

ANNEX B

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Facilitating Access to Employment for Refugees and Asylum Seekers through dedicated digital tool facilitating the automated job-matching process for refugees and asylum seekers

Background

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) is entrusted by the United Nations General Assembly with the responsibility for assisting governments in seeking permanent solutions to the problems of refugees.¹ Local integration represents one of the three durable solutions, alongside repatriation and resettlement, and is considered to be most relevant in the Bulgarian context.²

Finding solutions is perceived as restoring access to human rights of displaced populations that works both in the interest of refugees and of their receiving communities. Successful integration can be achieved by comprehensive and wisely designed integration policies which favour social cohesion, also taking into account the specific needs.

The refugee crisis has significantly impacted Bulgaria, necessitating innovative solutions to integrate refugees into the local economy. UNHCR collaborates with a wide range of partners, including States, the private sector and civil society, to enhance economic outcomes for refugees and their host communities. This involves promoting inclusive market systems, improving financial inclusion, aligning social protection systems and fostering inclusive environment. Despite these efforts, many refugees face significant barriers in accessing the labor market, including lack of access to financial services and exclusion from government social protection systems.

The Refugee Employment Platform aims to support refugees in finding employment by connecting them with employers, providing necessary information about their rights and obligations, and supporting both parties throughout the hiring process. This project aligns with global efforts to ensure that refugees have access to dignified livelihoods and are empowered to contribute to the host country's economy.

As of recent estimates, Bulgaria hosts a significant number of refugees, though the exact number can fluctuate due to ongoing conflicts and migration trends. The country has seen an influx of refugees from various regions, including Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Ukraine. Asylum seekers in Bulgaria are allowed to work (3 months their submission of the application for international protection).

¹ Statute of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UN General Assembly Resolution 428(V), Annex, UN Doc. A/1775, para. 1, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/4d944e589.pdf> ("Statute").

² UN Global Compact on Refugees, Report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN General Assembly 73rd session, Supplement No. 12, A/73/12 (Part II), para. 85 at https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf

Refugees in Bulgaria are granted temporary protection or asylum status under national and international laws. They have access to certain rights, including the right to work, but navigating the legal and bureaucratic landscape can be challenging.

Employment Needs of Refugees

Many refugees face difficulties with Bulgarian, which can hinder their ability to find and retain employment. Language skills are crucial for understanding job requirements, completing applications, and succeeding in interviews.

Refugees often have qualifications and work experience from their home countries that may not be recognized in Bulgaria. They may need support in translating and validating their credentials or obtaining local certifications.

Refugees might not be familiar with the Bulgarian job market, including where to find job listings, how to apply for jobs, or what types of roles are available. They may also need guidance on workplace norms and expectations. Thus, refugees and asylum seekers may require assistance with social integration, including understanding their employment rights, accessing social services, and building networks.

I. Overall Objective of the Assignment

UNHCR Bulgaria is dedicated to supporting refugees in their integration journey, including helping them find meaningful employment. To further this mission, we are seeking to establish an employment platform will connect refugees with job opportunities and employers in a streamlined and efficient manner. This platform will leverage an existing off-the-shelf solution customized to meet the specific needs of refugees.

Objectives of the Assignment:

Provide a user-friendly platform, including through subscription to an existing application meeting the following requirements, where refugees and employers can register and an automated matching process can take place.

1. To facilitate job matching between refugees and employers based on skills, location, and other criteria.
2. To provide a user-friendly interface accessible in multiple languages.
3. To ensure secure management of user data, adhering to relevant data protection regulations.
4. To offer ongoing support and maintenance services to ensure platform functionality and usability.

5. To enable a referral system between job seekers, and employers and relevant NGOs providing support and services, and employers and NGOs who can provide them guidance
6. To allow for a space for the provision of comprehensive content on refugees' rights and obligations related to employment in Bulgaria.

Specific Tasks

1. Project Initiation

A. Technical Design Proposal Development

- a. Develop a comprehensive Technical Design Proposal, including architecture diagrams, feature descriptions, and user journey maps.

2. Platform Customization Planning

A. Development Plan Creation

- a. Create a detailed plan outlining the steps for platform customization, including timelines, resource allocation, and risk management.

B. Platform Configuration

- a. Set up the existing off-the-shelf platform for initial configuration to match basic requirements.
- b. The selected service provider will be responsible for delivering a technically sound, user-friendly, and scalable employment platform that meets the following specifications **(Technical Specifications for the Refugee Employment Platform)**:

(1) Platform Architecture and Performance

- i. **Cloud-Based Infrastructure:** The platform should be hosted on a reliable, secure cloud-based infrastructure (e.g., AWS, Azure, Google Cloud) to ensure high availability, scalability, and disaster recovery capabilities.
- ii. **Scalability:** The platform must be designed to handle a growing number of users, including thousands of refugees and employers, without compromising performance.
- iii. **Performance Optimization:** The platform should load quickly, with page load times under 3 seconds, and be optimized for high performance even during peak usage.

- iv. **Responsive Design:** The platform must be fully responsive, providing a seamless user experience on desktops, tablets, and smartphones (iOS and Android).

(2) User Management and Authentication

- i. **Secure User Registration:** Provide secure registration for job seekers and employers, including email, social media, or mobile number verification.
- ii. **Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):** Implement MFA to enhance security, especially for administrators and employers accessing sensitive data.
- iii. **Role-Based Access Control (RBAC):** Ensure different levels of access (e.g., job seeker, employer, admin, etc.) with appropriate permissions to maintain data security and privacy. List of users is to be finalised after an agreement between the Provider and UNCHR Bulgaria.

(3) Multilingual Support

- i. **Language Accessibility:** The platform must support and be translated to multiple languages, including languages commonly spoken by refugees (e.g., Arabic, Farsi, Ukrainian, Russian, English, Bulgarian).
- ii. **Dynamic Language Switching:** Users should be able to switch languages easily from any page without disrupting their workflow.

(4) Job Matching and Search Engine

- i. **Automated Job Matching:** Use AI or algorithm-based matching to connect job seekers with relevant job opportunities based on skills, location, availability, and preferences.
- ii. **Advanced Search Filters:** Include filters such as job type (full-time, part-time, remote), location, required skills, and language requirements to help job seekers find relevant opportunities easily.
- iii. **Recommendation Engine:** Provide personalized job recommendations to job seekers based on their profile, search history, and previous applications.

(5) Integration Capabilities

- i. **API Integration:** Provide APIs to enable integration with third-party services, such as local job boards, government employment agencies, training programs, and language courses.

(6) Data Security and Privacy

- i. **Data Encryption:** Ensure end-to-end encryption of data in transit (SSL/TLS) and at rest to protect sensitive user information.

- ii. **GDPR Compliance:** Implement data protection measures that comply with GDPR and other relevant privacy laws in the European Union, including data anonymization, user consent management, and the right to be forgotten.
- iii. **Regular Security Audits:** Conduct regular security audits and vulnerability assessments to identify and mitigate potential security threats.
- iv. **Backup and Disaster Recovery:** Implement automated backups and a disaster recovery plan to ensure data integrity and availability in case of system failure.

(7) Analytics and Reporting

- i. **User Analytics Dashboard:** Provide an admin dashboard with real-time analytics on platform usage, such as job seekers registrations, job applications, job placements, job matches, job seekers skills/country of origin, education, work experience, etc. List of variables to be finalised upon consultation with UNCHR Bulgaria.
- ii. **Customizable Reports:** Allow administrators to generate and download reports based on various parameters (e.g., job placements by industry, user engagement metrics, location of the job seekers, skills). List of variables to be finalised upon consultation with UNCHR Bulgaria.

(8) Communication and Notifications

- i. **Automated Notifications:** Set up automated emails for key actions, such as job matches, application status updates, and account activity.
- ii. **Multilingual Notifications:** Ensure all notifications are available in the end-user's preferred language.

(9) User Support and Accessibility

- i. **Help Center and FAQs:** Provide an integrated help center with FAQs, guides, and tutorials in multiple languages to assist users.

(10) Testing and Quality Assurance

- i. **Performance Testing:** Conduct performance testing to ensure the platform meets load and stress requirements under expected usage conditions.
- ii. **User Acceptance Testing (UAT):** Include UAT to validate that the platform meets the needs of end-users, particularly refugees.
- iii. **Bug Tracking and Resolution:** Use a bug tracking system to log issues and provide timely resolutions before and after the platform launch.

(11) Maintenance and Support

- i. Technical Support: Provide ongoing technical support with defined SLAs, including response times for critical, major, and minor issues.
- ii. Regular Updates: Ensure the platform is regularly updated with the latest security patches, feature enhancements, and performance improvements.

3. Platform Customization and Development

A. User Interface (UI) and User Experience (UX) Design

i.Design the platform's UI/UX, ensuring it is user-friendly, accessible, and multilingual.

ii.User Experience

(1) Job seekers

- (i) Job seekers are to also have the option to apply for published vacancies even if no match has occurred. The platform should also have "Search button" functionality, aiming for the job seeker to search opportunities and open vacancies.
- (ii) Anonymised profiles: the platform anonymises by default all profiles to remove potential bias (age, gender, profile picture, vulnerability or disability)
- (iii) Their profile will give them access to personalised dashboard through which they would be able to apply for vacancies on their own, and/or also be notified when a match has taken place and can contact the employer as a next step.
- (iv) They will be able to keep track of their application status
- (v) Job seekers will be able to create and store their CV and Motivation Letter, and/or upload their CV and Motivation Letters if already available (documents` formats to be proposed by the Provider and confirmed by UNHCR)
- (vi) The platform is to have the possibility to incorporate sample CV templates, and samples of Motivation Letters for job seekers to use as ready-made templates (hence to be able to be downloaded in an editable format) and as guidance. The templates are to be proposed by UNHCR and its partners.
- (vii) Through the dashboard job seekers will be able to use a referral system within the platform where they would be able to send requests for support directly to relevant NGOs and

state institutions (for example, for legal support, career consultation, social assistance, etc.). The services and providers are to be proposed by UNHCR and revised regularly. UNHCR should be able to autonomously edit (add and remove) service providers from this section. The product should include a referral system. NGOs and local institutions providing services can also register and be users of the platform to establish the referral system.

- (viii) The platform should have the possibility to incorporate resources on guidance on legal requirements, work permits, and any other administrative aspects of hiring refugees and asylum seekers. The job seeker is to be able to use “search button” and find relevant sources by key words. UNHCR and partner organisations will provide the content and will continuously update based on the needs and the feedback mechanism. UNHCR should be able to autonomously edit (add and remove) links, files, videos, articles, interactive tools, and other learning materials.
- (ix) The platform should have the possibility to incorporate resources on guidance on available upskilling – trainings, learning programmes, online resources. The job seeker is to be able to use “search button” and find relevant trainings by key words UNHCR and partners will provide the contents and online materials. UNHCR should be able to autonomously edit (add and remove) links, files, videos, articles, interactive tools, and other learning materials.
- (x) A bug reporting section in the system and a mechanism for job seekers to report any issues they encounter that may block their activities on the platform. These are to be addressed by the maintenance team proposed by the Provider (e.g. within 72 hours).
- (xi) Feedback mechanism - implement systems where refugees can provide feedback on their experiences using the platform, and on their interactions with employers. Provider is to propose design and implementation of the feedback mechanism, and UNHCR is to consult and confirm the implementation of the mechanism
- (xii) **History tracking:** automatically capture each interaction the job seeker has with the platform and business process

(account creation, apply for a job, being selected for a job, getting hired, etc.).

(2) Employers

- (i) User-friendly process for creating a profile on the platform. Employers would have the possibility to create a profile for their business on the platform and publish vacancies
- (ii) Employers will have access to the CV of job seekers only after a match.
- (iii) **The employer should be able to submit their request for registration, filling up predefined information, which will be used by UNHCR Bulgaria for conducting due diligence process. UNHCR Bulgaria is to approve or reject their request for registration. Upon approval on behalf of UNHCR Bulgaria, employers will be able to proceed and create their profiles in the platform. Following the saving of the information entered for the creation of the company profile, UNHCR will receive a notification on the portal whenever a new company has completed filling out the personal profile. This will enable UNHCR to perform due diligence to approve or deny the company's enrollment in the portal.**
- (iv) Employers will have a personalised dashboard, with information available and restricted only for them (via authentication mechanism). The dashboard will provide them with information on: matches that took place, vacancies they published, status of the application process. Final features available on the dashboard are to be proposed by the Provider and approved by UNHCR Bulgaria.
- (v) The personal dashboard for each employer will also allow them to have the option to make requests to NGOs providing support and other relevant stakeholders when they have questions for the hiring process, and/or interpreting (referral system). UNHCR autonomously can edit (add and remove) relevant stakeholders and service providers to whom employers can address requests. The product shall include a referral system will be designed and implemented, and its implementation shall be confirmed by UNCHR Bulgaria. NGOs and local institutions providing services can also

register and be users of the platform to establish the referral system.

- (vi) The platform will also incorporate the possibility to link information on legal requirements, work permits, and any other administrative aspects of hiring refugees. Contents is to be provided by UNHCR Bulgaria and its partners.
- (vii) Incorporate the possibility to create a community for registered employers who use the platform, allowing them to share experiences, challenges, and best practices. It will be a forum-format space, where employers only will have access and can communicate with each other. There will not be an admin for that forum.
- (viii) Feedback mechanism through which employers can share their feedback on using the platform with UNHCR and/or relevant partnered engaged in the administration of the platform
- (ix) A bug reporting section in the system and a mechanism for employer to report any **issues they encounter that may block their activities on the platform. These are to be addressed by the maintenance team proposed by the Provider**
- (x) History tracking for posted vacancies, number of job seekers applied, status of job application

(3) **Administrators**

- (i) Provider is to propose various functionalities for the different type (levels) of administrators.
- (ii) Administrators should be able to extract reports and analytics with aggregated data (type of variable to be finalised upon consultation with UNCHR Bulgaria)
- (iii) Administrators should be able to add/remove end-users from the system;
- (iv) Administrators should be able to upload informative contents (videos, files, other interactive formats and tools) in the platform

B. Feature Development

Key platform features, including:

- a. **User Registration and Profile Management** - secure registration and profile management systems for job seekers, employers, and administrators.
- b. **Job matching and search functionality** - automated job-matching algorithms and advanced search filters. Matching criteria and algorithms to be selected upon consultation with UNHCR Bulgaria.
- c. **Referral system** - through their individual profiles – job seekers and employers will be able to use a referral system within the platform where they would be able to send requests for support directly to relevant NGOs and state institutions (for example, for legal support, career consultation, social assistance, etc.). The services and providers are to be proposed by UNHCR and revised regularly. UNHCR should be able to autonomously edit (add and remove) service providers from this section. NGOs and local institutions providing services can also register and be users of the platform to establish the referral system. Provider is to propose how the referral system will be designed and implemented, and its implementation shall be confirmed by UNCHR.
- d. **Analytics and reporting tools**: Dashboards for tracking user engagement (in compliance with EU GDPR policies), job placements, and other key metrics. Metrics to be finalised upon consultation with UNHCR Bulgaria.

C. Data Security Implementation

- a. Implement data encryption, role-based access control, and other security measures to comply with GDPR and other privacy regulations.

D. Integration with Third-Party Services

- a. Integrate the platform with third-party services such as job boards, social media for logins

4. Testing and Quality Assurance

A. Test case Development

- a. Develop test cases covering all functionalities, including performance, security, and user acceptance testing.
- b. Provide a detailed testing plan, including performance testing, security testing, and user acceptance testing.

B. Performance testing

- a. Conduct performance testing to ensure the platform handles expected user loads efficiently.

C. Security testing

- a. Perform security testing to identify and fix vulnerabilities.

D. User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

- a. Facilitate UAT sessions with a sample of end-users (job seekers, employers) to validate that the platform meets their needs.

E. Bug Fixing and Refinement

- a. Address issues identified during testing and refined the platform accordingly.

5. Training and Documentation

A. Training Material Development

- Develop user manuals, video tutorials, and other training resources in multiple languages. Training materials for administrators to be available in English. Training materials for employers to be available in English . Training materials for job seekers to be available in English,.

B. Administrator Training

- a. Conduct training sessions for platform administrators on how to manage and operate the platform.

C. End-User Training

- b. Provide training sessions for refugees and employers to familiarize them with the platform's features.

6. Platform Launch

A. Final Platform Review and Approval

- a. Conduct a final review of the platform with stakeholders to ensure all requirements are met.

B. Go-Live Preparations

- a. Prepare for the platform's public launch, including final data migration, system checks, and communication to potential users.

C. Platform Launch

- a. Launch the platform, making it publicly accessible to all intended users.

7. Post-Launch Support and Monitoring

A. Post-Launch Monitoring

- a. Monitor the platform's performance and user activity closely in the initial weeks after launch. Provider is to propose a timeline for the monitoring and to be agreed upon by UNHCR.

b. the selected provider will propose a Service Level Agreement (SLA) covering uptime, support response times, and issue resolution processes.

B. Technical Support and Issue Resolution

- a. Provide ongoing technical support, addressing any issues that arise promptly.
- b. Provide a plan for post-launch support, maintenance, and how updates will be managed.

C. User Feedback Collection

- a. Periodically collect feedback from all users to identify areas for improvement. Provider is to propose at what period the feedback is to be collected and approved by UNHCR Bulgaria.

D. Performance Optimization

- a. Optimize the platform based on monitoring data and user feedback to improve usability and performance.

8. Project Closure (upon discontinuation of service usage)

A. Final Project Report

- a. Prepare a final report summarizing the project outcomes, key achievements, and lessons learned.

B. Handover of Platform Assets

- a. Complete the handover of all platform assets, including source code, documentation, and administrative credentials.

III. Expected Deliverables

1. Technical Design Proposal outlining the platform's customization approach, technical specifications, architecture, user journey maps, and mock-ups.
2. Platform Customization and Development Plan - a detailed plan that includes the steps for customizing the existing platform to meet UNHCR specific requirements, including feature descriptions, development phases, and integration points.
3. Documentation of data security protocols and compliance with relevant laws.
4. SLAs covering uptime, support response times, and issue resolution processes.
5. Prototype and User Interface Mock-Ups - provide an interactive prototype or mock-ups demonstrating the proposed platform's user interface, navigation, and core functionalities. This should be tailored to showcase the user experience for job seekers, employers, and administrators (different levels).
6. Customized Platform Build - develop and customize the platform based on the approved design. This includes implementing core features such as user registration, job matching, search functionality, data security measures, and analytics. Features to be updated in coordination and consultation with UNHCR
7. Integration with Third-Party Services - complete integration with third-party services such as job boards, and external APIs. Provide a detailed report on the integration process and testing outcomes.
8. Quality Assurance (QA) and Testing Report - conduct comprehensive testing, including performance, security, and user acceptance testing (UAT). Provide a detailed testing plan, including performance testing, security testing, and user acceptance testing. Submit a Testing Report documenting test cases, results, identified issues, and resolutions.
9. User Training and Documentation - deliver training sessions for administrators and end-users, supported by user manuals, video tutorials, and a comprehensive help guide.
10. Final Platform Launch - Launch the fully customized and tested platform. Ensure that all functionalities are operational, integrations are stable, and users can access the platform as intended.
11. Post-Launch Support and Maintenance Plan - Provide a plan for post-launch support, including details on how technical support, maintenance, and updates will be handled. Establish a helpdesk or customer service contact for ongoing assistance. Ongoing support and maintenance continuous as per the SLA.

12. Performance Monitoring and Optimization Report - submit a report on the platform's performance during the initial operational period, including user feedback, performance metrics, and any recommended optimizations. Reporting periods to be agreed upon by the provider and UNHCR Bulgaria.
13. Final Project Report and Handover - deliver a comprehensive final report summarizing the project, key achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. Complete the handover of documentation, and administrative credentials.

IV. **Profile of the Contractor(s)**

The service provider must demonstrate:

1. Proven experience in developing and customizing employment or job-matching platforms.
2. Familiarity with the needs of refugees, migrants, or other vulnerable groups is an asset.
3. Expertise in data security, privacy compliance, and cloud-based solutions.
4. A robust support system with the ability to provide ongoing maintenance and updates.
5. Relevant references or case studies demonstrating previous similar work.

V. **Application**

In order to submit a proposal, please provide:

1. Description of the company and the company's qualifications, including information on: year founded; headquarters location; number of similar successfully completed projects (in the relevant area); experience with UN or other international organizations, if any. Include any information that will facilitate our evaluation of your company's substantive reliability, financial and managerial capacity to provide the services. (Please check Annex D with the technical requirements for more information on the evaluation criteria and the necessary information to be provided).
2. Comprehensive product/project proposal including description of the functionalities and workflows of the product, methodology of customizing the platform. Please provide detailed proposal including all requests as per Annex D.
3. Team members – minimum two CVs to be provided
4. Price proposal to be submitted through Annex C – Financial Offer. Detailed cost breakdown, including subscription fees, customization, and maintenance costs.
5. **The form should be dated, signed, stamped and scanned.**

Please note that the price offer should only cover :

- a. The subscription for the software product providing the functionalities described above
- b. Maintenance of the platform for the period of 1 Jan 2025-31 Dec 2026
- c. Customization of platform functionalities for the period of 1 April 2025-31 Dec 2025

VI. Roles & Responsibilities

1. Technical provider

- Project management.
- Customization and implementation.
- Training, support and software maintenance.

2. UNHCR Bulgaria

- Provide requirements and feedback.
- Facilitate resource access.
- Participate in training.

VII. Milestones and Timeline (tentative)

- **October 2024:** Contractual arrangements.
- **December 2025** – delivery of final product for testing
- **January 2025 – February 2025** – security assessment
- **February 2025** - train UNHCR/Partner staff on using the software
- **March 2025:** Launch the platform.
- **August 2025:** mid-term assessment of the performance of the platform and making adjustments based on the assessment

Approved by:

Bulent Peker, Snr Protection Officer