

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

Terms of Reference: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family through Early Family Support Social Services in the Republic of Moldova

Project	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)
Application Deadline	September 30th, 2026
Start/end date	October 2026 - February 2027
Institutional Reference / Objective	Pursuant to the official request submitted by Ms. Angela Cutasevici, Member of Parliament and member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family, the Service Provider is hereby commissioned to conduct a comprehensive ex-ante analysis on preventing the separation of the child from the family through early family support social services. The assignment shall assess the legal, institutional and financial framework governing the early identification of children at risk of separation and the support provided to vulnerable families before the situation leads to the placement of the child in the protection system, with a view to providing an evidence-based foundation to inform potential legislative and institutional interventions.
Location and travel arrangements	The assignment will be implemented in a hybrid manner. The Service Provider may conduct the research and drafting components from their preferred location. Interviews, stakeholder consultations, field visits and presentations will be held at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, at the premises of the relevant institutions or online. The Service Provider is fully responsible for all logistical arrangements regarding their own activity.
Supervision	Overall approval of deliverables is with the PADEM Project Team Leader while the financial processing lies with the Project Supervisor. Technical Supervision will be provided by the PADEM Component 1 Leader regarding methodology and content.
Number and title of the activity according to the PADEM Document and YOP2	Activity 1.2. Piloting new approaches with PSCs on pre-legislative scrutiny and legislative drafting.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pursuant to the official request submitted by Ms. Angela Cutasevici, Member of Parliament and member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family (Letter AC no. 46, dated 13 July 2026), PADEM's support was formally requested for the preparation and conduct of a pilot pre-legislative scrutiny exercise on the topic "Ex-Ante Analysis on preventing the separation of the child from the family through early family support social services". Conducting this ex-ante analysis falls within PADEM's scope, as the

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

activity supports the Parliament in piloting new pre-legislative scrutiny techniques, including evidence gathering and stakeholder consultation to improve the quality of draft legislation before it is formally tabled, in line with Activity 1.2 of the operational work plan.

Pre-legislative scrutiny is a fundamental component of an effective and modern legislative process. By systematically evaluating the institutional, legal, and economic impacts before a regulatory framework is drafted, Parliament ensures that new laws are evidence-based, predictable, and practically enforceable. This proactive approach prevents normative contradictions and guarantees a higher quality of the legislative act through comprehensive stakeholder engagement and a thorough analysis of existing regulatory gaps.

In this context, the Parliamentary Standing Committee plays a vital role in the pre-legislative phase by ensuring future interventions are built on a thoroughly researched foundation. By initiating this ex-ante analysis, the Committee actively exercises its mandate to identify structural gaps in the current framework, analyse relevant international models, and assess viable institutional and financial options before any formal drafting begins.

1.1. The Project Description

The Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM) project is a four-year strategic initiative (2025–2029) funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by DAI Global Belgium. The overarching goal of the project is to ensure that Moldovan society is politically represented by a well-functioning Parliament that guarantees transparent, fair, evidence-based, and inclusive legislative processes.

1.2. Scope of the Assignment

PADEM seeks a specialized Service Provider (Individual Consultant or Company) to conduct a comprehensive ex-ante analysis of the legislative, institutional and financial instruments through which support can be provided to the child and the family before a crisis leading to separation occurs. The assignment requires an examination of the mechanisms for early identification and assessment of the risk of separation, of the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved, of the availability and territorial coverage of early family support services, of inter-institutional case coordination, and of the way in which prevention is financed. Ultimately, this intervention seeks to bridge existing legal provisions with practical dynamics, supporting a shift of the social assistance system from reactive responses towards early, planned and adequately financed support to vulnerable families. The analysis shall build on the relevant findings of the ongoing national processes in the field and shall avoid duplicating them.

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

2.1 General Objective

The overarching objective is to provide the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family with a solid, evidence-based foundation for potential legislative, institutional and financial interventions aimed at building a functional system for preventing the separation of the child from the family, aligned with European standards and with the principle that material poverty alone should not constitute a ground for separating a child from the family.

2.2. Expected Results

By the end of the assignment, the Service Provider will have successfully developed and delivered a high-quality ex-ante analysis report, accompanied by applied instruments directly usable by the Committee.

This intervention will result in:

- A clear definition and quantification of the policy problem, based on available data on children at risk of separation, on the drivers of separation and on the comparative costs of early support versus placement.
- A clear evaluation of the existing normative and institutional framework, together with a mapping of early family support services, identifying gaps, overlaps and uncovered areas.
- A comparative evaluation of at least three intervention options, including the status quo, assessed against explicit criteria and accompanied by an assessment of the financing options for prevention.
- Evidence-based recommendations for decision-makers, accompanied by a package of legislative intervention proposals and a parliamentary dashboard on the prevention of child–family separation.

3. SCOPE OF THE WORK

General

The Service Provider is expected to design and conduct a rigorous ex-ante analysis evaluating the necessity, options, and anticipated impacts of strengthening the prevention dimension of the social assistance system, with a focus on preventing the separation of the child from the family. The methodology must be consultative, involving document review, legal and policy research, analysis of administrative and budgetary data, and consultations with key actors at central and local level. It shall include at least two thematic consultations with the relevant institutions and stakeholders, as well as a validation session of the preliminary findings with the Committee.

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

Target Groups and Key Stakeholders

Key target groups:

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family;
- The Parliamentary Secretariat.

Key stakeholders:

- The relevant central public authorities responsible for social protection, education, health, internal affairs and public finance;
- Local and territorial guardianship authorities, territorial social assistance structures and child rights protection specialists;
- Local public authorities and public, private and associative providers of social services;
- Education institutions, family doctors and the police, as first-line actors in identifying children at risk of separation, together with civil society organizations, academia and development partners active in the field.

Specific Activities

To ensure a robust pre-legislative scrutiny process, the Service Provider is expected to complete the following activities:

- *Define and Quantify the Policy Problem*

Define the policy problem on the basis of available data, establishing the scale and structure of the phenomenon: the number of children identified as being at risk of separation, the number of children separated from parents and placed in the protection system, the reasons invoked for separation, and the profile of the families concerned. Examine the drivers most frequently associated with separation and compare, to the extent that data allow, the costs of early family support with the costs of placement. The analysis must assess the availability and quality of administrative data at central and local level and flag the resulting limitations.

- *Evaluate the Normative and Institutional Framework*

Analyse the relevant legislation and secondary normative acts in order to determine how early identification, risk assessment, referral, case coordination and family support are regulated and applied in practice. Map the mandates and responsibilities of social services, guardianship authorities, education institutions, family doctors, the police, local public authorities and service providers, and identify gaps, overlaps, procedural bottlenecks and accountability deficits. A specific focus must be placed on whether the function of a case responsible, with predictable duties for connecting the family to social, educational, health and community services, is adequately regulated and resourced.

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

- [Map Early Family Support Social Services](#)

Cartograph the existing early family support services at national and local level, including parental counselling, psychological and social support, home-based support, day services, early intervention for children with disabilities, respite services and targeted material support. Analyse territorial coverage, the target groups that remain uncovered, and the overlaps between local public authorities, territorial social assistance structures and non-governmental providers, indicating where families are, in practice, left without any early support option.

- [Analyse the Financing of Prevention](#)

Examine how preventive social services are currently financed and whether the existing arrangements incentivize timely intervention or channel resources predominantly after the crisis, once the child has already been separated or placed. Assess the ratio between the cost of early intervention and the cost of placement, and outline the financing options that could support prevention, together with their indicative costing and fiscal implications. The findings of this component shall be presented as a dedicated chapter of the Ex-Ante Analysis Report rather than as a separate deliverable.

- [Review Relevant European Models and Transferable Lessons](#)

Analyse three to five relevant and transferable European models of preventing the separation of the child from the family, focusing on institutional architecture, competences, planning instruments and funding mechanisms. The selection of models shall be justified in the inception report and agreed with the Committee. Draw actionable lessons on prevention of separation on grounds of social vulnerability, early intervention and service coordination, individualised support planning, and the division of responsibilities between central and local institutions, taking into account Moldova's administrative and fiscal realities.

- [Compare Intervention Options and Formulate Evidence-Based Recommendations](#)

Identify and compare at least three intervention options, including the status quo, using explicit criteria: expected effectiveness, estimated cost and fiscal implications, institutional feasibility, equity and territorial coverage, and implementation risks, together with an assessment of the capacity of central and local institutions to implement each option. On this basis, provide the Committee with a clear, actionable diagnostic. The recommendations may include, but are not limited to: (i) initiating targeted legislative amendments concerning the identification of risk, the individualized support plan, the case responsible, early family support services and institutional obligations; (ii) confirming that the existing legal framework is sufficient, while recommending enhanced support for its implementation; and/or (iii) other forms of follow-up the Committee may wish to pursue, such as further studies, pilot mechanisms, or capacity-building measures. These findings will guide the Committee in prioritizing its parliamentary legislative and oversight functions, including through public hearings or requesting reports from the implementing authorities.

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

4. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

No.	Deliverable	Description and Content Requirements	Indicative Deadline
1	Inception Report, Methodology and Intervention Plan	A structured framework approved before the analytical work begins, containing: • Methodology and analytical framework: research methods, data collection tools, data sources, the criteria for comparing the intervention options and the selection of the European models examined. • Intervention plan with deadlines: activities, milestones and working days allocated for each component and each subsequent deliverable, including the feedback points for PADEM and the Committee. The plan shall be endorsed by the Parliament and approved by PADEM before implementation begins. • Consultation plan and parties concerned: the concrete institutions and actors to be consulted: central authorities, guardianship authorities, local public authorities, service providers, education, health and police, civil society and academia, with the format, timing and purpose of each consultation. • Replicable methodological note: a distinct section documenting the pre-legislative scrutiny methodology step by step, so that the Parliament can reuse it in other policy areas. A core requirement of the assignment, assessed as such. • Risks and data availability: anticipated constraints on access to data and on stakeholder availability, with the mitigation measures proposed.	15 days after contract signing
2	Draft Ex-Ante Analysis Report	A complete draft covering all elements of the Scope of Work: problem definition, normative and institutional diagnostic, service mapping, comparative analysis of European models and comparison of intervention options.	Mid-assignment
3	Final Ex-Ante Analysis Report and Executive Summary	The finalized report, incorporating feedback from PADEM and parliamentary stakeholders, including a dedicated chapter on the financing options, accompanied by an executive summary of 2–4 pages for Members of Parliament.	End of assignment

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

No.	Deliverable	Description and Content Requirements	Indicative Deadline
4	Package of Legislative Intervention Proposals	A distinct chapter or annex with normative proposals on risk identification, the individualised support plan, case coordination and the case responsible, early family support services and institutional obligations.	Together with the Final Report
5	Parliamentary Dashboard on the Prevention of Child–Family Separation	A simple visual monitoring instrument with indicators on children at risk, families supported early, children maintained in the family, territorial coverage and the cost of family support compared with placement.	End of assignment
6	Public Presentation and Validation of the Results	Presentation materials and delivery of the key findings and legislative recommendations at a dedicated event or committee hearing.	Towards the end of the assignment
7	Final Activity Report	A concise report (max. 3–5 pages) on the delivery process and the consultations carried out.	10 days after completion

Reporting Requirements and Language:

- All administrative and contractual deliverables (Inception Report, Final Activity Report) shall be written in English.
- The Ex-Ante Analysis Report and related specific outputs intended for parliamentary use (executive summary, legislative proposals and parliamentary dashboard) shall be written in Romanian.

5. SUPERVISION

The Service Provider will work under the technical supervision of the PADEM Component 1 Leader (Legislative Process) regarding methodology and content, and the overall contractual authority of the Project Team Leader. All materials produced remain the exclusive property of the PADEM Project and the Parliament. The Service Provider must strictly maintain political neutrality and confidentiality and must observe the applicable personal data protection requirements, with particular care regarding any information concerning children and families.

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

6. DATES AND DURATION

The assignment is anticipated to commence in October 2026 and must be concluded by February 2027.

7. LOGISTICS

The assignment will be implemented in a hybrid manner. Research and drafting activities are home-based. Interviews, stakeholder consultations, field visits and presentations will be held at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, at the premises of the relevant institutions or online. The Service Provider is fully responsible for all logistical arrangements regarding their own activity.

8. CANDIDATE SELECTION CRITERIA

The Service Provider (Individual or Company) must demonstrate the following:

- Solid experience in conducting ex-ante evaluations, public policy analysis, or complex legal research.
- Experts must possess an advanced university degree in Law, Public Administration, Social Work, Social Policy, Economics, or a related field.
- Demonstrated expertise in at least one of the following areas: child protection and social services, social assistance policy and financing, or public policy and regulatory analysis. Specific experience in family support services is an asset but not a strict requirement.
- Proven ability to draft clear, evidence-based recommendations for high-level legislative decision-makers, including the capacity to work with administrative and budgetary data.
- Proposals may be submitted by an individual expert or by a team. Fluency in Romanian is required for the parliamentary outputs, and working knowledge of English is required for the administrative deliverables.

9. SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION

9.1 Proposal Structure

To ensure a comprehensive assessment, the submission must include:

Technical Proposal:

- *Methodology and Approach:* A detailed narrative outlining the proposed research methods, data collection tools, and analytical frameworks, specifically tailored to the prevention of child–family separation and the rigors of pre-legislative scrutiny.
- *Key Expert(s) Profile:* Updated CV(s) highlighting relevant academic backgrounds and specific assignments related to social policy analysis, legal analysis, child protection or social services financing.

Project title	Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)		
Form title	ToR: External Service Provider to Conduct an Ex-Ante Analysis on Preventing the Separation of the Child from the Family	Version	1.0

- *Track Record & Portfolio*: relevant examples or links to previously authored ex-ante analyses, policy briefs, or complex legal and policy research reports.
- *Work Plan*: A structured timeline detailing key milestones, consultations, and deliverables.

Financial Proposal:

- A detailed budget breakdown, specifying the estimated number of working days and the daily fee rates for the expert(s).
- The fee must be an all-inclusive lump sum, covering all professional fees, logistical expenses, and administrative costs required to deliver the assignment.
- Prices must be indicated with 0% VAT, as the PADEM project is strictly VAT exempt.

9.2 Evaluation and Selection Criteria

The evaluation of proposals will be conducted using a Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) method, weighted at 80% for the Technical Proposal and 20% for the Financial Proposal.

The Technical Evaluation (maximum 80 points) will rigorously assess the following dimensions:

- *Understanding of Context & Proposed Methodology (30 pts)*: The depth of understanding regarding the Moldovan social assistance and child protection framework, the specific challenges of preventing the separation of the child from the family, and the robustness, innovation, and relevance of the proposed pre-legislative scrutiny approach.
- *Expertise and Professional Track Record (30 pts)*: Proven experience in conducting complex policy and legal research, ex-ante evaluations, or impact analysis. Preference will be given to candidates demonstrating specialized knowledge in child protection, social services or the financing of social assistance; prior experience with family support services or deinstitutionalization processes will be considered an added advantage, though not a mandatory precondition.
- *Feasibility of the Work Plan and Timeline (15 pts)*: Logical sequencing of activities, realistic time allocation for data collection and stakeholder consultations, and clear alignment with the assignment's final objectives.
- *Overall Quality and Clarity of the Proposal (5 pts)*: Coherence, structure, and professional presentation of the submitted documents.