

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

National Consultant responsible for conducting an Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives, and developing a Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda	
Hiring Office:	UNFPA Serbia Country Office
Purpose of consultancy:	<p>The UN Joint Programme PRO - Local Governance for People and Nature (PRO Programme) aims to enhance the well-being and quality of life of citizens by improving local governance, social inclusion, and environmental protection across 110 cities and municipalities in two regions: i) Šumadija and Western Serbia, and ii) Southern and Eastern Serbia. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) will lead the implementation of the project, in partnership with UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA, UNEP), over a three-year period from 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2026. UNFPA's component within the PRO Programme focuses on: i) building the capacity of local governments and other relevant local public entities to implement social policies and services; ii) addressing the rights and needs of marginalized groups; iii) enhancing family-centered public service delivery; and iv) improving the quality of life for older persons and youth in Serbia.</p> <p>Population aging has been a dominant demographic trend in Serbia over the past three decades, with some regions already facing unsustainable levels of population decline. This has placed significant pressure on social and pension insurance systems, as well as long-term and healthcare services. Serbia is among the European countries with the largest share of older persons in the population. According to the Statistical Office of Serbia (SORS), 22% of the population is over the age of 65, meaning one in every five people is older than 65. Given these statistics, it is of critical societal importance to enhance understanding of population aging, considering factors such as gender, urban-rural, and geographic differentials. The Census remains the key data source for assessing the trends and implications of Serbia's aging population. The data from the 2022 Census allow for in-depth analyses of population structures relevant to aging, including the effects of changes in education attainment and labor force participation on the dependency burden, particularly under conditions of a shrinking and aging population.</p> <p>As the population ages, older persons are increasingly at risk of poverty. Since the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda in Serbia, significant progress has been made toward achieving SDG1 (no poverty). The relative poverty rate decreased from 25.9% in 2016 to 21.1% in 2021, and the absolute poverty rate also saw a slight reduction from 7.3% in 2016 to 6.9% in 2020. However, for older persons (65+), the situation has worsened, with their relative poverty rate rising from 20.5% in 2016 to 22.7% in 2021, indicating a partial regression from the goal. Therefore, it is crucial to protect the most vulnerable groups, such as older persons, from the risks of poverty. Collecting detailed, gender-sensitive, and geographically differentiated data is essential for identifying at-risk groups, understanding the drivers of aging-related poverty, and designing targeted interventions that improve the well-being and inclusion of older persons. By leveraging data, policymakers can ensure that effective strategies are in place to address the challenges posed by an aging population and support the achievement of SDG1 for all.</p> <p>The UNFPA CO Serbia is engaging a National Consultant to: i) conduct an <i>Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives</i>, and ii) develop a <i>Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs</i>, as part of the PRO Programme (output 2.4, activity 2.4.3).</p> <p>The <i>Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives</i> will be framed within the key factors of human development, such as improvements in life</p>

	<p>expectancy, education, and economic activity. It will explore population aging in Serbia using both chronological (retrospective) age and prospective (biometric) age, the latter of which is linked to socioeconomic conditions. By combining these two concepts, the analysis will challenge widely accepted findings, such as the feminization of the elderly population, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of aging-related challenges in public policies, particularly those affecting pension and healthcare systems. In addition to common demographic indicators such as age dependency ratios, aging indices, and life table statistics, the labor force dependency ratio will be used to consider activity levels. This approach will offer a more nuanced measure of the pressure on the working-age population, regardless of traditional age thresholds. The analysis will be based on 2022 Census data, disaggregated by gender, education, family, and economic status, as well as on census-based life tables and the Labour Force Survey. Furthermore, the analysis will consider various scenarios of population dynamics and labor force participation patterns to provide a forward-looking perspective on population aging in Serbia.</p> <p>The <i>Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda</i> will include an analysis of their current situation and the adequacy of material support at the local level, based on readily available data. This analysis will link the SDGs to the position of older persons, in line with the "leave no one behind" principle of the 2030 Agenda. Methodologically, it will involve a literature review and data collection from government institutions, local governments (LGs), Centres for Social Work (CSWs), and the SDG platform, which has already initiated dialogue on aging and the SDGs. Additionally, seven focus group discussions with older persons will be conducted across three regions of Serbia—Southern, Eastern, and Southwestern—to gather relevant, real-time information on improving protection for older persons living in poverty. The guide will provide actionable recommendations for decision-makers at the national and local levels, aimed at improving policies that focus on the most vulnerable older populations. The document will be developed in consultation with the World Bank on methodology, as well as the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran, and Social Affairs (MoLEVSA), Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography (MoFWD) and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM). The guide will be promoted through at least one national roundtable discussion followed by strong advocacy for its use and will also contribute to Serbia's second Voluntary National Review (VNR).</p>
<p>Scope of work:</p> <p><i>(Description of services, activities, or outputs)</i></p>	<p>The recruited National Consultant will be responsible for undertaking the following main activities:</p> <p>Activity 1. Develop an outline for both: <i>Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives</i>, and the <i>Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda</i>. The outline should include: a description of tasks with deadlines; a list of national and local-level partners and beneficiaries; a proposal for the selection of local governments (LGs) where focus group discussions will be organized; methodology of both documents; clear objectives, and expected impact; a proposed chapter structure to ensure clarity and usability and practical recommendations for targeted interventions; public awareness efforts, and institutional responses to aging.</p> <p>Activity 2. Organize seven focus group discussions with older persons across three regions in Serbia—Southern, Eastern, and Southwestern—to gather real-time insights on improving protection for older persons living in poverty.</p> <p>Activity 3. Engage in consultations with relevant national stakeholders, including ministries and the World Bank, to refine the methodology and key elements of both documents.</p>

	<p>Activity 4. Prepare the first draft of the <i>Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives</i> in Serbian. The document should be submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography for review, feedback, and quality assurance.</p> <p>Activity 5. Finalize the <i>Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives</i> in Serbian. The document should be submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia.</p> <p>Activity 6. Prepare the first draft of the <i>Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda</i> in Serbian. The document should be submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia, the World Bank, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography for review, feedback, and quality assurance.</p> <p>Activity 7. Finalize the <i>Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda</i> in Serbian. The document should be submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia.</p> <p>Activity 8. Participate in a national roundtable discussion to present both the <i>Analysis of population aging in Serbia, focusing on demographic trends, socioeconomic implications, and policy perspectives</i>, and the <i>Guide to strengthening the protection of older persons living in poverty in the context of the 2030 Agenda</i>.</p> <p>Activity 9. Perform any other duties to support the implementation of project and program activities from the UNFPA CO portfolio.</p>
Duration and working schedule:	<p>Expected duration from: 1st April 2025 – 28th February 2026 (to invest up to 70 days).</p> <p>Working days are shown approximately, while payment will be based on and made upon completion of each deliverable as described below.</p>
Place where services are to be delivered:	<p>The duty station for the consultancy is Belgrade. The consultant will be working from home and in-country travels will be organized in accordance with planned activities and expected deliverables.</p>
Delivery dates and how work will be delivered (e.g. electronic, hard copy etc.):	<p>Seven deliverables are expected from the national consultant, as follows:</p> <p>1st Deliverable, to be completed by 1st May 2025: A detailed outline document, incorporating all required elements, is developed. The document will be prepared in Serbian and submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia for quality assurance.</p> <p>2nd Deliverable, to be completed by 1st October 2025: Seven focus group discussions with older persons across three regions in Serbia are organized to gather real-time insights on improving the protection of older persons living in poverty.</p> <p>3rd Deliverable, to be completed by 15th November 2025: The first draft of the <i>Analysis of Population Aging in Serbia: Demographic Trends, Socioeconomic Implications, and Policy Perspectives</i> is developed in Serbian. The document is submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography for review, feedback, and quality assurance.</p>

	<p>4th Deliverable, to be completed by 1st December 2025: The <i>Analysis of Population Aging in Serbia: Demographic Trends, Socioeconomic Implications, and Policy Perspectives</i> is finalized in Serbian and submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia.</p> <p>5th Deliverable, to be completed by 15th January 2026: The first draft of the <i>Guide to Strengthening the Protection of Older Persons Living in Poverty in the Context of the 2030 Agenda</i> is developed in Serbian. The document is submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia, the World Bank, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Family Welfare and Demography for review, feedback, and quality assurance.</p> <p>6th Deliverable, to be completed by 15th February 2026: The <i>Guide to Strengthening the Protection of Older Persons Living in Poverty in the Context of the 2030 Agenda</i> is finalized in Serbian and submitted to the UNFPA CO Serbia.</p> <p>7th Deliverable, to be completed by 28th February 2026: Participation in a national roundtable discussion to present both the <i>Analysis of Population Aging in Serbia: Demographic Trends, Socioeconomic Implications, and Policy Perspectives</i> and the <i>Guide to Strengthening the Protection of Older Persons Living in Poverty in the Context of the 2030 Agenda</i>.</p>
<p>Monitoring and progress control, including reporting requirements, periodicity format and deadline:</p>	<p>Work will be done under the supervision and guidance of the Population Dynamics (PD) Programme Analyst, while daily coordination will be done by the PRO Programme Assistant. In close consultation with the PD Programme Analyst, the National Consultant will liaise with all relevant institutions, partners on the PRO Programme, and LGs in the Republic of Serbia.</p> <p>For all delays in the completion of the tasks, the National Consultant should notify the PD Programme Analyst stating the reasons for the delay and proposing alternative actions or dates for completion of the deliverables.</p>
<p>Supervisory arrangements:</p>	<p>Overall supervision of all processes related to the UNFPA Country Office is performed by the UNFPA CO Serbia Head of Office.</p>
<p>Expected travel:</p>	<p>The National Consultant will perform activities in Belgrade. Travel can include relevant in-country travels following the planned activities.</p>
<p>Required expertise, qualifications and competencies, including language requirements:</p>	<p><u>Qualifications and Experience:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Master's degree in social sciences, political sciences, demography, economics, or a related field. A PhD is considered an advantage. 2. At least 10 years of experience in analysis, assessment, report writing, and policy work. 3. Proven experience working with statistical agencies, government institutions, international organizations, NGOs, and the academic community. Previous engagements with the United Nations on demographic issues in Serbia are considered an advantage. 4. Strong expertise in conducting qualitative and quantitative research related to demography, demographic change and challenges, aging, social policy, and human development in Serbia. 5. Understanding of demographic change and aging-related challenges in Serbia and globally, including their societal, economic, and developmental implications. 6. Excellent analytical, communication, and coordination skills, with the ability to work effectively in teams. 7. Strong organizational skills, ability to prioritize multiple tasks, meet deadlines and work independently. 8. Self-motivated, result-oriented, and proactive. 9. Excellent communication, writing, and editorial skills in both English and Serbian.

<p>Inputs / services to be provided by UNFPA or implementing partner (e.g. support services, office space, equipment), if applicable:</p>	<p>The UNFPA CO Serbia will provide all the necessary reading materials and contact information of relevant institutions and stakeholders at the national and local levels.</p>
<p>Other relevant information or special conditions, if any:</p>	<p><u>Basis of payment:</u></p> <p>The payment will be made upon completion of specific tasks, delivery of relevant deliverables, and certification by the Head of Office and the PD Programme Analyst of the successful performance and upon certification that deliverables have been finalized and accepted, by 28th February 2026. The fee will be paid in local currency at the UN operational rate of exchange in effect on the day of payment for the consultancy fee upon certification. The ownership of the outputs under this consultancy will remain with the UNFPA CO Serbia.</p>
<p>Approved by Requesting Officer in Hiring Office:</p> <p>Ms. Borka Jeremic, UNFPA Serbia Head of Office</p> <p>Date: 15 March 2025</p>	