1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

After gaining sovereignty in 2006, Montenegro is on a steady path of Euro-Atlantic integration. European Union (EU) accession negotiations were opened in June 2012, while in June 2017 Montenegro became a member of NATO. The progress in the accession process is evident, as 32 negotiations chapters (out of 35) were opened and three have been provisionally closed. Gaining independence and advancement in EU integrations required an expansion of government capacities and the establishment of national institutions to assume new roles and functions.

One area where Montenegro has high ambitions, and there remains room to progress, is in terms of ensuring its social protection system achieves the stated aim of "improvement of life quality and strengthening of an individual and the family for independent and productive life" (Government of Montenegro 2013). According to the last available official data, poverty in Montenegro, using the relative poverty line set at 60% of the national median equivalized disposable income, stood at 23.8% in 2018; a 1.4 percentage point decline from 2013 (MONSTAT 2019). Poverty is strongly related to status in the labor market, with the highest poverty rates being for people who are unemployed (47.5% in 2018) and those who remain inactive (31%). These figures are in the context of persistently high, though declining, unemployment rates (18% in 2014 and 16% in 2017), with most unemployed people having been unemployed for more than a year (World Bank 2013). Child poverty is also a concern, with 32.4% of children living in income-poor households, 8.6 percentage points higher than the national relative poverty rate. In addition, the At risk of poverty or social exclusion (ARPOE) rate of children stood at 39.4% in 2018 (MONSTAT 2019). The COVID-19 epidemic in Montenegro negatively affected poverty situation, as economic slowdown led to new social vulnerabilities and is likely to induce salary reduces and even layoffs, threatening to return poverty to 2015 or 2013 levels (World Bank, 2020). The impact of economic shock could potentially push 9,000 to 20,000 new citizens into poverty. A big portion of the new poor are currently not likely to be receiving any form of social protection benefits (World Bank, 2020).

Current situation in the sector: Montenegro already has a strong, and recently reformed, social protection system, comprising non-contributory social assistance (including family material support, a child allowance, personal disability benefit, carer’s allowance and foster family benefit) and contributory social insurance (including old age, survivor and disability pensions, health insurance and unemployment insurance). The Law on Social and Child Protection (2013) is the main legal framework for social services and social assistance in the country, with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) the main institution in charge. In addition, some forms of social assistance are the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) (cash benefits for the elderly and payments in lieu of contributions to the pension system) and Ministry of Education (free text books, free meals for children attending pre-school education which come from families who receive social assistance), while in the context of a decentralized system of governance, at the municipality level decisions are made to offer and deliver a range of forms of social services and social assistance (including one-off financial support).

Implementation of social assistance and social services is the responsibility of Centres for Social Welfare (CSW – for social assistance and non-residential social services, as specified under the Law on Social and Child Protection), residential institutions (for institutional care for children and adults), the MARD and the municipal governments for their own programmes. Meanwhile, the Employment Agency plays a crucial role in the ‘activation’ agenda, or in facilitating beneficiaries of certain types of social assistance to gain productive employment.

Despite approximately 2% of GDP being spent on social assistance (World Bank 2013; ASPIRE database) social assistance is contributing to poverty reduction in the country by mere 7 percentage points. Out of 14 types of

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2. Activation and Smart Safety Nets in Montenegro: Constraints in Beneficiary Profile, Benefit Design and Institutional Capacity.
benefits specified by the Law on Social and Child Protection, only 2 are means tested. The effectiveness of means tested benefits’ reaching families and children living below poverty line could be significantly improved. As an example, in 2018, 31,287 family members benefited from family allowance whereas 15,152 children received child allowance\(^5\). Although nearly every third child grows up in poverty, only 10% of children receive child allowance\(^6\). Therefore, based on rough calculations, the number of people vulnerable to poverty not covered by the national means-tested social assistance programmes could be more than two-fold of the number of those covered.

Therefore, social protection programmes should be better tailored to meet the needs of different groups including children, people of working age and the elderly. For people of working age, it is important that social protection promotes employment for those excluded from the labour market; with 48% of social assistance beneficiaries having the potential to be working (World Bank 2013)\(^7\). In the light of recent developments, it is also crucial to support return to work for the newly unemployed affected by the epidemic crisis in order to offset longer-term social and economic consequences. It is furthermore important to address the specific barriers that different groups, including women and Roma, face in accessing employment (EC 2018). There also need to be improved efforts to enhance social inclusion through social protection, including of particularly vulnerable groups such as Roma and people with disabilities (EC 2018).

The economic impact of COVID-19 imposed need for budget rebalances that are leading to budget cuts in social spending in 2020, whereas it will be crucial for the social protection system to be able to adequately respond to the crisis and protect those most vulnerable, ringfencing the expenditure and maximizing its effects.

**United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2017-2021:** UN Montenegro has been operating as a Delivering as One (DaO) country team since 2010. Following the current Integrated UN Programme (UNDAF) structure (2017-2021), there are four programmatic pillars: Democratic Governance, Social Inclusion, Economic Governance, and Environmental Sustainability. Each results area is managed by a results group comprising representatives of both UN agencies and relevant public sector institutions.

UN support in the country in relation to social inclusion is geared toward ensuring that, by 2021, the population has improved access to quality, equitable, inclusive and mutually reinforcing systems of health, education, protection and decent work.\(^8\) To reach this goal, UN agencies and Government of Montenegro implement development interventions, i.e. joint programmes of agency-specific programmes.

The Joint Programme “Activate! Integrated Social Protection and Employment to Accelerate Progress for Young People in Montenegro” (JP Activate) represents the UNCT joint initiative to be implemented in Montenegro, funded by Joint SDG Fund, in order to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme will be jointly implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO and IOM over the course of 24 months and will involve national partners such as state institutions, civil society organizations and private sector partners. The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare is the key partner for this initiative.

The JP aims to enhance the capacities of the social protection system to better serve people in need. It focuses on youth, children, migrants and refugees, and addresses root causes of human trafficking, while supporting decent work and employability/skills development. Innovation is used as a key change strategy: the programme applies advanced methodologies (foresight, human-centered design, policy simulation tools, etc.) in order to improve targeting, expand coverage, and address adequacy of social protection, but also activate Montenegro’s youth who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) and other vulnerable and marginalized groups through enhanced labour activation.

The expectation is that transformative policy tools will be developed, which have the potential to be replicated across policy areas and scaled up by the Government. These tools will simulate policy impact to ensure effective social protection which, provided there is political commitment, could result in reducing recently increased

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\(^7\) Defined as those individuals of working age (15–64) who are not in full-time education or training, and who are not disabled.

poverty rates and offsetting the crisis impact in the short run, and continuing to further reduce poverty rates once the economic activity is back to normal in medium to long-term perspective. More people, and youth in particular, will be reached through labour activation services: these services will be co-designed with the target beneficiaries and will therefore address their unique needs. Consequently, previously inactive youth will become contributors to the state budget, instead of recipients of social assistance.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE(S)

The area of social protection and employment was identified as one of three national key SDG accelerators, hence the opportunity to assist the Government to meet both agendas: the EU accession and Agenda 2030 – thus leaving no one behind. The Government needs to finalize reform processes in the area of social protection and employment in order to reach European standards. In this regard, the UN system in Montenegro will offer support through cutting edge technical expertise, e.g. policy simulation or studies of universal approach to social protection and linked to that the possibilities to expand fiscal space. The mutual reinforcements between the SDG targets are obvious: A better targeted social protection system with expanded coverage will ensure that those who are most marginalized receive adequate support, while those who are able to work, can find decent employment and thus lift themselves out of poverty and contribute to society and a better funded social protection system.

The JP aims at improving the performance of the system through better targeting the most marginalized and vulnerable groups and by activating young men and women as Montenegro’s untapped potential.

Therefore, the purpose of this consultancy is to perform policy simulation in the area of social protection, to ensure that the national system is well-designed, well-targeted and cost-effective. There is a unique window of opportunity to integrate SDG acceleration – specifically Goals 1, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10. Therefore, the objective is to strengthen evidence-based policy making and ensure the country benefits from innovative models of designing cost-effective policies.

The objective of this consultancy is:

- **Redistributive social policy scenarios based on simulations** developed
- **Policy simulation tools** that enable more effective and better targeted social policies and measures planning and implementation developed

For these analyses UNICEF will facilitate access to datasets to the extent possible, it is foreseen that the following data(sets) should be used for the consultancy purposes:

- **Core Diagnostic Instrument (CODI)** comprehensive social protection system assessment (expected in Autumn 2020), containing information about strengths and weaknesses of the social protection system, as a guidance for further action and consideration by the government
- **Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC, released in December 2018 and 2019)**
- **Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2018, released in December 2019)**
- **Administrative data held in the recently implemented Social Welfare Information System (SWIS) – a Monitoring Information System (MIS) currently covering programmes implemented by the CSW residential institutions, and by the Employment Agency**

UN Country Office further performed two rounds of Rapid Social Impact Assessment of the COVID-19 outbreak in Montenegro (RSIA), with third round expected in Autumn 2020. The RSIA reports provide more in-depth information about new and existing social and poverty vulnerabilities and specific needs (disaggregated by different vulnerabilities) brought about by the epidemic and government response measures.

In accordance with the **Law on Official Statistics and Official Statistical System of Montenegro (18/12)**, article 58, access to individual statistical data is allowed to scientific-research institutions, international statistical organisations, and statistics producers from other countries, upon written request. Scientific-research institutions are natural and legal persons carrying out scientific and research activities in accordance with the special law (**Law on Scientific Research Activity**, 54/14), governing licensing. The consultancy candidates should foresee manner to access datasets governed by the Law on Official Statistics in their proposal.
3. METHODOLOGY, TECHNICAL APPROACH AND MAIN TASKS

The institutional consultant will cooperate with separately contracted individual UNDP CTA consultant who will provide local context guidance, facilitate communication and cooperation with government and other counterparts, and provide quality assurance.

The overall consultancy work will be performed under the direct supervision of the UNICEF Social Policy Officer and in close collaboration with the UNDP Social Inclusion Team Leader. As a guidance, in order to successfully meet the objectives of the assignment, several phases are envisaged.

Orientation phase:

The phase will use desk review and interviews with key interlocutors to get acquainted with the current developments in the social protection sector, including: policy/legal environment, ongoing national reform processes, ongoing development interventions implemented by key partners, available data at household/individual level (official statistics, administrative data) on income, poverty, living conditions, etc., available fiscal space, overall social insurance system, tax policies, available data on COVID-19 impact on poverty, etc.

Tasks specific to this consultancy:

- Identify, review and analyze available data quality and adequacy, identify data required (available and missing) for running different policy simulation models potentially fitting to the case of Montenegro

Inception phase:

In this phase, it is expected to scan existing simulation models which have proven effective in the area of social policy/social assistance. Essential part of this exploratory stage is the understanding of data inputs required to run simulations and assess different models’ applicability to Montenegrin context, understanding the requirements in terms of feasibility of mainstreaming such tools in the public administration system in Montenegro. Similarly, this phase is geared toward understanding policy areas/fields where users may apply changes to policy regulations and agreeing which variables will be changeable, in order to simulate policy effects. If certain data (e.g. at household level) are not available, it will be necessary to identify methods to collect data or suggest alternative scenarios to close the data gap.

Tasks specific to this consultancy:

- Provide technical expertise in the process of defining the scope of potential policy scenarios within available fiscal space and budget allocations and defining the model (in cooperation with the UNDP CTA)
- Identify data gaps inputs to different available models and provide recommendations on the most effective methods to collect/generate missing data
- Identify, assess and propose feasible simulation models and inform if and how they should be adjusted to the Montenegrin context (to be performed once the scope of potential policy scenarios and changeable policy variables is agreed with the government) (in cooperation with the UNDP CTA)
- Provide technical expertise in the process of selection of a simulation model (in cooperation with the UNDP CTA)

Implementation phase:

The purpose of this phase is to run simulations of the effects of policy reforms on the risk of poverty, using the selected simulation model, desirably with specific attention to tax and benefits and fiscal space. Therefore, this phase may entail tailoring the model to the Montenegrin context, making sure that policy effects can be analyzed for different population groups (such as by age, gender, income source and household type) and producing additional analyses/policy briefs.

Tasks specific to this consultancy:

- Setting up/tailoring the simulation model to the Montenegrin context and data availability
• If case necessary, generating remaining missing data to run policy simulations, including COVID-19 impact data

• Simulating & estimating the cost and impact of material benefits and different social assistance strategies on poverty, recording and analyzing outputs:
Modelling different (re)distribution scenarios with different material benefit levels and coverage (as determined by means-testing criteria and beneficiary categories), within limits of available fiscal space, in terms of their mitigating impact on poverty rates and specific impact on different vulnerable groups. The models should estimate cost and impact of different interventions, including at least (i) family material support, (ii) child allowance, and (iii) personal disability benefit and care and support allowance. The goal is to identify those material benefits whose change in levels and coverage can have the highest potential impact on poverty reduction.

• Exploring other policy options for achieving social policy goals, including adjustments in the design of tax revenue collection from taxpayers, with the focus on individuals/households at risk of poverty, at-risk-of-poverty groups
E.g. specific tax and/or social security contributions designed to address equity issues (such as specific exemptions and deductions, for example on compulsory work-related contributions that would in turn facilitate employment), notably for national at-risk-of poverty groups for which available data demonstrate that are concentrated around poverty lines, but which might not be covered by social welfare system and means-tested benefits. Primarily, groups such as working parents, families with three or more children etc. should be considered. Belonging to the categories in question should be easy to demonstrate to facilitate implementation.

• Formulating at least three policy scenarios based on outcome of simulations, that will propose redistribution scenarios of the existing envelope to better target and expand coverage of at-risk of poverty population, primarily children and families with children.

• Preparation and presentation of policy briefs regarding social assistance (cash transfers) in support of alternative policy scenarios to the Government and other partners.

Follow up phase:
The purpose of this phase is ensuring sustainability of models in social protection and their potential replicability in other sectors by performing capacity development for civil servants, and providing input to specifications for upgrades of the Social Welfare Information System.

Tasks specific to this consultancy:

• Develop training and other capacity building measures in order to develop capacities of the MLSW and other key national stakeholders to run the policy simulation independently, to ensure sustainability

• Implement trainings to transfer knowledge about simulating policy scenarios, and related tools, to national stakeholders (MLSW)

• Provide inputs necessary to define specifications for SWIS adjustments (if applicable)

In the case that COVID-19 travel restrictions are in place and render not possible to perform field-based tasks, UNICEF and the consultancy provider shall jointly agree how to perform tasks in question (e.g. via online channels).

4. KEY DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAME
The timeframe of the contract is from 01 October 2020 until 30 November 2020.

Consultancy work is expected to start in October 2020. A proposed timeline is presented below. It is expected that the team will report any adverse events that may cause the timeline to slip, or any delays during project implementation to UNICEF’s Social Policy Officer.

Consultants may propose suitable inputs and level of effort to deliver the outputs. Applicants to this consultancy are asked to submit their daily rate for the work to be undertaken, based on the estimate of the number of days (level of effort) required to complete the work by the deadlines proposed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key deliverable</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inception report with identified preconditions, gaps and recommendations on deploying the adequate policy simulation tools for Montenegro context, including proposal of implementation plan and methodology</td>
<td>By 30 October 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalized policy modelling outline and methodology</td>
<td>By 30 November 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least three policy scenarios developed and presented to the Government of Montenegro for consideration</td>
<td>By 30 April 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Briefs supporting policy scenarios formulated and presented</td>
<td>By 15 May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity building plan and trainings developed and implemented along with recommendations for the organizational restructuring to carry on the implementation of the policy scenarios</td>
<td>By 30th July 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of the final report</td>
<td>By 1 November 2021 latest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the implementation period: reporting to the UNICEF Social Policy Officer</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed workplan with the time frame will be developed by the consultants.

5. TEAM COMPOSITION, QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS
This simulation will be contracted by UNICEF as one institutional contract, with the simulation team comprising at least two experts. The team will include an international Team Leader (preferably with solid experience in statistics or economy) and one Social Policy & PFM (Public Finance Management) expert, including the following experience and skills:

Requirements for the Team Leader (Statistician/Economist):

Education:
• Advanced university degree in Economics, Statistics, Development Policy, or a related relevant field (including quantitative component) is required. PhD degree would be considered as an asset.

Experience:
• At least 8 years of experience in quantitative analysis and developing policy simulations;
• Experience with statistical analysis of (child and family) poverty, vulnerability and/or deprivations using statistical/multivariate methods;
• Extensive experience using labor, income/expenditure and household force survey data, such as EU-SILC and MISC datasets; experience working alongside national statistical agencies will be considered a particular advantage;
• Advanced experience and command of relevant software, such as SPSS and/or STATA;
• Previous experience in project cycle management, financial and administrative management will be considered an advantage;
• Experience in working with UN/UNICEF or other international organizations will be considered an advantage;
• Experience in working with vulnerable groups is considered an asset;

Language:
• Proficient command of English is required. Knowledge of the local language will be considered an advantage.

Other:
• Good written and verbal communication skills.
• Excellent Microsoft Office skills.
• Experience and ability to work in intercultural environments.
• Ability to simultaneously work on multiple projects / tasks.
• Time management skills and the ability to prioritize work.
• A creative mind with an ability to suggest improvements.
• Attention to detail and problem-solving skills.

Requirements for the Social Policy & PFM expert

• An advanced university degree in Social Policy, Development Policy, Finance, Public Administration, or a related relevant field is required;
• At least 7 years of experience working in the field of social protection and social policy;
• At least 5 of relevant experience in costing policies in the context of available budget allocations and fiscal space;
• Experience with cash transfers and related taxation will be considered a particular advantage.
• Experience working on social and/or child protection in southern or eastern Europe would be considered an advantage; experience with Montenegro’s social protection system would be considered a distinct advantage;
• Demonstrable experience in writing research reports or policy and budget briefs.
• Experience in working with UN/UNICEF or other international organizations will be considered an advantage;
• Experience in working with vulnerable groups is considered as an asset;

Language:
• Proficient command of English is required. Knowledge of the local language would be an advantage.

Other:
• Good written and verbal communication skills.
• Excellent Microsoft Office skills.
• Experience and ability to work in intercultural environments.
• Ability to simultaneously work on multiple projects / tasks.
• Time management skills and the ability to prioritize work.
• A creative mind with an ability to suggest improvements.
• Attention to detail and problem-solving skills.

At least one of the team members should have experience developing and implementing trainings.

6. CONTENT OF PROPOSAL
The potential contractors are expected to submit a proposal (Technical and Financial) based on these Terms of Reference.
The proposal should consist of:

✓ **Technical Proposal including:**

a) Portfolio of the organisation/institution/agency with examples of previous work on similar projects and clients in the last 5 years, which should include:
   - Title/Designation of each team member on the project and their CVs
   - Experience in working on similar project and assignment – List all similar projects they worked on and their roles on those projects
   - Project implementation and work plan showing the detailed sequence and timeline for each activity and days necessary for each proposed team member
   - Quality assurance mechanism and risk mitigation measures put in place

b) Detailed description of the methodology and technical approach;

c) Tentative work plan with number of days, timeframe and deadlines for deliverables

d) Evidence about the two to three similar assignments containing the following information:
   - Name of Client
   - Title of the Project
   - Year and duration of the project
   - Scope of the Projects/Requirements
   - Proposed Solutions and Outcome – include visuals, web-links, etc.
   - Team members on each of the project and their specific roles
   - Project timelines (start and end date year, and any other information necessary)
   - Reference /Contact person details

e) Supplier Profile Form

✓ **Financial Proposal (Budget) including:**

- Daily fee rates for each team member per deliverable, as well as total cost per professional based on number of working days included in the technical proposal
- Estimated travel costs (all travel must be pre-approved by UNICEF and will be based on most direct and economy class ticket irrespective of the duration of the flight.). Daily subsistence allowance (DSA) will, where applicable, be paid up to a maximum of the official UN rate.
- Other costs if applicable.
- Proposed payment schedule.

The financial proposal shall indicate budget estimated in USD.

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7. PROPOSAL EVALUATION
Each proposal will be evaluated against a weight allocation of 70 for the technical proposal and 30 for the commercial (financial) proposal. The total maximum obtainable points is 100.

The proposal will be evaluated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Proposal Evaluation Form</th>
<th>Max. Points Obtainable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Professional profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Evidence of experience in similar projects e.g. policy modeling/simulations e.g. poverty and social protection systems analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Evidence of familiarity with static or dynamic simulation models for policy analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Evidence of familiarity with costing policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Proposed methodology and approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Overall understanding of the ToR and the needs and objectives of the assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Detailed methodology to conduct modeling of social protection system in Montenegro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Detailed workplan, key milestones and delivery plan for review by UNICEF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Relevance of personnel profiles and suitability for the assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Academic background and required professional experience for the position of Team Leader (Statistician/Economist) (as per the ToR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Academic background and required professional experience for the position of Social Policy &amp; PFM Expert (as per the ToR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B) Financial proposal (Budget) – Maximum points: 30

- Technical proposal evaluation. Proposals passing the minimum technical pass score (49 points - 70% of the maximum points obtainable for technical proposal) will continue into the Financial proposal evaluation.
- Financial proposal evaluation. The lowest price proposal will be awarded the full score assigned to the commercial proposal.
- Recommendation. The recommendation for award of contract will be based on best combination of technical and financial score.

Final award and contracts. Based on verified nominations and final scores, contract negotiations could be initiated with one or more successful Proposers.

The UNICEF evaluation team will select the Proposal which is of high quality, clear and meets the stated requirements and offers the best combination of technical and financial score.

10. REMARKS:
• UNICEF Montenegro Office holds copyrights for all reports. The documents (including raw materials, etc.) may not be reproduced, distributed or published without the written permission from UNICEF.

• All personal data should be accessible to team members, but no one else. The consultants need to set up secure systems (a) to ensure that other staff within their institutions cannot access their data via the shared staff drives, and (b) to ensure secure data transfer between institutions. Cloud based storage with limited sharing rights could be considered in this instance. Different personal data files need to be link-able, they need to be held separately so that they can only be linked purposely, by researchers who are authorised to do so. There is also a need to ensure that data cannot be removed from secure systems in ways that might compromise data security.

• UNICEF Montenegro Office will share with the selected consultants all the relevant materials it has and provide required expertise.

• UNICEF Montenegro Office and the Regional Office expert will review and provide feedback on reports prepared by consultants.

• All information from produced reports cannot be shared with the media without the written approval of UNICEF Montenegro Office.