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# EVALUATION REPORT

# Sustainable local and regional development Outcome

# Mid-Term Evaluation

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The content of this evaluation report is the sole responsibility of the Evaluators and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of UNDP Moldova.

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# List of Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| APA | Academy for Public Administration |
| CALM | Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova |
| CBM | Confidence Building Measures |
| CEDAW | Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women |
| CPA | Central Public Administration |
| CP | Country progamme |
| CPD | Country Programme Document |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| DANIDA | Danish International Development Agency |
| DCFTA | Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement |
| EU | European Union |
| GIZ | Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| HDI | Human Development Index |
| HRBA | Human Rights Based Approach |
| IMC | Inter-municipal cooperation |
| JILDP | Joint Integrated Local Development Program |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goals |
| MEBP | Moldova Energy and Biomass Project |
| MPTF | Multi-partner Trust Fund |
| NDS | National Decentralization Strategy |
| PPP | Public Private Partnership |
| RDS | Regional Development Strategy |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Agency |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| TN | Transnistrian Region of Moldova |
| TOR | Terms of Reference |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNEG | United Nations Evaluation Group |
| UNDAF | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USD | United States Dollar |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The UNDP Country programme document (CPD) for Moldova 2013-2017 has been developed in line with the country’s UN Partnership Framework signed with Government of Moldova 20013-2017 (UNPF). This document presents the Mid-Term Evaluation of the UNDP CPD’s Outcome 2, that seeks to contribute to ‘*Access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work*’. UNDP has supported a number of initiatives, programmes and projects towards contribution to this Outcome, either alone or within joint projects with other UN Agencies – UN Women, UNICEF, WHO. Interventions have been co-funded by various development partners, such as the EU, Governments of Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Romania, and implemented in collaboration with the national partners, such as the State Chancellery, line Ministries, the Parliament, Bureau of Reintegration, other central and local Government institutions, civil society and business sector. The indicative resources for Outcome 2 were 26,553,826 USD.

*Evaluation Objective*

Evaluation assesses collective results of UNDP interventions towards achieving positive contributions to the Outcome 2 of the UNDP Country Programme Document, and particularly: Status and degree of change in the Outcome, and factors influencing the Outcome; Level of incurred changes; UN/DP’s strategic positioning on achieving the Outcome; Relevance of the Outcome and outputs; and Sustainability. Additionally, the ToR stipulated that focus should be placed on assessing efficiency and to a possible extent effectiveness of the CPD Outcome 2, whether the size of resources, both financial and human, and partnership strategies continue to be cost-effective and may be applied in continuation and/or revised/changed.

Importantly, due to the fact that the UNDP CPD Outcome 2 was directly transposed from the UNPF, some areas stipulated in the outcome do not fall within the UNDP focus of interventions in the assessed period but within mandates of other UN Agencies (e.g. innovation in agriculture and decent work). That is why, it was agreed with the UNDP that the evaluation would not focus on these areas.

This outcome evaluation was conducted in the period of September – December 2015 with the objective to assess the progress and achievement of the outcome as well as the contribution of UNDP’s support towards the desired outcome.

***Development Context***

Moldova’s transition to a market economy has been slow and challenged by slow economic and social reforms, the collapse of the industrial sector, and territorial dismantling of the country with the self-proclamation of Transnistria. Political instability and slow economic development contributed to high poverty rates, which have fallen further sharply since 2006 qualifying Moldova as the poorest country in Europe. Moldova’s Human Development Index value for 2012 is 0.660, positioning the country at 113 out of 187 countries and territories and placing it in the medium human development category. Poverty levels are further compounded by non-monetary dimensions, such as limited access to water and sanitation. Moldova faces significant disparities between the capital city and the rest of the country, between urban and rural areas and, more recently, between development regions.

Employment ratesin Moldova are among the lowest in Europe and Central Asia due to a significant decrease in Labour Force Participation (from 53% to 41% compared to 60-70% for countries in Europe and Central Asia). The general unemployment rate was 3.9% in 2014, however unemployment among youth aged 15-24 was 9.8% are a cause of concern. According to government statistics in 2014, 15.5% of men and 7.8% of women of working age were working abroad or looking for work abroad.

Local governance in Moldova is fragmented, underfinanced and can provide only few services, thus negatively impacting vulnerable and poor population. Education and communal services such as water, sanitation and waste management account for 80-90% of local expenditures, however large part of the population in rural areas still does not have access to these services. Despite the solid policy foundation in the areas of decentralization and regional development since 2005, challenges in advancing local government reform and regional development persist. The implementation of the National Strategy for Regional Development 2013-2015 is slow due to underfunding (only 1% of the State budget allocated for regional development) and limited capacity of functionaries. The strategy does not provide sufficient clarity on roles and responsibilities of Regional Councils and Agencies and coordination mechanisms between the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction and line ministries is unclear. Key Regional Development Agencies (Chisinau, Transnistria) are not yet established, while the Gagauzia RDA is in process of being established (the Council was set up at the end of October, while the Agency in November 2015).

*Evaluation process and methodology*

The evaluation was structured into three phases: Inception (September – October 2015), Data collection (October - December 2015), and Analysis and Reporting (October – December 2015). It encompassed qualitative and quantitative data collection methodologies for assessment of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of UNDP’s interventions towards achievement of Outcome 2. The evaluation process included both the outcome and project level assessment to enable reflecting project achievements towards changes in overarching themes and issues, but also contextual influences at local and national levels affecting implementation of interventions contributing to the Outcome 2. The overall approach to the evaluation was utilization-focused, gender and human rights responsive, and followed a mixed method approach.

The evaluation used three main sources of data: i) people; ii) documents, files, publications and relevant literature; and iii) observations during the site visits to local communities outside of Chisinau for data collection. Main data collection tools were interviews, focus group discussions, field visits and data review. Triangulation was applied to ensure validity of data and to synthesize information derived from different data sources.

KEY FINDINGS

UNDP’s interventions developed and implemented within the Outcome 2 have been *relevant* to the needs and priorities and initiated reforms in the area of decentralisation in Moldova. The Outcome 2 is in line with the country strategies and priorities recognized by the government in a number of strategic documents, including the National Development Strategy of Moldova 2020; Regional Development Strategy 2013-2015, National Decentralization Strategy (Action Plan 2012-2015) and the Government Activity Program 2013-2014, each of which has priorities directly linking the regional and economic development to overall development of Moldovan society. The Outcome 2 interventions target local communities, citizens and businesses by increasing governance, equitable access to services and economic opportunities through a range of interventions aimed to build capacities, provide economic and social infrastructure, enhancing strategic planning, transparency and accountability of local and central governments, etc. Human rights and gender equality, have been cross cutting themes pursued by the interventions within the Outcome 2, and field inquiry and data review show there was special attention given to integrate the principles of gender equality and human rights in interventions.

Evaluation findings as regards contribution to envisaged results are *positive*, overall. Progress has been made towards achieving the intended outcome of *Access to more equitable sustainable development and economic opportunities* throughresults within the two set Outputs of the Outcome 2.UNDPhascontributed to enhanced capacities of LPAs to organize and improve governance and public management mechanisms, and deliver more accessible public services in- and across- communities and at regional level. The work with government counterparts brought results through improvement of capacities of national and local levels of government to implement governance practices, and effectively and strategically plan and implement development initiatives in an inclusive and participatory manner. The most significant contribution is the improving access to and building skills and training, which, besides their main contributions for improvement of socio-economic opportunities, also became a launching pad for the beneficiaries to access other services external to the project disbursements, thus fulfilling one of the key elements for increased equity in socio- economic opportunities. This is an important investment in building municipalities and regions, which are traditionally facing poverty and have fewer opportunities to attract investment, both by local and international donors due to weak capacities to develop quality projects.

Evaluation findings show positive contributions of UNDP towards increasing of job opportunities in Moldova, through investment in skills, employability, opening new jobs, business start ups and entrepreneurship across the board of UNDP projects and programmes. There is evidence of new jobs and business opportunities for women and vulnerable groups in local communities.UNDP’s contribution to this outcome has yielded results particularly for rural poor, women and minority groups through its good governance and improvement of livelihoods interventions and partnership building strategies. These interventions brought important results through enhancing livelihoods of targeted populations and improving access to and benefit from economic and business activities.

The main **drivers** towards achievement of objectives has been UNDP’s **support to and cooperation** with the government and development partners. The framework is founded on principles of building partnerships, strengthening evidence base and policy inputs and creating enabling environment for government’s capacity development and implementation of policies. There is evidence of strong interest, dedication and commitment of partners and UNDP, and interviewed stakeholders agree that the UNDP interventions have been valuable and positive experience to all parties and brought change, particularly at local level.

Main **hindering factors** affecting UNDP’s efforts towards contributing to improved *access to more equitable sustainable development and economic opportunities* include challenging political context and limited potential for economic development, due to poverty and regional disparities. At governmental level, turn over of staff and frequent political changes affect the prospects for sustainability of interventions supported by UNDP. Another important factor is stalemate in adoption of further reformist policies towards territorial and administrative reform and decentralisaton.

Partnerships between UNDP, government, civil society, business sector and other development partners have been **significant positive driver** of UNDP’s results. Evidence shows strategic and dynamic partnership with the Government, civil society and private sector. Also, partnerships with other UN Agencies and development partners are effective and appropriate.

UNDP made successful efforts to use available project resources strategically and efficiently. Synergies and complementarity of efforts were ensured through close cooperation with the government and alignment of interventions to national priorities. Evaluation data derived from document review and stakeholder consultations indicate that UNDP complemented and generated synergies with the work of government, while there were no cases of duplication of efforts with other development partners.

In the mid-term of implementation of the Country Programme, sustainability prospects of the results achieved within the framework of the Outcome 2 are mixed. The current strategic and legal framework focusing on regional development and decentralisation are in place, however there are significant gaps in policy framework affecting decentralisation reforms underway**.** UNDP’s contribution to social and business infrastructure and capacities shows, overall, positive sustainability prospects and shows signs of positive benefits for local population. Investment in building capacities, guidance and supporting new models of inter-municipal cooperation has been a good sustainability tool, and is replicated in other UN(DP) and development partners’ projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations have been developed on the basis of the evaluation findings and conclusions as well as on consultation with all key stakeholders that were interviewed during the field phase.

***Strategic recommendations***

* Invest in innovation in agriculture as part of the support to entrepreneurship
* Support the Government in the process of outsourcing services (PPP)
* Continue supporting efforts for economic development through direct support to business development and enabling environment.

***Operational recommendations***

* Develop clear exit strategies for UNDP’s interventions in local and regional development.
* Develop a clear exit strategy for Syslab Centres
* Further promotion of best practices and achievements
* Improve Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of UNDP interventions

# 1. INTRODUCTION

**Aims of the Evaluation**

A team of two consultants, one International Consultant – Team Leader and National Consultant, was commissioned to undertake two evaluations: Evaluation of the Sustainable local and regional development Outcome and the Final Evaluation of the Joint Integrated Local Development Programme. The purpose of this Report is to present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Outcome evaluation. The Outcome 2 of the Country Programme document refers to ‘*Access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work*’. To contribute to this Outcome, UNDP supported the Government in a range of interventions through its programmes and projects, as well as through joint projects with other UN Agencies – UN Women, UNICEF, WHO. Interventions have been co-funded by various development partners, such as the EU, Governments of Sweden, Denmark, Swiss and Romania, and implemented in collaboration with the national partners, such as the State Chancellery, line Ministries, Parliament, Bureau of Reintegration, other central Government institutions and the local authorities.

The indicative resources for Outcome 2 were 26,553,826 USD. The donors contributing to implementation of the Outcome 2 for the period of 2013-2015 were EU, Government of Moldova, Government of Denmark, Trust Fund on Anti-Corruption, Government of Lichtenstein, Norwegian Government, but also funding from UNDP core funds.

As outlined in the Terms of Reference (ToR), Outcome evaluation assessed the following:

* Status and degree of change in the Outcome, and factors influencing the Outcome
* Level of incurred changes: Enabling environment, Organizational and/or individual levels
* UN/DP’s strategic positioning on achieving the Outcome
* Relevance of the Outcome and outputs
* Partnership strategy
* Sustainability: whether there is ownership and capacity to maintain and manage development in the  Outcome

The evaluation requirement was to put the major focus on assessing the progress achieved within the Outcome 2 “*People have access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work*” and the impact produced so far under the area of intervention, as well as draw conclusions and recommendations for eventual adjustments, and, to extent possible, lessons learnt for further programming and implementation of programme. The ToR also stipulated that focus should be placed on assessing efficiency and to a possible extent effectiveness of the CPD Outcome 2, whether the size if resources, both financial and human, and partnership strategies continue to be cost-effective and may be applied in continuation and/or revised/changed.

To respond to the requirements of the Evaluation, a careful methodology for the Evaluation was devised in order to provide an opportunity to both look at what progress had thus far been achieved and also to understand how to improve and build on elements for further programming.

# 2. Context of the Outcome 2

After being a part of the Soviet Union for a half century, Moldova’s transition to a market economy has been slow and challenged by slow economic and social reforms, the collapse of the industrial sector, and territorial dismantling of the country with the self-proclamation of Transnistria (which once generated a third of Moldova’s industrial output and almost all of its energy production). Political instability and slow economic development contributed to high poverty rates qualifying Moldova as the poorest country in Europe. Moldova’s Human Development Index value for 2013 is 0.663, positioning the country at 114 out of 187 countries and territories and placing it in the medium human development category. Between 1990 and 2012, Moldova’s HDI value increased from 0.65 to 0.663, an increase of 2 percent or average annual increase of about 0.1 percent. Still, Moldova has the lowest HDI in Europe today. Poverty levels are further compounded by non-monetary dimensions, such as limited access to water and sanitation. Moldova faces significant disparities between the capital city and the rest of the country, between urban and rural areas and, more recently, between development regions.

Economic growth, which has slowed down in 2014 to 4,6 %, and is expected to turn negative, -1%, according to World Bank estimations in 2015. By far, it has remained driven by consumption and on remittances. This clearly make the economy vulnerable on a number of accounts with risks to long-term sustainability being the most critical. Remittances will eventually dry up as more and more migrants will reunite with their families abroad. The tendency is that migrant workers will reunite families abroad, which will lead to less and less remittances. Gearing economic growth model to the one investment- and knowledge-driven is thus of critical importance.

Unemployment ratesin Moldova are among the lowest in Europe and Central Asia due to a significant decrease in Labour Force Participation (from 53% to 41% compared to 60-70% for countries in Europe and Central Asia). The general unemployment rate was 3.9% in 2014, however unemployment among youth aged 15-24 was 9.8% are a cause of concern. According to government statistics in 2014, 15.5% of men and 7.8% of women of working age were working abroad or looking for work abroad.

According to the Third Millennium Development Goals Report, the Republic of Moldova has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty. The incidence of poverty according to the international threshold of 4.3 dollars per day decreased from 34.5% in 2006 down to 20.8% in 2012. The share of the population living under the absolute poverty line decreased from 30.2% to 11.4% in 2014, while the share of population suffering from hunger – from 4.5% to 0.1%. However, special concerns are raised by the pronounced inertia of rural poverty: in big cities absolute poverty has decreased by more than two times from 2008 to 2012(from 10.9% to 4.3%), while in villages the decrease was slower (from 34.6% to 22.8%). In spite of the remarkable decrease in the incidence of poverty, more than half a million citizens still are categorized as poor. The rural population is 3 times more exposed to the risk of poverty than urban populations, and one in four villages lives under the national poverty line. *The gap between rural and urban living standards increased: in 2006, 75.7% of the population living in poverty were in villages, while in 2014 this percentage increased to 84%*.[[1]](#footnote-1)

One of the preconditions for addressing poverty in a sustainable manner is the creation of decent work places. After a decade of continuous loss of the labour force and a decrease in the occupation rate (from 60% in 2000 down to 38.5% in 2012), it is clear that a fundamental improvement in the Moldovan business environment drives recovery, which is currently suffering from regulatory problems in such areas as fiscal and customs administration, company licensing and authorisation, competition, access to finance, protection of ownership rights. Collectively this undermines company performance and respectively their capacity to provide good salaries, comfortable working conditions, and development opportunities for their employees.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The National Development Strategy Moldova 2020 attempts to address these issues in a holistic manner, concentrating on seven priority areas which are prone to be crucial for changing the economic paradigm of Moldova: education, roads, finance, business, energy, pension system and justice. So far, unfortunately, the progress in implementing the Strategy is scarce.

On the policy level, in the last few years, Moldova has reached a new level in its relations with the EU. A visa-liberalization agreement entered into force in April 2014, and the Association Agreement was signed in June 2014. These new cooperation frameworks provided for whole new possibilities to implement, with considerable support from the EU, reforms in significant areas, such as the justice sector reform and the public administration reform.

Local governance in Moldova is fragmented, underfinanced and can provide only few services, thus negatively impacting vulnerable and poor population. Education and communal services such as water, sanitation and waste management account for 80-90% of local expenditures, however large part of the population in rural areas still does not have access to these services. Despite the solid policy foundation in the areas of decentralization and regional development since 2005, challenges in advancing local government reform and regional development persist.

The implementation of the National Strategy for Regional Development 2013-2015 is slow due to underfunding (only 1% of the State budget allocated for regional development) and limited capacity of functionaries. The strategy does not provide sufficient clarity on roles and responsibilities of Regional Councils and Agencies and coordination mechanisms between the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction and line ministries is unclear. Key Regional Development Agencies (Chisinau, Transnistria) are not yet established, while the Gagauzia RDA is in process of being established (the Council was set up at the end of October, while the Agency in November 2015). Moreover, the capacity of the local authorities to attract national funds from the Regional Development Fund proved to be insufficient. This might as well constitute an impediment in attracting EU funds for regional development in the future.

After two years of debates, the National Decentralization Strategy and the Action Plan for its implementation were adopted on April 4, 2012. The aim of the National Decentralization Strategy is to transfer competences and financial resources from the central authorities to local authorities. Implementing the reform will allow providing better quality public services at a lower price, while the overall standard of living will improve, gradually eliminating disparities between rural and urban areas.

Due to various estimations, the decentralization agenda has been so far implemented to about 50 to 70 percent, while the Action Plan expires in 2015, and most probably will have to be extended for a new period. The seven areas covered by the Action Plan are: 1) allocation of responsibilities; 2) fiscal decentralization; 3) decentralization of property; 4) local economic development, urban and regional planning; 5) administrative capacity (territorial-administrative organization); 6) institutional capacity; 7) democracy, participation and ethics.

Among the most important actions implemented with the decentralization reform was the adoption of a set of amendments to the law on local public finances, as of November 2013. These amendments provide for a whole new type of financial relations between the central public administration and the local administrations of first and second levels, securing higher degree of independence of the local authorities.

Considerable fragmentation is what describes the current territorial-administrative structure of the country. There are 898 first level administrative-territorial units (towns and villages) and 32 second level districts for a population of 3.4 million inhabitants. The average number of population in first level local government is 2,958, while almost a third of them have less than 1,500 inhabitants (which is a minimum required by the Law on Administrative-Territorial Organization). At the same time, all of them are allocated the same types and number of responsibilities, which do not take into account the fiscal or administrative capacity.

After a period of relative political stability in 2014, the political turmoil has again captured Moldova in 2015. Besides the fact that in 2014 general parliamentary elections were held, and in 2015 the local ones, in just one year four governments have changed, and the last one was dismissed on October 28, 2015. In such circumstances, the implementation of fundamental reforms is on hold.

Despite deadlocks in several reform areas, one domain has advanced considerably. E-Governance is the field where significant progress was achieved. After the adoption in 2011 of the Strategic Program of technological modernization of the Government (e-Transformation), the e-Governance Center was established. During five years of its activity, it has managed to create and launch such important tools like MCloud, Mpass, MPay, as well as digitize 105 services and start the re-engineering of another set of services. This opens the doors to whole new range of possibilities to both the Central Public Administration and the Local Public Administration to perform and deliver its services to citizens more transparently, efficiently and faster.

Civil society remains weak, both at central and particularly at local level in Moldova. Although the normative framework is in place, civil society organizations are not particularly active in monitoring the implementation of government policies, and, when they are, very few of its recommendations are actually adopted. The “2% law” was adopted to provide for greater financial sustainability of the civil society organizations; however, until practical mechanisms for its implementation are in place, changes are not going to occur.

Regarding human rights, little progress was achieved in the integration of national minorities. Although the Bureau for Inter-ethnic Relations formed a working group to draft a ‘Strategy on the integration of national minorities’, the process stopped before the parliamentary elections in 2014, but has been relaunched recently. The draft strategy was published on the web for public consultations.[[3]](#footnote-3) Insignificant progress was also made in implementing the Action Plan to support Roma minority in Moldova (2011-2015). Although the Roma mediators’ network has considerably extended, the fact that they are legally placed under the local administration’ authority undermines their independence.

# 3. Outcome 2 overview and progress

***Outcome 2:*** *People have access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work.*

*Table 1. Outcome Outputs and Projects contributing to the Outputs directly or indirectly*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Output** | Indicator/Baseline/Target: | **Progress 2014** | **Programme/Project**: |
| 1. LPAs ensure sustainable development and access of vulnerable to public services by empowering communities, promoting PPPs and inter- municipal cooperation | Indicator: Deprivation Index; Baseline: North 472, South 455, Centre 462;  Target: increase by 10 % per region; | N/A[[4]](#footnote-4) | Joint Integrated Local Development Programme[[5]](#footnote-5) |
| 2. Labour force competitiveness (focused on women and vulnerable) improved, by vocational education and job opportunities | Indicator (UNPF indicator): Gender wage gap; Baseline: 76.4%; Target: reduce by 2 p.p ;  Indicator (CPD indicator): Employment Rate, disaggregated by urban/rural, geographical areas, gender and age Baseline: General: 41.9%, women 48.1%; Target: increase by 10 p.p | 87,6 %[[6]](#footnote-6)  Employment Rate  General: 39.6%, women 37.4%[[7]](#footnote-7) | Innovative business for local development  Innovative Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Employment  Moldova Energy and Biomass Project (*contributing indirectly to the Outcome*) |
| 3. Partnerships created between communities, businesses, CSOs across Nistru River for better services/business infrastructure. | Indicator: # of projects in Transnistria (incl. gender sensitive); Baseline: 36 Target: 125 | 137 projects (including 52 new cross-river projects in the field of business development and civil society partnerships 42 infrastructure projects 7 projects in the field of healthcare)[[8]](#footnote-8) | Confidence Building Measures II & III (2012-2015)  Strengthening Human Rights in TN  Confidence Building Measures IV (2015-2018) |

## 3.1 Interventions towards achievement of the Outcome 2

Since the initiation of implementation of interventions stated under the Country Programme Document 2013, UN/DP has focused on supporting the government and other national partners within the reform agenda, in the area of regional and local development (through interventions including but not limited to improvement of community/social infrastructure and communal services, increasing employability and business development, etc.).

Within efforts towards sustainable regional development, UN/DP supported Government’s efforts to strengthen socio-economic development measures through: a) providing of technical assistance in community profiling focusing on economic opportunities and job creation, as inputs for local strategies; b) building capacities of local governments in public procurement, property management, public finance management, tax collection and human resource management; c) support to legislation development (e.g. Law on Inter-Municipal Cooperation); d) piloting projects and institutionalizing regulatory mechanisms inter-municipal cooperation on communal services, waste management, and joint building and exploration of road infrastructure; e) supporting improvement of the statistics in partnership with the National Bureau of Statistics (through projects falling under the UNDP Governance cluster, but contributing also to Outcome 2); f) piloting a new system of local public financing; g) revision of Small Areas Deprivation Index (SADI); h) establishment of Joint Information and Service Bureaus; i) establishment of municipal enterprises for public services in water and sanitation, roads maintenance, snow removal, waste management, greening, and public lighting

Within Confidence Building Measures, UNDP supported cross-river initiatives, focusing on business development, social infrastructure, health and environment and strengthening the cooperation between technical experts, communities and business; support to social infrastructure, service provision, and support to Civil Society initiatives. UNDP Confidence Building Measures programme achieved significant results over the past years responding to multiple challenges and needs in the area of business and civil society development, health, infrastructure, environment, motivating local actors, building confidence in the process, and providing important space for nascent NGO/civil society development. Considering the breadth of the programme- and sector wide approach, UNDP acts as a platform to facilitate technical and thematic expertise that different UN Agencies hold; such as human rights, women empowerment, promotion of health or environment standards, serving as knowledge hub for development work in the region. UNDP support was very instrumental in helping other agencies expand in Transnistrian region, including in the follow up to the Report on Human Rights in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova[[9]](#footnote-9) on furthering human rights in the region. As a new phase of the confidence building program started in March 2015 (10 million EUR for 2015-2017) looking for increased cross-river cooperation of economic actors leading to improved employment opportunities and livelihoods across the Nistru/Dniestr River and empowering local communities and actors from both sides to address pressing development needs by improving critical community infrastructure. Efforts were made to launch a new confidence building intervention in the Gagauzian region and Taraclia district, supporting job creation, SMEs development, agriculture and rural development, which was under negotiation at the moment of the evaluation, estimations being that the programme will be launched in January 2016.

*Within the efforts to enhance employability and develop skilled workforce, UNDP* provided technical assistance to the Government by establishing career development centres aiming at developing soft skills of the unemployed in a “company-like” environment. To tailor better services to Moldovan context UNDP has developed self-employment component as part of the centres, which is further underpinned by establishment of seed funds for business start-ups.

Aiming to create economic opportunities, UNDP has invested in new areas such as Biomass production and promotion, whereby the program has supported the establishment of PPP, vocational training, entrepreneurship and job creation. The table 2 below provides an overview of Programmes/Projects contributing to Outcome 2. Two other project contributed to increased economic opportunities, the CBM and Innovative SMEs, through their grants and entrepreneurship promotion programs.

*Table 2. Programme/Projects Implemented within the Outcome 1 Communities Programme*

| **Project/donor/budget** | **Project outcome** | **Project outputs** | **Strategies and activities** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **JILDP**  **SIDA – UNDP**  311,643 USD  **SIDA – UNWOMEN**  33,752 USD  **DANIDA- UNDP**  4.686.938 USD  **DANIDA- UNWOMEN**  597,199 USD  **TRAC\* allocations UNDP** 195,700 USD  **UNWOMEN** 12,960 USD | The **Overall Objective** of the Programme is **to support better and equitable service provision and sustainable local development, facilitated by the improved legal and institutional framework resulting from the implementation of the National Decentralization Strategy.** | 1. Policy frameworks to support autonomous, efficient and financially-sustainable LPAs developed and implemented  2. Capacities of LPAs and communities strengthened to deliver better services to citizens and create models of LPAs - in line with changes brought by the Decentralization Strategy | **Component 1:** *Policy Framework Support for the Implementation of the Decentralization Strategy*  **Activity 1.1.** Provide policy advice in implementing fiscal decentralization in line with the Decentralization Strategy  **Activity 1.2.** Support the Government in strengthening the administrative capacity of LPAs  **Activity 1.3.**  Support the development and implementation of sectoral decentralization strategies, and clarification of competences of local and central authorities  **Activity 1.4**. Provide assistance in strengthening the institutional capacity of main stakeholders to manage the decentralization strategy and training for local authorities  **Component 2.** *Viable models of Operational Local Governments in line with the changes brought by the Decentralization strategy*  **Activity 2.1**. Strengthen local self-governance and public management performance in 20 target communes to better respond to the needs of women and men, particularly the most vulnerable  **Activity 2.2.**  Improve management, access and quality of municipal service provision in 20 communes and 10 clusters of communities  **Activity 2.3**. Support an enabling environment for rural business development, creation of economic opportunities and diversification of rural economies |
| **CBM**  **EU–** 9,500,001 Euro  **UNDP –** 1,099,999 Euro | The **overall objective** of the programme is to facilitate the settlement of the Transnistrian issue through ensuring economic and social development of local communities and increasing confidence between both banks of the Nistru River by involving local authorities, civil society organisations, business community and other stakeholders. | • Catalytic development of the SME sector in the Transnistrian region and security zone; at least 200 SMEs benefiting from better business support services and improved management skills; at least 50 cross-river exchanges promoted  • Communities empowered to participate in addressing local development needs with least 40 small social infrastructure projects implemented; at least 40 cross-river exchanges supported.  • Capacity of national, sub-national and local institutions in the environmental sector enhanced to address environmental priorities.  • Capacity of civil society organisations strengthened to address pressing social and community needs; at least 30 cross-river NGO partnerships supported  • Increased contacts between actors on both banks in the social, cultural, economic and environmental sectors  • Increased trust and confidence between citizens on both sides of the Nistru River | **Component 1: Business Development**  1.1 Business School Project  1.2Research and Analysis into SME Access to Finance  1.3Development of Business Incubators  1.4 Business consulting services  **Component 2: Infrastructure, community and social projects**  2.1 Rehabilitation of social institutions in the Transnistrian region and the security zone  2.2 Integration of health specialist care (continuation of previous activities based on the principle of exchange of expertise between both banks of the river).  2.3 Environmental Projects  **Component 3: Support to civil society**  3.1 Dialogues programme between experts, opinion leaders etc.  3.2 Foster civil society development in the Transnistria |
| **MEBP**  **EU\*** 18,169,348 USD  **UNDP** 711,667 USD[[10]](#footnote-10)  (\*The MEBP project contributes through its activities to the overall objective of the outcome, but it is not directly linked with it) | The Energy and Biomass Project aims to contribute to a more secure, competitive and sustainable energy production in the Republic of Moldova. | Output 1: Municipal biomass heating and fuel supply  markets established  Output 2: Foundations laid for establishment of  efficient household heating, industrial cogeneration  and biomass briquetting markets  Output 3: Capacity built for growth of biomass  markets at regional and local levels  Output 4: The opportunities and benefits of biomass  energy for Moldova are well known locally, and  visibility of project results promoted | Activity 1.1: 130 heating systems in public buildings installed  Activity 1.2: Fuel cycle facilitated through leasing/hire-purchase mechanism for local fuel suppliers  Activity 1.3: Market environment enhanced to support quality, efficiency and effectiveness  Activity 2.1: Market solutions for high efficiency affordable rural biomass household heating identified and piloted  Activity 2.2: Industrial cogeneration using biomass fuel demonstrated  Activity 2.3: Market solutions for briquetting piloted  Activity 3.1 Capacity of municipal leaders to manage biomass systems enhanced  Activity 3.2: Training materials developed for sound operation of straw-fired boilers  Activity 3.3: Training materials developed for commercial fuel suppliers  Activity 3.4 Community understanding and acceptance of biomass energy enhanced through school educational  Programme  Activity 4.1: Media campaign  Activity 4.2: Annual national awards  Activity 4.3: Communication and visibility of project results |
| **Syslab**  **Norwegian MFA** 550,448 USD  **UNDP** – 120,000 USD  **UKM -** 119,943 USD | * The project aims to create and manage career development centers in five most important regions of the Republic of Moldova which will train and help qualified unemployed, recent graduates and returning migrants in getting a decent job on the local market. | * Five SYSLAB Career Development Centers are functional in the following cities of Moldova: Chisinau, Rezina, Cahul, Balti and Comrat; * New tools such as technology and methods for career development, job search and entrepreneurship adapted and successfully launched in Chisinau and the regions;   More than 200 persons who received training and tailored consultations already got relevant employment on local market | * Setting up and running the Syslab center in Chisinau * Setting up and running the four regional centers |
| **Innovative business development for local sustainable economic growth** | * The Project aims at spurring innovations in small and mid-sized business start-ups and business development process for the generation of sustainable jobs at local level and strengthening of the LPAs capacities to manage autonomously such processes. | * Build expertise and knowledge for mainstreaming innovations into business development processes and selective cases of new business start-up; * Facilitate innovative business start-up and development through matching financial support with specific focus on existing businesses to graduate from business incubators; * Enhance capacities of the LPAs to support innovative business development in a more decentralized framework. | * Provision of tailored training and consultative support to potential entrepreneurs to focus on innovations at key points, including at the level of product, process, marketing or management method, as defined in the National Innovations Strategy. * Matching grant support to selected innovative start-ups and existing businesses in post-incubation phase to facilitate uptake of innovative practices and ideas and * Support to local authorities to develop or expand their economic development plans with clear focus on innovations in business start-up and business development at local level. |
| **MiLab\***  **UNDP-**  84,000 USD  **Moldcell –**  13,500 USD  (\*similar to MBEP Project, the MILab provided services to other interventions, piloting several initiatives within JILDP, thus offering synergies and indirect contributions to the outcome) | The project aims to establish a Social Innovation Hub, which will act as a multilateral platform to engage actors from different sectors (public, private, non-profit, etc.) to seek and experiment with innovative approaches to the society’s problems. | * Methods and tools created for participative generation of ideas, including through innovative approaches like crowd-sourcing, challenges, etc.; * Developing and testing of a number of solutions supported, including through use of design thinking techniques, gaming, behavioral science, mobile technologies and data, and others; * Wider use of tested solutions, including in public services; * Stakeholders support the scaling-up of successfully prototyped solutions. |  |

# 4. Evaluation Methodology

The Evaluation methodology is in line with requirements as set out in the ToR for this evaluation. The evaluation analysed the progress to outcome realization, factors affecting outcome, UN’s contribution to outcome, while the evaluation also studied the extent of partnership and cooperation, as well as resource mobilisation and its effects on implementation of the intervention.

According to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) Evaluation Quality Standards and the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, selection and application of adequate evaluation methodology is crucial to produce reliable data that allow for valid evaluative judgments that are useful for learning and making decisions.

Upon analysis of the CPAP document and the results framework for the Outcome 1, the needs and expectations from the Evaluation by UNDP, the evaluation team applied “mixed methods” to optimise the potential of the analysis and to reach sound evaluation. In line with that, the methodology applied for this Evaluation included qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments, such as focus groups and interviews, as well as document review, and meetings with UNDP staff, government partners, donors, UN agencies and other international and national partners.

The evaluation methodology was based on ratings of the OECD-DAC established evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

## 4.1 Evaluation Design

The evaluation was carried out in three phases:

* The inception phase and the document review;
* The fieldwork phase comprising the field visits to the target communities and follow-up interviews.
* Analysis and report writing phase. This phase was marked by two main points of consultation, the field work de-briefing meeting with the UNDP team, and the final presentation of the report.

Qualitative data were collected by using a number of methods including:

* **A critical desk review of materials related to the Outcome**, as well as any material that was provided by UNDP such as projects’ reports and annual work plans, data on achievement of performance indicators, etc. This review also extended to documents external to the UNDP that were identified by the consultants through own research or through informants, which have a bearing on the evaluation questions. The Evaluation team conducted a comprehensive review of historical information and reports pertaining to the Outcome 2 since its inception, and earlier, as necessary. This information was analysed and the results were tailored to answer the main evaluation questions outlined in the ToR.
* **Interviews with UNDP teams at headquarters** and projects.
* **In-depth, semi-structured interviews** with representatives from the government counterparts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted as a more appropriate and valuable technique, because they allow partners to present and explain points freely. Purpose of in-depth interviews was to familiarise and assess the use of UNDP delivered outputs by beneficiaries, be it a government institution or local community.
* **In-depth interviews with a variety of representatives of the beneficiaries and partners** (e.g. of SMEs established, managers and users of public services, PPPs, participants of vocational education trainings and related activities, CSOs, and businesses, etc.)
* **Field visits and meetings with partners in target communitie**s as envisaged in the ToR. These visits were an opportunity to meet some of the beneficiaries, to conduct field observation, and gather best practices and lessons learned from programme implementation as well to observe changes towards achievement of the outcome. Selection of people for interviews was done by UNDP.
* **Interviews with other international donors or implementing agencies**, especially those involved in supporting economic development and poverty reduction in Moldova, as well as representatives of other UN Agencies. This allowed obtaining information about the expertise of other development organizations and their partnerships with UNDP in delivering development initiatives related to Outcome 2.
* **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** to obtain qualitative information to strengthen analysis and understand the relationship between the interventions and the results they have achieved, within the given context in the country. Focus groups discussions were primarily conducted with final beneficiaries of UNDP interventions (e.g. women businesses owners, career trainings participants, trained and supported local government representatives, local services users, etc.) Selection of participants of focus group discussions was conducted by UNDP.
* Visit to the 19th International specialized exhibition-fair of agricultural products, equipment, technologies and crafts, “Farmer”.

**Quantitative** data collection methods consisted of:

* Review of data sourced from the interventions on indicators related to the Outcome 2
* Collection and review of secondary data from the analysis of the strategic framework, including but not limited to the National Decentralization Strategy, the National Strategy for Regional Development 2013-2015, etc.
* Review of data from other secondary sources.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis was guided by the Evaluation matrix developed during the inception phase of the evaluation process. In order to ensure that findings and related conclusions are objective and evidence based, triangulation was used to identify inconsistencies and ensure reliability. Also, the evaluation team used both the descriptive statistic but also more advanced analytical exercises such as measures of correlation (e.g. between geographic region and success rate) to strengthen the evidence base for findings and conclusions.

**Ethical considerations**

The evaluation approach was to combine the Results-Based Management with a Human Rights-Based Approach to evaluation i.e. achievement of planned results through morally acceptable processes to realise human rights. The Evaluation team applied the Human Rights based approach, whereby the five core principles of normativity, participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency were guiding the Evaluation as per the document Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming, approved by the United Nations Development Group in 2003. At the same time, the evaluation was guided by gender equality and gender mainstreaming principles, in line with Moldova’s international commitments, most notably the CEDAW, and UN Women’s and UNDP’s gender mainstreaming policies and principles. The evaluation used to the extent possible disaggregated data by gender and deprivation profiles.

The evaluation team encouraged active participation and gave the opportunity of all key stakeholders in the evaluation process to provide data, information and feedback, but also space for stakeholders to discuss and share top priorities for the continuation of reforms in the area of decentralisation and good governance as well as to validate the findings and recommendations of this evaluation report. Overall, there has been a high level of participation of stakeholders in the evaluation process.

During data collection, the evaluation team ensured that the evaluation process is ethical and that participants in the process can openly express their opinions, protecting the confidentiality of their answers. All interviewed people were informed in advance about the purpose and the themes of the interviews, focus groups and discussion groups, as the case.

## 4.2 Evaluation Limitations

There are two limitations encountered during this evaluation.

1. **Limited time frame for the evaluation and heavy focus on JILDP Programme.** The ToR for this Evaluation included three tasks (Outcome Evaluation, JILDP Evaluation and development of the Concept note for the JILDP follow up programme). Due to the need to assess the JILDP to details, other projects were slightly side-lined for this evaluation. Some projects, such as Mi-Lab and Biomass Project were assessed only through desk review of secondary sources, while CBM was primarily assessed through desk review as well, besides a limited number of interviews.
2. **Limited number of visited communities.** Due to time constraints, the team could not conduct site observations in more than two communities targeted by the programme. To mitigate the risk of biased conclusions regarding the local level work of the programme, the Team conducted phone interviews with the total of nine (9)[[11]](#footnote-11) communities to include the views and experiences of these communities in the data pool for triangulation.

# 5. Key Findings

The Outcome 2 of UNDP Moldova Country Programme Document (hereinafter CPD) is defined as follows: *People have access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work*. The Outcome was directly transposed from the United Nations – Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework (UN PF) 2013 – 2017, without further adaptations to the programmatic focus and areas of interventions of UNDP Country Office. According to recent UNDP guidelines for CPD development ‘The number of CPD outcomes should not exceed four. These outcomes should be copied verbatim from the UNDAF (i.e. CPD outcomes are UNDAF outcomes’, which explains the comprehensiveness of the Outcome. Due to this, the Outcome 2 is a comprehensive and ambitious outcome, including areas of intervention of other UN Agencies that go beyond the scope of the UNDP portfolio (such as decent work, innovation in agriculture, while contribution to regional development is seen through efforts in local development and creation of cooperation among clusters of communities (e.g. Inter-municipal cooperation), contributing to regional development). The outputs relating to the outcome (directly linked to UNDP’s niche) are the following:

* Partnerships created between communities, businesses, CSOs across Nistru River for better services/business infrastructure.
* Labour force competitiveness (focused on women and vulnerable) improved, by vocational education and job opportunities
* LPAs ensure sustainable development and access of vulnerable to public services by empowering communities, promoting PPPs and inter- municipal cooperation

The assessment of the Outcome 2 as per criteria for this evaluation are affected by the issues with the Outcome definition, as demanded by the UNDP Guidelines for CPD development (to directly transpose it from UNDAF Outcome framework). That is, findings of the evaluation point to the fact that while a number of programmes and projects contribute to achieving the stated outputs, the extent of UNDP contribution to the stated Outcome is looked at through the lens of UNDP’s direct contribution as per its mission. This means that contributions to areas of ‘decent work and innovation in agriculture’ which are a part of the Outcome, are not areas of UNDP’s direct contribution but a focus of interventions of other UN Agencies directly working on these areas. Therefore, the evaluation focuses on areas of direct relevance to UNDP work in Moldova, recognizing that the other areas (decent work, innovation, agriculture) were not tackled and no contribution was made in these.

## 5.1 Relevance of the Intended Outcome and related outputs

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| --- | --- |
| EQ 1. | Are the Outcome and associated projects/programmes relevant, appropriate and strategic to national goals and UN/DP’s mandate? |

The relevance of the UNDP CPD Outcome 2 interventions has been assessed using available data, facts and statistics for the period of 2012-2015 as well as relevant legal and strategic documents of the Moldovan Government and its commitments to address the issues of equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities, as well as UNDP strategies in the country. Interviews with key stakeholders were also used to triangulate findings. The challenges and context in the area of equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunitieshave been already presented in Context Analysis of this report, based on analysis of findings of number of reports, studies, assessments and research studies produced by government, national and international partners.

Currently, interventions contributing to Outcome 2 are primarily organised within the umbrella of the Inclusive Development portfolio with contributions of projects within other two portfolios (Democratic Governance and Environment and Energy) as well. At time of CPD development, the Country Office structure was around several key portfolios, whereby the Confidence Building and Local/Regional Development Portfolio together with the Poverty one were contributing to the Outcome 2. Further to restructuring in 2014-2015, Local and Regional Development was merged with Energy and Environment becoming Sustainable Development Cluster, while other projects were still in the Confidence Building and Policy Unit/Poverty Reduction Portfolios, under the responsibility of the Strategic Support Team. Currently, discussions are being hold regarding connecting all projects related to the Outcome 2, in line with the UNPF, in one Cluster, to be called Inclusive Growth/ or Inclusive Local Development. The decision will be made by the end of 2015.

The programmes and projects contributing to the Outcome 2 focus on a number of areas, addressing the needs of Moldovan society in a number of areas of relevance to regional development and economic development. The projects and programmes implemented within the ongoing CPD include both follow up or ongoing projects from previous phases of UNDP work in the country (e.g. JILDP and CBM) or new projects (e.g. Syslab and Innovation in SMEs; Gagauzia and Taraclia local development as well as Human Rights in Transnistria just started or are in pipeline) making them medium to long-term investments in overall development of the country.

Document review and stakeholder consultations conducted within the scope of this Evaluation show **alignment of UNDP Outcome 2 with needs and priorities at national and local level in Moldova in the regional development and economic opportunities.** These priorities have been recognized by the government in a number of strategic documents, including the National Development Strategy of Moldova 2020; Regional Development Strategy 2013-2015, National Decentralization Strategy (Action Plan 2012-2015) and the Government Activity Program 2013-2014, each of which has priorities directly linking the regional and economic development to overall development of Moldovan society. For instance, the National Development Strategy Moldova 2020 identifies seven priority areas[[12]](#footnote-12) that would ensure changing the economic paradigm of the country and ensure its effective and sustainable development. Although most of the intervention areas of the Strategy are intended to be addressed primarily at policy level, UNDP Outcome 2 targets two of the objectives from a different angle. One of them refers to strengthening employability, where UNDP Syslab Project respond by investing in the skilled unemployed, providing them with trainings and coaching to improve their “soft skills”. At the same time, JILDP and CBM aim to boost local development, including through promoting entrepreneurship establishment, thus contributing to job creation at local level.

UNDP responds to priorities of the National Regional Development Strategy (hereinafter RDS) through contribution to regional development through local development. To this end, the UNDP projects (JILDP, CBM, Human Rights in Transnistria Region) respond to the need for community mobilisation and improvement of LPAs capacities overall, including in the areas of strategic planning, service provision, investment planning, etc. Also, the projects respond to the need to build links and partnerships between communities in immediate geographic proximity, through exchanges, networking, joint projects and modelling inter-municipal cooperation, overall responding to the need for development at regional level through strengthening local communities and regional cooperation. UNDP contributes directly to the priorities identified in the **National Decentralization Strategy** (hereinafter NDS)[[13]](#footnote-13), particularly backing up the decentralization process through providing expertise and assistance in developing the necessary legal framework, the sectorial decentralization strategies, by securing a participatory decision-making at all stages[[14]](#footnote-14). It has also embarked in a process of boosting local development through various mechanisms: enhancing the capacity of the LPA, mobilizing community groups, contributing to enhanced transparency and participation in local decision-making, offering small grants for community-based activities as well as for institutional strengthening of the LPAs.

CBM has also brought its contribution to meeting NDS targets, namely in the area of local development. It acted on several levels in order to support development of local communities, with a special focus – regions bordering Nistru River.

Outcome is also relevant in the context of the **Government Activity Programme 2013-2014,** which established seven key priorities[[15]](#footnote-15), whereby Outcome-related projects addressed four of these seven priority areas[[16]](#footnote-16) through its interventions. The Outcome will be still relevant in relation to the latest Government Activity Program 2015-2018, which mentions, among key priority areas, enhancing the quality of services delivered to citizens, decreasing the administrative costs and reducing gaps between the regions, including through implementation of the territorial-administrative reform and decentralisation, and creating prerequisites for country reintegration.

The Outcome and its related projects are fully in line with Moldova’s international commitments. Some of the issues set forth by the **Millennium Development Goals** are directly targeted by the Outcome. Thus, projects under this Outcome have directly contributed to promoting gender equality and empowering women, by streamlining the gender perspective into national policies and consolidating women groups at local and central levels. At the same time, the Outcome interventions clearly contribute to MDG1 “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”, through creation of hundreds of permanent and temporary work places and through pushing for policy change in critical areas.

The Outcome resonates with the **European Charter of Local Self-Government**, ratified by the Republic of Moldova on July 16, 1997, which guarantees the right of local public authorities to have effective capacity to solve and manage an important share of the public affairs according to the law, under their own responsibility and for the public benefit.

The relevance of the Outcome should also be noted in the context of **EU-Moldova** relations. At the time the Outcome was formulated, the EU has recommended Moldova, inter alia, in the ENP Progress Report for 2012, to: step up the reform of the public administration and start implementing the decentralisation strategy, with a view to strengthening institutional capacity, efficient use of public resources and optimization of local administration; and to engage pro-actively with the Transnistrian side in view of promoting an enticing, mutually acceptable vision for a common future, and agreeing accordingly the basic parameters for a settlement.

The Outcome-related projects were formulated in coordination with the key national stakeholders, primarily the State Chancellery, Ministry of Economy and Reintegration Bureau, but also other government partners. This approach ensured that all interventions were highly relevant and needed in the local reform context. All projects in focus of this assessment are steered by management boards whose membership is composed of representatives of relevant competent government authorities and other development partners with the mandate to guide and ensure coordinated actions towards achieving the goals of related projects in a concerted manner applying good governance mechanisms and to avoid overlaps with other development initiatives.

Although different as per scope, the projects under this Outcome have some activities, which are similar (e.g. promoting entrepreneurship, which is present in JILDP, CBM, Syslab and MEBP). There is evidence that project teams sought synergies (e.g. synergies between JILDP and MiLAB Projects), ensured cooperation and coordination to avoid possible overlaps and benefit as much as possible from each other’s experience.

The **chosen programmatic strategies** were **appropriate** to secure successful implementation of project activities as well as to respond to the needs of the target groups. The perpetual combination of policy and piloting activities has proven to be highly effective, as demonstrated by JILDP and CBM, developed a well-balanced activities plan comprising interventions at various levels: economic development, community and civil society mobilisation, culture, sports, strengthening local authorities and services, etc.

The Outcome has correctly identified the **needs of the main target groups**. Addressing the most urgent needs of local communities, projects have addressed the need to improve living standards and welfare of local population. Priority needs of people in the local communities are: access to quality public services and existence of possibilities to generate income. These needs are addressed by CBM and JILDP. Syslab addresses another sensitive issue – that of the “skilled unemployed” who are prone to leave the country unless they find a job that suits their qualification, as well as of the returning migrants, who should be offered a chance to stay in Moldova. While e-transformation has been enshrined into national policies in the last few years, and considerable progress was made in this respect, nothing was done to promote and advance this on the local level. UNDP’s contribution through this Outcome, mainly through JILDP, was to bring innovative solutions developed on national scale closer to the local authorities, with the aim of offering a cheaper, faster and more transparent way of public service delivery.

To respond to the priorities of the governmental strategies and the needs for improved services and policy frameworks in areas of importance for regional development, **UNDP interventions targeted perpetual capacity constraint** faced by the public authorities in Moldova. Trainings provided to different levels of government were greatly relevant taking into account the reforms and needs for improving and implementing legislative and policy framework and necessity to adapt to new regulations. In the public finance sector and budgeting alone, several essential acts have been amended and local authorities need to adjust their way of operation accordingly.

## 5.2 Effectiveness

### 5.2.1 Progress towards Achievement of the Outcome

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| --- | --- |
| EQ 2. | Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcome effective and efficient? |
| EQ 3. | Is sufficient progress been made with regard to UN/DP outputs? |

As mentioned in the relevance section, the Outcome itself is transposed from the UNPF to the UNDP CPD, making it broad and not reflecting the scope of UNDP contributions to the development of Moldova. The outcome is more specified through the three outputs and their related indicators, which provide more elaborate understanding of what UNDP provides through its interventions. Throughout the years of Programme implementation, UNDP and its partners have invested significant efforts on a number of areas of importance as presented in the Table in the Section 3 of this report. This section provides an assessment of the extent to which the implemented interventions were effective in achievement of the set outputs contributing to overall outcome of regional development and economic opportunities.

**Output 1. LPAs ensure sustainable development and access of vulnerable to public services by empowering communities, promoting PPPs and inter- municipal cooperation**

**UNDP interventions contribute to enhanced capacities of LPAs to organize and improve public services in-communities and at regional level, through capacity building, experiential learning and direct work with citizens towards improved prioritisation, planning and maintaining public services. This is an important investment in building municipalities, which are traditionally facing poverty and have fewer opportunities to attract investment, both by local and international donors due to weak capacities to develop quality projects.**

The programmes, particularly, JILDP, CBM and MEBP, **contributed significantly** to this output **through modelling new types of interventions** in their thematic areas for improvement of access to municipal and inter-municipal public services, promotion of PPPs and IMCs. Each programme applied holistic approach for their respective area of work by combining support to LPAs, local businesses and citizens through 1) strengthening capacities of LPAs for strategic planning with applying participatory and inclusive local decision making processes; 2) providing access to grants and financial support to organise community projects (bio mass; social infrastructure; community actions, etc.); 3) supporting business start ups and entrepreneurship; 4) supporting PPPs through piloting IMC and local service provision through private operators; and 5) Increasing awareness and acceptance, promote the benefits of civic activism, community mobilization and use of new technologies in energy, environment and community participation. Additionally, CBM programme used confidence-building measures to enhance the inter-community dialogue and exchanges. Such approach of the Programmes provide for critical investment in improvement of livelihoods and local and regional development and economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas and small communities, which otherwise do not have many developmental opportunities. Rationale for such approach is found in the need that strengthening capacities of the LPAs for better service provision cannot be focused only on LPAs, without assisting local businesses and citizens to take more active role and cooperation with the LPAs in improvement of services. UNDP’s strategy to tackle these challenges was to invest into building LPA capacities, modelling new services and community mobilisation combined with improvement of social and community infrastructure for local population with special focus on most vulnerable (women, minority groups, children, people living in divided communities, etc. Also, **UNDP piloted a new system of local public financing in four districts** (133 communities) towards building capacities and testing increased local budget autonomy and predictability for public fund allocation. Close to 95% of the functionaries in 30 pilot localities (552 public servants including 386 women and 175 men) received specialized trainings in various areas of public finance management and local revenue enhancement[[17]](#footnote-17).

Throughout the work with LPAs, UNDP succeeded in training and mentoring 74 LPAs, **bringing new knowledge and capacities** for transparency, public procurement, property management, public finance management, tax collection, human resource management, local planning, eco-technologies, etc. Evidence collected within the framework of this evaluation points to positive changes in targeted communities, reflected in better and more inclusive prioritization in the community and strategic planning; more transparent decision making and opening up of the LPAs to citizens; and generally more awareness and readiness of LPAs to organise services by using PPPs or IMC models. Stakeholder consultations with municipal representatives also point to better understanding of the LPA roles and opportunities for attracting investments and supporting local business development.

Limited data gathered on citizen satisfaction with public services in targeted communities point to **more confidence and satisfaction** with work of LPAs. Namely, the JILDP survey says 49% citizens are satisfied with LPA activity, 21% not satisfied, 26% undecided. Focus group discussions organized with communities benefiting from JILDP project and review of secondary data from CBM project show that LPAs are **improving their prioritization and inclusive planning**, that brings benefits in **improved social infrastructure and services**. Another result of the programmes is mobilisation of communities and establishment of new civil society organisations and community groups (18 of them were established through JILDP interventions). CSOs organise community actions and some of them have succeeded in raising funds locally (from citizens) or various donors and sponsors for local projects and initiatives of interest for local communities (e.g. rehabilitation of parks, wells, graveyards, etc.). The overall amount of co-financing attracted by the 26 JILDP community projects was roughly $40,000, which is a considerable amount compared to the initial support offered by the program ($ 130,000). There have been 26 community and Roma mobilisation projects under JILDP and 43 project small social infrastructure projects implemented with CBM thus far (around $120,000 per project).

The challenge of Moldova’s small communities and territorial fragmentation through current administrative division of LPAs but also lack of political will for territorial and administrative reforms has already been discussed in this report. Such fragmentation affects negatively (communal) service provision and maintenance, particularly in small communities whose budgets are scarce and do not allow for investment projects. In turn, such situation affects further deprivation and poverty of local population but also lack of investment opportunities from businesses due to poor conditions for business development. To fill in the gap in this sector, UNDP and its partners invested in modelling IMCs and PPP for communal services in water and sanitation, road maintenance, heat supply, snow removal, waste management, greening, public lighting, etc. Through JILDP and (indirectly, through one of its strategies) MEBP programme, 17 PPPs (7 for MEBP and 10 for JILDP) were established to provide above-mentioned types of services. The services were an important investment as they improved living conditions and access to new services for over 120,000[[18]](#footnote-18) women and men and 1,050 small businesses[[19]](#footnote-19). UNDP and partners also succeeded in advocating to the government to adopt the regulatory mechanism for inter-municipal cooperation, which ensures the sustainability of existing and opportunity for clusters of municipalities to establish new ones.

**Output 2. Labour force competitiveness (focused on women and vulnerable) improved, by vocational education and job opportunities**

**UNDP Interventions have contributed significantly to increasing of job opportunities in Moldova, through investment in skills, employability, opening new jobs, business start ups and entrepreneurship across the board of UNDP projects and programmes. There is evidence of new jobs and business opportunities for women and vulnerable groups in local communities. Investments in vocational education have been limited.**

UNDP investment over the years has been in **supporting businesses and increasing job opportunities** through capacity building for business (start-up), financial and mentoring support for business development and marketing, as well as through career guidance and training.

Within the CBM and JILDP programmes, investments were made in supporting business start-ups and business development through capacity building and mentoring, financial and support to exploration of new markets (by supporting participation in fairs, exhibitions, etc.). Supported businesses are predominantly in agriculture and farming, while there are also other types of businesses supported. **The support was beneficial**, as 78 (38 JILDP and 40 CBM) new businesses were established, while 15 of existing ones have been supported to increase their portfolios and profits, other 400 received training and managerial assistance, while 50 small businesses were supported to procure and install biomass boilers under preferential conditions, thus improving their business conditions. Also, a new Business Consultancy Unit has been established in the northern town of Rybnita, in Transnistria region, extending the Moldovan Chamber of Commerce’s outreach to local companies. Within this Unit, more than 330 representatives of SMEs from both banks improved their understanding of the legislative aspects of cross-river business exchange, new methods in doing business, while the Unit also enabled establishment of business contacts during seminars, business conferences, and economic forums. Such exchange also resulted in generating 10 cross-river partnerships. This evaluation could not establish evidence on the overall increase of profits or business portfolio of supported businesses, but stakeholder consultations and visit to a Business fair present individual accounts of increased business opportunities of supported entrepreneurs and empowerment to seek new markets and open their businesses to new opportunities. This is particularly important when it comes to women entrepreneurs, who report stronger confidence in running their businesses and participating in fairs and search for new markets, as reported by interviewed women entrepreneurs.

Interventions within the SYSLAB project directly **contribute to improvement of labour force competitiveness** through fostering innovative approaches to skill development and capacity building of young people-job seekers to acquire modern job-seeking or business start-up methods, entrepreneurship, systematic business and person-to-person networks, through trainings, mentoring and career guidance. The project activities contribute to job creation and business development by providing motivated and competent work force, but also supporting business start-ups. Various age categories of beneficiaries[[20]](#footnote-20), participants of courses, are being better informed about the potential drawbacks of inadequate job-seeking methods or running business and how to approach the market in appropriate way. The Project builds these skills in the company-like environment helping beneficiaries to be accustomed to possible challenges in the labour market, while extensive teamwork and individual exposure contributes also to boosting confidence of the participants. Within the project, 203 out of 261 young people got employed (making it approximately 78%). The Project models and activities are implemented at five Training centres[[21]](#footnote-21). The project is implemented under the auspices of the Ministry of Economy. Given, the strong emphasis on the entrepreneurship component, the role of the Ministry of Economy has become more important given the role of the Ministry and affiliated agencies, such as ODIMM (National Organization for SMEs). The Ministry of Labour is still member of the Project’s Board through the National Employment Agency (NEA). The Project as a whole has had Memorandum of Understanding with NEA from the onset and all centres cooperate with NEA and its regional outfits. Around 35% of Centres’ beneficiaries come via NEA. . The project tackles only the people with competencies and higher education credentials, since this category constitutes at least 25% of all unemployed in the country and is not properly covered by national services. Furthermore, the mismatch between educational offer and labour market needs is huge and many of the graduates are not able to find proper jobs. Syslab methodology is geared towards this category of unemployed. However, to reflect better demographic profiles in Moldova’s regions Centre work with beneficiaries who have vocational training. At the same time, an innovative approach was to adapt the standard Syslab methodology to the local context in terms of introducing an entrepreneurship training component. Further systematic replication and dissemination by the national and local authorities involved is planned in the Phase 2 of the Project. Insistence on replication and dissemination is important in order to boost the effects being produced and thus to significantly contribute the timely achievement of stated Outcome 2.

UNDP has had only limited investment in vocational education within the reporting period. UNDP conducted a portfolio review mission in 2012, looking for opportunities of portfolio development in line with the CPD, where vocational education sector was carefully considered. However, no relevant entry point was identified, considering the EU Technical Assistance in this area and budgetary support addressing it, coupled with a multitude of smaller donors (Austrian Development Agency, Liechtenstein Development Cooperation, and various foundations). Still, within the MEBP project, within framework of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, vocational education was piloted in three technical schools to meet the requirements of emerging bioenergy market. Thus, starting with 2015-2016 academic year, students of three VET schools are studying new educational modules on "Energy plants - a renewable energy source" within the forestry profession and "Biomass heating plants" within the operators in the boiler room profession. The VET schools from Cuhurestii de Sus village, Orhei town and the School No. 3 from Chisinau are the first schools to pilot the educational modules.

**Output 3. Partnerships created between communities, businesses, CSOs across Nistru River for better services/business**

**UNDP Interventions have succeeded in nurturing partnerships and cooperation opportunities within and across communities; between governments and citizens and between businesses.**

This Output may be looked as a crosscutting value of UNDP interventions, as all programmes supported and nurtured partnerships and networks of beneficiaries and target groups. Throughout the implementation of JILDP, MEBP and CBM programmes, networking, exchanges and joint activities both horizontally (between LPAs, between businesses; citizens, businesses and CSOs within and between communities) have been nurtured. For example, the CBM programme activities resulted in the following: over 400 businesses on both banks were involved in joint activities and received business management assistance; 61 cross-river exchanges established, offering improved economic opportunities to the population on both banks of the River; 80 civil society members from both banks established two platforms to discuss social-humanitarian and economic issues and identified ideas for joint projects to build confidence; some 97 partnerships created between entrepreneurs, civil society members and local authorities and other stakeholders on both banks of the Nistru River.

The CBM programme invested significant efforts to build confidence and build bridges across the Nistru river among citizens, businesses, service providers as mentioned above, but also among local governments albeit to limited extent. Considering the sensitivities of involving LPAs in cross river activities, this was not the target of the CBM. Despite these challenges, there were some successful attempts, as for example organization of joint round tables and joint trainings facilitated through a grant to CALM. At the same time, in the new phase of the CBM, this cooperation is planned in a more comprehensive manner, the first joint event awarding first communities to renovate social infrastructure took place successfully on November 2015. This is a big achievement when political and socio-economic challenges of the region are taken into account.

### 5.2.2 UNDP Contributions to the Outcome 2: People have access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work.

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| EQ 4. | What is the current status and prospects for achieving the outcome with the indicated inputs and within the indicated timeframe? |
| EQ 5. | Are the outputs and outcome leading to benefits beyond the life of the existing projects? |

As discussed in the section on Relevance, the Outcome definition was affected by the overall definition in the UNDAF document, making it to goes beyond UNDP’s interventions to capture also actions of other UN agencies. Therefore, it is clear that there has been no contribution of UNDP to decent work and innovation in agriculture. While, decent work falls within the mandate of other UN agencies; innovation in agriculture is the area covered by IFAD and FAO. There has been some support to business development in agriculture, but not going beyond supporting business start-up or expanding the businesses. Focus on innovation or new technologies or approaches in business is a part of recently started SMEs project were Moldovan SMEs receive knowledge and financial support from UNDP for implementation of their innovative solutions in the pre-commercial phase. The first financial support will be provided to the companies in the end of November and beginning of December 2015.

Progress has been made towards achieving the intended outcome to improve more equitable and sustainable regional development. UNDP’s contribution to this outcome has yielded results particularly for local communities and vulnerable groups through investments in good governance and improvement of livelihoods interventions and partnership building strategies. Results have also been yielded in expanding the reach to equitable and sustainable local and regional communal services, which improved access and livelihoods of citizens, particularly rural communities.

The CPD outcome has one indicator, as presented in Table 3 below. The review of the outcome indicator shows a **decline in absolute poverty** from 16.6% to 11.4%, which is a positive value for Republic of Moldova (See Table 3 below). However, while the absolute poverty rate in Moldova has decreased, the disparities and inequalities are still worrying, particularly the rural-urban divide. UNDP’s Outcome outputs have their own indicators as well, however, it is difficult to find reliable and coherent data as data values differ between the sources (See Table 1 in the Report). This section discusses UNDP’s contribution to the Outcome 2 particularly in terms of its achievement of changes at individual, institutional and community levels.

*Table 3. Outcome indicator as per the Country Programme document[[22]](#footnote-22)*

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| **Outcome Indicator**: | **Baseline:** | **2014** |
| Rate of absolute poverty | 16,6 | 11,4 |
| Rate of extreme poverty | 0,6 | 0,1 |

Results, notably relating to increasing capacities of government authorities, support to business development and income generation activities, investment in social and community infrastructure and public services, partnerships and regional cooperation, community mobilisation and confidence building have contributed to increase of the social capital and improved governance and service provision, thus **improving the chances of positively influencing the outcome**. Review of project documents as well as engagements with the development partners (government, private sector, civil society and international donors and development partners) indicate that the interventions towards achievement of outputs constitute noteworthy contribution to the achievement of the desired outcome, defined in its narrower scope where UNDP has had direct input (*People have access to more equitable sustainable regional development, economic opportunities*).

UNDP’s support was **instrumental** for formulation and implementation of reformist agenda and related sectoral strategies and planning documents at different levels to further implement of National Decentralisation Strategy. UNDP has been supporting the government to develop overall and sectoral strategies (inputs for Territorial and Administrative reform, sectoral decentralisation strategies, Public Finance Law amendments, Property delimitation, methodology of assessing the progress in implementing the NDS), at the same time investing in modelling new approaches (e.g. IMC), piloting strategic provisions (e.g. Public finance) and operationalization of the strategic documents at lower levels of governance.

Stakeholder consultations and document review show positive contributions of UNDP towards improving access to financial and capacity building support services to entrepreneurs, LPAs, CSOs and community group contributing to improvement of livelihoods of 228,639 people, which is 6.53 % of Moldovan population. Entrepreneurship support brought positive results to 559 businesses who have been offered an opportunity to increase the potential of their agricultural or SME income generation activities. Also, UNDP interventions contributed to job creation with 1858 jobs (permanent and temporary) created, or 0,14%[[23]](#footnote-23) of total employment of work force in Moldova. Field enquiry shows that these efforts were fruitful as interviewees report increase in business volume, some increase in income and opening of new market opportunities, which is a good indicator that the investments were needed and brought benefit or at least positive balance. Modelling new approaches to public service provision through IMC, PPPs and investment in tools for services is an important drive for LPAs but also citizens to use and pay for services that contribute to improvement of the quality of life. Taking into account the current socio-economic and poverty challenges in Moldova, these are areas of further UNDP’s support.

As mentioned above, business support targeted a lot of agriculture related business activities. Support in this area was primarily focused on capacity building and support to development of business per se, rather than investment in agricultural production itself or innovation in agriculture. Stakeholder consultations show that this is an area of further UNDP focus in the next phase of CPD implementation.

UNDP has invested efforts in **innovation in governance,** through e-governance. Partnership between JILDP and the e-Governance Centre has been established, and both looked at possibilities to pilot localised e-solutions for selected services in the target communities. Most of the products developed by the E-Governance Centre can also be used/re-used at the local level given the following conditions are met: - willingness of the LPA to invest in e-Gov and – availability of human resources to support that. While the first condition is present in some communities, the second one is almost absent. This makes e-governance at local level rather complicated to advance further. It should also be mentioned that just few services rendered by the local government could be digitalized, thus, mostly the effort is worth for re-engineering existing services, which is an exercise the LPAs cannot do without external support. It is worth mentioning that of 30 JILDP localities, only 3 had web pages at the beginning of the project. By the end of project implementation, half of communities have created web pages and all 30 – Facebook profiles. This comes in contrast with the general data per country, which shows that only 28% from the localities from Moldova have a webpage and only 7%-social media profile[[24]](#footnote-24).

In this line of ideas, JILDP attempted to do local public service re-engineering in one of its communities. The exercise was implemented in cooperation with the E-governance Centre and the UNDP MiLab project. Based on the piloting results, JILDP explored the possibility of re-engineering other local services. E-learning is a tool which can prove to be effective and sustainable. UNDP has explored this area through JILDP, by creating an e-learning platform for LPAs, in partnership with APA.

### 5.2.3 Factors Influencing the Outcome

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| EQ 6. | What are the main factors (positive and negative) within and beyond UN/DP’s interventions that affected or are affecting the achievement of the outcome? How have these factors limited or facilitated progress towards outcome? |

This section presents relevant drivers and hindering factors for the programme success as identified through document and literature review, stakeholder consultations, and site observations.

**DRIVERS OF SUCCESS**

The main driver of the UNDP interventions towards Outcome 2 has been the **good cooperation of UNDP with government and development partners** and recognition of the **UNDP’s niche and expertise** in confidence building, local and economic development. UNDP’s interventions offer **holistic approach** to addressing the issues of relevance to local development, employment and economic opportunities, tackling these issues through modelling innovative services and interventions, bringing lessons learnt from modelled processes to policy agenda, while simultaneously building capacities of duty bearers and right holders to organise and take active part in decision making processes brings valuable results and changes, particularly in targeted local communities. Data derived from document and literature review, stakeholder consultations, and observations during the site visits confirm that **such approach builds confidence and social capital** in terms of relationships with partners and commitment and ownership over results. Grants to LPAs and community groups, efforts to improve transparency and accountability of LPAs; investment in social infrastructure, businesses and employability **empower right holders** to enhance their participation in social sphere and benefiting from developmental interventions. General agreement among stakeholders participating in interviews and in group discussions is that UNDP interventions have been **valuable and positive experience** to all parties and brought change, particularly at local level.

**HINDERING FACTORS**

Moldova suffers from **complex political and institutional context**. Besides the fact that Moldova held Parliamentary elections in November 2014 and local ones in June 2015, during the last two years four governments have changed, the last one being dismissed just after the evaluation mission was finalized. The governing Alliance for European Integration, which has been in power since 2009, did not do much to advance reforms, particularly not in the sensitive areas. It has been active in designing and adopting reform strategies, but much less with their actual implementation.

Similar was the situation with the decentralization agenda. The Strategy has been adopted in 2012, and almost two years later, with much insistence from the development partners and civil society have the new amendments to the local public finance law been adopted. A crucial step, however, the **territorial-administrative reform is still on hold**. There was a clear **lack of political will** to implement it before the local elections in 2015, making it necessary to wait up to the next local elections in order not to “break” the local election cycle.

After the recent dismissal of the government, the so-called Alliance for European Integration broke up. The chances that a pro-European alliance will be re-shaped are very small. In case a centre-left governing coalition is formed, **the future** of the commenced **reforms** **becomes** even more **questionable**.

Besides **political constraints**, there are institutional factors hindering the implementation of the decentralization reform. Moldovan public administration is challenged by **turnover of staff, low capacities and small salaries**, **political changes** affecting turnover of officials and staff in mid- or higher – levels; which provide for significant **obstacles to sustainability** of efforts of development partners towards improvement of public administration and decentralisation. Capacity building efforts often do not provide sustainable institutional changes as trained civil servants move to other positions either within public administration or other sectors due to political (changes in political leadership inducing changes in the division of roles) or other reasons.

Many new mechanisms introduced by development partners rely on **new technologies** (internet) and use of computers. While Internet connection in Moldova is good[[25]](#footnote-25); **computer literacy** especially among public servants at lower levels of government **is very limited**, making it difficult for them to use new technologies in their work. The situation is much better among young people, who use internet.[[26]](#footnote-26) The Programme invested in e-governance, but it is only slowly taking root due to these challenges.

Settlement of the **Transnistrian issue has been in a stalemate** during the last years. Although formally negotiations continued (with postponements) both in the 5+2 format (Russia, Ukraine, OSCE, observers from EU and USA, Chisinau and Tiraspol representatives) and in the thematic working groups, no significant progress in advancing the resolution of the situation has been achieved. Although there is **no animosity among ordinary people** in the communities on both sides, there is **lack of communication** and sometimes understanding at the level of public authorities, which makes the implementation of projects there uneasy.

### 5.2.4 Human rights and gender mainstreaming

The projects in this Outcome, particularly JILDP and CBM, **have incorporated** Human Rights Based Approach. As per JILDP Project Document, operationalizing HRBA into the decentralization and local governance reform in the first place means focusing on the practical implementation of the following human rights principles: Participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability in each component of the project. As outcomes, HRBA aims for increased human rights empowerment for people and communities, social inclusion for vulnerable or marginalized groups, and aims to ensure that, in development processes, equality of outcome and dignity for all are core results. The CBM project also organized its interventions as per HRBA, ensuring also those ethical considerations are taken into account in project planning and implementation. Document review and stakeholder consultations demonstrated that HRBA was fully and thoroughly applied at all stages of projects’ implementation. For example, policy design was done in a highly participatory manner, both at central and local levels. Community mobilization activities, on the other hand, empowered marginalized groups to take action and to be “heard” by the public administration and by the community.

UNDP applied **gender mainstreaming** in its efforts**,** understanding it as a globally accepted strategy “for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuate”[[27]](#footnote-27). In the context of the decentralisation reform but also other UNDP efforts, projects progressed to make gender mainstreaming a “local” practice in the Moldovan Government and development partners.

**Considerable results** have been achieved towards **women empowerment** with assistance of UNDP interventions. For instance, 68% of direct beneficiaries in UNDP employability centres are women. This is encouraging because skilled unemployed women face difficulties in finding a relevant job, often this is main reason for women social exclusion. 20 development projects targeting women empowerment were supported, with 11 women now leading newly created community organizations. 500 women from local governments raised their professional qualification. A Forum of rural women leaders with 120 participants supported in 2014, led to an increased number of women balloting in 2015 local elections. About 200 women (including 50 from the breakaway Transnistrian region) were economically empowered and capacitated, 50% of them supported further in business development. Access to public services for 350 rural women (otherwise excluded) has increased with the creation of two Joint Information Service Bureaus. Gender Equality was mainstreamed in 39 community projects with support of UN Women. Finally, Women Mayors Platform was established within CALM as advocacy body for gender rights and overall women empowerment. Last local elections saw 183 (i.e. 20,4%) women mayors elected, an increase by 5,5% in the number of women local councillors, and, importantly two Roma women were for the first time elected into local Councils.

UNDP’s efforts for integration of HRBA and gender mainstreaming are **examples of best practice** and serve as positive practice for replication across UNDP interventions.

## 5.3 Efficiency

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| EQ 7. | Are the monitoring and evaluation indicators appropriate to link these outputs to the Outcome, or is there a need to improve these indicators? |
| EQ 8. | Are UN/DP’s management structures and working methods appropriate and effective in achieving the Outcome |

Interventions contributing to Outcome 2 are organized around the Inclusive Development pillar, while also projects within other portfolios contribute to the Outcome 2. Programmes and projects contributing to Outcome 2 amount to 31,953,397 USD funded by different donors. It covers national and local implementation and implementation models include Support to National Implementation and Direct Implementation Modalities.

**UNDP’s management structures and working methods are generally appropriate and effective in implementation of interventions towards the Outcome 2.** Project teams for interventions relating to Outcome 2 are skilled and with expertise in areas of focus of respective interventions. Evidence gathered for this evaluation shows that management of the portfolio is also well developed and communication within and between teams is open and transparent. The teams are further strengthened by outsourcing local expertise either through individual consultants or through CSOs and consulting businesses, which implement trainings and other relevant capacity building or research activities. Staff and management are largely Moldovan, which is positive practice and contributes to efficient allocation of budgets. Employing local expertise is a significant value added as well in terms of utilization of local skills and expertise, efficiency and as a measure to further invest in human capital by utilising and building on the experience and expertise of local experts. International expertise is utilised for bringing in international experiences and models and development of new procedures.

**UNDP organises its monitoring and evaluation relating to individual interventions, with use of UNDP Atlas system enabling input for analysis and reflection**. While the evaluation could not establish the evidence on how exchange of data happens across the portfolios, projects within Inclusive Development portfolio collect and analyse their data, while the data is also collated at portfolio level for further analysis of outcomes. Data is aggregated at least once per year, as part of Results Oriented Annual Report, which is done in the corporate system. Also, on specific themes, like job creation –analysis is done more often (for example, the data was collected three times in 2014).

**Document review and stakeholder consultations point to the fact that programme/project outputs are delivered in a timely manner** and that the approaches and interventions applied are viable and efficient in achievement of results. Also, the interviews reveal openness and inclusion of partners from the government and civil society in planning and implementation of the interventions, strengthening the relevance of the UNDP Interventions to developmental context of Moldova.

## 5.4 Undp Partnership and Resource mobilisation Strategy

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| EQ 9. | Was UN/DP’s resource mobilization strategy in the field appropriate and effective in achieving the Outcome? |
| EQ 10. | Was UN/DP’s partnership strategy in the field appropriate and effective in achieving the outcome? |

This section provides an analysis of the partnerships and cooperation of the UNDP with other development partners.

**Partnership with the Government is strategic*.*** Government of Moldova, its State Chancellery, Ministries and relevant institutions, as well as LPAs have been main strategic partners of the UNDP interventions within this Outcome. UNDP ensures close cooperation and support to government institutions, basing its interventions on the articulated priorities and needs. Stakeholder consultations and site observations confirm that government and other development partners are included in planning and implementation of interventions, responding to their needs for different kinds of support (to capacity building, support to strategic planning, introducing innovative methods, granting, etc.). Cooperation with LPAs, particularly in the context of the support to the local development, has been effective.

**Partnership with the government institutions in Gagauzia are overall good**. Local authorities in the region welcome any technical and/or financial assistance coming to the region, and are open to adopt new practices and improve their activity. The only barrier is the language barrier, as Gagauz authorities as well as most of the local population only speak Russian (except for their Gagauzian language), and thus training materials and all other products need to be translated as well as, the contracted consultants need to be wither fluent in Russian or accompanied by a translator, which makes it a bit more difficult to work with the region. But, the situation is similar in other districts of Moldova, particularly in the Northern part, as well as in the Transnistrian region.

**There is no formal partnership with de-facto authorities from Transnistrian region, while some limited partnerships exist with LPAs**. They do not impede carrying out capacity building activities in the region, particularly if this regards the social sphere. However, involving them into these kind of activities is rather difficult, thus offering a limited space for improvements. Yet, we should mention that UNDP’s neutral approach is of particular importance for developing any kind of projects in the region, a task which is not accessible to any institution/development agency.

**Partnerships with Civil Society and Private Sector are effective*.*** UNDP partners with CSOs and businesses in provision of capacity building and mentoring support to LPAs, local CSOs and businesses, as well as advisors in development of research studies and policy documents. This cooperation is effective as it offers the space for building local expertise but also profiling CSOs and businesses as leaders in local development. At the same time, local expertise is important to be developed and exploited, particularly in such sensitive areas as decentralization or administrative-territorial reform, particularly that local organizations become promoters of change securing sustainability and ownership of project results. Also, efforts to build grass roots civil society and citizen activism were needed and welcome component of local development and creation of vibrant civil society. While civil society in the big cities is more or less developed, in most of Moldovan communities demonstrate a clear lack of organized civil society, which could oversee local authorities’ activities and play an important role in the development of the community.

**Partnerships between UNDP and other UN Agencies, particularly UN Women, were effective in achieving the objectives of UNDP Interventions.** UNDP implemented a JILDP Project in partnership with UN Women in successful partnership, relying on knowledge and expertise base towards joint goals. Interviews with teams of the two agencies reveal good cooperation based on open communication of potential problems or issues arising from differing procedures or approaches. Joining forces, the two agencies succeeded to build in the HRBA and gender equality into the efforts of the Programme and the government, also ensuring holistic approach was applied. UNDP also cooperated with other agencies in other areas, for instance with ILO in some limited activities of relevance for economic development.

**Coordination and cooperation with other development partners was open and ensured avoiding overlaps.** UNDP ensures that interventions are coordinated with other development partners, and also that the targeted communities or areas of interventions are not subject to duplication of efforts. For example, JILDP ensured a good cooperation with other stakeholders present in the area of local development and decentralization, particularly ensuring that the common activities such as trainings to LPAs and regionally, conferences and support activities are not overlapping. For example, synergies were observed in organizing joint events with GIZ and USAID, such as conferences. (e.g. the National Decentralization Conference to be held in November 2015) as well as coordination in implementing IMC-related activities, while training activities have also been coordinated to avoid duplication. In cases where multiple development partners support some initiative, for instance CALM and the Academy for Public Administration, coordination was ensured to avoid double financing. JILDP also used the USAID-developed web-page format for local governments that can be adapted and used by all communities. UNDP also participates in donor coordination meetings and thematic groups, contributing to thematic areas with expertise and models of work developed through projects.

**Resource mobilization strategy of UNDP is multi-layered**, with instances where resource mobilization was opportunistic or strategic and value based. UNDP’s overall approach to resource mobilization is reflected through nurturing longer-term partnerships with donor agencies and government counterparts, to ensure that assistance is based on articulated needs of the government and on UNDP’s niche and values. Various donors contributed to interventions within the Outcome 2 (EU, Government of Denmark, Trust Fund for Anti-Corruption, Government of Liechtenstein, Norwegian Government, Government of Switzerland, Moldcell JSC, UNDP and UN Women Core funds). In some instances, UNDP is reactive – responding with proposals for already established donor funds for some areas. Another important resource mobilization channel is ensuring *indirect mobilisation of funds* whereby government, community or business partners are required to provide contributions for investments. For example, within the CBM project 500,000 EUR represented community/LPA contributions for social infrastructure (while programme (EU-UNDP) contribution to the infrastructure was of 5.4 million EUR, thus making it for 10%). In case of Transnistria, the approach entailing mandatory contribution was adapted towards encouraging but not requesting communities to contribute taking into account the difficulties of local communities to contribute with funds, and the difference in financial systems. Also, indirect contributions that the Programme receives is in the form of private contributions of time, funds, knowledge, etc. For example, the Syslab Project established a Seed Fund to which private companies contribute, but also private companies contribute with expertise and exchanges of knowledge and skills for employability and business development. Also, UNDP has mobilized resources to continue and further scale-up JILDP approaches through the new Migration and Development Project.

## 5.5 Sustainability

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| EQ 11. | To what extent do beneficiary systems, structures and resources help ensure sustainability of UN/DP results? Will these results remain once UN/DP support expires? |

**Sustainability prospects of the achievements within outcome are mixed in the mid-term of its implementation.**

**Strategic framework for regional development and overall strategy for decentralisation are in place, however there are significant gaps in policy framework affecting decentralisation reforms underway, factors that are beyond control of UNDP or its projects but affecting the sustainability of achievements.** The current strategic and legal framework governing decentralisation is based on the old and inefficient territorial and administrative divisions, which are not conducive for local and regional development and investments. Local level is very fragmented, composed of 898 LPAs, most of them very small and with extremely limited or non-existent developmental budgets. Sectorial decentralisation strategies have been developed only in some sectors (education, social protection and environment), making it difficult to bring the decentralisation to desired level. Public finance reform has been implemented only as a pilot thus far, while property delimitation policies, and the territorial-administrative reform have yet to be adopted and implemented. UNDP is in permanent contact with the respective authorities and carries out an energetic advocacy to support initiation and full implementation of necessary reforms and strategic measures. During the field phase, the representatives of the ministries and relevant government bodies provided evidence and confirmation of UNDP’s positive inputs to reform processes. Nevertheless, all stakeholders agree that adoption and implementation of full-fledged reforms, however necessary, depend on political will and commitment, which is beyond the influence of UNDP or other development partners.

**UNDP’s contribution to development of models of IMC and PPP has been positive and overall has positive sustainability prospects.** All IMCs and PPPs established with support of UNDP are thus far sustainable and not in need of government subsidies for their work. UNDP’s efforts to advocate for State regulation for IMCs and its consequent adoption raised the sustainability prospects further, but also opened the opportunity for other municipalities and regional clusters of municipalities to establish IMCs as per tested models.

**UNDP’s contribution to capacity development and training of public officials and servants has been relatively sustainable**. This is due to the fact that the public administration faces significant turnover and changes caused by political affiliation. Still, the capacities of individuals have been raised and they present positive and sustainable input at individual and to great extent institutional and community levels.

**Developed capacity building tools, guides, manuals, training packages, etc. are relatively sustainable.** Some of the training packages for LPAs have been institutionalised by the Academy for Public Administration and became part of the training package for public servants. This has been a strong sustainability input. IMC guide has become integral part of the model for IMC as recognised in the State Regulation, which makes it also sustainable foundation for further refining of the model itself. Also, the training curricula developed within MEBP on renewable energy and biomass heating plants is likely to be sustainable given the fact that it has been approved by the Ministry of Education and the relevant teaching materials have been published, while the programme will be piloted in three VET schools, with the possibility of being extended. Trainings for businesses or career guidance are implemented by commissioned CSO/consulting business implementing training (e.g. within JILDP), or through Career Centres (established by Syslab Project). Currently, the second phase of the Syslab Project will address the issue of institutionalision of trainings and their training materials, increasing their sustainability prospects in the mid-term.

**Social infrastructure rehabilitated or developed with assistance of CBM project is predominantly sustainable** as financing for operation and maintenance is ensured from governmental budgets, as these have been or are now part of the public service infrastructure.

**Prospects for sustainability of Community and confidence building projects are mixed** as they brought small local initiatives, bringing positive change at the level of the communities involved. As per the EU Impact Assessment of the CBM Project, “appropriate capacities have been built to maintain the benefits produced by the CBM in terms of infrastructure handed over to the local authorities and social institutions, and in terms of skills and expertise transfer”.[[28]](#footnote-28) Also this report confirms that UNDP, through CBM has contributed to a reasonable extent to establishment of the personal, communal and institutional relationships, which can be a positive foundation to build on. Also, the report states “Many NGOs partnerships and networks created by CBM are sustainable, evidenced by multiple initiatives which assumed a life of their own[[29]](#footnote-29). However, these links do not contribute critically to rapprochement of the two banks of the river, mainly due to external political and contextual circumstances, beyond the control of the Project. Further investment in building confidence and links is an area for further investment of UNDP. Identifying the areas which bring most value to the “confidence building” effort should be regarded as a priority in the next interventions, and UNDP should focus on those areas in order to achieve the declared objectives.

**Businesses supported by UNDP are relatively sustainable in the short term**, but their sustainability remains dependent on economic factors in Moldova and wider, beyond the influence of UNDP. Document review and stakeholder analysis points to the fact that the businesses established or supported in the reporting period have high sustainability prospects as UNDP and partners ensured that some of the most important sustainability inputs (market research, administration and profiling) are supported. However, sustainability of the businesses is beyond the control of UNDP.

# 6. Conclusions

Interventions within the Outcome 2 of UNDP’s Country Programme are organised within the umbrella of the Inclusive Development pillar with contributions from projects implemented within the other two clusters of the country office. Most of the programmes contributing to the Outcome 2 are in their third or second phase of implementation at the moment of finalisation of this Evaluation, meaning that most interventions have had the opportunity to scale up best practices, lessons learned and models tested in previous or current phases of implementation.

While UNDP does not contribute to all defined areas of change of the Outcome 2, **UNDP interventions contributing to Outcome 2 are relevant** **and important investments in supporting government reform processes** in the area of regional and local development and decentralisation, as well as relevant investments in institution building and strengthening government’s capacities. UNDP’s added value is in applying holistic approach to strengthening good governance and economic development, addressing these issues both horizontally (within and among local governments, CSOs and businesses), and vertically (between the local and national institutions). Interventions are designed, aligned to and respond to needs and priorities of beneficiaries, particularly vulnerable groups.

***Contribution of individual programmes towards the Outputs defined within this Outcome are positive, overall***. Analysis of programmes and project contributing to Outcome 2 (through document review, stakeholder consultations and site observations and field visits) show that they fully or at least partly achieved their planned objectives, and there is evidence of contributions to progress towards the envisaged outputs of the Outcome 2. Particularly strong contributions were made in view of strengthening the systems and capacities of LPAs for regional and cooperation with CSOs and citizens, good governance and strategic planning but also to organise community actions (including, but not limited to strategic plans, more transparent and inclusive decision making, social infrastructure and community projects, PPPs and IMCs etc.). Support to business development and CSOs has resulted in establishment of new or further strengthening of existing businesses and CSOs. Evidence gathered through the evaluation process also showed increase in job creation as a result of investment in employability and entrepreneurship. Overall, support to vulnerable groups through provision of new and/or improved services, business and employment opportunities, but also access to local governments has brought positive benefits to local population, particularly women and minority groups. On the other side, investment in providing inputs to policies by JILDP (falling with the Governance Outcome of UNDP CPD) has not been very successful, as most of the supported policy process were not finalised due to political reasons.

***UNDP interventions have brought some contributions to regional development and economic opportunities.*** Investments in LPAs already show positive changes in ways the targeted LPAs include or inform their citizens on local decision making and services, but also on how they partner with other communities in organising communal services. PPPs, IMCs and new social and community infrastructure are improving livelihoods of people living in the targeted or areas in proximity of targeted communities. Efforts to model and strengthen capacities for developmental planning, including also sectoral policy making bring positive effects in ways how respective institutions (e.g. schools, social protection) operate in local realities. Supporting these efforts, UNDP contributed to laying the foundations for future efforts by national and/or international actors in ensuring equitable and accessible regional development and economic opportunities. Established systems and mechanisms, particularly those assisting local economic development and improvement of livelihoods already show positive effects on citizens directly included and benefiting from innovative approaches and collaborative efforts of partners.

***UNDP has had no direct contributions to decent work, innovation and in agriculture.*** This Evaluation recorded that direct contributions to these thematic areas have been provided by other UN Agencies active in Moldova (e.g. ILO and IFAD), contributing to the overall UNDAF Outcome.

***UNDP Interventions have been managed and implemented strategically and efficiently, ensuring timeliness and effective utilisation of resources***. Management of programmes and expertise of the teams for respective areas of interventions has been sound and contributed to effectiveness of programmes and maintaining good cooperation with the government and development partners.

In the medium term of implementation of the CPD, the ***sustainability prospects of achievements within the Outcome 2 are mixed***. The current legal and policy framework still does not embrace the full scope of reforms needed for equitable and sustainable regional and local development. Capacities and models for innovative practices and mechanisms are in place and are relatively sustainable, but depend on external political and socio-economic factors. Sustainability of services and measures for support to economic development are relatively sustainable in the medium term, but are threatened by financial and economic factors.

# 7. Recommendations

The findings and conclusions of the evaluation point to the following recommendations, as elaborated in this section. Each recommendation has an addressee and a proposed timeframe. For ease of reference, recommendations are divided into two categories, as follows:

| **No** | **Recommendations** | **Addressee** | **Timing** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Strategic and Programming Recommendations (SP)** | | | |
| **SP1** | **Invest in agriculture as part of the support to entrepreneurship**  UNDP is supporting entrepreneurship in agriculture already, but the support is limited to market diversification and granting for expanding or starting businesses. Exploring opportunities for innovation in agriculture, and connecting it to new technologies, approaches and financing streams would be welcome investment to this branch of economy. | UNDP and international donors | 2016 onwards |
| **SP2** | **Support the Government in the process of outsourcing services (PPP)**  There are already examples of how PPP can serve as good approach to solving communal issues. These examples should be widely promoted and used as models for government to continue such practice. Good governance mechanisms should be integral part of such models, particularly in terms that accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and transparency elements are consistently applied. | UNDP, international donors and Government | ongoing |
| **SP3** | **Continue supporting efforts for economic development through direct support to business development and enabling environment.**  UNDP should continue working closely with the government to develop enabling environment for business development, including, but not limited to support to business start ups and investments. | Government and UNDP | ongoing |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Operational Recommendations (O)** | | | |
| **O1** | **Develop clear exit strategies for UNDP’s interventions in local and regional development.**  UNDP projects in focus of this evaluation do not have clear exit or phasing out strategies. Such strategies should be developed to provide clear understanding of steps and measures that need to be institutionalised and/or taken over by the government or other development partners. | UNDP and government | 2016 |
| **O2** | **Develop a clear exit strategy for Syslab Centres**  UNDP has established five Centres within the framework of the Syslab project. The centres implement needed career guidance and increase employability and entrepreneurship skills of unemployed. However, the functioning of the centres still relies heavily on UNDP. UNDP should, in consultation with government partners and donors, strengthen its Exit strategy, so to ensure institutionalisation of services from government and sources of funding. | UNDP and the government partner (preferably Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family | 2016-2017 |
| **O3** | **Further promotion of best practices and achievements**  UNDP and its partners have achieved significant results and changes, particularly at local level. Achievements are shared through country-wide campaigns disseminating results (e.g. within the JILDP Project). To ensure that best practices are shared and awareness raised, UNDP should further invest into media promotion of its achievements, best practice models to wider public in Moldova. | UNDP | permanently |
| **O4** | **Improve Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of UNDP interventions**  While this evaluation did not face the limitation of non-existent data on relevant interventions, it is advised that UNDP invest in connecting the data into a comprehensive M&E system that is based on a set of (internally developed) monitoring indicators to be used for further aggregation of data for CPD outcome indicators. Such system would ensure easier analysis and reflection of achievements and challenges, but also would facilitate decision making and evidencing of new programmes to be developed. | UNDP | 2016 |

# Annex 1. Evaluation Matrix

| **No.** | **Evaluation question** | **Judgment criteria** | **Indicator** | **Sources of information** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Relevance** | | | | |
| EQ 1. | Are the Outcome and associated projects/programmes relevant, appropriate and strategic to national goals and UN/DP’s mandate? | Extent to which UNDP interventions are in line with national goals in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work  Extent to which the activities within Outcome 2 are in line with the UNDP mandate in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work | * Evidence of consistency between needs and priorities for sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work and the content of policy documents, measures and institutional capacities developed with support of UNDP * Evidence of linkages between the interventions and UNDP mandate | * National and local reports, research studies * Interviews with key stakeholders * Programme reports * UNDP strategic documents * Programme documents * UNDP CPD, UNDAF |
| **Effectiveness: Output analysis** | | | | |
| EQ 2. | Were the actions to achieve the outputs and outcome effective and efficient? | Extent to which the interventions within the Outcome 2 efficiently lead to achieving the set goals | Identification and usage of defined quality standards  Projects prepared and implemented in line with set timetables  UNDP initiatives bring the expected benefit to target groups | * Administrative data from UN(DP) and national authorities (if available); Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Interviews with UNDP, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and beneficiaries of UNDP assistance |
| EQ 3. | Is sufficient progress been made with regard to UN/DP outputs? | Extent to which the UN(DP) interventions produce results, consistent with given overall outcome | UNDP interventions reflect the priorities established | * Administrative data from UN(DP) and national authorities (if available); Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Interviews with UNDP and other UN Agencies, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and beneficiaries of UN/DP assistance |
| **Outcome analysis** | | | | |
| EQ 4. | What is the current status and prospects for achieving the outcome with the indicated inputs and within the indicated timeframe? | Intended outcome (i) has been achieved, (ii) has been partially achieved (in which areas) or (iii) has not been achieved | * Quality of outputs and results * Evidence and examples of high/poor effectiveness | * UNDP reports (annual and monitoring) * Interviews with stakeholders, discussion groups, mini survey * Site visits to a selected number municipalities, including interviews/ group discussions with end beneficiaries to the extent possible |
| EQ 5. | Are the outputs and outcome leading to benefits beyond the life of the existing projects? | Impacts of UN/DP interventions within the Outcome 2 are identifiable and continue to contribute to country’s reforms | * Type, quality/ quantity of intended and unintended impacts on country reformist efforts | * Data from UN/DP and national authorities (if available); Annual Progress Reports, Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Interviews with UN/DP, donors, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and beneficiaries of UN/DP assistance |
| EQ 6. | What are the main factors (positive and negative) within and beyond UN/DP’s interventions that affected or are affecting the achievement of the outcome? How have these factors limited or facilitated progress towards outcome? | Extent to which external factors affect the operations of the UNDP in the area of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work  Extent to which the risk mitigation strategies were effective in ensuring results are achieved | * Evidence of external factors and their effects on UNDP operations * Evidence of successful mitigation strategies for risks and assumptions | * Programme reports * Evaluation reports * Site visits * Interviews with key stakeholders |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Efficiency** | | | | |
| EQ 7. | Are the monitoring and evaluation indicators appropriate to link these outputs to the Outcome, or is there a need to improve these indicators? | Monitoring and reporting tools and indicators are appropriate and ensure evidence based reporting and reflection | * Monitoring and reporting tasks being conducted with quality | * Programme reports (annual, monitoring) * Interviews with UNDP staff * Interviews with donors, government, partners |
| EQ 8. | Are UN/DP’s management structures and working methods appropriate and effective in achieving the Outcome | Administration and management arrangements and information flows are appropriately ensured at reasonable cost  Financial and human resources spent for the achievement of outputs and results are adequate | * Management and administrative tasks being discharged timely and respecting established deadlines * Adaptation/flexibility in project implementation * Examples of management intervention for overcoming barriers and constraints in programme implementation | * Programme reports (annual, monitoring) * Interviews with UNDP staff * Interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries * Site visits to selected communities |
| **Resources, partnerships, and management analysis** | | | | |
| EQ 9. | Was UN/DP’s resource mobilization strategy in the field appropriate and effective in achieving the Outcome? | Functioning resource mobilization strategy | * Level of effectiveness of the resource mobilization strategy to facilitate achievement of the Outcome | * Administrative data from UN/DP * Annual progress reports * Interviews with relevant UN/DP staff |
| EQ 10. | Was UN/DP’s partnership strategy in the field appropriate and effective in achieving the outcome? | Functioning partnership strategies and consultation processes with stakeholders and beneficiaries (local and national government, civil society, and private sector operating nationally and locally)  Complementarity with other projects implemented by UN Agencies | * Inputs provided by beneficiaries during the planning and implementation of interventions within Outcome 2 * Level of coordination and cooperation between partners in programmes contributing to Outcome 2 * Programme contains strong reference to coordination mechanisms between partners * Programme document contains reference to other interventions promoted by government, civil society and donors and the private sector * Number & type of inputs provided by other UN Agencies * Level of coordination and cooperation between partners in programmes * Programme documents contain reference to other interventions implemented by UN Agencies * Examples of synergies between UNDP and other UN Agencies’ projects contributing to Outcome 2 | * Programme Reports * Meeting minutes * Government and donor Reports * UN Agencies reports * Interviews with partners |
| **Sustainability** | | | | |
| EQ 11. | To what extent do beneficiary systems, structures and resources help ensure sustainability of UN/DP results? Will these results remain once UN/DP support expires? | Institutional/ administrative strategies and actions (at governmental, ministerial, agency, local level, etc.) supporting outcomes are in place  Availability of clear provisions and procedures for ensuring proper maintenance and continuation  Availability of financial and human resources for continuation/ maintenance of activities and further improvements | Institutional strategies are in use by beneficiaries  Beneficiary budgets in place for managing, operating and maintaining set institutional measures  Government policies towards the relevant sectors encourage/ require regular maintenance and continuation | * Data from UN/DP, donors and national authorities (if available); Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Interviews with UN/DP, donors, national authorities, programming and implementing actors, and beneficiaries of UN/DP assistance |

# Annex 2. Interview guides

**UNDP Staff**

Identification (name, gender, position, contact details, relevant experience, coordinates), date and location.

1. How do the UNDP Interventions relate to strategic to national goals in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work? How did the interventions contribute to achievement of targets within the National Decentralisation Strategy and the National Strategy for Regional Development 2013-2015?
2. Tell us about your project/portfolio linkages to the Outcome 2. What programmes/project are contributing to the Outcome? What specific measures did you implement? Were multi-level interventions conducted (environment, organization, individual)? How many?
3. What have been the main achievements of your project?
4. Which long term effects (socio-economic, political, administrative, environmental etc. impacts) can be well attributed to UNDP interventions? How these achievements relate to sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work?
5. What is the evidence of achievement of the Outcome 2 in your view? (i) has been achieved, (ii) has been partially achieved (in which areas) or (iii) has not been achieved? Why?
6. What other possible outputs could have been planned to increase UNDP’s contribution to the achievement of the outcome?
7. Which were the main constraints/challenges during preparation and implementation? (prompt political, social, economic, administrative, etc.)
8. Do you have a developed mitigation strategy? Pls, share with us
9. What is UN/DP’s (your project’s) resource mobilisation strategy?
10. What was the level and quality of dialogue between UNDP, government, civil society, donors, the private sector in planning and implementing interventions within Outcome?
11. Did national and donor coordination work well for your project?
12. What was the level and quality of dialogue between UNDP and other UN Agencies? Pls, provide examples of synergies.
13. How well have the implementation of activities been managed in terms of a) quality, b) timeliness; c) administration; d) finances?
14. What monitoring and reporting tools have been used?
15. How strong is the level of ownership of the results by the relevant government entities and other stakeholders?
16. What is the level of capacity of the Government to ensure sustainability of the results?
17. Are there financial and management mechanisms policies and regulations in place to sustain the achievements after UNDP exit?
18. Do you think there are any lessons/recommendations regarding UN/DP interventions in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work that should be considered for the future?

**Donors/International partners**

Identification (name, gender, position, contact details, relevant experience), date and location.

1. Do you consider that the UNDP support in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work is an adequate and balanced response to the identified needs in Moldova?
2. How would you describe the level of efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP Programme in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work in terms of taking into account country-specific views and needs?
3. Is coordination and cooperation in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work sound and does it deliver the desired outputs and results? Which are the main constraints?
4. Can you provide an illustration of impact achieved by the UNDP?
5. How do you assess the achieved degree of sustainability for UN/DP projects?
6. What is the level and quality of dialogue between UN/DP, government, civil society, donors, the private sector in planning and implementing UNDP interventions in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work?
7. What is the added value of UN/DP support in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work?
8. Do you think there are any lessons/recommendations regarding UNDP work that should be considered for the future?

Wider donor community:

1. Do you consider that the UN/DP support is an adequate and balanced response to the identified needs in Moldova?
2. Is coordination and cooperation sound and does it deliver the desired outputs and results? Which are the main constraints in the in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work?
3. Do national and donor coordination work well for the UN/DP?
4. What is the value added of UN/DP support?
5. Do you think there are any lessons/recommendations regarding UN/DP that should be considered for the future?

**Government and other national counterparts, beneficiaries**

Identification (name, gender, position, contact details, relevant experience), date and location.

1. Do you consider that the UN/DP support given to your institution was adequate and a balanced response to the identified needs?
2. Does UN/DP support correspond to the National Decentralisation Strategy and the National Strategy for Regional Development 2013-2015 and your institution/sector strategies?
3. How would you describe the level of efficiency and effectiveness of the UN/DP structures in terms of taking into account country-specific views and needs of your institution?
4. Was project implementation sound and did it deliver the desired outputs and results? What have been the main results achieved?
5. Which were the main constraints during implementation?
6. Are the results of UN/DP projects implemented in partnership with your institution (beyond the output level) well documented and if so, what are these?
7. Can you provide an illustration of impact achieved by UN/DP project implemented in partnership with your institution?
8. How do you assess the achieved a degree of sustainability of UNDP project implemented in partnership with your institution?
9. What was the level and quality of dialogue between UN/DP, government, civil society, donors, private sector in planning and implementing the UN/DP projects?
10. Do you think there are any lessons/recommendations regarding UN/DP interventions in the field of sustainable regional development, economic development, agriculture and decent work that should be considered for the future?

# Annex 3. Focus Group Discussions guide

The focus group discussions will be organized with final beneficiaries of UNDP interventions (Vocational training participants, small business owners, local beneficiaries, etc.)

**Introduction**

* Introduction of the consultant to the group, and of the group members to each other.
* Provision of information on background to the interview:
  + The purpose of the discussion
  + The intended recipients of findings and how they will be used
  + How feedback will be handled (issues of anonymity, confidentiality, data protection, etc).
  + Rules of the focus group: who speaks when and agreement on how to indicate when one wants to speak
  + The amount of time the discussion is anticipated to take
* Answering any questions participants may have.

**Discussion Topics**

1. **Overall context**

* *How is the current operating environment for starting a business/income generating activities?*
* *What have been the main changes in past few years? [Prompt government approach; funding]*

1. **Effectiveness of the UN/DP interventions**

* *What was the most important benefit or result of the [type of assistance] you received? (Each to name one.)*
* *What was most difficult problem you faced in applying the knowledge/support received in [business/job searching/other] activities?*

1. **Recommendations**

* *How do you think your experience of this [type of assistance] could have been improved?*
* *What are your recommendations for future support by UN/DP (what are the priorities)?*

**Rounding up**

* *Is there anything further anyone would like to add about any of the issues we’ve discussed, that you feel you’ve not had a chance to say?*
* *Is there anything anyone would like to add about any issue we’ve not really covered which you feel reflects an important aspect of your experience?*

**End of Discussion**

Thanking participants for attending and giving feedback.

# Annex 4. List of interviewed persons

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Name** | **Position** |
|  | Dafina Gercheva | UNDP Moldova Resident Representative |
|  | Narine Sahakyan | UNDP, Deputy Resident Representative |
|  | Valeria Ieseanu | UNDP, Portfolio Manager |
|  | Monica Moldovan | UNDP, Advisor |
|  | Doina Munteanu | UNDP, Portfolio Manager |
|  | Ulzii Jamsran | UNWOMEN Country Coordinator |
|  | Lucretia Ciurea | UNWOMEN, M&E Officer |
|  | Elena Spinu | UNWOMEN, programme analyst |
|  | Mihai Roscovan | Program manager, UNDP |
|  | Olesea Cazacu | Project Manager, JILDP |
|  | Zina Adam | Capacity Building Consultant, JILDP |
|  | Ghenadie Ivaşcenco | IMC Consultant, JILDP |
|  | Natalia Suschevici | Finance Associate, JILDP |
|  | Tatiana Solonari | Communication Officer, JILDP |
|  | Alex Oprunenco | Policy Analyst, UNDP |
|  | Victor Munteanu | SCBM Program manager |
|  | Dumitru Vasilescu | Syslab project manager |
|  | Jana Midoni | Syslab project coordinator |
|  | Victor Osipov | Deputy Prime Minister |
|  | Gheorghe Balan | Head of the Bureau of Reintegration |
|  | Tatiana Lapicus | Director, Syslab Chisinau Center |
|  | Dmitri Belan | MiLab project manager |
|  | Jordi Rodriguez | Project manager, EU Delegation |
|  | Jarek Domanski | EU Delegation |
|  | Sergiu Ceaus | Deputy Secretary General, State Chancellery |
|  | Victoria Cujba | Head of the Decentralization Policy Department |
|  | Nolina Pomparau | Main specialist, Legal department, Public Property Agency |
|  | Tatiana Demidenco | Deputy chief of Directorate for administration of public property, Ministry of Economy |
|  | Doruc Mihail | Head of Directorate for administration of public property, Ministry of Economy |
|  | Chilaru Natalia | Deputy chief of Legal Department, Public Property Agency |
|  | Cornelia Amihalachioae | Officer for Social Performance and Innovation, e-Governance Center |
|  | Oxana Casu | Government’s e-Transformation, project manager, e-Governance Center |
|  | Valerian Bînzari | Chief of Regional Development Department, Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions |
|  | Igor Malai | Deputy-Chief Regional Development Departament, Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions |
|  | Galina Norocea | Ministry of Environment |
|  | Bolocan Svetlana | Head, waste management directorate, Ministry of Environment |
|  | Elena Breahnă | Water management division, Ministry of Environment |
|  | Dietrich Hahn | GIZ |
|  | Valentina Plesca | GIZ |
|  | Natalia Iachimov | GIZ |
|  | Andrei Groza | Rector APA, Academy of Public Administration |
|  | Aurelia Tepordei | Academy of Public Administration |
|  | Alexandru Pelivan | Deputy Chief of Party, USAID Local Government Support Project |
|  | Irina Ionita | Specialist in communication, monitoring and evaluation, USAID Local Government Support Project |
|  | Dmitri Belan | MiLab project manager |
|  | Gheorghe Grigoras | Mayor, Ciuciuleni Village |
|  | Anatol Gremalschi | Expert, Ministry of Education |
|  | Tudor Cojocaru | Head of DAMEP, Ministry of Education |
|  | Rodica Josanu | Head of Legal department, Ministry of Education |
|  | Focsa Viorel | Entrepreneur supported by JILDP |
|  | Viorica Dumbraveanu | Ministry of Labour, Social Protection, and Family |
|  | Cristina Raducan | Consultant, Roma Women Network |
|  | Rada Padurean | Roma Women Network |
|  | Marin Alla | President, Tarna Rom Association |
|  | Veaceslav Bulat | Institute for Urban Development |
|  | Liubomir Chiriac | IDIS Viitorul |
|  | Liviu Andriuta | Business Consulting Institute |
|  | Nina Orlova | Programme manager, Swedish Embassy |
|  | Vasile Bulicanu | Head of Local Budgets Division, Ministry of Finance |
|  | Ion Diaconi | Ministry of Finance |
|  | Aurelia Porumbescu | Ministry of Finance |
|  | Diana Toma | Ministry of Finance |
|  | Tatiana Badan | CALM President, Mayor of Selemet village, Cimislia district |
|  | Alexandru Osadci | Coordinator , CALM |
|  | Nadejda Darie | Secretary of Network, CALM |
|  | Oleg Gospin | Mayor Ivancea, |
|  | Valeriu Gutu | Mayor Cioresti |
|  | Nicolae Buzu | Mayor, Peresecina |
|  | Silvia Cisleanu | Secretary, local council, Rusestii Noi |
|  | Petru Codreanu | Mayor, Rusestii Noi |
|  | Cirlan Ivan | vice-mayor, Rusestii Noi |
|  | Zasmenco Vera | Chief-accountant, Rusestii Noi |
|  | Sabina Cotorobai | Predisent of the local council, Rusestii Noi |
|  | Iurie Tap | Head of the Specialized Parliamentary Commission on Decentralization, MP |

**Focus group discussion with Community Facilitators**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Ghenadie Cojocaru | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Andrei Brighidin | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Constantin Nunu | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Ion Schidu | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Vasile Cioaric | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Olga Gherman | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Silvia Strelciuc | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Mihail Shalvir | JILDP community facilitator |
|  | Sofia Ursul | JILDP community facilitator |

# Annex 5. List of documentation consulted

* UNDP Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating for Results (Annex A)
* UN Women Evaluation Handbook1
* Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (Annex B)
* UNDP Results-Oriented Annual Report (ROAR, MPTF) for Moldova (2013, 2014)
* JILDP Project Document (Description of Action) and relevant progress reports
* National Development Strategy Moldova 2020
* Government of the Republic of Moldova Activity Programme (2015 – 2018)
* Government of the Republic of Moldova Activity Programme (2011-2014)
* Project documents and progress reports, project evaluation reports
* UNDP Assessment of Development Results, 2012
* United Nations – Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework (UNPF) “Towards Unity in Action” (2013 – 2017)
* UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) 2013 – 2017
* UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluations
* UNEG Ethical Guidelines
* UNEG Norms for Evaluation in the UN System
* UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System
* UNEG Guidance Integrating Human Rights and Gender in the UN System
* UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator and related Scorecard
* Development Partners’ Briefing Book for the Government of Moldova
* National Decentralization Strategy
* National Regional Development Strategy
* EU-Moldova Association Agreement
* EU Progress Reports on Moldova (2012, 2013, 2014)
* Law on local public administration
* Law on local public finances
* Law on administrative decentralization
* Action Plan to support Roma population in Moldova 2011-2015
* Millennium Development Goals Report
* JILDP documents, including project document, narrative and financial reports, previous evaluation reports, products produced within the project
* EU CBM III Impact Assessment
* SCBM project documents
* Syslab project documents
* MiLab project documents
* MEBP project documents
* E-Governance Center web-site and reports
* National Statistics Office web-site and reports
* Human Development Report 2014
* State of the Nation Report 2015
* MEGA: Analysis of economic growth in Moldova, Expert-Group
* Final Report UNPF Moldova 2013-2017
* International Labor Organization reports
* UNWOMEN reports
* World Bank reports

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1. <http://www.md.undp.org/content/dam/moldova/docs/Publications/UNDP_MD_3rdMDGReport_Eng.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.md.undp.org/content/dam/moldova/docs/Publications/UNDP_MD_3rdMDGReport_Eng.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=2373> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. No data available from 2012 onwards, <http://www.mec.gov.md/ro/content/indicatori-social-economici-pe-localitati> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. It needs to be noted that UNDP, through other interventions, provides support for the revision of the methodology for the regional statistics, thus it is that the new data will be released by the end of 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. National Statistics Office reporting on MGD, <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/view.asp?ma=ODM0101&ti=Indicatorii+revizuiti+ai+Obiectivelor+Dezvoltarii+Mileniului%2C+2000-2010&path=../quicktables/RO/ODM/&lang=1>, accessed in November 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Labor force in Moldova: employment and unemployment in 2014. National Statistics Office. <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=4698>, visited in November 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. As per 2014 CPD indicators update [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Hammamberg, Thomas (2013); Report on Human Rights in the Transnistrian Region of the Republic of Moldova; UN Office in Moldova; accessed in December 2015 on [www.un.md/publicdocget/41](http://www.un.md/publicdocget/41) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Data covers MEBP I, 2011-2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Bratuseni, Edinet; Sculeni, Ungheni; Pirlita, Ungheni; Chiscareni, Singerei; Zaim, Causeni; Vulcanesti, UTA Gagauzia; Carpineni, Hincsti; Corlateni, Riscani; Mingir, Hincesti. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The priorities set by the Strategy are: 1) aligning the education system to labour market needs in order to enhance labour; 2) productivity and increase employment in the economy; 3) increasing public investment in the national and local road infrastructure, in order to reduce transportation costs and increase the speed of access; 3) reducing financing costs by increasing competition in the financial sector and developing risk management tools; 4) improving the business climate, promoting competition policies, streamlining the regulatory framework and applying information technologies in public services for businesses and citizens; 5) reducing energy consumption by increasing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources; 6) ensuring financial sustainability of the pension system in order to secure an appropriate rate of wage replacement; 7) increasing the quality and efficiency of justice and fighting corruption in order to ensure an equitable access to public goods for all citizens. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The objectives are: Decentralization of services and competences; Fiscal (Financial) Decentralization; Decentralization of property; Local development; LPA administrative capacity; Institutional Capacity; and Democracy, ethics, human rights and gender equality [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Please, see the the UNDP Democratic Governance Mid-term Outcome Evaluation for detailed account of contributions of JILDP programme to the policy level [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. The priorities are: European integration; Sustainable and inclusive economic growth; Reform of the judiciary and law-enforcement; Reducing poverty; Strengthening the public administration (both CPA and LPA); Development of agriculture and rural areas; Re-integration of the country (i.e. resolution of the Transnistrian issue) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Sustainable and inclusive economic growth; Reducing poverty; Strengthening the public administration (both CPA and LPA); Re-integration of the country (i.e. resolution of the Transnistrian issue [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Trainings were held in managing public finance, local taxes, public property, human resources and performing public procurement according to official requirements and standards, upgrading computer skills and using information systems for human resources. Additionally, members of local communities and mayoralties were also trained and coached in writing and submitting to different donors regional development projects. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The data presented refers only to the JILDP Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The data presented refers to JILDP and the MEBP programmes [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. There are various age categories of beneficiaries of the Project: Unemployed 67%, Recent graduates 22%, Emigrants 11%, while the more detailed classification of participants is as follows: female 68%; male 32%; youth (< 30 years) 53% [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Centres have been established in Chisinau, Balti, Cahul, Comrat and Rezina, ensuring geographical coverage of Moldova, except break-away region of Transnistria. Locations were decided jointly at the Management Board. The decisions also reflect available resources at central and local levels. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. National statistics data accessed on <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/dialog/Saveshow.asp>  [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The overall amount of employed population is 1,240,600 in 2014. <http://angajat.md/files/PROGNOZA%20%202015.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. http://idsi.md/prezenta-web-a-localitatilor-din-Republica-Moldova [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. About 2/3 of Moldovan households are connected to the internet (<http://www.trm.md/ro/social/utilizarea-internetului-fix-si-mobil-o-tendinta-in-crestere/>) [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. 97% of students use internet, <http://www.publika.md/tinerii-sunt-cei-mai-inraiti-consumatori-de-internet-in-moldova-varstnicii-se-mai-mentin-conservatori_2110311.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Platform for Action, UN Fourth World Conference on Women, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/decision.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. EU (2015); Impact Assessment of the Confidence Building Measures Project; p. 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid, p. 7 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)