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MDA/22/01/CHE (108916)

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Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED); monitoring and evaluation; results-based management; policy dialogue; capacity development; outreach to NEETs.

The evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office

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The collaborative efforts and insights from all stakeholders have significantly contributed to the depth and quality of this evaluation, underscoring the commitment to fostering inclusive and productive employment in Moldova. Thank you all for your dedication and support.

Disclaimer

This project evaluation report presents the view of the evaluator and does not necessarily fully correspond to the opinions of ILO or other stakeholders referred to in this report. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here is correct. Any factual error that may appear is unintended and falls under the responsibility of the evaluator.

Acronyms

ALMM	Active Labour Market Measures
CO	Country Office
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT/CO	Decent Work Technical Support/Country Office
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus group discussions
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Individual Interviews
LEPs	Local Employment Partnerships
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MER	Ministry of Education and Research
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
LEP	Local Employment Partnerships
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LPA	Local Public Authorities
NEA	National Employment Agency
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NEP	National Employment Program
NSFE	Non-Standard Forms of Employment
NTCCCB	National Tripartite Commission for Consultation and Collective Bargaining of of Moldova
RBM	Results Based Management
SDC	Swiss Development for Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SECO	Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SLI	State Labour Inspectorate
STED	Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification
TCCCB	Tripartite Commissions for Consultation and Collective Bargaining
ToC	Theory of Change
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UDW	Undeclared Work
UNDP	United Nations Development Programmes
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

The SECO-funded project implemented by ILO aims to provide better opportunities for decent work for youth, women, and men in Moldova through targeted interventions in employment promotion, skills development, and formalization of employment.

The project focuses on three expected outcomes: 1) Improved inclusive employment via the National Employment Program, 2) Enhanced skills development aligned with labor market needs, and 3) Strengthened protection for workers at risk of informal employment.

The final evaluation aimed to assess relevance and coherence of the interventions, as well as the performance and sustainability of the project across three outcomes and elaborating evidenced-based recommendations for improvement of the future similar actions.

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach, engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders: government entities (Ministry of Labour and Social Protection-MLSP; National Employment Agency-NEA; Ministry of Education & Research-MER), workers' and employers' organizations, local public authorities, labor market professionals, ILO, donor, private companies, educational institutions and end-beneficiaries. Their participation was a necessary condition to ensure accountability, promote ownership, facilitate future buy-in and arrive at comprehensive recommendations for ILO, public authorities from Moldova, donor and other stakeholders.

The methodology was based on mostly face-to-face data collection and followed a mixed approach, using in parallel *qualitative* methods, namely key individual interviews and focus groups and *quantitative* methods, mostly data from the written sources.

Evaluation did not encounter any significant limitations in terms of available data. Most of the identified evaluation risks at the inception phase have not materialized in negative effects on the evaluation and its results. These were largely thanks to the support provided by the ILO team, its openness in sharing available information and reflect on the evaluated topics.

However, evaluating the impact proved challenging due to the absence of specific indicators and targets. Consequently, the evaluation sought to identify early signs of potential impact.

The evaluation encountered some difficulties in verifying certain quantitative achievements, such as the number and sustainability of jobs created with the project contribution, as well as the number of individuals from the Hincesti and Floresti districts who directly or indirectly benefited from the LEPs. To address this, the evaluator gathered data from different sources and employed a cross-checking approach and triangulation to validate the findings.

Conclusions

The ILO project has demonstrated significant *relevance* to Moldova's national strategic priorities and international commitments, effectively aligning with the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" and the nationalized SDGs. By focusing on decent work and economic growth, particularly through the promotion of productive employment and the protection of labor rights, the project addresses the specific needs of marginalized groups, including youth, women, and individuals with disabilities. The establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships further enhances its impact, fostering collaboration among various entities, including government agencies, social partners, and local authorities, which is crucial for creating a sustainable labor market. Moreover, the project's design and implementation reflect a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the labor market in Moldova. By incorporating a human rights-based approach and emphasizing gender-sensitive strategies, the project not only aimed to improve immediate employment outcomes but also strived for long-term systemic changes. While there are areas for improvement in gender-mainstreaming and stakeholder engagement, the overall structure and focus of the project ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries. This strategic alignment positions the ILO project as a vital contributor to fostering inclusive and equitable employment opportunities, ultimately supporting Moldova's broader development goals.

The *coherence* of the project is illustrated in its strong internal alignment, integrating results across various components to foster synergy and maximize achievements. The collaboration with LEPs, MER, MLSP, NEA, SLI exemplifies a coordinated approach to addressing skills gaps and promoting formal employment opportunities. However, external coherence presents an area for improvement, as the evaluation highlights limited collaboration with other organizations implementing projects in the same thematic area.

The project has demonstrated a commendable level of *effectiveness* across its various outcomes, particularly in enhancing inclusive employment and integrating essential skills into educational frameworks. While the mixed performance under Outcome 1 indicates some room for improvement, the substantial benefits derived from job creation efforts highlight the importance of targeted initiatives in addressing employment challenges. The progress made in Outcome 2, despite some unmet targets, reflects a strong commitment to aligning vocational training with labor market needs, paving the way for a more skilled and adaptable workforce in Moldova. Moreover, the performance achieved under Outcome 3 illustrates a well-rounded approach to safeguarding workers vulnerable to informal employment. The development and validation of key policy documents, along with effective capacity-building initiatives and public awareness campaigns, have not only met established targets but also contributed to a more supportive environment for workers. Collectively, these outcomes underscore the project's ability to respond to the unique challenges faced by the labor market in Moldova, establishing a solid foundation for continued progress and future initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive and sustainable employment.

The project was adequately staffed and has demonstrated notable *efficiency* in financial management and adherence to budgetary constraints, despite facing some implementation delays due to factors such as payment timing. Its strengths lie in its flexibility, strong partnerships, and a comprehensive M&E system, all of which have contributed to successful outcomes.

The *impact*, i.e. the long-term changes generated by the project is difficult to be assessed because, although it is formulated in the project proposal, there are no performance indicators and the duration of the project is quite limited. Still, there are some early signs that the project contributed to ensuring decent and safe working conditions and sustainable development in line with the nationalized SDGs by fostering inclusive employment, aligning skills with market needs, protecting vulnerable workers, and leveraging collaborative and digital approaches. Each element reinforces the others, collectively contributing to a sustainable framework for decent work in Moldova.

The *sustainability* prospects of the final achievements present a largely mixed outlook. On one hand, there are promising indicators for policy sustainability, demonstrating a strong alignment with broader objectives and a commitment to ongoing improvements. On the other hand, the aspects of institutional and financial sustainability among beneficiaries reveal more complexity and uncertainty. While ILO policy achievements and frameworks have been integrated and approved, the institutional frameworks and financial commitments supporting these initiatives overall appear less stable. The financial sustainability remains a significant concern, as many stakeholders require ongoing assistance to ensure the continuation of their initiatives.

Lessons Learnt

1. *Complementarity and comprehensiveness of the ILO's three-dimensional approach and the need for balanced budget allocations.* The strategy of integrating employment, skills development, and formalization addresses complex labor market issues by promoting a skilled workforce and ensuring better rights and working conditions for workers. The success of this approach relies on balanced budget allocations across all three areas, as adequate funding is crucial for implementing and sustaining these initiatives. A cohesive strategy, along with equitable financial support, is essential for maximizing the impact of the ILO's efforts.
2. *Importance of integrating evaluation recommendations into policy implementation.* The MTE of the NEP highlights the critical need for the MLSP and the NEA to incorporate evaluation

findings and recommendations into their policy frameworks. Failing to respond to this evaluation can undermine accountability, hinder informed decision-making, and alienate stakeholders, while also limiting the NEP's adaptability to changing conditions. By actively engaging with evaluation insights, the MLSP and NEA can enhance program effectiveness, foster collaboration, and build public trust, leading to improved employment outcomes.

3. *Need of contextualized assessment before pursuing further replication and institutionalization of the LEP approach.* While the evaluation indicates that the two established LEPs are productive and functional during project implementation, there is a lack of information regarding the functionality and sustainability of the six other LEPs created by the ILO in Moldova since 2018. Therefore, a comprehensive ex-post assessment is necessary to evaluate these LEPs before further replication and promoting national ownership.
4. *Flexible approach is determinant for adaptability and relevance.* The project demonstrated the value of flexibility in management, allowing the team to adapt to unforeseen challenges and delays. While the project faced implementation slowdowns due to various factors, the ability to extend timelines and adjust plans and interventions proved beneficial in achieving objectives. This adaptability, combined with partnerships and strong technical support, underscores the need for responsiveness to evolving demands.

Good Practices

1. *Utilizing a Concept Note for systemic change.* The SECO's and ILO's decision to employ a Concept Note to support a multi-faceted DWCP instead of a rigid project proposal framework exemplifies a successful strategy for promoting systemic change. This approach provided the necessary flexibility for ILO interventions, allowing for adaptations to align with the dynamic needs of national stakeholders. As a result, initiatives became more responsive and relevant to the local context, fostering increased engagement and collaboration among key partners. Embracing this adaptable framework highlights the importance of prioritizing systemic change over strictly defined project objectives.
2. *Engaging professional associations for enhanced achievements.* The involvement of the National Association of Beekeepers (NAB) has proven beneficial in several ways. Grantees received tailored business support, enhancing their operational capacities and practical experience, which helped them navigate industry complexities. This collaboration facilitated the formalization of start-ups and job creation by guiding grantees through business registration and regulatory compliance. Additionally, the partnership strengthened the NAB by increasing membership and improving internal processes like networking and communication among members.

Recommendations

Rec	Recommendations
Rec. 01	ILO to capitalize on the achievements and conceptualize the next phase for supporting systemic changes.
Rec. 02	ILO to reinforce the three-dimensional approach and ensure balanced budget allocations.
Rec. 03	ILO, MLSP and NEA to review and integrate MTE recommendations into the next NEP.
Rec. 04	ILO to conduct ex-post evaluation of LEPs to inform future programming.
Rec. 05	ILO, MER and MLSP to strengthen and sustain the skills anticipation system in Moldova.
Rec. 06	ILO to lobby for adoption of the next Programme to tackle Undeclared Work and implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.
Rec. 07	ILO to improve the projects' design and further increase gender sensitivity.
Rec. 08	Enhance collaboration with other development organizations.

Part I. INTRODUCTION

This evaluation report is prepared following the outline provided in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Final Evaluation *Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova* Project undertaken funded by Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

The evaluation report is prepared based on a review of the project documents and consultations with the key stakeholders. The report provides an overview of the project, describes evaluation methodology and the manner in which it was conducted. It highlights the main findings, good practices and lessons learned, ensuring that the next phase of the project can build on this foundation for even greater impact. The annexes are: matrix of key achievements, lessons learned and good practices templates, evaluation matrix, list of consulted stakeholders, list of reviewed documents, bio of evaluator and ToR.

Part II. CONTEXT

The Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) has made notable progress in narrowing the development gap with the European Union (EU). Thus, in 2000, the country's per capita income was 14 per cent of the average EU income; in 2020 the national income per person reached 29 per cent of the EU average.¹ Moldova continues to have one of the lowest per capita incomes and gross wages per worker in Eastern Europe. Even prior to the pandemic, economic growth was largely devoid of job creation. While unemployment rates appeared low (5% for those aged 15 and older in 2019, and 3.8% in 2020)², this figure can be misleading. The more pressing issues are low employment rates and high levels of inactivity, especially among youth, women, and older workers. Additional challenges in the labor market include an aging population, ongoing emigration, skills mismatches, and significant informality. Although the economy is recovering from the severe recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (with a GDP decline of -7% in 2020 and an estimated growth of 4.5% in 2021)³, the labor market recovery is lagging. The pandemic has intensified existing high levels of inactivity. The pandemic exacerbated existing issues, leading to job losses and reduced economic activity, with many individuals withdrawing from the labor force entirely due to health concerns or caregiving responsibilities.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, Moldova has welcomed a significant number (over 700,000)⁴ of Ukrainian war refugees, making it the country with the highest number of refugees per capita in Europe. With a population of about 2.6 million, this equates to roughly 1 in every 3.5 Moldovans being a refugee from Ukraine at some point.⁵ The influx of refugees has placed significant pressure on public services and labor markets, with many refugees seeking temporary or permanent employment in Moldova. In response to labor market challenges, the ILO launched the *Productive and Inclusive Employment in Moldova* Project, supported by the Swiss Government. This initiative builds on the ILO's established presence in Moldova, utilizing its technical expertise and tripartite approach to promote inclusive, sustainable, and rights-based labor market outcomes.

¹ Concept Note. Accelerator for decent job creation in Moldova. Page 1.

² Ibidem

³ Ibidem

⁴ See: <https://www.unhcr.org/where-we-work/countries/republic-moldova>

⁵ Ibidem

Part III. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The **general objective (impact)** of the project is to provide more and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women and men in Moldova.

The Theory of Change (ToC) of the project sounds:

- *If the ILO* assists Moldova in implementing a gender-transformative National Employment Strategy focused on decentralisation and demand-side measures, and strengthens employment services and governance through the National Employment Agency (NEA) and local actors, and facilitates the design and implementation of the Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs) to create jobs, activate jobseekers, and promote formality, and improves skills anticipation while supporting inclusive, market-relevant training for youth, adults, and vulnerable groups, and pilots a sectoral formalisation package using a systems approach to reduce informality and expand social protection, with all actions guided by social dialogue, gender equality, and digitalisation,
- *...then* local and national institutions will deliver more inclusive and demand-driven employment and training services, vulnerable groups will gain better access to decent work and relevant skills, informal workers and employers will be more likely to formalise, and social partners will contribute more effectively to employment, skills, and formalisation policies.
- *... leading to* more decent, formal, and inclusive jobs, better skills matching and productivity, reduced informality with expanded social protection, and stronger labour market institutions & social dialogue.

The project integrates targeted interventions across three interlinked areas: 1) Employment promotion through LEPs; 2) Skills development aligned with labour market demand, and 3) Transition from informal to formal employment. *Social dialogue* and *digitalization* are cross-cutting enablers across all components.

The project strategy is organized around three **expected outcome level results**:

Outcome 1: Improved inclusive and productive employment through decentralized implementation of the National Employment Program (NEP). The key interventions include:

- Operationalization of the NEP by strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), NEA, State Labour Inspection (SLI) and Local Public Authorities (LPA);
- Technical assistance and capacity building assistance for NEA, LPA, inter-ministerial Working Group;
- Supporting the local actors to design and implement LEPs for enhancement employment, job creation particularly for rural youth, inactive women, and other vulnerable groups.

Outcome 2: Enhanced skills development and adoption of a lifelong learning strategy to support labour market transitions. The key interventions include:

- Functional analysis and development of a national skills anticipation system,
- Modernization of the vocational education and training (VET),
- Development/update of occupational and qualification standards;
- Designing and piloting lifelong learning (LLL) programs for low-skilled and disadvantaged individuals;
- Integration of the sectoral approaches to improve alignment with labour market demand.

Outcome 3: Strengthened protection and formalization of workers at risk of informal employment.

The key interventions include:

- Development of policies, briefs and tools for extending labour and social protection to workers in non-standard forms of employment;
- Fostering innovative interventions in sectors with high informality, as construction and agriculture;
- Enhancing the institutional capacity to address undeclared work,
- Public awareness events on the risks of informality.

The **key stakeholders** of the project are:

1. *Government*, represented by the MLSP, including its Directorates responsible for the design of employment policies, and social dialogue and policies to formalize workers, including the State Labour Inspectorate. The NEA, as the key implementing body of ALMMs, is a key counterpart, and the SLI, as the body in charge of enforcement of labour laws, is crucial for the implementation of the formalization component. The Ministry of Education and Research (MER), SLI and other institutions contributing to skills development, lifelong learning, and labour market inclusion.
2. *Workers' organizations*, and local peers involved in selected districts, based on a national diagnosis of the labour market, particularly those engaged in designing and implementing of the LEPs. Trade Union has also played a key role in implementing the formalization component—nationally, through its participation in the NCCCB, sectoral, through the Tripartite Commission of the Construction Sector, and locally, through a National Campaign carried out in most districts of the country.
3. *Employers' organizations*, and other regional and local business associations, which play a key role in shaping demand-driven skills interventions, contributing to local employment, and promoting the transition to formality in sectors with high informal employment as construction and agriculture. CNPM has a key role in implementing the formalization component—nationally, through its participation in the NCCCB, and sectoral, through the Tripartite Commission of the Construction Sector.
4. *LPAs* at the district and community levels involved in the design and rollout of the LEPs. At the local level, social partners and LPAs form the core of the tripartite committees. Additional stakeholders, such as the local employment offices, regional development bodies, local youth organizations, training providers—including VET schools—and other interested actors.
5. *Labour market professionals*, including employment counsellors and NEA staff in need of capacity development assistance.
6. *Youth and women, particularly NEETs*, inactive persons, and those living in rural areas or belonging to disadvantaged groups (including refugees, persons with disabilities, and survivors of domestic violence). These final beneficiaries benefit from tailored employment services, lifelong learning opportunities, entrepreneurship support, and access to decent jobs.

Project duration: 16 December 2022 – 30 June 25. The project has been extended one time by six months, particularly from 1 January 2025 to June 30, 2025.

Part IV. EVALUATION APPROACH

4.1 Purpose and Objectives

The **purpose** of the final evaluation was to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the project's interventions across three outcomes. This includes evaluating performance against the targets and indicators at output and outcome levels, implementation methods, partnerships, identifying constraints and opportunities, and providing insights to enhance performance and results in future projects.

The **objectives** of the evaluation include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of the project's approaches.
- Measuring progress against the PB output 1.2 and DWCP Moldova 2021-2024 outcomes while identifying common factors that contributed to achieving results, their potential impact, and sustainability.
- Assessing how the project utilized ILO technical expertise and comparative advantages to establish ILO's position in the country and facilitate other interventions aligned with national priorities.
- Evaluating the extent to which the project integrated key ILO principles, such as International Labor Standards, social dialogue, and gender equality, into its activities.
- Evaluating how the project helped leverage additional resources.
- Identifying success stories, best practices, and lessons learned, including innovations that can inform regional learning and future programming.
- Assessing the strengths and weaknesses in the project design, monitoring, and reporting processes.

- Evaluating risk management and the impact of significant factors, such as crises and fragility.
- Documenting key lessons learned and effective practices.

The evaluation will encompass the entire duration of the project, from its inception until the evaluation date, and will assess all aspects and components of the project.

4.2 Evaluation Management

The evaluation was managed by the ILO evaluation Manager, who oversaw the entire evaluation process, ensuring it aligns with established plans and professional evaluation norms. To ensure the effectiveness and quality of the final evaluation conducted by the External Evaluator, the evaluation report was shared with the ILO DWT/CO, national staff, and the Regional Evaluation Officer for a qualitative review. This process aimed to confirm the relevance of the evaluation approach and to identify any factual errors, omissions, or misinterpretations. Representatives from the ILO were actively consulted on essential aspects of the evaluation process and provided valuable input at critical stages, including the inception report, draft evaluation report, and final evaluation report.

The final evaluation was focused on answering to the following questions reflected in the ToR:

Relevance

1. How sensitive are the interventions objectives and design to the country's and constituents' needs and capacity? Does the design address challenges the constituents are facing? Was the project initiated based on constituents' request?
2. The extent to which the design of project interventions have been logical and based on the clear result framework (CPOs linkages to DWCP and P&B outcome 1).
3. The extent to which the need of different groups (e.g. women and men, people with disability, and other marginalized groups) have been incorporated into consideration in the design of the interventions
4. How responsive was the project design to national sustainable development plans under specific SDG targets and indicators?

Coherence

5. How well does the project intervention complement other ILO projects' effort and other work of relevant national and international agencies working in the same area?
6. How has the project communicated its efforts to the general public in Moldova and other stakeholders? How strategic has the communication been and how much has it been integrated in all activities for awareness raising and for informing interest groups?

Effectiveness

7. What is the progress/achievements made in the country (significant progress made both reportable and not reportable under the National employment programme (2022-2026), and National programme to tackle the UDW (2024-2025))? The extent to which the project has been value addition to the achievement of target CPOs that contributed to P&B outcome 1)?
8. To what extent have the interventions' results/achievement – had an effect distributed across different groups (marginalized groups, men and women, non-discrimination, and inclusion of people with disability)
9. How effectively did the project mainstream gender equality issues into its activities, outputs and outcomes?
10. How did outputs and outcomes of the project contribute to other ILO's cross-cutting strategies including social dialogue, job creation and formalization?
11. Has the capacity development been well targeted? Were the right people trained?
12. To what extent has an M&E system been put in place and supported the project's overall implementation?
13. To what extent the project results contribute (or not) to the identified SDGs related targets? Even if the relevant SDGs had not been identified in design, can a plausible contribution to the relevant SDGs and related targets be established?

Efficiency

14. Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve expected results? Has the project management and staffing to implement and monitor the project been adequate?
15. How efficient were monitoring and whether these have affected the delivery of the projects. How effective was the role of DWTs, Regional Office, and HQ in technical supporting and monitoring of the project? To what extent have management capacities and arrangements supported the achievements of results? Is the current management set up and division of roles and responsibilities in ILO team, conducive to good results? What have been the lessons learnt?
16. Has the project been completed within the originally planned timeframe? What were the reasons for the delay, if any?
17. To what extent has the project leveraged resources (financial, human or other) with other projects/programmes, and through partnerships with other organizations, to enhance the project impact and efficiency?

Impact and sustainability

18. What is the expected sustainability of the intervention?
19. Have the solutions developed and proposed by the project been assessed from the cost perspective? How realistic have the policy proposals been?
20. What has the intervention contributed or established that will sustainably support inclusive employment, improved labour market participation, and strengthened local employment systems beyond the project’s duration?
21. Can long-term impact be expected? If not, why not?

4.3 Methodology

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach, engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. Participation of the main partners and other stakeholders was a necessary condition to ensure accountability, promote ownership, facilitate future buy-in and arrive at comprehensive recommendations for ILO, public authorities from Moldova, donor and other stakeholders.

The methodology was based on mostly face-to-face data collection and followed a mixed approach, using in parallel *qualitative* methods (mostly key individual and double interviews) and *quantitative* methods (diagrams, data from the written sources) as reflected in the Evaluation Matrix.

The final evaluation took place over July - September 2025. The assessment process included three distinct phases as described below in the Table 1.

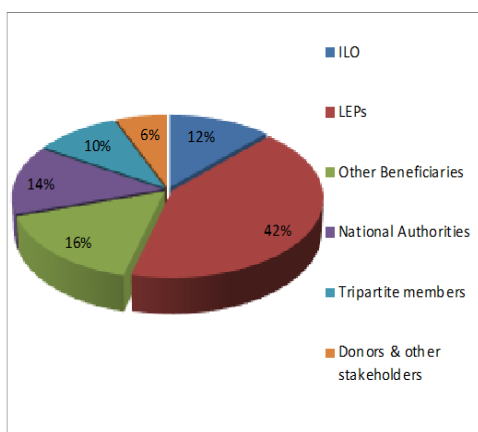
Table 1: *Phases of the final evaluation*

Phase	Description	Deliverable
Inception phase	Preliminary desk review to familiarize with the intervention logic of the projects, identify the sampling framework and fine-tune the evaluation methodology and draft inception report.	Inception report
Data-collection phase	Further collection of documentation; in-depth desk review; remote interviews with the project stakeholders and online data collection according to the evaluation matrix.	Draft evaluation report
Data analysis and report synthesis	Analysis of the collected data, definition of findings in line with the evaluation objectives, assessment of progress and contribution of the projects to the achieved results, and development of the recommendations. Consultation/verification and peer review of draft evaluation report and final reporting.	Final evaluation report

Primary information was collected by the evaluator through remote semi-structured consultations interviews, focus-group discussions and questionnaires sent by email. These involved a total of 49

interviewees (including 36 women) representatives of: MLSP, NEA, SLI, tripartite constituents, MER, LEP members, ILO (project team, national coordinator, Regional technical specialists), donor, experts and other actors. See the Figure 1 and the Annex 5 of the evaluation report.

Figure 1: Respondents involved in the final evaluation



The key evaluation questions from the Evaluation Matrix (See Annex 4) were tailored for each of the consulted stakeholder groups. For the triangulation purpose some of the questions were addressed to more than one type of stakeholder.

Secondary information was gathered by the evaluator through the desk-review of written strategic and project documents, progress reports, knowledge products, and other documents provided by ILO. The full list of the reviewed documents is presented in Annex 6 of the final evaluation report.

Collected data have been grouped by the evaluator into assessment areas and their sub-themes. Available documentation and involved structure of interviewees allowed quality evaluation of the data against the expected results and their triangulation in major parts of the projects. Both *quantitative* and *qualitative* aspects were considered and assessed.

The following methodologies in data analysis were found relevant and applicable:

Table 2: Analysis methodologies applied.

Method	Rationale
Responsibility assignment mapping	As a result of the logic of the intervention based on wide partnership and involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, the evaluation systematised the collected data on local and national partnership arrangements. Ultimately, among others this helped reaching conclusions on effectiveness and efficiency of the support and recommendations on how to increase the effectiveness of the cooperation.
Change analysis	Collected data were systematised and compared against the achievements and expected changes according to the projects' documents. This helped reaching conclusions on progress towards the targets and most effective approaches and respective recommendations.
Contribution analysis	Contribution analysis proved to be the most appropriate method used in understanding the causes of achieved results, results chain, roles of the stakeholders involved and other internal and external factors, including both enablers and barriers. That enabled drawing conclusions around the identification of the main contributors, including the level of contribution of ILO to the achieved results.

The evaluation was guided by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria⁶ and adhered to the principles established in the *ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation*.⁷ A collaborative and supportive participatory approach was followed at all stages of the assignment. The transparency of the process was ensured by the availability of, and the agreement on the methodology (inception phase) and by clear communication through the entire process with all stakeholders involved. The evaluation interviews were done in Romanian and English.

4.4 Quality Control, Challenges and Limitations

Diverse sources of information were used, and types of information gathered during the assignment. The data obtained from the desk-review of documentation and interviews ensured enough information for triangulation and synthesis of conclusions. Variety of data analysis methods mentioned above were applied in order to best respond to the requirements of the assignment. Comprehensive and processed data were provided on most aspects through relevant documentation. The evaluation methodology ensured a reasonable mix of sources and types of information gathered to ensure objectivity of conclusions and recommendations.

Evaluation had three “*check points*”, which increased the quality of the deliverables:

1. Review of the Inception Report to ensure that the requirements of the ToR are met.
2. Review of the draft evaluation report.
3. Acceptance of the completed external evaluation report.

Adjustments were made to reflect feedback at each of these points. More interaction contributed to the quality of the key deliverables.

The evaluation did not encounter any significant limitations in terms of available data. Most of the identified evaluation risks at the inception phase⁸ have not materialized in negative effects on the evaluation and its results. These were largely thanks to the support provided by the ILO team, its openness in sharing available information and reflect on the evaluated topics. Still, the following challenges and limitations should be taken into consideration, in order to understand the scope of the evaluation report and to correctly interpret, use and communicate the data:

Table 3: *Challenges and limitations*

Scope	The evaluation focused on assessing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project. The aim was to synthesize actionable recommendations for the future programming. However, evaluating the impact proved challenging due to the absence of specific indicators and targets. Consequently, the evaluation sought to identify early signs of potential impact.
Data	The evaluation encountered some limitations in verifying certain quantitative achievements, such as the number and sustainability of jobs created with the project contribution, as well as the number of individuals from the Hincesti and Floresti districts who directly or indirectly benefited from the LEPs. While the progress reports provide valuable information, they tend to focus more on actions taken rather than the changes resulting from those actions. To address this, the evaluator gathered data from different sources and employed a cross-checking approach and triangulation to validate the findings.

4.5 Ethical aspects

⁶ DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance. For additional information:

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

⁷ ILO Policy Guidelines for evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations. 4th edition. ILO 2020.

http://www.ilo.ch/eval/Evaluationpolicy/WCMS_571339/lang-en/index.htm

⁸ See the Inception Report for the final evaluation.

The evaluation of the ILO project was carried out according to ethical principles and norms established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)⁹.

- *Anonymity and confidentiality.* The evaluation respected the rights of individuals who provided information, ensuring their anonymity and confidentiality.
- *Voluntary participation.* The evaluation respected the rights of all stakeholders consulted regarding voluntary participation in the project evaluation process, including their right to withdraw at any stage, if they so decide.¹⁰
- *Responsibility.* The evaluator is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information collected and for the information presented in the evaluation report.
- *Integrity.* The evaluator is responsible for highlighting all issues not only those specifically mentioned in the TOR.
- *Independence.* The evaluator ensured his independence from the intervention under evaluation, and he was not associated with its management or any element thereof.
- *Validation of information.* The evaluator is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the information collected while preparing the reports and is responsible for the information presented in the evaluation report.
- *Intellectual property.* In handling information sources, the evaluator respects the intellectual property rights of ILO.

PART V. EVALUATION FINDINGS

5.1 RELEVANCE

The relevance is assessed mostly by the extent to which the project is in line with the thematic priorities 2030 Agenda, ILO's Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) and the development needs of the target groups and end-beneficiaries. It takes into account the degree to which the logic of intervention and the design are consistent and coherent for achieving the expected results. The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), cross-cutting issues are also analyzed.

5.1.1 Linkage between the projects and strategic priorities of Moldova, ILO's DWCP and beneficiaries' needs.

Evaluation findings indicate that the *ILO project aligns with Moldova's national strategic priorities, nationalized SDGs, the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, and the outcomes of the DWCP. This alignment demonstrates that the project addresses the needs of the targeted groups and end-beneficiaries*, as detailed below.

The project is in line with the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030"¹¹. It contributes to the nationalized SDG 8 - "Decent Works and Economic Growth" and is linked to the global targets: 8.3 "Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services" and 8.8 "Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment."¹²

⁹ For additional information see: UNEG Ethical Code of Conduct to Evaluations in the UN system: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100

¹⁰ None of the interviewed stakeholders has withdrawn.

¹¹ National Development Strategy "Moldova - 2030" is a strategic document that indicates the direction of development of the country and society in the next decade based on the principle of the human life cycle, his rights and quality of life, and which includes the following four pillars of sustainable development: a sustainable and inclusive economy, reliable human and social capital, effective institutions, and a healthy environment. See: <https://me.gov.md/en/content/national-development-strategy-moldova-2030>

¹² For additional information: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>

The project stimulated multi-stakeholder, tripartite and multi-dimensional local economic partnerships between the ILO, MLSP, NEA, territorial stakeholders from Hincesti and Floresti, SLI, National Trade Union Confederation, Employers Confederation, Professional Associations, LPAs, private companies and other actors. This also illustrates contribution to the SDG 17 - *Partnership for the Goals*.

The ILO project directly contributed to the implementation of the DWCP (2021-2024), supporting several key outcomes crucial for the development of a sustainable and inclusive labor market. Specifically, it advances Outcome 1: “Inclusive and productive employment through the decentralized implementation of the National Employment Program (NEP) and enhanced performance of the National Employment Agency (NEA). This includes sub-outcomes 1.2: Improved performance of the NEA, and 1.3: The establishment of an operational skill needs anticipation system and the adoption of a lifelong learning strategy. It supports Outcome 2.2: “Effective protection for temporary workers who are at the highest risk of informal employment, including seasonal, casual, and daily workers”. It also plays a role in strengthening social dialogue platforms, as emphasized in Outcomes 3.1 and 3.2, which focus on developing relevant and effective social dialogue mechanisms at national, territorial, and enterprise levels, as well as fostering strong employers’ and workers’ organizations with expertise in policy development and quality service provision for their members.

Aligned with the DWCP and the broader UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework¹³ (UNSDCF) for Moldova 2023-2027, the project supports Outcome 3: “Enhanced Shared Prosperity in a Sustainable Economy, emphasizing the creation of employment, skills development, and decent work for all.”

The UN’s Leave No One Behind (LNOB) Principle¹⁴ is not expressly formulated in the Concept Note or any other project document. Nevertheless, the project, implements the LNOB Principle by providing support for job creation and activation of the youth, NEET, inactive women, persons with disabilities, refugees and informal workers, who are at risk to be left behind.

The findings from field consultations and desk reviews indicate that the project addresses the needs of the targeted groups and beneficiaries identified through outreach efforts and partnerships with national and local stakeholders, including employment offices, local authorities, and social partners. The project is closely aligned with the capacity development needs of the national and local public institutions and social partners, such as the MLSP, NEA, SLI, tripartite partners, vocational education and training (VET) providers, and end-beneficiaries. This alignment is particularly notable given that the project was developed in close consultation with tripartite partners and relevant line ministries, including the MLSP and the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and other key stakeholders.

5.1.2 Consistence of the project design and intervention logic.

It is important to note that there is no formal project proposal in place. Instead, the ILO, in accordance with donor requirements, developed a Concept Note that is aligned with the DWCP and, as mentioned, directly contributes to its implementation. The evaluation aimed assessing the ToC, the results chain, and both the vertical and horizontal logic of the intervention.

The ToC contains an *if... then... leading to...* causality linkage and illustrates a clear anticipated pathway from the ILO’s strategic interventions to desired outcomes in Moldova’s labor market. By focusing on employment, formalization, and skills development, the ILO aimed to create a more

¹³ https://moldova.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/UNSDCF%202023_2027%20final%20ENG.pdf

¹⁴ For additional information: <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind>

equitable and productive employment environment. The emphasis on social dialogue and gender equality ensures that these changes are sustainable and address the diverse needs of the population. This structured approach is expected to generate immediate improvements and lays the groundwork for long-term systemic changes in the Moldovan labor market.

While social dialogue is mentioned, the ToC does not specify how different stakeholders (e.g., employers, trade unions, government) will be engaged throughout the process. The assumptions made in the ToC are linked to the expected results, and the evaluation underlined their validity. This connection ensures that the underlying premises guiding the project's implementation align with the anticipated outcomes, reinforcing the overall framework of the ToC. However, the ToC does not address potential risks or challenges that could hinder progress, such as economic downturns or political instability in Moldova. While the ToC aims for long-term outcomes/changes, it does not explicitly address how to sustain those changes after project completion.

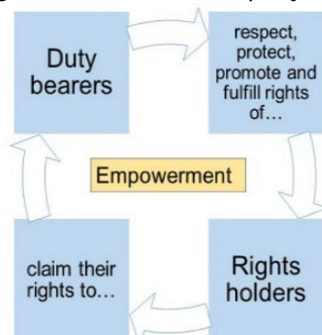
The vertical logic of the logframe demonstrates a strong alignment from the impact goal down to specific outputs. The impact- outcomes- outputs-activities are logically interconnected and without the significant gaps. Each output serves as a building block that contributes to the achievement of its respective outcome, which in turn supports the overarching impact.

The horizontal logic, which encompasses the interconnections between outputs and outcomes as well as the alignment of results with key performance indicators (KPI), is generally strong. However, there are some gaps and opportunities for improvement. The KPI are mostly quantitative expressed in *Number of...* and at each level provide mostly measurable targets, facilitating evaluation of progress toward the goal. This structure allows for tracking of the project's progress. One KPI as formulated "3.1.2 Market system analysis in construction sector carried out" is rather an activity than an indicator, because it outlines a task completed as part of the project, while an indicator would quantify the results of that activity.

The expected impact-level change "More and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women and men in Moldova" has no KPI, which affects its measurability. See *Impact* part. Nevertheless, the vertical logical progression from impact to outcome to output indicates a thought-out project strategy.

The HRBA, as reflected in the Figure 2, effectively guides the project's design, emphasizing the importance of both duty bearers and rights holders. The key elements of the HRBA, are mainstreamed in the design, with a particular emphasis on employment, formalisation and capacity strengthening of the "duty bearers", particularly MLSP, NEA, LPAs, SLI, Employers' organizations.

Figure 2: The core concept of HRBA



In addition to focusing on 'duty bearers' the ILO project also aims to engage "rights holders," which encompass trade unions, professional associations, small business owners, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, NEET, women, and other beneficiaries. Empowering "rights holders," to claim their rights is a crucial aspect of the HRBA. By equipping individuals and groups with the

knowledge and tools they need, the ILO project encourages active participation in the labor market and promotes social justice. These interventions particularly target areas such as job creation, skills development and lifelong learning (LLL) programs.

This dual focus is justified by the responsibilities of 'duty bearers', which include: establishing and maintaining a robust regulatory framework; ensuring compliance with ILO conventions, providing

employment support services, promoting inclusive and sustainable development. This approach aligns with the needs identified in the project's documentation and is further validated by feedback from stakeholders during data collection¹⁵ ensuring relevance in achieving the project's objectives.

The project design incorporates several gender-sensitive elements, particularly in its impact and indicators that focus on gender issues. It emphasizes targeted interventions aimed at empowering women, other marginalized groups, and promoting disability inclusion. For example, at the impact level, the project aims to create "more and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women, and men in Moldova." The logframe includes disaggregated indicators¹⁶, such as the number of new jobs created specifically for women and inactive women through LEPs. This focus helps ensure that the project's impact on gender equality can be measured effectively. There are specific outreach measures aimed at engaging inactive women, which shows an understanding of the unique barriers they face in the labor market. The project specifically aims to create jobs for marginalized populations, including women, refugees, and individuals with disabilities, indicating a commitment to inclusive employment practices. The mention of LLL programs targeting low-skilled and disadvantaged populations with a strong gender focus is a positive step toward addressing educational disparities. The achievements are gender-disaggregated and the gender aspects are reported in the narrative report.

However, a closer examination reveals some areas for improvement in ensuring comprehensive gender-sensitivity throughout the project.

- *Insufficient gender mainstreaming in outputs:* While there are indicators focused on gender/women, there is limited integration of gender issues across all outputs. For example, the outputs related to capacity building for stakeholders do not explicitly address how gender aspects will be incorporated into the design and implementation of labor market programs.
- *Lack of gender-specific indicators for some outcomes:* Not all outcomes have gender-sensitive indicators. For instance, while Outcome 1 has indicators focusing on men and women, Outcomes 2 and 3 could benefit from similar gender-specific measurements to assess the effects on female participation in skills training and protection from informal employment.
- *Engagement of gender-specific stakeholders:* While there is a general focus on stakeholders, there is little mention of actively engaging women's organizations or gender-focused groups in the project's implementation and evaluation phases.
- *Sustainability of gender initiatives:* The project design does not address how gender-sensitive initiatives will be sustained beyond the project duration.

By addressing these gaps and continuing embedding gender considerations throughout the project, the initiative can further enhance its effectiveness in promoting gender equality and inclusive employment. See Recommendations.

5.2 COHERENCE

The evaluation assessed both dimensions of the coherence, internal¹⁷ and external¹⁸.

The project largely complements other ILO initiatives and similar efforts by national and international actors operating in the same domain. While internal coherence is well demonstrated

¹⁵ Key informants' interviews.

¹⁶ Other engendered indicators are: *Number of inactive women engaged through new outreach measures, and creation of new jobs, with at least 50% allocated for women (including victims of domestic violence), refugees, people with disabilities, and NEETs*

¹⁷ *Internal coherence* considers alignment with other projects implemented by ILO. See: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&csp=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oced&itemContentType=book#section-d1e2935>

¹⁸ *External coherence* considers collaboration and complementarity with projects implemented by other actors. See: Ibidem

through various examples outlined below, external coherence remains limited, indicating areas for improvement.

Internal Coherence. The LEPs, as part of the employment component, foster internal synergy by integrating results from other project components. LEPs leverage outcomes from the skills development component whenever local partners address skills gaps. They also support the transition to formality by emphasizing the creation of formal employment opportunities.

Collaborative activities in skills development highlight partnerships between the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and the NEA, alongside social dialogue with various stakeholders involved in strategy formulation and execution. Sector-based skills diagnostics have also examined wage trends and lifelong learning (LLL) strategies aimed at mitigating informality. The formalization component builds on the successes of the ILO project “THE LAB - Market Systems Development for Decent Work,” completed in 2021 and funded by SECO. This initiative aided the DWCP in conducting detailed market system analyses focused on youth and safety and security at work. The latter study identified key drivers of informality, which have been incorporated into the current project, illustrating continuity and complementarity.

Additionally, the project collaborated with another ILO initiative funded by the EU, which supports NEA reforms in performance management, e-learning, and legislative framework education. The evaluation identified several synergies and complementarities between the two ILO projects, including: Outreach to NEET individuals through the National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM), covering both districts (Hincesti and Floresti) of the project; Technical support for digitalization to the NEA, including the development of an employee guide and various employment templates/tools; and joint funding of the MTR of the NEP.

External Coherence. While the evaluation highlighted some complementary aspects between the ILO project and the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development¹⁹ (ex-ODIMM) initiatives, such as business development trainings and startup funding, these synergies often arose from beneficiaries' proactive approaches and their efforts to diversify sources of business support, rather than through proactive approach by the ILO.

The UNDP's project employs a similar approach to the LEP, termed the Local Economic Development (LED) approach. However, aside from occasional interactions, the evaluation found no substantial evidence of collaboration, complementarity, or synergy between the ILO and UNDP project teams. This gap represents a notable area for improvement. Addressing this gap through increased collaboration with other organizations, particularly UNDP, CEDA, GIZ could enhance the overall coherence, effectiveness and impact of the project.

The project regularly communicated its initiatives to both the targeted audience and the general public in Moldova through various thematic activities, outreach programs, and awareness-raising efforts. To ensure a cohesive communication, all actions were closely coordinated with the Communication Officer at the DWT-CO/Budapest office prior to widespread dissemination. Additionally, collaboration with stakeholders was prioritized to maximize outreach and maintain consistent messaging. Communication materials prominently highlight the project's benefits derived from SECO assistance. Visibility requirements on deliverables was maintained, ensuring that support received is properly acknowledged and emphasized.

¹⁹ See: <https://oda.md/en/>

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness of the project was assessed preponderantly by analysis of its achievements and progress towards the expected results. The key supportive factors and challenges, which influenced the achievements of the results are also analyzed.

The evaluation findings indicate that the ILO project has largely succeeded in promoting inclusive and productive employment in Moldova, as evidenced by its final achievements in relation to the initial targets and the overall satisfaction levels of key stakeholders interviewed during the data collection phase.

The results matrix is attached to the report (See Annex 1), while below is provided an overview of the project's performance across its outcomes and outputs followed by analysis of the the specific achievements and areas for continued focus.

Outcome 1: Inclusive and productive employment through decentralized implementation of the new National Employment Program and improved performance of the NEA.

This is the largest outcome of the project in terms of outputs, targets, human and financial resources. It includes three outputs: Output 1.1. 'National and local stakeholders have capacities to support the implementation of NEP'; Output 1.2 'The MoLSP and NEA have better capacity to formulate and implement labour market programs and employment services for transition to decent work over the course of life' and Output 1.3 'Local economic development fostered and capacities of LPAs to design innovative employment initiatives enhanced.'

The achievements under Outcome 1 demonstrate significant progress in enhancing employment through targeted initiatives. Still, the outcome shows a mixed performance: while majority of the targets were fully achieved or nearly met, one job creation target fell short, but still provided tangible benefits.

Thus, the efforts made in job creation, though not fully reaching the ambitious target, still provided substantial benefits. The target of creating 1,000 new jobs for rural youth and inactive women was not fully achieved, as reveal the project documents²⁰, 719 new jobs were created, alongside the launch of 37 enterprises and the formalization of 190 businesses. These efforts positively impacted around 3,000 individuals, including marginalized groups, demonstrating some community economic empowerment benefits. In terms of active labor market policies (ALMPs), the target of covering 30% of registered unemployed individuals by 2024 was successfully met, with 30.1% coverage achieved.²¹ However, gender-disaggregated data revealed a disparity, as men (31.9%) had slightly higher coverage than women (28.4%), indicating a need for targeted strategies to support women better. Additionally, outreach measures aimed at inactive women reached 2,794 individuals, falling just short of the 3,000 target.²² This achievement underscores the importance of responsive outreach efforts in engaging inactive women and addressing community needs.

The project supported the mid-term evaluation (MTE) of the NEP, which revealed a well-structured logical framework with specific objectives and SMART indicators. The MTE found that while most actions are well-designed to achieve the NEP's overarching goals, there are also areas for improvement to enhance its measurability and alignment, particularly with the National Program for Reducing Undeclared Work. The MTE findings showed that implementation dynamic of the NEP

²⁰ Progress report *Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova. February 2023-December 2024*

²¹ Ibidem.

²² Ibidem.

is modest and NEP faces delays due to ‘overly ambitious deadlines, with over 60% of actions scheduled for the first two years, leading to an overload for responsible institutions’.²³

The MTE also provided several recommendations for further enhancing the relevance and increasing the performance of the NEP implementation.

The final evaluation consultations with the MLSP and NEA indicated that the MTE recommendations were not incorporated into the NEP’s design and implementation for unspecified reasons. However, as underlined some interviewed stakeholders,²⁴ there is a possibility that the recommendations may be reviewed and some of them included in the next NEP, which is set to be developed in 2026.

Within the Output 1.2, the project made strides in enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of labor market institutions in the NEP implementation. As a result of the technical assistance provided, the NEA has improved its efficiency in designing and delivering ALMMs, which, as highlighted field consultations, has, to a certain level, streamlined its operational processes.

The MLSP and NEA were equipped with a methodology²⁵ for conducting district-level labor market analyses developed with the project technical expertise. The final evaluation consultations evidenced that the thematic training for employment office caseworkers has enhanced their capacities and they are able to create detailed district profiles. Consequently, this creates promising opportunities for more targeted support for both job seekers and employers by enabling a more nuanced understanding of local labor market dynamics. With the new performance evaluation framework, territorial employment offices can identify specific needs and challenges faced by different demographic groups, such as youth, women, or marginalized communities. For job seekers, this means tailored services that align with their skills, aspirations, and local employment opportunities, increasing their chances of securing suitable jobs. For employers, the framework allows for a better grasp of the workforce’s capabilities, enabling them to access talent that meets their specific hiring requirements.

By optimizing the delivery of ALMMs and ensuring effective resource allocation, this enhanced framework contributes to improved employment outcomes nationwide. Additionally, by aligning interventions more closely with local economic conditions and trends, the NEA can enhance collaboration with businesses and community organizations. This targeted approach not only improves job matching but also stimulates local economic growth by fostering a workforce that is responsive to the evolving needs of employers. Overall, the enhanced support system is likely to lead to higher employment rates, reduced job vacancies, and a more resilient labor market.

The project was successful in developing a new methodology for impact assessment of ALMMs followed by a thematic training in this regard. The NEA is planning to harness this methodology to pinpoint effective strategies and identify areas for enhancement, which illustrates its commitment to continuous improvement of its performance on labor market interventions.

The project was effective in replication of the ILO flagship approach – LEPs, which are focused on consolidation of the local actors’ efforts for creating employment opportunities, outreach and transition to formality at the local level. Thus, under Output 1.3, two LEPs have been established in Hincesti and Floresti, complementing the five LEPs that were set up in other districts of Moldova since 2018. The LEPs were established following completion of territorial audits and managed to bring together various stakeholders, including local governments, territorial employment entities, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations engaged in collaboration with

²³ The Mid-Term Evaluation Report of the National Employment Program for 2022–2026. Iurie Morcotilo. ILO.

²⁴ Key informants’ interviews.

²⁵ This methodology enables the NEA to assess various economic factors within each district, allowing it to tailor services and interventions to address specific challenges.

the Territorial Commissions for Consultation and Collective Bargaining (TCCCBs). This collaborative approach ensures that multiple perspectives are considered, leading to more effective solutions for local employment challenges.

Both LEPs are operational and are highly appreciated by the interviewed stakeholders, especially local actors, which reveals local ownerships perspectives. Despite the clear benefits of Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs)—such as improved job opportunities, skills development, community engagement, support for formalization, economic growth, networking, and increased awareness—their institutionalization encounters significant obstacles. These challenges appear to stem from a lack of political will and insufficient integration within the NEP.

One major concern highlighted by interviewed stakeholders is the high initial investment required to establish an LEP, estimated between \$250,000 and \$300,000. This financial burden can be a significant barrier for many donors and local authorities, especially in regions with limited budgets. Additionally, there is a notable absence of comprehensive data and evidence regarding the sustainability of previously established LEPs in other districts. Without concrete examples of long-term success, potential stakeholders may be hesitant to invest in the establishment of new partnerships.

Outcome 2: An advanced skill needs anticipation system is operational and a lifelong learning strategy is adopted.

This outcome included one Output 2.1 ‘National stakeholders have capacities and knowledge to foster advanced skill needs anticipation systems and lifelong learning’.

The key interventions were: Functional analysis and development of a national skills anticipation system; Modernization of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes; Development/update of occupational and qualification standards; Designing and piloting LLL programs for low-skilled and disadvantaged individuals and Integration of the sectoral approaches to improve alignment with labour market demand.

The final evaluation found that the *Outcome 2 has made progress in integrating core employability, digital, and business skills into TVET, enabling the environment for curriculum developments and addressing the needs of the targeted groups. While some targets are not fully achieved, the successful implementation of capacity-building interventions and innovative training programs indicates a strong commitment to creating a responsive skills anticipation system in Moldova.*

The project has enhanced the knowledge base of key stakeholders by analyzing the skills needs anticipation system, facilitating better inter-institutional cooperation and laying the ground for a thematic curriculum development. The identified findings widely debriefed by the tripartite partners confirmed the sectoral skills needs and the development of micro-credentials that are necessary for providing the efficient pathways for adult workforce professional development in Moldova. While the target to fully integrate these skills by 2024 has not been realized, the groundwork indicates a clear policy direction towards equipping TVET students with competencies relevant to the evolving labor market.

To further improve labor market forecasting, an annual employers' survey focused on digital skills demand was conducted, which is expected to inform an assessment of digital literacy and identify critical skill gaps among the adult population. Additionally, comprehensive sector diagnoses for the road construction and renewable energy sectors utilized the Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED) methodology²⁶ to identify business capacity gaps and growth scenarios,

²⁶ The STED initiative, developed by the ILO, is a **targeted technical assistance** approach that focuses on **skills anticipation** to foster growth and create decent job opportunities. See: <https://www.ilo.org/skills-trade-and-economic-diversification>

laying the groundwork for targeted skills strategies aimed at equipping the workforce for future demands and promoting sustainable growth

The subject workshops introduced key stakeholders, particularly MER, MoLSP, NEA, National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education & Research, VET institutions, Centres of Excellence, and social partners to international micro-credentialing practices, fostering the lifelong learning (LLL) system tailored to the Moldovan vocational education needs. The development of LLL programs targeting low-skilled and disadvantaged populations in rural areas were implemented, with foundational proposals for micro-qualifications and assessments of digital literacy gaps. In terms of capacity-building interventions for representatives of the MLSP, Ministry of Education and Research (MER), academia, and development partners, all planned targets were successful in transferring and generating knowledge and validating a comprehensive skills needs anticipation mapping. Additionally, updates to occupational standards and the piloting of micro-qualifications programs were completed, addressing the target for two new or updated standards.

Overall, while some targets remain in progress, the achievements reflect a robust framework for a more responsive and sustainable skills anticipation system in Moldova, effectively preparing the workforce for future demands.

Outcome 3: Effective protection of workers at the highest risk of informal employment.

This outcome included one Output 3.1 ‘Moldovan constituents have Improved capacity to tackle undeclared work (UDW)’. The key interventions were: Development of policies, briefs and tools for extending labour and social protection to workers in non-standard forms of employment; Fostering innovative interventions in sectors with high informality, as construction and agriculture; Enhancing the institutional capacities to address UDW; Public awareness events on the risks of informality.

Overall, the project was effective under Outcome 3 and the achievements demonstrate a comprehensive approach to protecting workers at high risk of informal employment. The development and validation of key policy documents, combined with capacity-building efforts and public awareness campaigns, have met the established targets.

The development and approval by the MLSP of the National Programme to Tackle Undeclared Work (2024-2025) ²⁷ is a cornerstone achievement of the project. As remarked the interviewed stakeholders, this program, approved by the MLSP, serves as a ‘foundational policy document’²⁸ aimed at formalizing employment and improving worker protection, particularly for non-standard forms of employment (NSFE). It includes a thorough diagnosis of undeclared work and legal analyses, addressing critical areas such as gender equality and social security coverage. The program's objectives and interventions are focused on strengthening compliance mechanisms and promoting evidence-based enforcement. These measures are essential for creating a safer and more regulated work environment, particularly for vulnerable workers.

Following the approval of the National Programme to Tackle Undeclared Work, the project supported implementation of a practical Policy RoadMap aimed at improving prevention and deterrence while encouraging the transition from undeclared to declared work. This roadmap integrates general measures with a sectoral approach, specifically targeting agriculture, construction, and HORECA, where informal employment is most prevalent.

²⁷ <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Program-de-reducere-a-muncii-nedeclarate.pdf>

²⁸ Key informants' interviews.

The launch of the Digital OpenIMIS²⁹ voucher system represents a significant advancement in facilitating secure payment of social contributions for daily and seasonal workers in the agriculture and aimed at addressing the widespread informality and non-compliance with labor laws in the sector. This digital solution requires verified employers to purchase vouchers for work performed, thus facilitating the assignment of daily workers for specific periods. It is focused on streamlining the process for these workers and enhancing their access to vital social protections. It is expected that this digital solution will be integrated with various governmental platforms for payments and monitoring, ultimately supporting efforts to combat undeclared work. It worth mentioning that the development of this system required the formulation of essential legal amendments to ensure it aligns with the National Programme's objectives. While the introduction of the Digital OpenIMIS is promising, it is still too early to assess its full functionality and effectiveness in practice. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring will be necessary to determine how well it meets the needs of workers and contributes to the broader goal of formalizing employment and improving social security coverage in the agricultural sector.

Output 3.1 reflects a robust effort to build the capacity of Moldovan constituents to tackle undeclared work effectively. The project successfully conducted a Market System Analysis (MSA)³⁰ of the construction sector³¹, which is one of the sectors with the highest level of informal work. This analysis, openly discussed by the Tripartite Commission, provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for formalization in a key sector of the economy. Additionally, discussions with the Organization for Entrepreneurship Development (ODA) and the Ministry of Finance addressed selected implementation strategies, including small-scale pilots to streamline fiscal treatment for SMEs and enhance access to development finance for informal micro-enterprises.

Awareness-raising initiatives, such as the “Work Legally for a Secure Future!” campaign, significantly exceeded the initial target (10,000) by reaching over 50,000 individuals.³² This outreach promoted the importance of legal employment and informed workers about their rights and available resources. The campaign included various media channels, including TV, radio, public events, and online platforms, which contributed to a broader understanding of the risks associated with informal work.

The project provided costed policy options aimed at extending social security coverage to workers in NSFE. This is important for ensuring that workers in informal sectors receive the protections they need, thereby reducing the vulnerability of these workers. This approach to compliance monitoring reinforces institutional capacities and provides practical tools to tackle undeclared work effectively.

The project conducted a fiscal impact assessment of the *Trecem pe Alb* Campaign³³ based on the principle that improved data performance measurement can increase the success rate of State Labour Inspectorate (SLI) while reducing unnecessary inspections and associated costs. SLI has been equipped with a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) tool to monitor effectiveness in addressing undeclared work and envelope wages. The CBA evaluated the total costs incurred by the campaign, including monetary man/days and other expenses, in relation to the increase in budgetary revenue, taxes,

²⁹ <https://soldevelo.com/blog/openimis-in-moldova-tackling-the-undeclared-work-problem/>

³⁰ A MSA is a tool to understand how a market functions, identify the root causes of its underperformance or lack of inclusivity for certain groups, and design effective interventions to address these systemic issues. *Market Systems Analysis for Decent Work: A User-friendly Guide*. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/market-systems-analysis-decent-work-user-friendly-guide>

³¹ Diagnostic Report *Opportunities and constraints to formalize informal workers and economic units in the construction sector in the Republic of Moldova*, 2024.

³² Final narrative report. 2025

³³ <https://trecempealb.gov.md/>

and social contributions. The total fiscal impact on the national budget, based on the overall rate of long-term compliance quantified using SLI data, was estimated at 2.5 million lei.³⁴

These formalisation-oriented initiatives lay a strong foundation for improving labor market governance in Moldova and advancing the rights and protections of vulnerable workers. Moving forward, continued focus on implementation, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement will be essential to sustain and build upon these gains. See *Recommendations*.

Key factors influencing the project.

The evaluation consultant identified several internal and external factors that influenced project delivery, highlighting the main constraints encountered.

- *Timing and amounts of installment payments.* The delayed timing and limited amounts of the first two installment payments restricted the range of activities that could be undertaken, resulting in implementation delays that hindered progress.
- *Recruitment delays.* The time taken for project recruitment affected the implementation dynamics during the initial phase, slowing down the project activities during the first year.
- *Local elections.* The occurrence of local elections temporarily halted the establishment of LEPs, impacting the representation and engagement of local public authorities in the project.
- *Sensitive country context.* The delicate political environment invoked by the interviewed stakeholders limited the dissemination of findings from the MTE of the NEP, while the prevailing political will influenced the implementation of MTE recommendations.

There are at least two key driving forces, which positively influenced the implementation dynamics and subsequently the performance of the projects:

- *Project team* was recognized by both national and local stakeholders as instrumental in managing the project's implementation. Their ability to establish strong partnerships with various actors facilitated collaboration, which enhanced project effectiveness.
- *Sub-Regional Office support:* It played an important role by providing valuable backstopping support and subject matter expertise. This assistance was highly appreciated and contributed significantly to the project's overall success, ensuring that challenges were effectively addressed and best practices were applied.

4.3 EFFICIENCY

The efficiency was examined in terms of the implementation of the major activities and timeliness of the achievements, response mechanisms, delivery methods and use of available resources. The project management and monitoring and evaluation system (M&E) were also considered.

The project *demonstrates efficiency in financial management and adherence to the budget, although it has encountered some implementation delays. Management strengths include flexibility, strong partnerships, a comprehensive M&E system, dedication of the project team and robust technical support, all of which have contributed to successful performance.*

Analysis of project budget by Outcomes shows the following breakdown:

Table 4: *Budget breakdown*

Outcome	Cost	Percentage
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³⁴ Progress report. February 2023- December 2024.

Outcome 1: The people of Moldova, particularly those most at risk of labour market exclusion, have access to enhanced livelihood opportunities, decent work, and productive employment at the local level.	\$1,015,323	47,6%
Outcome 2: Young people and adult population have access to better quality vocational and professional training that respond to labour market demands.	\$417,562	19,6%
Outcome 3: Effective formalization of informal workers in a sector with high prevalence of informality.	\$454,015	21,3%
Programme support cost	\$245,297	11,5%
Total Budget	\$2,132,196	100%

The analysis of the logic of the budget allocations shows that the Outcome 1: (Employment) received the largest allocation, reflecting the project's priority on addressing labor market exclusion for vulnerable populations in Moldova. The substantial investment indicates a commitment to creating decent work opportunities and supporting productive employment at the local level.

The Outcome 2 (Skills development) focuses on improving the quality of vocational training for skills development of both young people and adults, ensuring that educational offerings align with changing labor market demands. The budget allocation here is significantly lower than for Outcome 1, which may suggest a strategic focus on immediate employment opportunities over training, or it may indicate potential underfunding for necessary skills development and vocational education improvements. While Outcome 2 is essential for long-term sustainability and workforce development, its comparatively smaller allocation may highlight a potential gap in addressing the skills mismatch in the labor market. If skills development is not adequately funded, it could undermine the effectiveness of the other outcomes in the long run.

The allocations for Outcome 3 (Formalization) emphasizes the importance of formalizing informal workers, addressing a critical issue in sectors with high informality rates, such as agriculture and construction. This is essential for improving labor rights and enhancing overall Moldovan economic stability. However, its budget is also significantly lower compared to Outcome 1, which could suggest that further emphasis and resources might be necessary to tackle this issue comprehensively.

The portion of the budget for program support cost covers administrative and operational costs associated with implementing the project. The allocation appears reasonable, given that effective program support is essential for the successful execution of all project activities. Overall, the budget allocations reflect a well-structured approach to addressing key challenges in Moldova's labor market, with a strong emphasis on enhancing employment. However, the disparity in funding for skills development raises concerns about the potential effectiveness issues. Future considerations should include a reevaluation of funding distribution to ensure that all outcomes are adequately supported, particularly in areas crucial for long-term employment sustainability and economic growth. This will help maximize the impact of the project and ensure that all aspects of labor market improvement are addressed cohesively. See *Recommendations*.

The desk review and consultations indicate that financial resources were allocated to budget lines as intended, with no significant deviations observed. The evaluation did not identify any alternative solutions that could offer similar benefits at a lower cost or provide a more economical approach for the ILO project. This suggests that the financial management of the project was effective, adhering closely to the planned budget while achieving the desired outcomes.

In terms of the timeliness of the implementation of the planned activities, the project experienced some lower implementation dynamic, because of the influencing factors described, which generated some delays in delivery. Therefore, it was a justified decision to extend the project and to allow implementation of the planned actions.³⁵

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system of the project was multidimensional, encompassing several key components:

- *Periodical monitoring and data collection:* This involved regular data collection, analysis, and consultations among the ILO project team, ILO Sub-Regional Office, national implementation partners, and donor. This collaborative approach ensured that all stakeholders were aligned and informed about the project's progress, limitations and decisions.
- *Post-training monitoring and follow-ups:* Primarily conducted by the project team, these activities were essential for assessing the effectiveness of training initiatives and ensuring that participants received the necessary support to apply what they learned.
- *Technical support and quality assurance:* The ILO Sub-Regional Office and the Evaluation Manager provided ongoing technical assistance and quality assurance, which were important for maintaining high standards throughout the project's implementation and evaluation.
- *Independent final evaluation:* Conducted by an external evaluator, this evaluation served as an objective assessment of the project's outcomes, providing valuable insights and recommendations for future initiatives.

Overall, the M&E system was structured to facilitate continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and rigorous evaluation, all of which contributed to the project's overall effectiveness.

The management arrangements and communication strategies within the project present a mixed landscape. On one hand, the project was adequately quantitatively and qualitatively staffed and project management has demonstrated flexibility and adaptability. Stakeholders consistently praised the productive partnerships with MER, LEPs, tripartite partners, MLSP, NEA formed with the project team, highlighting their expertise, dedication, and hard work. The project team is regarded as a pivotal driving force behind the initiative. The technical backstopping support provided by the Sub-Regional Office has been highly valued by the interviewed national stakeholders and stands out as one of the project's critical success factors. This support has strengthened the project's implementation and has facilitated knowledge transfer, ensuring that stakeholders are equipped with the necessary skills and resources to achieve the objectives.

4.4 IMPACT

The anticipated impact, while not specified in the Concept Note, is clearly articulated in the logframe, aiming to create "more and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women, and men in Moldova."

It is important to remind that this impact statement lacks specific KPIs or measurable targets, which complicates the ability to assess progress. The absence of measurable KPIs means that while the general objective is commendable, it remains vague and challenging to quantify. Without defined metrics, it is difficult to track advancements toward achieving this goal, making it harder to identify areas needing improvement or to celebrate milestones reached. It would be beneficial to establish clear and actionable KPIs that align with the development objective. This would not only facilitate more accurate measurement of progress but also provide a framework for accountability and continuous improvement. By integrating specific targets, the project can better demonstrate its

³⁵ The project was extended till June 2025.

impact on enhancing decent work opportunities for diverse groups in Moldova, ensuring that the efforts yield tangible benefits for the targeted groups and beneficiaries.

Still, evaluation found that all three outcomes and cross-cutting aspects, social dialogue and digitalisation contribute to the long-term changes, i.e. impact. The implementation of the NEP (Outcome 1: Employment) through decentralized efforts creates more inclusive job opportunities. By improving the performance of the NEA, the project facilitates better job matching and support for vulnerable groups, including youth and women. By focusing on productivity and inclusivity, the project helps to remove barriers to employment, enabling a broader to access decent work.

The establishment of an advanced skill needs anticipation system (Outcome 2) and the adoption of a LLL strategy are essential for aligning education with labor market demands. This outcome ensures that individuals, including women and girls acquire the skills needed for available jobs, thereby improving employability contributing to sustainable decent work targeted by the impact. The formalisation (Outcome 3) focuses on providing protections for workers who are most vulnerable to informal employment, often a source of job insecurity. Effective protections in the long-term perspectives lead to more stable employment, allowing workers to access benefits and protections associated with formal employment.

Social dialogue among stakeholders—including government, employers, and workers—plays a critical role in shaping policies and practices that impact employment.

Digitalization streamlines processes, enhance communication, and improve access to information regarding job opportunities and training programs. Digital development facilitates job searches and training enrollments, making it easier for job seekers to find employment opportunities.

In conclusion, all three outcomes, alongside social dialogue and digitalization, are integral to achieving the expected impact of "More and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women, and men in Moldova." By fostering inclusive employment, aligning skills with market needs, protecting vulnerable workers, and leveraging collaborative and digital approaches, the project creates a more equitable and dynamic labor market. Each component reinforces the others, collectively contributing to a sustainable framework for decent work in Moldova.

4.5 SUSTAINABILITY

The ILO project in Moldova has significantly contributed to *policy sustainability* through the delivery of key outputs that align with national and EU objectives. The MTE of the NEP, along with the development of a Technical Note and a comprehensive Policy Paper on Collective Bargaining, has strengthened stakeholder capacity for evidence-based policy dialogue. Furthermore, the introduction of a performance evaluation framework for local employment offices and enhancements to service delivery, such as self-service stations, reflect a commitment to improving accessibility and responsiveness in the labor market.

The successful establishment of the National Programme to Tackle Undeclared Work underscores a proactive approach to formalizing employment and enhancing worker protection. This policy document is backed by thorough analyses and includes concrete recommendations to extend social security coverage and improve compliance mechanisms. Overall, these initiatives fulfill the project's objectives and lay a robust foundation for sustainable labor market governance in Moldova, ensuring that policies are effective, inclusive, and aligned with broader economic goals.

The *institutional sustainability* of the project is underscored by comprehensive capacity-building initiatives aimed at strengthening key stakeholders, revealing a mixed outcome. Training sessions have successfully enhanced the capabilities of the MoLSP and the NEA, empowering them to tackle key policy areas like skills development, employment for young NEETs, and social dialogue. Involvement of local tripartite committees has improved their capacity to analyze labor market data and implement LEPs, fostering a more engaged local governance structure. Moreover, the project has boosted the operational efficiency of territorial employment units by providing guidelines and tools for performance measurement and service delivery. In the beekeeping sector, the functionality of formalized beekeepers and their cooperatives shows potential, though still in its early phases. The cooperatives require additional time for the installation and activation of necessary equipment, and while they have the documentation to apply for subsidies, it remains uncertain whether they will proceed with these applications successfully. Nevertheless, the active Viber group for new beekeepers facilitates regular communication and strengthens their professional network, exemplifying a good practice generated by the project.

Significant progress has also been made in integrating micro-qualifications essential skills development into TVET systems, aligning educational outcomes with labor market demands. The identification of skills gaps and the introduction of LLL programs for disadvantaged populations mark steps toward building a responsive and inclusive workforce. These accomplishments reflect a promising institutional framework that supports sustainable employment practices and enhances collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring that the labor market is equipped to meet challenges.

Conversely, the institutionalization of LEPs has not yet materialized, despite nine years of piloting by the ILO, leaving their sustainability and functionality in question. Their effectiveness is particularly susceptible to changes in local elections, which may result in shifts in LPA representatives. Although local tripartite actors recognize the benefits of the LEPs, opinions on their continuation vary, with some calling for additional technical and financial assistance.

The *financial sustainability* of the projects presents a mixed outlook. On one hand, there are promising developments, such as additional funding received by some grantees from other sources, for instance the ODA. Formalized entrepreneurs, particularly the 40 beekeepers, also show potential for sustainability as they have increased their financial stability through product sales. The establishment of enterprises and cooperatives under the LEPs lays a strong foundation for future job creation, enhancing the sustainability of employment interventions.

However, despite the commitment of LEP members to sustain their activities, long-term financial sustainability remains uncertain. Many stakeholders emphasize the ongoing need for financial assistance to maintain the effectiveness of the LEPs. Insufficient funding could lead to a decline in the progress made, jeopardizing employment initiatives and their effects on local labor markets. Moreover, the sustainability of LEPs relies on building stronger collaborations among stakeholders, including government agencies, local businesses, and educational institutions. This collaborative approach can leverage additional resources and cultivate a shared sense of ownership for LEP objectives. By proactively addressing financial challenges and enhancing stakeholder engagement, a more stable foundation can be established, ensuring that LEPs continue to meet the evolving needs of their communities.

Environmental sustainability. The ILO project was designed to be environmentally neutral, and the evaluation found no actions that would harm or negatively impact the environment. In fact, the project enhanced environmental sustainability by supporting, formalising and promoting beekeeping, which plays a crucial role in ecosystem health and biodiversity conservation. This initiative not only supports local livelihoods but also contributes positively to the environment by fostering pollination and maintaining ecological balance. The Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) analysis undertaken by the project in the construction sector was focused on skills needs for energy efficiency. This contributes to the development of professional competence in an area that is essential to the reduction of greenhouse gases in Moldova. Overall, the project exemplifies a commitment to sustainable practices that benefit both the community and the environment.

PART V. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNT & GOOD PRACTICES

5.1 Conclusions

The ILO project has demonstrated significant *relevance* to Moldova's national strategic priorities and international commitments, effectively aligning with the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" and the nationalized SDGs. By focusing on decent work and economic growth, particularly through the promotion of productive employment and the protection of labor rights, the project addresses the specific needs of marginalized groups, including youth, women, and individuals with disabilities. The establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships further enhances its impact, fostering collaboration among various entities, including government agencies, social partners, and local authorities, which is crucial for creating a sustainable labor market. Moreover, the project's design and implementation reflect a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the labor market in Moldova. By incorporating a human rights-based approach and emphasizing gender-sensitive strategies, the project not only aimed to improve immediate employment outcomes but also strived for long-term systemic changes. While there are areas for improvement in gender-mainstreaming and stakeholder engagement, the overall structure and focus of the project ensure that it remains relevant and responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries. This strategic alignment positions the ILO project as a vital contributor to fostering inclusive and equitable employment opportunities, ultimately supporting Moldova's broader development goals.

The *coherence* of the project is illustrated in its strong internal alignment, integrating results across various components to foster synergy and maximize achievements. The collaboration with LEPS, MER, MLSP, NEA, SLI exemplifies a coordinated approach to addressing skills gaps and promoting formal employment opportunities.

However, external coherence presents an area for improvement, as the evaluation highlights limited collaboration with other organizations implementing projects in the same thematic area.

The project has demonstrated a commendable level of *effectiveness* across its various outcomes, particularly in enhancing inclusive employment and integrating essential skills into educational frameworks. While the mixed performance under Outcome 1 indicates some room for improvement, the substantial benefits derived from job creation efforts highlight the importance of targeted initiatives in addressing employment challenges. The progress made in Outcome 2, despite some unmet targets, reflects a strong commitment to aligning vocational training with labor market needs, paving the way for a more skilled and adaptable workforce in Moldova. Moreover, the performance achieved under Outcome 3 illustrates a well-rounded approach to safeguarding workers vulnerable to informal employment. The development and validation of key policy documents, along with effective capacity-building initiatives and public awareness campaigns, have not only met established targets but also contributed to a more supportive environment for

workers. Collectively, these outcomes underscore the project's ability to respond to the unique challenges faced by the labor market in Moldova, establishing a solid foundation for continued progress and future initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive and sustainable employment.

The project has demonstrated notable *efficiency* in financial management and adherence to budgetary constraints, despite facing some implementation delays due to factors such as payment timing. Its strengths lie in its flexibility, strong partnerships, and a comprehensive M&E system, all of which have contributed to successful outcomes.

The *impact*, i.e. the long-term changes generated by the project is difficult to be assessed because, although it is formulated in the project proposal, there are no performance indicators and the duration of the project is quite limited. Still, there are some early signs that the project contributed to ensuring decent and safe working conditions and sustainable development in line with the nationalized SDGs by fostering inclusive employment, aligning skills with market needs, protecting vulnerable workers, and leveraging collaborative and digital approaches. Each element reinforces the others, collectively contributing to a sustainable framework for decent work in Moldova.

The *sustainability* prospects of the final achievements present a largely mixed outlook. On one hand, there are promising indicators for policy sustainability, demonstrating a strong alignment with broader objectives and a commitment to ongoing improvements. On the other hand, the aspects of institutional and financial sustainability among beneficiaries reveal more complexity and uncertainty. While ILO policy achievements and frameworks have been integrated and approved, the institutional frameworks and financial commitments supporting these initiatives overall appear less stable. The financial sustainability remains a significant concern, as many stakeholders require ongoing assistance to ensure the continuation of their initiatives.

5.2 Lessons Learnt

The evaluation suggests four lessons that may be of value to ILO and other stakeholders.

1. ***Complementarity and comprehensiveness of the ILO's three-dimensional approach and the need for balanced budget allocations.*** The ILO's approach encompassing employment, skills development, and formalization illustrates a comprehensive strategy that addresses multifaceted labor market issues. These elements work synergistically promoting employment requires a skilled workforce, while formalization ensures that workers enjoy better rights and working conditions. However, the consistency of the achievements of this integrated approach hinges on balanced budget allocations across all three dimensions. Adequate funding is essential to ensure that initiatives in employment generation, skills training, and formalization are not only implemented but also sustained over time. A cohesive approach combined with equitable budgetary support is vital for maximizing the impact of the ILO's initiatives.
2. ***Importance of integrating evaluation recommendations into policy implementation.*** The MTE of the NEP highlights the critical need for the MLSP and the NEA to incorporate evaluation findings and recommendations into their policy frameworks. Failing to respond to these evaluation recommendations can undermine accountability, hinder informed decision-making, and alienate stakeholders, while also limiting the NEP's adaptability to changing conditions. By actively engaging with evaluation insights, the MLSP and NEA can enhance program effectiveness, foster collaboration, and build public trust, leading to improved employment outcomes.
3. ***Need of contextualized assessment before pursuing further replication and institutionalization of the LEP approach.*** While the evaluation indicates that the two established LEPs are productive and functional during project implementation, there is a lack of information regarding the functionality and sustainability of the six other LEPs created by the

ILO in Moldova since 2018. Therefore, a comprehensive ex-post assessment is necessary to evaluate these LEPs before further replication and promoting national ownership. In this regard, there is no one-size-fits-all model; each context demands a tailored strategy that considers specific local conditions. Although the successful piloting of the LEP approach offers valuable lessons, it does not ensure sustainability, as various factors—such as the functional capacities of local actors, resource availability, local employment opportunities, effective leadership, and stakeholder commitment—can differ significantly from district to district.

4. ***Flexible approach is determinant for adaptability and relevance.*** The project demonstrated the value of flexibility in management, allowing the team to adapt to unforeseen challenges and delays. While the project faced implementation slowdowns due to various factors, the ability to extend timelines and adjust plans and interventions proved beneficial in achieving objectives. This adaptability, combined with partnerships and strong technical support, underscores the need for responsiveness to evolving demands.

There are some other project-specific lessons already well identified, analyzed and discussed by ILO in its reports. Nonetheless, the evaluator has restricted himself to five lessons that are overarching and that are the most striking. Although the lessons may be considered "basic," their implementation provides ILO and other stakeholders with the opportunity to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of interventions in future similar initiatives.

5.3 Good Practices

1. ***Utilizing a Concept Note for systemic change.*** The SECO's and ILO's decision to employ a Concept Note to support a multi-faceted DWCP instead of a rigid project proposal framework exemplifies a successful strategy for promoting systemic change. This approach provided the necessary flexibility for ILO interventions, allowing for adaptations to align with the dynamic needs of national stakeholders. As a result, initiatives became more responsive and relevant to the local context, fostering increased engagement and collaboration among key partners. Embracing this adaptable framework highlights the importance of prioritizing systemic change over strictly defined project objectives. This practice serves as a valuable model for ILO and other stakeholders seeking to implement effective and responsive programs.
2. ***Engaging professional associations for enhanced achievements.*** The involvement of the professional associations, particularly National Association of Beekeepers (NAB) has proven to be a valuable practice that yields multiple benefits. Firstly, grantees received tailored business development support, which not only enhanced their operational capacities but also provided them with practical, hands-on experience in their field. This direct support has empowered them to better navigate the complexities of their industry. Secondly, this collaborative approach has played an important role in the formalization of startups and the jobs created through these initiatives. By aligning with the association, grantees were guided through the necessary processes to register their businesses and comply with regulatory requirements, fostering a more structured and sustainable entrepreneurial environment. Lastly, the partnership has significantly strengthened the NAB itself. It has led to an increase in membership, enhancing the association's influence and reach and improvements in internal processes—such as networking, communication, and experience sharing among members.

This has fostered a supportive community that encourages collaboration and the sharing of best practices, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders involved.

PART VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the report provides a manageable number of eight recommendations based on the findings and conclusions and are explained by the evaluator to his best professional judgment.

6.1 General framework of the recommendations

<i>Rec</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Resources</i>
<i>Rec. 01</i>	<i>ILO to capitalize on the achievements and conceptualize the next phase for supporting systemic changes.</i>	High	Short-term	Low
<i>Rec. 02</i>	<i>ILO to reinforce the three-dimensional approach and ensure balanced budget allocations.</i>	Medium	Short-term	Low
<i>Rec. 03</i>	<i>ILO, MLSP and NEA to review and integrate MTE recommendations into the next NEP.</i>	High	Short-term	Medium
<i>Rec. 04</i>	<i>ILO to conduct ex-post evaluation of LEPs to inform future programming.</i>	High	Short-term	Medium
<i>Rec. 05</i>	<i>ILO, MER and MLSP to strengthen and sustain the skills anticipation system in Moldova.</i>	High	Long-term	Medium
<i>Rec. 06</i>	<i>ILO to lobby for adoption of the next Programme to tackle Undeclared Work and implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.</i>	Medium	Mid-term	Medium
<i>Rec. 07</i>	<i>ILO to improve the projects' design and further increase gender sensitivity.</i>	Medium	Short-term	Low
<i>Rec. 08</i>	<i>Enhance collaboration with other development organizations.</i>	Medium	Mid-term	Low

6.2 Detailed recommendations

Rec. 01 *ILO to capitalize on the achievements and conceptualize the next phase for supporting systemic changes.*

The ILO should leverage the successes, lessons learned, and good practices from the current phase of the project to gain momentum and to inform and shape the next phase of implementation. By

capitalizing on these insights, ILO and its partners can build upon established foundations, enhance project effectiveness and efficiency, and ensure that future initiatives are maximizing the effects to address further needs and opportunities.

Instead of traditional project documentation, adopt further a concept note approach, leveraging its advantages as outlined in the "Good Practices" section of the report and Lessons Learnt No.4. This method allows for greater flexibility, encourages stakeholder engagement, and improves adaptability. By focusing on the core objectives and approach in a concise format, the concept note can effectively and efficiently guide the initiatives that are relevant and responsive to the evolving context of labor and employment challenges in Moldova. The following recommendations may be pertinent in this regard.

Rec. 02 *ILO to reinforce the three-dimensional approach and ensure balanced budget allocations.*

This recommendation aligns with Lesson Learnt No. 1. Maintaining the ILO's three-dimensional approach focusing on employment, skills development, and formalization is important and is recommended because of at least four reasons:

1. *Holistic problem-solving*: The labor market presents complex and interrelated challenges. By addressing employment, skills, and formalization together, the ILO supports comprehensive solutions that tackle the root causes of labor issues rather than just the symptoms.
2. *Synergistic effects*: Each dimension reinforces the others. For example, creating jobs requires a skilled workforce; without adequate training, employment initiatives may not be successful. Similarly, formalization ensures that workers have rights and protections, which can lead to better job retention and satisfaction.
3. *Equitable worker rights*: Formalization helps to enhance labor rights and working conditions, making it essential for promoting decent work. Without a focus on this dimension, many workers may remain in precarious situations, undermining the benefits of employment and skills initiatives.
4. *Sustainability of initiatives*: Balanced budget allocations are important for ensuring that initiatives are not only implemented but also sustained over time. Without consistent funding across all three areas, project may falter, resulting in lost momentum and diminishing returns.

It is essential for the ILO to maintain its provision of technical expertise and support to the Government of Moldova, particularly to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the National Employment Agency (NEA). This continued assistance will be vital in facilitating the effective implementation of the EU acquis and the Grow Plan. By leveraging ILO's specialized knowledge, the government can navigate the complexities of aligning its policies and practices with EU standards, ultimately fostering a more robust labor market and social protection framework in Moldova.

Rec. 03 *ILO, MLSP and NEA to review and integrate MTE recommendations into the next National Employment Programme.*

This recommendation aligns with Lesson Learnt No. 2. ILO, MLSP, NEA should collaboratively undertake a comprehensive review of the MTE recommendations related to the NEP. This process should focus on identifying and incorporating those recommendations that remain relevant and actionable into the upcoming phase of the NEP. The key steps on how to implement this recommendation might be:

- *Establish a joint task force* comprising representatives from the ILO, MLSP, and NEA to facilitate the review process. This task force will be responsible for analyzing the MTE recommendations and assessing their applicability in the on-going context of Moldova.
- *Conduct a thorough review* of each recommendation to determine its relevance, feasibility, potential impact and current applicability.

- *Prioritize recommendations.* Identify key recommendations that align with the strategic goals of the next NEP. Prioritize those that can effectively address existing gaps, enhance effectiveness, and promote sustainable employment outcomes.
- *Integrate and adapt recommendations.* Incorporate the selected recommendations into the design and framework of the new NEP, ensuring they are adapted to fit the current socio-economic landscape and labor market needs of Moldova.
- *Monitor and evaluate integration.* Develop a mechanism for ongoing M&E of the integrated recommendations to assess their impact on the NEP's goals. This will ensure that the project remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in the labor market.

By reviewing and integrating the still-valid MTE recommendations, the ILO, MLSP, and NEA can enhance the effectiveness of the next NEP, ensuring it is well-informed by lessons learnt, evidence-based insights and aligned with the evolving needs of the workforce. This collaborative approach will also foster greater stakeholder engagement and commitment to the performance of the NEP.

Rec. 04 *ILO to conduct ex-post evaluation of LEPs to inform future programming.*

This recommendation aligns with Lesson Learnt No.3. To enhance the replicability and sustainability of LEPs, it is essential to undertake comprehensive ex-post evaluation of all eight existing LEPs created with the ILO support. This process can yield valuable insights that can inform future programming, promote national and local ownership, integrate the LEP approach into the national policies as foreseen in the DWCP³⁶.

The key steps on how to implement this recommendation might be:

- *Undertake an internal or external ex-post evaluation* of completed LEPs to analyze their functionality, challenges faced, and achievements. Focus on assessing the sustainability aspects and understanding the impact of LEPs on local employment outcomes, including concerning outreach and activation measures for women and youth.
- *Showcase successful case studies and utilize findings for future programming:* Highlight successful LEP implementations through case studies that demonstrate their potential return on investment. By showcasing these examples, stakeholders will gain a clearer understanding of the positive impacts on local employment outcomes, which can bolster advocacy efforts for funding and resources.
- *Promote institutionalization of LEPs:* Work towards the integration of the LEPs into the national policies and their institutionalization by emphasizing their effectiveness.

By conducting ex-post evaluations and incorporating the findings into future programming, stakeholders can strengthen the role of LEPs in the national employment policy, promote national and local ownership, and enhance the overall effectiveness of employment policies.

Rec. 05 *ILO, MER and MLSP to strengthen and sustain the skills anticipation system in Moldova.*

The project has made significant strides in enhancing the knowledge base of key stakeholders and laying the groundwork for a robust skills anticipation system in Moldova. However, to fully realize the potential of this system and ensure that it meets the evolving demands of the labor market, further efforts are necessary. Some key steps/interventions may include:

- *Reinforcing interinstitutional cooperation among stakeholders,* including the MER, MLSP, and vocational education institutions, by establishing a dedicated task force to monitor skills integration progress and promptly address challenges, ensuring alignment toward a responsive skills anticipation system.

³⁶ Indicator: "The National Employment Strategy includes the specific measures for outreach and activation of women and youth, including through the Local Economic Partnerships." DWCP. Republic of Moldova. 2021-2024, page 16.

- *Accelerating the development and implementation of micro-credential programs* tailored to the specific needs of the Moldovan labor market, particularly in high-demand sectors identified through the annual employers' survey on digital skills.
- *Conducting annual assessments* to monitor digital literacy and skills demand, utilizing the findings to inform curriculum adjustments and training programs that address critical skill gaps among the adult population.
- *Expanding LLL programs for low-skilled and disadvantaged populations*, particularly in rural areas of Moldova, to ensure equitable access to skills development opportunities. Raising awareness about available LLL programs and micro-qualifications and encouraging participation from underserved communities.
- *Providing capacity building for stakeholders*, including government representatives and educational institutions on skills anticipation and TVET.

By focusing on these key areas, Moldova can strengthen its skills anticipation system, facilitating a more agile and responsive workforce prepared to meet future labor market demands.

Rec. 06 *ILO to lobby for adoption of the next Programme to tackle Undeclared Work and implement a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.*

The current National Programme to Tackle Undeclared Work (2024-2025) is approaching its expiration, necessitating advocacy for its renewal and enhancement to continue formalizing employment and improving worker protections. Additionally, implementing a robust M&E framework will be vital for assessing the next programme's effectiveness and ensuring that interventions adapt to Moldova's evolving labor market. This dual approach aims to strengthen worker protections and contribute to a more equitable and regulated labor environment.

To promote inclusiveness in the next programme, engaging key stakeholders is essential for building a coalition that advocates for its renewal and expansion. Highlighting achievements from the existing programme through data, case studies, and beneficiary testimonials will demonstrate its positive impacts while emphasizing the need for ongoing efforts in high-informality sectors such as agriculture and construction. The launch of the Digital OpenIMIS voucher system is a significant advancement aimed at facilitating secure payment of social contributions for daily and seasonal workers in agriculture. As the system is implemented, continuous engagement with stakeholders—especially workers and employers—will be needed for refining the system. Regular feedback loops will help identify challenges and optimize functionality to better serve the target population.

A comprehensive M&E framework should have clear objectives and KPIs to track compliance and transitions to formal employment. This framework should include stakeholder feedback, involve beneficiaries in the process, leverage data analytics for real-time monitoring, and launch awareness campaigns to educate the public about the benefits of formal employment, thereby fostering community engagement and grassroots support.

Rec. 07 *Improve the projects' design and further increase gender sensitivity.*

Eliminate the gaps described in the *Relevance* part of the report. Increase the consistency of the design of the project, especially in terms of the results-based approach. Make sure the entire results chain (outputs-outcomes-impact) is inter-connected with the corresponding baselines - performance indicators - targets for each type of results.

Explicitly incorporate the LNOB Principle in the design and reporting, emphasizing in the reports how the project has contributed to social inclusiveness and improved the quality of life for individuals at risk of being left behind.

Integrate gender considerations into all outputs, ensuring that capacity development efforts include training on gender equality and inclusive practices. Develop gender-specific indicators for each outcome to ensure that the project's impact on gender equality is comprehensively assessed. Consider explicitly focusing on the gender pay gap

Actively involve women's organizations and gender advocates in the project to ensure that the interventions are informed by the needs and perspectives of women.

One cognitive recommendation is to clearly distinguish between the terms "capacity building" and "capacity development," as the project documents currently treat them as synonymous, which they are not. "Capacity building" refers to creating capacity from the ground up, assuming there are no existing capabilities (baseline of "0"). In contrast, "capacity development" acknowledges that some capacities are already present, starting from an existing baseline and focusing on strengthening and enhancing those capacities further.³⁷

Rec. 08 *Enhance collaboration with other development organizations.*

To improve the project's external coherence and overall effectiveness, it is recommended that the ILO project team proactively strengthen partnerships with organizations (e.g. UNDP, Helvetas, CEDA) which operate in similar thematic areas. This can be achieved through regular joint meetings, collaborative workshops, and the establishment of a shared platform for exchanging best practices and lessons learned. By fostering these relationships, the project can leverage existing resources and expertise, ultimately broadening its reach and impact. Creating joint initiatives focused on employment, formalisation and skills development can facilitate a more integrated approach to addressing shared challenges in the Moldovan labor market.

Additionally, strengthening external collaborations will not only improve the project's operational framework but also support a more coordinated effort in implementing the aforementioned recommendations, particularly numbers 3, 5, and 6.

³⁷ For additional information: *Frequently Asked Questions. UNDP Approach to Supporting Capacity Development*. Capacity Development Group. UNDP, June 2009, page 3. http://content-ext.undp.org/aplaws_assets/2072460/2072460.pdf

PART VII. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Final Achievements Matrix of the Inclusive and Productive Employment in Moldova Project

Results chain	Indicators	Final achievements & Comments
Impact (Development Objective): More and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women & men in Moldova.		
Outcome 1: Inclusive and productive employment through decentralized implementation of the new NEP and improved performance of the NEA	<p><i>Nr of new jobs created for rural youth & inactive women through LEPs (disaggregated by sex)</i> Baseline: n/a. Target: at least 1000</p>	The two LEPs in Hîncești and Florești contributed to the creation of 719 decent jobs and the launch of 37 enterprises, as well as the formalization and expansion of 190 businesses. While the target of 1,000 new jobs was not fully reached, the LEPs directly benefited approximately 3,000 people, including women and other groups at risk of social exclusion.
	<p><i>Percentage of registered unemployed covered with ALMPs</i> Baseline (2019): 20 % Target (2024): 30 %</p>	30.1% of registered unemployed individuals were covered by ALMPs (28.4% women and 31.9% men), exceeding the baseline of 20% in 2019 and meeting the target of 30% by 2024. This shows the effectiveness of the NEP and NEA interventions in reaching registered unemployed individuals.
	<p><i>Nr of inactive women covered by new outreach measures</i> Baseline (2019): 1,167 women were covered by the pilot outreaches Target (2024): 3,000 women</p>	Both LEPs identified and supported 1,812 individuals, including inactive women (443 from Florești and 387 from Hîncești), informal agricultural producers, and jobseekers. At the request of the MoLSP and the NEA, outreach measures were extended to additional three districts, leading to the identification of 982 women in: Soroca (370), Rezina (305), and Șoldănești (307). This brought the total number of beneficiaries reached through the project to 2,794, approaching the initial target of 3,000, and ensuring significant support for employment, formalization, and skills development across multiple districts.
Output 1.1: National and local stakeholders have	<p><i>1.1.1 Nr of capacity building sessions delivered to the inter-ministerial WG</i> Baseline: 0 Target by 2024: at least 3</p>	The project performed well by conducting a total of 22 capacity-building sessions for the MLSP and the NEA on : Skills development and employment of young NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training); Improvement of working conditions; Measures to increase the minimum wage; Strengthening social dialogue at national and local levels
	<p><i>1.1.2 Nr of sessions held by the inter-ministerial WG per year</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: at least three</p>	While specific data on the total number of sessions held by the Inter-Ministerial WG was not provided, the project's overall success in capacity building suggests that regular engagements likely occurred, supporting the ongoing implementation of key policies.

<p>capacities to support the implementation of NEP</p> <p>Output 1.2: The MoLSP and NEA have better capacity to formulate and implement labour market programs and employment services for transition to decent work over the course of life</p>	<p><i>1.1.3 Nr of recommendations for policy improvement</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2</p> <p><i>1.2.1 Nr of guidelines developed to enhance the NEA operations & service delivery</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2</p> <p><i>1.2.2 Nr of new tools developed to measure performance of employment services and programs</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2</p> <p><i>1.2.3 Nr of new tools for tiered service delivery introduced</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 1</p>	<p>The drafting of a Policy Paper on Promoting Collective Bargaining and Increasing Employee Coverage for 2025–2030 demonstrates enhanced stakeholder capacity for evidence-based policy dialogue. The project successfully developed the planned guidelines, enhancing the operations of the MLSP and NEA. Key accomplishments include: Technical guidance was provided to improve the indicators used to assess NEA performance in delivering Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs) to final clients.</p> <p>New methodologies for district-level labour market analysis were developed, enhancing the NEA’s capacity to evaluate local employment needs.</p> <p>Guidelines for employer surveys under the Labour Market Observatory were introduced, incorporating a new module focused on digital skills needs, thereby strengthening the evidence base for service planning. A new framework for evaluating local employment offices was created, enabling data-driven decision-making and aligning local activities with national employment objectives.</p> <p>Self-service stations were equipped in 20 of 35 local employment agencies, allowing registered unemployed individuals and jobseekers independent access to digital employment services, which marks progress toward tiered and inclusive service delivery.</p>
<p>Output 1.3: Local economic development fostered and capacities of LPAs to design innovative employment initiatives enhanced</p>	<p><i>1.3.1 Nr of LPAs with capacities to draft territorial employment diagnostics, assess the local labour market and identify income generation opportunities</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: LPAs in at least 4 districts</p> <p><i>1.3.2 Nr of local level employment initiatives designed & LEPs implemented</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: at least 7 per district</p> <p><i>1.3.3 Nr of new jobs created (at least 50% for women (incl. victims of domestic violence), refugees, people with disabilities and NEETs))</i></p>	<p>This output made progress in fostering local economic development and strengthening the capacities of LPAs. Key achievements include: Two territorial audits for the Hîncești and Florești districts drafted in collaboration with LPAs. Additionally, through capacity-building initiatives, 20 local tripartite committees and NEA employment specialists designed a total of 35 territorial audits.</p> <p>The project reinforced the capacities of social partners across 20 districts, enhancing the establishment and functioning of local tripartite committees, which are critical for collaboration, monitoring, and coordination of employment interventions. The project has made substantial progress in designing local-level employment initiatives, as evidenced by the accomplishments under the LEPs for Hîncești and Florești. However, specific data regarding the total number of initiatives designed and implemented across all districts is needed to fully assess progress against the target.</p> <p>The LEPs for Hîncești and Florești contributed to the creation of 719 decent jobs, the launch of 37 enterprises, and the formalization and expansion of 190 businesses. Notably, at least 50% of beneficiaries are women and include other vulnerable groups.</p>

	Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 1,000	While the total number of jobs created fell short of the target, the established start-ups and cooperatives under the LEPs are expected to generate further employment opportunities, ensuring long-term sustainability and inclusive growth.
Outcome 2: An advanced skill needs anticipation system is operational and a lifelong learning strategy is adopted	<i>Core employability, digital and business skills integrated into TVET</i> Baseline: not integrated Target: integrated by 2024	While the target for full integration by 2024 has not been met, substantial groundwork has been laid. The collection and analysis of relevant labour market data indicate a strategic approach toward achieving the integration of essential skills into TVET. This preparatory work positions the program favorably for future developments, aligning with the needs of the labor market. Continued focus on implementing these findings into the curriculum will be essential to meet the integration target effectively.
	<i>LLL programmes on digital skills targeting low-skilled & disadvantaged rural population, with a strong gender focus, including for refugees developed</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2	While the target of developing two comprehensive LLL programs by 2024 has not yet been fully achieved, significant progress has been made in groundwork preparation. The proposal for micro-qualifications and the assessment of digital literacy gaps positions the project favorably for the future rollout of these programs. Continued focus on these initiatives will be essential to meet the target and ensure effective skill development for low-skilled and disadvantaged populations in rural areas.
Output 2.1: National stakeholders have capacities and knowledge to foster advanced skill needs anticipation systems and lifelong learning	<i>2.1.1: Nr of capacity building interventions on skill needs anticipation</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2	The capacity-building enhanced the capacities of national stakeholders, including representatives from the MLSP, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), and other key partners, in methodologies for detecting and anticipating skills needs. Additionally, a comprehensive mapping of the skills needs anticipation system was validated, further solidifying stakeholders' understanding of institutional frameworks.
	<i>2.1.2 Nr of capacity building new/updated occupational standards in support of the sectoral skills strategies, incl. for green occupations</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2	The project delivered updates to occupational standards that support sectoral skills strategies, including those for green occupations. This was based on a thorough diagnosis of the road construction maintenance and renewable energy sectors, identifying critical skills gaps and informing the development of the Sector Skills Roadmap for Moldova's Construction Industry, validated in 2025.
	<i>2.1.3 Nr of training programmes developed and piloted, including work-based learning</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 2	The project successfully developed and piloted a micro-qualifications program in partnership with the Postal Office of Moldova in 2025. Guidelines for large-scale implementation were drafted, and regional training sessions for providers were conducted, facilitating skill acquisition for workers and jobseekers. This includes a focus on work-based learning.
	<i>Nr of policy documents & recommendations validated by the tripartite constituents for effective protection of the workers in non-</i>	The project successfully developed and validated the National Programme to Tackle Undeclared Work, which serves as the main policy document to strengthen worker protection, formalize employment, and reduce informality, including for non-standard forms of employment (NSFE). This Programme, approved in 2024,

<p>Outcome 3: Effective protection of workers at the highest risk of informal employment</p>	<p><i>standard forms of employment, incl. suggestions on GE</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: At least one policy document and one policy recommendation.</p>	<p>was preceded by a thorough diagnosis of undeclared work and a legal analysis of NSFE, and it includes a series of concrete policy recommendations aimed at improving gender equality, formalization, and worker protection. Among these recommendations are measures to extend social security coverage to workers in non-standard forms of employment, improve compliance mechanisms, and promote evidence-based enforcement. The Programme also supported the development of the Digital OpenIMIS solution, enabling secure and systematic payment of social contributions for daily and seasonal workers. This outcome fully meets the planned target of one policy document and accompanying policy recommendations validated by tripartite constituents, establishing a solid foundation for formalization, social protection, and sustainable labour market governance.</p>
<p>Output 3.1 Moldovan constituents have improved capacity to tackle undeclared work.</p>	<p><i>3.1.1 Nr of policy documents to tackle the undeclared work drafted</i> Baseline:0 Target 2023:1</p>	<p>Output 3.1 was successfully completed, with Moldovan constituents significantly strengthening their capacities to tackle UDW. The development and approval of the National Programme to Tackle Undeclared Work in 2024 represented a comprehensive policy document, underpinned by a prior diagnosis of UDW and legal analysis of non-standard forms of employment (NSFE), and containing multiple recommendations combining deterrence and incentive measures. This achievement fully met the target for drafting policy documents to address UDW. A Market System Analysis of the construction sector was carried out and validated through a Tripartite Validation Workshop, providing a solid evidence base on opportunities and constraints related to formalization, thus achieving the planned target for sectoral analysis. In support of extending social security coverage, technical assistance facilitated the development of the Digital OpenIMIS voucher system for daily and seasonal workers in agriculture, alongside the elaboration of necessary legal amendments to the national framework, in line with the National Programme, meeting the planned target for costed policy options. Awareness-raising efforts exceeded expectations, with the “Work Legally for a Secure Future!” campaign reaching thousands of workers through TV and radio spots, public events, job fairs, trainings, and digital platforms, including over 11,000 unique website visitors, 50,000 Meta ads impressions, and 270 job applications submitted via the SLI system. The campaign successfully promoted legal employment and the role of the SLI, surpassing the target for public outreach. In parallel, the SLI piloted behaviorally informed notification letters for 50 high-risk companies, collecting feedback and generating early evidence for scalable, evidence-based enforcement. Taken together, these activities strengthened institutional capacities, enhanced stakeholder knowledge, and provided practical tools to reduce informality in the labour market, thereby achieving and, in some areas, exceeding the planned targets for tackling undeclared work.</p>
	<p><i>3.1.2 Market system analysis in construction sector carried out</i> Baseline:0 Target 2023: 1</p>	
	<p><i>3.1.3 Nr of people reached out with awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of informality and UDW</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 10,000</p>	
	<p><i>3.1.4 Nr of developed and costed policy options to extend social security coverage to workers in NSFE</i> Baseline: 0 Target 2024: 1</p>	

Annex 2: Lessons Learned Templates –

Lessons Learned 1

ILO Lesson Learned Template	
<p>Project Title: <i>Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova Project.</i></p> <p>Project TC/SYMBOL: MDA 826</p> <p>Name of Evaluator: Gheorghe Caraseni Date: 16 August 2025</p> <p>The following lesson learned has been identified as the result of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.</p>	
LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<i>Complementarity and comprehensiveness of the ILO's three-dimensional approach and the need for balanced budget allocations.</i> The three-dimensional approach—encompassing employment, skills development, and formalization—illustrates a comprehensive strategy that effectively addresses multifaceted labor market challenges.
Context and any related preconditions	Adequate funding is essential to ensure that initiatives in employment generation, skills training, and formalization are not only implemented but also sustained over time. A cohesive design and approach combined with equitable budgetary support is vital for maximizing the impact of the ILO's initiatives.
Targeted users /Beneficiaries	ILO, donor, national and local stakeholders.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	The consistency of the achievements of this integrated approach hinges on balanced budget allocations across all three dimensions.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	These elements work synergistically; promoting employment requires a skilled workforce, while formalization ensures that workers enjoy better rights and working conditions.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Financial planning - the need for balanced budget allocations.

Lessons Learned 2

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: *Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova Project.*

Project TC/SYMBOL: MDA/22/01/CHE (108916)

Name of Evaluator: Gheorghe Caraseni

Date: 28 August 2025

The following lesson learned has been identified as the result of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p><i>Importance of integrating evaluation recommendations into policy implementation.</i></p> <p>The MTE of the NEP highlights the critical need for the MLSP and the NEA to incorporate evaluation findings and recommendations into their policy frameworks. By actively engaging with evaluation insights, the MLSP and NEA can enhance program effectiveness, foster collaboration, and build public trust, ultimately leading to improved employment outcomes.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	<p>Integrating evaluation recommendations into policy implementation is vital for the MLSP and the NEA, as it ensures that their policies are grounded in real-world data and insights. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of programs but also encourages collaboration among stakeholders and fosters public confidence in government initiatives, setting the stage for improved employment outcomes and a more responsive labor market.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	<p>Mostly the MLSP and the NEA.</p>
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	<p>Failing to respond to the findings and recommendations of the NEP mid-term evaluation can undermine accountability, hinder informed decision-making, and alienate stakeholders, while also limiting the NEP's adaptability to changing conditions.</p>
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	<p>Implementation - Integrating NEP MTE recommendations into policy implementation.</p>

Lessons Learned 3

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: *Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova Project.*
Project TC/SYMBOL: MDA/22/01/CHE (108916)
Name of Evaluator: Gheorghe Caraseni **Date:** 28 August 2025
 The following lesson learned has been identified as the result of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<i>Ex-post assessment before pursuing further replication and institutionalization of the LEP approach.</i> While the evaluation indicates that the two established LEPs are productive and functional during project implementation, there is a lack of information regarding the functionality and sustainability of the six other LEPs created by the ILO in Moldova since 2018. Therefore, a comprehensive ex-post assessment is necessary to evaluate these LEPs before further replication and promoting national ownership. In this regard, there is no one-size-fits-all model; each context demands a tailored strategy that considers specific local conditions.
Context and any related preconditions	The need for a contextualized assessment before further replication and institutionalization of the LEPs approach arises from the evaluation findings indicating that while the two established LEPs have proven productive during project implementation, there is insufficient information regarding the functionality and sustainability of six other LEPs created within other ILO projects. To ensure effective replication and promote national ownership, a dedicated ex-post assessment is essential to evaluate the performance of these LEPs, as each context requires a tailored strategy that considers unique local conditions and challenges, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all model. This assessment will help identify best practices, potential barriers, and the specific needs of different communities, ultimately guiding the successful integration of LEPs into broader employment strategies.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO, LEPs, local communities, NEA, MLSP.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Although the successful piloting of the LEP approach offers valuable lessons, it does not ensure sustainability, as various factors—such as the functional capacities of local actors, resource availability, local employment opportunities, effective leadership, and stakeholder commitment—can differ significantly from district to district.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	A nuanced understanding of these local dynamics is crucial for effectively adapting and sustaining the LEP approach, ultimately maximizing its positive impact on local labor markets.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Ex-post assessment of the LEP approach.

Lessons Learned 4

ILO Lesson Learned Template

Project Title: *Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova Project.*

Project TC/SYMBOL: MDA/22/01/CHE (108916)

Name of Evaluator: Gheorghe Caraseni

Date: 28 August 2025

The following lesson learned has been identified as the result of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<i>Flexible approach determines adaptability and relevance.</i> The project demonstrated the value of flexibility in management, allowing the team to adapt to unforeseen challenges and delays. While the project faced implementation slowdowns due to various factors, the ability to extend timelines and adjust plans and interventions proved beneficial in achieving objectives. This adaptability, combined with partnerships and strong technical support, underscores the need for responsiveness to evolving demands.
Context and any related preconditions	The ILO project was carried out in a context shaped by various internal and external constraints, including elections, partner capacity, management issues, and financial allocations. The project's adaptability was a key precondition and played a crucial role in maintaining the relevance of its interventions, which is commendable.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO, project stakeholders.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	Not applicable
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	The positive causal factors contributing to the project's success include: The project's ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges and delays through flexible management practices enabled timely adjustments to plans and interventions; Timely adjustments in response to implementation slowdowns helped maintain progress toward achieving objectives; Collaborative relationships with stakeholders and robust technical backing from the Regional Office, which provided subject expertise and guidance, further reinforcing the project's adaptability and effectiveness.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	No administrative issues.

Annex 3: Good Practices Templates

Good Practice 1

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template Project Title: <i>Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova Project</i> TC/SYMBOL: MDA/22/01/CHE (108916) Name of Evaluator: Gheorghe Caraseni Date: 28 August 2025	
GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<i>Utilizing a Concept Note for systemic change.</i> The decision to employ a concept note to support a multi-faceted DWCP instead of a rigid project proposal framework exemplifies a successful strategy for promoting systemic change. Embracing this adaptable framework highlights the importance of prioritizing systemic change over strictly defined project objectives.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	This good practice can be replicated by ILO in other similar initiatives without any limitation.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	This approach provided the necessary flexibility for ILO interventions, allowing for adaptations to align with the dynamic needs of national stakeholders. As a result, initiatives became more responsive and relevant to the local context, fostering increased engagement and collaboration among key partners.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The impact of the good practice will be improved adaptability of the projects and increased relevance and performance. Targeted beneficiaries are ILO and implementing partners.
Potential for replication and by whom	Fully replicable by ILO, but is depending by the donor funding requirements.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice may contribute to increase the adaptability of the Decent Work Agenda as part of DWCP of ILO in Moldova, especially given the unforeseen by the DWCP external influencing factor - migration because of the military intervention of Russia in Ukraine.
Other documents or relevant comments	n/a

Good Practice 2

ILO Emerging Good Practice Template

Project Title: *Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova Project.*

Project TC/SYMBOL: MDA/22/01/CHE (108916)

Name of Evaluator: Gheorghe Caraseni

Date: 28 August 2025

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<i>Engaging professional associations</i> , particularly National Association of Beekeepers (NAB) has proven to be a valuable practice that yields multiple benefits. Firstly, grantees received tailored business development support, which not only enhanced their operational capacities but also provided them with practical, hands-on experience in their field. Secondly, this collaborative approach has played a crucial role in the formalization of startups and the jobs created through these initiatives. By aligning with the association, grantees were guided through the necessary processes to register their businesses and comply with regulatory requirements, fostering a more structured and sustainable entrepreneurial environment. Lastly, the partnership has significantly strengthened the NAB itself. It has led to an increase in membership, enhancing the association’s influence and reach and improvements in internal processes—such as networking, communication, and experience sharing among members
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Implementation of this good practice does not require contextualised limitations or special conditions for applicability and replicability.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	As revealed consultations with the stakeholders this direct support has empowered them to better navigate the complexities of their industry.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The impact of the good practice will be improved employment and enhanced formalisation.
Potential for replication and by whom	Fully replicable by ILO.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO’s Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice will contribute to better implementation of the Priority 1 Inclusive and productive employment for youth of the DWCP in Moldova.
Other documents or relevant comments	n/a

Annex 4: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Criteria	Key questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources	Tools/Methods
Relevance	How sensitive are the interventions objectives and design to the constituents' needs and capacities?	Does the design address challenges the constituents are facing? Was the project initiated based on constituents' request?	Mainly qualitative Partially quantitative	Needs based approach of the ILO project. Demand driven character of the project.	Written project and thematic policy documents. Project stakeholders	Analysis of the project documents, progress reports and strategic thematic documents. Desk review. KII and FGD with project stakeholders.
		To what extent the needs of marginalized groups (e.g. women/men, people with disability, other groups) have been incorporated into project design?	Mainly qualitative Partially quantitative	Inclusiveness of the project. LNOB Principle used by ILO.	Written project and thematic policy documents. Project stakeholders	
	To what extent the objective and design of the project are suited to national priorities, ILO's DWCP goals and strategic areas of UNSDCF?	How alighted is the project with the SDGs/Agenda 2030 and UNSDCF?	Mainly qualitative	Linkages of the project with the national and UN priorities. Level of project approximation	Concept Note, UNSDCF, Policies, Stakeholders.	Analysis of the project documents, progress reports. KII and FGD with the stakeholders
		How linked in the project to the DWCP?	Qualitative Quantitative	CPOs linkages to DWCP and P&B outcome 1.	Concept Note, DWCP. ILO.	
	The extent to which the ToC was valid and design of project interventions has been logical and based on the clear result framework?	To what extent the results` chain is interconnected with the indicators? Are there areas for improvement?	Qualitative Quantitative	Consistency and gaps of the project design.	Guidelines on RBM Concept Note, ToC, logframe. Stakeholders.	Desk review. KII and FGD with project stakeholders.
Coherence	How well does the project complements other similar projects?	How well does the project complements other ILO projects?	Qualitatively Quantitativel	Internal coherence	Concept note, progress reports, ILO.	Mostly desk review and KII and FGD with ILO.
		How well the project complements the projects of other actors working in the same area?	Qualitatively Quantitativel	External coherence	Concept note, progress reports, other stakeholders.	Desk review and KII and FGD with the stakeholders.
	How has the project communicated its efforts to the general public in Moldova and other stakeholders?	How strategic has the communication been and how much has it been integrated in all activities for awareness raising and for informing interest groups?	Mainly qualitative	Communication strategy of the project.	Concept note, progress reports, ILO and stakeholders.	Desk review KII and FGD with the stakeholders and ILO.

Evaluation Criteria	Key questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources	Tools/Methods
Effectiveness	To what extent have the expected results been achieved?	What is the progress made (reportable/not reportable) under the NEP (2022-2026), and National Programme to tackle the UDW (2024-2025)?	Qualitative Quantitative	Project achievements against the performance indicators. The level of implementation of the thematic legislation.	Progress reports. MTE report on NEP implementation, National policies. Other secondary data documents. ILO and key stakeholders.	KII, FGD. Desk review.
		The extent to which the project was value added for CPOs achievement?	Qualitative Quantitative	Evidences of the contribution to to P&B outcome 1 achievement.		
		Has the capacity development been well targeted? Were the right people trained?	Mostly Qualitative	Evidences of increased capacities	Progress reports. Key stakeholders.	KII, FGD. Desk review.
	To what extent the project results contribute (or not) to the identified SDGs related targets?	Even if the relevant SDGs had not been identified in design, can a plausible contribution to the SDGs and related targets be established?	Qualitative Quantitative	Project contribution to SDG implementation.	Progress reports. Key stakeholders.	KII, FGD. Desk review
	To what extent the cross-cutting issues were mainstreamed and different groups benefited from the project results?	How different marginalized groups benefited from the project achievements ?	Mostly Qualitative	Project inclusiveness.	Progress reports. ILO projects stakeholders	KII, FGD. Desk review
		How effectively did the project mainstream gender equality issues into its activities and results?	Qualitative Quantitative	Gender sensitiveness of the project.	Progress reports. ILO projects stakeholders	KII, FGD. Desk review
		How did outputs and outcomes contribute to other ILO's cross-cutting strategies including social dialogue, job creation and formalization?	Qualitative Quantitative	Promotion of the ILO cross-cutting policy.	Progress reports. ILO projects stakeholders	KII, FGD. Desk review
	What are the major factors influencing the achievements/ non-achievements?	How did the project adapt to external and internal factors?	Qualitative Quantitative	Degree of influence of the factors (enablers and barriers) on achievements. Flexibility and adaptability.	Project documents, Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review KII and FGD with stakeholders

Evaluation Criteria	Key questions	Sub-questions	Type of Indicators	Indicators related to EQs	Sources	Tools/Methods
Efficiency	To what extent the resources were allocated strategically and mobilized?	To what extent were the available resources (human, financial, materials, time) used efficiently?	Qualitative Quantitative	Cost efficiency of the project	Financial documents versus project achievements.	Desk review KII and FGD
		To what extent has the project leveraged resources with other projects and through partnerships with other organizations?	Mostly Quantitative	Resources mobilisation	Financial and progress reports.	Desk review KII and FGD
	To what extent have management capacities and arrangements supported the achievements of results?	How efficient was the M&E system? How effective was the DWTs, Regional Office & HQ in supporting and monitoring the project?	Mostly Qualitative	Efficiency of the management arrangements. Lessons Learnt and good practices.	Project documents, Stakeholders of the project.	Desk review KII and FGD
		Is the current management set up and division of roles and responsibilities in ILO team, conducive to good results? What have been the lessons learnt?	Mostly Qualitative			
Impact	To what extent the project contributed to more and better opportunities for decent work for youth, women /men in Moldova?	Can other long-term changes be expected? If not, why not?	Qualitative Quantitative	Long-term changes generated with the ILO projects' contribution.		Desk review KII and FGD
Sustainability	What are the sustainability prospects of the project?	What groundwork has the project laid to ensure sustainable support for employment, improved labor market participation, and strengthened local employment systems following its completion?	Mostly Qualitative Partially Quantitative	Sustainability of changes. Degree of use of the increased knowledge/enhanced capacities. Commitments of authorities.	Progress reports. Financial plans, Decisions or other commitments. Stakeholders.	Analysis of the programme documents. KII, FGD with the stakeholders.
	What are the next steps to be undertaken?	What action might be needed to bolster the longer-term effects and to come to further policy measures generating a positive change?	Quantitative Qualitative	Recommendations and next steps	Projects reports and key stakeholders	Desk review. KII, FGD with the stakeholders.

Annex 5: List of consulted stakeholders

<i>N</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Position</i>
1.	Ala Lipciu	ILO Moldova	National Coordinator
2.	Violeta Vrabie		Project Coordinator
3.	Iuliana Moga		
4.	Maria Jose Chamorro	ILO Budapest office	Formalization and Gender Equality Specialist
5.	Alessandra Molz		Skills Development Specialist
6.	Daniela Zampini		Employment Specialist
7.	Anna Gherganova	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	Head of the Directorate for Occupational Policies and Labour Migration Regulation
8.	Felicia Bechtoldt		State Secretary
9.	Raisa Dogaru	National Employment Agency	Director
10.	Lilia Plugaru		Deputy Director
11.	Tatiana Cristafovici		Interim Head of ALMMs Implementation Department
12.	Vlad Caminschi	National Confederation of Employers from Moldova	Head of Internal and External Affairs
13.	Polina Fisticanu	National Confederation of Trade Unions from Moldova	Head of Social-Economic Department
14.	Ion Maxim	National Beekeeping Association	President of ANARM
15.	Marin Dragomir		Beekeeper
16.	Mihaela Grumeza		Trainer
17.	Ana Cimpoiesu	LEP Hincesti	Local facilitator Hincesti
18.	Iurie Levinschi		President of Hincesti District Council
19.	Aliona Grigoras		Deputy-president of Hincesti District Council
20.	Dumitru Vartic		
21.	Galina Erhan		Chief of Finance department
22.	Elena Nichifor		Chief of economy and transborder cooperation
23.	Adrian Tasca		Construction, Public Utilities and Roads Section
24.	Svetlana Vrabie		Accountant of the district council
25.	Valentina Cotorobai		President of the Association of Cultural Trade Unions
26.	Vitalie Savcenco		Employment Directorate
27.	Maria Rotaru		Producers' association 'Agrofarm'
28.	Tamara Leancă		Entrepreneur
29.	Angela Hristicenco		Vice-Director of VET School Hincesti
30.	Daria Gonța		Farmer/ Beneficiary
31.	Valentina Pănuță	Beekeeper/ Beneficiary	
32.	Ana Moisei	Handicrafts master/ Beneficiary	
33.	Aliona Manole	LEP Floresti (Territorial Committee for Collective Consultation and Bargaining)	Local facilitator/Territorial Branch Trade Union Centre in the Field of Education and Science
34.	Natalia Bogdan		Directorate of Investments Attraction
35.	Irina Gusac		Employment Directorate
36.	Aliona Cojocar		Deputy-President of Floresti District Council

37.	Natalia Barbasumpa	ILO	Director of Lunca Rautului LAG
38.	Diana Decuseara		Member of Artisans Union
39.	Dumitru Stoica		Regional Center for Sustainable Development
40.	Veaceslav Cretu		Director of the VET School
41.	Victoria Cazacu	Copperative in Floresti	President
42.	Ludmila Stihi	Ministry of Education and Research	State Secretary
43.	Lilia Buimestru		Senior Consultant, National Qualifications Framework
44.	Sergiu Coceas		Senior Consultant, General Education Management
45.	Patrik Meier	SECO	Advisor, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
46.	Andrei Stratulat	Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova	National Programme Officer Economic Development
47.	Iurii Morcotilo		Consultant
48.	Corina Ajder	Prime Minister's Office	Employment and social protection advisor
49.	Nicolae Vasilenco	State Labor Inspectorate	Deputy Director
50.	Claire Harasty	ILO	Director, Decent Work Technical Support Team & Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe
51.	Alexei Buzu	MLSP	Minister

Annex 6: List of Consulted documents

1. SDC Moldova Concept Note *Accelerator for decent job creation in Moldova, 2022-2024*.
2. Terms of Reference: Independent Evaluation of the project “*Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova*”.
3. ILO Logical Framework *Inclusive and Productive Employment in Moldova* Project.
4. *Decent Work Country Programme 2021-2024 for Republic of Moldova*, ILO Office for Central and Eastern Europe.
5. Initiating the take-off: Quick project status report as of Feb. 23.
6. Progress Report February, 2023 – January, 2024.
7. Progress Report *EU Support to Inclusive Labour Markets in the Republic of Moldova* September 2023 – September 2024, ILO.
8. The Mid-Term Evaluation of the National Employment Program for 2022–2026.
9. Reform on improving the National Employment Agency’s services for 2023-2026, MLSP.
10. Analytical Note: *The performance evaluation framework of the National Employment Agency*. Iurie Morcotilo
11. Narrative Report on the implementation of Grant Agreement PO40513559 between the ILO and National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova (CNSM).
12. Diagnostic Report *Opportunities and constraints to formalize informal workers and economic units in the construction sector in the Republic of Moldova, 2024*.
13. Employee register and information centers to support the formalization of work, Dec. 2024. RO.
14. Evaluation report on the results of the actions taken by the State Labor Inspectorate during the campaign: Let's Go White. Chisinau, 2024.
15. Final report *Communication campaign lucrezlegal.md*
16. PPP Report *Communication Campaign* to boost the image of the Labour Inspectorate.
17. Agenda *Incentive-Based Approaches to Formalization* Forum.
18. *Reduction of Undeclared Work* Program for 2024-2025.
19. Order of MLSP Nr 72/1, 11 Apr. 2024.
20. Diagnostic report on undeclared work in Moldova: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/diagnostic-report-undeclared-work-moldova>
21. Report on non-standard forms of employment under Moldovan legislation: <https://www.ilo.org/publications/report-non-standard-forms-employment-under-moldovan-legislation>
22. Research and Stakeholder Mapping for the Development of Notification Letters – A Tool for Preventing Undeclared Work by the State Labour Inspectorate.
23. Methodology for Companies Segmentation Based on the Risk Classification System for Sending Legal Compliance Notifications Regarding Undeclared Work.
24. Informative Letter: *Notification on Compliance with Labour Legislation and Employment Declaration in the Republic of Moldova*.
25. Notification Letter: *Notification Regarding Potential Violations of Labour Legislation and Risk of Sanctions*.
26. Notification Letter: *Warning Regarding Non-Compliance Risks with Labour Legislation*.
27. Net impact assessment of the program Wage subsidies in Moldova, Chişinău, June 2025.
28. National Development Strategy "Moldova - 2030": <https://me.gov.md/en/content/national-development-strategy-moldova-2030>
29. National Employment Program (2022-2026).
30. UNEG Ethical Code of Conduct to Evaluations in the UN system: www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100
31. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm#impact-block>
32. <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>
33. <https://anarm.md/centre-de-instruire-si-consultanta-in-apicultura/> and <https://ro-ro.facebook.com/ANARM.md/>
34. UNDP Approach to Supporting Capacity Development. Capacity Development Group. UNDP, June 2009, page 3. http://content-ext.undp.org/aplaws_assets/2072460/2072460.pdf

Annex 7: Terms of References

Independent Evaluation of the project “Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova”

Project Title	Inclusive and Productive employment in the Republic of Moldova
Project Code	<u>MDA/22/01/CHE (108916)</u>
Type of Evaluation	Independent
Timing	Final
Donor	SECO
Administrative Unit	DWT/CO Budapest
Technical Backstopping	DWT/CO Budapest
P&B outcome (s)	ILO PB 24-25 Strategic Output 1.2
SDGs	8
Budget	CHF 2,000,000 (USD 2,212,104.27)
Project Duration	16 December 2022 – 30 June 25
Evaluator	TBC
Evaluation Manager	Krgovic, Nina

Background of the Project

Moldova has made notable progress in narrowing the development gap with the European Union; nevertheless, the country continues to face persistent labour market challenges, including low employment rates, high levels of inactivity among youth, women, and older workers, widespread informality, and sustained emigration. The COVID-19 pandemic—compounded by the energy and refugee crises following the war in Ukraine—has further strained the labour market, disproportionately impacting vulnerable groups. In response to these challenges, the **Productive and Inclusive Employment in Moldova** project was launched by the International Labour Organization (ILO), with financial support from the Government of Switzerland. Spanning the period 2022–2025, the project supports the Moldovan Government and its social partners in advancing decent work opportunities, with a particular focus on local-level implementation. It contributes directly to the ILO’s [Decent Work Country Programme \(DWCP\) 2021–2024](#) and aligns with the strategic priorities of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). The project integrates targeted interventions across three interlinked areas: employment promotion through Local Employment Partnerships (LEPs), skills development aligned with labour market demand, and the transition from informal to formal employment. Social dialogue and digitalization are cross-cutting enablers across all components. Building on the ILO’s longstanding presence in Moldova, the project leverages its technical expertise and tripartite approach to foster inclusive, sustainable, and rights-based labour market outcomes.

Theory of Change

If the ILO assists Moldova in implementing a gender-transformative National Employment Strategy focused on decentralisation and demand-side measures, and strengthens employment services and governance through the National Employment Agency (NEA) and local actors, and facilitates the design and implementation of the LEPs to create jobs, activate jobseekers, and promote formality, and improves skills anticipation while supporting inclusive, market-relevant training for youth, adults, and vulnerable groups, and pilots a sectoral formalisation package using a systems approach to reduce informality and expand social protection, with all actions guided by social dialogue, gender equality, and digitalisation,

....then local and national institutions will deliver more inclusive and demand-driven employment and training services, vulnerable groups will gain better access to decent work and relevant skills, informal workers and employers will be more likely to formalise, and social partners will contribute more effectively to employment, skills, and formalisation policies.

... leading to more decent, formal, and inclusive jobs, better skills matching and productivity, reduced informality with expanded social protection, and stronger labour market institutions and social dialogue.

The project strengthens the capacities of national and local institutions, including the MLSP, Social Partners, NEA, LPA, local tripartite committees and training providers, to promote inclusive, demand-driven, and gender-responsive employment and skills policies. Through technical assistance and policy advice, the project supports the decentralized implementation of the NEP, the rollout of Active Labour Market Measures (ALMMs), the design and

operationalization of Local Employment Partnerships, and the development of market-relevant, lifelong learning opportunities for youth, women, and disadvantaged groups.

- The project aims to reach at least 3,000 inactive women and youth, and to generate over 1,000 jobs by end of June 2025, with a focus on vulnerable groups such as NEETs, young women, refugees, and persons with disabilities. It also promotes the formalization of work and strengthens mechanisms to prevent undeclared work and extend social protection to workers in non-standard employment.
- The project is expected to foster stronger cooperation among social partners, improve the performance of employment services, and contribute to a better match between labour supply and demand. At system level, it will result in improved capacities for policy formulation and delivery, better anticipation of skills needs, and more coherent labour market governance.
- Ultimately, by promoting inclusive and productive employment, formalization, and access to relevant skills, the project contributes to creating more and better decent work opportunities in Moldova.

Target groups:

7. **The Government**, represented primarily by the MLSP, including its Directorates responsible for the design of employment policies, and social dialogue. The National Employment Agency, as the key implementing body of ALMMs, is a central counterpart of the project. The project also engages the MER, the Ministry of Finance, SLI and other institutions contributing to skills development, lifelong learning, formalization and labour market inclusion.
8. **Workers' organizations, and their local peers** involved in selected districts, based on a national diagnosis of the labour market, particularly those engaged in designing and implementing of the LEPs.
9. **Employers' organizations**, and other business associations at regional, and local levels. These organizations play a key role in shaping demand-driven skills interventions, contributing to local employment initiatives, and promoting the transition to formality, particularly in sectors with high informal employment as construction and agriculture.
10. **Local Public Authorities (LPAs)** involved in the design and rollout of the LEPs. These actors include local administrations at the district and communities levels. At the local level, social partners and LPAs form the core of the tripartite committees. The project has actively promoted the inclusion of additional relevant stakeholders in these committees, such as the local employment offices, regional development bodies, local youth organizations, training providers—including VET schools—and other interested actors. At the national level, social partners have played a critical role in reinforcing the institutional capacity of the local tripartite committees. They provide strategic support to strengthen competencies in social dialogue and contribute meaningfully to the design, implementation, and long-term sustainability of LEPs.
11. **Labour market professionals**, including employment counsellors and NEA staff. The project strengthens their technical capacities in service delivery, digital tools, inclusive outreach of vulnerable groups.
12. **Youth and women**, particularly NEETs, inactive persons, and those living in rural areas or belonging to disadvantaged groups (including refugees, persons with disabilities, and survivors of domestic violence). These final beneficiaries benefit from tailored employment services, lifelong learning opportunities, entrepreneurship support, and access to decent jobs.

The project strategy is organized around three interlinked outcomes that contribute to the overall objective of creating more and better decent work opportunities for youth, women, and men in Moldova.

Outcome 1: Improved inclusive and productive employment through decentralized implementation of the National Employment Program (NEP). The project supports the operationalization of the NEP at national and local levels by strengthening the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the National Employment Agency, and Local Public Authorities. Through technical assistance, capacity building, and support for local employment partnerships, the project aims to enhance employment service delivery, increase the reach and impact of ALMMs, and create job opportunities, particularly for rural youth, inactive women, and other vulnerable groups.

Outcome 2: Enhanced skills development and adoption of a lifelong learning strategy to support labour market transitions. In response to the fast-changing world of work and skills mismatches, the project promotes a forward-looking skills ecosystem. It supports the development of a national skills anticipation system, modernizes vocational education and training (VET), and helps design and pilot lifelong learning (LLL) programs that target low-skilled and

disadvantaged individuals, including refugees and women in rural areas. Sectoral approaches are integrated to improve alignment with labour market demand.

Outcome 3: Strengthened protection and formalization of workers at risk of informal employment

The project works with social partners and government institutions to develop policies and tools for extending labour and social protection to workers in non-standard forms of employment. It fosters innovative interventions in sectors with high informality (e.g., construction, agriculture), enhances the institutional capacity to address undeclared work, and raises public awareness on the risks of informality. The aim is to ensure fair working conditions and inclusive access to social protection. These outcomes are pursued through a rights-based, gender-responsive, and participatory approach, ensuring meaningful involvement of social partners and vulnerable groups, and alignment with the DWCP and Moldova's national development priorities. The project team consists of four members: a Senior National Project Coordinator (SNPM), a Junior National Project Coordinator (JNPC), and a Project Administrative Assistant (PAA), all based in Chişinău, (Moldova), along with a part-time Programme Assistant based at the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) office in Budapest. The SNPM is responsible for the overall management and implementation of the project. The SNPM also liaises with and receives technical guidance and support from the Senior Employment Specialist. In addition, project staff benefit from the expertise of the Gender and Formalization Specialist, as well as the Specialist in Skills and Employability from the DWT Budapest team. The JNPC supports the SNPM with the implementation of all project components with specific responsibility for supporting the formalization component. The Project Administrative Assistant handles administrative, financial, and operational tasks, including preparation and follow-up of project documentation. The part-time Programme Assistant based in Budapest is responsible for processing all project-related travel and financial transactions, as well as budget revisions and monitoring through the ILO's central accounting system (IRIS) that is managed exclusively by the ILO Regional Office based in Budapest³⁸. The project has been extended one time by six months (from 1 January 2025 to June 30, 2025).

The Inclusive and Productive Employment in Moldova project contributes directly to the implementation of the DWCP 2021-2024, supporting multiple key outcomes that are essential for sustainable and inclusive labour market development. Specifically, the project advances Outcome 1: "Inclusive and productive employment through decentralized implementation of the National Employment Program (NEP) and improved performance of the National Employment Agency (NEA)," including sub-outcomes 1.2: Improved performance of the NEA, and 1.3: An advanced skill needs anticipation system is operational, and a lifelong learning strategy is adopted. The project also supports Outcome 2.2: Effective protection of temporary workers at highest risk of informal employment, such as seasonal, casual, and daily workers. Furthermore, it contributes to strengthening social dialogue platforms as highlighted under Outcomes 3.1 and 3.2, focusing on the development of relevant and effective social dialogue platforms at national, territorial, and enterprise levels, as well as building strong employers' and workers' organizations with expertise in policy development and quality service provision for their members. Aligned with the ILO Programme and Budget Strategic Outputs and the broader [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework \(UNSDCF\) Moldova 2023-2027](#), the project supports Outcome 3: Enhanced Shared Prosperity in a Sustainable Economy, emphasizing employment creation, skills development, and decent work for all.

Gender equality and non-discrimination are integrated as core, cross-cutting principles throughout all project activities. The project places special emphasis on improving access to decent and productive employment for vulnerable groups, including rural youth, women, persons with disabilities, refugees, and inactive populations. This includes promoting gender-sensitive labour policies and programs that address barriers to employment, reduce informality, and strengthen social protection, with particular attention to temporary and non-standard workers. Central to the project's success is the reinforcement of social dialogue mechanisms at all levels. By fostering constructive dialogue among government bodies, employers' organizations, and workers' representatives, the project contributes to more inclusive policy formulation and implementation. This participatory approach enhances transparency, builds consensus, and strengthens the capacity of social partners to collaboratively address labour market challenges, thereby supporting Moldova's transition toward more equitable and sustainable economic growth. Overall, the project enhances institutional capacities, promotes skills development and lifelong learning, supports protection of vulnerable workers, and empowers social partners, all contributing to improved labour market outcomes aligned with Moldova's National Employment Program and international labour standards.

³⁸ According to ILO financial rules and procedures the local staff do not have access to IRIS

1. Purpose, Objective and Users of the Evaluation

The main purposes of the independent final evaluation is to give an assessment of the effectiveness and the sustainability of the project interventions across the three outcomes; assessing performance as per the foreseen targets and indicators of achievement at output and outcome levels; strategies and implementation modalities chosen; partnership arrangements; constraints and opportunities; and to provide lessons to improve performance and delivery of future project results. The evaluation will cover the project's components, outcomes, outputs and activities as reflected in the project document, as well as subsequent modification and alterations made during its implementations. The evaluation will follow the [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation](#). The evaluation also serves organizational learning and it will cover the issues and inputs from stakeholders/tripartite constituents. The evaluation findings and insights will support organizational learning by facilitating cross-learning opportunities, including the documentation and sharing of success stories. These lessons will help to innovate and enhance the project's approaches, contributing to regional knowledge on improving outreach and the effectiveness of services that promote productive and inclusive employment, particularly in addressing labour market challenges and informal employment. Primary users of the evaluation findings are ILO constituents, funding partners, ILO DWT/CO Budapest and HQ (Evaluation Office, PARDEV and PROGRAM). Secondary users of the evaluation findings are other interest partners (e.g. MER, SLI, tripartite committees), other ILO units and regions, and the general public.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are the following:

- Assess the effectiveness of the project approaches;
- Measure progress of the interventions against the PB output 1.2 and DWCP Moldova 2021-2024 outcomes 1.1,1.2,1.3.,2.2, 3.1,3.2. Examine what are the common factors that have contributed to the achievement of the results, their potential impact and likelihood of their sustainability;
- Assess the extent to which the project used ILO technical expertise and comparative advantages to position ILO in the country and/or as instruments/frameworks that pave ways for other interventions that respond to national priority;
- Assess the extent to which the project mainstreamed key ILO tenets in the delivery of its activities, including the promotion of ILS, social dialogue and gender equality.
- Assess how the project contributed to delivery of results, that were agreed during the design stage of these interventions;
- Assess how project contributed to leveraging additional resources;
- Identify success stories as well as, good practices and lessons learned, including innovation to feed into regional learning and future programming of similar interventions and strategies;
- Assess the strength and weaknesses of the project proposal design, monitoring and reporting;
- Assess the risk management and impact of significant factors including crisis and fragility. How it affected the interventions?
- Identify key lessons learned and good practices.

2. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation will cover the period from the start of the project until the evaluation takes place (1 st July 2025) and will examine all the aspects and components of the project. The evaluation will integrate ILO's cross-cutting issues, including norms and social dialogue, gender equality, disability inclusion, other non-discrimination concerns, and medium and long-term effects of capacity development initiatives throughout the evaluation methodology and deliverables. The gender dimension should be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover, the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve the lives of women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and evaluation report. The evaluation will give specific attention to how the project is relevant to the ILOs programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels, UNSDCF and other national development strategies and frameworks.

3. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

1. **Relevance:** *The extent to which the intervention objectives, and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partners/Institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change*

- How sensitive are the interventions objectives and design to the country's and constituents' needs and capacity? Does the design address challenges the constituents are facing? Was the project initiated based on constituents' request?
 - The extent to which the design of project interventions have been logical and based on the clear result framework (CPOs linkages to DWCP and P&B outcome 1).
 - The extent to which the need of different groups (e.g. women and men, people with disability, and other marginalized groups) have been incorporated into consideration in the design of the interventions
 - How responsive was the project design to national sustainable development plans under specific SDG targets and indicators?
2. **Coherence:** *The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution*
- How well does the project intervention complement other ILO projects' effort and other work of relevant national and international agencies working in the same area?
 - How has the project communicated its efforts to the general public in Moldova and other stakeholders? How strategic has the communication been and how much has it been integrated in all activities for awareness raising and for informing interest groups?
3. **Effectiveness:** *The extent to which the interventions achieved, or are expected to achieve, their objectives and its results, including any differential results across groups?*
- What is the progress/achievements made in the country (significant progress made both reportable and not reportable under the National employment programme (2022-2026), and National programme to tackle the UDW (2024-2025))? The extent to which the project has been value addition to the achievement of target CPOs that contributed to P&B outcome 1)?
 - To what extent have the interventions' results/achievement – had an effect distributed across different groups (marginalized groups, men and women, non-discrimination, and inclusion of people with disability)
 - How effectively did the project mainstream gender equality issues into its activities, outputs and outcomes?
 - How did outputs and outcomes of the project contribute to other ILO's cross-cutting strategies including social dialogue, job creation and formalization?
 - Has the capacity development been well targeted? Were the right people trained?
 - To what extent has an M&E system been put in place and supported the project's overall implementation?
 - To what extent the project results contribute (or not) to the identified SDGs related targets? Even if the relevant SDGs had not been identified in design, can a plausible contribution to the relevant SDGs and related targets be established?
4. **Efficiency:**
- Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve expected results? Has the project management and staffing to implement and monitor the project been adequate?
 - Assess the monitoring and oversight of the project – how efficient were these and whether these have affected the delivery of the projects. How effective was the role of DWTs, Regional Office, and HQ in technical supporting and monitoring of the project? To what extent have management capacities and arrangements supported the achievements of results? Is the current management set up and division of roles and responsibilities in ILO team, conducive to good results? What have been the lessons learnt?
 - Has the project been completed within the originally planned timeframe? What were the reasons for the delay, if any?
 - To what extent has the project leveraged resources (financial, human or other) with other projects/programmes, and through partnerships with other organizations, to enhance the project impact and efficiency?
5. **Impact and sustainability:**
- What is the expected sustainability of the intervention?
 - Have the solutions developed and proposed by the project been assessed from the cost perspective? How realistic have the policy proposals been?
 - What has the intervention contributed or established that will sustainably support inclusive employment, improved labour market participation, and strengthened local employment systems beyond the project's duration?

- Can long-term impact be expected? If not, why not?

4. Methodology

The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory, consultative and transparent manner by engaging various groups of stakeholders. The evaluation should apply a mixed methods approach with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to addressing the criteria and questions that might include: document analysis, interviews, direct observation and surveys—or some combination thereof. The advantage of this approach is that it permits findings derived from one method to be verified using a different method. This ensures valid findings. The evaluation will also examine the project's Theory of Change. The evaluation will be carried out through a desk review, Teams interviews with ILO specialists in Budapest and in Geneva with the ILO project staff, ILO constituents, project beneficiaries, development partners and other key stakeholders. The interviews will be conducted face-to-face, and by Teams or phone if the situation does not allow face-to-face meetings. The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to representation of specific group of stakeholders. The methodology should ensure involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation as well as in the dissemination processes. Data should be presented and analyzed with appropriate gender disaggregation. The detailed approach and methodology should be part of the inception report. The evaluator may adapt the methodology, but any fundamental changes should be agreed with the evaluation manager.

5. Main deliverables

Draft and Final version of evaluation report in English (maximum 30 pages plus annexes) with the following proposed structure in accordance with ILO Evaluation Office Checklist 5. Preparing the evaluation report:

- Inception report
- Draft evaluation report
- Final Evaluation Report
 - Cover page with key project and evaluation data
 - Executive Summary
 - Acronyms
 - Project background: Description of the project
 - Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation
 - Evaluation criteria and questions
 - Methodology and limitations
 - Clearly identified findings for each criterion
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations (i.e. for the different key stakeholders)
 - Lessons learned and good practices
 - Annexes: TOR, List of people interviewed - Schedule of the interviews, Documents reviewed, Project outputs and unexpected results achieved versus planned as per the Project logical framework targets, Lessons learned and good practice templates.

Executive summary, Lessons learned and Good practices completed, using ILO templates. The quality of the report will be assessed against the relevant EVAL Checklists #5 and 6. All reports, including drafts, must be written in English.

6. Management Arrangements and Work Plan

Evaluation Management – Role and responsibilities

An Evaluation Manager will manage the evaluation process, and the quality assurance will be provided by the ILO Regional Evaluation Officer (REO). The Evaluation Manager (EM) responsibilities include managing the evaluation and assignment of the Independent Evaluator, consulting on methodological issues and facilitating access to primary and secondary data. The EM will be also responsible for the following tasks:

- Prepare the TOR and ensure consultation with all key stakeholders before TOR is finalized
- Facilitate selection of the independent evaluator(s);
- ensure proper stakeholders involvement;
- review and circulate draft and consolidate comments from key stakeholders
- review and submit the final report to RO/Europe and ILO Evaluation Office for approval;
- disseminate final report.

The RO for Europe at ILO HQ will approve the report. The final approval of the report will be done by ILO Evaluation Office at ILO HQ. The evaluation report will be considered final only when it is approved by ILO Evaluation Office. Role and responsibility of the project team: The staff will handle all arrangements with the chosen evaluator and provide any logistical and other assistance as required. The project team will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Provide project background materials,
- Prepare a list of recommended interviewees,
- Obtain relevant approvals and consent from key stakeholders to undertake evaluations and interviews,
- Help in schedule meetings for field visits (if applicable) and coordinating in-country logistical arrangements,
- Be interviewed and provided inputs as requested by the evaluator during the evaluation process,
- Review and provide comments on the draft evaluation reports,
- Provide logistical and administrative support to the evaluator, including travel arrangements (if applicable) and all materials needed to provide all deliverables.

Evaluator(s)

- The Evaluation Manager will assign an evaluator(s) to conduct this evaluation.
- Responsibilities of the evaluator
 - Providing guidance and definition of roles and tasks in this evaluation throughout the evaluation phases and ensuring quality control and adherence to ethical guidelines,
 - Defining the methodological approach and drafting the inception report (including all data collection tools), producing the preliminary findings presentation, draft reports and drafting and presenting a final report,
 - Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation,
 - Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. This includes consultation with all key stakeholders,
 - Ensuring the evaluation is conducted per TORs and timeline, including following ILO and UNEG guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements and adheres to evaluation report quality standards: as referred to above,
 - Liaising with the evaluation manager,
 - Facilitating meetings with stakeholders (scheduling, debriefing and/or stakeholders’ workshop),
 - Be flexible on the evaluation timeline if it takes longer time and effort to complete the interviews/data collection through various methods,
 - Contributing to the report dissemination and communication (if any) by participating in webinars, and
 - Supporting or providing inputs to evaluation communication products.

Desired competency and qualification of the evaluator

- At least 5 years experience in evaluations of the UN and multi-lateral agencies, including experience as evaluation team leader;
- Contextual knowledge of the ILO and UN;
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and an understanding of issue related to validity and reliability;
- Knowledge in gender and non-discrimination, and understanding of ILO ILS, tripartism, social dialogue will be an advantage
- Adequate technical specialization – knowledge and expertise in International Labour standards and resolution of labour disputes is considered an advantage
- Fluency in spoken and written English
- Previous work experience in Central Europe, and especially in Moldova will be an advantage

Estimated level of efforts – approximately 30 working days for the evaluator. The duration of work of the evaluators will be required within the period of 3 months (during July - September 2025). The travel fees and DSA will be added to the fees. Indicative time frame and responsibilities

Tasks/ Responsibilities	Responsible person	Time frame (by end)
Preparation of the TOR –draft	Evaluation manager	20 th June 2025
Preparation of list of stakeholders with E-mail addresses and contact numbers	ILO Project in Moldova	11 th July 2025
Finalization of the TOR	Evaluation manager (EM)	24 th June 2025
Call for EOIs	ILO EM	25 th June 2025
Selection of Evaluator	Evaluation Manager	27 th June 2025
Contracting Evaluator	DWT/Evaluation Manager	30 th June 2025

Tasks/ Responsibilities	Responsible person	Time frame (by end)
Brief evaluator	Evaluation Manager and relevant ILO staff	By 5 July 2025
Inception report submitted	Evaluators	By 15th July 2025
Data collection and debriefing to ILO	Evaluators	By 10 th August 2025
Draft report submitted to Evaluation Manager	Evaluators	By 22 nd August 2025
Quality check and review of the draft report	Evaluation Manager	By 27 th August 2025
Sharing the draft report with all concerned stakeholders for comments	Evaluation Manager	By 1 st September 2025
Consolidated comments on the draft report, send to the evaluator	Evaluation Manager	By 16 th September 2025
Finalisation of the report and submission to Evaluation Manager	Evaluators	By 20 th September 2025
Quality Review of the final report	Evaluation Manager	By 30 th September 2025
Submission of the final report to ILO Evaluation Office	Evaluation Manager	By 9 th November 2025
Approval of the final evaluation report	ILO Evaluation Office	By 15 th November 2025

Resources: Funding will come from project budget, estimated resource requirements at this point include

- Consultancy fee
- travel cost and DSA (where relevant) as per the ILO rules and regulations
- actual communication cost (in case of virtual meeting e.g. telephone or skype calls if needed)
- Translation
- Validation workshop

7. Legal and Ethical Matters

The evaluation will comply with UN Norms and Standards. The evaluator will abide by the [EVAL's Code of Conduct](#) for carrying out the evaluations. UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical guidelines will be followed. The evaluator should not have any links to project management, or any other conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation. Evaluators should have personal and professional integrity and abide by the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines](#) for evaluation and the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system to ensure that the rights of individuals involved in an evaluation are respected. Evaluators must act with cultural sensitivity and pay particular attention to protocols, codes and recommendations that may be relevant to their interactions with women. Evaluators will be expected to sign the respective ILO Code of Conduct to show that they have read and understood the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System process. Ownership of data from the evaluation rests jointly with the ILO and the consultant. The copyright of the evaluation report will rest exclusively with the ILO. The use of data for publication and other presentations can only be made with written agreement of the ILO. Key stakeholders can make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

8. Security and Covid-19 restrictions and guidance

ILO EVAL has provided guidance on Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO that should be consulted and followed by the national consultant: http://www.ilo.ch/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_mas/--eval/documents/publication/wcms_744068.pdf. All UN personnel, including consultants, are expected to complete the UNDSS BSAFE (security awareness training course) and, if travel is required, are obliged to provide the Security Clearance External collaborators benefit from the security arrangements and protection provided by the United Nations Security Management Network (UNSMN) at duty stations which are either not under a security level or up to security level four (4). No external collaboration contracts may be issued for work that entails travel to a location at security level five (5) or higher. If external collaborators for whom travel has been paid by the ILO find themselves at a location where security level five (5) or six (6) is declared during their presence there, immediate arrangements must be made in liaison with SECURITY to ensure that they leave the duty station as soon as possible. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, if the situation in the region changes, appropriate actions will be taken amongst the following options:

- Suspending the implementation of the contract until further notice or until a specific time when it can be reviewed further in the face of new developments,
- Reducing the contract activities/scope/services (partial suspension), or

- Terminating the contract if it appears unfeasible that the desired deliverables will be received/achieved.

I. Annex

6. All relevant UNEG and ILO evaluation guidelines and standard templates

- [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations 4th edition](#)
- https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_744068.pdf Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the ILO (to be signed and returned by evaluator to the evaluation manager)
- [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 Response measures through project and programme evaluations](#)

Guidance Notes

- ✓ [Guidance Note 3.1 Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 3.2 Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 3.3 Strategic clustered evaluations to gather evaluative information more effectively](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 4.3 Data collection methods](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 4.5 Stakeholder engagement](#)
- ✓ [Guidance Note 5.5 Dissemination of lessons learned and good practices](#)

EVAL Checklists and Templates for the Evaluator:

- ✓ [Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.2 Preparing the evaluation report](#) [including the templates for completing [lessons learned](#) and [emerging good practices](#), as well as the templates for the title page and [executive summary](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.3 Filling in the title page](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.4 Preparing the Evaluation Report Summary](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.5: Documents for Project Evaluators](#)
- ✓ [Checklist 4.9 Rating the quality of evaluation report](#)