

***Final evaluation of the project***

***Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova***

**EVALUATION REPORT**

**December 2024**

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| **Project information** | | | | |
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**List of abbreviations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **CA** | Contribution Analysis |
| **CSO** | Civil Society Organization |
| **DAC** | Development Assistance Committee of the OECD |
| **dNFR** | Digital National Farmers Registry |
| **EC** | Evaluation Consultant |
| **ER** | Evaluation Report |
| **EU** | European Union |
| **FE** | Final Evaluation |
| **GDP** | Growth Domestic Product |
| **GoM** | Government of Moldova |
| **HDP Nexus** | Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus |
| **IC** | Individual Contract |
| **JICA** | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| **KII** | Key Informants Interviews |
| **LFA** | Logical Framework Approach |
| **MAI** | Ministry of Internal Affairs |
| **MDHS Project or the Project** | Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova |
| **MSMEs** | Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises |
| **NEA** | National Employment Agency |
| **ODIHR** | Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights |
| **OECD** | Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| **OSCE** | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| **OVI** | Objectively Verifiable Indicator |
| **PB** | Project Board |
| **PCA** | Project Cooperation Agreement |
| **PM** | Project Manager |
| **PMF** | Performance Measurement Framework |
| **Prodoc** | Project document |
| **PT** | Project Team |
| **RRP** | Refugee Response Plan |
| **SDG** | Sustainable Development Goals |
| **SMART** | Specific Measurable Accepted Realistic Timely |
| **SO** | Specific Objective |
| **SoV** | Sources of Verification |
| **STMM** | Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism |
| **TNCs** | Third Country Nationals |
| **TOC** | Theory of Change |
| **TOR** | Terms of Reference |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |
| **UNEG** | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| **UNHSTF** | United Nations Human Security Trust Fund |
| **UNSDCF** | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |
| **UNV** | United Nations Volunteer |

# Executive summary

The "Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova" project was launched in March 2023 as a collaborative effort by UNDP, funded by the Government of Japan, to address the compounded impacts of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, COVID-19 pandemic, and Moldova's systemic vulnerabilities. The project aimed to enhance energy, food, and community security by adopting a Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach, aligning its interventions with Moldova’s national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The evaluation assessed the project’s achievements against its objectives, highlighting successes and improvement areas. Its primary goal was to provide evidence-based insights to guide stakeholders in scaling effective interventions and addressing emerging challenges in Moldova's human security landscape.

The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. A theory-based evaluation framework was utilized, supported by contribution analysis, to understand the project’s causal pathways and contributions to observed changes. A reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) provided a structured basis for evaluating the project's design, implementation, and outcomes.

The evaluation gathered data through project record reviews, key informant interviews, group discussions, and participatory methods, engaging a wide range of stakeholders, including beneficiaries, implementing partners, and government representatives. Qualitative data analysis software was used to apply a code-and-classify approach aligned with the evaluation matrix. Findings were validated through cross-validation and data triangulation to ensure accuracy and reliability.

This systematic evaluation approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the project’s impacts. It highlighted strategic lessons learned and offered actionable recommendations to inform future programming and policy-making in Moldova.

**Findings**

**Relevance and coherence**

The "Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova" (MDHS) project exemplified strategic alignment with Moldova's national development strategies, the European Union integration priorities, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project addressed Moldova's critical challenges in energy security, food security, and community resilience through an integrated and human security-focused approach. The evaluation underscores the project’s significant contributions while identifying areas for improvement in internal coherence and cross-sectoral integration to amplify its transformative potential.

The project strategically aligned with Moldova’s National Development Strategy Moldova 2030 and the European Union Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) by addressing vulnerabilities and promoting inclusive growth. It contributed to the country’s EU accession priorities, particularly in Chapters 23 and 24, by strengthening institutional capacities and promoting inclusive development (F1, F2). The project also advanced Moldova's commitments to the UNSDCF (2023–2027) and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) by fostering green development, participatory governance, and resilience-building. Through its alignment with the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for Ukraine, the project addressed immediate humanitarian needs while promoting social cohesion and refugee integration.

The project’s design incorporated the SDGs into its programming, addressing immediate challenges and contributing to broader development goals. It directly supported SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 13 (Climate Action), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), while also indirectly contributing to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). This strategic alignment highlighted the project’s focus on sustainability, inclusivity, and resilience, creating lasting impacts on vulnerable communities (F2).

Stakeholders praised the project’s human security approach for its participatory and inclusive framework, effectively meeting the multidimensional needs of its target groups. This approach enabled the project to address systemic vulnerabilities, empower marginalized populations, and promote long-term resilience (F3). Key interventions, such as renewable energy solutions, the Digital National Farmers Registry (dNFR), and the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM), contributed to building economic, environmental, and community resilience, aligning with Moldova's development priorities.

Despite its achievements, the evaluation highlighted the need for improved internal coherence to strengthen synergies between project objectives. While the project demonstrated strong vertical alignment within each objective, opportunities to create cross-sectoral linkages between energy, food, and community security components were underutilized (F4, F5). A more integrated approach would amplify the project’s impact and foster a cohesive response to Moldova’s multidimensional challenges. The MDHS project also showcased strategic coherence with UN, UNDP, and development partner frameworks, reinforcing its role in a cohesive response to Moldova’s human security needs. Effective complementarity and synergies with other initiatives, such as climate resilience programs and inclusive governance projects, enhanced the project’s relevance and impact (F7, F8). This collaboration demonstrated the importance of multi-stakeholder coordination to achieve shared priorities and address emerging challenges.

The evaluation underscores the project’s continued relevance in addressing Moldova’s evolving needs, particularly in the context of its EU integration process. It highlights the need for strategic adjustments to enhance cross-sectoral integration, ensuring a more holistic and transformative impact on human security in Moldova.

**Effectiveness**

The evaluation thoroughly assessed the MDHS Project's achievements relative to its primary objectives, which focused on enhancing energy security, strengthening food security, and promoting social cohesion and community resilience. Despite the challenges posed by Moldova’s systemic vulnerabilities, regional instability due to the Ukraine conflict, and a short implementation timeframe, the project demonstrated significant progress in fostering human security across targeted sectors.

Key accomplishments include improving access to sustainable energy solutions, modernizing agricultural practices, and enhancing social cohesion mechanisms (F9). The project successfully introduced energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy solutions, benefiting households, micro-enterprises, and public institutions. It also strengthened food security through initiatives such as the dNFR, which improved resource allocation and compliance with international standards. It supported MSMEs with targeted grants and capacity-building to modernize production and storage practices. Furthermore, the project bolstered community security by equipping police services with advanced tools like body cameras and implementing the STMM to address underlying drivers of social tensions.

The MDHS Project adopted a comprehensive approach to human security, addressing economic, community, and personal dimensions. Its integrated interventions built resilience among vulnerable populations, particularly women-led enterprises, smallholder farmers, and marginalised communities, ensuring their ability to withstand economic and social shocks. The project’s ability to tackle interlinked challenges, such as energy poverty and social tension, underscored its holistic and sustainable strategy (F10).

Despite its achievements, the project faced challenges in fully realising its objectives due to external pressures such as economic volatility and Moldova’s EU accession process, which placed competing demands on national institutions. These factors, combined with the short timeframe, constrained the scalability of interventions, emphasising the need for sustained efforts to consolidate progress (F11). The evaluation commended the MDHS Project’s dynamic and participatory approach, which engaged stakeholders across all levels, fostering ownership and commitment to its goals. By leveraging UNDP’s technical expertise and Moldova-specific insights, the project successfully aligned with national priorities and international frameworks, establishing a strong foundation for future resilience-building initiatives (F12).

**Efficiency**

The MDHS Project demonstrated a strategic and efficient resource allocation and implementation approach. Despite the challenges posed by its complexity, multidimensional scope, and initial delays in fund transfers, the Project effectively completed its activities within an extended timeframe, enabled by the collaborative efforts of UNDP and its national partners (F15). The Project's budget prioritised programmatic activities, directing themostsources toward addressing its key objectives—energy security, food security, and community security. Financial efficiency was further evidenced by the allocation of only 5% of the total budget to operational costs, ensuring the majority of funds were used for impactful interventions (F16). During implementation, Adjustments to the budget reflected a refined focus on addressing key priorities, such as scaling up the dNFR, enhancing biofuel production systems, and expanding food poverty monitoring mechanisms.

The management structure, built around the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality, was well-established and critical in delivering results—the portfolio approach integrated activities across thematic clusters, fostering synergies and alignment with national strategies. However, the short implementation period and recruitment delays limited the intended benefits of the portfolio model, resulting in more objective-focused delivery (F17).

The Project's monitoring system facilitated efficient progress tracking at the output level but faced limitations in capturing broader systemic changes due to the ambitious scope of its outcome-level indicators. Nevertheless, the results-oriented work plan and a gender-sensitive approach ensured activities were well-coordinated and aligned with stakeholder needs. Communication efforts were equally robust, effectively disseminating results and fostering stakeholder engagement across key intervention areas (F18). Overall, the MDHS Project exemplified efficient resource management, strategic adaptability, and strong institutional collaboration, setting a solid foundation for addressing Moldova’s human security challenges.

**Sustainability**

The Project's sustainability is rooted in strong country ownership, capacity development, and alignment with national priorities, demonstrating a robust foundation for the continuity and scaling of its interventions. This is further reinforced by systematic partnership-building with stakeholders across government, private sector actors, and civil society organizations, ensuring shared responsibility for sustaining the outcomes (F19).

The Project made significant strides in developing institutional and individual capacities, ensuring long-term benefits for target groups. Notable achievements include enhancing policymaking capabilities through technical training in advanced tools like Power BI, strengthening local governance with mechanisms such as the STMM, and modernizing agricultural practices via the dNFR. These efforts have embedded sustainable frameworks within national systems, providing a pathway for institutional ownership and resilience (F20).

The Project successfully introduced renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies in the energy sector, benefiting MSMEs, agricultural producers, and vulnerable households. These interventions reduced costs and enhanced productivity, with co-financing models fostering ownership and sustainability. Similarly, in the agricultural domain, the piloting of the dNFR has established a scalable mechanism for data-driven resource management, aligning Moldova with EU standards. However, maintaining and expanding these systems will require consistent updates, integration into national workflows, and further capacity-building efforts (F21).

Despite these achievements, challenges persist, including financial constraints, delays in legislative processes, and inconsistent stakeholder engagement. The Project has mitigated some challenges through innovative funding mechanisms, such as co-financing and private-sector partnerships. For example, the biomass trading platform and grant schemes have incentivised sustainable practices while leveraging additional resources. However, relying on a single major donor highlights the need for diversified funding sources to ensure financial sustainability (F22).

Opportunities for continuation and scaling are evident in multiple areas. Expanding the dNFR’s scope, strengthening renewable energy initiatives, and replicating the STMM across different regions could enhance the Project’s impact. Additionally, scaling the successful grant schemes to include more beneficiaries and sectors would amplify socio-economic and environmental benefits. Strategic resource mobilization, robust policy support, and sustained stakeholder commitment will be crucial to realizing these opportunities (F23).

The Project's efforts in knowledge management, such as integrating training modules into national e-learning platforms and piloting innovative tools like satellite imagery for agricultural monitoring, have further institutionalized learning and best practices. However, creating a centralized knowledge repository could enhance replication and dissemination of successful models. By addressing these areas and fostering active participation in planning and execution, the Project is well-positioned to ensure the longevity and amplification of its achievements within Moldova’s development framework.

**Impact**

The project effectively contributed to promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for Moldova’s vulnerable groups by addressing economic, food, and energy vulnerabilities. Key interventions, including renewable energy grants and capacity-building initiatives, enhanced human security and resilience. These measures reduced operational costs, stabilized livelihoods, and empowered women-led enterprises. Tools like the STMM and the dNFR provided frameworks for responsive governance and food security, laying the groundwork for broader systemic change. However, the project’s short-term focus limited its ability to achieve systemic reforms, underscoring the need for multi-sectoral strategies to sustain and scale its impact.

**Leave No One Behind (LNOB)**

The project demonstrated a robust commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited through targeted grants, infrastructure improvements, and participatory outreach. Women-led agricultural enterprises, in particular, were central to the project, receiving tailored support to adopt energy-efficient and climate-smart technologies. These interventions fostered energy independence, economic stability, and social integration. Despite these successes, the project highlighted the need for expanded outreach and systematic follow-ups to ensure the sustainability of these efforts across underserved regions.

**Gender Equality**

Gender mainstreaming was a cornerstone of the project’s design and implementation. Women-led businesses were prioritized, receiving grants and tailored technical assistance to adopt renewable energy solutions. These interventions significantly reduced energy costs, increased productivity, and fostered economic empowerment, challenging traditional gender roles and positioning women as community leaders. Inclusive outreach strategies ensured equitable participation, while gender-disaggregated monitoring captured both intended and unintended outcomes, such as increased community awareness and male support for women entrepreneurs. The project’s success underscores the transformative potential of integrating gender-responsive strategies into energy and agricultural development.

**Conclusions:**

The UNTFHS Project in Moldova demonstrated exceptional relevance and alignment with the country’s strategic priorities, including the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" and EU accession goals. By addressing critical areas such as energy security, food resilience, and community safety, the Project has significantly contributed to fostering inclusive growth and reducing systemic vulnerabilities (C1, C2).

The Project’s coherence was evident in its well-structured design and alignment with broader frameworks such as the UNSDCF and UNDP Country Programme Document. However, opportunities for improved horizontal integration among components remain to enhance cross-sectoral synergies (C3, C4). Effectively addressing human security challenges, the Project made notable strides in enhancing energy efficiency, agricultural capacities, and community cohesion. Despite regional crises, it successfully laid a foundation for resilience and inclusion among Moldova’s most vulnerable groups (C5, C6).

Efficiency was a hallmark of the Project, with judicious resource utilisation and a prioritisation of impactful interventions. Challenges such as delayed fund transfers and short implementation timelines were mitigated through strategic planning and adaptive management. Nonetheless, longer-term strategies are needed for systemic institutionalisation of outcomes (C8, C9).

The sustainability of the Project’s achievements was reinforced through local ownership, capacity building, and innovative tools like the Digital National Farmers Registry (dNFR). However, further efforts are required to address resource gaps, embed project outcomes into regulatory frameworks, and diversify funding sources to ensure long-term impact (C10, C11).

The Project achieved meaningful impact by addressing immediate vulnerabilities and improving the resilience of disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Targeted initiatives such as renewable energy grants and technical support enhanced productivity and self-reliance among women-led enterprises and rural communities. However, scaling these outcomes to achieve systemic change will require deeper integration with national frameworks and sustained stakeholder collaboration (C12).

Cross-cutting themes were central to the Project’s success, with a strong emphasis on gender mainstreaming and the "leave no one behind" principle. These efforts empowered women and other vulnerable groups, fostering economic independence and leadership. Inclusive approaches, co-financing models, and capacity-building programs underscored the Project’s commitment to rights-based and gender-sensitive development (C13).

**Recommendations:**

The evaluation consultant has outlined strategic recommendations to enhance the impact, sustainability, and inclusiveness of human security programming in Moldova:

**R1. Extend implementation timeframes:** To ensure comprehensive planning, stakeholder engagement, and institutionalisation of results, it is recommended to adopt phased project timelines and allocate additional time for institutional capacity-building and stakeholder consultations. Extended timeframes would address systemic challenges and embed interventions within national systems for long-term sustainability. (C9, F15, F18)

**R2. Strengthen portfolio management for integrated programming:** Establish robust portfolio management mechanisms to foster synergies across project components, ensuring inclusivity and equity. Key actions include forming a fully staffed team with sectoral specialists, implementing integrated M&E systems, and promoting participatory processes that address the unique needs of marginalised groups such as women-led enterprises and rural communities. (C13, F25, F26)

**R3. Support EU Accession through institutional tools:** Leverage the Digital National Farm Registry (dNFR) and Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM) as governance and policy reform tools. Institutionalising these tools within national frameworks can enhance food security, social cohesion, and compliance with EU standards. Expanding and linking their scope to actionable policy recommendations will align with Moldova’s SDG and EU accession priorities. (C5, C10, F10, F11)

**R4. Leverage innovative funding models:** Diversify funding sources through partnerships with private sector actors, crowdfunding, and public-private collaboration. Innovative financing mechanisms will reduce dependency on traditional donor funding and support project scalability. (C11, F11)

**R5. Enhance monitoring, evaluation, and communication strategies:** Develop comprehensive M&E frameworks blending qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess human security outcomes. Implement strategic communication campaigns to highlight social cohesion and inclusion successes, fostering stakeholder buy-in and broader engagement. Such measures will ensure continuous learning and promote a culture of inclusion and resilience. (C8, C5, C10, F18, F20)

# Introduction

This document presents the Final Evaluation Report for the "Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova" (MDHS Project). The evaluation provides a comprehensive assessment of the project’s contributions to addressing Moldova’s critical human security challenges, which have been exacerbated by the socio-economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and systemic national vulnerabilities.

The report begins with an analysis of Moldova's political and socio-economic context, setting the stage for understanding the relevance and urgency of the MDHS Project. This contextual framework highlights the interconnected challenges faced by Moldova, such as energy insecurity, food vulnerabilities, and strained social cohesion. The analysis underscores the need for integrated and multidimensional approaches to address these challenges effectively.

Subsequent sections outline the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation, providing a clear rationale for assessing the project's achievements and identifying lessons for future programming. The evaluation follows a structured approach, using OECD/DAC criteria and cross-cutting perspectives on gender equality, human rights, and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle. It incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a robust and inclusive analysis.

The report also presents findings across the project's three specific objectives: enhancing energy security, strengthening food security, and advancing community security. These findings highlight the project's achievements, challenges, and contributions to Moldova’s broader development and EU accession goals. Additionally, the report includes strategic conclusions and actionable recommendations to guide future interventions, emphasizing sustainability, systemic impact, and cross-sectoral synergies.

Annexes provide supplementary materials, including evaluation tools, stakeholder lists, and analyzed documentation, offering transparency and depth to the evaluation process. This comprehensive structure ensures the report serves as both a detailed account of the MDHS Project’s outcomes and a strategic resource for shaping Moldova’s future resilience and development initiatives.

# Context and background

## Republic of Moldova- human security challenges

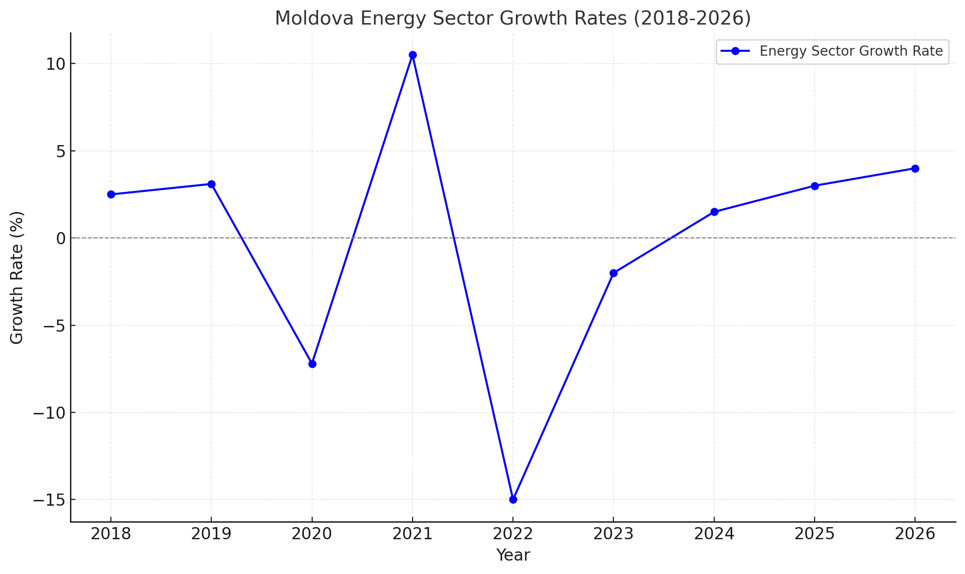
Moldova faces an unprecedented and multifaceted crisis, driven by the compounding effects of the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 pandemic's socio-economic aftermath, and its existing systemic vulnerabilities.

Moldova’s challenges are interconnected and cyclical, with each crisis amplifying the others. Rising energy costs impact agricultural production, leading to food insecurity. Weak economic growth and inflation exacerbate poverty and migration. The refugee crisis and growing inequalities strain social cohesion, further destabilizing the country. Without urgent and integrated interventions, Moldova faces the risk of a prolonged development setback and increased human suffering.

**Energy Security:**

Moldova’s energy sector remains exceptionally fragile due to its heavy reliance on external sources. Until recently, the country imported nearly all of its natural gas from Russia and depended substantially on electricity generated in the Transnistrian region. In October 2021, an energy crisis emerged when gas and electricity shortages caused tariffs to spike, increasing sevenfold for natural gas and 400% for electricity. By the onset of winter 2022, more than 70% of households in the country were deemed energy-vulnerable - up from 64.4% in 2021 - spending over 10% of their incomes on energy, especially for heating between November and March.

**Figure 1: Moldova Energy Sector Growth Rates from 2018 with forecast until 2026**



*Source: Statistical Office of Moldova and the World Bank*

The war in Ukraine further disrupted Moldova’s energy supply chains. Attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure halted electricity exports to Moldova, while reduced gas supplies from Gazprom forced the country to procure more expensive gas from the European spot market. This not only strained public finances but also deepened energy poverty, with rapidly rising costs leaving households and institutions struggling to afford basic energy needs. An early income simulation by UNDP suggested that under the food and energy inflation levels recorded in February 2022, about 250,000 people were at risk of falling below the poverty line. These challenges were compounded by Moldova’s underdeveloped infrastructure for harnessing renewable energy sources, despite significant potential in biomass and solar. Consequently, the country remains highly susceptible to future geopolitical and economic shocks.

**Food Security:** Agriculture is the backbone of Moldova's economy, employing a significant proportion of the population, especially in rural areas where poverty disproportionately affects women. The sector is energy-intensive and has been crippled by rising prices for inputs such as fertilizers and fuel. Disrupted logistics and the inability to access traditional import and export routes due to the war have further diminished productivity. Moldova also faces frequent extreme weather events, including droughts, which have reduced agricultural output by 30% in recent years.

**Figure 2: Food Security Indicators in Moldova, 2018-2024**



Source*: Moldovan authorities for agricultural output and food security statistics. World Bank and UNDP Moldova reports for inflation and population vulnerability data.*

These challenges have driven food prices to unprecedented levels, with a 50% increase reported in 2022 alone. As a result, food insecurity has become a pressing concern, exacerbated by the government’s limited capacity to implement its Food Security Strategy effectively. Many agricultural producers, particularly small-scale farmers, lack access to modern technologies and targeted subsidies, leaving them ill-equipped to navigate these challenges.

**Economic Vulnerability:** Moldova's economy remains under significant strain due to ongoing challenges stemming from global disruptions and internal vulnerabilities. In **2022**, GDP contracted by 4.6% as the economy grappled with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and rising living costs. In **2023**, the economy showed signs of stabilisation, with GDP growing modestly by 0.7% as inflation declined to 13.4%. However, the recovery remains fragile, as the current account deficit improved only slightly to -11.9% of GDP. External debt decreased marginally to 63.3% of GDP, while public debt rose to 36.0%, highlighting continued fiscal challenges in managing public finances and addressing social vulnerabilities. In 2024, GDP growth reached an estimated 2.8%, with inflation stabilising further at 4.5%. The current account deficit remains high at -11% of GDP, indicating persistent external vulnerabilities. External debt is projected to rise to 67.8% of GDP, driven by ongoing borrowing needs, while public debt is expected to peak at 38.5% of GDP.

**Table 1: Overview of key macroeconomic indicators 2020-2023, with projections for 2024, 2025 and 2026**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Nominal GDP (MDL billion)** | **GDP Growth (%)** | **Inflation (CPI, %)** | **Current Account Balance (% GDP)** | **External Debt (% GDP)** | **Public Debt (% GDP)** |
| 2020 | 199.7 | -8.3 | 3.8 | -7.7 | 70.5 | 36.4 |
| 2021 | 242.1 | 13.9 | 5.1 | -12.4 | 64.5 | 33.8 |
| 2022 | 274.5 | -4.6 | 28.7 | -17.1 | 66.1 | 35.9 |
| 2023 | 300.4 | 0.7 | 13.4 | -11.9 | 63.3 | 36.0 |
| 2024 | 323.0 | 2.8 | 4.5 | -11.0 | 67.8 | 38.5 |
| 2025 | 351.5 | 3.9 | 5.1 | -10.5 | 67.2 | 38.1 |
| 2026 | 385.5 | 4.5 | 4.9 | -9.7 | 65.8 | 37.5 |

*Source: Statistical Office of Moldova and the World Bank*

Projections for 2025 and 2026 indicate a gradual economic recovery, with GDP growth estimated at 3.9% and 4.5%, respectively. Inflation is forecast to stabilize, reflecting improved price stability and public debt is anticipated to decline slightly.

These trends highlight the continued pressures on Moldova’s economy, particularly in addressing fiscal and external vulnerabilities. Despite some positive signs of recovery, structural reforms and targeted investments remain critical to strengthen economic resilience, curb poverty risks, and reduce dependency on external financing.

**Social and Community Security:** Moldova’s social fabric is under significant strain. The country has received over 1,200,000 refugees since the start of the war in Ukraine, with approximately 127,000 currently hosted[[3]](#footnote-4)—a figure representing over 4% of the population. The influx of refugees, coupled with pre-existing social tensions and divisions, has tested the country’s limited institutional capacity. Moldova's societal cohesion is weak, characterized by low trust in institutions, rural-urban divides, and social distance between majority and minority groups.

While demonstrating Moldova’s solidarity, the presence of refugees has intensified competition for already scarce resources. This has heightened social tensions, particularly in host communities, risking a breakdown of peaceful coexistence. Furthermore, public institutions, including police services, are overstretched, lacking the capacity to effectively manage rising community security concerns.

## The project "Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova"

The UNDP-implemented "Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova" Project adopted a comprehensive Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus approach to address the country's multifaceted challenges. These challenges have been driven by the compounding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and pre-existing vulnerabilities in Moldova’s governance and economic systems.

The project’s goal has been to protect human security, mitigate immediate shocks, and enhance resilience by promoting sustainable, long-term solutions.

The project was structured around three interrelated objectives:

**Specific Objective 1: To enhance people’s energy security through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and energy-efficient production.**

The project focused on promoting affordable and renewable energy solutions to address Moldova’s acute energy vulnerabilities, stemming from its heavy reliance on imported natural gas and electricity. Key interventions included the installation of biomass heating systems for residential sector, as well as the facilitation of energy-efficient technologies in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

These measures aimed to reduce Moldova’s dependency on external energy sources while directly benefiting over 20,000 individuals and multiple enterprises. By enabling resource-efficient production, the project contributed to both immediate energy relief and long-term sustainability.

**Specific Objective 2: To enhance food security by supporting the government to implement its Food Security Strategy, thereby strengthening the capacities of agricultural producers affected by the compound crises.**

Aligned with Moldova’s Food Security Strategy, this objective focused on improving the capacities of agricultural producers impacted by compounding crises. The project’s cornerstone was the development and operationalisation of a National Farmers Registry, a digital platform designed to enhance traceability, quality assurance, and evidence-based policymaking, while also enabling better targeting of subsidies and ensuring compliance with EU standards. This fostered Moldova’s integration into international markets.  
In addition to the Farmers Registry, the project provided critical support to MSMEs in the agri-food sector, improving their production, processing, and storage capacities, and enhancing competitiveness through tailored business advisory services.

These efforts strengthened the resilience and economic sustainability of Moldova’s agricultural sector, directly addressing vulnerabilities exacerbated by global disruptions.

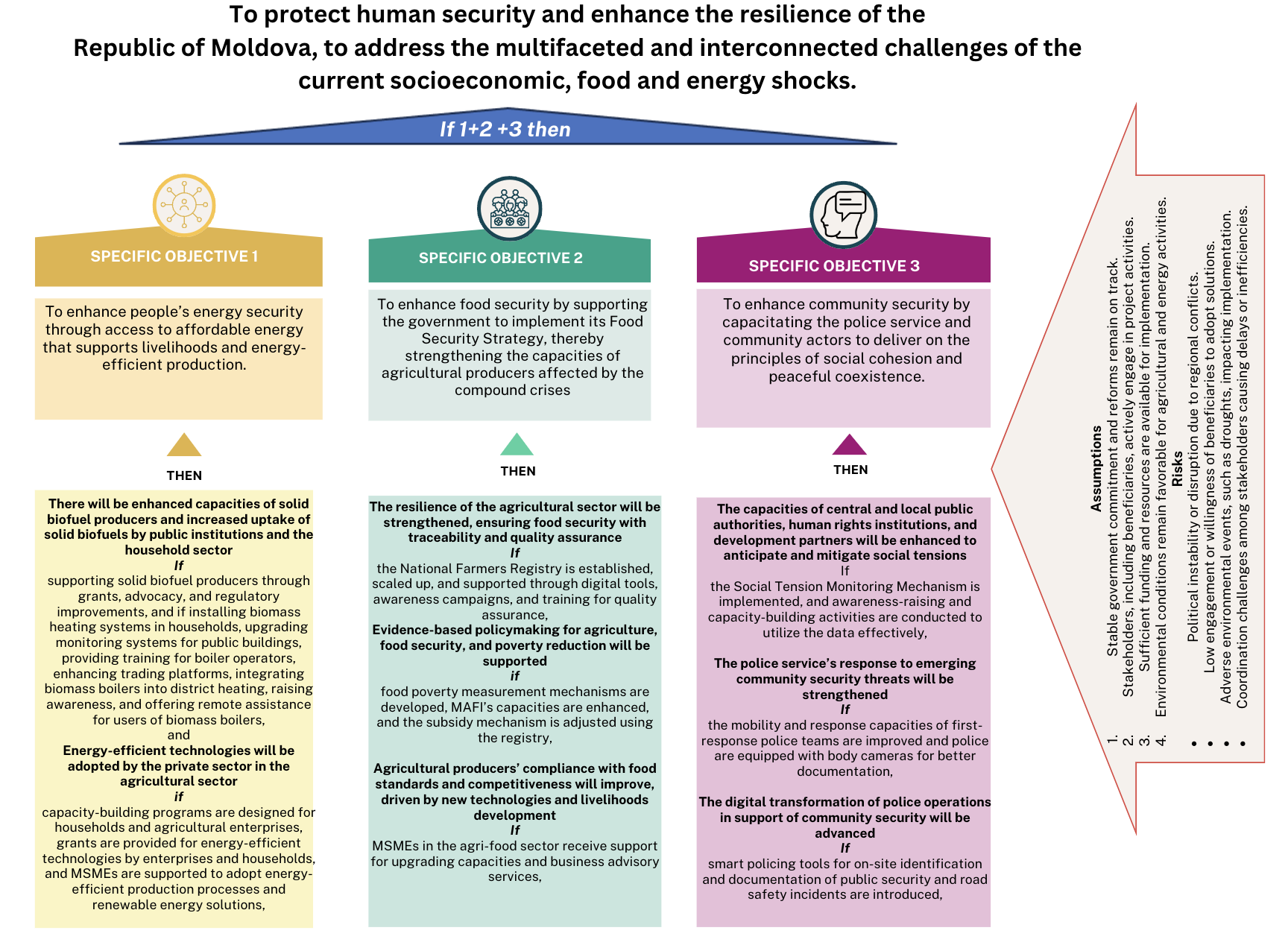
**Specific Objective 3: To enhance community security by capacitating the police service and community actors to deliver on the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.**

To mitigate social tensions heightened by the refugee influx and economic instability, the project introduced a Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism to identify and address community risks. Additional measures included:

* Enhancing the operational capacity of law enforcement through advanced tools such as body cameras and smart policing technologies.
* Promoting collaboration between local authorities, civil society, and law enforcement agencies to foster social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

These interventions strengthened Moldova’s institutional capacity to anticipate and respond to emerging community security threats, ensuring more inclusive and cohesive communities.

**Figure 3 Project Theory of Change**



**Integrated Approach: Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus**

The project strived to integrate its objectives under the HDP Nexus framework, ensuring sustainable development strategies complement immediate humanitarian interventions. By addressing the root causes of insecurity and fostering institutional and community resilience, the project aligned with Moldova’s Food Security Strategy and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Outcomes, ensuring relevance and coherence with national and international priorities.

The project spanned from March 2023 to December 2024, with a total budget of USD 6.81 million, funded by the Government of Japan. Despite the challenges posed by resource limitations and political volatility, its interventions have been designed to create lasting benefits for vulnerable groups, including refugees, marginalised communities, and agricultural producers.

### Target Beneficiaries:

The project adopted a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to ensure equitable engagement and benefits for all stakeholders, prioritizing vulnerable and marginalized populations. This approach categorized stakeholders into duty-bearers and rights-holders, reflecting their respective roles and responsibilities in implementing and achieving project outcomes.

The duty-bearers included the Government of Moldova—represented by the Ministries of Energy, Agriculture and Food Industry, and Internal Affairs—local governments, and municipal administrations. These entities were responsible for overseeing project implementation, aligning interventions with national strategies, and facilitating the delivery of services to communities. UNDP Moldova, as the main implementing partner, provided strategic guidance and managed activities to ensure alignment with the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus. Operational partners, such as local public administrations , biofuel producers, law enforcement agencies, and businesses, contributed to activities like energy efficiency improvements, social tension monitoring, and agricultural resilience-building. Secondary duty-bearers, including CSOs and private sector actors, supported community outreach, advocated for inclusivity, and provided technical expertise and market access opportunities.

The rights-holders targeted by the project encompassed various vulnerable groups. Households affected by energy poverty and food insecurity benefited from biomass heating systems and agricultural support programs. Smallholder farmers and MSMEs received capacity-building, subsidies, and access to digital tools like the National Farmers Registry, improving productivity and market integration. Refugees from Ukraine and Moldovan host communities gained from enhanced community security measures and social tension monitoring, fostering peaceful coexistence. Marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, were prioritized for vocational training and capacity-building to address specific barriers. Community actors and law enforcement agencies were also capacitated with new tools and technologies to manage community security challenges effectively.

# Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, and Scope

## Purpose of the Final Evaluation

The purpose of the final evaluation of the “Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova” project has been to comprehensively assess its achievements against the three specific objectives of energy security, food security, and community security. The evaluation aimed to determine the extent to which the project achieved its intended results and contributed to protecting human security and enhancing resilience in Moldova. Furthermore, it looked to derive strategic lessons to inform stakeholders and decision-makers for potential future interventions.

## Objective of the Evaluation

This evaluation provided a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of the project’s contributions to human security in Moldova, ensuring alignment with national and international priorities and setting the stage for future resilience-focused interventions. The specific objectives of this evaluation were to:

**Assess Results and Effects:** Evaluate the extent to which the project has achieved its planned objectives and produced both expected and unexpected results, including their sustainability and scalability. The evaluation identified success factors and constraints that influenced the delivery of results.

**Analyze Cross-Cutting Contributions**: Analyze how the project integrated cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality, social inclusion, and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle. This included examining contributions to national priorities, UNDP’s strategic frameworks, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Identify Lessons Learned**: Highlighted lessons learned from the project’s implementation, identifying best practices, challenges, and strategic recommendations to guide similar future initiatives.

**Inform Future Programming**: Provided actionable insights for UNDP, the Government of Moldova, and stakeholders on enhancing human security approaches and scaling up successful interventions.

## Scope of the Evaluation:

The evaluation covered the entire project implementation period from March 2023 to December 2024 and includes all geographic areas and target groups addressed by the project. Specifically, the evaluation assessed:

**Thematic Areas**

* *Energy security: Renewable energy adoption, energy efficiency, and biomass systems.*
* *Food security: Design of the dNFR, capacity building for agricultural producers, and evidence-based policymaking*
* *Community security: STMM, police capacity-building, and community cohesion initiatives.*

**Outcomes and Outputs**: All outcomes, outputs, and indicators outlined in the project’s results framework have been evaluated to measure their coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation also analyzed how these results address root causes and drivers of insecurity and vulnerability.

**Stakeholder Engagement**: The evaluation involved key stakeholders, including UNDP Moldova, national and local authorities, community representatives, and direct beneficiaries such as refugees and marginalized groups.

**Evaluation Criteria**: The evaluation used the OECD/DAC criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, with additional focus on human rights and gender equality.

## Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The final evaluation comprehensively assessed the project, focusing on the following key evaluation criteria:

**Relevance:** The evaluation assessed the extent to which the project’s activities and outcomes aligned with Moldova’s national development priorities, including energy, food, and community security strategies, and the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD). It examined the coherence of the project design and its responsiveness to the country’s socio-economic shocks, refugee crisis, and global SDG commitments.

**Effectiveness:** The evaluation measured the achievement of the project’s objectives, such as enhancing energy security, strengthening food security systems, and advancing community security mechanisms. It analyzed the success of specific interventions like the National Farmers Registry, renewable energy solutions, and the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism, highlighting factors that facilitated or hindered progress.

**Efficiency:** The evaluation analyzed the project’s resource utilization, including financial, material, and human resources. It assessed adherence to timelines, cost-effectiveness, management structures, and coordination among stakeholders, including government institutions and development partners.

**Impact:** The evaluation reviewed the project’s broader contributions to enhancing resilience and improving the lives of beneficiaries, including vulnerable groups such as women, youth, and displaced populations. It assessed whether interventions led to measurable improvements in energy access, food security, and social cohesion.

**Sustainability:** The evaluation determined the durability of the project’s outcomes, including the institutional capacities built and the likelihood of sustained benefits. It considered risks such as political instability or economic fluctuations and identified opportunities for continued collaboration and resource mobilization to ensure long-term impact.

**Human Rights, Gender Equality, and LNOB:** The evaluation analyzed the integration of human rights and gender equality principles, examining how the project promoted social inclusion, supported women and marginalized groups, and ensured equitable access to opportunities and benefits in line with the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle.

**Lessons and Recommendations:** The evaluation documented lessons learned, identified best practices, and provided actionable recommendations to guide UNDP and its partners in improving future interventions. This included insights into addressing Moldova’s ongoing challenges and sustaining the benefits of the current project.

The EC analyzed achievements against national priorities, stakeholder expectations, and project goals from March 2023 to December 2024, addressing both technical and operational aspects. The evaluation offered strategic insights into the project’s successes and limitations, serving as a basis for future programming to support Moldova’s resilience and human security.

### Key Evaluation Questions

The Terms of Reference (TOR) and the guidelines established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concerning evaluation served as the foundation for formulating the evaluation questions. The EC conducted a comprehensive analysis. It proposed the primary evaluation questions, incorporating supplementary sub-questions to guarantee that all aspects delineated in the TOR are duly considered and addressed.

The Final Evaluation Report responded to these inquiries utilizing specific, objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) developed for each evaluation question to assess the prevailing circumstances, the delivery of outputs, and progress toward the intended outcomes. The Evaluation Matrix (Annex 3 of this report) presented a detailed overview of the evaluation questions and sub-questions.

# Cross-cutting issues

The EC implemented a multifaceted approach to conduct a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of cross-cutting issues during the evaluation, ensuring the integration of gender considerations and incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives at every stage. Specifically, the EC examined the extent to which human rights considerations were embedded in the project’s activities, focusing on benefits to people experiencing poverty, women, and other disadvantaged groups in the targeted regions of Moldova.

For gender equality, the evaluation assessed how the project addressed gender issues throughout its lifecycle. This included analysing gender-sensitive measures applied to capacity-building, market access, and employment opportunities and reflecting on the project’s overall contribution to gender equality, human rights, and economic empowerment. The evaluation also examined the transformative changes promoted by the project in advancing gender equality within local communities and fostering women’s participation in various activities.

Adhering to a gender-responsive evaluation methodology, the EC scrutinised the influence of project interventions on gender equality and power dynamics. The UNDP Gender Results Effectiveness Framework (GRES) was utilised to categorise gender results. Using quantitative and qualitative data sources, the EC constructed a comprehensive picture of the project’s gender-related outcomes. Each result was evaluated against the GRES categories, systematically applying these to understand the Theory of Change (ToC) outcomes. This participatory and integrative approach revealed the intricate factors influencing project outcomes.

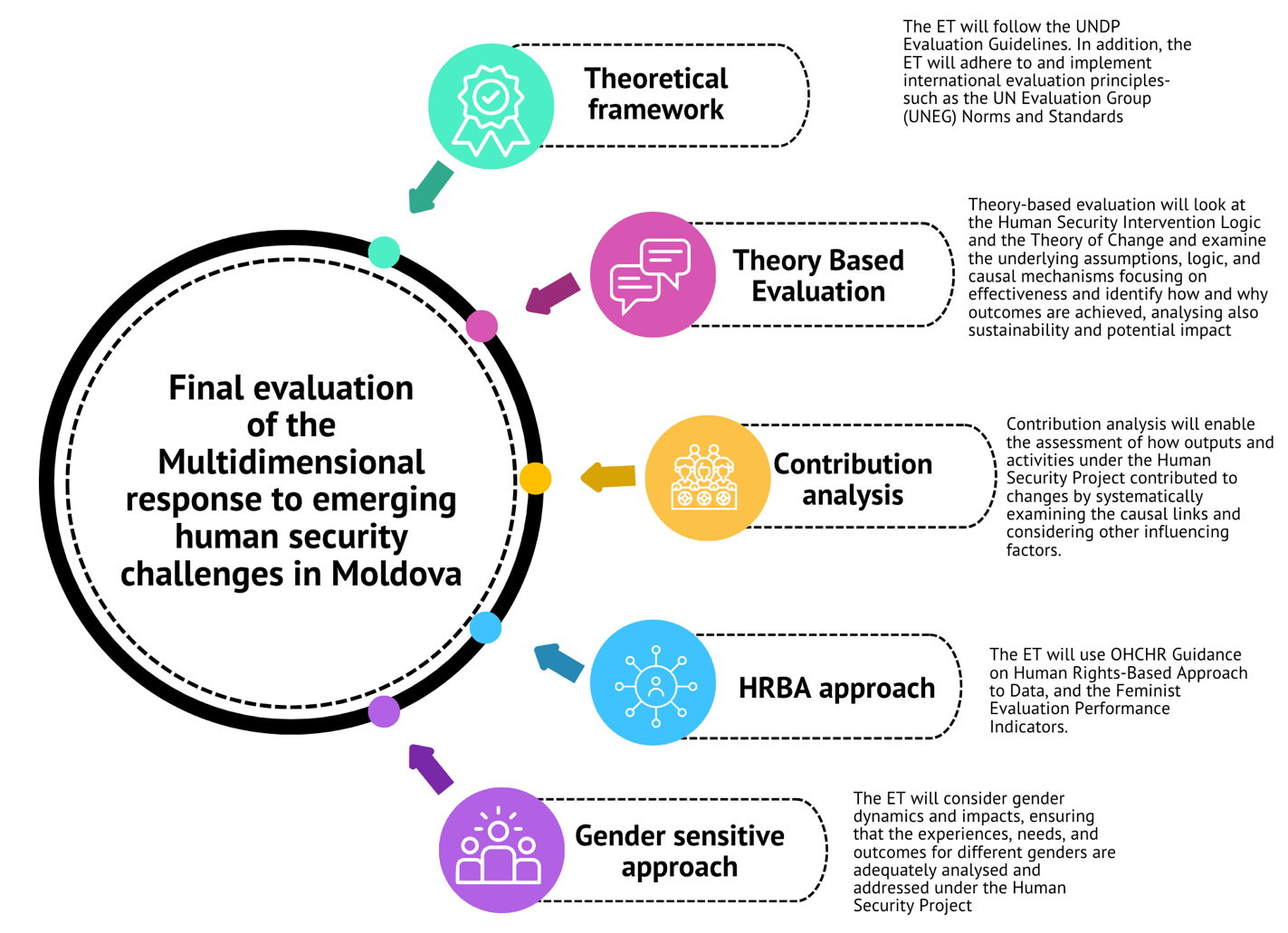
# Evaluation approach and methodology

## Specific approach to this evaluation

The framework for this ex-post evaluation has been set in the ToR, and following its provisions, the ET has developed a tailor-made methodology. The main references for the evaluation methodology are the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2021)[[4]](#footnote-5) and OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria. The EC adhered to UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards[[5]](#footnote-6) and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation[[6]](#footnote-7). Expanding this basis, the EC applied a theory-based evaluation approach. using the ToC; furthermore, the evaluation included contribution analysis (CA), reflect gender-responsive principles, and follow a human-rights-based approach.

The following paragraphs outline how a unique methodology combining such approaches has emerged for the Project’s evaluation[[7]](#footnote-8).

**Figure 5: Overview of the evaluation methodology**



The evaluation employed a **theory-based approach[[8]](#footnote-9)**, focusing on the project's **ToC, that** provided a roadmap for assessing how the project’s activities, outputs, and outcomes align with its overarching objectives. The EC implemented the following tasks:

* Examined the assumptions and risks underlying the ToC, including barriers to achieving energy, food, and community security goals.
* Analyzed the logical sequence of interventions, such as installing biomass heating systems, developing the National Farmers Registry, and implementing the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism.
* Identified discrepancies between planned and achieved results, offering insights into areas for improvement.

This iterative process fostered a deeper understanding of the contextual and systemic factors influencing project outcomes, ensuring that the evaluation captures the complexity of interrelated factors, such as energy dependency, agricultural resilience, and social cohesion.

**Contribution analysis** complemented the theory-based evaluation by:

* Disentangling the causal links between project activities (e.g., capacity-building for agricultural producers, adoption of biomass energy) and observed outcomes.
* Establishing a causal chain that traces the flow of activities, immediate outputs, and long-term impacts.
* Scrutinizing external influences, such as inflation, geopolitical tensions, or parallel initiatives, to validate or challenge the project's contribution to observed results.

For example, the evaluation assessed whether interventions such as the National Farmers Registry (dNFR) directly contributed to improved agricultural policymaking and food security or whether external factors played a significant role. This method ensured a robust analysis of the project's effectiveness in achieving its objectives.

The evaluation applied the **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)** to assess the project’s inclusivity and equity, particularly for marginalized groups such as refugees, rural communities, and women-led households. It examined how the project empowered vulnerable groups by improving access to resources, markets, and social services and evaluated the effectiveness of interventions in addressing systemic inequalities, including gender and socio-economic disparities, within energy and food security initiatives.

A **gender-sensitive lens** was incorporated to analyze the project’s impact on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The evaluation assessed whether activities, such as business advisory services for women-led MSMEs, effectively tackled gender-specific barriers. Additionally, it evaluated the integration of gender-responsive elements in community security initiatives, such as enhanced policing mechanisms to ensure women’s safety.

The UNDP Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) was used to categorize outcomes as gender-targeted, gender-responsive, or gender-transformative, providing a nuanced understanding of the project’s contributions to promoting gender equality and empowerment.

## Data collection methods and instruments and data analysis

The final evaluation of the MDHS Project adopted both summative and formative approaches.

* The summative component aimed to critically assess lessons learned, evaluating the realization of visible results at both output and outcome levels.
* The formative component focused on determining the adaptability of these results for future phases and potential expansions of the Project.

The evaluation employed a comprehensive methodology, integrating a mixed-methods paradigm that combined qualitative and quantitative data collection and analytical techniques. While qualitative methods, such as key informant interviews, group discussions, and reflective sessions, were the primary focus, quantitative data provided by the Project Team and its partners complemented these findings. Participatory data-gathering methods served as a cornerstone, emphasizing the expertise and contributions of diverse institutional stakeholders in the country.

To mitigate inherent research biases, the EC engaged in continuous self-reflection and actively addressed power dynamics with evaluation participants. A systematic process of data triangulation was used to validate findings, synthesizing insights from multiple sources to highlight points of consensus and divergence.

This robust evaluation methodology, informed by the ET’s extensive experience in similar contexts, ensured the relevance, applicability, and integrity of the evaluation process, providing a comprehensive understanding of the Project's implementation and impact.

### Analysis of Project records and secondary literature

The evaluation began with a thorough review of the Human Security Project's inputs, deliverables, and alignment with national and sector-specific strategic documents, including its energy, food, and community security objectives. This analysis incorporated governance and economic development aspects outlined in country-specific reports and strategic directives, offering insights into Moldova's political, governance, and socio-economic dynamics and the project's relevance and impact.

Additionally, the evaluation examined external factors influencing Moldova's context, such as the Ukraine conflict, political reforms, and the EU accession process, which significantly shaped the project's implementation. This contextual analysis provided a nuanced understanding of the operational environment and the challenges faced during execution.

The desk review integrated findings from national and international reports to refine evaluation questions and align them with the evaluation's objectives. Subsequent phases of the evaluation revisited key documents and strengthened collaboration with stakeholders to enrich findings.

A standardized analytical tool, aligned with the evaluation matrix, was employed to systematize insights from various primary and secondary sources. This ensured a cohesive and comprehensive analysis of the project and its outcomes.

### Primary Data Collection

This evaluation applied a human rights-based approach (HRBA) and gender-sensitive methodologies, ensuring inclusive participation from diverse stakeholders. This included both male and female beneficiaries and representatives from partner institutions to capture a full range of perspectives on the project’s impact. Guided by HRBA principles—transparency, equality, and non-discrimination—the evaluation process promoted accountability and respects the rights of all participants, fostering an environment where all voices were heard.

The primary data collection process for the evaluation of the MDHS Project was designed to comprehensively capture insights into the project’s implementation, outcomes, and challenges. A week-long in-country mission was conducted, combining stakeholder meetings, field visits to beneficiaries, and consultations with implementing partners. The agenda ensured the inclusion of diverse perspectives from government agencies, implementing entities, and direct beneficiaries.

The evaluation began with consultations involving the UNDP team, government counterparts, and sectoral partners. Meetings with the UNDP team, held at the start and conclusion of the field mission, provided an overview of the project’s objectives, outcomes, and challenges while allowing for reflections on lessons learned. Key government stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the General Inspectorate of Police, participated in discussions that highlighted sector-specific interventions, institutional capacities, and alignment with Moldova’s national priorities.

Field visits to project beneficiaries were a central component of the primary data collection process. These visits offered qualitative insights into the project’s impact at the community level. Beneficiaries of energy sector interventions, such as those implementing biomass heating systems and photovoltaic solutions, demonstrated tangible outcomes in enhancing energy security and operational efficiency. Visits to agricultural producers revealed how initiatives like the National Farmers Registry and tailored advisory services had improved productivity and resilience. Additionally, interactions with local communities and law enforcement entities involved in social tension monitoring and enhanced policing practices provided valuable perspectives on the project’s contributions to social cohesion and security.

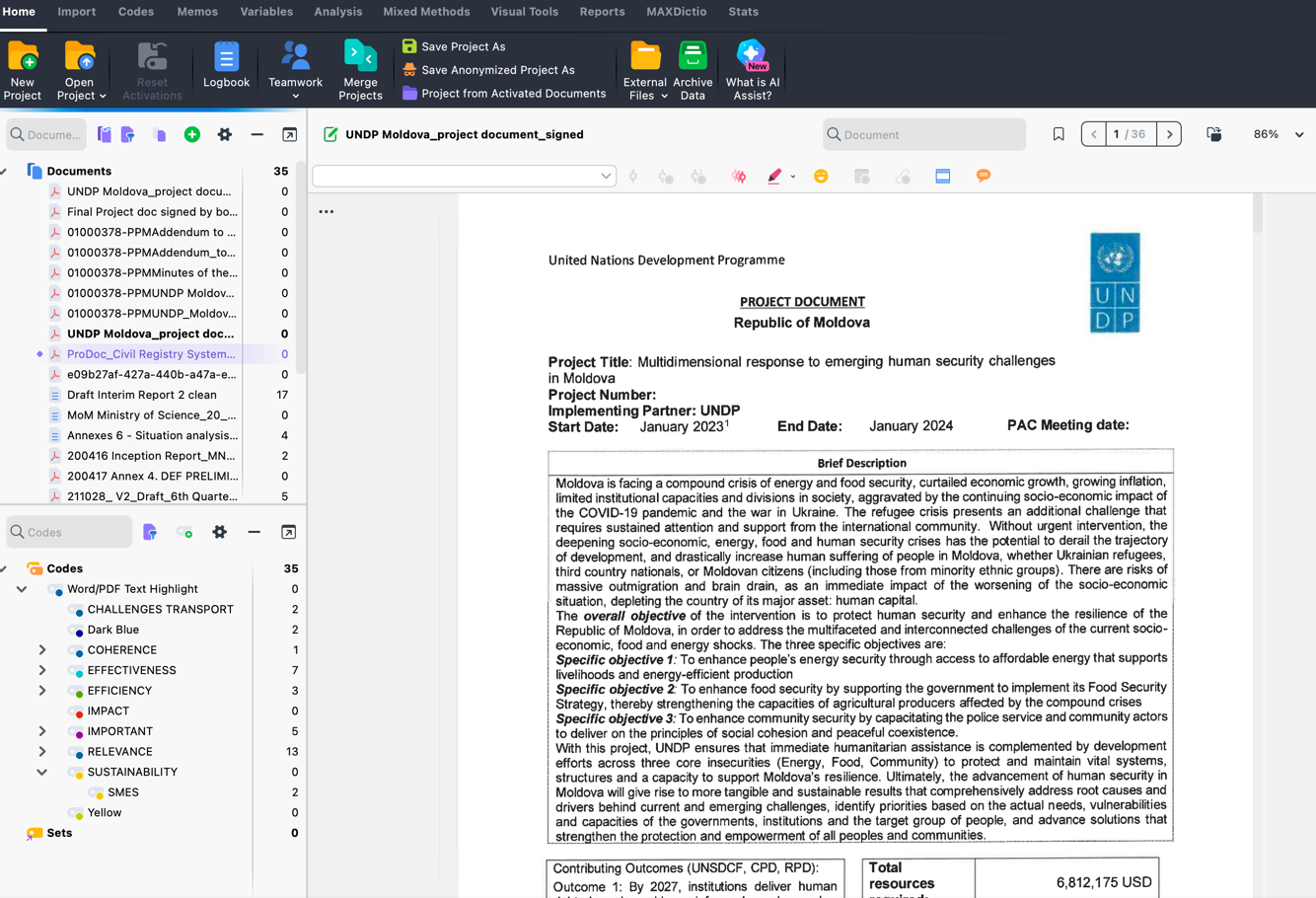
To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project’s outcomes, thematic meetings were held to assess each of the three specific objectives. Discussions on energy security focused on the adoption and impact of renewable and energy-efficient technologies in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Food security was examined through the operationalization of the National Farmers Registry and its alignment with EU standards, alongside support provided to MSMEs. Community security interventions were analyzed through the implementation of the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism and tools aimed at reducing social tensions and improving law enforcement practices.

The evaluation employed participatory methods to engage a wide range of stakeholders. Key informant interviews with government officials, UNDP representatives, and implementing partners provided insights into project management and operational challenges. Direct feedback from beneficiaries, including women-led households, smallholder farmers, and MSMEs, allowed for the validation of findings and triangulation of data. Reflective sessions with local authorities and other stakeholders facilitated discussions on the sustainability and scalability of the project’s interventions.

The data collected through these engagements were systematically analyzed using a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Triangulation ensured the reliability and consistency of findings by comparing information from interviews, field observations, and project documentation. Insights into Moldova’s socio-economic and political context, including the EU accession process and the regional impact of the Ukraine conflict, were integrated to provide a nuanced understanding of the project’s operational environment. This robust primary data collection approach ensured the evaluation captured the breadth and depth of the MDHS Project’s achievements, challenges, and potential for sustainability.

## Data analysis

The EC analysed data to facilitate the preparation of the evaluation report, using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA to upload completed data collection instruments[[9]](#footnote-10). The EC prepared codes and classifications based on the evaluation matrix and its elements- the sub-questions, judgement criteria and indicators. In parallel, the EC added classifications and attributes[[10]](#footnote-11) to facilitate data analysis tailored to the evaluation purpose.

***Figure 5 MAXQDA features for data analysis***

The responses have been grouped according to the evaluation matrix and respondent categories, and interview notes have been coded against the evaluation matrix (as indicated in the previous paragraph for direct alignment with the judgement criteria and indicators).

The EC applied a **cross-validation approach[[11]](#footnote-12)** for information from various sources and different collection methods to ensure the accuracy of findings. In parallel, the EC examined multiple sources to ensure the internal validity of the findings

## Risks and limitations

The evaluation of the "Multidimensional Response to Emerging Human Security Challenges in Moldova" faced several limitations and risks, primarily due to time constraints and the complex political and social context in the country. The limited timeframe for the evaluation posed a significant challenge, as it restricted the depth and breadth of analysis that could be undertaken. While the Evaluation Consultant (EC) had access to all key stakeholders, including government representatives, project beneficiaries, and implementing partners, the short duration necessitated a prioritization of activities, which may have limited opportunities for extensive consultations and in-depth data collection.

The evaluation also occurred against the backdrop of heightened political and social tensions following elections and a referendum concerning Moldova’s EU integration. These tensions influenced stakeholder dynamics and created an environment of uncertainty, potentially affecting the willingness of some participants to engage fully or reflect candidly on challenges and achievements.

Additionally, while the project documentation was comprehensive, the limited time available for triangulating findings through additional field visits and extended consultations presented challenges in ensuring a fully exhaustive assessment. Furthermore, while access to stakeholders was ensured, competing commitments of key informants and institutional representatives occasionally constrained their availability, requiring flexible scheduling and adaptations to the evaluation process.

To mitigate these challenges, the evaluation adopted a highly structured and strategic approach. This included targeted consultations during the in-country mission, prioritization of key interviews and field visits, and the use of pre-existing data and reports to supplement primary data collection. The EC employed participatory methods and real-time data validation to maximize the quality and reliability of findings within the given time constraints.

Despite these limitations, the evaluation successfully captured the project’s achievements and areas for improvement, offering a credible and context-sensitive analysis while acknowledging the constraints imposed by the timeframe and broader political environment.

## Ethical Considerations

Generally, the EC is aware of the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations[[12]](#footnote-13) and United Nations Ethical Guidelines[[13]](#footnote-14). The EC followed ethical considerations in selecting interviewees, interacting with them, and respecting their personal and institutional rights.

The EC requested informed consent from stakeholders before asking questions about the MHDS Project evaluation. To obtain consent, the EC briefly explained the evaluation's reasons and objectives and the questions' scope. Stakeholders had the right to refuse or to withdraw at any time. The EC will also ensure respondent privacy and confidentiality, as disclosing confidential information may seriously jeopardise the efficiency and credibility of the evaluation process. Therefore, the EC has been responsible for exercising discretion in all matters of the final MDHS Project evaluation, not divulging confidential information without authorisation. The EC respected informants' right to provide information confidently and ensured that sensitive information could not be traced to its source to protect the key informants from reprisals. Original data, including interview records and notes from interviews, will be retained in confidential files until the completion of the evaluation. The EC is fully independent and unaware of any conflicts of interest regarding this work.

# Evaluation findings

The final evaluation has presented the following findings, responding directly to the evaluation criteria and questions detailed in the scope and objectives section of the report. It is based on evidence derived from data collection and analysis methods described in the methodology section.

## Findings on relevance and coherence

The EC considered several critical aspects in evaluating the relevance of the MDHS project in Moldova. The initial step was to assess whether the Project's design and strategy aligned with Moldova’s national priorities, primarily concerning the country's human security and social cohesion. This included assessing how the Project had contributed to implementing national strategies.

Furthermore, the EC assessed the extent to which the project addressed the needs of its stakeholders. This encompassed an evaluation of the project's relevance to the needs of its beneficiaries and partners, including partners’ involvement in the implementation. The EC analysed if the project areas of intervention remained relevant during the implementation period.

EQ1.1. To what extent has the design and implementation of the Project responded to the national priorities strategies and commitments of the country?

JC1.1.1. The extent to which the Project responded to the country’s priorities and strategies in the respective areas of intervention

* ***F1. In conjunction with addressing immediate vulnerabilities, the project further supports the long-term objectives outlined in Moldova 2030 by integrating human security priorities and support sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity into its design***

The project is aligned with the ***National Development Strategy Moldova 2030***[[14]](#footnote-15). This comprehensive strategic framework identifies critical areas for national growth, including poverty reduction, equitable access to resources, improved living conditions, and the transition to sustainable practices, all of which the MDHS addressed. Specifically, a fundamental aspect of the Moldova 2030 strategy is its dedication to promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

The project progressed this objective by improving ***energy security, encouraging renewable energy sources, and implementing energy-efficient technologies (under SO1***). The Project’s initiatives to facilitate the development and deployment of biomass-based energy systems and increase the adoption of energy-efficient technologies are critical tested models in diversifying Moldova’s energy portfolio. The intention has been to alleviate the nation's reliance on imported energy and lowers household energy expenses, which are significant concerns identified within the Moldova 2030 framework. Moreover, promoting green technologies fosters the transition towards a low-carbon economy, aligning with the strategy’s focus on environmental sustainability as a cornerstone for enduring economic prosperity growth.

The project supported the Moldova 20230 inclusive economic growth-related objectives by considering and addressing critical elements of food security in the targeted regions. The strategy highlighted that the agricultural sector, as a large employment generator, has been and remained highly vulnerable to external shocks and climate change. At the same time, outdated practices further affected this situation. ***The project analysed and addressed some of these challenges (under SO2)- focusing on priorities under the Food Security Strategy 2023-2030[[15]](#footnote-16)- closely linked with the broader Moldova 2030.*** In this context, the project defined key activities, including the establishment and operationalisation of the Digital National Farmers Registry (dNFR), which set the framework to enhance agricultural productivity and traceability while simultaneously ensuring adherence to international standards. Integrating digital technologies into agricultural management will facilitate country’s EC accession process and bolster data-driven decision-making. For example, it will serve to refine subsidy policy and targeting measures (promoting access to high-value markets). Generally, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI) representatives recognised that project’s interventions align with the national overarching strategy of fortifying agricultural resilience and play a pivotal role in mitigating rural poverty and addressing economic disparities.

The project also aligns with Moldova 2030’s priority of ***facilitating social cohesion and focusing on community security***. The country faces persistent challenges in ensuring trust and collaboration between institutions and citizens, particularly in vulnerable communities. The project’s activities, such as piloting the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM) and enhancing police capacities (***under SO3***) have been part of the response. Overall, the partners from visited municipalities/ local public authorities recognised that the project’s initiatives under the community security framework contribute to reducing social tensions, promoting inclusive governance, and fostering peaceful coexistence as core elements of a cohesive and equitable society (the Strategy envisages).

The EC finds that a ***human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming*** have been implemented across all activities. For example, the interviewed stakeholders from UNDP and the national institutions stated that the project contributed to institutional capacities to design evidence-based policies and implement gender-responsive activities and services (from small grants for women-led enterprises to capacity development efforts), consistently promoting that no group is left behind. This is a core principle of the Moldova 2030 strategy.

***The project supported the nation’s efforts to align with the rigorous objectives outlined in the European Union Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) for Moldova (2021-2027)*** [[16]](#footnote-17). Notably, the Project's initiatives aim to enhance the capacities of key institutions from the national[[17]](#footnote-18) and sub-national[[18]](#footnote-19) levels, including community initiatives and civil society organisations (CSOs). These entities are entrusted with the crucial responsibilities of upholding, protecting, and promoting respect for fundamental human rights and facilitating the social inclusion of the country's most vulnerable populations. More specifically, the Project is designed to align with the MIP’s multidimensional approach to fostering social inclusion by creating a safer, more regulated, and economically advantageous environment, thereby ensuring that all citizens, including vulnerable groups, can contribute to Moldova's development and the overall well-being of its populace[[19]](#footnote-20).

In the context of EU integration, the Project’s strategic initiatives are aimed at strengthening stakeholders' competencies in addressing the urgent vulnerabilities faced by target groups and facilitating their social and economic integration following the EU Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all[[20]](#footnote-21). The Project has actively contributed to efforts to combat all forms of discrimination and to guarantee access to essential products and services[[21]](#footnote-22). Additionally, it aligns with the priorities set forth by the EU Partnership to enhance cooperation among institutions that are committed to ensuring that every individual can fully enjoy their civil and political, economic, social, and cultural rights[[22]](#footnote-23).

The EC finds that the recent ***EU Progress Report confirmed the MDHS Project's relevance to Moldova’s*** measures to support the most prominent vulnerabilities within the country. The EU Progress report recognised that Moldova’s authorities have responded to the crisis and laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and resilient society, aligned with EU standards and values[[23]](#footnote-24). The key informants confirmed that the Project has been, along with other initiatives in this area, relevant in extending efforts beyond temporary measures to create a lasting impact on the country's social fabric. They recognised these efforts as important in supporting Moldova’s efforts to meet accession criteria under Chapter 23: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights and Chapter 24: Justice, Freedom, and Security, “by strengthening institutions and fostering a climate of transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.[[24]](#footnote-25)

JC1.1.2. The extent to which the project aligned with UNDP country programme document outputs and outcomes, UNDCF, RRP, UNDP strategic plan

* F2. The project aligns closely with the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027 strategic priorities, demonstrating a coherent and integrated approach to addressing Moldova’s development challenges. Both frameworks emphasise the importance of resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability in fostering long-term development, which the MDHS directly supported.

The UNDP CPD 2023–2027[[25]](#footnote-26) is structured around four outcomes, with the project contributing to two: ***just and inclusive institutions and green development with sustainable communities and climate resilience.*** The project supports institutional capacity-building by enhancing the ability of local authorities to deliver inclusive, gender-responsive, and human rights-based services. This effort addresses governance gaps and strengthens participatory governance mechanisms, ensuring that marginalised and vulnerable groups can access essential services and opportunities, particularly in underserved regions. The project also prioritised evidence-based decision-making- using tools such as STMM and fostering community engagement- hence advancing the CPD’s vision of just and equitable institutions.

The CPD also prioritises Moldova’s transition to green development and resilience to climate change, which is central to the project’s focus on promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency by promoting affordable and renewable energy solutions to address Moldova’s acute energy vulnerabilities[[26]](#footnote-27). These interventions strived to reduce Moldova’s reliance on imported energy, lower carbon emissions, and enhance the resilience of communities to environmental risks. These Project’s efforts align with the CPD’s goal of accelerating structural transformations in energy and environmental sustainability while ensuring no one is left behind.

The CPD priorities derive from the UNSDCF 2023–2027[[27]](#footnote-28), a multi-agency framework that targets four strategic outcomes. The project contributed directly to the ***outcomes of just and inclusive institutions and green development***. Through its focus on governance in human security priorities areas- especially with the MAFI and MoI, the stakeholders recognised the project’s effects on strengthening institutional accountability and capacity, enabling institutions to respond effectively to the needs of diverse communities. These efforts align with the UNSDCF’s goal of fostering inclusive governance systems that empower citizens to participate in decision-making. The project also promoted environmental sustainability and resilience by integrating renewable energy solutions and climate adaptation strategies. These efforts advance the UNSDCF’s vision of sustainable communities that are resilient to climate and environmental risks, supporting Moldova’s transition to a green economy.

A critical dimension of the project’s alignment with the CPD and the UNSDCF is its ***integration of human rights, gender equality, and the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principle***. The project adopted a rights-based approach by addressing systemic inequalities that hinder access to resources and opportunities for marginalised groups. Gender equality is mainstreamed into the project’s activities, with targeted initiatives that empower women and promote their participation in socio-economic life and sustainable development. These efforts also contributed to structural barriers that perpetuate exclusion.

In addition, the Project aligned with the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) for Ukraine[[28]](#footnote-29) by focusing on critical areas such as ***social inclusion, economic empowerment, and more secure and inclusive communities***. Specifically, the Project's initiatives to enhance employment opportunities and livelihoods and reinforce community security and integration align with the RRP's goals of improving refugees' self-reliance (RRP SO3) and strengthening social bonds (RRP SO4), especially with the host communities. In addition, the Project's efforts to address the urgent needs of vulnerable groups, including food and energy security, mirrored the RRP's objective to improve the status and enhance support, including to refugees (RRP SO2).

JC1.1.3. The extent to which the project addressed relevant SDGs

* F3. The MDHS Project strategically targeted several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addressing immediate challenges and contributing to Moldova’s broader sustainable development agenda. The project adopted an integrative approach, tackling systemic vulnerabilities in energy security, food systems, and community resilience, thus, contributing to sustainable, equitable, and inclusive results that correlate to SDGs.

The project’s emphasis on energy access and efficiency directly supports **SDG 7**: *Affordable and Clean Energy*. The project supported using renewable energy sources such as biomass and promoted energy-efficient solutions in public institutions and households. These activities contributed to universal access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services (Target 7.1) and increased the share of renewable energy in Moldova’s energy mix (Target 7.2). Aligned with **SDG 13**: *Climate Action*, the project addressed climate resilience and environmental sustainability by promoting green technologies and enhancing local capacities to respond to climate-related challenges. Adopting energy-efficient practices and renewable energy solutions reduces the carbon footprint and builds Moldova’s capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change (Target 13.1). In line with **SDG 1**: *No Poverty*, the project addressed energy poverty and economic vulnerabilities, particularly in rural communities. By improving access to affordable energy and reducing household expenditures through energy efficiency, the project contributed to eradicating poverty in all its dimensions (Target 1.2).

Additionally, the project supported to some extent SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities by incorporating green and energy-efficient solutions..

The project’s efforts to modernise food systems and support agricultural resilience contribute to **SDG 2**: *Zero Hunger*. The results, such as the operationalisation of the National Farmers Registry and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, strengthened food security and supported small-scale agricultural producers, aligning with the target to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers (Target 2.3). The project also contributed to **SDG 10**: *Reduced Inequalities* by promoting social inclusion and equitable access to energy and agricultural resources. Its targeted interventions reduced disparities in access to public services and supported marginalised groups, ensuring equal opportunity and addressing systemic inequalities (Target 10.2 and Target 10.3).

The project’s activities reflect its contribution to **SDG 16**: *Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions* by enhancing participatory governance and strengthening institutional capacities at the local level. Efforts to improve community resilience and social cohesion aligned with promoting inclusive and peaceful societies and building accountable institutions (Target 16.6). Finally, the project’s cross-cutting emphasis on sustainable, inclusive development indirectly contributes to **SDG 5**: *Gender Equality*. The project promoted the participation of women in all activities, while targeting gender-responsive outcomes- these results supported the elimination of inequalities and promoted equal opportunities in decision-making processes (Target 5.5).

EQ1.2. To what extent has the Project addressed the needs of final beneficiaries?

JC1.2. The extent to which the Project addressed the needs of the final beneficiaries

* F4. The MDHS Project demonstrates a comprehensive and deeply contextualised approach to addressing its final beneficiaries’ multidimensional vulnerabilities and needs while fostering long-term resilience and empowerment. The project’s focus on identified challenges across energy, food security, and community resilience served to prioritise interventions that are inclusive, participatory, and aligned with human security principles.

The MDHS Project effectively addressed its target groups and beneficiaries' complex and interrelated challenges through a comprehensive, inclusive, and participatory programming approach. This demand-driven framework was developed in collaboration with institutional partners[[29]](#footnote-30), reflecting long and functional partnerships and building on ongoing UNDP initiatives. Partners highlighted the advantages of this methodology, particularly its bottom-up nature, which allowed for the effective identification of challenges while fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding. The partners recognised that the project “tailored its interventions to their mandates and capacities (as local stakeholders)” and this approach ensured that the specific and unique needs of beneficiaries were in focus and appropriately addressed[[30]](#footnote-31).

The EC finds that the project’s interventions targeted key vulnerabilities, starting with energy security, a significant challenge for households, micro-enterprises, and agricultural producers. The increasing energy costs and limited access to affordable, sustainable sources had created substantial barriers for these groups. To address these challenges, the project proposed and introduced smaller-scale renewable energy solutions, such as biomass boilers, photovoltaic systems, and energy-efficient technologies. These interventions intended to reduce energy costs for beneficiaries and enhance their resilience against external shocks[[31]](#footnote-32).

In the field of food security, the project addressed the requirements of smallholder farmers and agricultural enterprises to enhance their production, storage, and processing capabilities. Although modest in scale, these initiatives aim to empower producers to comply with stringent food safety standards, which are essential for market competitiveness and EU alignment). It responded to the necessity of establishing a registration system for farmers, which is a vital component of Moldova's vision for the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS)[[32]](#footnote-33).

The project also addressed the financial and technical needs of MSMEs, particularly the necessity for enhancing productivity, sustainability, and market resilience. For non-agricultural MSMEs, the project supported the adoption of energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable practices, which reduced operational costs while contributing to Moldova’s broader environmental goals. In parallel, the project considered and addressed the needs of women-led enterprises in adopting energy-efficient technologies, sustainable agricultural practices, and innovative business solutions[[33]](#footnote-34).

The project responded to broader socio-economic and governance challenges at the community level by addressing security needs and fostering local resilience. Collaborative processes engaged local stakeholders to promote participatory governance. The underlying objective was to respond to the community needs effectively: mitigate community (and governance-related) risks, reduce social tensions, and lay the foundation for stronger social cohesion and resilience.

EQ1.3. How did the human security approach bring added value?

JC1.3.1. The extent to which the human security approach brought the value to the beneficiaries and led to new solutions to address the priority challenges of the project

* F5. The project’s human security approach added value by placing individuals and communities at the centre of its interventions and promoting a holistic, integrated, and prevention-oriented framework (responding to the priority needs of its target groups and enhancing resilience and sustainability).

The key informants stated that the “added value of the human security approach lies in its ability to address multiple dimensions of vulnerability—economic, food, energy, and community security—in an integrated and context-specific manner”. They recognised that this approach has been effective in “tackling the complex challenges threatening the various dimensions of socioeconomic lives, livelihood, and dignity of targeted groups in Moldova". In addition, the Project emphasised strategic entry points that can have multiplier effects across different security dimensions, such as working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI) on dNFR or, under another component, engaging with social tension monitoring. Amidst the compounded crises impacting every facet of the human security framework, the project identified and addressed critical pervasive and interconnected insecurities. For example, the project responded to energy security needs by promoting renewable energy solutions- enabling households and micro-agricultural producers to enhance productivity and operational efficiency (despite rising energy prices and external shocks). The approach went beyond immediate relief, as adopting sustainable technologies also improved environmental outcomes, demonstrating the strategic value of linking economic resilience with energy sustainability.

In community security, the project added values: guided by people and context-specific principles, the Project engaged in ongoing assessments of community security, particularly focusing on the diverse experiences of various communities and individuals concerning different threats and vulnerabilities. Consequently, this methodology ensured that the project was perceived as consisting of "tailored initiatives that met the needs of targeted groups," as key informants stated. At the same time, they acknowledged the variability of risks and challenges present across diverse settings. This approach facilitated the initiative’s navigation through consultations with local authorities, community police, CSOs and citizens. Furthermore, this process enabled the integration of top-down protective measures with bottom-up empowerment initiatives.

A critical added value of the human security approach was its ability to integrate solutions across sectors, breaking down traditional silos to address interconnected challenges. For instance, interventions combining renewable energy technologies with agricultural support simultaneously addressed energy poverty, environmental sustainability, and food security. Similarly, MSME support programs strengthened economic resilience and community cohesion, highlighting the strategic advantage of aligning solutions with broader development priorities.

The project’s prevention-oriented focus ensured that its activities addressed immediate vulnerabilities and built long-term resilience. By empowering beneficiaries with tools, knowledge, and resources to navigate future challenges, the project created a foundation for sustainable progress. For example, adopting energy-efficient technologies and climate-smart agricultural practices enhanced beneficiaries' capacity to withstand economic shocks and environmental risks, aligning with Moldova’s national priorities for green development and EU integration.

EQ1.4. Has the project proven to be as relevant as originally envisaged?

JC1.4. The degree of lasting relevance of the MDHS Project and its activities (measured through the flexibility of the project and changes introduced during planning and implementation)

* F6. The MDHS Project remains highly relevant through its human security approach, aligning with Moldova's strategic priorities to build a resilient and cohesive society and promote inclusive development in line with the country’s strategic and international commitments.

The Project has demonstrated continued relevance, supporting Moldova’s efforts to build a cohesive, resilient, and equitable society to manage current and future challenges by fostering inclusive development, enhancing resilience, and promoting sustainable solutions.

As indicated in the previous paragraphs, the project was relevant in addressing priorities under the Moldova 2023. This strategic document continues to provide a solid foundation for the project’s relevance, emphasising the need for a whole-of-society approach to address systemic vulnerabilities and foster inclusive development. The strategy highlights priorities such as diversifying energy and enhancing renewables, improving access to livelihoods and employment opportunities, and ensuring universal protection for all groups, particularly those at risk of marginalisation. The MDHS Project aligns with these goals by addressing energy and food security challenges, strengthening community resilience, and promoting inclusive economic opportunities (particularly for women, agricultural producers, etc). This strategic alignment underscores the project’s role in advancing Moldova’s broader development vision and building the country’s capacity to withstand external shocks and emerging crises[[34]](#footnote-35).

The project’s relevance is further reinforced by Moldova’s efforts to proceed with the achievement of EU integration milestones priorities, which emphasise “structural and cohesion priorities” that require resilient systems and inclusive approaches to address social and economic disparities. The EU Progress Report[[35]](#footnote-36) reflected on Moldova’s progress in consolidating activities to improve the overall energy sector and implement sound energy efficiency measures, strengthen social cohesion, and respond to immediate humanitarian needs. This document stated that these efforts initially focused on managing the consequences of crises (such as food and energy vulnerabilities), recognising the need to expand the focus and promote the inclusion of all marginalised groups and strengthen community-based resilience. The MDHS remained relevant to these priorities- implementing interlinked human security components[[36]](#footnote-37) (aligns with this shift, which addresses systemic gaps and provides sustainable pathways for inclusion and resilience-building. In addition, Moldova’s national priorities underscore the importance of building resilient communities capable of effectively managing compound areas of human security. The project focuses on improving institutional capacities for community policing while empowering local public authorities and strengthening collaboration with citizens and CSOs, directly supporting these objectives.

The project’s continued relevance is also reflected in its ability to adapt to the evolving needs of its target groups. The challenges related to energy access, food insecurity, and social exclusion remain persistent in Moldova, requiring integrated and context-specific solutions. In this context, the project addressed these challenges through tailored interventions and, hence, remained responsive to the realities on the ground, ensuring that vulnerable populations, including rural communities and micro-enterprises, receive the support necessary to navigate both immediate and long-term vulnerabilities.

EQ1.5. To what extent has the Human Security Project established and ensured internal coherence?

JC1.5. The extent to which the theory of changes and objectives of the project (including inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) are logical and coherent, realistic and achievable

* F7. The MDHS Project established a well-structured and coherent vertical framework, ensuring that each specific objective included tangible and realistic results through carefully designed activities and outputs. However, the limited horizontal linkages between specific objectives constrained opportunities for cross-sectoral synergies and greater internal coherence. Strengthening these interconnections in future programming, particularly through a refined Theory of Change, would enable a more integrated and holistic response to Moldova’s multidimensional challenges.

The MDHS Project demonstrated strong internal coherence in designing and implementing its vertical interventions: each specific objective was clearly articulated, realistic, and supported by well-defined activities, outputs, and indicators. The project’s strategic framework provided a logical structure that linked inputs to outputs and outputs to specific objectives and further to outcomes, ensuring measurable and achievable results within the project’s allocated resources and timeframe. The EC analysis of the hierarchy of objectives confirms that the project’s intervention logic was robust, with clear pathways for achieving results in energy resilience, food security, and community stability.

For instance, under Specific Objective 1, introducing renewable energy solutions (e.g., biomass boilers and photovoltaic systems) included activities to address energy poverty and support the operational efficiency of micro-enterprises and smallholder farmers. Similarly, under Specific Objective 2, activities included improving food security through adopting climate-smart agricultural practices and establishing the dNFR, ensuring tangible support for small-scale farmers to strengthen their productivity and resilience. Specific Objective 3, is aimed at enhancing community security and institutional capacity, planned activities for strengthening participatory governance processes and implementing actions for further advancing community policing (improving partnerships between community police, LPAs, CSOs and citizens as part of more resilient communities).

While the vertical interventions were strong and realistic in achieving their respective objectives, a key area for improvement lies in the project’s horizontal linkages across these specific objectives. The integration between energy resilience (Objective 1), food security (Objective 2), and community resilience (Objective 3) was limited as designed and remained limited during implementation. For instance, while energy interventions improved agricultural productivity at the enterprise level, the potential synergies between these efforts and food system initiatives, such as capacity-building for climate-resilient farming, were not fully explored. Similarly, community resilience activities, such as strengthening governance and fostering institutional capacity, could have been better connected to economic and energy interventions to create broader, cross-sectoral impacts.

This *fragmented approach* resulted in each specific objective being treated as a standalone pillar rather than components of an integrated, mutually reinforcing strategy. A more explicit articulation of interlinkages, particularly in the project’s Theory of Change, could have strengthened internal coherence by showcasing how progress in one area (e.g., energy resilience) contributes to or benefits from advancements in other areas (e.g., food security and community governance). Such integration would have amplified the project’s transformative potential and enhanced its overall effectiveness and facilitate more integrative, portfolio implementation approach.

EQ1.6. To what extent is the project cooperating and coordinating with other UNDP projects and activities of the GoM and other partners?

JC1.6. The extent to which the Project and its outputs and outcomes synergised and coordinated with other UNDP initiatives, activities of GoM and other development partners

* F8. The MDHS Project has effectively demonstrated complementarity and synergies with other UNDP initiatives and coordinated with various stakeholders, contributing to a comprehensive and integrated response to human security challenges in Moldova. The project strategically aligned with existing programs, leveraging partnerships, and participating in collaborative platforms and amplified its impact across multiple dimensions of human security

The project's integration with UNDP’s ongoing initiatives created important synergies with on-going initiatives in three clusters. For example, the Effective Governance Cluster provided critical linkages, aligning with initiatives such as the Strengthening Police Training Capacities in the Republic of Moldova and the Access to Justice Project. These synergies reinforced institutional capacities, promoted participatory governance, and enhanced community-level security by addressing systemic justice and law enforcement vulnerabilities.

Within UNDP’s Inclusive Growth Cluster, the project connected effectively with initiatives such as the Resilient and Inclusive Markets in Moldova (PRIM). Similarly, the EU4Moldova – Focal Regions Programme supported various project components, facilitating energy interventions and enhancing the resilience of local communities by improving infrastructure and promoting sustainable development solutions.

Additionally, the project established critical synergies with UNDP’s Climate Change, Environment and Energy Cluster to advance energy security and climate resilience (synergies have been established with on-going initiatives such as Greening the future, advancing rights and stability. For example, the project had synergies with the prject Enhancing human security in Moldova through agri-food resilience to intensifying external and climate shocks. The MDHS focus on empowering MSMEs and promoting energy-efficient and climate-resilient practices contributed to inclusive economic growth (addressing also systemic challenges faced by women-led enterprises). This collaboration ensured beneficiaries received targeted support while aligning with national development priorities.

Spurring an inclusive and green transition with responsive governance in the Eastern Neighbourhood region. The MDHS Project complemented ongoing initiatives to address energy poverty and reduce Moldova’s dependency on external energy sources through activities promoting biomass-based energy solutions, photovoltaic installations, and energy-efficient technologies. These efforts aligned with national strategies, such as the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan, and supported Moldova’s commitments to energy transition and climate action in line with EU standards. By addressing energy vulnerabilities, the project enhanced the resilience of households, micro-enterprises, and agricultural producers, promoting both economic and environmental sustainability.

In the governance area, the project synergised with the various UNDP initiatives such as Support Police Capacity Building in the Field of Public Order and Cybercrime in Moldova and Strengthen social cohesion through inclusive participation and empowered citizens.

The project’s strategic cooperation with national institutions was another pillar of its success in fostering complementarity. Partnerships with ministries, LPAs, and national agencies were integral to implementing activities such as the dNFR. This flagship initiative strengthened the agricultural system in line with EU accession process. By aligning its efforts with Moldova’s national agricultural modernization goals, the project demonstrated its ability to advance systemic solutions and facilitate institutional capacity-building.

The project further engaged stakeholders through coordinated platforms and multi-stakeholder consultations, aligning its activities with broader national and development priorities. Participation in forums, such as those focusing on energy efficiency and sustainable agriculture, allowed the project to advocate for human security principles while harmonizing interventions with those of other development partners. This coordination enabled the project to remain agile in addressing emerging challenges and ensured a unified response to Moldova’s multi-dimensional vulnerabilities.

## Findings on effectiveness

In assessing the effectiveness of the MDHS Project, the EC thoroughly reviewed its achievements against its main objectives. This included evaluating progress in enhancing energy security by improving access to affordable and sustainable energy solutions, modernizing solid biofuel production, and promoting energy-efficient technologies that supported livelihoods and production capacities. The EC further examined the project’s contribution to food security, particularly through strengthening the capacities of agricultural producers, piloting the National Farmers Registry, and enhancing MSMEs' abilities to comply with food safety standards to ensure resilience amid compounded crises. Additionally, the EC assessed the project’s role in improving social cohesion and community security by building police services’ capacities through modern equipment, such as body cameras and digital tools, and implementing the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM) to identify and address key social drivers of tension.

The EC reviewed progress in promoting human security, with evidence highlighting the project’s ability to respond to systemic vulnerabilities while mitigating external challenges, including economic volatility and resource pressures. Finally, the EC evaluated collaboration among project partners, particularly their ability to align efforts with national strategies and effectively engage stakeholders, ensuring a unified response to the complex challenges addressed by the project.

EQ2.1. To what extent were the project’s main objectives achieved in keeping with the original activities, outputs and performance indicators?

JC2.1.1. The extent to which the project contributed to enhanced people’s energy security through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and energy-efficient production (specific objective 1)

* F9. The MDHS Project has progressed in enhancing energy security in Moldova by improving access to affordable and sustainable energy solutions while supporting livelihoods and promoting energy-efficient production.

The project's Specific Objective 1 targeted the public and private sectors, offering a multi-dimensional response to the country's pressing energy challenges, further exacerbated by socio-economic shocks. Through its well-articulated activities under Outputs 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3, the Project delivered tangible results, contributing to increased energy resilience and sustainable development.

The EC finds that the project's design was strategic and well-aligned with Moldova’s energy priorities, focusing on modernising solid biofuel production, promoting biomass energy adoption, and fostering energy-efficient technologies in agriculture and non-agricultural sectors. Output 1.1, which aimed to support existing solid biofuel producers, demonstrated notable achievements. According to the project's records and partners, ten companies were selected for grants to modernise production processes, particularly in pellet and briquette lines, photovoltaic installations, and mobile shredders. Key informants emphasized that these improvements have enhanced production efficiency and reduced operational costs, thereby increasing the competitiveness of local producers in the biomass market. The EC also observed that the Association of Solid Biofuel Producers emerged as a critical facilitator between the Government and producers. Through advocacy and legislative support (Activity 1.1.3), amendments to two laws and two government decisions were initiated, addressing key barriers to raw material supply and market development. Stakeholders stated that this strengthened coordination has been critical for solid biofuel producers, allowing their voices to influence Moldova's energy policies.

The EC further finds that the project's interventions under Output 1.2 contributed to energy security at the household and institutional levels. The subsidised household biomass heating program successfully identified and supported 80 households to install biomass boilers through a structured two-step process of telephonic surveys and technical inspections. Key informants noted the importance of this intervention in addressing energy poverty, particularly in vulnerable and rural communities, where access to affordable heating solutions remains limited. Introducing a remote monitoring system for biomass boilers in public buildings is another notable achievement, with the system being operationalised in nine facilities to date and targeting 207 power stations. According to technical partners, this system ensures real-time data collection for energy consumption and facilitates evidence-based decision-making for energy efficiency improvements.

The project's efforts to build human capital were equally significant. Training for 150 biomass boiler operators strengthened operational capacities, ensuring the efficient management of renewable energy infrastructure. The reactivation of the online trading platform for solid biofuels (Activity 1.2.4) was highlighted as a vital step towards improving market transparency and accessibility. Informants acknowledged the platform’s potential to connect producers with consumers, fostering a more competitive and dynamic biomass market. Furthermore, awareness-raising activities targeting 310 children, 350 students, and 150 adults promoted the benefits of biomass energy use, with participants expressing an increased willingness to adopt energy-efficient solutions in their daily lives.

Under Output 1.3, the project made substantial progress in promoting energy-efficient technologies among agricultural enterprises and households. Activities such as capacity-building programs and study tours equipped 358 individuals, including SMEs and micro-agri producers, with knowledge on sustainable energy solutions. Study tours, in particular, fostered peer learning and inspired participants to integrate renewable energy technologies into their production processes. Moreover, through a targeted grant scheme, 10 smallholder farms and 20 women-led households implemented energy-efficient solutions, including photovoltaic systems, heat pumps, and thermal insulation technologies. The EC notes that this support was particularly transformative for women-led enterprises, with tangible impacts on reducing energy costs, increasing productivity, and fostering inclusive growth. Beneficiaries reported improved operational efficiency and are strongly committed to maintaining these practices long-term.

Despite these achievements, the EC finds that certain gaps remain. For example, while the subsidised biomass heating program and capacity-building initiatives were well-received, the scale of interventions may not fully address the widespread energy insecurity in Moldova, particularly among vulnerable populations. Stakeholders recommended expanding the reach of such initiatives and further integrating renewable energy solutions with national energy strategies to ensure systemic change.

Generally, the EC finds that the project has demonstrated clear and measurable progress toward enhancing energy security through a combination of infrastructure development, capacity-building, and legislative support. Also, the EC finds that the project's achievements under Specific Objective 1 are well-documented and aligned with performance indicators. However, further efforts to scale up these interventions and strengthen synergies with national policies could enhance their long-term impact and sustainability. Key informants emphasised that the project laid a strong foundation for Moldova's transition to clean and affordable energy, underscoring its critical role in addressing the country’s energy challenges.

JC2.1.2. The extent to which the project strengthened the capacities of agricultural producers affected by the compound crises to enhance food security (Specific objective 2)

* F10. The EC finds that the MDHS project has demonstrably strengthened the capacities of agricultural producers affected by compounding crises to enhance food security, thereby supporting the Government of Moldova in implementing its Food Security Strategy.

The Project targeted the immediate and structural challenges within the agricultural sector, specifically addressing vulnerabilities exacerbated by socioeconomic shocks and energy price volatility.

The Project's interventions under Specific Objective 2 focused on enhancing food security through capacity-building, improved processes, and targeted infrastructure support for agricultural producers and smallholder farmers. The National Registry of Farmers was successfully piloted (Indicator 2.1.2), serving as a foundational mechanism for monitoring and improving access to resources for farmers. The EC finds this initiative crucial as it laid the groundwork for evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation, particularly in regions severely impacted by the crisis. As part of this registry pilot, a notable number of farmers were registered (Indicator 2.1.3), which key informants emphasised as a step towards better planning and oversight in the agricultural sector.

The project delivered results that enhanced the capacity of MSMEs to comply with food safety and production standards (Indicator 2.1.4). Specifically, small and medium-sized enterprises in the agricultural value chain received targeted support to modernise production processes, improve food storage, and ensure alignment with international standards. The EC observed that 11 MSMEs were successfully supported through competitive grants, as confirmed by evaluation reports. These grants enabled beneficiaries to upgrade their equipment, expand storage facilities, and introduce energy-efficient solutions that enhanced production efficiency and sustainability. The EC underscored the importance of this support in promoting resilience among small agri-businesses, noting that the selected MSMEs demonstrated strong innovation and sustainability potential.

Furthermore, food poverty monitoring mechanisms (Indicator 2.1.1) were established to assess and respond to emerging food security risks. This initiative marked a strategic contribution to strengthening institutional capacities, ensuring that data-driven insights guide national responses to food crises. Key informants highlighted the utility of these mechanisms in identifying gaps in food access and designing appropriate interventions.

The Project also prioritised capacity-building efforts, delivering tailored training programs for farmers on sustainable agricultural practices, resource management, and food safety standards. Through informative sessions and in-country study tours, over 199 participants from agricultural enterprises gained exposure to clean energy-efficient technologies and innovative farming solutions, with a particular emphasis on empowering women-led enterprises and younger farmers. As evidenced by post-training evaluations, participants reported a high degree of satisfaction and intention to apply newly acquired knowledge.

Nevertheless, the EC notes that while the Project's activities were well-targeted and aligned with national priorities, integration across the broader food value chain could be further enhanced. For example, while MSMEs received critical support, limited horizontal linkages between beneficiaries and other actors within the value chain (e.g., processors, distributors) constrained the full realisation of synergies. Additionally, expanding monitoring mechanisms to include qualitative indicators, such as beneficiaries' perceptions of capacity gains, would further strengthen the assessment of food security outcomes.

JC2.1.3. The extent to which the project contributed to capacities of police service and community actors to deliver on the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence (Specific objective 3)

* F11. The MDHS Project has contributed to strengthening the capacities of police services and community actors to uphold the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, addressing systemic challenges in public security and community resilience.

The interventions under Specific Objective 3 combined evidence-based mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives, and targeted tools to improve institutional responsiveness while fostering trust between police services and local communities. For example, the project supported the identification of social tension drivers in targeted communities by implementing the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM) (Indicator 3.1.2.a). The project identified key drivers of tension by engaging local stakeholders and conducting participatory assessments, such as resource competition, refugee integration challenges, and socio-economic disparities. The key informants highlighted that the STMM data provided actionable insights for community interventions and strategic planning, helping local actors address potential sources of conflict before they escalated. Furthermore, the project developed and implemented awareness and information tools (Indicator 3.1.2.b) to promote the use of STMM data. In parallel, the project implemented activities such as community consultations, workshops, and public campaigns to enhance understanding among local actors, enabling evidence-driven responses to emerging tensions.

In parallel, the project addressed the operational capacities of police services to respond effectively to public security challenges and ensure accountability. The EC finds that the average police response time to 112 emergency calls improved in the targeted districts due to the provision of fit-for-purpose vehicles and capacity-building efforts (Indicator 3.2.1). Police officers in districts with many settled refugees were equipped with body cameras (Indicator 3.2.2) to properly document public order violations, fostering greater transparency and accountability in law enforcement practices. The key informants emphasized that the introduction of body cameras not only improved the quality of evidence collection but also enhanced public trust in police services. One interviewee from the law enforcement sector stated that “the body cameras have changed how the community perceives the police—it reduces disputes and ensures professional conduct.”

Police teams received training and equipment for smart policing tools (Indicator 3.3.2), which were instrumental in addressing emerging public security threats, including road safety incidents. The training combined theoretical knowledge and practical exercises, ensuring officers could effectively use modern policing technologies. Several informants acknowledged the transformative impact of these tools, with one senior police official noting, “These digital solutions allow us to work smarter, not harder—responding faster, recording evidence better, and reducing crime-related delays.”

The EC also observed significant strides in strengthening community-level actors to promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. The project engaged local public authorities (LPAs), community leaders, and civil society organisations in targeted capacity-building initiatives, which improved their ability to mediate conflicts and foster inclusive decision-making processes. The alignment of community-focused interventions with police capacity-building efforts created a unified approach to addressing public safety and social tensions. As a result, the project contributed to building trust between law enforcement agencies and communities, promoting collaboration in tackling shared challenges.

While the achievements under Specific Objective 3 were substantial, the EC finds that coordination between police services and community actors could have been further strengthened. Linking the STMM's outputs to community-led initiatives and police response strategies could amplify the project’s overall impact. Additionally, qualitative assessments of community perceptions of safety and trust in police services would provide valuable insights into the long-term outcomes of these interventions.

EQ2.2. Has there been any significant progress in promoting human security as a result of this project?

JC2.2. The extent to which the country and the targeted/ beneficiary regions progressed in ensuring human security

* F12. The project has achieved progress under its objectives, despite the brief implementation timeframe and inherent challenges. Ensuring meaningful changes in human security requires developing institutions and establishing systems, which requires time and following a well-elaborated and sustainability-focused approach.

Stakeholders emphasised that the Project's combination of evidence-based approaches, targeted grants scheme and capacity-building support has laid a solid foundation for continued efforts, enabling Moldova and its targeted regions to respond more effectively to human security challenges.

One of the Project’s results with the most transformative capacity was addressing economic insecurities by promoting livelihood opportunities and enhancing food security. Through designing a well-balanced combination of tailored activities (needs-based capacity-building, introducing energy-efficient technologies, and supporting small businesses), the Project enabled beneficiaries to improve productivity, adopt climate-smart practices, and strengthen their resilience to economic shocks. For example, the project efforts for food security involved access to critical data to guide national strategies on food security. In addition, support for MSME contributed to improved performance**[[37]](#footnote-38)**. Key informants emphasised that these interventions affect social cohesion, reducing economic uncertainty and improving the self-reliance of vulnerable communities.

The project also strengthened community-level security, addressing preparedness and capacities to respond to emerging tensions and public safety concerns. For example, the informants highlighted that the project enhanced the operational capacity of police services by equipping them with body cameras and fit-for-purpose digital tools, which improved transparency, accountability, and response times to emergencies. Introducing smart policing technologies and training programs enabled law enforcement to address public safety challenges efficiently, fostering greater trust between communities and police services.

In addition to economic and community security, the Project addressed personal insecurities, particularly among vulnerable groups, by improving the overall situation to access essential services and promoting inclusive development- in this area the MDHS synergised with the various on-going UNDP and other development initiatives. In this context, interventions to upgrade critical infrastructure, such as energy-efficient systems and public facilities, improved the quality of life for targeted communities.

EQ2.3. What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?

JC2.3. The extent to which external challenges affected the progress of the project- from a human security point of view

* F13. The MDHS Project demonstrated progress in promoting human security despite being implemented in a complex and evolving external environment. The war in Ukraine, Moldova’s somewhat challenging EU accession process, and regional economic pressures created hurdles, yet the Project’s targeted interventions laid a foundation for resilience, inclusion, and stability.

The conflict in Ukraine continues to pose a substantial risk to the region, with the potential for further increased refugee inflows into Moldova. This ongoing instability has strained local systems, increasing the demand for improving availability and quality of essential services and exacerbating economic and social vulnerabilities within refugee-hosting communities. While the Project successfully addressed immediate needs, such as improving access to livelihoods and community safety, stakeholders noted that the fluid nature of the refugee situation—marked by frequent border crossings—complicates long-term stabilisation and integration efforts**[[38]](#footnote-39)**.

In parallel, Moldova’s EU accession process presented both an opportunity and a challenge for the Project. The country has been (and largely remained) divided between pro-EU and anti-EU sentiments, creating uncertainty around its developmental trajectory. However, the recent referendum confirming Moldova’s pro-EU commitment has brought clarity and momentum to reform efforts, amplifying the relevance of several Project activities. For example, the dNFR, piloted through the Project, aligned with EU standards for modernising agriculture and strengthening food security—a key priority for the agriculture sector Acquies. Similarly, the STMM emerged as a tool for identifying social cohesion challenges, providing a solid basis for policies and practices to mitigate tensions that could otherwise hinder Moldova’s progress toward EU integration. Despite these successes, stakeholders noted that the demands of the accession process had placed pressure on national institutions, creating competing priorities that at times, affected the pace of implementation.

Additionally, regional economic challenges, such as the rising energy costs exacerbated by the conflict, posed significant barriers for vulnerable households and businesses. While the Project introduced innovative energy solutions, such as biomass heating systems and energy-efficient technologies, the affordability of these measures remained a challenge, particularly for marginalised groups already struggling with economic insecurities. Stakeholders emphasised that the interventions effectively provided immediate relief, but broader structural issues continue to hinder the full realisation of energy security goals.

The short implementation timeframe further amplified these challenges, as meaningful and systemic improvements to human security require sustained engagement. The ET finds that the Project introduced critical measures to enhance interlinked aspects of human security, and stakeholders recognized that long-term investments and continued support would be essential to consolidate these gains and ensure lasting impact.

EQ2.4. How effectively did the project partners collaborate?

JC2.4. The extent to which the project partners collaborated with the project and among themselves

* F14. The EC recognises that the MDHS has embraced a dynamic, demand-driven methodology, engaging stakeholders at every stage and fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the Project's goals.

UNDP’s longstanding presence in Moldova, coupled with its established partnerships and deep sectoral knowledge in governance, energy, and inclusive development, played a critical role in guiding the Project’s direction and ensuring the relevance of its activities and high effectiveness within the limited implementation timeframe. This institutional foundation enabled UNDP to leverage its technical expertise and context-specific insights to design and implement solutions tailored to Moldova’s priorities.

The project’s interventions were also grounded in the human security framework, effectively addressing interconnected dimensions of human security, such as economic stability access to energy, and strengthened community resilience. National stakeholders interviewed during the evaluation commended UNDP for its impartiality, reliability, and commitment to addressing Moldova’s development sensitivities. As one stakeholder emphasized, *“UNDP’s ability to balance technical expertise with trust-building among institutions makes it a critical partner for us in navigating complex development interventions.”*

A key strength of the Project was its collaborative engagement with national stakeholders, including LPAs and the main institutions, who participated as equal partners throughout the planning and implementation stages. This inclusive approach resulted in tailored interventions, such as capacity-building measures and targeted support grants, which were aligned with human security priorities and responsive to the specific needs of local communities. Stakeholders noted that the Project’s participatory processes amplified its impact and fostered a shared sense of responsibility, strengthening institutional and community ownership. The EC finds that this partnership modality promoted a citizen-centric approach, empowering stakeholders to participate actively and advocate for the Project’s broader goals.

Furthermore, UNDP’s ability to integrate interlinked areas of human security—including energy, food, and community-level safety—underscored the value of a holistic and comprehensive framework for social progress. The combination of national expertise, technical guidance, and inclusive collaboration ensured the Project achieved meaningful results while aligning with Moldova’s long-term development aspirations. The Project established a platform for addressing systemic vulnerabilities through locally grounded and sustainable solutions by fostering multi-stakeholder dialogue and enabling national institutions to drive change.

## Findings on efficiency

The evaluation of efficiency focused on two primary dimensions. Initially, the EC assessed the strategic allocation of resources, encompassing financial, human, and technical support, to ascertain their effectiveness in realising the Project's outputs under its specific objectives. This process aimed to determine if the Project effectively channelled resources to maximise the desired results.

The EC delved into the Project's management structure, analysing the effectiveness of the tested implementation model (that resembles the “portfolio approach”), including operational and administration roles shared among three clusters, understanding how these roles contributed to the results, and determining any potential areas for optimisation.

SQ3.1. Were the anticipated outputs generated on time and within the budget, as specified in the workplan and implementation schedule?

JC3.1.1. The degree of timely implementation of the MDHS Project in a logical sequence and availability of inputs in a timely fashion

* F15. The MDHS Project embodied efficient execution and a strategic vision, demonstrating strong delivery speed and an appropriate allocation of resources. These factors contribute to the Project's alignment with the priorities and needs of partners and target groups.

The project was planned to be implemented within a twelve-month implementation period, from March 2023 until March 2024. However, the complexity of this initiative and its multi-dimensional human-security-driven scope and considerable funds, that were allocated but transferred with some delays posed limitations and challenges to completing all activities within this very limited timeframe.

Still, the involvement of UNDP clusters and the project teams (from various initiatives within these clusters) in implementing various activities and project components facilitated the efficient implementation and completion of all the tasks. Still, despite these management capacities and focused implementation- activities could not be completed on time. Therefore, the Project requested and received a ten-month no-cost extension; this additional time for implementation allowed the UNDP and its partners to complete all activities and processes and wrap up the Project activities.

The national stakeholders recognised the project's added value for its targeted human security approach: they recognised limited time to implement activities, but at the same time, they recognised that UNDP remained focused on results but facilitated nationally-driven processes. For example, preparing and establishing the dNFR system has been a highly important result, but developing the capacities of the Ministry and other national institutions within the agriculture sector- to operate it and benefit from the new system is another dimension. The partners stated that the project allocated sufficient time for nationally driven processes, enabling them to adopt and apply acquired knowledge and institutionalise these practices[[39]](#footnote-40).

JC3.1.2. The extent to which the resources, including human, material and financial, have been used to achieve the results

* F16. The MDHS and UNDP teams have been highly efficient in planning and using human and financial resources to achieve the results

Project Document[[40]](#footnote-41) has been signed between UNDP and the Government of Japan, funded this initiative with the budget of USD 6,812,176. The EC used operational ratio measurement for the cost-benefit analysis (CBA)[[41]](#footnote-42).

**Graph 1 Overview of the project budget by categories**

*Source: Annex - Project budget*

The initially approved budget analysis reveals that the MDHS Project strategically allocated its resources to address its core objectives of energy security, food security, and community security. The budget envisaged that operational and management costs account for **5%**, indicating efficient resource allocation to programmatic activities while maintaining essential administrative functions.

***Graph 2 Overview of the Project budget by specific objectives***



Energy security received the largest allocation, amounting to $2,349,111 (37% of the total budget and 40% of the budget allocated for specific objectives). This allocation intended to support activities such as promoting solid biofuels, enhancing energy-efficient practices, and introducing sustainable technologies for MSMEs and households. Key planned initiatives included the installation of biomass heating systems, the development of a biofuel trading platform, and grant schemes to support solid biofuel producers in upgrading their production processes. These grants aimed to incentivise the adoption of energy-efficient technologies and foster a more sustainable biofuel market. The budget reflected complementary activities, including capacity-building efforts- such as training programs for biomass boiler operators and awareness campaigns to promote energy security solutions.

The allocation for food security, totalling $2,244,000 (35% of the total budget and 38% of the programmable budget) was directed toward activities aimed at modernising agricultural systems and addressing systemic food vulnerabilities. This allocation focused on developing and piloting the dNFR, which is the key step in improving agricultural governance and aligning with EU standards. Additional budgeted activities included support of business advisory services, capacity-building programs for MSMEs in the agri-food sector, and establishing a food poverty monitoring mechanism. The grant schemes under this objective were envisaged to provide targeted financial and technical support to smallholder farmers and MSMEs, enabling them to adopt modern agricultural practices, meet food safety standards, and strengthen their resilience. These initiatives were complemented by efforts to enhance the effectiveness of subsidy mechanisms.

For community security, $1,322,000 (21% of the total budget and 22% of the programmable amount) was allocated to enhance policing capacities and promote social cohesion. This allocation envisaged activities such as implementing the STMM and strengthening community-police capacities to improve law enforcement efficiency. In addition, this budget component included around 0.2 mil ISD for communication activities- this allocation was for all project components, including SO3.

Operational costs, totalling $330,008 (5% of the total budget), ensured the effective management and coordination of the Project. This allocation covered essential expenses such as staff salaries, office rent and utilities, and communication activities. The modest allocation to operational costs demonstrated efficient resource management, with most funds directed toward achieving the Project’s programmatic outcomes.

***However, during the implementation, the Project Team requested a budget revision. The analysis of the revised budget reveals that while the overall allocation under the specific objectives has remained consistent, there were notable adjustments within the budget lines to better align with the project’s priorities and operational needs. These adjustments reflect a refined focus on addressing key challenges and enhancing the effectiveness of interventions under each objective.***

Within the SO1, the adjustments emphasise operationalising systems and expanding capacity-building efforts. The allocation for grant schemes supporting solid biofuel producers and establishing a trading platform for biofuels demonstrates a more strategic focus on fostering sustainability within the energy sector. Additional resources were directed toward training operators of biomass boilers and supporting MSMEs to adopt energy-efficient technologies, ensuring these measures contribute to broader economic and environmental resilience.

The budget under SO2 also underwent adjustments to prioritise scalable and impactful interventions. The piloting and scaling of the dNFR were given greater prominence, along with the establishment of complementary systems such as the Farm Accountancy Data Network and the Agricultural Market Information System. These shifts reflect an increased focus on creating robust, data-driven mechanisms to inform policymaking and support agricultural producers. The UNDP team stated that enhanced resources for business advisory services and food poverty monitoring further underline the commitment to addressing systemic vulnerabilities in the agri-food sector.

The revised budget highlights a more focused investment in digital tools and community engagement for the SO3. The allocation to smart policing tools illustrates a deliberate effort to modernise law enforcement capabilities. Similarly, under this budget category, the MDHS envisaged expanded funding for awareness campaigns and other communication activities under this and other project components.

The EC finds operational costs have been realigned to optimise resources to support delivery. Consolidating expenses related to office operations and increased funding for communication and visibility activities reflect a pragmatic approach to maintaining operational efficiency while enhancing stakeholder engagement and outreach.

SQ3.2. How efficient were the management and administrative arrangements employed to implement the project?

JC3.2.1. The extent to which the Project has introduced sound and effective management practices (including reporting and communication)

* F17. The Project had a well-established management approach that contributed to delivering results.

The Project planned for a well-defined team structure and oversight mechanism to ensure efficient execution under the UNDP Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). The EC recognises that the Project, as a multifaceted and managerially demanding initiative, was envisioned to operate under a robust management and coordination framework. This framework aimed to deliver integrated and cohesive support with significant effects on human security, utilising a "portfolio approach." The portfolio approach is a strategic framework that integrates individual initiatives across thematic clusters into a cohesive system, targeting broader development outcomes aligned with specific SDGs and fostering synergies across thematic areas, as operationalised through the three UNDP Moldova clusters. This methodology emphasised inclusive stakeholder engagement and adaptive management, enabling real-time adjustments and learning to address evolving challenges.

In line with these provisions, the Project document envisaged a dedicated implementation team to ensure effective delivery across thematic areas. This team was planned to include one International Programme Coordinator, reporting directly to the Deputy Resident Representative, and three Thematic Component Leads specialising in Community Security, Energy Security, and Food Security. Two Procurement Associates, two Financial/Administrative Associates, and one Communication Specialist were planned under the operational support[[42]](#footnote-43).

However, the EC finds that the short implementation period and lengthy recruitment procedures hindered the establishment of the envisioned full-fledged project team. The Project Coordinator, an International UN Volunteer (UNV), joined several months after implementation had started and departed before the Project's completion. Still, the Project nominated thematic component leads as planned- UNDP programme associates from three clusters acted in these roles.

*The EC finds that this deviation from the planned structure reduced the benefits of the portfolio approach.* While the experienced UNDP clusters and teams managed activities under the specific objectives, this arrangement resulted in a predominantly objective-focused implementation process. This practical implementation limited the integrative potential of the portfolio approach, thereby preventing the realisation of multiplier effects that could have been achieved through better integration and cross-thematic synergies.

JC3.2.2. The extent to which management systems, including monitoring mechanisms, facilitated efficient implementation

* F18. The partners acknowledged that the UNTFHS Project Team has been focused and dedicated, ensuring efficient implementation and continuity of activities.

The Project adopted a results-oriented annual work plan[[43]](#footnote-44), providing a solid foundation for scheduling, resource allocation, budget control, and achieving desired objectives. This comprehensive work plan facilitated activities' planning, implementation, and synchronisation, ensuring coherence and responsiveness to identified priorities and needs (and considering other partners' institutions- including local public authorities in Moldova). The EC finds that the preparation of the work plan reflected a comprehensive, gender-sensitive approach involving the efforts of the UNDP project teams in planning inputs and scheduling activities. The key informants highlighted the benefits of this approach, as it facilitated collaboration and synergy with ongoing UNDP initiatives in the respective sectors.

The **monitoring system** of the Project was grounded in a well-defined results framework, structured around specific objectives, outputs, and measurable indicators. The Project’s results framework clearly outlined targets and performance indicators across three thematic areas: energy security, food security, and community security. The LFA linked planned interventions to expected results, with detailed activity lines supporting the achievement of outputs. Indicators at the output level were specific, measurable, and realistic, enabling effective tracking of progress. For example, under energy security, indicators included the number of solid biofuel production companies with improved efficiency, households benefiting from subsidized biomass heating, and operators trained in biomass boiler operations. Similarly, for food security, indicators tracked progress in establishing a farmer registry, enhancing MSME capacities to meet food safety standards, and piloting food poverty measurement mechanisms.

However, the EC identified challenges in translating these outputs into meaningful outcome-level measurements. The outcome indicators lacked sufficient granularity and, in some cases, overlapped with outputs, limiting their ability to capture broader transformational changes. Additionally, the ambitious scope of outcomes within a short implementation period made it difficult to demonstrate systemic improvements, particularly in areas requiring long-term engagement, such as food security strategies or community resilience. While the outputs were effectively monitored and progress was reported, the EC finds that the outcome-level indicators could benefit from further refinement to better align with the intervention logic and enable clearer measurement of the Project’s impact.

In terms of communication and visibility, the Project demonstrated strong results[[44]](#footnote-45). A well-developed communication strategy enabled effective dissemination of key messages, tailored to different audiences and delivered through diverse platforms. The strategy spotlighted the Project's results across its intervention areas, ensuring visibility of activities and outcomes. This approach highlighted progress and promoted stakeholder engagement, fostering greater understanding and support for the Project’s contributions to human security and resilience.

## Findings on sustainability

The EC conducted an assessment of the Project's sustainability by evaluating the capacities of the country to maintain the results achieved. This examination concentrated on the financial and human resources available. Furthermore, it encompassed the strategies employed by local authorities to perpetuate project initiatives beyond their completion, highlighting the significance of country ownership and stakeholder collaboration in achieving enduring success.

Additionally, the EC took into account how the Project's interventions have enhanced both individual and institutional capacities, thereby ensuring long-term benefits for the target groups. The potential for securing future funding from external donors beyond the Project and the prospects for further development and expansion of the multi-agency human security initiative were pivotal elements of the assessment, indicating a positive outlook for the sustainability and amplification of the Project's accomplishments.

SQ4.1. What is the prospect that the project’s activities and achievements will be sustained following the project support?

JV4.1.1. The existence of the country’s ownership of the results and plans or approaches of the national authorities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends

* F19. The Project has exhibited strong country ownership and capacity strengthening, crucial for sustaining its efforts and benefits. This ownership was defined by partner institutions' and stakeholders' active involvement and influence over the Project's activities and decisions.

The project has established mechanisms to enhance sustainability, including capacity development and institutional strengthening, alignment with national policy frameworks, partnership building, and systematic knowledge management. These efforts demonstrate the potential for long-term impact. However, challenges persist in scaling interventions and ensuring consistent stakeholder commitment, especially in the face of evolving national priorities and financial constraints.

The EC finds various mechanisms that were implemented to facilitate sustainability:

**Capacity development and institutional strengthening**: The project focused on equipping national institutions such as the MAFI, the MoE and the NCSE with the technical skills and operational frameworks required for sustainable implementation. Activities included training of government officials in advanced tools like Power BI for data visualisation and macroeconomic forecasting, significantly enhancing policymaking capacities.

Tailored support in the agricultural and energy sectors fostered resilience by adopting renewable energy technologies and energy-efficient processes. For example, 11 MSMEs received targeted assistance to modernize production processes and integrate sustainable technologies.

Further, community-level initiatives strengthened local governance and institutional capacities. The STMM, developed in partnership with Center for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD)[[45]](#footnote-46), equipped local authorities with tools for assessing and mitigating social tensions. The report "Understanding Social Tensions in Moldova" reveals a mixed picture of societal dynamics across ten localities. Intergroup relations, particularly "Confidence in the locality’s future" and "Positive intergroup relations," are strong overall, reflecting optimism and harmony in many areas. However, the welfare and institutional dimensions present significant challenges. Indicators like access to healthcare (5.9/10), availability of social welfare support (6/10), and national authorities' care (5.6/10) are notably weak, highlighting systemic gaps. Localities such as Basarabeasca and Căușeni consistently underperform, facing critical deficits in economic opportunities, healthcare, and social cohesion, with scores significantly trailing the full sample averages. Recommendations include prioritising investment in welfare and healthcare systems, enhancing economic opportunities through inclusive initiatives, and strengthening local governance and civic participation. The report also emphasises leveraging local strengths like community mobilization potential to foster resilience and effectively address the root causes of social tensions. This evidence-based approach underpins proactive and sustainable governance.

**Policy alignment and advocacy:** The project strategically aligned its interventions with Moldova’s national priorities, including the Food Security Strategy and EU compliance frameworks. Key outputs, such as the dNFR and the LPIS, directly supported agricultural data management and food security policies, aligning with EU standards.

Advocacy efforts facilitated legislative improvements in the energy sector to promote biomass energy production and solid biofuel use. These changes and stakeholder consultations ensure that project achievements are embedded within national regulatory frameworks, supporting scalability and sustainability.

**Partnership building and multi-stakeholder engagement:** The project’s collaborative approach fostered partnerships across government, private sector actors, and civil society organizations. For example:

* The Ministry of Energy and biomass producers collaborated to modernize biofuel production and promote its adoption through targeted legislative changes.
* Engagements with local agricultural stakeholders facilitated knowledge sharing and innovation adoption, as seen in the in-country study tours involving 199 participants.

This inclusive approach ensured shared responsibility and enhanced ownership among all partners, a critical element for sustaining project outcomes.

**Knowledge Management and Learning**: The project invested in the development of platforms, training materials, and interactive tools to institutionalize learning. Notable examples include:

* Training modules integrated into national e-learning platforms, ensuring continued access to resources.
* Feedback mechanisms and pilot projects, such as the use of satellite imagery and AI for agricultural monitoring, informed scalable solutions.

Despite these advancements, establishing a centralized repository for all project-related knowledge could further enhance the dissemination and replication of best practices.

**Challenges to sustainability:** Despite the significant efforts to ensure sustainability, the project faced several challenges that need to be addressed to secure long-term outcomes. Resource limitations, particularly financial and human, have constrained the institutionalization and scaling of interventions, such as the biomass energy platform and the broader adoption of energy-efficient technologies. Inconsistent engagement and ownership among some stakeholders, including certain national institutions, have also emerged as a barrier, potentially undermining the continuity of project results. Additionally, delays in legislative processes—critical for embedding project outcomes within regulatory frameworks—have further impeded progress.

To overcome these challenges and enhance sustainability, the project must prioritize the integration of its interventions into broader national development strategies, ensuring systemic alignment and coherence. Exit strategies should be robust and emphasize the development of local capacities while advocating for the institutionalization of successful models within government policies and programs. Mobilizing innovative financing mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships and blended finance, is essential to address funding gaps and secure resources for continued implementation. Strengthening monitoring frameworks to track sustainability indicators will provide valuable insights for scaling up successful practices. Finally, fostering greater ownership and commitment among stakeholders by promoting active participation in project planning, execution, and monitoring will be crucial to embedding sustainability and maximizing impact. By addressing these areas, the project can build on its achievements and ensure their longevity in Moldova’s development context.

SQ4.2. To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the results achieved by the project?

JC4.2.1. The extent to which stakeholders’ capacities (individual and institutional) have been developed to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits

* F20. The project progressed in building individual and institutional capacities critical for sustaining the results achieved across various components and sectors.

Under **Specific Objective 1**, the project focused on enhancing energy resilience and sustainable practices. Capacity-building efforts were directed at individuals and institutions. Nearly four hundred participants engaged in district-wide informative sessions, combining theoretical learning with practical exercises on clean energy solutions. These sessions were complemented by six in-country study tours, which exposed two hundred participants to real-world applications of sustainable energy technologies. The success of these initiatives is reflected in the 83% of participants who expressed their intent to implement the acquired knowledge and skills, demonstrating the program’s effectiveness in fostering ownership and application of sustainable practices.

Institutions such as the Solid Biofuel Producers’ Association were also strengthened, as their managers and staff highlighted. The Association gained visibility and influence through legislative consultations and international forums, positioning it as a key advocate for policy changes to support biomass energy development. Collaboration with the National Center for Sustainable Energy and relevant ministries further bolstered these efforts, institutionalising mechanisms like the Energy Vulnerability Informational System to enhance equitable energy access.

Beyond energy-specific interventions, the project contributed to agricultural management (under SO2). As indicated in the previous paragraphs, the project partnered with the MAFI on the dNFR, a key tool for aligning Moldova with the EU Acquis Communitaire in the agriculture sector. Coupled with training programs for Ministry staff and agricultural producers, the project has strengthened institutional capacities to address food security challenges effectively. However, the long-term sustainability of this deliverable depends on ensuring that the Ministry retains ownership and integrates the registry into its operational workflows, along with consistent updates and maintenance to adapt to evolving agricultural needs.

The project also introduced the STMM, as a tool for assessing social tensions including various vulnerabilities. The report highlights strong intergroup relations but significant deficits in welfare, healthcare, and governance across Moldovan localities, recommending targeted investments in social services, economic opportunities, and civic engagement to address disparities and foster resilience. While the STMM provided critical insights during implementation, its sustainability is at risk as no clear entity has been assigned ownership. Establishing a dedicated body to manage and update this tool is necessary to ensure its continued relevance and utility in monitoring and responding to emerging human security challenges.

The sustainability of capacities developed through the project is clearly manifest in the law enforcement sector. Police units, which have received new equipment aimed at enhancing community safety and addressing violence with sensitivity, have successfully institutionalized these practices within their operational protocols..

Moreover, the small grants program, executed through multiple components, highlights the project’s unwavering commitment to sustainability. Grants were allocated to well-established MSMEs, agricultural producers, and households headed by women, ensuring that the funds were directed towards entities with robust foundations. For example, MSMEs employed the grants to implement energy-efficient technologies, thereby diminishing their environmental impact and enhancing their competitiveness. Similarly, agricultural producers and women-headed households harnessed the grants to adopt renewable energy solutions, bolstering their resilience against energy and climatic disruptions. The design of the program, which mandated co-financing from beneficiaries, further fostered a sense of ownership and accountability, ensuring that the interventions are sustained and expanded over time. Collectively, these capacity-building initiatives exemplify a comprehensive approach to sustainability. By addressing energy resilience, agricultural management, social monitoring, law enforcement, and grassroots empowerment, the project has established a solid groundwork for enduring impacts. However, the long-term sustainability of these achievements will necessitate addressing critical gaps, such as ownership of essential tools like the Social Tension Monitor Mechanism, alongside continued investment in capacity enhancement through partnerships, resources, and strategic follow-up mechanisms. The interviews with the UNDP team and other national stakeholders showed joint efforts to enhance ownership around this initiative and enhance its sustainability prospects.

JC4.2.2: The extent to which target groups benefited (and will continue benefiting) from the project

* F21. The project has delivered tangible benefits to its diverse target groups (women-led households, micro and small agricultural producers, MSMEs, and marginalised communities across Moldova) with some mechanisms in place to ensure continued effects.

Various beneficiaries, including women-led micro-producers and small to medium agricultural enterprises, received grants to implement advanced technologies. For instance, a woman entrepreneur from the Cantemir district utilised a grant to install a photovoltaic system along with air conditioning, thereby reducing her operational costs and facilitating the expansion of her beekeeping business. Another entrepreneur from the Rezina district adopted solar water heating systems and thermal insulation, thereby enhancing energy efficiency and ensuring sustained operations during peak seasons. Similarly, a woman entrepreneur in Taraclia district replaced traditional coal-based heating with a biomass boiler, ensuring efficient greenhouse operations and expanding production.

The adoption of energy-efficient technologies and practices has led to enhanced productivity and competitiveness. Supported micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and agricultural producers have reported substantial cost reductions and improved output quality. For instance, a cereal producer in the Florești district implemented a 12 kW photovoltaic system to decrease energy expenditures, facilitating further investments in technology and market expansion. Likewise, introducing an agricultural drone for a farm in Șoldănești improved precision farming practices, reducing waste and increasing yields.

Furthermore, the project addressed the energy vulnerabilities faced by low-income households by installing biomass heating systems, thus providing reliable and affordable energy solutions. Although the number of direct beneficiaries was relatively modest—specifically, targeted households received biomass boilers—this model effectively lowered heating costs and enhanced living conditions during winter. These interventions have ensured that even the most marginalised communities can access sustainable energy. This experience also demonstrated significant potential for scalability and replicability.

In relation to this matter, the project exemplified various methodologies pertaining to inclusive development, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities specifically for women-led enterprises and vulnerable populations. The EC finds that the project benefits large families, individuals with disabilities, and businesses employing marginalized groups. For instance, a female entrepreneur in the Cahul district integrated her daughter, who has Down syndrome, into their greenhouse operations, demonstrating how project support facilitated economic advancement and social equity. These targeted initiatives may serve as a replicable model for alleviating poverty while empowering beneficiaries to participate in economic development actively. Moreover, the project emphasised broader community benefits: informative sessions and domestic study tours enhanced awareness and practical knowledge regarding energy-efficient practices, which are expected to be implemented in practice to yield more effective outcomes.

Finally, the project’s support for digitalization, particularly through the Digital National Funding Registry (dNFR), further extended advantages to a wider demographic. The dNFR registry presents a framework for enhancing traceability and streamlining subsidy allocation, which contributes to improved agricultural management and food security. Farmers, another target group, gained access to an integrated platform that aligns with European Union standards, fostering compliance and creating avenues for new opportunities markets.

JC4.2.3. The extent to which donors/s (outside of the UN system) and/or other effective strategies are employed to secure funding.

* F22. The project, in partnership with the GoM and other stakeholders, strategically considered funding sources and mechanisms beyond the UN system to ensure financial sustainability and amplify its impact.

The project effectively diversified funding sources and mechanisms beyond the UN system to ensure financial sustainability and maximize impact. The Government of Japan served as the principal external donor, contributing a total of $6.8 million to address the complex socio-economic, food, and energy challenges faced by Moldova. This strategic partnership enabled the implementation of renewable energy solutions, capacity-building initiatives, and digital transformation projects, all aligned with Moldova’s priorities for resilience and sustainable development.

To complement this funding, the project successfully engaged beneficiaries through co-financing models. Under the renewable energy and energy-efficiency grants program, women-led micro and small agricultural enterprises contributed 20% to 30% of the total project costs. For example, a smallholder in the Rezina district invested $2,000 alongside project funding for a photovoltaic system, demonstrating strong commitment and shared ownership of the intervention. In the agricultural sector, grant schemes supported micro and small agricultural enterprises, including those led by women, in adopting advanced technologies to enhance their productivity. For instance, a smallholder farmer in the Cantemir district received a grant for the installation of an agricultural drone to improve efficiency in precision farming. The farmer provided co-financing, covering nearly 33% of the project’s cost, exemplifying shared ownership and commitment. Similar schemes for renewable energy adoption also observed beneficiaries contributing between 20% and 30% of project costs, reinforcing accountability and sustainability.

Furthermore, the project established meaningful partnerships with private sector actors. Collaborations with local suppliers concerning renewable energy led to competitive pricing and quality assurance for technologies such as biomass boilers and photovoltaic systems. The relaunch of the biomass trading platform further amplified these efforts by connecting producers and consumers, thereby reducing market inefficiencies and incentivizing private sector investment in renewable energy production. A cornerstone of the project’s sustainability strategy involved institutionalizing financial mechanisms within national systems. By embedding the biomass boiler grant scheme within the National Center for Sustainable Energy, the project ensured its continued operation through domestic resources and technical expertise.

Similarly, the dNFR, developed as part of Moldova’s alignment with the European Union’s Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS), unlocked access to technical and financial support from EU programs. This integration enhanced Moldova’s eligibility for agricultural subsidies and development funds, creating a foundation for long-term sectoral growth. The adoption of the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) further aligned Moldova’s agricultural sector with EU standards, thereby expanding opportunities for sustained external support. However, additional support from the EU/Government of Moldova and the partnership with UNDP could present viable options for the subsequent steps in the process.

The project synergized with other donor-funded initiatives, ensuring coherence and resource optimization. For instance, SIDA, Switzerland, and UNDP co-financed a complementary program to strengthen energy and agricultural activities, leveraging shared frameworks to maximize impact. These collaborations minimized duplication of efforts and fostered cross-learning, further reinforcing the project’s outcomes. Additionally, discussions with private financial institutions explored innovative funding options, such as credit lines for renewable energy investments, which offered affordable financing for agricultural producers, thereby reducing reliance on grants.

Nevertheless, the reliance on a single major donor highlights the need for a more diversified funding base. Future strategies should concentrate on attracting additional bilateral and multilateral donors, private investors, and philanthropic organizations. Innovative mechanisms such as green bonds and crowdfunding platforms could further expand funding streams and deepen community engagement. By embedding financial mechanisms within national systems, aligning with international frameworks, and fostering innovative funding models, the project has established a robust foundation for sustained investment and impact. Diversification of funding sources remains essential to mitigate risks and ensure long-term resilience.

SQ4.3. What are the potentials for continuation or replication upscaling of this multi-agency human security initiative?

JC4.3. Opportunities for continuation and expansion of the results and activities in the area of the human security through multi-agency approach

* F23. The project offers a strong foundation for continuation, replication, and upscaling through its alignment with Moldova's national priorities and its demonstrated successes. Key interventions involving the sectoral ministies, alongside innovative tools like social distance monitoring and grant schemes, showcase specific opportunities for expansion.

For the MAFI, continuing to develop the dNFR is critical for Moldova’s alignment with EU standards and its broader EU accession goals. The dNFR has proven to be an essential tool for managing agricultural data, enabling complete traceability, and ensuring compliance with EU requirements. Sustained investment and capacity building are needed to expand its scope, integrate it with other national databases, and ensure its operational readiness for EU accession. As a strategic asset, this registry could also serve as a model for other data-driven agricultural governance reforms across the region.

In the energy sector, the project’s achievements in renewable energy adoption and energy efficiency, implemented through collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, provide a strong basis for replication. Beyond these successes, the experience and lessons learned from deploying biomass systems and renewable energy solutions should be codified and used to inform policy and program development. These inputs can support Moldova’s efforts to expand renewable energy infrastructure and improve energy security, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders and facilitating knowledge-sharing platforms would enhance the scalability of these interventions.

The STMM, which demonstrated its utility during the project, offers a replicable model for addressing complex human security challenges. By providing data-driven insights, the STMM can guide the design of evidence-based policies and practices to address socio-economic needs at various levels of governance. Replicating this mechanism in other regions or sectors would enable policymakers to better anticipate and respond to emerging social risks, fostering greater cohesion and resilience.

The grant schemes introduced during the project represent a particularly scalable and replicable element of the initiative. These schemes, which supported renewable energy adoption and energy-efficient practices among SMEs and micro-agricultural producers, proved effective due to their participatory approach and co-financing model. The success of the schemes is evident in the tangible benefits achieved, including reduced energy costs, enhanced productivity, and improved environmental sustainability. Scaling up these schemes would involve expanding the pool of beneficiaries, increasing the diversity of eligible activities, and integrating them into national financing mechanisms. Justification for this scaling lies in their demonstrated ability to foster local ownership, attract additional resources, and generate substantial socio-economic and environmental impacts. Replicating the model in other sectors, such as non-agricultural MSMEs or community-level energy cooperatives, could further enhance its reach and effectiveness.

Addressing these opportunities for continuation, replication, and scaling requires sustained commitment from stakeholders, strategic resource mobilization, and robust policy support. The project’s successes can be expanded with targeted interventions and comprehensive planning, ensuring lasting contributions to Moldova’s human security and development goals.

## Findings on impact

In analysing the Project's impact, the focus was on assessing how the project contributed to promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for target communities and vulnerable groups in Moldova, looking at the established stakeholders’ capacities to mitigate shocks and implement human security principles. In addition, the EC analysed if the overall resilience in the country has increased.

EQ5.1. To what extent has the project contributed to promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for target communities and vulnerable groups in Moldova?

JC5.1. The extent to which the Project contributed to enhanced human security, and capacities to mitigate immediate shocks, and enhance resilience in the country

* F24. The project has made progress in promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for Moldova's target communities and vulnerable groups. Its interventions have contributed to enhanced human security, improved capacities to mitigate immediate shocks, and the generation of best practices and lessons. However, the extent of systemic changes achieved remains limited, pointing to further development and scaling opportunities.

In contributing to enhanced human security, the project addressed the intertwined challenges of economic, food, and energy vulnerabilities that affect Moldova’s most at-risk populations. Key interventions, such as renewable energy grants for agricultural producers and households, reduced dependency on traditional energy sources while lowering operational costs. These initiatives directly improved personal and community security by stabilizing livelihoods and fostering economic resilience. For instance, energy-efficient technologies were adopted by the selected women-led agricultural enterprises, demonstrating the project’s commitment to empowering vulnerable groups, particularly women. Additionally, capacity-building sessions and study tours introduced innovative practices that beneficiaries could apply to their agricultural and energy management activities. These achievements have enhanced targeted groups' economic and social security but have not yet extended to a systemic transformation of human security measures across Moldova.

The project strived to enhance capacities to mitigate immediate shocks and improve resilience. Initiatives such as the STMM provided authorities and stakeholders with tools to effectively assess and address emerging risks, enabling more responsive governance. Additionally, support for adopting biomass heating systems and renewable energy sources has built resilience to energy shocks among households and public institutions. In the agricultural sector, developing the dNFR laid the foundation for improved traceability and food security, aligning Moldova with EU standards. ***These efforts highlight the project’s dual focus on immediate impact and long-term adaptability***. However, integrating these interventions into national frameworks and strategies is essential to sustain their benefits beyond the project’s lifecycle.

The project has also generated important lessons and best practices to inform future initiatives. For example, the co-financing model, where beneficiaries contributed to the costs of renewable energy solutions, ensured ownership and sustainability of outcomes. The STMM’s success in promoting data-driven policy responses illustrates the value of evidence-based decision-making. The study tours and capacity-building sessions highlighted the importance of combining practical and theoretical learning to inspire behavioral and operational change. Despite these successes, the systematic codification and dissemination of these lessons are needed to ensure their replication and scalability.

However, the project’s limitations underscore the need for a more systemic approach. While it succeeded in enhancing individual and community resilience, it fell short of catalysing systemic reforms in areas such as energy governance, food security policy, and comprehensive human security frameworks. The EC finds that this is justifiable as the project was initiatied and implemented as a crisis response, hence the focus on individuals/community resilience, and insufficient time for more catalysing/systemic reforms. Still, the EC highlights that addressing these gaps in the future would require a multi-sectoral strategy that integrates immediate support with long-term structural changes. Such a strategy should emphasise aligning project outcomes with national development plans, strengthening institutional capacities, and ensuring sustained financial and political commitment. A positive step in this direction has been reform targeted through such interventions as the Farmers' registry that looked into food security, agriculture-related aspects, and relevant lessons learnt.

In conclusion, the project has effectively improved human security and resilience among Moldova’s vulnerable groups. It has demonstrated the potential of targeted interventions to address immediate needs while generating practices and tools to inform broader efforts. However, scaling its impact to achieve sustainable, systemic change will require a deliberate focus on policy integration, stakeholder collaboration, and resource mobilizations. This approach would ensure that the project’s achievements are sustained and expanded to benefit a wider population segment.

## Findings on cross-cutting

The EC assessed the Project's commitment to inclusivity and equality, focusing on two key areas. Firstly, the EC evaluated how well partners were prepared to apply the "leave no one behind" principle and a rights-based approach, ensuring that the Project's benefits effectively reached disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

The EC analysed the training provided to partners, the strategies for identifying and addressing the needs of these groups, and the measures in place to safeguard their rights throughout the Project. Secondly, the EC examined the Project's approach to gender mainstreaming, assessing how the partners within the Project integrated gender equality into project planning and implementation.

EQ6.1: To what extent have disadvantaged and marginalised groups benefited from the project's work, and with what results?

* F25. The project demonstrated a strong commitment to the principles of "leave no one behind" and gender equality, integrating these approaches in its design, implementation, and monitoring.

The project made significant strides in reaching disadvantaged and marginalized groups by addressing systemic barriers to inclusion and resilience. Targeted capacity-building efforts and grant schemes provided practical support for economically vulnerable groups, including women-led smallholder farms and households in underserved rural areas. These initiatives focused on fostering energy resilience through renewable energy technologies and energy-efficient solutions. For example, 10 women-led smallholder farms and 20 women-led households received non-cash grants, enabling the adoption of photovoltaic systems, biomass boilers, and other climate-smart technologies. These measures directly improved energy independence, reduced operational costs, and enhanced economic stability for the beneficiaries.

Additionally, participatory approaches ensured that the project responded to the specific needs of marginalized communities. Stakeholders highlighted the accessibility of grant programs, tailored technical support, and the project’s ability to engage underrepresented groups through inclusive outreach strategies. However, further improvements are recommended to expand these initiatives to regions with limited outreach and integrate systematic follow-up to assess the sustainability of impacts.

EQ6.2: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?

Gender mainstreaming was integrated comprehensively throughout the project’s lifecycle, ensuring that women's specific needs and roles were prioritized in both planning and execution.

JC6.2.1: The extent to which gender mainstreaming was considered and implemented under the project

* F26. The project demonstrated a robust commitment to gender mainstreaming by integrating gender considerations throughout its design, implementation, and monitoring processes.

The project placed women-led agricultural enterprises at the center of its interventions, focusing on empowering women economically, reducing energy vulnerabilities, and promoting gender equality. This commitment was operationalised through grant programs (Activities 1.3.2 and 1.3.4), which provided non-reimbursable financial assistance to women-led MSMEs and households. The grants supported adopting innovative, energy-efficient technologies such as photovoltaic systems, biomass boilers, heat pumps, and other climate-smart solutions. These technologies helped reduce operational costs, increase productivity, and enhance the energy resilience of women-led agricultural activities.

To ensure women’s equitable access to resources, the project implemented an inclusive and participatory outreach strategy. Information sessions were held across 16 target districts, supplemented by two online training sessions attended by over 150 participants. These initiatives aimed to familiarize women with the application process, eligibility criteria, and the potential benefits of the grant program. The project also engaged NGOs and independent consultants specializing in energy efficiency and renewable energy to provide tailored technical guidance and mentoring during the application and implementation phases. This multi-tiered approach ensured that women from diverse backgrounds, including those in rural and underserved regions, could effectively participate and benefit from the program.

The selection process for grant awards reflected a clear emphasis on gender equity, prioritizing women-led enterprises that demonstrated innovative, scalable, and sustainable approaches to agricultural production. The evaluation criteria considered not only the economic and environmental feasibility of proposed projects but also their potential to foster women’s empowerment and increase their visibility in traditionally male-dominated sectors like agriculture and renewable energy. By requiring a minimum 20% co-financing from applicants, the program also encouraged ownership and long-term commitment among beneficiaries​​.

The project’s interventions catalyzed significant changes in women’s roles and participation within their communities. For instance, women-led enterprises adopted advanced renewable energy solutions to enhance their agricultural productivity, such as heating greenhouses, cooling milk tanks, and improving food processing techniques. These initiatives reduced operational inefficiencies and strengthened women’s financial independence, positioning them as leaders in their communities. Furthermore, the success stories of women entrepreneurs inspired shifts in traditional gender norms, fostering greater acceptance and support for women’s participation in economic.

The project’s monitoring framework incorporated gender-disaggregated data to evaluate the specific impacts of its interventions on women. This systematic tracking enabled the identification of both intended and unintended outcomes, such as the ripple effect of increased community awareness about gender equality and the supportive involvement of male family members in women-led initiatives. The data also highlighted how women’s participation in decision-making and resource allocation increased as a result of the project, further contributing to broader societal shifts towards gender.

Looking ahead, the project can build on these achievements by scaling up mentorship and peer-learning networks for women entrepreneurs, addressing region-specific challenges such as connectivity issues in remote areas, and institutionalizing gender-sensitive practices in agricultural and energy policies. Strengthening partnerships with local governments and NGOs could also ensure that the progress made is sustained and expanded, enabling more women to access opportunities for growth and leadership in their communities. These measures would ensure that the principles of gender equality and empowerment remain integral to the project's long-term impact.

JC6.2.2: The extent to which the project promoted positive changes in gender equality (including best practices and unintended results)

* F27. The project contributed to advancing gender equality by creating new economic opportunities for women and fostering their leadership in sustainable agricultural practices.

For instance, women-led smallholder farms and households adopted innovative energy-efficient technologies, enhancing their productivity and financial independence. These interventions supported economic empowerment and challenged traditional gender roles, as women entrepreneurs became more visible and active within their communities. Additionally, the emphasis on co-financing encouraged women to engage in strategic planning and resource mobilisation, strengthening their decision-making capacities.

The project demonstrated positive practices in empowering women entrepreneurs by integrating gender-responsive strategies with innovative energy solutions, fostering economic resilience, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. Through targeted grants and tailored technical assistance, the project addressed critical challenges women-led agricultural enterprises face, enabling them to overcome barriers and scale their operations sustainably. Women entrepreneurs benefitted from tailored energy-efficient solutions that significantly reduced their operational costs and enhanced productivity. For instance, women who received support from Strășeni district transitioned to a 5.85 kW photovoltaic system, replacing her coal boiler. This investment lowered energy expenses and supported the expansion of her greenhouse vegetable and seedling production. Similarly, a woman in Taraclia district implemented a biomass boiler and fan heaters, ensuring efficient heating for her greenhouses, which operate almost year-round. These interventions strengthened the energy resilience of women-led businesses while promoting environmentally friendly practices.

The project also excelled in combining economic empowerment with social impact by addressing the unique needs of marginalised women. For example, a woman-grantee from Cahul district enhanced her flower cultivation business with energy-efficient equipment, enabling optimal greenhouse conditions. Beyond economic gains, this initiative actively involved her daughter with Down syndrome in the business, highlighting the project's inclusive approach to empowerment. In Rezina district, a woman, who supports a family including orphaned children and a disabled husband, utilised a photovoltaic system to sustain her vegetable and grape farming, ensuring the financial stability of her household while reducing dependence on traditional energy sources.

Innovation was a key element of the project, as women entrepreneurs adopted advanced technologies to modernize their operations. The women that benefited from the project from Taraclia utilized a 5 kW photovoltaic system to power her rabbit breeding facility and greenhouse, enabling a significant scale-up of her production capacity from 20 rabbits to a projected 4,000 heads. Similarly, another women in Cantemir district implemented energy-efficient cooling tanks, improving the preservation of dairy products, enhancing cheese production, and creating opportunities to expand her market reach.

The project also promoted energy-efficient solutions tailored to local contexts, such as thermal insulation and renewable energy installations. For example, a woman from Telenești district thermally insulated her house and installed a solar water heater, reducing heating costs while improving operational efficiency. These interventions enhanced the sustainability of agricultural practices and improved working conditions for women entrepreneurs, enabling them to focus on growing their businesses.

Another standout feature was the project's holistic approach to capacity-building. Beneficiaries, such as a woman from Ungheni district, received comprehensive training on energy resilience and sustainable practices. These training programs complemented installing an 8 kW photovoltaic system, significantly reducing operational costs and facilitating the expansion of her cereal and grain production business.

Unintended positive results included a ripple effect of increased awareness about gender equality among community members who interacted with the project. Observations from key informants suggested that male counterparts in beneficiary households grew more supportive of women's roles in agriculture and entrepreneurship, fostering a more inclusive environment.

The project effectively demonstrated how integrating gender-focused approaches with innovative energy solutions can empower women, enhance livelihoods, and address broader societal challenges. By creating inclusive opportunities, promoting environmentally sustainable practices, and supporting scalable economic models, the project set a benchmark for gender-led development interventions. Moving forward, such initiatives can serve as a blueprint for empowering marginalised groups while fostering community resilience and sustainable growth. Recommendations include sustaining these achievements through continued support for women-focused initiatives, strengthening mentorship networks for women entrepreneurs, and scaling gender-sensitive monitoring practices to enhance accountability.

# Conclusions

The EC has analysed the findings and prepare the following conclusions:

## Conclusions on relevance and coherence

***C1***. The Project demonstrated strong alignment with Moldova’s strategic development goals, including the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030," which emphasizes poverty reduction, equitable access to resources, and environmental sustainability. By addressing critical areas such as energy security, food resilience, and community safety, the Project directly supported Moldova’s transition to sustainable and inclusive growth (F1). Furthermore, its alignment with Moldova’s Food Security Strategy 2023–2030 and EU accession priorities underscores its relevance in fostering long-term resilience and economic modernization. Through initiatives like the Digital National Farmers Registry (dNFR) and the promotion of green technologies, the Project has addressed systemic vulnerabilities while facilitating Moldova’s alignment with international standards (F2).

The Project’s relevance also extends to its contributions to social cohesion and trust-building in vulnerable communities. Activities such as piloting the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM) and enhancing police capacities have strengthened governance and reduced social tensions. Still, the need remains to continue investing in participatory governance frameworks and collaborate more closely with local stakeholders to enhance community policing further (F3).

***C2.*** The project reflects the country’s commitment to fostering inclusive and cohesive societies, as envisioned by Moldova’s strategic priorities and the EU Eastern Partnership policy (F3). Moreover, the Project’s rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming have ensured inclusivity, empowering women and marginalized groups through targeted initiatives like grants for women-led enterprises and capacity development efforts. These efforts amplified the Project’s relevance by addressing systemic inequalities and supporting long-term empowerment (F4).

***C3.*** The Project’s internal coherence was evident in its well-structured design, with clear vertical linkages between its objectives, activities, and anticipated outcomes. For instance, the alignment of renewable energy solutions with agricultural and community resilience initiatives highlighted the logical progression of inputs to outputs and outcomes. However, horizontal integration among components—such as the linkages between energy resilience and community safety—could be strengthened to maximize cross-sectoral synergies and amplify the Project’s overall impact (F5). Externally, the Project aligned seamlessly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Moldova (2023–2027) and UNDP Country Programme Document (2023-2027), contributing to outcomes such as inclusive institutions and green development. Its efforts to promote evidence-based decision-making, strengthen institutional capacities, and foster sustainable practices reinforced its coherence within broader UNDP programming and Moldova’s development agenda.

***C4***. The Project also demonstrated effective synergy with other initiatives, such as those under the UNDP Inclusive Growth and Energy Efficiency Clusters, which complemented its efforts to enhance community resilience and energy efficiency. These partnerships facilitated the adoption of integrated solutions to tackle interconnected challenges, ensuring the Project’s responsiveness and adaptability to emerging vulnerabilities (F7).

## Conclusions on effectiveness

**C5.** The MDHS Project in Moldova has effectively addressed critical human security and resilience dimensions, demonstrating notable progress in enhancing energy security, strengthening agricultural capacities, and fostering community cohesion amidst compounded crises. The Project’s interventions under Specific Objective 1 significantly enhanced energy security by promoting affordable and sustainable energy solutions, such as biomass heating systems, energy-efficient technologies, and renewable energy adoption in agricultural enterprises and households. These measures reduced energy costs, improved productivity, and supported Moldova’s transition to clean energy, directly addressing the vulnerabilities of both rural and urban communities (F9). However, despite these achievements, the scale of interventions did not fully address the widespread energy insecurity, highlighting the need for expanded outreach and deeper integration with national energy strategies. Under Specific Objective 2, the Project demonstrated measurable progress in strengthening food security through targeted support to MSMEs, the piloting of the National Farmers Registry, and capacity-building initiatives for agricultural producers. These efforts improved production processes, introduced sustainable practices, and enabled compliance with international food safety standards. However, horizontal integration across the broader agricultural value chain could be strengthened to amplify synergies and address systemic gaps, such as connecting MSMEs with distributors and processors to enhance market access and competitiveness (F10).

The Project also excelled in fostering community security and social cohesion under Specific Objective 3, combining innovative tools like the STMM with capacity-building for police services and community actors. Providing body cameras and digital tools improved law enforcement accountability and response times, fostering trust between police services and local communities. Despite these successes, linking STMM outputs to community-led initiatives and qualitative assessments of safety perceptions could enhance the long-term impact of these interventions (F11).

**C6.** While the Project employed a holistic approach to human security, addressing economic, personal, and community vulnerabilities, external challenges such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and regional economic pressures posed significant barriers. The rising energy costs and the fluid refugee situation strained local systems, complicating stabilization efforts. Nevertheless, the Project’s targeted interventions effectively mitigated these challenges by laying a foundation for resilience and inclusion in the most vulnerable communities (F12).

**C7.** Collaboration among project partners was a key factor in achieving these results. The Project’s participatory and demand-driven approach engaged stakeholders at every stage, fostering ownership and ensuring alignment with national priorities. This dynamic methodology enabled tailored interventions, such as grants for women-led enterprises and capacity-building for local authorities, reinforcing the relevance and impact of the Project in addressing Moldova’s human security challenges (F13).

## Conclusions on efficiency

***C8.*** The MDHS Project effectively utilised resources to achieve its objectives despite challenges posed by delays in fund transfers, recruitment gaps, and external pressures such as the Ukraine conflict and rising energy costs. The strategic allocation of the budget demonstrated a prioritisation of programmatic impact, and these resources supported key interventions. Operational costs were limited to 5% of the total budget, reflecting efficient financial management. However, the complexity of the Project’s multidimensional scope, combined with a short implementation period extended by ten months, highlighted the challenges of institutionalising systemic human security solutions. While the Project laid a strong foundation for addressing Moldova’s energy, food, and community security needs, longer implementation periods are crucial for sustaining and scaling such outcomes (F15, F16).

***C9.*** The management structure leveraged UNDP’s expertise and a portfolio approach, integrating interventions across thematic areas to align with Moldova’s human security priorities. This approach facilitated significant achievements, such as improved energy efficiency training, modernised agricultural systems, and enhanced community-police cooperation. However, the absence of a formally established management structure constrained the full realisation of cross-sectoral synergies and limited the integrative potential of the portfolio approach.

Additionally, while the monitoring framework successfully tracked output-level indicators, outcome-level measurements lacked sufficient granularity to assess broader transformational impacts. Addressing these gaps, along with ensuring timely recruitment and fostering stronger cross-thematic integration, would enhance the efficiency and strategic impact of future initiatives. The Project’s ability to adapt its resources and processes to emerging challenges, such as establishing the dNFR and capacity-building for national institutions, underscores its operational resilience and commitment to long-term human security goals (F17, F18).

## Conclusions on sustainability

***C10.*** The MDHS Project has laid a strong foundation for sustainable human security initiatives in Moldova, with significant strides made in enhancing institutional and individual capacities, aligning with national priorities, and introducing innovative tools and funding mechanisms. However, the sustainability of these achievements hinges on addressing key challenges and fostering continued collaboration and investment.

The Project successfully equipped institutions like the MAFI and NCSE with tools such as the dNFR and the STMM, enabling evidence-based policymaking and enhanced service delivery (F19). Local ownership, demonstrated through active stakeholder engagement and co-financing models, further strengthened the sustainability of interventions, particularly in renewable energy and agricultural sectors (F20). Initiatives like grant schemes for MSMEs and women-led households have not only improved productivity and energy efficiency but also set a replicable model for inclusive development (F21).

Despite these achievements, challenges remain. Resource constraints, delays in embedding project outcomes into regulatory frameworks, and uneven stakeholder commitment pose risks to sustaining results. For instance, tools like the STMM lack a dedicated institutional owner, undermining their long-term utility (F22). Furthermore, reliance on a single major donor highlights the need to diversify funding sources and integrate financial mechanisms within national systems. To address these challenges, the Project must focus on institutionalizing its initiatives within national policies, ensuring robust stakeholder ownership, and mobilizing diverse funding streams. By addressing systemic gaps and fostering long-term partnerships, the Project can transform its achievements into enduring contributions to Moldova’s human security.

## Conclusions on impact

***C11.*** The MDHS Project has made meaningful contributions to enhancing the economic, social, and community security of vulnerable groups by addressing critical needs such as livelihoods, infrastructure, and access to essential services. Initiatives like renewable energy grants, co-financing models, and targeted capacity-building programs have improved economic resilience, reduced energy costs, and fostered sustainable practices among beneficiaries. These interventions have empowered marginalized groups, particularly women-led enterprises and rural communities, by promoting self-reliance and inclusive economic growth.

Despite these achievements, the Project's broader impact on systemic transformation remains limited. While it effectively addressed immediate vulnerabilities and built resilience among targeted groups, achieving long-term, structural changes requires more comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategies. Greater integration of project outcomes into national frameworks, sustained stakeholder collaboration, and alignment with broader development priorities are essential to ensure scalability and sustainable impact (F24).

## Conclusions on gender, human rights and leave no one behind

***C12.*** The Project effectively operationalised the "leave no one behind" principle and a rights-based approach, reaching disadvantaged and marginalised groups through targeted interventions. Key initiatives, such as renewable energy grants for women-led enterprises and tailored technical support for rural communities, significantly enhanced economic resilience and energy security. These efforts empowered vulnerable groups and fostered economic independence and leadership among women in traditionally underserved areas. However, challenges remain in expanding these benefits to all regions and ensuring their sustainability through systematic follow-up and regional outreach strategies (F25).

***C13.*** Gender mainstreaming was fully integrated into the Project’s framework, with women-led enterprises prioritised in grant schemes and technical capacity-building programs. By adopting renewable energy technologies and innovative agricultural practices, women beneficiaries experienced increased productivity and financial stability, positioning them as leaders in their communities. Additionally, co-financing mechanisms encouraged accountability and ownership among participants, strengthening the sustainability of interventions. Despite these successes, addressing connectivity gaps in remote areas and institutionalising gender-sensitive monitoring practices will be critical for scaling these outcomes and embedding systemic change (F26, F27).

# Lessons learned

Following a comprehensive evaluation of the MDHS project, the EC highlights several key lessons learned. These lessons underscore the intricacies involved in the implementation of human security initiatives, as well as the necessity for a strategic, adaptable, inclusive, and partnership-driven approach. Such insights are invaluable in directing future projects aimed at enhancing human security and promoting sustainability development:

* **Flexibility and Strategic Adaptation Enable Effective Crisis Management:** The project underscored the importance of flexibility in navigating dynamic crises, such as regional instability and energy challenges. Rapid adjustments in planning, implementation, and resource allocation allowed the project to remain relevant and responsive to emerging needs. For instance, tailored energy solutions for women-led enterprises and support for refugee-hosting communities showcased the project’s agility in addressing immediate vulnerabilities while fostering long-term resilience. This adaptability highlights the need for projects to integrate contingency planning and iterative decision-making processes into their designs to accommodate shifting circumstances effectively.
* **Portfolio Implementation and Integrated Approaches Drive Complexity Management**: The portfolio approach proved highly effective in addressing the multifaceted challenges of human security by integrating interventions across energy, food, and community security. By leveraging synergies among these interconnected objectives, the project demonstrated the value of a holistic design in maximizing impact. However, a key lesson is the critical need for a well-defined management structure to enhance coordination. Establishing dedicated project teams with sectoral focal points ensures clear accountability, efficient resource use, and the effective realization of portfolio benefits. This approach amplifies outcomes and minimizes fragmentation, especially in contexts with diverse stakeholders and competing priorities.
* **Participatory and Inclusive Programming Strengthens Sustainability:** By engaging local authorities, civil society organizations, and marginalized groups directly in the project’s design and implementation, the initiative fostered ownership and ensured demand-driven solutions. Tailored interventions, such as renewable energy grants for women-led enterprises, were not only contextually relevant but also aligned with beneficiaries’ needs, enhancing sustainability. Moreover, these participatory processes highlighted the value of inclusive programming in embedding resilience within community infrastructures and service delivery systems. Expanding this inclusive approach to underserved regions and incorporating systematic follow-up mechanisms can further ensure long-term sustainability and scalability.
* **Strategic Partnerships Multiply Impact:** Collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders—including government institutions, development partners, and the private sector—amplified the reach and effectiveness of project interventions. These partnerships facilitated resource sharing, enhanced expertise, and ensured alignment with national priorities. For example, the project’s integration of the dNFR into Moldova’s EU accession goals illustrates the power of strategic alignment in achieving systemic change.
* **Sustainable Solutions Require Systemic and Long-term Commitment:** While the project delivered notable short-term results, including renewable energy adoption and improved food security mechanisms, systemic changes in governance and policy require extended engagement and structural integration. Achieving transformative impact demands embedding successful project outcomes within national policies and institutional frameworks. For instance, the long-term success of tools like the STMM depends on establishing clear ownership and institutionalizing their use within governance structures. Sustained financial and political commitment, coupled with innovative funding mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, is essential to maintain momentum and scale these interventions.

# Recommendations

The primary and secondary data analysis served to define findings and form conclusions. Considering these inputs, recommendations are a framework for further analysis and follow-up actions.

The evaluation consultant has formulated the following main recommendations:

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| **Recommendation 1:**  **For:  UNDP, GoM,**  **Government of Japan, other donors** | **Extend implementation timeframes to enable comprehensive and sustainable human security solutions**  The complexity and multidimensional nature of human security projects necessitate longer implementation periods to allow for comprehensive planning, stakeholder engagement, and the institutionalization of results. The following steps are recommended:   * **Phased Implementation:** Design projects with phased timelines, including preparatory, implementation, and follow-up stages, to ensure comprehensive and sustainable delivery of outcomes. * **Focus on Institutionalization:** Incorporate timeframes that allow local institutions to fully adopt, adapt, and integrate project interventions, particularly in sectors like energy, agriculture, and social cohesion. * **Stakeholder Engagement:** Allocate adequate time for consultations and capacity-building initiatives that engage a wide range of stakeholders, fostering ownership and ensuring alignment with national strategies.   The new initiative could, by extending timeframes, can achieve more profound impacts, ensuring that interventions address systemic challenges and are embedded within national systems for long-term sustainability. (F15, F18, C9) |
| **Recommendation 2:**  **For:  UNDP** | **Strengthen portfolio management for integrated and inclusive human security programming**  To enhance the impact, coherence, and equity of human security programming, the following measures are recommended:   * **Strengthen Portfolio Management**: Establish integrated planning and implementation mechanisms to enhance collaboration across UNDP thematic teams, fostering synergies within the Country Office in Moldova. Ensure the portfolio management approach includes a fully staffed team with sectoral focal points and specialists to oversee and drive cohesive implementation across components. Develop an integrated monitoring and evaluation system to track interconnections between project components, enabling the identification of opportunities for scaling impacts across sectors. * **Promote Inclusivity and Equity**: Ensure that marginalized groups, including women-led enterprises and rural communities, benefit equitably from development initiatives by designing tailored programs that address their unique needs. Strengthen institutional and individual capacities to implement inclusive and gender-sensitive policies, ensuring sustained impact. * **Foster Participation and Ownership**: Engage marginalized groups in decision-making processes through participatory consultations and feedback mechanisms. By embedding inclusivity and capacity-building into portfolio management, projects can better address systemic barriers, promote equity, and enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations.   A strengthened and inclusive portfolio management approach will maximize synergies, ensure equitable benefits, and enhance the overall effectiveness and sustainability of human security programming. (F25, F26, C13) |
| **Recommendation 3:**  **For:  UNDP, GoM, LPAs, CSOs**  **European Union and other development partners** | Strengthen Governance and Institutional Frameworks to Support EU Accession through Agricultural Modernization and Social Cohesion  To support Moldova’s EU accession priorities, the EC recommends leveraging both the Digital National Farm Registry (dNFR) and the Social Tension Monitoring Mechanism (STMM) as strategic tools for governance, policy reform, and development:   1. **Leverage the dNFR for EU Agricultural Integration** (C5, C10, F1, F10, F13)    * Institutionalize the dNFR as a core component of Moldova's Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) to align agricultural governance with EU acquis requirements.    * Strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) to maintain and expand the registry, ensuring it supports evidence-based decision-making in subsidy allocation, resource distribution, and food security planning.    * Promote partnerships with EU technical assistance programs to scale the dNFR through expertise and co-financing, enhancing agricultural competitiveness and compliance with EU market standards.    * Facilitate data-driven approaches to create opportunities for smallholder farmers and MSMEs, supporting rural development and modernizing agriculture in line with EU standards. 2. **Institutionalize the STMM for governance and social cohesion** (C5, C10, F6, F11)**:**    * Integrate the STMM into Moldova's national governance framework to systematically monitor and address social cohesion challenges, linking its outputs to actionable policy recommendations for community resilience, economic inclusion, and intergroup harmony.    * Broaden the STMM’s scope to include dimensions such as health, economic vulnerabilities, and governance challenges, ensuring alignment with Moldova’s national priorities, SDGs, and EU accession objectives.    * Establish multi-stakeholder platforms to analyze STMM findings, fostering evidence-based interventions to address security threats, social inequalities, and resource disparities.    * Allocate resources and designate a responsible entity, such as a government agency or independent institute, to ensure the STMM’s long-term sustainability and evolution.   The efforts to institutionalise these tools and linking them to national policies, Moldova can address systemic challenges in agriculture and social governance, aligning with EU accession priorities while enhancing food security, social cohesion, and economic resilience. |
| **Recommendation 4:**  **For:  UNDP,**  **GoM** | **Leverage Innovative Funding Models for Project Sustainability**  Exploring innovative funding mechanisms is crucial for ensuring the continuity and expansion of human security projects. This could include partnerships with the private sector for social impact investments, crowdfunding campaigns to engage wider communities, and leveraging public-private partnerships to mobilize resources. Such approaches can provide a diversified funding base, reducing dependence on traditional donor funding and enhancing project resilience and scalability. **(C11, F11).** |
| **Recommendation 5:**  **For:**  **UNDP,** | **Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and communication strategies to enhance learning and promote inclusion**  Effective monitoring, evaluation, and communication systems are pivotal for understanding project impacts, fostering adaptive management, and promoting inclusion.  To achieve these goals, the EC recommends the following actions:   * Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: Develop comprehensive M&E systems that blend qualitative and quantitative indicators to capture the multifaceted nature of human security outcomes. Qualitative insights can illuminate social and community dynamics, while quantitative data provides measurable evidence of progress. These systems should include mechanisms for continuous feedback and learning to ensure that projects remain adaptive and responsive to evolving beneficiary needs. * Targeted Communication Strategies: Craft strategic communication initiatives to raise awareness and disseminate key project achievements, particularly in social cohesion and inclusion. Leverage diverse channels such as digital campaigns, local forums, and success stories to amplify the narrative around the transformative impacts of inclusive practices. By engaging stakeholders—community leaders, civil society, and potential partners—communication efforts can foster greater buy-in and support for ongoing and future initiatives. * Fostering Stakeholder Engagement: Use communication tools to spotlight how project interventions foster inclusion and community resilience, creating a shared understanding of their importance. This approach ensures that narratives resonate widely and drive sustained engagement, reinforcing the foundation for progress in social cohesion and inclusive practices.   By integrating robust M&E systems with strategic communication efforts, projects can ensure continuous learning, effectively showcase their impacts, and deepen engagement with stakeholders to foster a culture of inclusion and resilience. (C8, C5, C10, F18, F20) |

# Annexes

## Annex 1 Terms of Reference

**United Nations Development Programme**

**FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT FOR MULTIDIMENSIONAL RESPONSE TO EMERGING HUMAN SECURITY CHALLENGES IN MOLDOVA**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Consultancy title:** International Consultant to perform the Terminal Evaluation of the Project

**Type of Contract:** Individual Contract (IC)

**Assignment Type:** International Consultant

**Unit/Cluster:** Inclusive Growth

**Duty Station:** Home-based (with 1 travel mission to Chisinau, and regions of the Republic of Moldova)

**Starting Date:** October 2024

**Duration of Assignment:** 27 working days during October-December 2024

1. **Background**

Moldova is facing a compound crisis of energy and food security, curtailed economic growth, growing inflation, limited institutional capacities and divisions in society, aggravated by the continuing socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The refugee crisis presents an additional challenge that requires sustained attention and support from the international community. Without urgent intervention, the deepening socio-economic, energy, food and human security crises has the potential to derail the trajectory of development, and drastically increase human suffering of people in Moldova, whether Ukrainian refugees, third country nationals, or Moldovan citizens (including those from minority ethnic groups). There are risks of massive outmigration and brain drain, as an immediate impact of the worsening of the socio-economic situation, depleting the country of its major asset: human capital.

The overall objective of the intervention is to protect human security and enhance the resilience of the

Republic of Moldova, in order to address the multifaceted and interconnected challenges of the current socioeconomic, food and energy shocks. The three specific objectives are:

**Specific objective 1:** To enhance people’s energy security through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and energy-efficient production.

**Specific objective 2:** To enhance food security by supporting the government to implement its Food Security Strategy, thereby strengthening the capacities of agricultural producers affected by the compound crises

**Specific objective 3:** To enhance community security by capacitating the police service and community actors to deliver on the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

With this project, UNDP ensures that immediate humanitarian assistance is complemented by development efforts across three core insecurities (Energy, Food, Community) to protect and maintain vital systems, structures, and a capacity to support Moldova’s resilience. Ultimately, the advancement of human security in Moldova will give rise to more tangible and sustainable results that comprehensively address root causes and drivers behind current and emerging challenges, identify priorities based on the actual needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the governments, institutions and the target group of people, and advance solutions that strengthen the protection and empowerment of all peoples and communities.

The project information is summarized in the table below.

Table 1: Project Information

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PROJECT INFORMATION | | | |
| Project/outcome title | Multidimensional response to emerging human security challenges in Moldova | | |
| Project IDs | 01000378 (UNDP) | | |
| Corporate outcome and output | Contributing Outcomes (UNSDCF, CPD, RPD):  Outcome 1: By 2027, institutions deliver human  rights-based, evidence-informed and gender responsive services for all with the focus on those who are left behind  Outcome 3: By 2027, all people of Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from inclusive, competitive and sustainable economic development and equal access to decent work and  productive employment.  Outcome 3: By 2027, all people of Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from inclusive, competitive, and sustainable economic development and equal access to decent work and  productive employment.  Indicative Output(s) with gender marker: GEN 2 | | |
| Country | Republic of Moldova | | |
| Region | Europe and Central Asia | | |
| Date project document signed | 16-12-2022[[46]](#footnote-47)  16-02-2023[[47]](#footnote-48) | | |
| Project dates | Start | Original End | Extended End Date |
| 22-03-2023 | 22-03-2024 | 31-12-2024 |
| Project budget | 6,812,175 USD | | |
| Project expenditure at the time of evaluation | US $ (it will be updated during the evaluation) | | |
| Funding source | The Government of Japan | | |
| Implementing party | UNDP Moldova | | |

For more details about the project, please refer to **Annex 1.**

1. **Evaluation purpose, scope and objectives**

The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess the results of the project against all of the three specific objectives. The final evaluation will cover the entire Project implementation period from March 2023 to December 2024, cover all geographic areas and target groups considered by the project. The final evaluation should scrutinize successful/unsuccessful elements and their underlying reasons, highlight intended and unintended results and provide strategic lessons to guide decision makers and inform stakeholders for future course of actions.

The **scope** of the final evaluation is to assess the overall project results against all intended project outcomes, outputs and indicators and targets for the results mandated by the project donor and as stipulated in the approved project proposal and workplan and result framework in line with the [UNDP’s evaluation Guidelines](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/?utm_source=EN&utm_medium=GSR&utm_content=US_UNDP_PaidSearch_Brand_English&utm_campaign=CENTRAL&c_src=CENTRAL&c_src2=GSR&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI9dfr3cvj9AIVhKZ3Ch212QiuEAAYASAAEgImDvD_BwE). Emphasis should be placed on the coherence of the intended outputs and planned and implemented activities and whether these produced intended impacts.

The evaluation should address the **relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability** of the project, as per the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria. The evaluation should also reflect the degree to which cross-cutting issues such as **gender equality, human rights and social standards** as well as partnership, were addressed during project design and implementation.

1. **Evaluation Criteria and Guiding Questions**

The evaluation will follow the four OECD-DAC evaluation criteria - Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Sustainability. Human Rights and Gender Equality will be added as cross-cutting criteria. The guiding questions outlined below should be further refined by the consultant and agreed with UNDP.

| **Criteria** | **Evaluation Questions** |
| --- | --- |
| Relevance/Coherence | * To what extent is the project in line with national development priorities and strategies, UNDP country programme document outputs and outcomes, UNDCF, RRP, UNDP strategic plan as well as relevant SDGs? * To what extent are the objectives of the project design (inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change logical and coherent? * Were the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources? * Has the project proven to be as relevant as originally envisaged? * In this regard, how did the human security approach bring added value? * How did implementing the human security principles led to new solutions, strategies or ways of working to address the priority challenges of the project? * What lessons did the project produce to support advancing the major global agendas identified as relevant in the proposal? * Were there any exceptional cases or stories that demonstrated any of the above? |
| Effectiveness | * To what extent were the project’s main objectives achieved in keeping with the original activities, outputs and performance indicators? * What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs? * How effectiveness were the management and administrative arrangements employed to implement the project? Any best practices or lessons learned? What might be done differently? * What were the main challenges from a human security point-of-view during the project period? What trade-offs were made during the project implementation?What impact did these have on tangible improvements in people’s lives? How could they have been mitigated differently? * Has there been any significant progress in the promotion of human security as a result of this project? * How would you assess the effectiveness of the management and administrative arrangements? Did the Project Steering Committee and Technical Working Group function as originally planned? * How effectively did the project partners collaborate? |
| Efficiency | * How efficiently were the resources including human, material and financial resources used to achieve the results in a timely manner? * To what extent was the project management structure appropriate and efficient in generating the expected results? * To what extent has the project implementation strategy and its execution been efficient and cost-effective? * Were the anticipated outputs generated on time and within the budget, as specified in the workplan and implementation schedule? |
| Sustainability | * To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the results achieved by the project? * What are the plans or approaches of the local authorities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends? * What is the prospect that the project’s activities and achievements will be sustained following the project support? * What is potential follow-up that is likely to influence whether the programme’s activities will be sustained. * Describe any significant contributions by donors/s (outside of the UN system) and/or effective strategies employed to secure funding. * Has this programme and the multi-agency human security approach been replicated elsewhere using other financial resources? Explain why or why not? |
| Impact | * How would you rate and describe the overall impact of the programme? * What, if any, significant unintended impacts/outcomes (positive or negative) were there beyond the original programme plans? * What were the major lessons (positive and negative) learned through the programme? Are there concrete recommendations that could increase the success of future programmes? |
| Human rights | * To what extent have the poor, ethnic minority groups, women, conflict affected populations (including women and children), people with disabilities and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the work of the project and with what impact? |
| Gender equality and social inclusion | * To what extent has the gender equality been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project? * To what extent has the project promoted positive changes of in gender equality? Were there any unintended effects? |

1. **Methodology:**

The evaluation design, approach and methods should adhere to the evaluation principles such as impartiality, credibility and utility including the quality standards in accordance with [the UNDP’s Evaluation Guidelines](http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/?utm_source=EN&utm_medium=GSR&utm_content=US_UNDP_PaidSearch_Brand_English&utm_campaign=CENTRAL&c_src=CENTRAL&c_src2=GSR&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI9dfr3cvj9AIVhKZ3Ch212QiuEAAYASAAEgImDvD_BwE). The evaluator should review the methodology and propose the final methods and data collection tools as part of the inception report. The methods and tools should adequately address the issues of gender equality and human rights.

The evaluation should apply a mix of qualitative and quantitative processes and methodologies. The evaluator is expected to provide evidence-based information, through rigorous triangulation, that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator should follow a participatory and consultative approaches ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, project coordination and implementation teams, UNDP Country Offices and other key stakeholders, including the affected population and the intended beneficiaries. The data should be disaggregated by social criteria, such as gender, ethnicity, age, and disability.

Methods to be used by the evaluator to collect and analyse the required data shall include but not limited to:

* **Desk review** of all documents relevant to the project, including project document/proposals as well as reports and analysis of the country situation.
* **Consultations** with UNDP Country Office Staff, programme and project staff, national and local authorities of the project areas.
* **Field visits/observations, key informant interviews (structured, semi-structured) and consultations** with the affected populations and beneficiaries.
* **Data review and analysis and interpretation** of qualitative and quantitative data available from various credible sources.
* **Gender and human rights lens**. All evaluation products need to address gender, disability, and human right issues.
* **Other relevant methods**.

The process/steps mentioned above should ensure that the most appropriate and relevant data are gathered for the objectives of the evaluation. The evaluator should select the respondents using an appropriate sampling technique. While selecting the respondent, the evaluators should ensure gender balance and representation.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits, evaluation matrix and data to be used in the evaluation should be clearly outlined in the inception report and fully discussed and agreed with UNDP.

1. **Evaluation products (deliverables)**

UNDP expects the evaluation products described below. The schedule of deliverables is described in section 6.

* **Evaluation inception report (10-15 pages).** The inception report should be carried out following and based on preliminary discussions with UNDP after the desk review and should be produced before the evaluation starts (before any formal evaluation interviews, survey distribution or field visits) and prior to the country visit in the case of international evaluators. (*Please refer to Annex 2 for the templated of the Inception Report).*
* **Evaluation debriefings.** Immediately following an evaluation, UNDP may ask for a preliminary debriefing and findings.
* **Draft evaluation report (within an agreed length).** A length of 40 to 60 pages including executive summary is suggested. *(Please refer to Annex 3 for the template of the Evaluation Report)*
* **Evaluation report audit trail.** The programme unit and key stakeholders in the evaluation should review the draft evaluation report and provide an amalgamated set of comments to the evaluator within an agreed period of time, as outlined in these guidelines. Comments and changes by the evaluator in response to the draft report should be retained by the evaluator to show how they have addressed comments.
* **Final evaluation report**  *(as per Annex 3 template)*
* **Presentations to stakeholders and/ or evaluation reference group** (if required).
* **Evaluation brief and other knowledge products** or participation in knowledge-sharing events, if relevant to maximise use.

*Language requirements*

All documentation related to the assignment shall be in English.

1. **Schedule of deliverables:**

Under the supervision of the Programme Specialist/Inclusive Growth Cluster Lead, UNDP Moldova, the evaluator will produce the following deliverables:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Deliverables** | **Tentative timeframe** |
| **1** | **Deliverable 1: Inception Report**, containing the evaluation framework, detailed evaluation methodology, work plan and logistical arrangements.  The outline of the inception report should be as follow:  1. Background, Purpose and Objectives  2. Evaluation Design and Approach  2.1. Methodology and Methods  2.2. Evaluation Matrix  2.3. Data Collection instrument  2.4. Data Analysis  2.5 Limitations Risks and Mitigation Measures  3. Quality Assurance and Ethical Consideration  4. Workplan  5. Annexes  (Estimated at 3 working days) | **30 October 2024** |
| **2** | **Deliverable 2:** Data collection from beneficiaries, implementers and key stakeholders and reporting and debriefing on preliminary findings.  (Estimated at 10 working days, including travels to Moldova: up to 5 days) | **15 November 2024** |
| **3** | **Deliverable 3**  Draft Evaluation Report including annexes for review and comments. The outline for the Evaluation Report will be as follows:  1. Executive summary  2. Introduction  3. Background and Context Analysis  4. Evaluation Design and Approach  4.1. Methodological Approach  4.2. Data Collection and Analysis Tools  4.3. Limitations, Risks and Mitigations Measures  5. Findings  6. Conclusions  7. Recommendations  8. Annexes  All collected data need to be sex-disaggregated, to the extent possible.  (Estimated at 10 working days) | **2 December 2024** |
| **4** | **Deliverable 4:** A presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations of the evaluation.  (Estimated 1 day) |
| **5** | **Deliverable 5:** Final Evaluation Report incorporating comments received on the first draft.  **(**Estimated at 3 working days) | **10 Decembre 2024** |
| **6** | **Travel costs** |  |

1. **Evaluation Team Composition and Required Competencies**

The evaluation will be carried out by an international expert (with experience and exposure to projects and evaluations in other regions). The persons involved in any way in the design, management or implementation or advising any aspect of the intervention that is the subject of the evaluation will not be qualified.

The International Consultant should have the following competencies:

Academic Background

* A masters’ degree or equivalent in humanitarian, development, peace, international relations, social sciences, or other relevant fields.

Professional Experience

* At least 4 international assignments in conducting or managing evaluations of humanitarian and/or development responses.
* At least 10 years of proven experience in designing, implementing, and monitoring of humanitarian and/or development projects; in particular experience in human security, displacement and refugee, socio-economic, food and energy shocks responses, is an asset.
* Past experience as a team leader for similar assignments is an advantage.
* Evaluation experiences within the United Nations System are an asset.

Competencies

* Strong analytical and writing skills, with the ability to conceptualize, articulate, present evidence-based analysis and conclusions and realistic and achievable recommendations.
* Excellent skills for and knowledge on qualitative and quantitative data collection tools used for project evaluation.
* Excellent knowledge of the national development context as well as humanitarian crisis.
* Fluency in written and spoken English with excellent facilitation and knowledge sharing skills.
* Working knowledge of Ukrainian/Romanian/Russian languages would be an advantage.

Personal Qualities

* Demonstrates integrity by modelling the UN’s values and ethical standards (human rights, tolerance, integrity, respect, and impartiality).
* A strong client-service orientation.
* High level of responsibility and organization capacities.
* Consistently approaches work with energy and a positive, constructive attitude.

*The UNDP Moldova is committed to workforce diversity. Women, persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic or religious minorities, persons living with HIV, as well as refugees and other noncitizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are particularly encouraged to apply.*

1. **Evaluation Ethics**

This evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG ‘Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation’. The evaluator must safeguard the rights and confidentiality of information providers, interviewees, and stakeholders through measures to ensure compliance with legal and other relevant codes governing collection of data and reporting on data. The evaluator must also ensure security of collected information before and after the evaluation and protocols to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of sources of information where that is expected. The information knowledge and data gathered in the evaluation process must also be solely used for the evaluation and not for other uses without the express authorization of UNDP and partners. Violation of confidentiality requirement may result in immediate termination of the contract. The evaluator will be held to the highest ethical standards.

1. **Implementation arrangements**

The principal responsibility for managing this final evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in Moldova. The UNDP CO will contract the consultant, while the Project implementation team will ensure the timely provision of logistic arrangements and facilitation within the country for the evaluator. A single travel mission to Moldova, lasting up to 5 days, is required for evaluating project outcomes, conducting field visits, and interviewing beneficiaries. The Project will cover the associated travel costs for conducting field visits and interviewing beneficiaries within Moldova. The travel costs to/from Moldova shall be covered by the consultant individually and shall be included in the financial proposal, as outlined in the Financial Arrangements Section.

The UNDP project team responsible for implementing the project activities will provide required information, furnishing documents for evaluation to the consultant. They will also support as appropriate with logistic arrangements of the evaluation, setting up stakeholder interviews, arranging field visits, coordinating with the local authorities and beneficiaries in the field.

The consultant will be briefed by UNDP on the objectives, purpose and expected outputs of the evaluation. The consultant will present and propose work plan and methodologies which will be approved by UNDP prior to the commencement of the evaluation process.

The evaluation will remain fully independent. The final report will be signed off by Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP CO.

## Annex 2 In-country mission- detailed agenda for the fieldwork (including stakeholders for interviews)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Description** | **Location** |
| 9.00-11.00 | Meeting with UNDP Team | Chisinau, meeting room MAIB |
| 11.00-13.00 | Outcome 1 | Chisinau, meeting room MAIB |
| 13.15-15.15 | Outcome 2 | Chisinau, meeting room MAIB |
| 15.15-17.00 | Outcome 3 | Chisinau, meeting room MAIB |
| **Tuesday, 03 December 2024** | |  |
|  | **Description** | **Location** |
| 9.00-10.00 | Bi-lateral meeting with Sergiu Botezatu | Chisinau, meeting room MAIB |
| 10.45-11.45 | Field visit to the benificiary Mrs. Aurelia Balan | Cojusna, Straseni |
| 12.15-13.15 | Field visit to the benificiary Mrs. Proca Margarita | Zubresti, Straseni |
| 14.00-15.00 | Visit to Ministry of Agriculture | Chisinau, Ministry of Agriculture, Bulevardul Ștefan cel Mare și Sfînt 162 |
| 15.30-16.30 | Visit to IGP and MAI | Strada Tiraspol 11/1, Chișinău |
|  |  |  |
| **Wednesday, 04 December 2024** | |  |
|  | **Description** | **Location** |
| 9.00-10.00 | Field visit to the beneficiary PRODECO GTN | Hancesti |
| 12.00-13.00 | Field visit to the beneficiary Mrs. Alexandra Uscov | Pohrebea, com. Cosnita, Dubasari |
| 14.00-15.00 | Visit to CNED | Strada Alecu Russo 1, Chișinău |
| 16.00-17.00 | Field visit to the beneficiary Mr.Valeriu Dragalin | Strada Bucuresti 106, Cladirea Liberty |
|  |  |  |
| **Thursday, 05 December 2024** | |  |
|  | **Description** | **Location** |
| 10.00-11.00 | Field visit to the beneficiary Mrs. Cristina Scutaru | Ungheni |
| 12.10-13.00 | Free time - online meeting of the Evaluator |  |
| 13.30-14.30 | Field visit to the beneficiary Mr. Ivan Postolachi | Ungheni |
| 15.15-16.15 | Field visit to the beneficiary Crama Mircesti | Mircesti, Ungheni |
|  |  |  |
| **Friday, 06 December 2024** | |  |
|  | **Description** | **Location** |
| 10.00-11.00 | Field visit to the beneficiary Mrs. Ludmila Cretu | Tanatari, Causeni |
| 13.00-14.00 | Field visit to the beneficiary Mrs. Dorina Baciu | Sadaclia, r. Basarabeasca |
| 15.30-17.00 | Meeting with UNDP | UNDP office |

## Annex 3: List of analysed documents

**Project documents with annexes and revisions:**

UNDP Moldova JSB Human Security project document (signed)

Attachment 1. Selection criteria (Activity 1.1.1 from September 2023)

Attachment 2. Selection criteria (Activity 1.2.1 from September 2023)

Attachment 3. UNDP Moldova Budget JSB (final version) - Board with proposed revision September 2023

Attachment 4. JSB Human Security Project - Minutes of the Evaluation Committee meeting - MSMEs financial support

Attachment 5. JSB Human Security Project-Minutes of the Evaluation Committee meeting-MSMEs

financial support (appendices)

Attachment 6; JSB Human Security Logical Framework

**List of addendums**

PPM Addendum to the HS Project Document (October 2023)

PPM Minutes of the LPAC UNDP Moldova HS Project

PPM UNDP Moldova Budget JSB (proposed and approved revision October 2023)

PPM Addendum to the HS Project Document (April 2024)

Human Security Project Revised Work Plan

PPM Addendum to the HS Project Document (July 2024)

Gantt Chart for Possible Extension (Until 31.12.2024)

**Other project-related documents**

Justification Note Evaluation Committee with the lists (22.04.2024)

Justification Note Evaluation Japan (22.04.2024)

Information Note Component1 (HS Board, dated: November 2024)

Informative note selected-districts (EN-MD-5CG01475 RL)

Japan projects description (fin October 2024)

JSB HS Project Board officially sent attachments for endorsement

JSB Human Security Project-Minutes of the Evaluation Committee meeting MSMEs financial support (appendices List of Proposals)

Minutes of the Evaluation Committee meeting (MSMEs financial support)

Minutes of the Evaluation Committee

Record of Project Board Consultation (Activities 1.3.2 and 1.3.4), dated: April 2024

Reporting for the Board Meeting - MHS Project (November 2024)

Selection criteria micro agri-producers

Selection criteria MSMEs

Selection criteria women agri-farmers

Summary Report Japan-UNDP-(Activities 1.3.1/ 1.3.2/ 1.3.4) revised 25.11.2024.

## Annex 4 Evaluation matrix

The EC has improved the understanding of the Project’s structure and available data sources through an initial document review and the creation of an evaluation matrix. This matrix considered proposed evaluation questions from the Terms of Reference (ToR), and adjusted and reviewed them. As a result of this review, the list of evaluation questions has been consolidated, as questions that were too similar have been combined and sub-questions have been re-framed to make them more focused.

The principle was to ensure that the questions were answerable, all of the Project’s components were appropriately addressed, and there was no duplication or undue overlap. The ET formulated precise questions, allowing for an exploratory data collection approach.

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Relevant sub-question** | **Judgement criteria** | **Indicators** | **Data analysis** | **Data Sources & collection tools** |
| Relevant evaluation criteria: **Relevance** | | | | |
| *EQ1.1. To what extent has the design and implementation of the Project responded to the national priorities and strategies and international commitments of the country?* | JC1.1.1. The extent to which the Project responded to the country’s priorities and strategies in the respective areas of intervention  JC1.1.2. The extent to which the project aligned with UNDP country programme document outputs and outcomes, UNDCF, RRP, UNDP strategic plan  JC1.1.3. The extent to which the project addressed relevant SDGs | * Evidence that the objectives and outputs of the Project are supporting country priorities and strategies in the areas of intervention * Evidence that the HS Project aligns with the UN Development Cooperation Framework * Evidence that the project aligned with UNDP Strategic Plan * Evidence that the HS Project addressed SDGs and contributed to its targets | Desk based research  Assessment of the strength of the ToC designed for the Project (explicit or implicit).  Interviews and group interviews with identified stakeholders concerning HS Project  Analysis of the Moldova’s International benchmarks- especially human security-related indicators, targets and recommendations  Analysis of socio-economic and vulnerability indexes | Programming documents: Project documents, Project Matrix, Progress Reports and other deliverables  Stakeholders from the UNDP, other partners from the national and local levels, public and, other institutions, and development partners in the respective fields |
| *EQ1.2. To what extent has the Project addressed the needs of final beneficiaries?* | JC1.2. The extent to which the Project addressed the needs of final beneficiaries | * Evidence that the Project and its activities responded to the needs of final beneficiaries- including measures that addressed increasing, urgent and interconnected vulnerabilities |
| *EQ1.3. How did the human security approach bring added value?* | JC1.3.1. The extent to which the human security approach brought the value to the beneficiaries  JC1.3.2. The extent to which human security principles led to new solutions, strategies or ways of working to address the priority challenges of the project | * Evidence and examples (including opinions) that the human security approach added brought value to the beneficiaries * Examples of new solutions, strategies or ways of working that the human security brought while supporting beneficiaries |
| *EQ1.4. Has the project proven to be as relevant as originally envisaged??* | JC1.4.1. The degree of lasting relevance of the Human Security Project and its activities (measured through the flexibility of the project and changes introduced during planning and implementation)  JC1.4.2. Existence of added value that the Project ensured and its contribution to its relevance | * Evidences (including opinions) about the changes in the Project environment and the need/ or no need to adjust or not to adjust activities and implementation approach * Evidence (including opinions and desk examples) that the Project considered and responded to the socio- economic and institutional changes in the country |
| *EQ1.5. To what extent has the Human Security Project established and ensured internal coherence?* | JC1.5.1. The extent to which the objectives of the project (including inputs, activities, outputs and their indicators) and its theory of change are logical and coherent  JC1.5.2. The extent to which the objectives of the project were clear, and realistic and targets were likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources | * Analysis of the ToC and the links between outputs and outcomes, assumptions and activities- logical connections and consistency * Analysis of the indicators at various levels (including baselines and targets) * Analysis the benchmarks and if the targets were realistic to be achieved within the given timeframe |
| ***EQ1.6.*** *To what extent is the project cooperating and coordinating with other UNDP projects and activities of the GoM and other partners?* | **JC1.6.** The extent to which the Project and its outputs and outcomes synergized and coordinated with other UNDP initiatives, activities of GoM and other development partners | * Evidence and opinions about the HS Project objectives (at various levels) are in synergy and coordination with the UNDP activities, activities of the GoM and other development partners |
| Relevant evaluation criteria: **EFFECTIVENESS -** | | | | |
| *EQ3.1. To what extent were the project’s main objectives achieved in keeping with the original activities, outputs and performance indicators?* | **JC3.1.1.** The extent to which the project contributed to enhanced people’s energy security through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and energy-efficient production (specific objective 1) | * Evidence that the project contributed to enhanced people’s energy security through access to affordable energy that supports livelihoods and energy-efficient production * *1.1.1. Number of companies that wil improve the efficiency of the solid biofuel production process* * *1.1.2.a. Number of knowledge products produced by the Association of Biomass Producers* * *1.1.2.b. The Association of Biomass Producers is an active partner in biomass market and facilitator between Government and solid biofuels producers l papers* * *1.1.3. Number of analytical and legislative/regulatory drafts on biomass row material supply issue* * *1.2.1. Number of households benefiting from subsidized household biomass heating programme* * *1.2.2. Remote monitoring system is operational and receives data from biomass boilers installed in public buildings* * *1.2.3. Number of biomass boilers operators trained* * *1.2.4. The platform for trading solid biofuels is operational* * *1.2.5. Assessment of the integration of large biomass boilers in district heating in Chisinau and Balti* * *1.2.6. Number of people benefiting from awareness and educational programs on benefits of biomass use* * *1.2.7. Support call canter for biomass use is operational* * *1.3.1. Number of people benefiting from training programmes on energy efficient practices ni agriculture as a result of this project* * *1.3.2. Number of agricultural enterprises benefiting from energy- efficient technologies as result of this project* * *1.3.3. Numberofnon-agricultural enterprises with improved energy efficiency* * *1.3.4. Number of households with economic activities implementing energy-efficient technologies* | Desk-based research including national and organizational statistics, and third-party reports  National statistics and international performance indicators on the priority areas  Interviews and group interviews with identified stakeholders from UNTFHS and national institutions.  The intention is on validating or refuting lines of inquiry - collecting perceptions about results (outputs) achieved with the reference to outputs and progress towards outcomes. | Project document, Progress Reports. Other project deliverables  Stakeholders from the UNTFHS, public institutions, policy-making bodies and other government institutions, and development partners in the respective fields |
| **JC3.1.2.** The extent to which the project strengthened the capacities of agricultural producers affected by the compound crises to enhance food security (thus, supported the government to implement its Food Security Strategy)? (Specific objective 2) | * Evidence, including examples and opinions that the project strengthened the capacities of agricultural producers affected by the compound crises to enhance food security * *2.1.1. Food poverty measurement and monitoring mechanisms established* * *2.1.2. National registry of farmers piloted* * *2.1.3. Number of farmers which are part of the Registry of Farmers* * *2.1.4. Number of MSMEs with enhanced capacity to comply with food safety and other standards* |
| **JC3.1.3.**The extent to which the project contributed to capacities of police service and community actors to deliver on the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence (Specific objective 3) | * Evidence that the project contributed to capacities of police services and community actors to deliver on the principles of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence * *3.1.2.a. Nr of communities with main social tension drivers identified* * *3.1.2.b. Nr of awareness and information tools. Interventions developed and implemented to promote the use of STMM produced data* * *3.2.1. Average policy response time to a 112-emergency call in targeted districts* * *3.2.2. Number of police staffers from districts with high number of settled refugees across the country using bodycameras to properly detect and document public order violations* * *3.3.1. Number of police staffers from districts with high number of refugees settled equipped fit-for-purpose mobile devices to pilot functionalities of the new e-Contraventions system* * *3.3.2. Number of police teams equipped and trained to use smart policing tools to address emerging public security threats and road safety incidents* |
| *EQ3.2. Has there been any significant progress in promoting human security as a result of this project?* | JC3.2. Th extent to which the country and the targeted/ beneficiary regions progressed in ensuring human security | * Evidence including opinions that the country has progressed in human security in the region- including contribution claims that the program contributed to these results |
| *EQ3.3. What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?* | JC3.3.1. The extent to which external challenges affected the progress of the project- from a human security point of view  JC3.3.2. The extent to which these external developments had an impact on tangible improvements in people’s lives | * Evidence, including opinions and examples, that external challenges affected the progress of the project- from a human security point of view * Evidence, opinions and examples, that these external developments had an impact on tangible improvements in people’s lives |
| *EQ3.4. How effectively did the project partners collaborate?* | JC3.4. The extent to which the project partners collaborated with the project and among themselves | * Opinions of stakeholders about their cooperation with the Project and among themselves * Examples of established cooperation channels and its links with the progress in human security |
| Relevant evaluation criteria: **Efficiency** | | | | |
| *SQ4.1. Were the anticipated outputs generated on time and within the budget, as specified in the workplan and implementation schedule?* | JC4.1.1. The degree of timely implementation of the UNTFHS Project in a logical sequence and availability of inputs in a timely fashion  JC4.1.2. The extent to which the resources, including human, material and financial, have been used to achieve the results  JC4.1.3. The extent to which the management and administrative arrangements were effective during the implementation | * Evidence of timely implementation of activities (without delays)- analysis of planned vs implemented activities and delivery of outputs or delays and changes in the implementation of plans * Evidence that resources have been available and used to achieve results * Evidence and examples of effective management practices that the HS Project introduced and followed | Desk-based research including national and organizational statistics, and third parties’ reports  Analysis of the Project budget- operational vs programmatic lines  Analysis of the management and steering and technical (advisory) mechanisms and coordination structures and approaches - to verify decision-making approaches  Interviews with key informants –group interviews with beneficiaries and experts | Programming documents: The Project Document, and Reports. Other deliverables.  Available meeting minutes  Contractual arrangements including analysis of the approved budget  Stakeholders from the implementing partners- UNDP, national structures, sub-national levels, beneficiaries, other ministries and governmental structures, local authorities |
| *SQ4.2. How efficient were the management and administrative arrangements employed to implement the project?* | JC4.2.1. The extent to which the Project has introduced sound and effective management practices (including reporting and communication)  JC4.2.2. The extent to which the Project Steering Committee and Technical Working Group function as originally planned  JC4.2.2. The extent to which management systems, including monitoring mechanisms, facilitated efficient implementation | * Evidence that the Project’s management structure has been optimized and cost-efficient to ensure efficient delivery * Evidence and opinions/ perceptions that the Project Steering Committee and Technical Working Group functioned effectively, as planned * Evidence that management system was well-established (compared to development assistance benchmarks) and facilitated delivery of results * Evidence that the monitoring data were objectively used for management of risks, actions and decision making |
| Relevant evaluation criteria: **Sustainability** | | | | |
| *SQ5.1.* What is the prospect that the project’s activities and achievements will be sustained following the project support? | JV5.1.1. Existence of the plans or approaches of the local authorities to ensure that the initiatives will be continued after the project ends  JC5.1.2. Existence of the country ownership of the results and partnerships with relevant stakeholders | * Type of national mechanisms/ structures to maintain the results achieved- including examples of country ownership of results and partnerships * Evidence that financial resources are assigned to the national institutions and stakeholders for the delivery of services – opinions of partners re their committed to providing continuing support * Examples of plans and approaches of local authorities to ensure the continuation of benefits for men and women in the future | Desk-based research including national and organizational statistics, and third parties’ reports  Analysis of the project budget and management/ organizational structure  Interviews with key informants -  Group interviews if possible (to discuss achievements and validate findings) | Programming documents: The Project Document, and Reports. Other deliverables.  Available meeting minutes  Contractual arrangements including analysis of the approved budget  Stakeholders from the implementing partners, beneficiaries, other ministries and governmental structures, local authorities |
| *SQ5.2. To what extent did the project interventions contribute towards sustaining the results achieved by the project?* | JC5.2.1. The extent to which stakeholders’ capacities (individual and institutional) have been developed to ensure sustainability of efforts and benefits  JC5.2.2. The extent to which target groups benefited (and will continue benefiting) from the project  JC5.2.3. The extent to which donors/s (outside of the UN system) and/or other effective strategies are employed to secure funding. | * Evidence that institutional systems (legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes) and individual capacities are in place for sustaining benefits * Existence of positive perception of the Project by the beneficiaries and evidence that they have received appropriate services from the project * Evidence that about ensured donor funding (outside of UN system) and other effective strategies to secure funding |
| *SQ5.3. What are potentials for continuation or replication up scaling of this multi-agency human security initiative?* | JC5.3. Opportunities for continuation and expansion of the results and activities in the area of the human security through multi-agency approach | * Evidence about the opportunities for continuation and expansion of the results and activities in the human security sector and project areas (including innovative approaches and practices) |
| Relevant evaluation criteria: **Impact** | | | | |
| *EQ6.1. To what extent has the project contributed to* promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for target communities and vulnerable groups in Moldova? | JC6.1.1. The extent to which the Project contributed to enhanced human security,  JC6.1.2. The extent to which the project enhanced capacities to mitigate immediate shocks, and enhance resilience in the country  JC6.1.3. Existence of best practices and lessons that were generated during the implementation | * Evidence- examples and opinions- that the Project contributed to the enhanced human security * Evidence that the Project contributed to the capacities to mitigate immediate shocks, and enhance resilience in the country * Examples of best practices and lessons learned during the implementation | Desk based research including national and organizational statistics, and third parties’ reports  Interviews with key informants -  Group interviews | Project document and deliverables National and international statistics  Stakeholders from the implementing partners, public institutions and other |
| Relevant evaluation criteria: **Human rights, Gender mainstreaming and Leave no one behind** | | | | |
| *EQ7.1. To what extent have the disadvantaged and marginalised groups benefitted from the work of the project and with what results?* | JC7.1.1. The degree to which partners are capacitated to implement “leave no-one behind” and rights-based approach  JC7.1.2. The extent to which the Project ensured benefits to poor, women and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups | * Examples of practices in the promotion and mainstreaming of human rights during its formulation and implementation * Evidence- opinions that the Project contributed to the capacity development of the stakeholders to implement “leave no one behind” and human rights principles in its activities | Desk based research including national and organizational statistics, and third parties’ reports  Interviews with key informants -  Group interviews (to discuss achievements and validate findings) | Project document, Progress Reports. Project deliverables.  National and international statistics  Stakeholders from the implementing partners, public institutions and other stakeholders |
| *EQ7.2. To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?* | JC7.2.1. The extent to which gender mainstreaming was considered and implemented under the project  JC7.2.2. The extent to which the project promoted positive changes in gender equality (including unintended results) | * Evidence and opinions that gender was considered and mainstreamed during the project implementation * Evidences that partners enhanced capacities for gender mainstreaming in all activities |

## Annex 5: Interview guides

**Interview guide- UNDP Project Team**

**Evaluation Criteria: Relevance**

**KEQ1: To what extent has the design and implementation of the project responded to national priorities, strategies, and international commitments?**

* *How has the project addressed Moldova’s national energy, food security, and community security strategies?*
* *How effectively did the project align with international commitments, such as SDGs?*
* *How has the project supported UNDP outputs, outcomes, and the UN Development Cooperation Framework?*

**KEQ2: To what extent has the project addressed the needs of final beneficiaries?**

* *How were the needs of vulnerable groups, including refugees, agricultural producers, and women, integrated into the project design?*
* *Were there specific measures implemented to address interconnected vulnerabilities of beneficiaries?*

**KEQ3: How did the human security approach bring added value?**

* *What value did the human security approach bring to beneficiaries?*
* *What new solutions or strategies emerged from implementing human security principles?*

**KEQ4: Has the project proven to be as relevant as originally envisaged?**

* *Were adjustments to project activities made in response to changing needs or contexts?*
* *How has the project addressed socio-economic and institutional changes during its implementation?*

**KEQ5: To what extent is the project cooperating and coordinating with other UNDP projects and activities of the Government of Moldova and other partners?**

* *How has the project ensured coherence and synergy with other UNDP initiatives?*
* *Were there challenges in coordinating activities across stakeholders?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness**

**KEQ6: To what extent were the project’s main objectives achieved?**

* *How has the project contributed to improving energy security through renewable and affordable energy solutions?*
* *How effectively has the project strengthened the capacities of agricultural producers to enhance food security?*
* *How has the project supported police services and community actors in promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence?*

**KEQ7: Has there been significant progress in promoting human security as a result of this project?**

* *What tangible improvements in human security have been observed in Moldova?*
* *How has the project contributed to enhancing resilience in beneficiary communities?*

**KEQ8: What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?**

* *How have external challenges, such as economic instability, affected the project’s progress?*
* *What role did project management and stakeholder collaboration play in achieving intended results?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency**

**KEQ9: Were the anticipated outputs generated on time and within budget?**

* + - *Were all activities implemented within the planned timeline and allocated budget?*
    - *How effectively were resources (financial, human, and material) utilized during implementation?*

**KEQ10: How efficient were the management and administrative arrangements employed to implement the project?**

* + - *How well did management systems and coordination mechanisms facilitate efficient implementation?*
    - *Were there any lessons learned regarding project management practices?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability**

**KEQ11: What is the prospect that the project’s activities and achievements will be sustained following project support?**

* + - *What mechanisms or structures have been developed to ensure sustainability?*
    - *How actively are local governments or institutions engaged in maintaining project results?*

**KEQ12: To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustaining the results achieved?**

* **Support Questions:**
  + - *How have stakeholder capacities been strengthened to sustain the benefits?*
    - *What ongoing partnerships or funding mechanisms exist to support sustainability?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Impact**

**KEQ13: To what extent has the project contributed to promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for target communities and vulnerable groups in Moldova?**

* **Support Questions:**
  + - *What systemic changes have been observed as a result of the project?*
    - *What evidence suggests enhanced resilience among vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and refugees?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Human Rights, Gender, and Social Inclusion**

**KEQ14: To what extent have disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the project, and with what results?**

* + - *How effectively has the project promoted social inclusion and addressed the needs of marginalized groups?*
    - *How has the project contributed to building stakeholder capacity to implement “Leave No One Behind” and human rights principles?*

**KEQ15: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?**

* + - *How effectively has gender mainstreaming been integrated into project activities?*
    - *What positive changes have been observed in promoting gender equality through the project?*

**Interview Guide for JICA (Donor)**

**Interview guide- UNDP Project Team**

**Evaluation Criteria: Relevance**

**KEQ1: To what extent has the design and implementation of the project responded to national priorities, strategies, and international commitments?**

**KEQ2: To what extent has the project addressed the needs of final beneficiaries?**

**KEQ3: How did the human security approach bring added value?**

* *What value did the human security approach bring to beneficiaries?*
* *What new solutions or strategies emerged from implementing human security principles?*

**KEQ4: Has the project proven to be as relevant as originally envisaged?**

* *Were adjustments to project activities made in response to changing needs or contexts?*
* *How has the project addressed socio-economic and institutional changes during its implementation?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness**

**KEQ6: To what extent were the project’s main objectives achieved?**

**KEQ8: What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?**

**Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency**

**KEQ9: Were the anticipated outputs generated on time and within budget?**

* + - *Were all activities implemented within the planned timeline and allocated budget?*
    - *How effectively were resources (financial, human, and material) utilized during implementation?*

**KEQ10: How efficient were the management and administrative arrangements employed to implement the project?**

* + - *How well did management systems and coordination mechanisms facilitate efficient implementation?*
    - *Were there any lessons learned regarding project management practices?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability**

**KEQ11: What is the prospect that the project’s activities and achievements will be sustained following project support?**

**KEQ12: To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustaining the results achieved?**

* + - *How have stakeholder capacities been strengthened to sustain the benefits?*
    - *What ongoing partnerships or funding mechanisms exist to support sustainability?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Impact**

**KEQ13: To what extent has the project contributed to promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for target communities and vulnerable groups in Moldova?**

* + - *What systemic changes have been observed as a result of the project?*
    - *What evidence suggests enhanced resilience among vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, and refugees?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Human Rights, Gender, and Social Inclusion**

**KEQ14: To what extent have disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the project, and with what results?**

**KEQ15: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?**

* + - *How effectively has gender mainstreaming been integrated into project activities?*
    - *What positive changes have been observed in promoting gender equality through the project?*

**Interview Guide for National Partners and local authorities in Moldova**

**Evaluation Criteria: Relevance**

**KEQ2: To what extent has the project addressed the needs of final beneficiaries?**

* *How were the needs of vulnerable groups, including refugees, agricultural producers, and women,considered and addressed?*
* *How did the project implemented measures to address interconnected vulnerabilities of beneficiaries?*

**KEQ3: How did the human security approach bring added value?**

* *What value did the project (and human security approach) bring to beneficiaries?*

**KEQ5: To what extent is the project cooperating and coordinating with other UNDP projects and activities of the Government of Moldova and other partners?**

**Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness**

**KEQ6: To what extent were the project’s main objectives achieved?**

**KEQ8: What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving the intended outputs?**

* *How have external challenges, such as economic instability, affected the project’s progress?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability**

**KEQ11: What is the prospect that the project’s activities and achievements will be sustained following project support?**

* + - *What mechanisms or structures have been developed to ensure sustainability?*
    - *How actively are local governments or institutions engaged in maintaining project results?*

**KEQ12: To what extent did the project interventions contribute to sustaining the results achieved?**

* + - *How have stakeholder capacities been strengthened to sustain the benefits?*
    - *What ongoing partnerships or funding mechanisms exist to support sustainability?*

**Evaluation Criteria: Impact**

**KEQ13: To what extent has the project contributed to promoting sustainable, long-term solutions for target communities and vulnerable groups in Moldova?**

**Evaluation Criteria: Human Rights, Gender, and Social Inclusion**

**KEQ14: To what extent have disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefitted from the project, and with what results?**

**KEQ15: To what extent has gender been addressed in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the project?**

1. Project proposal was submitted on this date, which was later accepted to serve as the project document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Donors Endorsement of the extension. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/248?sv=0&geo=680> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://erc.undp.org/pdf/UNDP\_Evaluation\_Guidelines.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/download/2787> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/1294> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 2019, available at: https://web-archive.oecd.org/temp/2024-05-13/81829-daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (2012). [Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts and Practices.](https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/centre-excellence-evaluation/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html#toc4) Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. Such instruments include document review templates, semi-structured interview guides (individual and group), and discussion or reflection guides. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Some examples could be duty bearer, rightsholder, and implementation partners [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Morras-Imas and Rist define triangulation of methods as “Collection of the same information using different methods in order to increase the accuracy of data”, p. 300. Morra **Imas**, L. G., & **Rist**, R. C. (2009). The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations. Washington, D.C., World Bank. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation- UNEGFN/CoC , 2020. Ref to <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Original text available at: <http://http//lex.justice.md>; Translation available at: https://www.elibrary.imf.org/downloadpdf/journals/002/2023/085/article-A001-en.xml [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mol215849.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Multiannual Indicative Programme (2021-2027) for the Republic of Moldova- EU Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/ecfd53f7-c434-4b78-9d22-fce05e28b793\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Ministry of Energy, Energy Efficiency Agency, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Food Safety Agency, Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Police Inspectorate, Ministry of Economy, Economic Council under the Prime Minister [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Including institutions such as the Congress of Local Authorities, local public institutions, community groups [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Ibidem, MIP- Republic of Moldova [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. “Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all”; Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020; SWD (2020) 56 final, Brussels, 18.3.2020, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/1\_en\_act\_part1\_v6.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. The document explicitly highlights prevention of discrimination Including sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation- [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Ibidem, “Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all” [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. Ibidem, EU Progress Report for the Republic of Moldova, 2023 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/moldova/> [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. https://moldova.un.org/en/213654-undp-country-programme-document-2023-2027#:~:text=The%20vision%20for%20the%20country,quality%20of%20life%20for%20everyone. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Key interventions include installing biomass heating systems for public and private use and facilitating energy-efficient technologies in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. https://moldova.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/UNSDCF%202023\_2027%20final%20ENG.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/105903 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. KII notes [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. The key informants highlighted that this responsiveness was especially critical given the compounded pressures of rising food and energy crises, security tensions, and the strain on local systems and capacities. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. For example, the project responded to the needs of micro-agricultural producers through targeted grants and capacity-building programs that enabled them to adopt climate-smart technologies, improving operational efficiency and minimizing environmental impact. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. This system enhances agricultural oversight, ensures standardized and reliable data collection, and supports evidence-based decision-making, all of which are critical for Moldova’s agricultural sector to align with EU accession priorities and improve overall competitiveness. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. These interventions were instrumental in enhancing productivity, reducing systemic barriers to economic participation, and promoting greater gender equality. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/downloadpdf/journals/002/2023/085/article-A001-en.xml> [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/d8ef3ca9-2191-46e7-b9b8-946363f6db91\_en?filename=SWD\_2023\_698%20Moldova%20report.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. The project is implementing innovative solutions, such as renewable energy technologies, agriculture sector reform (supporting institutional and policy measures and applying climate-smart agriculture), and participatory governance processes. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. The ET finds that these results have been achieved through compliance with food safety standards, enhancing market access and economic stability for smallholder farmers [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Informants emphasised that while Moldova has responded admirably to the crisis, the continued escalation of the conflict remains a looming challenge that could impact the sustainability of human security results. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. This is often called a "delivery trap" where undue pressure falls primarily on the execution of activities and the disbursement of funds [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. Submitted on 16 December 2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. The lack of a baseline assessment and the common standards in programme financial analysis shaped this approach. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. Project document [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. The AWP was based on the logical matrix and indicators established during the design phase [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. For example, this is one of highly valuable and important inputs- Mainichi Newspaper Social Welfare Foundation donated $7,515.97 that was used to for refugee response efforts: [Readers of the Japanese newspaper Mainichi donated, through UNDP Moldova, 10 new computers to children from Ukraine who took refuge in Cărpineni | United Nations Development Programme](https://www.undp.org/moldova/press-releases/readers-japanese-newspaper-mainichi-donated-through-undp-moldova-10-new-computers-children-ukraine-who-took-refuge-carpineni) [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. https://app.scoreforpeace.org/en/publications?yId&cId=32&tId&lId [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Project proposal was submitted on this date, which was later accepted to serve as the project document. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Donors Endorsement of the extension. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)