



# Evaluation Summary



International  
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## *Improved human resources development and employment policies, with particular attention to youth, women and migrants – Final evaluation*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Republic of Moldova</i>
<b>Final Evaluation:</b>	<i>27 April 2020</i>
<b>Evaluation Mode:</b>	<i>Independent</i>
<b>Administrative Office:</b>	<i>DWT/CO-Budapest</i>
<b>Technical Office:</b>	<b>DWT/CO-Budapest</b>
<b>Evaluation Manager:</b>	<b>Emil Kstaninovski</b>
<b>Evaluation Consultant:</b>	<i>Roxana Irimia (Pluriconsult Ltd.)</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	<b>106357-MDA/16/02/RBS</b>
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	<b>RBSA (998,560 USD), XBTC (40,000 USD - Czech Republic), RBTC (Moldova - in kind)</b>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>Employment, Employment service, Vocational training, Active Labour Market Policies</i>

### Background & Context

#### **Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure**

The overall objective of the project was to strive towards improving the inclusiveness of the labour markets in Moldova, to foster dialogue and cooperation around job creation and formalization, including at the local level and create more employment opportunities for young people and women, to address the skills mismatches and strengthening labour market institutions, in line with

the strategic priorities of the NES, the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for Moldova (DWCP) 2016-2020 and the UN Joint Programming Framework (UNDAF) 2018-2022. The project is funded from the ILO's Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) and its duration is 30 months.

The project had two major milestones:

*Milestone 1:* By June 2018, the new law on employment promotion is sent to the government for approval and the tripartite partners have begun to design concrete interventions that support the implementation of the national employment policy, including at the local level.

*Milestone 2:* By December 2018, the Government has followed up on at least 60 % of the list of short-term recommendations of the PES functional audit.

#### **Present Situation of the Project**

The project officially started on 25 October 2017<sup>1</sup>, was initially planned for a two year duration and is currently in implementation until 30 April 2020 due to the approval a six month no-cost extension.

Project theory of change was not explicitly articulated, but the logic was that if the ILO supports the constituents in designing legal frameworks, sectoral strategies and local employment partnerships in line with employment policy objectives, and if ILO supports transformation of labour market institutions to effectively perform their tasks; and if ILO improves the knowledge of the social partners in youth employment, this will lead to a better functional labour market and enhanced employment

<sup>1</sup> The date of approval by ILO PROGRAM.

opportunities for young women and men and migrants, in particular.

The project directly contributes to DWCP Outcome 1.2 “Improved human resources and employment policies”. It also expands on the DWCP immediate targets and strives to enhance capacities to define and implement a more comprehensive employment framework at national and local level in line with the UN Joint Programming Framework (UNDAF 2018-2022), as well as Moldova’s commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, with particular emphasis on SDG 8 and its Targets 8.2; 8.3; 8.5; 8.6; and 8.8.

The project consolidates national capacities and knowledge with respect to international labour standards, specifically in reference to the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), and Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88) – which have already been ratified by Moldova, - and include advocacy for the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204).

The project pays particular attention to aspects related to gender equality and non-discrimination, by adopting gender-responsive local labour market diagnostic tools and pursuing advocacy for non-traditional occupations and skills. The intervention strategy and planned outputs specifically target disadvantaged groups and aim at meeting their needs.

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The overall purpose of this evaluation was to promote accountability and strengthen learning among the ILO and key stakeholders.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were:

- Assess the extent to which the project has achieved its stated objectives and expected results, while identifying the supporting factors and constraints that have led to them;
- Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the project;
- Assess the extent to which the project outcomes will be sustainable;
- Establish the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, UN and national development frameworks (i.e. SDGs, UNDAF, Moldova 2020);

- Identify lessons learned and potential good practices, especially regarding models of interventions that can be applied further;
- Provide recommendations to project stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development of the project outcomes.

The evaluation focused on the whole implementation period of the project, assessing all the results and key outputs that have been produced so far.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The evaluation framework followed the conceptual framework most often used in the ILO which is one that is consistent with results-based management. The framework features the following criteria proposed by OECD: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact.

The methodological approach used for this evaluation relied on a comprehensive review of relevant documentation and analysis of already available data, as well as on primary data collection and analysis from various sources (project staff, ILO NC, project partners).

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

### ***Relevance***

The project was highly relevant given its contribution to the national process of employment policy review. Newly enacted employment promotion law and by-laws envisage a comprehensive portfolio of active labour market measures suitable to address the diverse difficulties unemployed persons may encounter on the labour market in Moldova.

The project directly contributed to the DWCP 2016-2020, Outcome 1.2. Improved human resources and employment policies. It also expanded on the DWCP immediate targets and strives to enhance capacities to define and implement a more comprehensive employment framework at national and local level in line with the new UN Joint Programming Framework (UNDAF 2018-2022). Also, the project is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with particular emphasis on SDG 8 and its Targets 8.2; 8.3; 8.5; 8.6; and 8.8. The project was designed in such a manner that it enables reporting under specific SDGs targets and indicators.

The needs addressed by the project resulted mostly from a functional review of the National Employment Agency (NEA) carried out with the ILO support in 2017. This document is pointing to 1/ the need to diversify and improve the offer of active labour market policies for young people, particularly with a view to increasing the labour market attachment of young women; 2/ the significance of integrating sectoral concerns into the implementation of the National Employment Strategy 2017-2021, particularly in order to address the skills mismatches; and 3/ the importance of strengthening labour market institutions, including at the local level, to foster dialogue and cooperation around job creation.

The project pays particular attention to aspects related to gender equality and non-discrimination, by adopting gender-responsive local labour market diagnostic tools and pursuing advocacy for non-traditional occupations and skills.

### *Effectiveness*

According to the evidence available four months prior to the project end, the majority of the project outcomes are ongoing and two outcomes are achieved. The outcomes and outputs of the project were stable, however there were certain changes which were introduced in the implementation of the related activities relying on a soft assistance provided by ILO Specialists to the MHLSP and the NEA to accelerate stabilization after the organizational restructuring and improve institutional capacity to deliver on employment policy objectives. In terms of gender and disability equity, the project monitoring includes gender disaggregated reporting, which indicates a high concern for equitable activities for women and men, incl. people with disability.

The social partners have two major issues of concern which may, in their vision, reduce the success of the project. One was expressed by a representative of the CNSM and refers to predominance of employment in the informal sector, which they consider is still a widely spread phenomenon in the country which reduces the interest of young workers for the national labour market and represents a factor contributing to an increase of their migration. The other one, expressed by the representative of the CNPM, refers to the shortages on the labour market in Republic of Moldova, which is more a result of the labour

migration and of the decreasing qualification of the workers remaining on the labour market in Moldova.

### *Efficiency*

Over the lifetime of the project ILO has demonstrated to be an efficient and constructive partner of its constituents (the Government of Moldova and the national and local level social partners) and its role has been recognised very positively. ILO has used a highly participatory approach and involved all relevant partners in the country to participate in the project design, implementation and continuation. ILO's commitment to quality was highly appreciated by stakeholders.

The technical monitoring includes field work on behalf of the project team and no progress reports in a consolidated form. However, in addition to the field monitoring, the project team is constantly supporting the development project partners' capacity to accurately report on the activities they are implementing, which sometimes proves to be challenging. It appears that in the end, all these efforts are rewarding in terms of increasing partners' ownership on the projects' outputs and outcomes.

### *Impact*

As a result of the project, the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to deal with youth employment will be consolidated. Social partners will improve their capacity to initiate and expand action to promote youth employment. Also, social partners will be more aware of the good practices and experience in other countries concerning youth employment policy.

Due to the achievements of the project it can be estimated that the existing social dialogue in the country will be strengthened through fostering local partnerships and cooperation between employment offices and municipal authorities, the social partners, social services, private employment services, and civil society organizations to enhance national and local labour markets. Overall, the project contributed to strengthening of the enabling environment at country level, in terms of the development of employment policies, technical capacities of national and regional stakeholders, local knowledge through the national and international consultants contracted, and of the mind-set and motivation of stakeholders.

## *Sustainability*

The sustainability of project at the policy and legislation level was appreciated by most stakeholders who informed this evaluation as being high. The political instability and frequent changes of Government in crisis conditions negatively reflect on sustainability since it is extremely hard to plan for political risks and to limit their impacts on any reform. In addition, there is a significant gap between the formal existence of laws and policies promoting employment and active labour market measures, and the realities in practice on the ground, on the other.

From the financial perspective, the sustainability of the project achievements appears to be moderate. Overall, MHLSP tends to give priority to the social protection measures which remain much higher on the national political agenda compared with the ALMP.

## **Recommendations**

### **Main recommendations and follow-up**

**Recommendation 1:** An explicit support of a “coalition for change”, including key policy makers, advocates, academics and others, as agents of change might be important in contributing to a shared understanding of the employment reform and a stronger commitment to ensure that reform measures are continued regardless of who is in political power. Consultations within the frame of such coalition should include not only central government actors but also stakeholders active at the local grassroots level. In addition, more focus on developing social dialogue at the local level might be necessary.

**Recommendation 2:** Coherent policies and special programs with the active involvement of local public administration and a public-private partnership are required in order to increase the supply of jobs, especially the quality ones – with good working conditions and qualifications matching the needs of the modern society.

**Recommendation 3:** There is a strong need for the Government to find a better balance between the national and donors’ agenda in the continuation of the employment reform process. There has to be a higher level of integration with the economic strategy of the country and more sequencing of the reform. At the same time, the Government has to be encouraged in making progress in increasing its capacity for sound

policy analysis and for rigorous data collection and analysis in order to ensure real time and evidence based monitoring of the progress.

**Recommendation 4:** In order to ensure the consolidation of employment reform the Government and the ILO may consider joint activities aimed to strengthen the capacity of social partners in the design, monitoring and evaluation of employment policy and programmes. Also, policy coherence and coordination across ministries (MHLSP, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance) needs to be improved in order to increase more effective and stable results of the employment reform.

**Recommendation 5:** ILO may consider the exit strategies in the earlier stages of the projects in order to increase the national ownership and sustainability of the respective interventions. This may involve a stronger message to the beneficiaries to increase their commitment to move from beneficiaries of international funding to beneficiaries of transfer of competences allowing them to perform functions independently of the international assistance.

**Recommendation 6:** For future projects, the ILO should better prioritize and increase consistency between project planning, monitoring and reporting. This should include output and outcome progress indicators in the project design phase and periodic (e.g. bi-annual) technical progress reports against these indicators in the project implementation phase.