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EU4 Green Recovery East (700002623)
Recovery through a Circular Economy and Pollution Reduction in the Eastern Partnership
countries

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Development and finalisation of a Directive-Specific Implementation Plan (DSIP) for the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD) in the Republic of Moldova

1. Background

The EU4Green Recovery East (EU4GRE) programme (2025–2028), funded by the European Union, supports Eastern Partnership countries in advancing a greener, more resilient, inclusive and competitive economic model. Under Component 3 – Support to legal approximation and implementation, EU4GRE assists partner countries in strengthening their capacity to transpose, implement and enforce the EU environmental acquis. In the Republic of Moldova, this support is directly relevant to preparations for accession negotiations under Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate Change.

The Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive is among the most demanding elements of the environmental acquis because implementation requires extensive legal, administrative, technical, financial and operational measures over a long period. A Directive-Specific Implementation Plan (DSIP) is expected to demonstrate a credible pathway towards full compliance, including a clear baseline, implementation measures, institutional responsibilities, investment needs, financing sources, milestones and monitoring arrangements. Where full compliance cannot be achieved by the date of accession, the DSIP must provide a robust technical, financial and administrative basis for any requested transitional periods.

Moldova has progressively harmonised its national framework with the former Council Directive 91/271/EEC, including through Water Law No. 272/2011, Law No. 303/2013 on public water supply and sanitation services, Government Decision No. 950/2013, Government Decision No. 802/2013 and Government Decision No. 736/2020. The Government has initiated full transposition of Directive (EU) 2024/3019 on urban wastewater treatment, including amendments to Law No. 303/2013 and Government Decision No. 950/2013.

At the same time, several complementary planning processes are under development, notably the specialised Water and Sanitation section of the National Territorial Development Plan, a Long-Term Investment Plan for the water supply and sanitation sector, and a Financing Strategy based on the '3T' model (tariffs, taxes and transfers). These processes, together with the World Bank-supported feasibility work, EU4GRE assessments and other relevant initiatives, provide substantial analytical material for preparation of the DSIP.

The service contract shall therefore be implemented as a targeted consolidation, validation and negotiation-support exercise. Existing validated outputs shall be systematically reused. New primary data collection or modelling shall be undertaken only where a clearly identified material gap cannot be addressed through existing sources.

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to support the Government of the Republic of Moldova in consolidating, validating and finalising a negotiation-ready Directive-Specific Implementation Plan for the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, including the new requirements introduced by Directive (EU) 2024/3019, with a particular focus on the evidence and implementation arrangements required for Chapter 27 negotiations.

The specific objectives are to:

- Review available studies, strategies, datasets and draft legal and institutional analyses and assess their suitability for use in the DSIP.
- Confirm the remaining information and policy gaps and address only those gaps that are material for the completeness and credibility of the DSIP.
- Consolidate legal, institutional, technical, infrastructure, investment, affordability and financing information into an agreed DSIP structure.
- Develop a realistic, phased compliance pathway and implementation timetable linked to national investment and administrative capacity.
- Prepare and justify proposed transitional periods using technical, financial, institutional, social and affordability evidence.
- Prepare negotiation-ready documents, tables, annexes and briefing materials for use by Moldovan authorities in the Chapter 27 process.
- Strengthen national ownership, inter-institutional coordination and the capacity of competent authorities to present, negotiate, monitor and defend the DSIP.

3. Financing

European Union

4. Procedure

EF Procurement rules

5. Contracting Authority

International Office for Water (OiEau) --- France

6. Nature of contract

Lumpsum Service contract

7. Time period of implementation

Indicatively from contract signature in October 2026 until August 2027. The Contractor shall plan for delivery of the final validated DSIP and negotiation support package no later than May 2027, followed by technical support to discussions with the European Commission, as required, through August 2027.

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8. Maximum contract value

150 000 EUR

9. Scope of work

The Contractor shall work as a compact multidisciplinary team and shall prioritise consolidation and validation of existing evidence. The assignment shall be closely coordinated with Moldovan authorities, EU4GRE, the EU Delegation and teams responsible for ongoing sector studies so as to avoid duplication and ensure a single, State-owned evidence base.

Task 1: Inception, document review and gap confirmation

- Review the EU4GRE mapping table, the World Bank-supported feasibility study and annexes, national territorial planning work, the sector Financing Strategy, legal approximation outputs, institutional assessments and other relevant documents.
- Confirm the DSIP structure, required annexes, quality criteria and validation process with Moldovan authorities, EU4GRE and the EU Delegation.
- Prepare a source-to-chapter matrix identifying existing outputs to be reused, elements requiring validation and material gaps requiring additional work.
- Prepare a detailed workplan, consultation calendar, decision-making sequence and data/assumptions register.

Task 2: Legal and institutional consolidation

- Review and consolidate existing assessments of transposition against Directive (EU) 2024/3019 and identify remaining legislative and regulatory steps required for full alignment.
- Confirm responsibilities for implementation, permitting, monitoring, reporting, enforcement, investment planning and data management.
- Identify institutional and administrative capacity measures to be included in the DSIP action plan.
- Coordinate with ongoing capacity assessments and parallel support to avoid duplication.

Task 3: Validation of the technical baseline and agglomeration framework

- Review the methodology used to delineate and classify agglomerations and confirm its suitability for the DSIP and future reporting.
- Validate existing infrastructure inventories, technical data sheets, GIS outputs, service coverage data and compliance assessments.
- Identify and resolve inconsistencies that materially affect the implementation timetable or transitional-period analysis.
- Document assumptions and obtain validation by the competent Moldovan authorities.

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Task 4: Compliance strategy, prioritisation and action plan

- Translate available technical scenarios and prioritisation methodologies into a phased UWWTD compliance strategy.
- Define legal, institutional, administrative, technical and investment measures required before and after accession.
- Establish milestones, responsible institutions, dependencies and implementation sequencing for each measure.
- Ensure consistency with national investment planning, operator development, territorial planning and financing constraints.

Task 5: Transitional periods and negotiation justification

This task is a central element of the assignment. The Contractor shall develop evidence-based options for transitional periods and support the Government in selecting and documenting the preferred approach.

- Identify obligations, agglomeration groups and implementation components for which transitional periods may be required.
- Develop alternative compliance schedules and assess their technical, financial, institutional and social feasibility.
- Link proposed timetables to investment delivery capacity, affordability, financing availability, administrative readiness and implementation risks.
- Prepare transparent prioritisation and sequencing criteria.
- Draft the technical and financial justification for each proposed transitional arrangement.
- Prepare concise negotiation fiches and supporting tables for national negotiators.
- Revise proposals following national validation and guidance from the EU Delegation and, where applicable, the European Commission.

Task 6: Costing, financing and affordability consolidation

- Review and consolidate existing CAPEX and OPEX estimates and document the cost base, assumptions, price year and treatment of contingencies.
- Integrate costs for legal, institutional, capacity-building, monitoring and reporting measures where not covered by infrastructure studies.
- Align the DSIP financing chapter with the sector Financing Strategy and distinguish confirmed, indicative and unfunded sources.
- Link investment and financing scenarios to proposed transitional periods.
- Document affordability assumptions and agreed thresholds used in the implementation pathway.



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Task 7: Monitoring, reporting, risks and governance

- Define institutional arrangements and data flows required to monitor DSIP implementation.
- Consolidate measurable indicators, baselines, milestones and reporting responsibilities.
- Prepare a risk register covering financing, procurement, institutional capacity, data, implementation, political decision-making and validation delays.
- Propose mitigation measures, escalation procedures and arrangements for periodic review of the DSIP.

Task 8: Preparation of the consolidated DSIP and negotiation package

- Prepare a complete draft DSIP using the agreed chapter structure and validated existing material.
- Prepare annexes including agglomeration tables, compliance schedules, investment tables, maps, legal tables and institutional matrices.
- Prepare an executive negotiation summary, transitional-period fiches, presentation materials and responses to likely technical questions.
- Support national consultations, validation meetings and final revisions.
- Provide technical support after submission of the negotiation-ready DSIP for discussions and questions from the European Commission through the end of the assignment.

Task 9: Capacity building

The Contractor shall propose, prepare and deliver some targeted capacity-building activities, as agreed during inception, which may cover:

- Implementation of Directive (EU) 2024/3019 on urban wastewater treatment.
- Institutional responsibilities and coordination mechanisms.
- Chapter 27 – Environment and Climate Change implementation obligations.
- Preparation and negotiation of transitional periods with the European Commission.
- Institutional negotiation capacities in the EU accession process.
- Reporting requirements to the European Commission.
- Monitoring systems, performance indicators and progress reporting.

10. Deliverables and deadlines

The indicative sequencing below is based on the Concept Note. Exact calendar dates shall be adjusted to the actual contract signature date while preserving the required sequence of validation and decision-making.

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No.	Deliverable	Minimum content	Indicative deadline
1	Inception Report and validated source-to-chapter matrix	Methodology; workplan; document inventory; agreed DSIP structure; coordination and validation plan; dependencies with ongoing studies.	Month 1 (indicatively Nov. 2026)
2	Consolidated gap and validation report	Usability of existing evidence; remaining material gaps; validated agglomeration and baseline assumptions; policy decisions required.	Month 1 (indicatively Nov. 2026)
3	Draft Chapter 1 – Alignment baseline and required implementation steps	Legal/policy and institutional/governance framework; agglomerations; technical/infrastructure baseline; remaining legal and capacity measures.	Month 2 (indicatively Dec. 2026)
4	Draft Chapter 2 – Compliance strategy and transitional-period options	Compliance pathway; prioritisation; roles; alternative transitional-period scenarios; preliminary justification.	Month 2 (indicatively Dec. 2026)
5	Draft Chapter 3 – Costs, investment and financing strategy	CAPEX/OPEX; institutional and administrative costs; affordability; financing sources; funding gaps; links to transition scenarios.	Month 2 (indicatively Dec. 2026)
6	Draft Chapter 4 – Detailed action plan, timetable and monitoring framework	Measures; milestones; responsibilities; timetable; funding by measure; indicators; reporting; risks and mitigation.	Month 2 (indicatively Dec. 2026)
7	First consolidated DSIP and draft negotiation package	Complete draft DSIP and annexes; proposed transitional periods; negotiation fiches; executive summary; presentation materials.	Month 3 (indicatively Jan. 2027)
8	National consultation and validation report	Consultation record; comments matrix; agreed decisions; unresolved issues and proposed resolution.	Month 5 (indicatively Mar. 2027)
9	Revised negotiation-ready DSIP	Revised document incorporating national comments and EU4GRE quality review, suitable for EU Delegation review and possible informal Commission consultation.	Month 6 (indicatively April. 2027)
10	Final DSIP and negotiation support package	Final validated DSIP; transitional-period justifications; clean annexes; negotiator brief; presentation; editable source files.	No later than May 2027



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11	Support in technical discussions with the European Commission	Technical meetings; written responses and revisions/clarifications following questions or comments from the European Commission.	May–Aug. 2027
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Deliverable review and validation process

- Each deliverable shall be subject to review and acceptance by the Contracting Authority, with technical validation by the designated State-led coordination mechanism.
- Comments on major deliverables shall be consolidated through a single comment matrix to avoid parallel or conflicting instructions.
- Key methodological and policy decisions shall be recorded through meeting conclusions or written approvals.
- Review periods and escalation arrangements shall be agreed during inception.
- The EU Delegation shall be invited to key steering and validation meetings and may provide strategic guidance on major deliverables.

Format and quality requirements

- All deliverables shall be prepared in English unless otherwise agreed; key presentation or capacity-building materials may additionally be required in Romanian.
- Reports shall be submitted in editable Microsoft Word format and PDF; tables/data shall also be supplied in editable formats, and presentations in Microsoft PowerPoint.
- All calculations, assumptions, datasets and source references used for negotiation-sensitive conclusions shall be transparent and traceable.
- Deliverables shall be concise, internally consistent, technically sound, suitable for government decision-making and Chapter 27 negotiations, and aligned with Directive (EU) 2024/3019.
- Final files shall incorporate all accepted comments and be suitable for handover and continued use by Moldovan authorities.

11. Coordination of the Assignment

The preparation and finalisation of the DSIP shall be a State-owned process led by the competent authorities of the Republic of Moldova. Moldovan authorities shall lead substantive decision-making, approve methodological assumptions, validate the baseline, select preferred implementation and transitional-period scenarios and formally endorse the final DSIP.

The Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MIRD) is expected to act as the principal technical lead and ensure coherence with water and sanitation sector studies, infrastructure planning, investment scenarios and financing work. The Ministry of Environment shall play a central role in legal approximation, environmental policy and Chapter 27 coordination. Other national bodies, local public authorities, regulators, utilities and data providers shall participate according to their statutory responsibilities.

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EU4GRE/OiEau shall manage and steer the service contract, provide technical quality assurance, facilitate coordination with ongoing initiatives and support preparation of negotiation-ready outputs. The EU Delegation shall provide strategic oversight and guidance in relation to the accession process and European Commission expectations.

A State-led Steering Group should be established, chaired or co-chaired by MIRD and including the Ministry of Environment and other competent institutions. The Contractor shall participate in steering and technical meetings, provide regular progress updates, maintain a decision and assumptions register and promptly flag issues that may affect the timetable.

12. Key Risks to be Addressed in the Technical Offer

- Timing and procurement delays that may compress consultation and validation periods.
- Dependencies on ongoing studies and late release of financing or capacity-assessment inputs.
- Multi-level validation and the risk of repeated or conflicting review cycles.
- Political sensitivity of transitional periods and related prioritisation, affordability and financing choices.
- Data consistency, ownership and differences in baselines, assumptions or agglomeration definitions.
- Duplication or inconsistency with parallel donor and government support.
- Potential evolution of EU expectations or interpretation of the revised UWWTD during the assignment.

The Contractor shall propose practical mitigation measures and shall front-load validation of sources, assumptions and decision points. The workplan shall distinguish technical acceptance of consultant outputs from formal State endorsement of the DSIP.

13. Indicative Expertise Requirements

The service provider may be an individual consortium/consulting firm or other eligible legal entity able to mobilise a compact multidisciplinary team. The proposed team shall include, at minimum:

- A Team Leader with demonstrated experience in Chapter 27 accession preparations and Directive-Specific Implementation Plans or equivalent compliance roadmaps.
- An urban wastewater specialist familiar with Directive (EU) 2024/3019, agglomeration methodology, collection and treatment requirements and implementation planning.
- An environmental investment and financing expert able to review CAPEX/OPEX, affordability, financing sources and long-term implementation scenarios.
- A legal and institutional expert with experience in EU environmental approximation and public-administration responsibilities.
- A national expert or experts with strong knowledge of Moldova's water and sanitation sector, institutions, legislation, datasets and investment programmes.
- Short-term specialist support for negotiation documentation, data management, GIS, facilitation or editing, as required.

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The technical offer shall demonstrate how the proposed team collectively covers the above fields and shall identify the Team Leader and key experts, their roles, estimated inputs and availability over the full assignment period.

14. Payment modalities

Payments should be linked to acceptance of clearly defined groups of deliverables and should retain a final balance until acceptance of the Final DSIP and negotiation support package. Any advance payment, interim payment percentages and conditions shall be specified in the contract.

Payment will be transferred via bank wire to the EUR account specified in the B4. Financial identification form.

15. Participation to the tender

Interested parties (both individual and legal entities) are invited to download the full tender dossier free of charge from our website at <https://eu-oieau.synapse-consult.com>. This platform should be used for all communications with OiEau.

Your Proposal, consisting of the technical offer and the financial offer must be submitted on the digital platform for tender submissions at <https://eu-oieau.synapse-consult.com> no later than 17.00 (Paris time) on 29th of October 2026.

For any assistance in using the platform, please contact support@synapse-consult.com.

This tender follows Expertise France's procurement rules. The contract will be awarded based on the best price-quality ratio.

11. Award of the contract

OiEau can withdraw from this call at any given time. In no event shall OiEau be liable for any damages whatsoever including, without limitation, damages for loss of profits, in any way connected with the cancellation of a tender procedure.

The awarding or non-awarding of the contract does not preclude the application or (non-)awarding for any similar tender under this Programme.

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