were the most important and what effects may they have caused on the CS? Which adaptations have been taken?
1.2 Quality of context analysis
1.2.1. To what extent is the context analysis realistic and relevant? To what extent is the broad political context taken into account in the CS and ARs? Does the analysis include current issues (e.g. social and economic inequality, global challenges, power relations, and existing territorial disparities) and relevant stakeholders (e.g. private sector, state apparatus and political parties, institutions and powers, civil society)?

Review Area 2: Relevance and appropriateness of the projects/program portfolio with regard to the domains of intervention of the CS
2.1 Relevance of the projects/program portfolios
2.1.1. To what extent are the projects/program portfolios relevant, coherent and appropriate for achieving the results of the CS regarding its domains of intervention? 2.1.2. To what extent are the approaches being applied appropriately in the domains? Which innovative approaches produce added value? How well the SCO ensures synergies between projects and domains?

Review Area 3: Implementation of the CS and its portfolio
3.1 Management performance
3.1.1. How effective is the portfolio management of the SCO (regarding transversal themes, policy dialogue, collaboration with the global programs, financial and human

resources, aid diplomacy/policy influencing, coordination efforts, the mix of instruments)? What are its contributions to an optimal achievement of results?

3.2 Quality of the CS monitoring system

3.2.1. To what extent is the process management of the CS monitoring system relevant and effective, in order to provide evidence-based data/information for accounting for results (reporting) and CS steering?

3.3 Coordination and aid effectiveness in the country set up

3.3.1. Which role does the SCO play vis-à-vis the national government and the donor community? How well is the Swiss CS harmonized with and complementary to the global efforts of other development partners? Which added values result due to Switzerland's support in Moldova?

3.3.2. What is the role of the SCO in aid-coordination with the Moldovan government and with other development partners in order to improve the aid effectiveness and avoid duplication of efforts?

3.3.3. How well does the SCO identify and promote synergies within the Swiss cooperation program as well as with interventions of other donors / development partners?

Review Area 4: Results of the CS – in relation to the results at country level

4.1 Domain results, effectiveness and contribution to country results

4.1.1. Which contributions of the Swiss cooperation portfolio become visible at the outcome level, particularly regarding the achievement of the development results in Moldova? Which internal and external factors enhance or hinder aid performance and results achievements? To what extent are the identified outcomes set in the Results Frameworks being achieved? Are there any significant unintended results (positive and negative)? What are the perceptible indirect positive and/or negative consequences (environmental, social, cultural, gender, etc.) derived from or induced by the Swiss interventions.

4.1.2. To what extent the objectives set for the new domains (LG and EDE) under the current CS are likely to be achieved? Are any significant adjustments / corrective measures necessary?

4.1.3. Do women and men equally benefit from the results of Swiss interventions? Do the most excluded / the most at risk groups benefit? To what extend the Swiss interventions contribute to social inclusion and reduction of vulnerabilities and inequalities?

4.1.4. To what extent the Swiss interventions contribute to policy, structural and institutional changes that lead to improved governance (participation of population, social accountability, and organizational governance), strengthened national / local capacities and local ownership and leadership (at policy, institutional, service delivery, community and end-user level)?

4.2 Sustainability and scaling up

4.2.1. Which innovations generated by field experience have been scaled up through policy dialogue, alliances, networking and dissemination? With regard to policy dialogue and scaling-up, what are the most important results achieved under the current strategy and the main lessons learnt?

4.2.2. Which actions have been taken at country level to enhance the sustainability of the Swiss investments?

N.B.! The depth of the review of these areas will differ for the three SDC domains of intervention in Moldova. For instance, in Review Area 4 (Results of the CS), the team will look at the impact of the Health domain (the oldest of the domains). While for the new LG and EDE domains the review will focus on assessing their contribution to the overall CS objectives to date, as well as the plausibility of the achievement of the overall objectives.

4.   Review process

The mid-term review will be conducted by a mixed team consisting of one external consultant (team leader) and two internal resource persons (SDC peers). The review should take place over a period between July and November 2020. The following work plan suggests the dates and responsibilities for the different activities of the review process. The SCO-M estimates that the assignment will take up to 20 days. However, adjustments to this work plan (including a detailed time-table) will be discussed and agreed by the Review Team and the SCO-M during the preparatory work and will be included in the inception report.

Activity	Date	Responsibilities
Call for external consultant offers & for SDC-peers	16 March	SCO
Deadline to submit external consultant offers	06 April C.O.B.	Potential candidates
Analysis of the external consultant offers	07 April - 04 May	SCO
Interviews with external consultant-candidates, if necessary	May	SCO
Contract signed with the external consultant	June	SCO
Preparatory work: briefing/initial interviews (via skype/phone) with the relevant resource-persons in the SCO, SDC HQ in Bern, FDFA political division and Swiss Embassy in Kiev; desk review of key documents provided by the SCO; drafting of the inception report – max. 5 working days	July	External consultant
Finalization of the Inception Report (based on feedback from the SCO and SDC Eurasia Division) – max. 1 working day	August	Review team
Logistic and administrative preparation of field mission to Moldova, interviews with stakeholders, partners, focus groups, workshops, etc.	September	Review team & SCO
Field mission to Moldova (incl. debriefing on preliminary findings with the SCO and SDC HQ) – max. 7 working days	End-October	Review team & SCO
Drafting the final report – max. 5 working days	November	Review team
Finalizing the mid-term review report (based on feedback from the SCO and SDC Eurasia Division) – max. 2 working days	November	External consultant
Validation Workshop	First week of December	External consultant & SCO
Management Response	January 2021	SCO & SDC Eurasia division

5. Deliverables

a. **Inception report** – summarizing the main findings of the preparation phase (document analysis and initial interviews) and providing details on the design and methodology of the mid-term review. This report provides as well details on the time schedule of the field mission. The inception report builds important background information for the peer exchange during the field mission. It is commented by the SCO-M and by the SDC Eurasia Division. The inception report should not exceed 20 pages (excluding appendices).

b. **Draft review report** – in accordance with the agreed time schedule, taking into account the comments, received during the debriefings. On acceptance, the report will be submitted for comments to the SCO-M, SDC Eurasia Division, FDFA Political Division and the Swiss Embassy in Kiev to correct possible factual errors, potential misunderstanding and open questions before elaborating the final review report.

c. **Debriefing meetings** for the discussion with the concerned staff at the SCO-M and at SDC HQ on the preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations, will be organized either immediately at the end of the field mission or few days after the field mission, face to face or over the phone/skype. Also, a meeting for the discussion on draft review report will be organized via phone / skype to discuss the lessons learnt and recommendations.

d. **Final report** – which analyses and synthesises the elements resulting from the review process. The report must meet the following requirements:
   - Not exceed 25 pages (excluding an review abstract and appendices);
   - Be of high quality. The findings, conclusions and recommendations should be thorough and based entirely on proven evidence. Also they should reflect a methodical and thoughtful approach, and highlight links or sequences between them. The final report takes into account the comments received during the debriefings (misunderstandings and factual errors). Major document references (sources) should be mentioned. Structurally, the report should follow the four review areas.
   - The report shall include an executive summary with the main review findings against which a management response will be drafted. The management response will include an action plan to correct any main deficiencies and short and long term adaptation of the programme (the latter to be taken into consideration for the new CS).

e. **Communication**– key for institutional learning within the SDC. The following deliverables with regards to communication are required:
   - Meetings with the management at Eurasia division and SCO-M in charge of steering the elaboration of the new strategy;
   - Participation on day 1 of the validation workshop in Moldova;
   - If relevant, presentation of the report in SDC Eurasia division, Bern;
   - The SCO-Moldova will present the findings to their main implementing partners.

6. Review team composition & the role of the external consultant (team leader)

The mid-term review will be conducted by a mixed team consisting of one external consultant (team leader) and two internal resource persons (SDC peers). The qualifications of the SDC peers will consider the professional qualifications of the external consultant in order to set up a complementary team. The external consultant and the SDC peers should be familiar with the Moldova / CIS region context and bring in relevant thematic know-how to the review team. The various tasks are shared by the review team members according to their individual areas of competence and availability, under the overall responsibility of the review team leader.

The *external consultant (team leader)* shall:

- Coordinate the process, gather and analyse important information and data, provide important methodological elements, and assume overall responsibility for the quality of the result.

- Lead the review team, composed by the team leader (the consultant) and two internal SDC-peers. Suggest and agree with the SCO-M the optimal distribution of roles and tasks for the SDC-peers, according to their individual areas of competence. He / She will coordinate, control and supervise the work done by the team and facilitate exchange between the review team members in order to reinforce mutual learning.

- Conduct interviews with the headquarter staff of SDC, FDFA Political Division, Embassy in Kiev, the concerned staff of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Chisinau and as well as some key staff of key partner-institutions.

- Be responsible for the development of the Inception Report.

- Lead the field mission in Moldova (October), including a debriefing meeting at the end of the field mission (with the concerned staff based in Chisinau as well as relevant partners). The field mission consists of the validation of the results of the inception report and of gathering additional information through a mutual learning process. The field mission in Moldova consists of a series of peer exchanges, interviews, project visits and workshops involving the peers, SDC staff involved in implementing the CS, main international and national implementing partners, selected donors and government representatives.

- Be responsible for the preparation of the draft and final mid-term review report (incl. a discussion with the concerned SCO-M and SDC HQ staff on the draft report) and guarantee their high quality.

7.   Required qualifications of the external consultant (team leader)

- Proven experience in designing and managing strategic reviews / evaluations, evaluation comparable in size, scope and complexity. Verifiable skills in review / evaluation methodology. Ability to manage complex reviews involving a multitude of stakeholders in a multi-cultural politically unstable environment. Ability to evaluate according to the OECD / DAC evaluation standards.

- Verifiable expertise (through work experience and education) in at least one of the thematic domains of the Swiss CS for Moldova: Health; Local Governance; Economic Development and Employment.

- Knowledge and verifiable expertise through work experience in multilateral and bilateral development cooperation.

- Experience with programme cycle management and quality assurance instruments.

- Practical experience in politically unstable contexts and in the CIS region.

- Experience in the following transversal themes: social inclusion, gender equality, governance & anti-corruption, migration & development, conflict / context sensitive programme management (CSPM).

- Sensitivity at enhancing learning processes.

- Excellent English language writing and presentation skills.

- Communication skills in Romanian and/or Russian would be an asset.

Experts, who have been involved directly in the design or implementation of projects covered by this review, are excluded from this assignment in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interests.

8. <u>**Composition and content of the offer**</u>

Contents	Max. No. of pages

1. **Technical offer:**
  - Introduction with motivation
  - Understanding of the assignment
  - Description of the proposed methodology
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2. **Financial proposal** To be submitted in in CHF currency (use Excel sheet budget form in the Annex 2).	**1 narrative page + budget***

3. **Required annexes:**
  - Curriculum Vitae
  - References
  - A list of completed reviews/evaluations, preferably on a
    similar topic and in which the candidate has been a team
    leader or an active review/evaluation team member	

*Budget

The volume of work shall be limited to **25 working days**, including time for travelling and field visits.

Please note that when the person is working in the country of residence, the workload should be calculated in hours, when abroad – in days including travel time.

The budget cannot include reimbursements for the work in preparing and submitting the offer.

The candidate should indicate the estimated costs for two field visits to Chisinau/Republic of Moldova (a longer one for the review and a shorter one for the validation workshop), and 1 visit to Bern/Switzerland in the financial offer.

Transportation costs:

- Flights to Chisinau/Republic of Moldova;

- Trip to Bern;

- Transportation costs during the mission in Bern;

For flight costs current rates (economy) should be estimated.

9. <u>**Logistics**</u>

The offers should be submitted in English via email, with the message title "*Offer – Mid-Term Review Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the Republic of Moldova",* to the review manager (caroline.tissot@eda.admin.ch) no later than 06 April C.O.B.

SCO-M will contract the external consultant and cover all related costs for the external consultant and SDC-peers. The assignment budget will be based on the agreed offer indicating separately the consultants' fee/rates and expenses for travel, per-diem, hotels, local transport, etc. Reservation and payment for flights, hotels and transport in and to Moldova are the responsibility of the consultants.

SCO-M will prepare and provide the review team with the package of *necessary documents / reference materials for the desk review*: Swiss Federal Council Dispatch, Moldova's national development strategy and sectorial strategies (where relevant and available for CS domains), SCO annual reports, CS monitoring system and data, regular SCO reports on the context changes, programmatic audit reports, project/program documents (if needed), executive

summaries of project evaluations / reviews, end of phase / end of project reports, relevant sources of information from other donors / development partners, statistics of World Bank and UN (MDG monitoring), etc.

The SCO-M will support the Review Team in organizing the program of the mission (which has to be approved in advance by SDC), including meetings, visits, contact to the project's partners, domestic logistics, etc.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Swiss Cooperation Strategy for the Republic of Moldova 2018-2021

Annex 2: Budget template for mandate B