

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

**Final Evaluation of
UN - Republic of Moldova Partnership
Framework 2013-2017**

Final Evaluation Report (vol.1)

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The contents of this evaluation report is the sole responsibility of the evaluation team and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of UN Moldova.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
AA	Association Agreement
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
API	Association for Independent Press
ATU	Autonomous Territorial Unit (of Gagauzia)
BCIS	<i>(Romanian abbreviation for)</i> Common Information and Services Bureau
BMA	Bureau of Migration and Asylum
BOS	Business Operations Strategy
CA	Country Analysis
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEC	Central Electoral Commission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CIS	Community of Independent States
CNA	National Anti-Corruption Centre
CNI	National Integrity Commission
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSM	Superior Council of Magistrates
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CwD	Children with Disability
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DaO	Delivering as One
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DCT	Direct Cash Transfers
DNA	<i>(Romanian abbreviation for)</i> National Anti-Corruption Directorate
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
ELDS	Early Learning Development Standards
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
FAO	Food for Agriculture Organization
GARPR	Global AIDS Response Progress Reporting
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HDI	Human Development Index
HHP	Highly Hazardous Pesticides
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HSI	Hospital Safety Index
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

IDA	International Development Association
IDU	Injecting Drug Users
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual
LPA	Local Public Authorities
LTA	Long Term Agreement
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDL	Moldovan Leu
MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMR	Measles, Mumps and Rubella
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSPF	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
MP	Member of Parliament
MSM	Men having Sex with Men
MTBF	Mid-Term Budgetary Framework
MTCT	Mother-to-Child Transmission
MTEF	Mid-Term Expenditure Framework
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NAC	National Anticorruption Centre
NAMA	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEF	National Ecological Fund
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NPM	National Preventive Mechanism
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OMT	Operations Management Team
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PEFA	Public Expenditure Framework Assessment
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PwD	People with Disability
RBM	Results-Based Management
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office

RECP	Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production
SADI	Small Area Deprivation Index
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMEs	Small and Medium-Size Enterprises
SOP	Standard Operations Procedures
TB	Tuberculosis
TESSy	The European Surveillance System
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	(Office of the) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNPF	United Nations Partnership Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
YFHC	Youth Friendly Health Centre
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

This document represents the Final Evaluation Report of UN-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework (UNPF) 2013-2017 “Unity in Action”. The evaluation was conducted between March and May 2015.

Objectives and Purpose of the Evaluation

The main **objective** of the UNPF 2013-2017 evaluation was to assess the contribution of UN system to national development targets and priorities of Moldova through the UNPF outcomes. More specifically, the evaluation assessed:

- the effectiveness and efficiency by which UNPF outcomes are being achieved, their sustainability and relevance to national priorities and goals; and
- the mainstreaming of the five programming principles in the UNPF interventions, i.e. human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, and capacity development.

The **purpose** of the evaluation was multi-fold: a) to improve accountability for the use of resources and achievement of results; b) to inform the Common Country Assessment and the planning and decision-making for the next UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) cycle 2018-2022; and c) to further improve UN coordination and coherence at the country level. The evaluation had thus both summative and formative aspects.

The intended main **users of the evaluation** were the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the Government of Moldova, development partners and civil society.

Evaluation Object

The **object of the evaluation** was the UNPF 2013-2017. The overall goal of the UNPF was to enhance the growth agenda of the Government of Moldova with support for building regulatory and institutional capacity and conditions for good governance; promotion of UN values and strengthened democracy; ensuring equity through development of national capacity for social service delivery and inclusive development opportunities; and ensuring sustainable management of the environment, with the underlying objective to improve the lives of all people living in Moldova. The UNPF aimed to reach its overall goal by achieving ten Outcomes grouped under three broad thematic pillars:

1. Democratic governance, justice, equality and human rights
2. Human development and social inclusion
3. Environment, climate change and disaster risk management

A Steering Committee, including UN agencies, Government, civil society, private sector and key development partners, was set up to guide the preparation and monitor the implementation of the UNPF. Joint responsibility for the implementation of UNPF has been entrusted to the State Chancellery, as National Coordinating Authority, and the UNCT.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation applied a **mixed-method approach**, including: stakeholder mapping; mapping of situation and contextual analyses; in-depth documentary review and structured desk analysis of UNPF design, implementation approaches, documenting of results and processes; structured desk analysis of policy documents and legislative frameworks; implementation strategies; analysis of the results chain; analysis of results from monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and data at national level; aggregation and analysis of information collected via the UNCT questionnaire; contribution analysis to determine factors which promoted or impeded the progress against intended results; systems analysis of management, monitoring, quality control and assurance strategies; mapping of risks analyses and mitigation measures; financial analysis; analysis of sustainability strategies and systemic barriers to sustainability; in-depth interviews, focus groups, round tables and case studies, participant observation during site visits. The evaluation was carried out in three phases. In the **Inception Phase**, a preliminary review of key documentation and development of data collection, analysis and evaluation tools were done. The **Data Review and Collection Phase** was devoted to the in-depth documentary review and collection of data from key stakeholders during an in-country field mission. In the **Synthesis Phase**, the evaluation applied

the standard evaluation criteria analysis (design and focus, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability) in combination with a Human Rights-Based Approach and Results-Based Management in order to assess the achievement of results, draw informed conclusions and provide recommendations.

Contextualisation of Findings and Analysis

The role of UN and its partners in delivering support to the Republic of Moldova has been significantly mediated by the specific contextual features of the operating landscape in the country, most notably:

- the protracted economic and political crisis;
- the unsettled, frozen conflict in Transnistrian region;
- sometimes opaque national decision-making;
- political sensitivity on certain rights-based issues promoted by UN.

The evaluation has thus applied the concept of “operating space” to inform its findings and analysis, including the space for dialogue with national partners; the extent of a shared vision on issues and policy options between the Government of Moldova and UN; the availability and capacity of national partners with whom to work.

Main Findings and Conclusions

UNPF – a platform for learning in a context of opportunity

The UNPF 2013-2017 Moldova has been implemented under challenging operating conditions which remain complex, sensitive and unpredictable. UN Moldova has done its best to address the most pressing needs of the country, in particular of vulnerable groups and communities, in a period of protracted political instability and economic-financial crisis. The UN seemed to have been the most loyal and closest partner of the Government and ally of the most needy during these years of turmoil. The feedback received from 164 consulted stakeholders confirms that UN is a respected partner and that its overall interventions were conducted professionally, efficiently and in an inclusive and culturally-sensitive manner.

Although functioning in a challenging context, the UNCT Moldova demonstrated that progress towards planned targets could be achieved by creatively using the existing enabling factors to add value and of opportunities to open up new operating space. UN has thus managed to successfully support the country in advancing the human rights agenda and reforms in key priority development areas, on the basis of intelligent partnerships with the citizens as ultimate change owners and with key international development partners, most notably the EU.

At the same time, there are a number of issues linked to the strategic ownership and joint accountability for results as well as linked to the lack of an underlying ToC and suboptimal alignment of annual work planning with national budgeting processes, etc. which raised challenges and impeded a better effectiveness and delivery rate of support during the first three years of UNPF implementation. The design of the next UNPF for 2018-2022 represents an opportunity for UN, Government of Moldova and their partners to capture learning generated by an ambitious co-operation framework in a low middle-income setting, against the backdrop of a distinctive national political landscape and volatile regional security.

More specific findings and conclusions are presented below.

Design and Focus

- The UNPF 2013-2017 in Moldova has been designed on the basis of five programming principles: HRBA, Gender equality, Environmental sustainability, Capacity development, and RBM.
- HRBA and gender equality standards and principles were effectively used for the programming of UN assistance, being embedded in the formulation of most planned results, indicators and disaggregations. In fulfilling human rights and achieving gender equality, both mainstreamed and targeted interventions were used as key strategies for UNPF implementation. The analytical work which informed the design of the UNPF and the planning process of the UNPF itself were highly participative, involving a wide range of stakeholders who reflected in broad terms the entire

spectrum of needs and interests. Still, some vulnerable groups whose rights are repeatedly violated were left out or only marginally addressed.

- Mainstreaming environmental sustainability into UNPF was only partially successful. The planning process was informed by a certain level of understanding of the relationship between environment and development. Yet the UNPF separated the two areas into different pillars and linkages environment-poverty, environment-gender, environment-migration, etc. seemed to have been neglected in the Results Matrix. Lower priority given to inter-sectoral coordination on environmental matters and insufficient awareness of the planners concerning the cross-cutting nature of environmental sustainability figure among the possible reasons. Nevertheless, at operational level, there are many examples of UN initiatives which mainstreamed environmental concerns into development work.
- Capacity development was mainstreamed across the entire UNPF, being embedded in the formulation of a large number of outcomes/outputs and assigned indicators. Capacity building priorities were informed by a general analysis of the capacity gaps but to a lesser extent by the capacity assets of targeted beneficiaries. At operational level, strengthening the institutional capacities of duty-bearers to protect, promote and fulfil human rights as well as to monitor and report on ratified international standards stayed at the heart of many UNPF activities, but the efficiency of investment has been decreased by high turnover within the state agencies. In case of rights-holders (vulnerable people, citizens, community groups, etc.), the focus was put on increasing their access to quality services, better governance and sustainable development opportunities, and on encouraging participation in voting and local decision-making. Increasing rights-holders' capacity to understand and claim their rights received less attention.
- Insufficient level of data reliability, consistency and disaggregation, posing severe constraints in targeting interventions at the time when UNPF was developed, prompted UN to focus its assistance towards developing the national capacity for disaggregated data collection and analysis. Capacity building is identifiable in the formulation of various outputs and there is a reasonably good level of disaggregation of indicators in the UNPF Results Matrix, in particular by gender, age, urban/rural, region. Disaggregation by disability, ethnicity and migration is however scant. At operational level, there is evidence of successful projects and programmes which fostered evidence-based monitoring, analysis and policy-making and supported the Government to better address the discrimination and disadvantage among specific vulnerable groups.
- The UNPF, including its Results Matrix, adhered to the undg RBM methodology to help ensure accountability for results and utilization of resources as well as to offer a framework to manage the support based on results. However, the road towards change at impact level is not that clear given the lack of an underlying ToC describing how the Government and UN were planning to make a difference. The lack of a ToC has also affected the selection of indicators which were not always suitable enough to accurately measure change at various levels in the hierarchy of results. Reporting, although well structured and informative, was too process-oriented, with insufficient detail concerning the contribution of achieved results to national priority targets. The Results Matrix was flexible enough to accommodate adjustments required by new opportunities and challenges, assuming that financial implications were manageable.

Relevance

- The UNPF was highly relevant for Moldova's priorities and its European and international commitments. It addressed key development challenges of the country and their underlying causes highlighted in relevant situation analyses and country assessments. The document has substantially guided the work of UNCT in planning activities and instrumenting cooperation with national counterparts and international development partners. The UNPF has not necessarily been a guiding framework for the Government, but rather the national strategies with which it has been fully aligned.
- The UNPF results and strategies were driven by the standards and principles of Moldova's ratified human rights treaties and, to a significant extent, by the issues comprised in the concluding observations and recommendations of UN treaty body reports. The work carried out within the framework of the UNPF has also addressed the key issues underlined in the third MDG report (2013), in particular the areas where progress was lagging behind.
- The UNPF has preserved its relevance in time, due to the large scope of its outcomes, flexibility in adapting the Results Matrix to arising needs, constant preoccupation of UNCT for understanding the needs and staying attuned to the country context, and regular dialogue with the Government and

international development partners to ensure alignment of UN work to national reform and EU association agenda.

Effectiveness

- The UNPF implementation to date has brought about significant institutional and behavioural changes which influenced positive trends in relevant national targets. It has also contributed to advancing the EU association agenda. Nevertheless, results achieved to date indicate that the UNPF has been a too ambitious framework for the political context of Moldova, available resources and timeframe.
- Around 58% of the planned targets are likely to be achieved by the end of 2017, the biggest progress being recorded in pillar 1 which falls under the broad human rights, rule of law, equality and democracy mandate of UN. The emerging political stability in 2016 and renewed budgetary (EU) and monetary (IMF) support from the international development partners are expected to create better conditions for the remaining implementation period of UNPF and attainment of most of its targets by the end of 2017. The improved regulatory and institutional framework and strengthened capacities contributed by the UN in partnership with the Government have prepared a solid ground for accelerated progress in 2016 and 2017.
- The UNPF results so far have been facilitated by the excellent approach of UNCT which combined sound analytic frameworks, strong evidence and investment in knowledge products with effective leverage of relationships that UN agencies had with the Government, civil society and other key stakeholders and systematic embedment of capacity building in most UN interventions. Very helpful was also the UNCT ability to frame policy issues and options in ways that are sensitive to institutional and political context and priorities in Moldova. The main factor which affected the country's development as a whole and hindered the achievement of the UNPF planned results to date has been the political turmoil.
- UNCT Moldova has creatively used its comparative advantages in opening up new operating space in order to add value and push the needed reforms, most notably: normative, standards setting mandate; impartiality; neutrality; credible and trustworthy partner for the Government; strong, cross-sector expertise in-house and ability to quickly deploy additional expertise from Moldova, regional and international networks; trustworthy implementing agency, able to mobilize funds from different donors and channel them to areas in need; ability to link work at the local level with policy level. A more structured, focused analysis of comparative advantages of both UN and development actors would have efficiently assisted the selection of UNPF priorities and strategies, and sharpened the focus of support.

Efficiency

- Overall, UNCT managed to ensure an efficient implementation of UNPF, despite severe constraints of the operating space. Stakeholders perceive that the results of UN cooperation were achieved in a timely, cost-efficient and effective manner, with little waste and duplication. UN procedures are deemed to be transparent and trustworthy, hence UN is regarded as a 'go-to-agency' by many development partners. Nevertheless, efficiency was affected by political instability, with uneven participation of the Government in the UNPF steering, coordination and monitoring as well as decreased mutual accountability for results. Alignment of the UNPF annual work planning process with the national budgeting process was complicated by the late adoption of the national budgets, creating cost-sharing constraints. Yet, the risks arising from the challenges of the operating context were not factored in an explicit mitigation strategy to allow UNCT intervene in a pro-active way.
- On the delivery side, the amount spent during the period 2013-2015 represented 58.9% of the estimated UNPF budget, mirroring the achievement level of results. The yearly delivery rate was about 19-20% on average. The UNCT and its partners have successfully attracted funding for the development assistance envisaged in the UNPF, reducing the funding gap from 53.9% at the beginning of the implementation period to 8.8% currently.
- The implementation of DaO, aimed to ensure increased efficiency of support, is rather advanced. It contributed so far to better programming, coordination and synergising of the UN work through increased cross-practice and cross-agency harmonization (58% projects implemented jointly); reduction of transaction costs; fund raising to cover the funding gap (contribution of 27.5% via MDTF); and improvement of the clarity, coherence and consistency of external UN messages. Apart from these efficiency gains, the implementation of DaO was challenged by the different operational

rules and internal procedures of UN agencies and the perception that DaO is unable to reduce the competition for funds – a matter which is expected to be settled by the implementation of the recently-adopted Joint Fund Mobilization Strategy of the UNCT.

- Efficiency has been enhanced by successful partnerships developed with the Government and with citizens that will ultimately influence the sustainability of change in the society. The UNCT has also managed to develop a solid partnership with the EU Delegation as donor and partner for policy dialogue and advocacy for pushing forward the needed reforms.

Sustainability

- Sustainability is part of the UNPF design, which embeds an orientation towards sustainable change at the level of duty-bearers in terms of enabling policy frameworks and strengthened capacities as well as at the level of rights-holders through sustainable access to opportunities and services. The implementation strategies, programme management arrangements and the M&E Plan of the UNPF contain specific sustainability elements. The Government accountability for the sustainability of the achieved results is however not explicit in the UNPF document. At operational level, the projects/programmes embed various sustainability prerequisites, but an explicit exit strategy is rarely incorporated in the planning documents. Ex-post monitoring of results from a sustainability point of view seems to be rather an exception.
- Evidence of sustainability will be available after the end of UNPF, but there are results across all outcomes which are already showing good sustainability prospects.
- UN Moldova had a substantive contribution to the development and improvement of the legal and policy advocacy agenda in all focus areas of UNPF, thus providing an enabling environment for preserving and enriching the UNPF results in the years to come. Mainstreaming gender equality and human rights as well as climate change and disaster risk management into the national, sectoral and local policies and plans will also contribute to the sustainability of results in terms of impacts on the most vulnerable.
- New institutions were set up and integrated into the Government structures at central and local level. New services were developed, scaled up nationwide and taken over by authorities. Capacities were strengthened in terms of more competent and skilled people, modernised infrastructure, institutionalised trainings, new positions introduced in the organigramme of public institutions, increased capacities for data generation, a wide range of guidelines, quality standards, protocols and methodologies developed with the support of UN. High staff turnover in the Government and public institutions, impeding a long-term strategic thinking and action, on the background of significant delays in the implementation of the public administration reforms might decrease the institutional sustainability. The implementation of the EU association agenda where public administration reforms figures high among national priorities might mitigate this risk, at least partially.

Recommendations

The evaluation provides a number of strategic/programming recommendations for the current UNPF 2013-2017 (the last two years of implementation) and for the next UN support programming period 2018-2022. They are addressed to the UNCT Moldova, Government of Moldova and key partners in line with the need to engage all major stakeholders in a concerted effort for the continuation of reforms on the advancement of human rights-based development in Moldova.

A. Recommendations for the current UNPF 2013-2017

A1: Carry out an evaluation concerning the effects of DaO implementation to date to inform a UN common agenda and concrete line of action towards full implementation of the approach

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova)

A2: Ensure that resources are available for the implementation of planned projects/programmes and attainment of planned results in all UNPF pillars and particularly in the area of human development and social inclusion

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and the Government of Moldova)

A3: Develop and implement sustainability plans (exit strategies) for current and upcoming projects to make sure that results and impacts of assistance are taken over and enhanced by the relevant national stakeholders and mainstreamed in policies and practices.

(Addressed to: UN agencies in cooperation with the implementing partner)

A4: Carry out a quick check of the sustainability of results and benefits of finalised projects (ended in 2013 and after) to take remedial action while capitalizing the lessons learnt for future programming processes

(Addressed to: UN agencies in cooperation with the beneficiary)

A5: Improve the inclusiveness and accountability of the Results Groups by involving relevant line ministries and prominent CSOs with the task of ensuring strategic oversight and of monitoring the developing opportunities, risks and constraints.

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova)

B. Recommendations for the next programming period 2018-2022

B1: Develop an underlying Theory of Change for the next UNDAF 2018-2022 to ensure solid connection of UN support to national development priorities and targets, EU association agenda and Sustainable Development Goals as well as to improve joint UN-Government accountability for results

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and Government in cooperation with national stakeholders involved in the preparation of next UNDAF)

B2: Ensure that the next UNDAF 2018-2022 is streamlined and has a strong strategic focus on priority areas where the UN Moldova has the capacity and the comparative advantage to produce the biggest difference

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and UNDAF planners)

B3: Align the steering and coordination of UNDAF to the national coordination mechanisms to ensure national leadership and ownership throughout the implementation period

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and Government)

B4: Engage more inclusively and effectively with citizens and CSOs throughout the entire UNDAF cycle (problem identification, planning, prioritising, programming, implementation monitoring) to ensure that nobody is left behind and social accountability standards are observed

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova)

B5: Mainstream environmental sustainability principles across all strategic priority areas of UNDAF to add value to development work (by making use of links between environment and poverty, environment and migration, environment and agriculture, environment and regional development, etc.) and advance gender equality and the human rights agenda

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova, Ministry of Environment and UNDAF planners)

B6: Ensure an integrated approach towards migration by considering both the development opportunities brought about by migration and mitigation of its negative consequences.

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and relevant national stakeholders involved in UNDAF planning)

B7: Develop a risks mitigation/management strategy to inform the planning and underpin a smooth implementation of UNDAF

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and UNDAF planners)

B8: Improve the monitoring and evaluability of UNDAF results

(Addressed to: UNCT Moldova and Government, notably the State Chancellery)

1. CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

Geographic and Demographic Context

Moldova is a landlocked, low middle-income country in transition situated in Eastern Europe, bordered to the west by Romania and to the north, east and south by Ukraine. Moldova has a population of 3.5 million people (2015), out of whom 51.8% women and 48.1% men. Around 685.5 thousand people (19.3% of the total population) are below 18¹. Life expectancy has increased in the last five years from 65.31 to 68.05 years for men and from 73.37 to 75.55 years for women². The population of the country is undergoing important demographic changes, characterized by fertility rates, high infertility and an ageing population, with economic and social implications such as in the area of social security. Migration from Moldova has been progressively increasing, with an estimated one third of the working-age population currently abroad.

Economy, employment and migration

The transition to a market economy has been slow due to challenges faced in the implementation of economic and social reforms, the collapse of the industrial sector and political tensions, including internal divergences on Moldova's future path and frozen conflict with the breakaway region of Transnistria³. Economic growth was 7.1% in 2010, but contracted in the following years, reaching only 3.7% in the third quarter of 2015⁴ when the economy flipped into recession due to a negative weather shock in agriculture, weak external flows, the repercussions of a large-scale bank fraud, and tight monetary policy. Sustaining growth has been a challenge since GDP gains have been fuelled by remittances and export growth through increased access to external markets, which in turn were subject to the effects of the global financial crisis. The economy is projected to remain subdued in 2016, with growth of 0.5%. As the economy stabilizes and investor confidence improves, Moldova is expected to slowly regain growth momentum, reaching its potential by 2017-2018. The table below presents the evolution of key macroeconomic indicators since 2012 with projections for 2016-2017.

Table 1. Key Macroeconomic Indicators in Moldova, 2012-2017

Indicator	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Nominal GDP, MDL billion	88.2	100.5	112.0	121.9	132.8	145.1
GDP, % real change	-0.7	9.4	4.8	-0.5	0.5	4.0
Consumption, % real change	0.9	5.2	2.7	-1.9	-0.7	3.1
Gross fixed investment, % real change	0.4	3.8	10.00	-1.2	-1.5	4.3
Exports, % real change	2.3	9.6	1.0	2.3	1.2	3.2
Imports, % real change	2.5	4.4	0.4	-4.3	0.1	3.8
Consumption Price Index, % change, average	4.6	4.6	5.1	9.7	8.9	5.4
Current account balance, % of GDP	-8.7	-6.4	-7.1	-7.2	-7.2	-6.9
Remittances, % change, USD	8.8	10.1	-4.9	-26.7	-1.5	3.7
External debt, % of GDP	82.6	83.6	82.5	97.9	98.1	96.4
Budget revenues, % of GDP	38.0	36.7	37.8	35.8	35.9	36.4
Budget expenditures, % of GDP	40.1	38.5	39.6	38.1	39.1	38.9

Source: The World Bank (2016), "MOLDOVA Economic Update", 7 April

¹ National Bureau of Statistics (2016), "The structure of resident population of the Republic of Moldova, by age and sex, as of January 01, 2016", <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5210>, accessed on 20.06.2016

² National Bureau of Statistics, StatBank <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp>, accessed on 31.03.2016

³ Transnistria is a self-proclaimed independent state situated between the Nistru River and the Eastern Moldovan border with Ukraine. It is not recognised by any of the UN member states and it is designated by the Republic of Moldova as the "Transnistria Autonomous Territorial Unit with special legal status".

⁴ World Bank country overview, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/moldova/overview>, accessed on 31.03.2016

Agriculture remains one of the main economic sectors, its share in GDP increasing from 8.5% in 2009 to 12% in 2014⁵. Agriculture employed 32% of labour force in 2015, while about 50% of exports were agro-food products. Besides a low productivity sector, it is also highly dependent on natural factors, the severe draught from 2015 being a clear example in this sense. A total reshaping of the sector needs to be undertaken, and this has been, to a large extent, envisaged in the New Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Areas Development 2014-2020 and its Action Plan, whose implementation is under risk due to scarce budget and temporarily locked external financial assistance.

The employment rate in Moldova slightly increased from 38.5% in 2010 to 40.3% in 2015, still being among the lowest in Europe⁶. In case of women, the level was even lower i.e. 38.4% compared to 42.3% for men. The employment rate was also lower in rural areas: 38.9% as against 42% in urban areas⁷. The unemployment rate was 4.9% in 2015, however unemployment among youth aged 15-24 was 12.8% which is a matter of concern. Yet, it is not necessarily the lack of jobs which leads to these statistics as well as to the labour force migration, but primarily the lack of decent jobs.

According to data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics, the labour migrants accounted for 25.7% of the country's economic active population in 2015⁸, meaning that about 1/4 of the national labour force resources participate in the economic development of other states. Generally, Moldova's migration phenomenon is characterized by the prevalence of temporary/circular migration, over 68% of labour migrants coming from rural areas. Mostly involved in migration are men with secondary education⁹ who account for about 65% from the total migrants¹⁰. Since 2013, migrants' return trends were noted caused by the harshening of migration policies of the Russian Federation (which count for 68,9% of the labour migrants)¹¹ and the Ukrainian armed conflict. In 2015, a number of 2,605 returned migrants, of whom over 86% from Russian Federation, was registered at the National Employment Agency, four times higher compared to 2013. Out of this number, only 25.5% were employed as a result of active labour market policies¹², compared to 33.5% of non-returnee registered job seekers¹³. This indicates that the active labour market policies and market conditions do not sufficiently meet the reintegration needs of the returned migrants. The main reintegration challenges include unattractive salaries, lack of jobs in compliance with their qualifications and competences acquired abroad, lack of jobs in the rural areas (except in agriculture), hostile investment environment and insufficient resources and knowledge to launch a business. As a result, a significant part of returned migrants opt for a repeated emigration¹⁴.

⁵ Data sources: http://www.mediu.gov.md/images/ECE_CEP_171_En.pdf and <http://fumn.eu/analiza-fumn-republica-moldova-esecul-unui-model-economic/> accessed on 28.04.2016

⁶ www.ieconomics.com, accessed on 27.06.2016

⁷ National Bureau of Statistics, StatBank" statistical data bank.

<http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=MUN0102&ti=Ratele+de+activitate%2C+ocupare+si+somaj+pe+sexe%2C+medii+si+trimestre%2C++2000%2D2015&path=../Database/RO/03%20MUN/MUN01/&lang=1>, accessed on 17.05.2016

⁸ Calculations based on "StatBank" statistical data bank,

<http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/RO/03%20MUN/MUN07/MUN07.asp>, accessed on 03.05.2016

⁹ BMA/MIA (2015), "Extended Migration Profile 2009-2014", Annex 2, Table 17, page 85, http://tender.gov.md/bma/raportul-analitic-pme_2009-2014.pdf, accessed on 04.05.2016

¹⁰ Calculations based on "StatBank" statistical data bank,

<http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/RO/03%20MUN/MUN07/MUN07.asp>, accessed on 03.05.2016

¹¹ BMA/MIA (2015), "Extended Migration Profile of the Republic of Moldova for 2009-2014", page 26,

http://tender.gov.md/bma/raportul-analitic-pme_2009-2014.pdf, accessed on 13.05.2016

¹² National Employment Agency/Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (2016), "Activity report 2015", page 22.

<http://www.anofm.md/files/elfinder/Raport%20de%20activitate%20ANOFM%202015-Final.pdf>, accessed on 04.05.2016

¹³ Calculations based on the National Employment Agency "Activity report 2015" data.

<http://www.anofm.md/files/elfinder/Raport%20de%20activitate%20ANOFM%202015-Final.pdf>, accessed on 04.05.2016

¹⁴ Vremis, M., Cantarji, V., Vladicescu, N., Toarta, V., Popova, N., Panzica, F., and Lipcanu, O. (2014), "Return Labour Migration and the socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova". Report prepared for ILO.

http://brd.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/06_studiu_ilo_reintoarcerea_lucratorilor_migranti_si_desvoltarea_rm_2014_rom.pdf, accessed on 17.05.2016

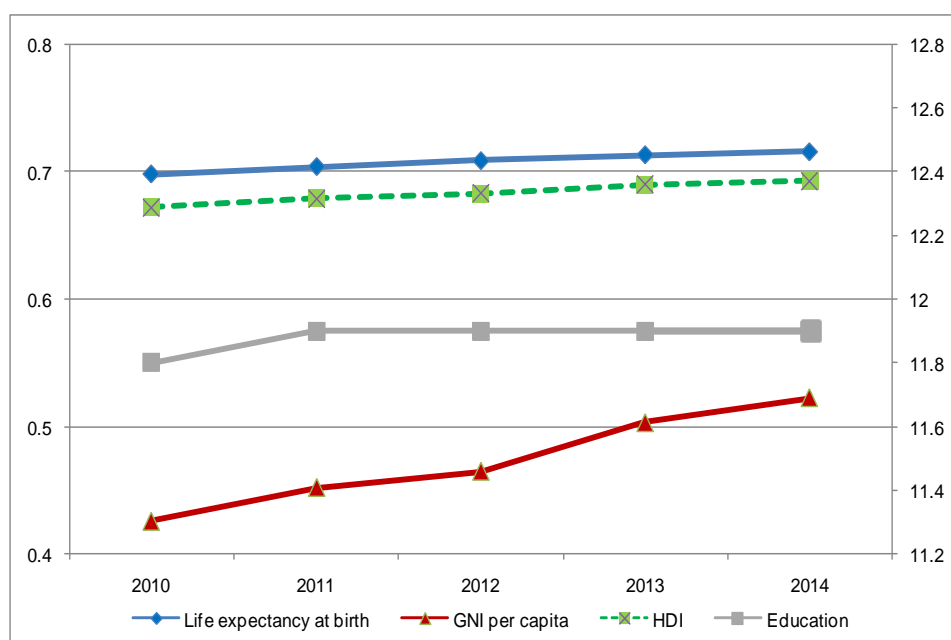
During the last couple of years a set of regulatory documents to enhance the management of migration issues were developed and adopted. Although migration is not figuring among the priority areas of the National Development Strategy “Moldova 2020”, the importance of this issue and the need to address it in a human rights-based manner is acknowledged in the sectorial strategies (on migration and asylum, on child protection, on diaspora) and in the national programme for the implementation of the European Union (EU) - Moldova Visa Liberalization Action Plan and the EU-Moldova Association Agreement and its Action Plan.

Millennium Development Goals and Human Development

Moldova has adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the country level and has remained committed to achieving these goals through various means, including an increased level of prioritization and an intensification of collaboration with all relevant partners, including civil society. The country has made significant progress in meeting most MDGs targets. The main areas where good performance indicators were achieved include the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger, the reduction of child mortality and the creation of a global partnership for development. The most lagging behind areas are the ones related to the combat of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB) and other diseases, improvement of maternal health and promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women¹⁵.

Moldova’s Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2014 was 0.693, positioning the country at 107 out of 188 countries and territories and placing it in the medium human development category¹⁶. Figure 1 shows the contribution of each component index to Moldova’s HDI since 2010.

Figure 1. Trends in Moldova’s HDI component indices 2010-2014



The health care reforms continued in 2013-2015 with a view to ensuring improved quality and access of population to health services, in line with the Health Care System Development Strategy of the Republic of Moldova 2008-2017. The public health service reorganisation was initiated in 2015 in accordance with the National Public Health Strategy approved by the Government in 2013 with the

¹⁵ Government of the Republic of Moldova (2013), “The Third Millennium Development Goals Report. Republic of Moldova”, Chisinau

¹⁶ UNDP (2015), “Human Development Report 2015. Work for Human Development”, New York

aim of enhancing the public health capacities and services. However, steady out-flow of staff within regulatory and implementation agencies within the health sector has precluded efficient and timely implementation of health reforms and follow-up on recommendations. At the same time, the health care system has been severely depleted of qualified human resources as health professionals continued to emigrate abroad. Overall, it remains fragmented and services are not equally distributed across the country. The coverage of health insurance was slightly increased in parallel with the extension of the services provided to uninsured people. However, the health insurance system needs adjustment as more than 40% of the poor are not insured and 45% of health spending is from patients' pockets¹⁷.

Progress was registered in the development of the policy and legislative framework for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and implementation of key strategies and programmes on nutrition and cardiovascular diseases. Smoking in public spaces and advertising and promotion of tobacco products were banned in 2015. Nevertheless, NCDs continue to be a major health challenge, especially among the working population. As far as communicable diseases are concerned, progress in the control of TB and HIV/AIDS has been rather slow. Although Moldova successfully applied for two three-year grants of the Global Fund (HIV and TB) and secured first-line anti-TB drugs for adults in the Transnistrian region as well as paediatric formulations for the whole country through the Green Drug Facility, the morbidity and mortality owing to HIV infection and TB are rather high. Around one quarter of all new cases and two-thirds of retreatment cases are infected with multi-drug resistant TB, placing Moldova among the 18 "high TB burden" countries globally¹⁸. The most affected region is Transnistria with the lowest coverage of those most affected by prevention programmes and lacking several interventions from the package. New vaccines have been introduced over the last years, but overall the vaccination rates dropped due to parents' and health providers' hesitancy and false contraindications.

The situation of adolescent health and access to health care services are still of serious concern. Even if common efforts have been made by governmental and non-governmental organisations to inform young people about protection against sexually-transmitted infections, 6 of 10 persons infected are in the age group 15-29 and their share remained constant over the last decade. Approximately 14% (in 2013) of new HIV infection cases were detected among persons aged 15-24. In addition, various studies show a decrease of the share of young people with comprehensive knowledge about HIV from 40.5% (in 2005) to about 32% (in 2013).¹⁹

As far as education is concerned, in recent years the Government has taken critical steps towards improving resource allocation by adopting per capita financing for primary, lower and upper secondary education, and an enabling legislative framework. The new Code of Education and the new sector strategy Education 2020 set the basis for further promotion of education reform. Efforts were made to improve the relevance and quality of education and to make the education system more inclusive. Compared to neighbouring countries and from an equity point of view, the education outcomes are however poor in Moldova²⁰. There are discrepancies in school enrolment rates at all levels between urban and rural students. One in four young children in rural areas does not have access to early childhood development programmes²¹. Although the number of children with special educational

¹⁷ UN Moldova (2015), "Briefing Book from Development Partners of Moldova", http://md.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/moldova/docs/pub/strateg/brief_english.pdf, accessed on 20.05.2016

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ Demographic Barometer (2015), "The situation of youth in Moldova", http://ccd.ucoz.com/_ld/0/37_barometru_nr_3_.pdf, accessed on 28.06.2016

²⁰ Moldova's 15 year olds performed at the bottom of Europe in the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2009. A proportion of 57% of students lack the basic levels of reading proficiency needed to participate effectively and productively in society. PISA results also showed that 15 year olds in rural schools are one full year of learning behind their urban counterparts (Source: UN Moldova (2015), "Briefing Book from Development Partners of Moldova")

²¹ Mid-Term Evaluation of UNPF 2013-2017, Chisinau, 2015

needs and children with disabilities (CwD) in mainstream schools increased to 10,393 in 2015, there are still 1,033 CwD in special and auxiliary schools²². More than half of Roma children are *de-facto* excluded from education or are educated in segregated environments and classes with substandard education²³. Poor children and children living with HIV still face barriers to accessing quality education in mainstream schools. Improved regulations, institutional capacity and addressing the social culture of intolerance remain top priorities.

Poverty, income, inequality

Political instability and slow economic development contributed to high poverty rates, placing Moldova among the poorest countries in Europe, despite important progress in reducing poverty. The incidence of poverty (using the international threshold of 4.3 dollars per day) decreased from 34.5% in 2006 down to 14.2% in 2014²⁴. The share of the population living under the absolute poverty line decreased from 30.2% to 11.4% in 2014. The grim economic outlook, with a negative growth of -0.5% in 2015 (see Table 1), reduced remittances and currency devaluation, falling purchasing power of social benefits and wages, and contracting agriculture risk undoing recent progress on the national poverty rate.

A concern regarding the distribution of the welfare outcomes of growth and remittances is the inequality of household incomes, which remained unchanged in recent years, roughly at a Gini coefficient of 0.300 (0.306 in 2013)²⁵. Indeed, while the absolute poverty fell, the gap between the rural and urban areas widened: in 2006, 75.7% of the population living in poverty were in villages, while in 2014 this percentage increased to 84%.²⁶ Every fourth household was dependent on remittances; in case remittances were ceased, the poverty rate among these households would have been 26.7% or 2.3 times higher than the current estimated poverty rate²⁷. The most vulnerable groups at risk of poverty in Moldova remain those with low education levels, households with many children, those in rural areas, families relying on self-employment, the elderly, and Roma.

Families with three or more children are the most vulnerable to poverty, the rate for this category being 27.1% compared to 9.3% for families with one child²⁸. The majority of these families live in the rural areas (74.8%, Household Budgets Survey²⁹). As far as children under 18 are concerned, the rural-urban gap is illustrated by 38% of children in rural areas living below the poverty line, compared to 13% in urban areas³⁰.

While migration may help reduce the absolute poverty rate among children and increase the level of disposable income of households, it could have a negative impact on children left behind, representing 44.8% (19,700 children) of the overall number of children without parental care in 2015³¹. According to a UNICEF survey, 21% of children has one or both parents living abroad, and 5% of all children have been left behind by both migrant parents, with rural children most affected³². Given high rates of male

²² NBS (2015), "The activity of the primary and secondary education institutions in 2015/16", Table 2, <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5025> accessed on 27.06.2016

²³ UNDP, UN Women, and UNICEF (2013), "Roma in the Republic of Moldova in areas of their compact population". Report developed within the UN Joint Programme "Strengthening the National Statistical System", Chisinau

²⁴ Ministry of Economy (2015), "2014 Poverty and Policy Impact Report", page 13

http://www.mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_privind_saracia_in_republica_moldova_2014.pdf, accessed on 18.05.2016

²⁵ UNDP (2015), "Human Development Report 2015. Work for Human Development", New York, NY 10017, USA

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ Ministry of Economy (2015), "2014 Poverty and Policy Impact Report", page 10,

http://www.mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_privind_saracia_in_republica_moldova_2014.pdf, accessed on 18.05.2016

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ National Bureau of Statistics, www.statistica.md, accessed on 28.03.2016

³⁰ Government of the Republic of Moldova, UN Moldova, "Towards Unity in Action. United Nations – Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework 2013-2017", Chisinau

³¹ Data provided by the Directorate of Family Protection and Children's Rights, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family

³² UNICEF (2014), "Republic of Moldova. Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2012", Final Report, Chisinau

migration and divorce, many households are headed by women, and 22% of children live with their mother only; for low-income single-mothers and their children, social exclusion and deprivation is a concern.

Social protection spending in Moldova representing 13.5% of GDP in 2015³³ was quite high by regional standards. Out of this, 11% was spent on social insurance (mostly pensions) and about 2% on social assistance programmes. The overall targeting of social assistance is weak, while pensions are unable to ensure adequate benefits for the elderly. After the annual indexation in 2015, the average pension was able to cover only 82.9% of the minimum survival costs for pensioners³⁴. As a result, 57.7% of the elderly in rural areas and 48.6% of those living in urban areas declare that their income does not cover the basic needs.³⁵ Depressed demographic trends, with a rapidly ageing population and a shrinking labour force, create heavy pressure on the social protection system, in particular from a sustainability long-term perspective. The Government is currently reforming the social assistance system, which includes reducing category-based benefits to pay for more targeted cash transfers with a view to better respond to the particular needs of the beneficiary and ensure efficient spending of public funds. Other measures address the strengthening of the social safety nets through improved redistribution and referral mechanisms to protect the most disadvantaged categories of population against the adverse effects of the transition process.

The reform of the childcare system progressed steadily. Of all children under public care, around 17% were in residential institutions and 83% in family-based care³⁶. At the end of 2015, about 2,200 children were in public residential institutions, an annual decline of 26% compared to 2014. Significant problems remain with the deinstitutionalization of children under age three and those with disabilities as well as with the efficiency of family support and gatekeeping measures to prevent children from entering formal care in the first place. Violence against children is another matter of growing concern.

European integration

The Government of Moldova regards EU integration as a fundamental priority of domestic and foreign policy. 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 (AA) was signed in June 2014. The agreement reconfirms mutual commitment to support Moldova in strengthening the rule of law, democracy, human rights standards and principles. The agreement includes a specific chapter on the rights of the child, providing a strategic platform to improve children's protection and development. To achieve steady progress, the Government of Moldova adopted in 2014 the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the AA, which transposed the provisions of the AA into concrete actions for the years 2014-2016. Since then, Moldova submits regular reports on the implementation of the EU-Moldova Association Agenda to the EU. As part of the AA, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) is meant to stimulate trade integration between Moldova and the EU. However, the low competitiveness of the local products decreases the advantages of the DCFTA. Consensus on Moldova's future path has yet to be achieved, despite the signature of the agreement. Parliamentary elections in November 2014 emphasized diverging views on Moldova's integration into the EU. Political instability is still an issue and negotiations on settlement

³³ http://www.mf.gov.md/files/files/Acte%20Legislative%20si%20Normative/CBTM/2015%20-%202017/Anexa%202_2_%20Cadru%20global%20de%20resurse%20C8%99i%20cheltuieli%20ale%20bugetului%20public%20na%20C8%9Bional%20C%202011-2017%20C%20%25%20C3%AEEn%20PIB.pdf, accessed on 25.06.2016

³⁴ National Bureau of Statistics (2016), "The survival minimum in 2015", <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5146>, accessed on 25.06.2016

³⁵ Demographic Research Centre, HelpAge International Moldova (2015), "Breaking the silence: Elder abuse in Moldova", research study supported by UNFPA

³⁶ UNICEF data

of conflict between the two sides of the Nistru River has registered limited progress despite confidence-building measures supported by international partners.

Governance and Public administration reform

The efficiency of the public sector has been folded with hope under the auspices of the central public reform and the decentralization strategy– both registering some progress, yet perceived as marginal in terms of transformational qualitative changes³⁷. Central public reform included the creation of e-administrative services and implementation of e-governance principles coupled with capacity building for quality decision making based on ex-ante and corruption risks assessment. While the quality of decision making was improved, divisions along the political lines within the governing Coalition resulted in accumulated inefficiencies, poor cross-institutional cooperation and excessive political interference in the work of public institutions. The governmental agencies responsible for the budget revenue accumulation and for enforcement of law have not been protected from political parties' influence, being unable to prevent and effectively address the outbreak of the financial and banking frauds which also stifled the business environment. The positive effects of the somewhat improved performance of the public sector have not been capitalized substantially in the perception of the society on the central public administration efficiency.

Over the last years, the practice of transparency in the development and adoption of Government Decisions has increased in compliance to 70% according to civil society and to 90% according to the Government sources³⁸. Draft decisions are now published on the website and on a dedicated consultation website³⁹ and comments are included. Concerns remain with regard to sensitive draft decisions and policies and improvements are needed in the area of legal remedy against violations, corruption risk, ex-ante impact assessment (including on human rights), removal of political influence over decisions and somewhat inadequate skills and capacity to fully comply with legal requirements⁴⁰.

Institutional accountability of authorities is rather weak. Accountability mechanisms towards citizens⁴¹ in terms of thorough annual results presentation are still to become a standard practice across governmental agencies and local authorities. The draft law on ministerial and agency responsibility was delayed in the Government since 2013. On the positive side, the Government practice to present regular account for the implementation of its programme and progress towards fulfilling the obligations in the AA is a good example to capitalize on and make the process more results-oriented. Parliament oversight of independent authorities or hearings on problematic issues is yet to become a routine practice.⁴²

Public trust in public institutions, with some notable exceptions (army, local authorities, police and Anti-Corruption Agency), declined over the last two years, on average from 10-15% to below 10%.⁴³ The trust in Parliament, Government, Presidency, Justice surged to around 6-7% in 2016 from around

³⁷ OECD (2015), "The principles of Public Administration-Moldova", <http://www.sigmaweb.org/publications/Baseline-Measurement-Moldova-2015.pdf>, accessed on 28.05.2016

³⁸ CNP/CreDO (2014), "Systemic Persistence of Transparency Deficiencies in the Decision-Making of the Moldovan Government (April 2012-October 2014)", <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=478?&lang=en> accessed on 28.05.2016; Adept (2013), "Transparența decizională a APPC", <http://www.e-democracy.md/files/td/transparența-decizională-aapc-2013.pdf>, accessed on 28.05.2016

³⁹ www.particip.gov.md, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁴⁰ IMF Moldova (2016), "Corruption: Costs and Mitigating Strategies", <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2016/sdn1605.pdf>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁴¹ CreDO (2015), "Why key law-enforcements institutions do not deliver?", <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=483>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁴² CreDO (2016), "Practica angajării răspunderii Guvernului în fața Parlamentului contravine principiului separării puterilor în stat și subminează statul de drept", <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=493>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁴³ IPP (2016), "Barometer of Public Opinion", <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=773&parent=0>, accessed on 28.05.2016

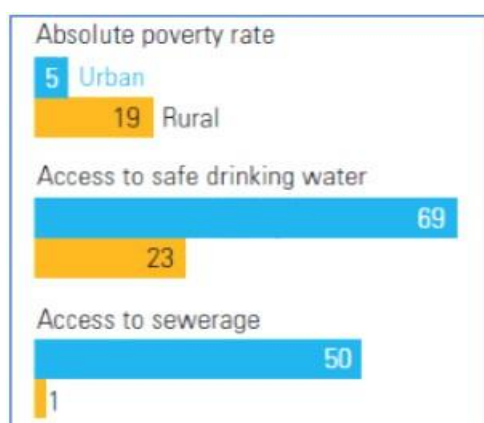
20-30% in May 2012 and 15-20% in November 2013. The decrease in trust is directly linked to the substantial devaluation of the MDL (around 30%) due to the financial crisis in Russia which reduced the remittances flow to Moldova as well as due to the banking fraud, totalling 15% of Moldova's GDP⁴⁴.

Decentralisation and local government

A pillar of the public administration reform in Moldova is the decentralization process which has undergone several stages since 2006, when the Law on local public administration and the Law on administrative decentralisation were adopted. It is only in 2012 when decentralisation became part of a comprehensive reform agenda, with the adoption of the National Decentralization Strategy. The goals of the strategy are to improve resources management and bring quality services closer to citizens; to strengthen the system of local fiscal autonomy; to give more decision-making powers to the local governments following the principles of transparency, legality, efficiency, responsibility and administrative solidarity; and to create a more stable, clear, and enforceable legal framework on local public finance. Till now, the progress towards decentralisation is piecemeal. Local governments have to play a significant role in the provision of basic public services, including social services, and bear primary responsibility for water supply and sanitation, road construction, maintenance and heating. However, local governance is still fragmented, underfinanced and able to provide only few quality services or not at all, thus negatively impacting vulnerable and poor population. The new legal provisions⁴⁵ on local public finances aimed to increase the fiscal autonomy of LPAs are being implemented throughout Moldova; however, the fiscal potential of small communities is very poor, thus depriving the population of access to basic services.

Education, a delegated function financed entirely from the state budget, accounts for 30-50% of the local budgets, while communal services (water, sanitation, waste management) account for 6-8% of local expenditures. Except for 55 local administrations (6% from the total), all LPAs spend more, per capita, on administration than they do on all communal services. 24% of LPAs spend less than 1 euro per capita in a year for communal services.⁴⁶ According to 2015 global Human Development Report⁴⁷, 69% of urban people have access to safe drinking water, compared to only 23% of rural people. Similar worrying disparities are registered in the access to basic services (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Access to basic public services in Moldova, 2014 (% of population)



Source: UNDP (2015), "Human Development Report 2015. Work for Human Development", page 60

⁴⁴ IMF Moldova (2016), "Bank Crises Resolution – Stress testing", http://www.imf.md/press/3%20Moldova%20-%20IMF%20-%20FSAP%20Crisis%20Resolution-Stress%20Testing_cr1674.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁴⁵ Law on local public finances no.397/2003, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&id=312821>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁴⁶ UNDP (2015), "Optiuni pentru reorganizarea structurii administrative teritoriale in Republica Moldova", Chisinau, page 8

⁴⁷ UNDP (2015), "Human Development Report 2015. Work for Human Development", New York, NY 10017, USA

There is a significant economic polarization, coupled with disparities between regions and a widening development gap between rural and urban areas. The South region is the poorest, followed by the Centre, North and Gagauzia regions. Economic activity and qualified labour force are concentrated in the capital while socio-economic development of rural areas is weak⁴⁸. The implementation of the National Strategy for Regional Development 2013-2015 which was aimed to ensure balanced and sustainable development of all development regions in Moldova has been slow due to underfunding, limited capacity of civil servants as well as poor inter-ministerial coordination which would allow maximise impact of implemented projects.⁴⁹ 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. At the same time, the connection between regional development and local development, but equally with other sectorial policies is artificial, thus leading to fragmentation and implementation of isolated projects, which is not cost-efficient. Overall, the lack of a strategic vision on what should actually need to be achieved through the regional development agenda, which is certainly a cross sector policy, constitutes the main challenge for progress.

Transnistria frozen conflict

The breakaway region of Transnistria continues to pose a substantial challenge for the internal stability of Moldova and is seen as a source of regional instability. Since Mesederg process in 2011 which produced some momentum in the 5+2 settlement process, there was no other tangible progress. Bilateral meetings intensified, but they focused on humanitarian issues and management of some incidents or limited crises situation.⁵⁰ Human rights and rule of law in the region remain of serious concern for the international community.⁵¹ The region's *de facto* administration has accepted humanitarian and social support from the EU but avoided serious engagement with Moldova's EU association process, promoting the rhetoric of the Eurasian Union integration.

On the economic side, Transnistria's private companies registered in Chisinau had duty-free access to the EU market in 2015-2016, but as of the end this year they will have to accept the import tariffs regime for EU goods as the rest of the country⁵². Currently, exports of Transnistrian produced goods to the EU is higher than to former Community of Independent States (CIS) to the proportion of 75-25% (mostly Romania, Italy and Germany)⁵³. The macroeconomic instability in the region and high dependence on high cost energy sources from Russia as well as direct financial support to the budget of around 50% make the economy very sensitive to Russia economic decline and soured financial support. The situation in the region further deteriorates as compared to the rest of Moldova.

In the course of the last 4-5 years, social and humanitarian projects have been implemented in the area of, for instance, HIV/AIDs prevention and TB control, prevention of NCDs, mother and child health, including immunizations, prevention of domestic violence, etc. Civil society actors established joint initiatives and cross-river partnerships. A positive signal was also the adoption by Transnistrian

⁴⁸ <http://agora.md/analize/32/economia-nationala-pe-regiuni-nordul-mai-bogat-decat-sudul-si-economie-ce-se-invarie-in-iurul-chisinaului>, accessed on 13.05.2016

⁴⁹ Tabirta, V. (2014), "Implementarea Strategiei Nationale de Dezvoltare Regionala", Concluzii intermediare, Chisinau, http://www.contact.md/doc/policy_implementarea%20strategiei_01.03.15.pdf, accessed on 15.05.2016

⁵⁰ European Parliament Think Tank (2012), "The Transnistrian Issue: Moving beyond the Status-Quo", accessed on 28.05.2016

⁵¹ European Parliament (2016), "The frozen conflicts of the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and their impact on the respect of human rights", [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/578001/EXPO_STU\(2016\)578001_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/578001/EXPO_STU(2016)578001_EN.pdf), accessed on 28.05.2016

⁵² Berlin Economics (2015), "Trade Liberalisation in Transnistria", http://www.berlin-economics.com/download/studien/2015.07.01_Transnistria_Import_Tariff_Impact_en.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁵³ Expert-Group (2013), "Transnistria and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement", http://expert-grup.org/en/biblioteca/item/download/972_ba9250542ae4085e175909b27cba6773, accessed on 28.04.2016

leadership of an action plan following the release of the first UN human rights report on the Transnistrian region.

Environment

Environmental situation in the Republic of Moldova worsened during the past 10 years. The last UNECE Environmental Performance Review presented in 2014 showed that total emissions of CO₂ more than doubled from 2005 to 2011, from 2,400 to 5,800 tons annually, drinking water quality is deteriorating, the amount of municipal waste doubled from 2005 to 2012, while the consumption of fuel wood is very high.⁵⁴ In 2014, the Parliament adopted the Environmental Strategy 2014-2023 as well as an Action Plan for its implementation, the National Strategy on Biodiversity 2015-2020 and also, of high importance, the Law on environmental impact assessment. These strategic documents go hand in hand with the EU association agenda and approximation of EU acquis in the area of environmental protection. While progress in developing the policy framework and improving environmental management at sector level is visible, comprehensive institutional reform is missing, including a restructuring of the Ministry of Environment and its subordinated agencies and the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Moldova is highly vulnerable to climate change, leading in this regard among European and Central Asia countries. The impact of climate change on agriculture is significant, given that the latter is the main source of income for a large share of Moldovan population. The socioeconomic costs are very high; it is estimated that the yearly average costs incurred due to different types of calamities between 1984 and 2006 are about 61 million US Dollars.⁵⁵ With the aim of increasing Moldova's capacity to adapt and respond to real or potential effects of climate change, the Government approved the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in 2014 and its Action Plan. It focuses on three main intervention areas: (1) establishment, by 2018, of an institutional framework, which would ensure efficient implementation of adaptation measures, (2) creation of a mechanism for monitoring of the impact and social vulnerabilities of climate change, by 2020, and (3) ensuring climate change resilience.

One of the few areas where cross-sector interdependencies were considered is agriculture. The National Agriculture and Rural Areas Development Strategy 2014-2020 integrates, besides its main focus in agriculture, rural development and environmental sustainability. These are not merely mentioned in the introduction to the Strategy, but have each assigned one objective: (1) modernization of the agri-food network to meet EU requirements, (2) ensuring sustainable management of resources in agriculture, and (3) improving living standards in rural areas. Unfortunately the progress in implementing the Strategy is scarce, particularly concerning objectives 2 and 3, mainly due to limited financial resources and lack of division of responsibilities between the main stakeholders.

Energy security and efficiency have a direct impact on economic growth and poverty reduction. At this stage, though, the energy system in Moldova faces serious challenges. The energy infrastructure is worn out, while prices for energy resources, of which 95% are imported⁵⁶, is increasing. Taking into account the fact that electric energy production during the past 15 years was decreasing (by 15% in 2010 as compared to 2001), the Government has committed itself to reform the energy sector by increasing the energy security of the country, while addressing environmental sustainability issues. Thus, a new national strategic framework⁵⁷ was adopted; at the same time, Moldova adhered to the European Energy Community and committed to implement the provisions of the EU-Moldova

⁵⁴ UNECE (2014), "Environmental Performance Review", Republic of Moldova, New York and Geneva, http://www.medi.gov.md/images/ECE_CEP_171_En.pdf, pages 1-2, accessed on 28.04.2016

⁵⁵ National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Government Decision no.1009/2014.

⁵⁶ http://www.statistica.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/balanta_energetica/BE_2015_rom.pdf, accessed on 28.04.2016

⁵⁷ The National Programme on Energy Efficiency 2011-2020 and the Energy Strategy of Moldova until 2030

Association Agreement. To ensure energy security, Moldova needs to take actions in two directions: securing an alternative energy import source, particularly given the unstable situation in Ukraine through which gas is transited to Moldova, as well as developing alternative sources of energy inside the country and minimizing energy consumption where possible. Although the local market is rather reluctant to adopting alternative energy sources, the past few years demonstrated a significant increase in the production of bioenergy, from 0 kWh in 2010 to 324,362 kWh in 2012 and 825,843 kWh in 2013.⁵⁸

Justice and the rule of law

The very ambitious policy document - Strategy for the reform of the justice sector 2013-16 and the respective Action Plan – has been implemented in a proportion of 90%⁵⁹. Nevertheless, the results are yet to be perceived by the citizens i.e. the public trust in the justice system decreased to from 25% in November 2013 to 10% in 2016⁶⁰. The justice reform strategy has received substantial financial support via direct budget support programme from the EU of the total disbursable value of 56 million Euro. The support has been suspended in July 2015 given political uncertainty.

The courts are nowadays more accessible to the most vulnerable people and hearings are open. Free legal aid, extended aid to children who are victims of abuse and child-friendly interrogation facilities have been created in the regions. All courts decisions are published; however, the efforts to eliminate discretion in the allocation of cases provided mixed results⁶¹. A matter of concern is the quality of the decisions, especially their explanatory part, as the jurisprudence is not solid enough and not adequately grounded in terms of the substantial law⁶². The judiciary inspection of the Superior Council of Magistrates reviews the quality of the decisions upon received complaints or as part of the periodic evaluation of judges for promotion reasons, while the access of other interested parties is barred⁶³. The new law examined in the Parliament stipulates the territorial location of the courts, providing for a gradual reduction of them in some regions. This proposal might however jeopardise the public access to the court.

The self-organization and independence of the judiciary have been improved particularly in the last couple of years. The Superior Council of Magistrates is fully responsible for the administration of the process of judges' appointments, promotion, performance assessment and enforcement of disciplinary sanctions (the Council on disciplinary sanctions is part of the Superior Council). To date, these sanctions resulted in the exclusion of some dozens of judges found in violation of the requirements concerning the quality of decisions. The transparency of decisions and hearings of both Councils have become subject of heated discussions in the society; the reasoning of decisions has not been fully disclosed as only recently the Council started to broadcast its sessions on internet. The negative public image of some judges has been projected over the entire judiciary, following some journalistic investigations depicting excessive or unaccounted and undeclared properties.

⁵⁸ <http://www.aee.md/energie/biocombustibil/analiza/255-statistic-bioenergie>, accessed on 28.04.2016

⁵⁹ Ministry of Justice (2015), "Annual report on the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy for 2013-16", Reporting period 2015, www.justice.gov.md, accessed on 01.06.2016

⁶⁰ IPP (2016), "Barometer of Public Opinion", <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=156&id=773&parent=0>, accessed on 16.05.2016

⁶¹ CNA (2015), "Studiul privind deficiențele înregistrate în cadrul sistemului de repartizare aleatorie a dosarelor (PIGD)" <http://justice.gov.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=4&id=2915>, accessed on 16.05.2016; IPRE (2015), "Studiu privind principalele deficiențe și provocări în implementarea reformelor în domeniul justiției și de luptă contra corupției în procesul de asociere europeană", <http://ipre.md/portofolio/studiu-privind-principalele-deficiente-si-provocari-ale-sistemului-justitiei-si-de-lupta-contra-coruptiei-in-procesul-de-integrare-europeana-al-republicii-moldova/>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶² CRJM (2015), "Achievements and faults in reforming the justice sector of the Republic of Moldova: 2012 - July 2014", <http://crjm.org/category/publications/justitie/page/2/>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶³ CRJM (2015), "Transparența și eficiența Consiliului Superior al Magistraturii din Republica Moldova", <http://crjm.org/category/publications/justitie/page/4/>, accessed on 28.05.2016

The newly adopted Prosecutor law adopted in 2016 provides the National Anti-Corruption Centre (CNA) to be coupled with the Anti-Corruption Prosecutor, based on the Romanian model of the National Anti-Corruption Directorate (DNA), considered to be effective in the identification and investigation of a high number of corruption cases.⁶⁴ Recent high profile anti-corruption cases involving the former Cabinet ministers claimed to reflect the political power struggle. Recent poll shows lack of confidence in economic and police authorities⁶⁵. The self-governing body - Superior Council of Prosecutors – is expected to shield the Prosecutor's Office from the external political influence. Regional experience aimed at the improving the public trust in the law-enforcement bodies prescribes greater systematic information on the investigation of cases, their progress, results, publication of accusations submitted by the prosecutors to the courts. Such practice also helps overcoming the allegations of the selective prosecution and justice cases.⁶⁶

The anti-corruption measures and institutions have been subject of heated debates and political battles prevailed over the effectiveness and efficiency of creating a robust institutional framework. The effectiveness of the National Integrity Commission (CNI) to oversight income declarations, conflict of interest and incompatibilities was challenged by the incoherence of shared mandate with CNA/Prosecutor and short expiry date of sanctions⁶⁷ as well as the pressure of outside interventions⁶⁸. The EU conditioned the justice reforms on specific anti-corruption criteria and integrity reform package was sent to the Parliament for adoption. The package provides for the elimination of the overlap between the institutional mandates of CNA and prosecutor on one hand and CNI on the other hand, as well as strengthening of the preventive and anti-corruption functions.

Human rights, women empowerment and anti-discrimination

The realisation of human rights situation has advanced since 2010 as far as civil and political rights are concerned while the social and economic rights have been affected by the financial-banking crises and regional instability. The special rights of vulnerable groups are yet to progress. Freedom of association and assembly has enjoyed wide spread across the country. Detention conditions were improved and the torture cases were reduced, but fair trial rights remain somewhat problematic. Financial crisis in 2015-16 has negatively affected the special programmes aimed to mainstream the education rights of children with disabilities and community development programmes.⁶⁹

While the regulatory framework was improved, the capacity of state institutions to promote and effectively protect human rights is rather weak. Sectoral policies and programmes have yet to systematically incorporate human rights, gender equality and inclusiveness in their design and implementation⁷⁰. At the same time, positive developments have occurred over the last years, such as the adoption of the sectoral Roma Rights Action Plan 2016-2020, special measures for persons with

⁶⁴ CreDO (2015), "Localizarea instituțională eficientă a funcțiilor de prevenire și de combatere a corupției", <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=511>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶⁵ IPP (2016), "Activitatea polițienească în Republica Moldova, percepții interne și externe", http://www.ipp.md/public/files/Evenimente/Raport_-_Activitatea_Politieneasca_in_Moldova_ro.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶⁶ CreDO (2014), "Why key law-enforcements institutions do not deliver?", <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=483>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶⁷ ADEPT (2014), "Comisia Națională de Integritate la doi ani de activitate: Așteptări și realizări", <http://www.e-democracy.md/adept/publications/cni-2-ani/>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶⁸ CRJM (2016), "Sondaj. Percepția judecătorilor, procurorilor și avocaților privind reforma în justiție și combaterea corupției", <http://crjm.org/category/publications/justitie/>, accessed on 28.05.2016; TI-Moldova (2016), "Sistemul Național de Integritate", <http://www.transparency.md/ro/cefacem/publicatii/141-sni-2014>, accessed on 28.05.2016; TI-Moldova (2014), "Monitorizarea conflictelor de interese în Moldova", <http://www.transparency.md/ro/cefacem/publicatii/210-monitorizarea-coi-moldova-2014>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁶⁹ Promolex (2016), "Respectarea Drepturilor Omului în Republica Moldova-2015", https://promolex.md/upload/publications/ro/doc_1437047545.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2016; People's Advocate (2016), "Report on Human Rights in Moldova – 2015", http://www.ombudsman.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/raport_2015_red.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁷⁰ CreDO (2013), "Vulnerability Study. Taxonomy and possible decentralization policy implications for vulnerable groups in Moldova", <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=249?&lang=en>, accessed on 28.05.2016

disabilities (PwD) in 2015 and a package of legal amendments concerning gender equality and related social rights in 2016. Among the most significant transformations during the last two years was the adoption and implementation of non-discrimination law and the setting up of the Anti-discrimination Council in charge of looking into individual cases and proposing special remedial measures.⁷¹

The People's Advocate and the Anti-discrimination Council have gone through a process of institutional strengthening. The former got greater institutional independence and a more solid mandate. The appointment of the Ombudsman and the selection of the members of the Council have been completed through a rather transparent process. Over the last two years, the Council produced a body of progressive administrative jurisprudence. These decisions in many cases have been maintained by the courts.⁷² In the human rights area, preventive anti-discrimination functions require ex-ante impact assessment on gender equality and human rights of policies and laws as well as the proposal of special measures for adoption regarding specific vulnerable groups; these functions are still underdeveloped.

Moldova's gender sensitive Human Development Index (HDI in 2011) achieves 0.429 against 0.623 for the whole population. The difference reflects the loss in human development for women due to their disadvantages in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Women remain dramatically underrepresented in public office; there is extensive horizontal and vertical gender segregation in work; certain health processes display intensely gendered outcomes to the detriment of women. The entrance into force of AA/DCFTA opens up opportunities for the greater integration of women in labour market and provides for rise in benefits in agricultural and service sectors of the economy. At the same time, women are more exposed to risks given smaller businesses and less formalized and therefore few opportunities for credits.⁷³

Parliamentary elections in November 2014 and local elections in June 2015 have not improved substantially women representation in the elective position. Women make only 20.8% in the current Parliament. For local elections, women representation is higher and there is evidence of much better electability of women as they are closer to the voter. According to the Central Electoral Commission data, women make 15.2% of presidents of rayons, 20.6% of mayors, 18.5% of rayon councils, and 30% of commune councils. The persistence of inequalities in Moldova hinders the development of the country and restricts the ability of disadvantaged sectors to fully realize their human capabilities. To break through the wall of bias and disadvantaged political position of women, a regulatory gender sensitive quota of 40% is needed to boost political opportunities of women and improved skills for their direct campaigning.

Civil society and media

The conditions for the functioning of civil society and media are generally permissive but not enabling. Fiscal and tax conditions are cumbersome and are not adapted for the needs of their development. The operational regulatory framework stipulates the conditions for accessing public information and overseeing the degree of Government transparency in decision-making. Prosecution resulted from civil society actions is rare, except in the Transnistrian region.

⁷¹ CReDO, CNR (2016), UPR Submission 2016: Universal Periodic Review - Republic of Moldova, 26th session <http://www.credo.md/pageview?id=577>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁷² Antidiscrimination Council (2015), "Annual report 2015", <http://www.egalitate.md/media/files/Raport%20general%202015.pdf>, accessed on 28.05.2016

⁷³ Indvelop (2016), "Gender Analysis of the EU AA/DCFTA with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine", <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/1d7e165f86b349f7a4629d30ffdcde83/final-report---gender-analysis-of-eu-aadcfta-with-georgia-moldova-and-ukraine-29-jan-2016.pdf>, accessed 28.05.2016

A proportion of 70-75% of the civil society activities are financed by foreign donors. Funding is mostly project based. In December 2013, the so-called “2% Law” was adopted. This law allows physical persons the right to divert 2% of their income tax to non-commercial organizations of public utility (mainly "classical" NGOs and not social partners). Enforcement of the law is however challenging since the conditions for benefitting of this mechanism are complicated and unclear. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) also have the option to raise funds as service and goods providers as long as such activity is stipulated in their statute. The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection has recently started to contract out CSOs for service provision, especially for the vulnerable, based on the Law on Public Procurement and Law on Social Contracting passed in 2013. However, this is a unique example and not always the case. For small CSOs in particular, local authorities represent a source of funding and support as they may engage CSOs in local governance and policy making. Such role would be relevant as a way to both launch initiatives aimed at reducing social exclusion factors at local level and foster decentralization, in line with current reform processes.

There are no self-governing bodies on the ethics of civil society. Only 24% of Moldovan citizens claim they trust CSOs. This negative image is partly caused by the donor-driven elite of a restricted circle of NGOs from the centre, disconnected from the wider society, which dominates the relations with donors and the Government. The development of smaller, local NGOs having a real constituency in society is low. In view of the needed watchdog function of the CSOs, but also of new roles and responsibilities deriving from the implementation of the AA, the lack of representativeness of the civil society sector, its limited capacity for advocacy and engagement in high level policy dialogue and insufficient organizational skills are of utmost concern.

Media landscape diversified substantially in the last five years but is divided mostly along the political lines and fractions. Some programmes are well balanced within the same tv network while others are less. During the electoral campaigns media polarization is even higher. Concentration of media is high as there are three-four economic and political centres which control the major audio-visual outlets and news internet portals (70% and 40% respectively). The number of licenses held by one owner is limited to five, thus allowing higher influence from the single owner with multiple licences, which is the reality in Moldova with just two owners concentrating most of audio-visual licences. Advertising market is limited and favours foreign re-broadcasting audio-visual outlets. Full aired content is produced by only several audio-visual outlets, not exclusively funded from advertisements but with core pay from the owners. Moldova progressed in removing criminal defamation already back in 2010 and there have been no cases of prosecuted journalists since. Media ethical standards remains a challenge, the professional journalist association being unable to come on terms for reuniting all journalists and uphold the working standards. There is media pluralism but its political polarization is very high. The self-organization of media is in progress. The Code of Ethics is not shared broadly by all journalists and the editorial independence is not secured by the law and in practice. Over the last few years, investigation journalism has started to successfully investigate cases of corruption and expose corrupted practices. According to API (Association for Independent Press), media is more able now to report on the sensitive issues of child rights and women and on gender equality.

Strategic framework

The country's current National Development Strategy "Moldova 2020", adopted in 2012, has seven development priorities which are prone to be crucial for changing the economic paradigm of Moldova, as follows:⁷⁴

⁷⁴The Republic of Moldova (2012), "National Development Strategy Moldova 2020", Law no.166/11.07.2012, published in the Official Journal no. 245-247/30.11.2012

1. Aligning the education system to labour market needs in order to enhance labour productivity and increase employment in the economy;
2. 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.
8. Agriculture and rural development: Competitiveness of agri-food products and sustainable rural development.

The broad framework of the National Development Strategy was widely consulted during its formulation and practically accepted by all political parties. It has remained as a foundation for development strategy despite frequent changes in government, and progress has been achieved in its implementation. However, despite advancements, opportunities and results for the people of Moldova have not yet been realized due to slow pace of policy and legal reforms, weak institutional capacity, and lack of resources to boost service delivery at the local level on the background of several political crises, culminating at the end of 2014 with a major banking scandal involving the disappearance of 1 USD billion and the formation of a third government since parliamentary elections in November 2014.

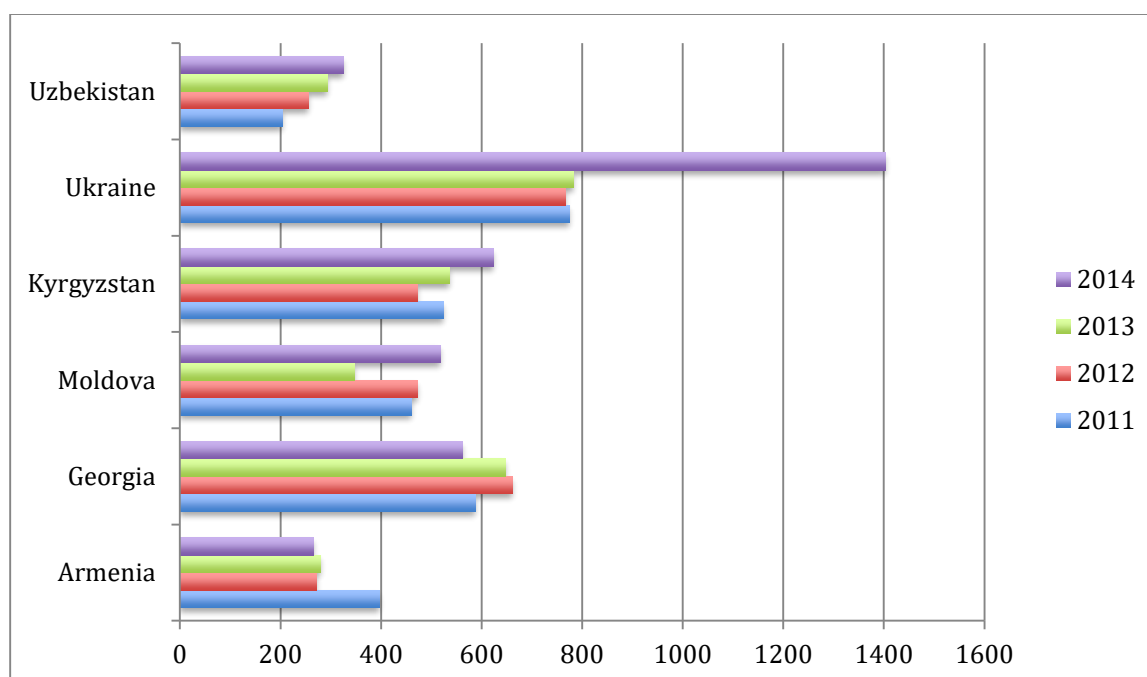
Official Development Assistance

The Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Moldova decreased from 461.2 million USD in 2011 to 347.03 million USD in 2013 (due to lengthy domestic political crisis), but reversed the trend in 2014 when the assistance reached 517.4 million USD. The country is the fourth recipient of ODA among the low middle income countries in Community of Independent States (CIS), after Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan (Figure 3). According to OECD data, Moldova's major donors are the EU and European financial institutions, USA, International Development Association (IDA), Japan and Germany.⁷⁵ The sectors receiving the greatest assistance have been agriculture, public administration, civil society, water and waste management, and transport⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ <http://www2.compareyourcountry.org/aid-statistics?cr=302&lg=en&page=1> , accessed 09.05.2016

⁷⁶ State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova (2015), "Cooperare pentru dezvoltare. Raport anual 2014 cu privire la Asistența Externă acordată Republicii Moldova", Chisinau

Figure 3. Total ODA to Low Middle Income Countries from CIS 2011-2014 (million USD)



Country ⁷⁷	2011	2012	2013	2014
Armenia	396.94	271.16	278.96	265.34
Georgia	587.95	660.45	647.27	562.79
Moldova	461.20	473.45	347.03	517.40
Kyrgyzstan	524.74	471.64	536.40	624.09
Ukraine	775.15	767.60	783.48	1,403.68
Uzbekistan	203.64	254.94	292.74	324.39

As far as EU assistance is concerned, the Single Support Framework for the EU - Republic of Moldova (2014–2017) includes three priority intervention sectors to be financed by EU i.e. public administration reform; agriculture and rural development; and police reform and border management.

Support is dependent on political stability and the will to implement reforms and restructure the system. The macro-financial instability caused by the banking scandal at the end of 2014 and political deadlock has affected the influx of external assistance to the country. The postponement of negotiations by the International Monetary Fund was followed by the World Bank's suspension of 45 million USD assistance for 2015, and the EU's freezing of budget support worth 40.7 million Euro⁷⁸. Apart from endangering earlier achievements in key reforms, the continuous political instability may lead to further loss of donor trust and could paralyse the previously well-established mechanisms of donor coordination, an essential ingredient of aid effectiveness⁷⁹. The serious delays in processing the data gathered during the Population and Housing Census conducted in May 2014 is another matter of concern, as funds to be made available from donors are also dependent upon the census results and continued delays are undermining the accuracy and credibility of the exercise.

The prime minister is the national coordinator of the foreign assistance, while the State Chancellery is the national authority in charge of foreign assistance coordination. Within the State Chancellery, external assistance is administered by the National Coordination Unit. According to the recent

⁷⁷ Source: OECD Stats (2015), available at: <http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/#?x=2&y=6&f=3:51,4:1,1:1,5:3,7:1&q=3:51+4:1+1:1+5:3+7:1+2:9,66,92,114,182,185+6:2007,2008,2009,2010,2011,2012,2013,2014,2015>, accessed on 09.05.2016

⁷⁸ Jaromin, K. (2015), "EU freezes funding for Moldova", www.euractiv.com/sections/europes-east/eu-freezes-fundingmoldova-316202, accessed on 09.05.2016

⁷⁹ Bucătaru, V., Sobják, A. (2015), "Aid Coordination in Moldova: Politics Killing Policy", Policy Paper No. 39 (141), November 2015 © PISM

Government Decision no.561/2015, priorities for the development assistance at the national level are formulated by this Unit, based on proposals submitted by the Sectoral Coordination Councils, in line with the National Development Strategy, agreements between the EU and Moldova, and the government activity programme. As far as donors' coordination is concerned, monthly generic meetings organised by the UN at the World Bank's premises in Chisinau, and attended by bilateral and multilateral donors, are the major platform for development partners. The meetings are supposed to be co-chaired by the UN and the State Chancellery; due to political turmoil and the fact that the position of the Secretary General of the government, heading the Chancellery, was vacant for almost a year, government ownership of the meetings has been negatively affected. The meetings are mainly informative and less platforms for decision-making. A tool often used for donor coordination is the Aid Management Platform⁸⁰, launched in January 2014 with UN support and run by the State Chancellery. It is an online database which summarizes information on all external aid received by the country.

⁸⁰ www.amp.gov.md

2. OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

The **object of this evaluation** is the UN-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework (UNPF) 2013-2017 “Unity in Action”. The UNPF was signed by the Government of Moldova and 22 UN agencies, both resident and non-resident in Moldova⁸¹, expressing the collective determination of the parties to collaborate to tackle major national development challenges and meet the country’s international development goals and human rights commitments. Based on this, an Action Plan 2013-2017 was developed, translating the commitments of the UNPF into an agreement between the same parties and setting out the ways in which the UN will support the key development and reform commitments of Government, common principles, strategies and management approaches.

Overall goal. The overall goal of the UNPF was “to enhance the growth agenda of the Government of Moldova with support for building regulatory and institutional capacity and conditions for good governance; promotion of UN values and strengthened democracy; ensuring equity through development of national capacity for social service delivery and inclusive development opportunities; and ensuring sustainable management of the environment, with the underlying objective to improve the lives of all people living in Moldova”⁸².

It provided a strategic framework for prioritising UN support to Moldova in order to address major development challenges, achieve the MDGs, comply with international human rights commitments and take significant steps towards EU membership.

Intended results. The UNPF was aimed to reach its overall goal by achieving ten **Outcomes** grouped under three broad thematic pillars:

1. Democratic governance, justice, equality and human rights
2. Human development and social inclusion
3. Environment, climate change and disaster risk management

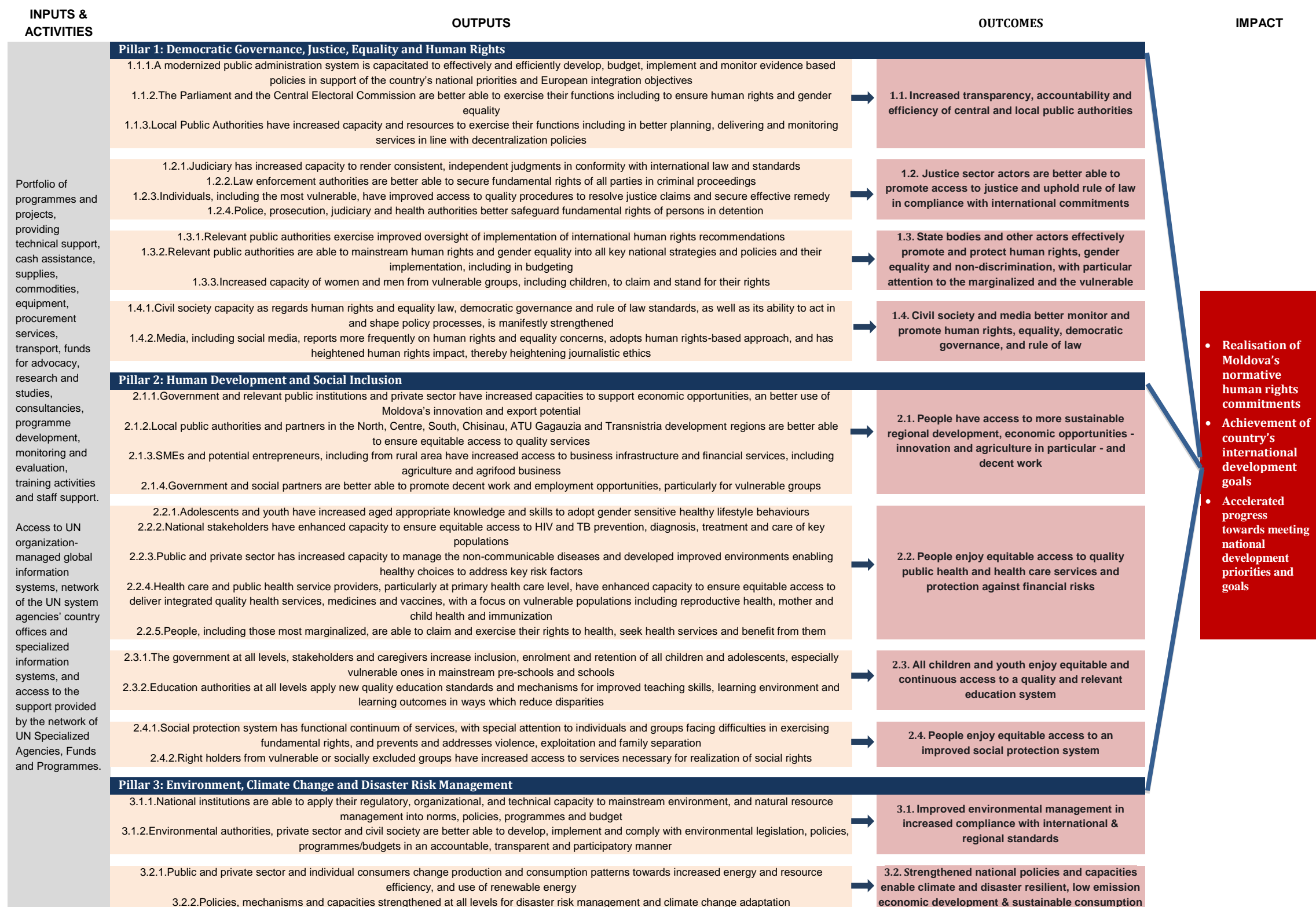
In line with the intervention logic, the UNPF Action Plan further developed the overarching Outcomes into 29 expected **Outputs**.

The UNPF does not contain an underlying Theory of Change, but rather a results chain up to the outcome level. Based on the UNPF and its Action Plan, the results chain of the UNPF has been reconstructed by the International Consultant up to the impact level to provide the main framework for the evaluation (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Results Chain of the UNPF 2013-2017 in Moldova

⁸¹ UN resident agencies: FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNPFA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, World Bank; UN non-resident agencies: IAEA, ITC, UNCITRAL, UNCTAD, UNECE, UNEP Regional Office for Europe, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC, IFAD.

⁸² UNPF 2013-2017, page 1



The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNPF in 2015 led to significant mid-course changes in the UNPF results matrix at the level of outcome and output indicators. The revised matrix currently includes 14 reformulated indicators, 13 deleted indicators, 7 new indicators, 15 revised baselines and 20 revised targets.

Intended reach. The data sources available do not provide a statement on the intended aggregate number of beneficiaries of the UNPF, apart from an implicit intended reach of the whole country through programmatic interventions.

Portfolio and resourcing. The estimated financial resources required by the UN system in Moldova to implement a portfolio of 168 programmes and projects in order to achieve the intended results of the UNPF is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Intended resourcing of the UNPF 2013-2017

Thematic pillar	Portfolio (no. of programmes/ projects)*	Estimated resources (USD)
1. Governance, justice, equality and human rights	54	61,890,000
2. Human development and social inclusion	76	123,144,000**
3. Environment, climate change and disaster risk management	38	32,256,000
TOTAL	168	217,290,000

* It does not include the World Bank-led projects; ** This amount includes an estimated USD 40,000,000 of highly concessional loans from IFAD, with a grant element exceeding 70%.

Source: UNPF 2013-2017, page 16

According to figures provided by RCO Moldova, the amount spent during 2013-2015 was 126,467,693 USD, representing around 58% of the estimated UNPF budget⁸³. Analysis of the budget by thematic areas shows that Human development and social inclusion portfolio (pillar 2) was intended to take 56.7% of the intended overall budget (Table 2). This is followed by 28.5% for Governance, justice, equality and human rights (pillar 1) and 14.8% for Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management (pillar 3).

Implementation strategies. The review of the UNPF document and its Action Plan indicates that the following strategies were planned to be used for the implementation of UNPF:

- *Convergence of UN actions to increase UNPF efficiency and impact:* building on existing experience in joint programmes; development new joint programmes involving several UN system agencies which could add value and increase impact; enhanced coordination of programmatic actions; using the broader expertise available across the UN System; close coordination of local level activities of UN system agencies co-located in communities; close cooperation between UN system agencies co-located in the same ministries and Government agencies and sectors to provide a better programmatic approach to issues; leverage the expertise of other UN system agencies, as appropriate; work to heighten efficiency and to reduce transaction costs for all parties, as part UN Moldova's aspiration to *Delivering as One (DaO)*.
- *Participatory and inclusive approach:* encourage all relevant key stakeholders, notably UN system agencies, Government, international development partners, CSOs, private sector, population,

⁸³ The UNPF Action Plan, page 10, indicates a higher overall budget of 217,998,820 USD, while the indicative budget updated in May 2016 and shared by the RCO to the evaluation team provides a figure of only 214,670,835 USD.

etc.) to proactively participate in the design (problem analysis, setting priorities and targets), implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the UNPF.

- *Partnership building* of the UN system with the Government of Moldova through its relevant national councils, task forces, and similar mechanisms to advance progress towards the estimated results of the UNPF; promotion of continuous shift of cooperation modalities between the Government and the UN system towards programme-based support; networks and partnerships with Local Public Authorities (LPAs) and other key stakeholders active at local level, civil society organizations and private sector; partnerships with international development partners.
- *Capacity development*: provision of support for sustainable development of national capacity at all levels, for both duty-bearers and rights-holders, to enable the country address development challenges, respond in a timely manner to emergencies, meet international commitments and ultimately improve the well-being of people living in Moldova; policy advice for improving the capacity for evidence-based policy making and good governance.
- *Resource leverage*: engaging in strategic dialogue with national and international partners supporting the advancement of reforms and leveraging resources needed for successful implementation of the UNPF and attainment of its intended results.

Implementation mechanism and partners. As mentioned in the UNPF document, national capacity development was aimed to be a key implementing principle for the UNPF. It has thus been planned to gradually “expand the use of national systems in programme implementation through national systems of procurement and financial management, in line with the principles of aid effectiveness”⁸⁴.

A *Steering Committee*, including UN agencies, Government, civil society, private sector and key development partners (such as the European Union), guided and facilitated the preparation of the UNPF, but ceased to function during the implementation period due to political instability and constant changes of key stakeholders in the Government. A joint responsibility for the implementation of UNPF has been entrusted to the State Chancellery, as *National Coordinating Authority*, and the UNCT. In addition, three *Results Groups*, chaired by a UN Head of Agency and primarily composed of UN agencies, were set up for each thematic pillar of the UNPF and their associated outcomes. Within each result group, *Outcome Groups*, involving senior programme officers designated by relevant UN agencies, were functioning, having a designated convening agency, as per UNPF Results Matrix. The results and associated outcome groups were responsible for ensuring joint planning, facilitating implementation, monitoring and reporting on progress recorded in each pillar, respectively for each outcome, and for necessary interface with national mechanisms.

The main planning and reporting document was the UNPF and its Action Plan, in particular the Results Matrix including expected results and indicators with baselines and targets as well as institutional responsibilities for each outcome and output.

The UNPF document identified as *stakeholders* the public, the donors, the government and partners which collaborate with the UN system agencies. It was planned to keep the stakeholders abreast of UNPF implementation progress, results and evaluation findings and recommendations.

⁸⁴ UNPF 2013-2017, page 16.

3. OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The main **objective** of the UNPF 2013-2017 evaluation was to assess the contribution of UN system to national development targets and priorities of Moldova through the UNPF outcomes, as per Terms of Reference (ToR, page 1⁸⁵, Annex 1). More specifically, the evaluation assessed:

- the effectiveness and efficiency by which UNPF outcomes are being achieved, their sustainability and relevance to national priorities and goals; and
- the mainstreaming of the five programming principles in the UNPF interventions, i.e. human rights-based approach, gender equality, environmental sustainability, results-based management, and capacity development.

The evaluation **purpose** was multi-fold: a) to improve accountability for the use of resources and achievement of results; b) to inform the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the planning and decision-making for the next UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) cycle 2018-2022; and c) to further improve UN coordination and coherence at the country level.

The UNPF evaluation meets the UN statutory requirement for evaluation of UN development assistance frameworks once in their cycle. The UNPF is currently in its penultimate year of implementation. The evaluation was scheduled for the first half of 2016 in order to provide usable recommendations for the process of preparing the new UNDAF, which will begin in the last quarter of 2016. This means that the evaluation has a *summative* element focused on **accountability** for results achieved during the period 2013-2015 and a *formative* element focused on **learning** and provision of recommendations relevant for the remainder of the current UNPF and for the preparation of the next one.

The ToR specify the main intended **users of the evaluation** which are the UNCT, the Government of Moldova, development partners and civil society.

The **Scope** of the evaluation was defined by the following elements:

- focus on the assessment of the actual progress in UNPF implementation against the planned results in the UNPF Results Matrix for the years 2013 through the end 2015, including their plausible contribution to outcomes and national development priorities and targets;
- examination of systemic enabling factors and constraints, including the operating space, that can help explain the progress, respectively the bottlenecks in attaining the planned results;
- geographic coverage: the whole country, with possible site visits to one-two joint UN projects to develop case studies;
- thematic coverage: all three thematic pillars i.e. 1-Democratic governance, justice, equality and human rights, 2-Human development and social inclusion, and 3-Environment, climate change and disaster risk management.

⁸⁵ Amended version of the ToR, dated 16 March 2016.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Conceptual Approach

The evaluation work considered the following **principles**:

- The evaluation of the UNPF in a country such as Moldova requires a focus on the alignment of UN strategies both with the wider normative context (human rights standards) and EU association and international development agenda in a low middle-income country.
- The UNPF and its interventions do not operate in a vacuum but are embedded in broader sectoral and development strategies of the country, and their implementation is frequently dependent on the political, legal and institutional frameworks and constraints in place in the respective country. More specifically, the evaluation employed the concept of 'operating space', meaning the scope for dialogue and partnership between the proponents of the UNPF, i.e. UN system agencies and the Government of Moldova; the extent of a shared vision on issues and policy options; and the availability and capacity of national partners with whom to work. Operating space determines the extent to which international actors such as UN system agencies can raise issues in policy dialogue, provide technical support and assistance, conduct activities and generate results within the policy and programming landscape of a country. Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the UNPF results were thus assessed by considering the extent to which the UNCT made best use of the available operating space in Moldova to achieve the planned results.
- The UNPF and its interventions are not just contributors to accountability, but are also important sources of information and advice for the design of the future UNPF and associated programmes and projects.
- Evaluation of UNPF and its interventions requires an explicit underlying theoretical basis - here the results chain on which the 2013-2017 UNPF was based and associated strategies - against which performance can be assessed.

A theory-based approach was adopted, as appropriate for such a complex evaluation object, particularly where it operates in complex and sometimes volatile environments, such as Moldova. It considered the baselines, the strategic intent and assumptions of UNCT, the Government of Moldova and other decision makers on the preconditions, context and mechanisms making the UNPF interventions work; it then tested these assumptions against the observed results and compared them with baselines following the different steps of the intervention logic in the results chain; it also examined other influencing factors, in particular of the context and national strategies in shaping the UNPF implementation approaches and in determining the nature and level of achievement of intended results. Such approach allowed the evaluation to explain why and how results have occurred at various levels and to appraise UN contribution and of other stakeholders.

A counterfactual was not integrated in the evaluation design given the fact that it did not meet the required conditions (difficult to avoid selection bias and find a good comparator, etc.) and which in any event was not methodologically appropriate for the nature and object of the evaluation⁸⁶. That was also acknowledged by the ToR which mentioned that "attribution of development change to the UNCT (in the sense of establishing a causal linkage between human rights and development interventions and observed results) may be extremely difficult and in many cases infeasible" due to the fact that '(1) outcomes are, by definition, the work of a number of partners, and (2) UNDAF outcomes are set at a

⁸⁶Counterfactuals answer contingent, setting-specific causal questions 'did it work there and then' and cannot be used for generalization to other settings and timeframes, unless they are accompanied by more fine-grained knowledge on the causal mechanisms actually operating within the process leading from potential cause to effect. See Stern, E. et al (2012)

very high level” (page 2). Thus the evaluation considered contribution of the UNCT to the change in the stated UNPF outcomes and explained how the UNCT contributed to the observed result.

4.2 Evaluation Phases

The evaluation was carried out in three consecutive phases: Inception Phase, Data Review and Collection Phase, and Synthesis Phase.

During the **Inception Phase**, the International Consultant had a kick-off discussion with the UN Resident Coordinator (RC) followed by a preliminary review of secondary sources of information, evaluability assessment, design of primary data collection tools (Annex 4), development of the Evaluation Matrix as the main analytical framework against which data will be gathered and analysed (Annex 3) and drafting of the Inception Report.

The **Data Review and Collection Phase** included an in-depth documentary review of secondary quantitative and qualitative data, followed by a 8-day in-country field mission to collect primary data from key stakeholders, based on the data collection tools developed in the Inception Phase. Annex 2 presents the primary data collection methods used by the evaluation team. This phase ended with a debriefing session with UNCT Moldova on the preliminary findings of the evaluation.

During the **Synthesis Phase**, information and facts collected during the first two phases were analysed and integrated in this Draft Evaluation Report, in line with UNEG quality standards. The analysis was based on the Evaluation Matrix which groups the Evaluation Questions (EQs) around:

- the issues of **UNPF design and focus** in terms of mainstreaming into the UNPF results chain the UNDG programming principles, i.e.:
 - human rights-based approach;
 - gender equality;
 - environmental sustainability;
 - results-based management; and
 - capacity development.
- the standard **OECD/DAC evaluation criteria**⁸⁷, i.e.:
 - relevance: alignment of UNPF interventions with Moldova’s national priorities and international commitments;
 - effectiveness: contribution of UNCT to the achievement of the UNPF planned outcomes.
 - efficiency: extent to which outcomes have been achieved at reasonably low cost and maintenance of minimum transaction costs;
 - sustainability: extent to which the obtained benefits (results) have continued, or are likely to continue, after the UNPF-related intervention has been completed.

4.3 Evaluation Design

The methodology model designed for this evaluation aimed to utilize the best mix of data gathering tools to yield the most reliable and valid answers to the EQs and generate maximum learning within the limits of resources and availability of data.

⁸⁷ In addition to the four standard evaluation criteria mentioned above, the ToR required the use of **impact** evaluation criterion as well. Given the fact that the evaluation took place 22 months before the end of the UNPF implementation period, an assessment of the impact at that point in time was highly premature and speculative. It was therefore suggested and agreed to only assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, as also advised by UNEG (2012), “Guidance on Preparing Terms of Reference for UNDAF Evaluations”, page 6.

In order to serve its purpose, the evaluation applied a **mixed-method approach**⁸⁸, including: stakeholder mapping; mapping of situation and contextual analyses; in-depth documentary review and structured desk analysis of UNPF design, implementation approaches, documenting of results and processes; structured desk analysis of policy documents and legislative frameworks; implementation strategies; analysis of the results chain; analysis of results from monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems and data at national level; aggregation and analysis of information collected via the UNCT questionnaire; contribution analysis to determine factors which promoted or impeded the progress against intended results; systems analysis of management, monitoring, quality control and assurance strategies; mapping of risks analyses and mitigation measures; financial analysis; analysis of sustainability strategies and systemic barriers to sustainability; in-depth interviews, focus groups, round tables and case studies, participant observation during site visits.

Validity and reliability of analysis was ensured through triangulation, complementarity and interrogation⁸⁹. Impartiality and lack of bias was safeguarded by the evaluation methodology which relied on a cross-section of information sources and uses a blended methodological approach (quantitative, qualitative and participatory) to ensure triangulation of information through a variety of means.

The design of the evaluation methodology combined a **Results-Based Management (RBM)** with a **Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)** to programming and evaluation i.e. achievement of planned results through morally-acceptable processes to realise human rights. The evaluation identifies the “**rights holders**” of the UNPF the people and communities who are at most risk and vulnerable.

During data collection, attention was paid to ensuring that the evaluation process was ethical and that participants in the process could openly express their opinions, protecting the confidentiality of their answers. Overall, the **UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation** in the UN System (March, 2008) was strictly respected.

Involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation was of utmost importance for the collection of vital data and critical insights, but also for validating findings and conclusions as well as checking the feasibility of recommendations while ensuring buy-in. Therefore, the evaluation was so designed to ensure the involvement of stakeholders at three levels: *information, participation and consultation*, depending on the nature of each stakeholder and engagement in the implementation of the UNPF. In total, a number of 164 people were consulted via 47 in-depth (individual and group) interviews, 5 focus groups and 3 round tables.

4.4 Evaluation Limitations

The ToR identify a possible limitation for this evaluation linked to the attribution of results. The International Consultant has identified additional possible limitations (constraints), which are presented in Table 3 together with corresponding mitigation approaches.

⁸⁸ It combines various methods as a way to overcome limitations and highlight strengths - see Stern et al (2012), “Broadening the range of designs and methods for impact evaluations”, DFID, Working Paper 38.

⁸⁹ Triangulation to confirm and corroborate results reached by different methods, complementarity to explain and understand findings obtained by one method by applying second and interrogation where diverging results emerge from the application of different methods.

Table 3. Limitations to the Evaluation and Mitigation Approaches

Potential Limitations/Constraints	Mitigation approaches
Attribution of results –The complex nature of the object of evaluation, namely the UNPF 2013-2017, involving multiple stakeholders, within a complex and changing environment and context, limited the possibility to use methodologies which imply more linear causality. A direct attribution of change to the delivered activities and outputs of the UNPF was difficult to prove.	The application of a theory-based model, as described in the conceptual approach above, facilitated complexity and context to be explored and understood, and causative pathways to be developed. The evaluation team conducted a contribution analysis by triangulating multiple information sources to determine if there was a tangible contribution of the UNPF to the planned outcomes and if the latter influenced progress towards national development priorities.
Resource constraints (time, financial) – The evaluation team was not able to conduct any primary collection of statistical data related to indicators in the UNPF. The limited field mission time also raised some challenges in consulting the full range of key stakeholders.	The evaluation team relied on data already collected and presented by UNPF stakeholders in the MTR (updated for 2015), annual progress reports, and other studies and evaluations. A questionnaire was sent to the UNCT in advance of the field mission to cover a series of evaluation questions in order to save time and allow the face-to-face interviews focus on issues which required more in-depth analysis. In addition, the team split on the ground to maximise coverage to the extent possible. Phone or skype interviews with stakeholders unable to be interviewed face-to-face during the field mission were also carried out.
Assessment of UNPF efficiency - As opposed to a project evaluation, in a strategic evaluation, such as the one of UNPF, it is challenging to determine efficiency according to a conventional definition as this does not fully consider the benefits of programme partnership, advice, advocacy and other forms of soft assistance.	The efficiency assessment was done by triangulating the perceptions of multiple key informants on the extent to which the UNPF results were achieved without waste and with a minimum of transaction costs, and the quality and timeliness of the actual UNPF outputs. An important question was whether the actual outputs could have been delivered more 'efficiently' by other partners or with the use of other partnership approaches.
Validity and reliability of interview data – particularly in an environment where national sensitivities exist on multiple issues, and where local political conditions shape interaction with external consultants.	Strict application of the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct, ensuring interviewees of confidentiality and anonymity at the start of the interview. Recognising, and being explicit on, the likely limitations of interview data from some sources, and placing major efforts on triangulation.
Unavailability of key informants (staff turnover, travels, etc.)	The International Consultant mapped the key informants and organised, in close cooperation with UNCT, interviews with UN staff or other people that left the respective institutional stakeholder, when information obtained from the existing staff was insufficient; interviews were

Potential Limitations/Constraints	Mitigation approaches
	<p>face-to-face, by skype or by phone, depending on the availability of the respective interviewees.</p> <p>As far as non-resident UN agencies are concerned, a request for one pager and a questionnaire were sent to all nine agencies; however, the response was weak (see Annex 5) and the perspective of non-resident UN agencies is therefore reflected to a limited extent in the analysis.</p>

5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

As mentioned in the methodology section, this evaluation applied the concept of **operating space**, meaning the scope for dialogue and partnership between the proponents of the UNPF, i.e. UN and the Government of Moldova.

The role of UN and partners in delivering support to the Republic of Moldova has been significantly mediated by the specific contextual features of the operating landscape in the country, most notably:

- the protracted economic and political crisis which made difficult for UN entities to have meaningful and results-oriented dialogue and interaction with Government counterparts;
- the unsettled, frozen conflict in Transnistrian region, meaning that the scope for influencing change, beyond the implementation of specific interventions, has been restricted;
- sometimes opaque national decision-making, meaning that policy may rapidly shift direction (e.g. periodic political attempts to promote pro-natality policies by limiting access to family planning services) or institutional restructuring takes place without warning (e.g. deputy Prime Minister post for social affairs abolished end 2014 which could potentially hamper a multi-sectorial approach to development issues, change in the role played by the National Drug Control Commission and its coordinating responsibilities in 2015 compared to 2013, etc.) which required international actors and their national partners to adapt their planned interventions and objectives in a context of sudden change, with some loss of efficiency;
- political sensitivity on certain rights-based issues promoted by UN (e.g. LGBT, religious minorities, violence against children, etc.), limiting the scope for dialogue and cooperation.

The scope and timeframe to generate results in the Republic of Moldova have therefore been highly conditioned by the operating space available, in terms of: space for dialogue with national partners; the extent of a shared vision on issues and policy options between the Government of Moldova and UN; the availability and capacity of national partners with whom to work.

Operating space determines the extent to which international actors such as UN agencies can raise issues in policy dialogue; provide technical support and assistance; and conduct activities within the policy and programming landscape of Moldova. Accordingly, the evaluation analysed the design and focus, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the results obtained so far within the UNPF 2013-2017 by considering the extent to which the UNCT Moldova made best use of the available operating space to achieve the planned results.

5.1 Design and focus of UNPF

Evaluation of UNPF design and focus efficiency was based on the following evaluation questions:

To what extent did the UNPF promote and apply a **HRBA and gender equality** standards and principles to achieve outputs and contribute to the UNPF outcomes?

To what extent did the UNPF effectively use the principles of **environmental sustainability** to achieve outputs and contribute to the UNPF outcomes?

To what extent did the UNPF focus on national **capacity development** of government and CSOs?

To what extent did UNPF strengthen the capacities for data collection and analysis to ensure **disaggregated data** on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, income levels, geographic location, as well where it is relevant migration status? Did the groups subject to discrimination and disadvantage benefited from priority attention?

Did the UNPF adequately used **RBM** in its design to ensure that it is a results-oriented, realistic, focused and evaluable framework?

Was UNPF **Results Matrix** sufficiently flexible to respond to new opportunities and challenges that arose during the UNPF lifetime?

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Guidelines⁹⁰ identify five programming principles: a HRBA, Gender equality, Environmental sustainability, Capacity development, and RBM. The principles bring value to country analysis and they help to identify results and strategies for more effective UN-supported country programming. They also help to balance the pursuit of international norms and standards with the achievement of national development priorities⁹¹.

HRBA and gender equality standards and principles

UN is associated by Moldovan politicians, civil servants, CSOs, ordinary people, international development partners with human rights! There is a sound human rights orientation across all UN agencies functioning in the Republic of Moldova. They have a strong human rights mandate and have been constantly pushing for the ratification and observance of human rights standards as well as for maintaining key human rights issues on the priority list of government agenda. The UN Moldova Diversity Initiative Task Force has made good progress in the implementation of an ambitious diversity policy within the UN family itself, consisting of more inclusive recruitment processes, staff diversity training, improved physical accessibility of UN offices, revised contracting and procurement procedures to strengthen human rights, gender equality and diversity commitments and increased accessibility of UN communications.

HRBA is a normative principle. It is used to further the realization of human rights and ensure that human rights standards and principles guide all phases of development cooperation. It focuses on the development of the capacities of 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations and of 'rights-holders' to claim

⁹⁰ UNDG (2009), "How to Prepare an UNDAF: Part (I) Guidelines for UN Country Teams", UN. See also: Part (II) Technical Guidance for UN Country Teams

⁹¹ UNDG (2010), "Guidance Note: Application of the Programming Principles to the UNDAF"

their rights. Gender equality, a normative principle as well, aims to ensure that priorities in the national development framework reflect the country's commitments to achieving gender equality and that programme results and strategies contribute to these gender equality goals. Gender mainstreaming is a key strategy to examine how women and men experience problems differently, and how they relate to one another and the societal forces that shape power relationships.

The UNCT Moldova has effectively used a HRBA and gender equality standards and principles for the programming UN assistance over the period 2013-2017, as demonstrated by the Country Analysis (CA)⁹² and UNPF itself. A light CA was prepared in 2011, building on extensive analytical work led by the Government for reporting on progress towards MDGs and human development as well as analyses carried out by UN for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the European Neighbourhood Policy reporting. This analytical work has been highly participative and it is therefore likely that the needs and views of vulnerable groups, as rights-holders, have been reflected in the CA. The analysis used a rights-based assessment of human development, linking the human development issues with the national strategies, MDGs and key Human Rights Instruments. The CA identified a series of shortcomings related to the realization of the right to development and well-being, right to health, right to education, right to a healthy environment, right to social protection, right to sexual orientation and gender identity and right to a good governance mostly from a human development and gender equality perspective.

The CA was the key document which informed the development of the UNPF 2013-2017. Apart from that, a *consultation* process on UNPF priorities and expected results was carried out in 2011-2012 that brought together the UN system, Government, social partners, stakeholders from civil society, international development partners and Moldovan diaspora. Still, the evaluation was informed that, with few exceptions⁹³, **there was rather limited participation of vulnerable groups (via their representatives) in the planning of UNPF and in the process of identifying the target groups, allowing for potential self-identification by individuals**⁹⁴. The complexity of the process was reported by some NGOs to have led to uneven participation of final beneficiaries, depending on their own capacity to understand and contribute to the discussions. Indeed, the UNPF addressed civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in relation to most vulnerable groups identified in the CA, including of people in Transnistrian region, most under-represented women in decision-making process, victims of human trafficking and domestic violence, Roma, people living with HIV/AIDS, TB or other stigmatised diseases, PwD, children without parental care, children in conflict with the law, neglected and abused children, rural youth, working poor, small farms holders, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers.

It however left aside or only marginally addressed the needs of several groups whose human rights are repeatedly violated (notably the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender - LGBT⁹⁵, religious minorities, illegal migrants⁹⁶), although they have been figuring in the definition of vulnerable groups in the UNPF (footnote 6, page 8). It seems that the political sensitivity around the issues of these groups has impeded UN to take a more explicit stance and 'visualize' them more prominently in the UNPF. In case of the elderly, who constitute another disadvantaged group⁹⁷, there have been some support provided for mainstreaming ageing into policy documents, generating

⁹² UN Moldova (2011), "Country Analysis. United Nations – Moldova"

⁹³ Notably UNICEF which collected inputs from children for its situation analysis conducted in 2011, which contributed to setting priorities for the UNPF. There is a dedicated chapter on children's views, see http://www.unicef.org/moldova/ro/Raport_ENG.pdf accessed 15 April 2016

⁹⁴ OHCHR (2008), "Report on Indicators for Promoting and Monitoring the Implementation of Human Rights"

⁹⁵ Apart from supporting the LGBT Pride events in 2013 and 2014.

⁹⁶ See, for instance, IPP, Soros Moldova, SOIR Moldova (2015), "The Phenomenon of Discrimination in Moldova: Perceptions of the Population A Comparative Study", Chisinau

⁹⁷ See Rojco, A., Gagauz, O. (2015), "The Quality of Life of the Elderly", Demographic Barometer, Centrul pentru Cercetări Demografice, UNFPA

evidence for policy-making, enhancing capacities of journalists to report on ageing and of CSOs to advocate for the rights of the older people. Nevertheless, the elderly do not figure as a distinct vulnerable group in the UNPF Results Matrix and the age disaggregation is incomplete for many relevant indicators, thus impeding targeted monitoring and reporting on progress at UNPF level. In addition, there was a tendency to consider gender-sensitive programming from the perspectives of women only, addressing less the area where males are disadvantaged (e.g. dropping-out in secondary schools, men's health issues, etc.). Key informants also reported that the migrants' issues and migration-related priorities agreed during the public consultations have been only marginally addressed in the final version of the UNPF, although it was acknowledged as a transversal phenomenon with multiple and significant effects⁹⁸. Overall, these aspects led to some lost opportunities for UNPF in comprehensively addressing discrimination and vulnerability in Moldova.

Human rights were embedded in the formulation of most outcomes and outputs of UNPF, in particular those planned under pillar 1 "Democratic Governance, Justice, Equality and Human Rights" and pillar 2 "Human Development and Social Inclusion". Human rights and gender equality were also 'made visible' in the formulation and disaggregation of UNPF indicators (by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, urban/rural, region, income, education level, etc.) in the Results Matrix, particularly following the MTR in 2015. **The document was guided by the human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, participation and inclusion, and accountability and rule of law.** The principles of progressive realization of human rights and use of maximum available resources were rather implicit in UNPF, with the notable exception of output 1.3.2 which explicitly envisaged the establishment of a mechanism for mainstreaming gender, human rights and diaspora in state budget.

In fulfilling human rights and achieving gender equality, both mainstreamed and targeted interventions were envisaged as key strategies of UNPF implementation, which were later on reflected in the portfolio of programmes and projects implemented with the support of UN since 2013. These interventions have aimed to develop the capacities of duty-bearers (notably Government and other central and local public authorities, Parliament, private companies, parents, etc.) to meet their obligations and, to a certain extent, of rights-holders to claim their rights and have a meaningful say in the overall change process.

Environmental sustainability principle

Environmental sustainability is also a normative principle which aims to promote an understanding of the linkages between environment and development; support country partners to mainstream environmental considerations into the national development framework using the goals and targets of the MDGs, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and ratified Multilateral Environmental Agreements⁹⁹; and anticipate environmental opportunities and constraints as early as possible in programme cooperation.

UNDG guidelines identify 15 specific entry points and related actions and tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability into programme cooperation¹⁰⁰. Two are particularly important: (1) Screening for environment during CA to get an understanding of any critical environmental issues, how they relate to national development priorities, and (2) Preliminary environmental review of draft UNDAF results to flag potential environmental opportunities or constraints and their implications for results.

⁹⁸ UNPF 2013-2017, page 3

⁹⁹ There are 700-plus Multilateral Environmental Agreements in three broad clusters: climate, biodiversity, chemicals.

¹⁰⁰ UNDG (2009), "Mainstreaming Environmental Sustainability in Country Analysis and the UNDAF. A Guidance Note for United Nations Country Teams and Implementing Partners Teams"

Notwithstanding the UN Moldova's contribution to the development and operationalization of two key legal instruments (the Environmental Impact Assessment and the Strategic Environmental Assessment - SEA) and work on greening the economy, **mainstreaming efforts proceeded more slowly and work in this area appears to have occurred more in a *silo* compared with the other principles.**

Environmental pollution is the reality faced by almost every country to a large or limited extent. Natural resources are depleting rapidly, creating scarcity problem for the next generation. A large number of people, particularly the poor, are seriously affected. On one hand, every country is trying to increase economic growth to alleviate the living standard of their people and on the other hand, environmental problems are becoming complicated due to excessive use of resources. Until recently, environment and development were considered to be opposite terms. Nowadays, researchers and development practitioners tackle these issues inclusively, as it is well understood that there can be no sustainable development without considering environmental aspects.

The CA (2011) acknowledged that the “environment sector is still not perceived as a driver of growth, and the links between socioeconomic development and environmental management, and the benefits arising from an improved status of the environment are not sufficiently acknowledged” (page 8). **The UNPF planning exercise mapped well existing problems in socio-economic development as well as the environmental ones, also linking them together at some point.** One of the minutes of the meetings of the working groups which prepared the document back in 2011 reads: “Environmental degradation, pollution and unsustainable use of natural resources is a significant concern for Moldova's development agenda. The economic, social and health costs of environmental degradation, deteriorated infrastructure and natural disasters impacts are high while economic growth and demographic development will further increase pressure on the environment and natural resources.”¹⁰¹ **It appears that the planning process was informed by a certain level of understanding of the relationship between environment and development. Yet the UNPF separated the two areas into different pillars.** Environmental considerations were addressed only in pillar 3. Linkages environment-poverty, environment-gender, environment-migration, etc. seemed to have been neglected in the UNPF Results Matrix. Migration, for instance, has a significant imprint upon environment via negative effects (unlaboured and eroded fields), but also positive ones (new practices in using alternative energy sources, waste management, etc.). Yet, there is no clear reflection of this linkage in the planned results and strategies of UNPF.

At the same time, environment-related principles¹⁰² were hardly reflected in the planned results of other pillars, except for outcome 2.1. (pillar 2) which marginally touches environmental concerns from the development perspective through one of its indicators: “% of population with permanent access to sewage systems and quality water, disaggregated by urban/rural and geographical area”. There are several factors which might explain the situation. Although consulted, the Ministry of Environment was not a standing member of the Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee which led the preparation of UNPF. As such, **inter-sectoral coordination on environmental matters might have had a lower priority.** In addition, the evaluation was informed that the inputs of the Ministry were only partially considered and no feedback was provided to the Ministry to explain the reasons, an issue which was raised by other Government stakeholders as well. **As far as UN Moldova is concerned, the environment area did not benefit from an organised inter-agency theme group, such as that for human rights and gender equality, and there is a rather low level of understanding among UN agencies of the meaning of the environmental sustainability**

¹⁰¹ Minutes of the working groups, 30 August 2011, page 24

¹⁰² Integration and Interdependence; Transparency, Public Participation and Access to Information and Remedies; Precaution; Polluter-Pays; Responsibility for trans-boundary Harm

mainstreaming. Principles of environmental sustainability are not yet fully enshrined into all UN agencies activity. Being a rather new set of principles applied in the UN agencies in Moldova, very few of them see environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting issue which should be considered at programming phase. Out of 10 resident agencies which responded to the questionnaire, four agencies confused the mainstreaming of the principle with the targeted interventions under pillar 3, one agency mentioned that it is not applicable for its area of work and four agencies did not reply at all.

At operational level though, there are many examples of initiatives which aimed to mainstream environmental concerns into development work. For instance, WHO supported national authorities to strengthen their capacities to perform health impact assessments at selected public health centres, and to network in the region with other countries. The MTR makes also reference to the energy-related legislation and policy frameworks approved in 2013 which bring evidence of environmental mainstreaming and inter-sector cooperation. UNIDO has been working with businesses to incorporate cleaner production and resource efficiency into their production processes effectively leading to economic savings and increased productivity, while reducing the manufacturing sector's impact on the environment. FAO has supported the implementation of interventions aimed to prevent the negative effects of climate change on agriculture. Another example is provided by UNICEF which supported the development/revision of local development plans which are child-focused and mainstreamed in terms of disaster risk management. The UNDP-supported projects on bio-mass had an imprint on jobs generation. UNDP country office has also a focal point which screens every project initiative against correspondence to environmental sustainability. The projects should be 'environment-sensitive', such as the one which provides support to strengthening the capacities of the Parliament, also contributing to better quality environmental legislation through consolidating the capacities of the specialized commission. There is definitely room for improvement at the planning stage of the next UNPF, by considering environmental sustainability as a key cross-cutting issue, alike HRBA principle.

Focus of UNPF on national capacity development

Capacity development is an enabling principle. As part of programme cooperation, it supports country partners to better lead, manage, achieve and account for their national development priorities, especially for those related to the MDGs and human rights obligations in ratified UN conventions and treaties. The main steps involved are to assess capacity assets and needs for the achievement of national priorities, design and conduct capacity assessments, and design capacity development strategies together with partners and ensure that they are reflected in programme results and indicators.

UNPF dedicates significant importance to enhancing the capacities of implementing partners and final beneficiaries. It asserts that the national capacity development is a key implementing principle and that UNPF overall objectives are *'...to provide support for building regulatory and institutional capacity and conditions for good governance;ensure equity through development of national capacity for social service delivery'*¹⁰³. **Capacity development cuts across the UNPF, being embedded in the formulation of a large number of outcomes/outputs** and reflected, with few regrettable exemptions¹⁰⁴, in related indicators.

¹⁰³ UNPF 2013-2017, page 5

¹⁰⁴ Output 2.1.1. "Government and relevant public institutions and private sector have increased capacities to support economic opportunities, and better use of Moldova's innovation and export potential" left without an indicator to measure progress after the revision of the Results Matrix (MTR, 2015). Other examples refer to output 1.3.3 "Increased capacity of women and men from vulnerable groups, including children, to claim and stand for their rights" and output 1.4 "Government and social partners are better able to promote decent work and employment opportunities, particularly for vulnerable groups" for which new capacity building indicators and disaggregations were proposed by the experts to reflect the migration perspective, but were not considered in the final version of the Results Matrix.

Capacity building priorities were informed by the light CA (2011) and also by the results of the working groups set up for the design of the UNPF. The CA identified a strong need for capacity strengthening, considering that “UN agencies are well positioned to support this process, due to their broad knowledge and expertise in capacity development, and their ability to act quickly and flexibly”.¹⁰⁵ **The review of minutes taken on the occasion of their meetings demonstrates that part of the debates and work was focused on the identification of overall root causes of issues and capacity gaps, but less on capacity assets**¹⁰⁶. On the other side, the borderline between the capacity gaps of implementing partners and those at the level of final beneficiaries was rather blurred. Ownership of change depends on the capacity of all actors in the society, including the final beneficiaries. **The evaluation has not found evidence that a more formal, structured capacity assessment was conducted as part of the UNPF preparation or for the MTR, based on UNDG guidelines**¹⁰⁷, **to enable more robust assessment of results and formulation of cross-sector responses to unlock value of existing capacity assets and maximize impact.**

At operational level, the review of UN-supported projects and programmes implemented since 2013 and achieved results (see the Effectiveness section) indicate that the development of the national capacity has been at the core and the most preferred option for many support interventions. **Strengthening or developing new institutional capacities of duty-bearers (Government, other public authorities, Parliament, oversight bodies, social partners, political partners, etc.) to protect, promote and fulfil human rights as well as to monitor and report on ratified international standards stayed at the heart of many UNPF activities.** There are positive examples of capacity development materialised during the programming cycle, such as in the area of preschool education; collective bargaining; gender equality; rights-sensitive media reporting; environmental planning; generating, accessing and using environmental information; strategic planning, local finance management and participatory decision-making at local level¹⁰⁸; mainstreaming migration in development strategies; management of public services with the participation of community members, including the migrants¹⁰⁹. **The bulk of the capacity building investment went to the public authorities and agencies, while civil society and beneficiary groups benefited to a lesser extent. However the high turnover within the state agencies returned in many instances depleting skills and knowledge in some few years.** A finding that emerged from interviews with Government partners is the need for further capacity development and UN is urged to put even greater emphasis on supporting the Government at central and local levels especially to cope with high staff turnover, new responsibilities related to the implementation of Association Agreement, and implementation of a results-based approach to monitoring and evaluation of public policies.

In the case of rights-holders (vulnerable people, citizens, community groups, etc.), the focus was put on increasing their access to quality services, protection against disasters, better governance and sustainable development opportunities, and on encouraging women’s participation in voting, women political empowerment¹¹⁰ **and participation in decision-making and local development planning. Increasing rights-holders’ capacity to understand and claim their rights received less attention,** except in four out of 29 outputs¹¹¹ in the area of civil and political rights and health. As put it by one key informant consulted for the evaluation purposes, the UNPF appears to have been excessively focused on strengthening the institutions and structures, and less on people in their individuality and diversity.

¹⁰⁵ UNDP (2011) Country Analysis, page 12

¹⁰⁶ See, for instance, “Progress of UNDAF Working Groups 6 September 2011” provided by the RCO Moldova

¹⁰⁷ See UNDG (2008), “UNDG Capacity Assessment Methodology User Guide: for national capacity development”

¹⁰⁸ Joint Integrated Local Development Project

¹⁰⁹ UNDP/SDC “Integration Migration into Local Development” project

¹¹⁰ Via the Gender Equality Platform, too.

¹¹¹ Outputs 1.3.3, 1.4.1, 2.2.1 and 2.2.5

The approach used by UN agencies to provide capacity building in the form of knowledge/skills on one side and equipment/infrastructure on the other side has been a distinguished feature along with the learning format which combined standard trainings with follow-up mentoring and coaching (see Case Study in Annex 10). A problematic issue revealed by interviews and the review of project reports is the limited attention paid to evaluating the effects of capacity building initiatives, many stakeholders reporting primarily what was done rather than what was achieved as a result of improved capacities.

As far as capacity for data collection and analysis is concerned, the CA from 2011 highlighted the lack of reliable, systematic and disaggregated data as an issue to evaluate the needs, provide evidence for policy development at the national and local levels and measure the impact of those policies. As a result, the **UNPF aimed to strengthen the capacity for disaggregated data collection and analysis in order to better address the discrimination and disadvantage among specific vulnerable groups**. In this regard, capacity building is identifiable in the formulation of various outputs and indicators, particularly in pillar 1, for instance: *“A modernized public administration system is capacitated to effectively develop, budget, implement and monitor evidence-based policies in support of country’s national priorities and European integration objectives” (output 1.1.1.), “2014 Population and Housing Census undertaken” (indicator 1.1.1.d), “Human rights and gender analysis of the draft laws in the Parliament” (indicator 1.1.2c), “Civil society and Press Council monitors gender and human rights quality and impact of media” (indicator 1.4.2b)*. In addition, a definition of vulnerable groups was included in the UNPF to ensure a unitary understanding across the UN agencies and further disaggregations by vulnerability¹¹².

At operational level, the review of UN-supported portfolio of interventions and feedback from key informants reveal **projects and initiatives aimed to foster evidence-based monitoring, analysis and policy-making in all thematic pillars of UNPF**. Examples are provided in Box 1.

Box 1. Highlights of UNPF 2013-2017 support for data collection and analysis

- *“Data availability on population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality” (UNFPA, UNDP, IOM, UN WOMEN, UNICEF, WHO)* aimed to enhance national capacity to produce, utilize and disseminate data to contribute to evidence and rights-based policy formulation and implementation in the area of sexual and reproductive health, including family planning, migration, low fertility, ageing and gender-based violence.
- *“Strengthen Government capacity in data collection and analysis of socio-economic situation of the most vulnerable children” (UNICEF)* within the Joint UN project “Strengthening the National Statistical System” (UNDP, UN WOMEN, UNICEF, UNFPA) to improve availability of data in the area of education and child protection, with particular focus on CwD and special educational needs (SEN), and children in formal care (residential and family-based care).
- *“Health Systems and Services” (WHO, WB, IOM, ILO)*, envisaging the broadening of evidence base for decision making in the health sector through targeted studies and analytical work.
- *“Return Migrants and Home Country Socio-Economic Development” (ILO, IOM, UNDP, WHO)* whose aim was to carry out research to provide empirical evidence and analysis on return migration trends, factors affecting return and re-migration decisions, social and economic characteristics of return migrants, etc. to support the design of measures and incentives encouraging sustainable and successful labour market reintegration.
- *“Enhancing development outcomes of migration and mitigating negatives social costs of migration” (IOM, UNDP, ILO, UN WOMEN, WHO, UNICEF)* whose first objective is to foster evidence-based participatory

¹¹² UNPF 2013-2017, page 8, footnote 6

migration policy making.

- “*Mapping of data revolution ecosystem*” exercise to analyse the readiness of Moldova to provide and use the data required for setting on relevant national targets and keeping track on progress in the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda (UNDP).

The MTR and feedback from key informants consulted for the purpose of evaluation demonstrate that **UN has made significant and constant efforts to support the Government and other key national stakeholders in the process of data generation and capacity strengthening.** The following achievements have been more frequently mentioned:

- national stakeholders supported to implement the recommendations of the 2012 global assessment of the National Statistical System of Moldova;
- Small Area Deprivation Index (SADI) revised in compliance with UN and Eurostat criteria to support evidence-based policy-making focused on local development and targeting the most vulnerable groups of population;
- data on Roma updated and disseminated;
- analytical notes on women and unpaid work, childcare and women’s employability, health and disability based on the first Time Use Survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics;
- National Legal Aid Council assisted to increase its transparency by providing public online access to disaggregated data on the provision of the legal aid services in Moldova;
- enhanced national capacity to produce, monitor and analyse certain areas and indicators related to decent work (collective bargaining, migration and skills, private employment agencies, labour accident and occupational disease reporting and injury insurance, school to work transition, work and family reconciliation, etc.);
- Bureau of Migration and Asylum assisted to institutionalise the Extended Migration Profile and draft the corresponding analytical report;
- new data on returned migrants and emigrants introduced in the existing integrated information systems of the National Employment Agency and Bureau of Migration and Asylum;
- improved Information System on Management of Cases of Ministry of Justice to allow quick generation of statistical reports on labour litigation;
- improved data management and investments in Information and Communication Technology guided by the developed e-Health Strategy;
- policy papers, studies and surveys to support the health sector reform (e.g. on NCDs, including tobacco and alcohol; health care affordability and the implications of health worker migration; antimicrobial resistance; bio-behavioural and KAP surveys);
- evidence generation on the most vulnerable children by conducting area-based Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Transnistrian region;
- capacity of the Market Information Centre (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry) strengthened to increase access to statistical data for the development of national policies on climate and disaster resilience as well as of the National Bureau of Statistics in performing the agriculture census;
- demographic barometers and policy papers on ageing, quality of life of the elderly and youth, with recommendations to mainstream youth and elderly into sectorial policies.

Nevertheless, as acknowledged by the UN agencies in their response to the evaluation questionnaire and by a large number of national stakeholders during interviews, **the insufficient level of data reliability, consistency and disaggregation posed severe constraints in designing well targeted interventions at the time the UNPF was developed and in monitoring and reporting on progress and achievements.** In this respect, the stakeholders indicated several vulnerable groups whose targeting was particularly challenging due to the lack of disaggregated data, i.e. returned migrants, HIV-infected Roma and migrants, persons above 60 years old, Roma children, CwD/SEN, children in

contact with the law, victims of domestic violence, women entrepreneurs. **Nevertheless, the available disaggregated data were used to the extent possible complemented by additional assessments and studies to better understand the needs and challenges of specific populations** (e.g. KAP surveys, MICS), estimates or even software modelling (for instance in the area of health). UNPF targeting was easier in area with well-established reporting mechanisms at country level, such as the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form for immunisations, or GARPR/UNGASS and The European Surveillance System (TESSy) for HIV. In the area of gender equality, disaggregated data were available in a high volume due to the existing harmonised set of gender sensitive indicators before the UNPF development.

The UNCT is fully aware that further progress in data disaggregation is of utmost importance, as acknowledged in the MTR: *“Data disaggregation to monitor the situation of the most disadvantaged is still weak and need to be further addressed to close existing gaps. It is important not to let the average hide existing disparities (regional, urban/rural, poorest/richest, etc.)”* (page 53). The evaluation team shares this opinion and believes that the disaggregation planning should be also improved, starting from a more careful selection and design of indicators in the Results Matrix towards mobilising targeted support and advocacy for better and timely data generation. In this respect, the M&E plan of future UNDAF should detail how data gaps are going to be filled in, for instance through strengthening the capacity of the Government to operationalize its own monitoring systems and implementing new joint UN programmes/projects to improve the national statistical capacity.

At the moment, there is a reasonably good level of disaggregation of indicators in the UNPF Results Matrix¹¹³, in particular by gender, age, urban/rural, region. However, there are no data available to monitor and report progress against the full set of targets. At the same time, there is insufficient disaggregation of indicators by disability, ethnicity and migration even in areas where such disaggregation would be most relevant (poverty, employment, education, social protection) – see Annex 8 for a detailed appraisal of indicators. The revision of the Results Matrix on the occasion of MTR reduced even further the disaggregation level, in particular by ethnicity (from 8 to 6 indicators). New migration-sensitive indicators/disaggregations were introduced in the revised matrix, however insufficient to reflect the effects of employment and social protection policies and interventions. Results indicators under pillar 3 are not disaggregated, raising difficulties in monitoring the effects upon vulnerable groups by linking environment to poverty, human rights and gender equality. Finally, there is no cross-disaggregation of indicators which would allow a more accurate picture of vulnerability, social exclusion and discrimination (for instance, children with disability in foster care, Roma unemployed women, employed rural youth, etc.).

Using RBM in the design of UNPF, including Results Matrix

RBM is another enabling principle of programme cooperation. RBM helps to ensure accountability by offering a process and a framework to formulate results, focus resources and manage for their achievement. The UNPF includes a Results Matrix at outcome level which adheres to the UNDG RBM methodology¹¹⁴, with indicative resources, risks and assumptions and role of partners. The 10 outcomes are grouped under three broad thematic pillars on democratic governance, justice, equality and human rights; human development and social inclusion; and environment, climate change and disaster risk management. The UNPF Action Plan further develops the Results Matrix by assigning 29 outputs to outcomes in a logical chain of results. The number and formulation of outcomes and

¹¹³ 29 out of 114 indicators in the initial Result Matrix of UNPF and its Action Plan; 27 out of 108 indicators in the revised Matrix, following MTR. The proportion of disaggregated indicators remained constant, at around 25%.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Development Group (2011), “Results-Based Management Handbook. Harmonizing RBM concepts and approaches for improved development results at country level”, <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>, accessed on 27.04.2016

outputs have remained the same following the MTR (2015), however planned to be measured by a modified set of indicators (as detailed in the section describing the Object of Evaluation). Each indicator has a baseline and a target and frequently includes disaggregation, as the case. The section on M&E explains the process that will be followed in implementation of the UNPF through thematic working groups with national counterparts invited to contribute. Overall, UNPF annual progress report for 2013 and the MTR report (capturing the progress until end 2014) are informative and well-structured, however too process-oriented¹¹⁵ and sometimes missing a contribution analysis towards planned results at higher level, possibly due to the lack of a Theory of Change (ToC).

Indeed, there is no evidence that the chain of results detailed in the Matrix has been preceded by a ToC, describing how the Government and UN were planning to make a difference. **The UNPF and its Results Matrix do not provide sufficient clarity concerning the road towards change at impact level as it stops at the outcome level. Although Results Groups were set up for each thematic pillar at impact level¹¹⁶, their role in monitoring progress at this level was severely constrained by the lack of connection of expected UNPF results to specific national development priorities and targets (indicators) to which they were supposed to contribute higher up in the logical chain¹¹⁷.** To make things even more confusing, the UNPF Results Matrix assigned impact indicators to outcome-level results.

Indeed, the lack of a ToC has also created confusion in the selection of indicators, one of the major shortcomings of the Results Matrix being the assignment of particular indicators to an inappropriate level of results. For instance, there are frequent cases of impact indicators (e.g. poverty rate, life expectancy, mortality rate, public trust, etc.) assigned to the outcome level, of output indicators aimed to measure outcomes or of process indicators attached to output levels. This is not simply a matter of semantics. In line with United Nations Development Group (UNDG) RBM methodology¹¹⁸, impact indicators measure changes in human development in terms of people's well-being; the transformation of institutional performance and behavioural capacities for development are measured using outcome indicators; the assessment of changes in skills or abilities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services is done with the support of output indicators. Finally, process indicators measure how well activities were implemented. Assigning a wrong type of indicator to a particular result in the hierarchy of change would impede the stakeholders to verify changes relative to what was planned.

The Results Matrix includes plenty of examples of outcomes and outputs which are not sufficiently evaluable due to the flaws in the selection of indicators: a) some of them are insufficient to grasp the whole spectrum of changes planned in a specific output or outcome (for instance the indicators assigned to outcome 2.1 do not reflect *innovation and decent work*; the indicator assigned to output 2.4.1 related to BCIS¹¹⁹ and SYSLAB is too narrow to capture the complexity of the social protection system which is aimed to have a *"functional continuum of services, with special attention to individuals and groups facing difficulties in exercising fundamental rights, and prevents and addresses violence, exploitation and family separation"*); or b) other indicators are unable to reflect the progress in relation to the specific problem which is aimed to be addressed by the planned output (for instance, *indicator 2.1.2c "Share of capital expenditures in the total expenditures of local budgets"* cannot meaningfully

¹¹⁵ For instance, the MTR abounds with examples of capacity building activities, yet the effects of these interventions are usually not identifiable in the document.

¹¹⁶ See ToR of UN Results Groups under the UNPF 2013-2017 (revised as of June 2014), section on Management Arrangements, page 1

¹¹⁷ The Results Matrix indicates a number of national priorities and goals under each pillar, but these are not linked to concrete outcomes.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Development Group (2011), "Results-Based Management Handbook. Harmonizing RBM concepts and approaches for improved development results at country level", <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>, accessed on 27.04.2016

¹¹⁹ Romanian abbreviation for 'Common Information and Services Bureau'

measure the improved access to local services since an increase in the share of capital expenditures in the local budget does not necessarily mean that these expenditures are used for improving access; indicator 2.4.c on the *number of beneficiaries of social home care* is a nominal indicator, disconnected to the size of the problem and thus less useful to measure to what extent people in need of social home care are actually benefitting of such services and further of *“improved social protection system”* as per outcome formulation).

An additional challenge in the evaluability of planned results is caused by inadequate targets which are either too general (e.g. 1.2.4b: *“Substantial progressive increase of proportion of convictions including custodial sentences ...”*) or unrealistic (e.g. 1.1.2 a1: *“Increase in Moldovan citizens from abroad participating in parliamentary elections in 2018”*, one year after the end of UNPF implementation) or disconnected from the indicators (e.g. 1.2.3b: *“Elaborated eligibility of victims for legal assistance, in particular for serious crimes”* for indicator *“Percentage of victims who receive legal aid ...”*). A detailed appraisal of indicators is presented in Annex 8.

Nevertheless, **the quality of the Results Matrix is by far better compared to the one in the former UNDAF 2007-2011¹²⁰ and has effectively supported the annual reporting on progress and the MTR.** Some Government stakeholders have however mentioned the fact that the Results Matrix contains outputs and indicators which were pushed by the UN but to which they have contributed less for their achievement. Such opinions signal the fact that **there is insufficient understanding concerning the joint Government-UN responsibility for the attainment of UNPF results and that UN could not be solely held accountable, an issue which would require clarification in the next programming cycle.**

As far as its flexibility is concerned, the Matrix was amended following the MTR to take benefit of new opportunities or respond to challenges, in particular at the level of indicators, but only in cases which did not have substantial financial implications. An illustrative example is to be found in the area of migration. The UNPF mentions the fact that “Migration is a cross-cutting phenomenon that affects all layers of the population, and public and private institutions.”¹²¹ The results of the assessment of UNCT’s Capacities and Gaps in the field of Migration and Development, done within the Pilot Phase of the IOM/UNDP Programme “Mainstreaming of Migration into National Development Strategies”, concluded that the UNPF and the related Action Plan do not consider the full potential of migration mainstreaming. It has been agreed to adapt the Action Plan from the perspective of migration as a ‘development enabler’ by including migration-targeted and migration-sensitive interventions as well indicators connected to the agreed outcomes and targets. During the MTR (2015), a migration mainstreaming exercise was done. As mentioned before, only 4 out of 11 validated indicators and disaggregations were identified and proposed to be integrated in the UNPF Results Matrix and its M&E Plan. A number of 11 indicators were assessed as relevant and feasible and were validated by the UNCT. However, in the final version only 4 indicators were considered¹²². Although the current evaluation reveals that migration issues are better reflected after the MTR, they are addressed unilaterally, by mitigating the social negative effects of migration only. In this respect, the MTR was a lost opportunity for updating the Results Matrix in a manner able to capture the potential of migration for sustainable development. The evaluation was informed that this was mainly due to financial considerations, inclusion of any additional intervention and indicators in the Matrix being conditioned by available funding. Nevertheless, some adjustments were done at operational level, i.e. the Joint Integrated Local Development Programme which shifted its vector towards empowering the local communities to manage migration for development as well.

¹²⁰ See Evaluation Report UNDAF-Moldova, June 2011, <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/UNDAF-Evaluation-Report-Moldova.pdf>, accessed on 29.04.2016

¹²¹ UNPF 2013-2017, page 3

¹²² MTR (2015)

5.2 Relevance

Evaluation of relevance was based on the following evaluation questions:

To what extent was the UNPF aligned with the country priorities and addressed key development issues, their underlying causes and challenges?

Has UNPF been relevant in terms of European and internationally agreed goals and commitments, norms and standards guiding the work of UN system and the Government?

Alignment with country priorities and key development issues

The UNPF is consistent with the country priorities enshrined in the National Development Strategy (NDS) “Moldova 2020” and other key strategic documents, in particular the medium-term strategic outlook “Rethink Moldova”, the Government Activity Programme 2011-2014 and relevant sectoral strategies¹²³. Relevant national policy documents are specified under each UNPF pillar.

The UNPF outcomes resonate with five of the eight priorities of NDS, i.e. education, energy, pensions, justice, agriculture and rural development, for which there is similarity of certain indicators (see Table 4). In some cases, the UNPF indicators do not mirror the ones in the NDS, but there is evidence of UN interventions (projects, programmes) which are aimed to contribute to the attainment of the respective NDS targets.

The NDS is primarily focused on economic development and growth, while UNPF is much broader in philosophy, goals and purpose given its rights-based nature. As a result, health is not explicitly targeted by NDS, but merely as a cross-cutting issue¹²⁴, while it is a major priority area in UNPF. The same goes for other UNPF priority areas, notably public administration, inclusive education, social assistance, disaster risk management, which are not covered by the NDS. The UNPF results thus contribute more to sectoral strategies and action plans and only partially to NDS targets.

In this respect, the UNPF has addressed key development challenges and their underlying causes highlighted in the CA 2011, situation analyses of UN agencies which informed their country programmes, other relevant assessments done by the Government, international development partners and civil society organisations and, last but not least, sectoral strategies of the country.

¹²³ Most frequently referred strategies and policy documents referred to by the State Chancellery and line ministries include: Justice Reform Strategy 2011-2015, Human Rights Action Plan 2011-2014, National Strategy “Digital Moldova 2020”, National Decentralisation Strategy, Strategy “Education 2020”, Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020, Health Sector Development Strategy 2008-2017, National Health Policy 2007-2021, National Strategy on Reproductive Health 2005-2015, Road Map on Ageing, Energy Strategy 2030, Biodiversity Strategy 2015-2020, Environmental Strategy 2014-2023, Action Plan to support Roma 2011-2015, National Plan on Inclusive Education 2011-2020, Strategy on Migration and Asylum 2011-2020, Diaspora Strategy 2025

¹²⁴ “Health was identified as one of critical problems which leads to reduction of labor force and to a decrease in labor productivity, but its solving is possible by including health aspects in all long-term development priorities” (NDS, section on Development Priorities).

Table 4. Consistency between the NDS “Moldova 2020” and UNPF 2013-2017

NDS “Moldova 2020”	UNPF 2013-2017
Priority: “Education: relevant for a career”	Pillar 2: “Human Development and Social Inclusion”
Indicators: 4	NDS-aligned indicators: 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment rate, % • Outflow of young labour force, % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment rate, % (outcome 2.1) <p><i>Note: although there is no indicator in the UNPF to mirror the one in the NDS, the UNDP project “Integrated Migration and Local Development” is aimed to counteract the effects of young labour force outflow by supporting the development of policies related to temporary, permanent and circular migration in correlation with local development processes and thus the improvement of services and income-generating activities as well as equal access for youth, women, children, elderly, PwD and other groups of population in selected communities (outcome 2.1)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of employers satisfied with labour force quality, % • Share of employed graduates that claim to need additional training after graduation, % 	-
Priority: “Roads: in good condition, anywhere”	-
Priority: “Finance: affordable and cheap”	-
Priority: “Business: with clear rules of the game”	-
Priority: “Energy: delivered safely, used efficiently”	Pillar 3: “Environment, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management”
Indicators: 12	NDS-aligned indicators: 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy interconnections (electricity lines, natural gas pipelines, km) 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of energy produced from renewable energy sources in the total domestic consumption, % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of renewable energy in gross domestic consumption, % (outcome 3.2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of bio-fuels in the total of fuels used, % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of biomass heating installations in public buildings/private households (output 3.2.1) • Number of biomass fuel producers (output 3.2.1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic production capacity for electricity, MW 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of annual electricity production from renewable energy sources, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy intensity, % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy intensity, % (outcome 3.2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity losses in transport and distribution networks, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural gas losses in transport and distribution networks, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating losses in transport and distribution networks, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenhouse gas emissions, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy consumption in buildings, % 	<p><i>Note: although there is no similar NDS indicator in the Results Matrix of UNPF, the UNDP project “Moldova Energy and Biomass” is aimed to contribute to the reduction of energy consumption in buildings (which is the objective of NDS) by increasing the use of renewable energy sources (in form of biomass from agricultural wastes) for heating public buildings and individual households in rural areas (outcome 3.2)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of renovated public buildings, % 	-
Priority: “Pension system: equitable and sustainable”	Pillar 2: “Human Development and Social Inclusion”
Indicators: 6	NDS-aligned indicators: 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of replacement of salaries with pensions, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio between average retirement pension and subsistence minimum for pensioners, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absolute poverty rate of pensioners, % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of absolute and extreme poverty, % (not disaggregated by age or occupational status) (outcome 2.1)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio between the number of retired pensioners with pensions under the subsistence minimum for pensioners and the total number of retired pensioners, % 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State social insurance budget deficit, % (compared to an average of 1% during 2006-2010) 	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of states that have concluded social security agreements with Republic of Moldova 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of bilateral agreements on labour and social security signed between the Republic of Moldova and countries of destination for Moldovan migrants (output 2.1.4)
Priority: “Justice: responsible and incorruptible”	Pillar 1: “Democratic Governance, Justice, Equality and Human Rights”
Indicators: 7	NDS-aligned indicators: 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share of citizens that show lack of trust in justice, % 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of public confidence in the justice system, % of people

	who trust in the justice system (outcome 1.2)
• Justice independence index, Freedom House	• Share of children in conflict with the law diverted from the judicial system (output 1.2.2)
• Share of judicial cases examined with delays, %	-
• Share of courts that observe norms and decisional transparency (publish court decisions and have audio-video records of court sessions), %	-
• Share of litigations solved via alternative ways (extra-judicial)	-
• Number of corruption victims, %	<i>Note: although there is no indicator in the UNPF to mirror the one in the NDS, the UNDP project "Strengthening the corruption prevention and analysis functions of the National Anticorruption Centre (NAC)" aims to enhance the capacities, independence and empowerment of the NAC to effectively prevent corruption and in this way contribute to the reduction of the number of corruption victims i.e. the NDS target (outcome 1.1)</i>
• Share of economic agents which believe that courts are reasonable, impartial and non-corrupt, %	-
Priority: "Agriculture and rural development: Competitiveness of agrifood output and sustainable rural development"	Pillar 2: "Human Development and Social Inclusion"
Indicators: 3	NDS-aligned indicators: 0
• Gross agricultural output, value index	<i>Note: although there is no indicator in the UNPF to mirror the one in the NDS, planned output 2.1.3 "SMEs and potential entrepreneurs, including from rural areas, have increased access to business infrastructure and financial services, including agriculture and agrifood business" could make an important contribution to the achievement of the NDS priority</i>
• Irrigated land, ha	<i>Note: there is no similar indicator in the UNPF; nevertheless, the FAO project "Improvement of basic irrigations systems for small-scale farmers and supporting to the maintenance of irrigation systems" is aimed to contribute to the attainment of the NDS target (outcome 2.1)</i>
• Number of migrant people from rural areas	<i>Note: although there is no indicator in the UNPF to reflect the number of migrant people from rural areas, the IOM project "Migration and Development" aims to mitigate the negative costs of migration, including from rural areas (outcome 2.1)</i>

Relevance for European and international commitments, norms and standards

The UNPF is highly relevant for European and international commitments of Moldova. Moldova has ratified seven of the nine core UN human rights treaties, eight fundamental international labour conventions, and several major multi-lateral environmental treaties. The UNPF makes explicit reference to human rights treaties and international conventions ratified by Moldova, MDGs, UPR and EU association commitments in four planned results (outcomes and outputs) and 13 result indicators, as well as in the subsequent progress reports and reviews. As far as implementation is concerned, the evaluation found out that the **UNPF results and strategies have been driven by the standards and principles of Moldova's ratified human rights treaties and, to a significant extent, by the issues comprised in the concluding observations and recommendations of UN treaty body reports.** Table 5 provides some illustrative examples.

Table 5. Reflection of UN Treaty Body Recommendations in UNPF results (selected examples)

Treaty Body Recommendation ¹²⁵	Relevant UNPF result
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Concluding Observations: Republic of Moldova, CRC/C/MDA/CO/3, 20 February 2009	
- strengthen mechanisms for systematically collecting and analysing data that is disaggregated by sex, age and geographical location, on all persons under 18 and for all areas covered by the Convention (<i>recommendation 20</i>)	- evidence generation on the most vulnerable children in the break-away region of Transnistria by carrying out the area-based MICS survey (<i>outcome 2.4</i>)
- strengthen measures to move towards de-institutionalization	- significant decline of the number of children in public

¹²⁵ The recommendations have been edited for length. Please refer to the original report for complete recommendations.

<p>whilst ensuring that alternatives to institutionalization, such as supporting families and extending the network of foster care, are developed (<i>recommendation 45</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pursuing efforts to ensure that children with disabilities, including moderate and severe developmental disabilities, are able to exercise their right to education to the maximum extent possible (<i>recommendation 51</i>) 	<p>residential care in favour of family-based care (<i>outcome 2.4</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study on foster care services leading to revised foster care regulations and minimum standards to align them with international standards (<i>outcome 2.4</i>) - five centres providing specialised services for young CwD (<i>outcome 2.3</i>) - 1,321 young children with special educational needs mainstreamed in regular preschool groups (<i>outcome 2.3</i>)
<p>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Concluding Observations: Republic of Moldova, CRC/C/OPSC/MDA/1, 29 October 2013</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish special programmes targeting Roma children, children living in poverty, children affected by migration, children living in care institutions and those who run away from such institutions (<i>recommendation a</i>) from chapter V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - law on special protection of children at risk and children separated from their parents adopted in 2013 (<i>outcome 2.4.</i>) - inter-sector referral mechanism on violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking of children settled in 2014 and functional (<i>outcome 2.4.</i>)
<p>Convention on Elimination of all Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/MDA/4-5, 18 October 2013</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that all investigations into acts of sexual violence, including those committed against Moldovan migrant women, are carried out in line with international standards of investigation, including by amending the existing guidelines on investigation of rape and other forms of sexual assault (<i>recommendation 20. d</i>) - effectively implement the action plans of the Strategy of the National Referral System to Protect and Assist Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, which are aimed at the early identification and referral of victims of trafficking, and take preventive measures such as raising the awareness of disadvantaged and marginalized groups of women of the risks of trafficking (<i>recommendation 22c</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100 prosecutors, police officers and judges increased their understanding of the international human rights principles outlining the definition of rape and abilities to recognize illegal sexual acts as gender-based crimes¹²⁶ (<i>outcome 1.2</i>) - 776 specialists of multidisciplinary territorial teams within National Referral System from 224 communities were trained in 2015 (<i>outcome 2.4.</i>) - 104 victims of trafficking of human beings and 1,177 potential victims were identified and assisted within National Referral System during 2015¹²⁷ (<i>outcome 2.4.</i>)
<p>Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. Aarhus, 1998</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote environmental education and environmental awareness among the public, especially on how to obtain access to information, to participate in decision-making and to obtain access to justice in environmental matters - public participation in decisions in specific activities (<i>art.6</i>) - public participation concerning plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment (<i>art.7</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training curricula developed within Moldova Energy and Biomass Project on renewable energy and biomass heating plants approved by the Ministry of Education; relevant teaching materials published; programme to be piloted in three VET schools, with the possibility of being extended (<i>outcome 3.2.</i>) - activities aimed to support environmental authorities, private sector and civil society to be better able to develop, implement and comply with environmental legislation, policies, programmes/budgets in an accountable, transparent and participatory manner (<i>outcome 3.1</i>)
<p>Hyogo Framework for Action 2000 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, 2005</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation; - identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning; - use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; - reduce the underlying risk factors (including: Protect and strengthen critical public facilities and physical infrastructure, particularly schools, clinics, hospitals, water and power plants, communications and transport lifelines, disaster warning and management centres, and culturally important lands and structures through proper design, retrofitting and re-building, in order to render them adequately resilient to hazards) - strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Adaptation Strategy approved in 2014 followed by an iterative National Adaptation Planning process, which resulted in draft Health and Forestry Adaptation Strategies; climate change adaptation policy measures mainstreamed into the energy and transport sectors (<i>outcome 3.2.</i>) - reform process of the Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Services in support of a prevention and preparedness-focused disaster risk management system initiated (<i>outcome 3.2.</i>) - Hospital Safety Index re-assessment of all public hospitals in Moldova currently on-going (May 2016) and will be completed in late 2016, after which updated data will be available (<i>outcome 3.2.</i>) - advocacy for mainstreaming the disaster risk reduction concept in the education sector (<i>outcome 3.2.</i>) - recommendations to be included in the Education Strategy 2020, enhancing schools' preparedness and children's participation in reducing vulnerability to disaster risk (<i>outcome 3.2.</i>)

¹²⁶ MTR (2015), page 14

¹²⁷ MLPSF (2016). "Monitoring Report of the implementation of the National Referral System Strategy for the protection and assistance of victims and potential victims of human trafficking during 2015", http://www.mmps.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/snr3223_0.pdf, accessed on 30.05.2016

The work carried out within the framework of the UNPF has extensively addressed the key issues underlined in the third MDG report (2013)¹²⁸, chapter “*A finished agenda, or not yet*”, in particular the areas where progress was lagging behind, i.e. access of children to preschool programmes (target 3, MDG 2 via outcome 2.3); women’s representation in decision-making positions (target 1, MDG 3 via outcome 1.3); vaccination of children under 2 years (target 3, MDG 4 via outcome 2.2); HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis and other diseases (all three targets, MDG 6 via outcome 2.2); mainstreaming of sustainable development in country’s policies and programmes (target 1, MDG 7 via outcome 3.1); youth unemployment (target 4, MDG 8 via outcome 2.1).

The UNPF has preserved its relevance in time. One of the most telling proof is its consistency with the issues highlighted in the EU annual reports on European Neighbourhood Policy in Moldova since 2013 and particularly with the provisions of the AA, although the latter was signed one year after the UNPF started its implementation. Table 6 illustrates that most UNPF outcomes are in concert with the AA, except in the area of education, migration asylum and borders management, and media¹²⁹.

¹²⁸ UN Moldova (2013), “Third National Report on Millennium Development Goals in Moldova: progress achieved, remaining issues and future options”, pages 74-76

¹²⁹ Chapter 23 “Cooperation on education, training, multilingualism, youth and sport” of the AA is focused on lifelong learning, employability of workforce and cooperation in higher education, while the UNPF tackles education from a rights-based perspective i.e. access of children to quality education, inclusive education, etc. Chapter 25 “Cooperation on culture, audio-visual policy and media” of the AA includes provisions on the development of cultural industries, intercultural dialogue and cooperation with EU, while the UNPF sees media as a key partner in monitoring and promoting human rights, equality, democratic governance and rule of law.

Table 6. Alignment of UNPF to the provisions of the Association Agreement

UNDAF	Association Agreement ¹³⁰
<p>Outcome 1.1 - Public Administration Increased transparency, accountability and efficiency of central and local public authorities</p>	<p>CH. 1 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM Art.21 development of efficient and accountable public administration Art.22 institutional and functional development of public authorities, modernization of public services including the introduction and implementation of E-Governance, efficiency of service delivery to citizens and reducing the costs of doing business, professional civil service based on the principle of managerial accountability and effective delegation of authority Art.23 cooperation shall cover all levels of public administration, including local administration CH. 7 MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FINANCES Art.48 Budget and accounting systems - improvement and systematisation of regulatory documents on the budgetary, treasury, accounting and reporting systems and their harmonisation on the basis of international standards; development of multi-annual budget planning and the alignment to EU good practice; fostering approximation of procurement procedures with existing practices in the EU Art.49 Internal control, financial inspection and external audit - improvement of the internal control system in state and local authorities; development of an adequate financial inspection system to ensure adequate control coverage of government income and expenditure; effective cooperation between actors involved in financial management and control, audit and inspection with the actors for budget, treasury and accounting to foster the development of governance Art.50 Fight against fraud and against corruption - improving methods to combat and prevent fraud and corruption, including cooperation between relevant administrative bodies; effective cooperation with the relevant EU institutions and bodies, in the case of on-the-spot checks, inspections and audits related to the management and control of EU funds, according to relevant rules and procedures</p>
<p>Outcome 1.2 – Justice Justice sector actors are better able to promote access to justice and uphold rule of law in compliance with international commitments</p>	<p>TITLE III FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE Art. 12 Rule of law - promotion of the rule of law, including the independence of the judiciary, access to justice, and the right to a fair trial; effective functioning of institutions in the areas of law enforcement and the administration of justice CH. 7 MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC FINANCES Art.50 Fight against fraud and against corruption - improving methods to combat and prevent fraud and corruption</p>
<p>Outcome 1.3 - Human Rights, Empowerment of Women and Anti-discrimination State bodies and other actors effectively promote and protect human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, with particular attention to the marginalized and the vulnerable</p>	<p>Art.1 OBJECTIVES Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms TITLE I GENERAL PRINCIPLES Art.2 respect for the democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms TITLE II POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND REFORM, COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY Art.3 Aims of political dialogue – strengthen respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities Art.4 Domestic reform - ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms TITLE III FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE Art. 12 Rule of law - respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms will guide all cooperation on freedom, security and justice CH. 4 EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES Art.32 equal opportunities, aiming at enhancing gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, as well as combating discrimination on all grounds CH. 27 COOPERATION IN THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Art.137 promotion of the rights of the child according to international laws and standards, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, taking into account the priorities identified in the specific context of the Republic of Moldova, in particular for vulnerable groups</p>
<p>Outcome 1.4 Civil society and media better monitor and promote human rights, equality, rule of law and empowerment of women</p>	<p>CH. 4 EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES Art.33 involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society organisations and in particular social partners, in policy development and reforms in the Republic of Moldova CH.13 TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Article 377 1. joint forum with civil society organisations and the public at large for dialogue on sustainable development aspects.</p>

¹³⁰ The AA provisions have been edited for length. Please refer to the original document at http://eeas.europa.eu/moldova/pdf/eu-md_aa-dcfta_en.pdf

<p>Outcome 2.1 - Economic Opportunities and Regional Development People have access to more sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work</p>	<p>CH. 4 EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES strengthen dialogue and cooperation on promoting the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Decent Work Agenda Art.32 employment policy, aiming at more and better jobs with decent working conditions, including with a view to reducing the informal economy and informal employment; promoting active labour market measures and efficient employment services to modernise the labour markets and to adapt to labour market needs; fostering more inclusive labour markets that integrate disadvantaged people, including PwD and people from minority groups; efficient management of labour migration, aiming at strengthening its positive impact on development; enhancing the participation of social partners and promoting social dialogue, including through strengthening the capacity of relevant stakeholders; promoting health and safety at work.</p> <p>CH. 10 INDUSTRIAL AND ENTERPRISE POLICY Art.63 implement strategies for SME development</p> <p>CH.12 AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT Art.67 promote agricultural and rural development, in particular through progressive convergence of policies and legislation</p> <p>CH.13 TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Article 377 1. The Parties shall promote a balanced representation of relevant interests, including independent representative organisations of employers, workers, environmental interests and business groups, as well as other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate.</p> <p>CH. 20 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, CROSS-BORDER AND REGIONAL LEVEL COOPERATION Art.107 promote mutual understanding, and bilateral cooperation in the field of regional policy, decentralization of the decision-making process, from the central level to the level of regional communities, consolidation of the partnership between all the parties involved in regional development Art.108 support and strengthen the involvement of local and regional level authorities in cross-border and regional cooperation Art.109 strengthen and encourage development of cross-border and regional elements of, inter alia, transport, energy, communication networks, culture, education, tourism</p> <p>CH. 23 COOPERATION ON EDUCATION, TRAINING, MULTILINGUALISM, YOUTH AND SPORT Art.125 (a) cooperation and exchanges in the field of youth policy and non-formal education for young people and youth workers</p>
<p>Outcome 2.2 – Health People enjoy equitable access to quality public health and health care services and protection against financial risks</p>	<p>CH.21 PUBLIC HEALTH Art.113 raising the level of public health safety and protection of human health as a precondition for sustainable development and economic growth. Art.114 strengthening of the public health system, high-quality primary healthcare, improving health governance and healthcare financing, epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases, prevention and control of non-communicable diseases Art.115 progressive integration of the Republic of Moldova into the European Union's health related networks, progressive enhancement of interaction between the Republic of Moldova and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control</p>
<p>Outcome 2.4 - Social Protection People enjoy equitable access to increased social protection</p>	<p>CH. 4 EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES Art.32 poverty reduction and enhancement of social cohesion; social safety systems that integrate disadvantaged people, including people with disabilities and people from minority groups; social policy, aiming at enhancing the level of social protection, including social assistance and social insurance, and modernising social protection systems, in terms of quality, accessibility and financial sustainability</p> <p>CH. 27 COOPERATION IN THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Art.138 prevention and combating of all forms of exploitation, improvement of the system of identification and assistance of children in vulnerable situations, exchange of information and best practice on the alleviation of poverty among children</p>
<p>Outcome 3.1 Environment Management Improved environmental management in increased compliance with international and regional standards</p>	<p>CH. 16 ENVIRONMENT Art.86 develop and strengthen cooperation on environmental issues for sustainable development and greening the economy Art.87 preserving, protecting, improving, and rehabilitating the quality of the environment, protecting human health, sustainable utilisation of natural resources and promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or global environmental problems Art.88 joint research activities and exchange of information on cleaner technologies; plan the handling of industrial hazards and accidents; implement joint activities at regional and international level, including with regard to multilateral environment agreements Art. 89 development of an overall strategy on environment for ensuring implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation</p>
<p>Outcome 3.2 - Low Emissions and Resilient Development Strengthened national policies and capacities enable climate and disaster resilient, low-</p>	<p>CH. 14 ENERGY COOPERATION Art.77 development of competitive, transparent and non-discriminatory energy markets in accordance with EU standards, energy efficiency and energy saving, stability and security of energy supply and trade</p> <p>CH.17 CLIMATE ACTION Art. 93 promote measures at domestic, regional and international level in the areas of mitigation and adaptation to climate change; research, development, demonstration, deployment and diffusion of safe and sustainable low-carbon and adaptation technologies; mainstreaming of climate considerations into sector</p>

emission economic development and sustainable consumption	<p>policies; and awareness raising, education and training.</p> <p>Art. 95 development and implementation of a climate strategy and action plan for the long-term mitigation of and adaptation to climate change; vulnerability and adaptation assessments; National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change; low-carbon development strategy; long-term measures to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases; measures to prepare for carbon trading; measures to promote technology transfer on the basis of a technology needs assessment; measures to mainstream climate considerations into sector policies; and measures related to ozone-depleting substances.</p> <p>CH. 22 CIVIL PROTECTION</p> <p>Art. 118 improve prevention of, preparation for and response to natural and man-made disasters.</p> <p>Art.120 assess the environmental impact of disasters</p>
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The UNPF relevance in time has been favoured by the large scope of its outcomes, flexibility in adapting the Results Matrix to arising needs, the constant preoccupation of UNCT for understanding the needs (hence a large volume of analytical work) and staying attuned to the country context, and regular dialogue with the Government and international development partners to ensure alignment of UN work to national reform and EU association agenda. The evaluation identified several examples of quick UN response to emerging needs, most notably the development of the “Briefing Book from Development Partners of Moldova”¹³¹ (January 2015) which aimed to assist the new Government in quickly understanding the key issues and challenges in 29 priority areas and in action planning, based on concrete, prioritised reform proposals. The Briefing Book has been frequently referred to as a strategic overview and actionable document by the Government representatives who were interviewed for the purpose of this evaluation. Other examples mentioned by the national stakeholders include the swift UN response to the request of the Government to support the preparation for nationalisation of post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals, expand the capacity building initially envisaged for the Parliament and Central Electoral Commission towards the Legislative Assembly of Gagauzia¹³², support the preparation of the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections in 2018, assistance for developing the National Strategy for Protection of Children (2014-2020) and respectively National Action Plan (2016-2020) - both considered to be a flexible and timely support from the UNICEF.

No actual or potential areas of divergence between the national priorities and UNPF results and strategies have been identified by the stakeholders during the interviews or focus groups. With one exception¹³³, the same conclusion could be drawn up in the case of recommendations from treaty bodies and EU on one side, and results and strategies of UNPF on the other side.

¹³¹ UN Moldova (2015), “Briefing Book from Development Partners of Moldova”, http://md.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/moldova/docs/pub/strateg/brief_english.pdf, accessed on 20.05.2016

¹³² Support to Parliamentary Development and Electoral Support in Moldova, by UNDP

¹³³ Stakeholders reported a divergence between UNGASS and the EU Directive on intellectual property which obliges the countries to procure brand drugs and not generic ones for a certain number of years, thus putting a huge financial burden on member countries. This provision might reduce the access to medicines in Moldova, thus access to health generally, which is promoted by the UNCT and addressed in various projects carried out within the framework of UNPF.

5.3 Effectiveness

Evaluation of effectiveness considered the following evaluation questions:

What was the UN's actual contribution to the achievement or likely **achievement of the UNPF outcomes**?

What were the main **factors** which contributed or hindered the achievement of UNPF outcomes?

Has the implementation of UNPF produced any **additional, unplanned** effect (positive or negative)?

What was the **comparative advantage of the UN** and how was it utilised in the Moldovan context in relation to other development actors in the country?

Contribution to achieving intended results in the relevant programming areas

As mentioned above, **the scope and timeframe to generate results through the implementation of the UNPF has been highly conditioned by the operating space available in Moldova**. It varied across intervention areas and pillars. Due to political turmoil which has shaken the country over the last years, the operating space was partly or minimally conducive to generating the estimated outcomes on medium term. The progress in the first three years of UNPF implementation has been thus uneven.

There are intervention areas which registered considerable success in terms of addressing the most pressing needs of the country, such as in the area of voting rights for PwD and migrants, free legal aid, alternative reporting to international review bodies, gender-sensitive media reporting, population access to piped water and public sewage system, SMEs development, inclusive education, child deinstitutionalisation, promotion of human rights in Transnistrian region, reproductive health, addressing risk factors of NCDs, access to renewable energy, reduction of energy intensity, etc. **There is plausible evidence that institutional and behavioural changes brought about by UNPF implementation managed to influence positive trends of relevant 'Moldova 2020' indicators (e.g. related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, social security for migrant Moldovans, electoral rights of labour migrants, etc.), but primarily of the ones included in various sectoral strategies of the country (gender equality, inclusive education, health care, confidence building, migration and asylum, border management, diaspora, etc.) for the reasons explained in the Relevance section. The work carried out by UN Moldova in partnership with the Government and other key national and international partners has also contributed to progress towards EU association targets, particularly in the area of justice, child rights, equal opportunities, public health and energy efficiency, migration management.**

At the same time, there are areas where progress is lagging behind and unlikely to meet the targets until the end of 2017, e.g. lack of ex-ante impact assessment of policies from a human rights perspective, still not functional human rights oversight mechanism, deteriorated public confidence in Parliament and the justice system, inefficiency of active employment measures for returned migrant workers, Roma school segregation, low MMR vaccine coverage of children, deficit of health professionals in primary health care, limited community-level implementation of climate change and disaster risk reduction measures, etc.).

Even in areas with a shared vision between the Government and UNCT, open space for dialogue, sectoral coordination and available national partners with whom to work, there have been major constraints related to political instability, staff turnover and loss of institutional memory, competing priorities and budgetary constraints at local level, weak evidence base, migration, etc. which impeded the

attainment of results at a pace planned in the UNPF. Therefore, the analysis considered the results which could have been generated relative to the existing operating space.

The analysis of results (outcomes and outputs) has been a rather challenging undertaking due to several flaws in the selection of indicators in the Results Matrix (see discussion on indicators in the Design and Focus section and in Annex 8), data gaps to measure progress to date and limited end-2017 evaluability in some cases¹³⁴. The evaluation has used evidence from a variety of sources, notably MTR and updates provided by the RCO for 2015, one-pagers, RC Annual Reports, relevant evaluation reports and feedback from key informants (interviews, focus groups and round tables). From this triangulated data, a progress assessment has been constructed towards the outputs and outcomes. The indicators used are the revised ones following the MTR in 2015, since these compose the framework for the current UNPF reporting. Each outcome has been mapped against a description of the main features of the operating space¹³⁵ and an evaluative judgement drawn accordingly.¹³⁶

A detailed *results analysis* is provided in Table 7 along with *trends, some key activities which supported the progression to results and contribution of various UN agencies to achieved results* (see 'Assessment' under each Outcome).

Based on the available data, the results analysis indicates that around 58% of the planned targets are likely to be achieved by the end of 2017¹³⁷ i.e. 61 of 105 indicators, most positive trends toward the end-results being registered in pillar 1 (67% i.e. 26 of 39 indicators) which falls under the broad human rights, rule of law, equality and democracy mandate of UN. As far as pillar 2 is concerned, the percentage is lower (51%, 25 of 49 indicators), the results of the assessment being influenced by the very ambitious targets set in many cases at impact level¹³⁸ and for whose attainment the UNPF could have, in any event, only a limited capacity to significantly influence. At the same time, most data gaps and unevaluable indicators are to be found in pillar 2¹³⁹, thus influencing the overall assessment of progress towards targets. In case of pillar 3, the evaluation found that around 59% of targets will be met by 2017 (10 out of 17 indicators).

¹³⁴ For instance, the indicator having as target the increase in Moldovan citizens' abroad participation in parliamentary elections. These elections are however planned for 2018, thus exceeding the timeframe of UNPF. Another example is SADI for which the methodology has been changed and the available data do not compare with the baselines. In case of output 2.1.1, the only indicator existing in the initial Results Matrix has been removed following the MTR, impeding the assessment of progress.

¹³⁵ In particular, data gathered through key informant interviews and available situation analyses.

¹³⁶ Judgements are characterized as follows: "good progress" where there is evidence of progress more than halfway towards target; "some progress" where progress is evident but is still less than halfway towards target; "limited progress" where little progress against targets is evident/ results are largely at the activity/input level; and "no progress" in cases where the situation remained unchanged or worsened.

¹³⁷ The calculation includes all indicators where "good progress" was achieved so far and other indicators which are currently not too much advanced but for which there are favourable conditions and opportunities for being achieved until the end of UNPF implementation period.

¹³⁸ See Annex 8 for a full appraisal of indicators.

¹³⁹ Unknown progress in case of 6 indicators, compared to 1 in pillar 1 and 2 in pillar 3

Table 7. Detailed Analysis of Outputs and Outcomes ¹⁴⁰

PILLAR 1 – DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Outcome 1.1 - Increased transparency, accountability and efficiency of central and LPAs

Indicators:

- a. Confidence in public administration institutions; Corruption Perception Index (CPI). Baseline: (May 2011): Government 23%; Parliament 19%; LPA 47%; Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 36% (2011); Target: Government 45%; Parliament 40%; LPA 60%; CPI: Improvement of Confidence and Trust; Progress: Government 7%; Parliament 6%; LPA 52% (2015), CPI 33% (2015)
- b. Hunter coefficient of vertical balance (the degree of fiscal dependency of local governments on resources transferred by central government); Baseline: varying between 13% and 19% (2011); Target: above 20% and not varying; Progress: 18.30% (2015)
- c. Public availability of data on equality, disaggregated by key/target vulnerable groups & cross-cutting dimensions (incl. territorial, inhabitants' area, etc.) to track progress towards MDGs and Moldova's long-term development goals. Baseline: Certain data available on gender and regional disparities but data missing on a number of key groups; Target: Data on target vulnerable groups (PwD, Roma, persons with stigmatized diseases, third country nationals, the stateless) available and used in policymaking; Progress: Statistical data available on vulnerable groups: PwD, persons with stigmatized diseases

Assessment:

As expected, there was good progress on the first two indicators especially when the country experienced political stability before 2014. However, in the course of 2015, the indicators on confidence and trust deteriorated significantly. The current confidence in Parliament and Government (Opinion Barometer 2015, April 2016) is around 6-7% which is in substantial decline as compared to the baseline, whereas the same parameter for LPAs increased slightly to 52%. CPI remained roughly the same as in 2012. It shows that the corruption perception didn't reduce the confidence and trust in central public administration. Nor was the confidence and trust decreased due to the ineffectiveness of LPAs as the confidence indicator remained the same. A possible alternative explanation for the reduced confidence and trust stems from the financial/banking crises whose effects were felt in 2015, notably 30% depreciation of Moldovan leu, and the regional instability. It is unlikely that the set target for the confidence in public administration institutions will be achieved by 2017. The Hunter coefficient improved its level in 2015, standing at 18.30%, and it likely to reach its target of 20% by the end of UNPF implementation. The degree of the disaggregation of statistical data has been improved for some vulnerable groups (e.g. criteria of disability, HIV, other diseases, repatriates)¹⁴¹, while others did not get too much attention (Roma, for instance).

Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCIVE - Political instability emerged in 2015 following the delayed Government appointment after the parliamentary election in November 2014. In 2016 the prospects became better for the implementation of the planned objectives. Therefore, the current barriers and constraints reside in the area of the availability of sound technical solutions and financial competing priorities. Some secondary political sensitivity could affect the achievement of the trust and perception indicators, but outside the UN control.

Output 1.1.1 - A modernized public administration system is capacitated to effectively and efficiently develop, budget, implement and monitor evidence-based policies in support of the country's national priorities and European integration objectives

Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Ex-ante policy analysis and results-based management principles mandatory for public policy development, ensuring results- oriented, rights-based, and gender-sensitive response implementation and monitoring with clear linkages to programme-based budgeting <u>Baseline:</u> Methodology for ex-ante policy analysis (incl. a human rights and gender-sensitive approach) is not a mandatory step for public policy development (2011) <u>Target:</u> Ex-ante policy analysis, including human rights- based, migration and gender-responsive methodology, is mandatory for development,	New law on the drafting of the normative acts (includes legislative and secondary legislation) drafted and currently with the Ministry of Justice for expert feedback. Comments from specialized NGOs signalling that the draft law does not include a well developed component on the ex-ante policy impact evaluation (including human rights) and on ex-post human rights policy impact. Gender impact added to the methodology in 2013. Migration and diaspora impact under consideration; however five sectorial strategies with migration impact integrated ¹⁴² . No progress in 2015 possibly because of the lack of technical understanding of issues related to human rights and gender-sensitive approach to ex-ante and ex-post impact evaluation, or inadequate capacity to implement. Portfolio of UNPF interventions including projects related to ex-ante, ex-post policy analysis, gender-sensitive and rights-based and results-based management principles. Indicator achievable in principle till the end of the UNPF if targeted and efficient assistance is provided to the MoJ, State Chancellery and policy units within the central public administration.	Limited progress (but positive opportunities)

¹⁴⁰ The sources of data for the quantitative value of indicators are the Results Matrix of the MTR (for 2013-2014) and the updates provided by the RCO (for 2015)

¹⁴¹ http://www.ms.gov.md/sites/default/files/07_expert_itm_si_dizabilitatea.pdf , <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/EN/08%20SAN/SAN05/SAN05.asp> , <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/EN/ODM/ODM.asp> , <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Database/EN/08%20SAN/SAN02/SAN02.asp> , accessed on 04.05.2016.

¹⁴² See MTR (2015), page 11

implementation and monitoring of all new public policies developed after 2013		
b. Public Expenditure Framework Assessment (PEFA) scoring on multi-year perspective in fiscal planning, expenditure policy and budgeting <u>Baseline:</u> PEFA scoring B+ (2011) <u>Target:</u> PEFA scoring A	Scoring A not achieved at the moment, likely to be achieved by 2017. Improved PEFA scoring in 2015 compared to 2011, as indicated by PEFA reports ¹⁴³ , less for the indicators on access to fiscal information (from A (the highest) to B) and proportion of aid managed by national procedures (from C to D (the lowest)). Indicator on credibility of budget moved from B to A. Slight improvement of indicator on comprehensiveness and transparency. No progress on predictability and control of budget execution (most problematic being effectiveness of tax collection and predictability of expenditures committed), accounting and recording (with problems recorded with quality and timeliness of annual financial statements), external scrutiny/audit (most problems referring to parliament scrutiny). No substantial change on donor practices, but problematic the Direct budget support predictability. Portfolio of UNPF interventions does not include projects related to PEFA indicator.	Some progress
c. EU-Moldova AA signed and implemented in line with the action plan <u>Baseline:</u> EU-Moldova AA not signed <u>Target:</u> EU-Moldova AA signed and is being implemented in line with the action plan	EU-Moldova AA signed in 2014, and is being implemented based on the Action Plan. Online monitoring platform for the implementation of AA in place (https://monitorizare.gov.md/reports/Raport%20PNAAA.htm). Progressive compliance of the implementation of Action Plan under the AA/DCFTA according to official sources, but impact evaluation not done yet. Around 21-30% of activities implemented and having the planned effects, according to alternative NGOs sources ¹⁴⁴ . Portfolio of UNPF interventions included some projects that contributed directly to achieving the target.	Some progress
d. 2014 Population and Housing Census undertaken <u>Baseline:</u> non-existent (last census in 2004) <u>Target:</u> census undertaken successfully, providing reliable, credible data for policy formulation (2015)	Census carried out (including a chapter on migration), post-enumeration survey conducted, preliminary results disseminated in December 2014, but publication of final results expected only in March 2017 (2 years later than the target). Challenges raised by the lack of domestic financial allocation and inefficient management by NBS of the whole process.	Some progress
Output 1.1.2 - The Parliament and the Central Electoral Commission are better able to exercise their functions including to ensure human rights and gender equality		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Women's representation in decision-making positions <u>Baseline:</u> Members of Parliament (MPs) 22%; members of the Government at Minister level 2-10% (2011) <u>Target:</u> MPs 30%; members of the Government at Minister-level 30% (2015)	2014: 21% MPs (or 21 women), 20% members of the Government Cabinet (or 4 women) 2016: 23% members of the current Government Cabinet (or 5 women). The target for MPs will not be achieved, as the next parliamentary elections will take place in 2018. Low prospects for the second target, too.	Some progress
a.1. Participation in voting of Moldovan citizens abroad [new indicator ¹⁴⁵] <u>Baseline:</u> 64,199 Moldovan citizens from abroad (2010) <u>Target:</u> Increase in Moldovans citizens from abroad participation in parliamentary elections in 2018	73,311 Moldovan citizens from abroad who voted in November 2014 Parliamentary election, representing an increase by 14% compared to previous 2010 elections. The year of the target goes beyond UNPF implementation period. Strengthened capacity of Central Electoral Commission (CEC). Several options for the voting abroad, including through the electronic vote, piloted. CEC commitment to use electronic voting in the future. Portfolio of UNPF projects includes substantial support for increasing CEC's capacity.	Good progress
b. Public confidence in Parliament (sex-disaggregated) <u>Baseline:</u> 25% report confidence in Parliament (27% of men, 22% of women) (spring 2012)	6% report confidence in Parliament (5% male and 6% female) in 2015 The target is unlikely to be achieved given the current low level of trust. Portfolio of UNPF projects includes substantial support provided to the Parliament for capacity building.	Limited progress

¹⁴³ http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/documents/more_info/pefa_assessment_2012-2014.pdf, accessed on 28.05.2016

¹⁴⁴ IPRE – 30%, <http://ipre.md/>, 239-gradul-total-de-implementare-al-planului-national-de-actiuni-pentru-implementarea-acordului-de-asociere-rm-ue-pe-2015-2016/; Expert-group – 21% on DCFTA <http://www.expert-grup.org/ro/, activitate/comunicate-de-presa/item/1172-comunicat-euromonitor-aa&category=188>, CReDO/CNM – 35% on Justice, Energy and Environment.

¹⁴⁵ Whenever 'new indicator' is mentioned in the table, it refers to an indicator introduced in the revised UNPF Results Matrix, following the MTR (2015).

Target: 40% report confidence in Parliament (at least 40% of women) (2017)		
c. Human rights and gender analysis of the draft laws in the Parliament Baseline: 0% Target: 100%	Limited progress to date, but target could be achieved till the end of the UNPF. Indicator correlated to indicator 1.1.1 a) for comments on the capacity of Parliament. Missing sound technical solutions and capacities. Portfolio of UNPF projects includes substantial support provided to the Parliament for capacity building.	Limited progress (but positive opportunities)
d. OSCE/ODIHR overall assessment of the quality of the general elections Baseline: 2010 parliamentary election 'met most standards'; 2011 local elections 'largely met' standards Target: Steady improvement in meeting electoral standards as assessed by OSCE/ODIHR (general elections -2014, local elections -2015)	Parliamentary election administration in 2014 generally professional and transparent, enjoying the confidence of most stakeholders, with citizens able to "vote in a free and dignified manner". "Well administered" local elections in 2015, according to OSCE/ODIHR election observation mission. CEC "enjoyed the trust of electoral competitors" (OSCE/ODIHR Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions) (http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/123801 , http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/128476?download=true , http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/moldova/157256). Alternative sources confirm these assessment (https://promolex.md/upload/publications/ro/doc_1417786016.pdf , https://promolex.md/upload/publications/ro/doc_1442821363.pdf).	Good progress
Output 1.1.3 – LPAs have increased capacity and resources to exercise their functions including in better planning, delivering and monitoring services in line with decentralization policies		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Increase in the share of local own revenues in the overall local budgets Baseline: 4.0% (2011) Target: Not less than 10%	Ministry of Finance annual reports stating a coefficient of 3.4% in 2012 which gradually increased each year to reach 9.2% in 2015. This a steady progress. Nevertheless, full compliance until 2017 not safeguarded given the financial crises consequences.	Good progress
b. Degree of implementation of Decentralization Strategy Action Plan Baseline: Decentralization Strategy approved in 2012 Target: Decentralization Strategy Action Plan implemented in a timely manner at a rate of 70% of planned actions for respective year	Government reports on the implementation of the Decentralization Action Plan (http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=344005&lang=1) indicating an increase from 42% in 2013 to 57% in 2015 (http://descentralizare.gov.md) Set target unlikely to be achieved given economic-financial crisis.	Some progress
Outcome 1.2 – Justice sector actors are better able to promote access to justice and uphold rule of law in compliance with international commitments		
Indicators: a. Level of public confidence in the justice system. Baseline: 24% of people trust the justice system (May 2011); Target: 34% of people trust the justice system by 2017; Progress: 10.3% (12.4% men, 8.6% women) (Apr 2015) b. Number of judicial instances and/or equality body recognizing and remedying discrimination in individual cases. Baseline: No known cases to date of judicial recognition of discrimination on any grounds; Target: 100 recognition/remedy decisions by 2015; 400 recognition/remedy decisions by 2017; Progress: By 1 May 2016 the Equality Council had received and examined 420 discrimination complaints, issued 230 decisions and found discrimination in 103 cases (12 cases in 2013, 48 in 2014, and 25 in 2015). Assessment: The first indicator regressed more than two time the baseline level and it is highly unlikely that the target will be met. The level of trust in the judiciary stood in November 2014 at 23% (22% men, 23% women) and went down in April 2015 to a worrying level of 10.3% (12.4% men, 8.6% women) according to Barometer of Public Opinion. The corruption perception related to the justice sector has not worsened according to the CPI, yet the trust decreased. The explanation is similar to the one provided for outcome 1.1 above, given the perceived role of the justice sector (court and prosecutor) in the banking/financial crises, but also of the high level cases profiled in the media of judges and prosecutors' undeclared assets on the background of concrete actions thereof of the Superior Council of Magistrates (CSM). The second indicator has progressed and has chances to be achieved as far as decisions of the Equality Council are concerned. However, the number of judicial decisions on discrimination is not known and first data shows that judicial decisions reverse the earlier adopted decisions in substantial numbers. Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCTIVE - Political instability in 2015 weakened the focus on implementation of commitments. The emergence of the political stability in 2016 provides for the opportunity to create better conditions for training curriculum development on international human rights law, explanatory decisions of the Supreme Court of Justice, implementation of the state programme for compensation of victims of crimes, improvement of Equality Council's decisions and even of the quality of the judicial decisions on discrimination cases but also the investigation of the ill-treatment cases handling by the prosecution and courts. Financial and economic constraints arisen in 2015 and adversely influencing 2016 will be partly mitigated in the course of 2016 given the renewed financial support from the international development partners.		

Output 1.2.1 - Judiciary has increased capacity to render consistent, independent judgements in conformity with international law and standards		
Indicator	Status as December 2015	Assessment
a.Training curriculum modules (introductory and continuous) on international human rights law developed and implemented by National Institute of Justice (NIJ) <u>Baseline:</u> NIJ trains in selected European Court of Human Rights provisions, but not at all on international human rights law. <u>Target:</u> By 2017, NIJ curriculum substantively amended with modules on each of the international treaties, mechanisms and instruments (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention Against Torture (CAT), ICERD, CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), CRPD), including the 1951 Refugee Convention	No progress at the moment, yet results are likely to be achieved in the course of 2016-2017 (not a politically sensitive area) In 2015, UNDP started a four-year project with NIJ, and its implementation will advance progress towards the target.	No progress (but positive prospects)
b. Number of Supreme Court of Justice explanatory guidance decisions explicitly related to the implementation of international human rights law <u>Baseline:</u> 4 known guidance decisions on international human rights law <u>Target:</u> 7 guidance decisions or similar guidance arrangements on international human rights law issues during 2013-2017	Four guidance decisions on international human rights law and two decisions adopted which are relevant to human rights issues (http://jurisprudenta.csj.md/db_hot_expl.php) Not a politically sensitive area; therefore more substantial progress is feasible in case targeted capacity building and advice are provided to the Court; otherwise the target will be missed. As per previous indicator, there is a large project targeting NIJ that can contribute to the achievement of the target in this area, too.	Some progress
Output 1.2.2 - Law enforcement authorities are better able to secure fundamental rights of all parties in criminal proceedings		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Share of children in conflict with the law diverted from the judicial system <u>Baseline:</u> 53.08% of children diverted from judicial system (2011) <u>Target:</u> 63% of children diverted from judicial system	45% of cases diverted until end 2015 Changes in the law and capacity of the relevant actors likely to ensure the achievement of the target.	Good progress
d. Existence of a state programme for compensation of victims of crimes <u>Baseline:</u> Mechanism of asset seizure not effective in ensuring the rights of victims of crimes to compensation <u>Target:</u> Human rights-based state compensation programme for victims of crimes created	Draft law on compensation of the victims of crimes adopted by the parliament in the first reading (http://www.justice.gov.md/public/files/transparenta_in_procesul_decizional/consultatii_publice/Proiect_de_lege_dupa_avizare_2_curat.pdf) (victims of trafficking of human beings among the beneficiaries of this law). Programme to be developed after final approval of the law expected for 2016. As the target provides just for the creation of the mechanism and not for its application and functioning, there good changes to achieve the target.	Some progress
Output 1.2.3 - Individuals, including the most vulnerable, have improved access to quality procedures to resolve justice claims and secure effective remedy		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a.Quality assurance system for legal aid delivery developed and sensitive to gender and vulnerability criteria from human rights perspective* <u>Baseline:</u> No such system existing at present; limited systemic knowledge about quality of legal assistance or gender/vulnerability status of recipients	Significant progress registered. Data on the number of beneficiaries available online (http://statistica.cnaigs.md/) and disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity, disability, refugee status, and locality. Legal aid quality monitoring mechanism in place and functioning. General data available from the National Legal Aid Council annual reports. External quality assurance for aid delivery tested in 2015 (Sept-Oct). 55% of monitored lawyers were rated "good", 25 % "very good" and 20% "insufficient".	Good progress

<p>Target: Existing and functional monitoring system, with qualitative gender-sensitive indicators and functioning sanctioning mechanism, for legal services; system in place for assuring quality and monitoring gender and vulnerability criteria from human rights perspective*</p>		
<p>b. Percentage of victims who receive legal aid, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, language, citizenship, criminal code, article of crime suffered Baseline: 0, and no coverage by law of the victim in criminal proceedings Target: Elaborated eligibility of victims for legal assistance, in particular for serious crimes</p>	<p>Progress noted. Juvenile victims able to benefit from legal aid services in place since 2013. Number of beneficiaries: 7 in 2015. List of legal aid lawyers specialized in services for victims compiled by the National Legal Aid Council which also approved quality standards for services for juveniles. Legal aid extended to stateless and seeking refugee status persons. UNDP assistance in 2013 for the development of case registration and data generation software. Since 2014, disaggregated data on legal aid services and beneficiaries available on website http://statistica.cnaigs.md/ Changes in the law and capacity of the relevant actors in place, so the target is likely to be met.</p>	Good progress
Output 1.2.4 - Police, prosecution, judiciary and health authorities better safeguard fundamental rights of persons in detention		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
<p>a. Percentage of effective criminal investigations opened, in relation to number of complaints submitted, related to torture and ill treatment Baseline: 11% (2011) Target: Effective criminal investigation opened in 40% of complaints *</p>	<p>Progress observed in comparison to the baseline: 21.84% (2013), 17.8% (2014), 17.85% (2015) (http://procuratura.md/md/newslist/1211/1/6532/, http://procuratura.md/md/com/1211/1/6052/) Changes in the law and capacity of the relevant actors in place, so the target is likely to be met. Comprehensive and independent and publicly profiled monitoring could improve the chances to meet the target.</p>	Good progress
<p>b. Percentage of final convictions, in relation to number of complaints submitted, related to torture and ill treatment Baseline: 0.94% (2011) Target: Substantial progressive increase of proportion of convictions including custodial sentences for crimes related to torture and ill treatment</p>	<p>Progress observed on sentencing to real prison terms: (2013) 2 persons (5%) out of 40 convicted; (2014) 14 persons (22.58%) out of 62 convicted; (2015) 9 persons (18.37%) out of 49 convicted (http://procuratura.md/md/newslist/1211/1/6532/, http://procuratura.md/md/com/1211/1/6052/) Changes in the law and capacity of the relevant actors in place, so the target is likely to be met. Comprehensive and independent and publicly profiled monitoring could improve the chances to meet the target.</p>	Some progress
<p>c. Share of people in detention who have access to medical services independent from the administration of the detention facility/system Baseline: Detention medical services and medical staff are subordinated to the Department of Penitentiary Institutions of Ministry of Justice. Target: 100% of people in detention have access to medical services independent from the administration of the detention facility/system</p>	<p>Action plan for reorganization of medical services adopted through Government decision, but not implemented. Not political issue, yet affected by the financial-economic crisis. Issue on public agenda as human rights are profiled in EU-Moldova relationship. The target could be achieved by the end of the UNPF timeframe.</p>	Some progress
Outcome 1.3 - State bodies and other actors effectively promote and protect human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, with particular attention to the marginalized and vulnerable		
<p>Indicators:</p> <p>a. Share of international human rights recommendations, in particular Universal Periodic Review (UPR), implemented in timely manner. Baseline: Report of the UPR Working Group; Target: All UPR recommendations implemented; Progress: 17 recommendations not implemented, 28 recommendations partially implemented, and 12 recommendations fully implemented. No answer received for 63 out of 123 recommendations and voluntary pledges.</p> <p>b. Number of protection orders issued by courts for victims of domestic violence effectively implemented by police and other relevant authorities. Baseline: Approx. 200 protection orders issued by courts since September 2009, 0 effectively implemented; Target: At least 40% of protection orders effectively implemented; Progress: 828 protection orders issued by courts in 2015, compared to only 4 in 2010. The average yearly increase of protection orders issued by courts is 550% (source: Ministry of Interior).</p>		

Assessment:

First indicator is reported to be partially implemented by the Government. Numerical evaluation shows that about half of the recommendations are implemented¹⁴⁶, while impact evaluation and alternative sources for the assessment remain just partial. More information will be available after preparation and submission of the National UPR Report in July 2016. The second indicator has seen a rapid increase in the enforcement of protection orders. The effective aspect of the implementation i.e. protection orders produce the expected result and do not have unintended consequences to the victims of abuse, is yet to be evaluated. A comprehensive evaluation of the ex-ante impact of the amended law and of the protecting orders has to be carried out, but the target could be met (according to a study by Promo-LEX, 83% of interviewed police persons stated protection orders were issued observing the term of 24 hours¹⁴⁷).

Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCIVE - Political instability in 2015 weakened the focus from the commitments to the implementation. The emergence of the political stability in 2016 provides for the opportunity to create better conditions for the establishment of the oversight of NHRAP, UPR recommendations and UN Special Procedures recommendations and specialised HRIs. Financial and economic constraints developed in 2015 and adversely influencing 2016 will be brought under the better management in the course of this year given the renewed budgetary and monetary support from the international development partners.

Output 1.3.1 - Relevant public authorities exercise improved oversight of implementation of international human rights recommendations

Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Mechanism for human rights oversight in place (National Human Rights Action Plan - NHRAP oversight mechanism), with representative membership and mechanism for transparency/civil society/public input, including diaspora* <u>Baseline:</u> National Commission for NHRAP monitoring in place in the form of a meeting convened by Deputy Prime Minister for Social Affairs; civil society not effectively included. <u>Target:</u> Effective and representative oversight and coordination body for implementation of international and regional human rights recommendations meets regularly with agenda published in advance	No progress since 2012. Discussions (May 2016) on-going on the possible extension and follow-up on NHRAP 2011-2014 and on initiation of a new post-2016 NHRAP, in particular in light of the second Moldova UPR scheduled for 2016. Division between implementation coordination role and implementation oversight role needed. Establishment of redesigned oversight mechanism achievable as the issue is not politically-sensitive or risk adverse, but requiring a sound technical solution for the oversight mechanism which would include the right decision makers and representative CSOs together with media. See also Outcome 1.4 that should be synergised with action under this output.	No progress
b. Percentage of UPR recommendations implemented <u>Baseline:</u> 0 of 122 recommendations in the first UPR cycle implemented <u>Target:</u> 100% of UPR recommendations of the first cycle implemented	This indicator is similar to outcome indicator 1.3 a) as far as the target is concerned (see comments above).	Some progress
c. Percentage of Moldova-specific UN treaty body special procedures and related relevant recommendations implemented <u>Baseline:</u> CEDAW (2006), CRC (2009), (Human Rights Committee (2009), CAT (2009), CERD (2011), CCESCR (2011) aggregate, taken together with SRs on Violence against Women, Torture and Freedom of Religion or Belief, UN Senior Expert on Human Rights in Transnistria <u>Target:</u> All 2011 CERD concluding observations, 2011 CESCR concluding observations, 2013 CEDAW concluding observations, 2012 report by the UN SR on Freedom of Religion or Belief, 2014 Report by the UN SR on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights and related relevant recommendations implemented	Information on the progress under this indicator available in the second half of 2016 and in 2017, following UPR on Moldova and post-UPR developments in 2017. No consistent mechanism to evaluate the implementation of recommendations, either by Action Plan or by alternative sources and ex-post evaluations. See indicator 1.3.1 a).	Unknown

¹⁴⁶ More information available on <http://www.upr-info.org/followup/index/country/moldova>

¹⁴⁷ <https://promolex.md/index.php?module=news&item=1056>, accessed on 27.05.2016

d.Parliamentary Advocates, Centre for Human Rights and National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) against torture (ombuds-Institution) establish working methods in conformity with the Paris Principles on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) <u>Baseline:</u> Ombuds-institution not in conformity with Paris Principles (B-status accredited) <u>Target:</u> Ombuds-institution recognized as A-status NHRI	New Law on the People's Advocate adopted in April 2014. Successful action taken by the Ombudsperson before the Constitutional Court against the provisions of the 2014 Law, which prohibited persons under guardianship from submitting complaints on human rights infringements to the People's Advocate. Currently, work in progress on drafting a Regulation for the Office of People's Advocate and capacity building of the staff to apply for reaccreditation. Application for A status expected in 2016. Rules of procedure to the Law on the People's Advocate approved by the Parliament. Re-establishment of NPM likely to be done by 2017. Achievement of A-status unlikely within the period of one year of activity towards the end of UNPF.	Some progress
Output 1.3.2 - Relevant public authorities are able to mainstream human rights and gender equality into all key national strategies and policies and their implementation, including in budgeting		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
b. Mechanism for mainstreaming gender, human rights, diaspora* in state budget in place <u>Baseline:</u> (1) No data on human rights and gender mainstreaming in budget, across budget lines; (2) not all NHRAP activities budgeted; (3) National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) has no ring-fenced budget item; (4) in 2014 two strategies included the diaspora dimension: strategy of culture development 2020 and Strategy of tourism development 2020 <u>Target:</u> (1) Gender and human rights- mainstreamed budget developed and applied by line ministries and Ministry of Finance; (2) all activities in NHRAP have clearly allocated budgets; (3) NHRI has ring-fenced budget; (4) all strategies for relevant sectors have allocated budget for subprogramme 'Diaspora Support'	(1) Enhanced knowledge of public servants and staff of central authorities (Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, National Bureau of Statistics etc.) and Parliament on gender sensitive budgeting. Gender sensitive disaggregated data available. Budget classification allows for gender sensitive budgets, but not yet fully applied by line ministries and Ministry of Finance. No progress on gender-sensitive ex-ante and ex-post budget evaluation. (2) NHRAP activities budgeted according to the general budgeting rules within the existing budget lines of the relevant institution in charge, yet not clearly earmarked to NHRAP and therefore difficult to trace and oversight; (3) NHRI have defined budgets (Ombuds and Equality Council, yet not for NPM); (4) Funds allocated from the state budget for the period 2013-2014 for the implementation of "Diaspora Support" subprogramme.	Some progress
Output 1.3.3 - Increased capacity of women and men from vulnerable groups, including children, to claim and stand for their rights		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Proportion of well-founded claims concerning discrimination received by Anti-discrimination Council receiving effective remedy <u>Baseline:</u> 0 claims received by Anti-discrimination Council; Council not yet established <u>Target:</u> Anti-discrimination Council establishes working practices in conformity with international and regional best practices and provides effective remedy to all well-founded complaints of discrimination on any international law grounds brought before it	Equality Council set up. 420 discrimination complaints received since it setting up until 1 May 2016; decisions issued on 230 complaints, discrimination found in 103 cases. Explanatory information as basis for decisions taken by the judiciary not available at the moment. Chances are good for the achievement of indicator's target.	Good progress
b. Curriculum modules covering or substantially mainstreaming human rights, including child rights and gender equality, in mainstream education and training <u>Baseline:</u> Human rights curriculum elements in primary and secondary education are mainly optional	Some elements of children's rights contained in the moral and spiritual education subjects in primary education. Elements of the CRC and rights of the child, right to life, right to health, prevention of abuse, social security and human rights institutions included in the civic education which is a mandatory discipline for lower secondary and secondary education curriculum. Efforts should be directed towards improving education on human rights and democracy in high schools.	Some progress

Target: Human rights included in mainstream curriculum in primary/secondary education		
Outcome 1.4 - Civil society and media better monitor and promote human rights, equality, democratic governance, and rule of law		
<p>Indicators:</p> <p>a. Public trust in NGOs and media. Baseline: Public Opinion Barometer trust index - NGOs 26%, Media 63% (May 2011); Target: Public Opinion Barometer trust index, NGOs 46%, Media 75% (2017); Progress: Public Opinion Barometer trust index: NGOs 26% , Media 60% (Nov 2014); NGOs 23.6%, Media 41.5% (Apr 2016).</p> <p>b. Heightened quality of reporting by media on human rights, equality, rule of law, and empowerment of women. Baseline: Media insufficiently covers the human rights issues, with frequent infringements of ethical standards. Target: Qualitative increase of coverage of human rights, equality and rule of law issues in mainstream media; Progress: Progressing as planned.</p> <p>c. Number of entities submitting alternative reports to international review bodies, in particular UPR. Baseline: 24 national-level stakeholder entities involved in submissions to 2011 UPR; 13 national-level CSOs involved in submissions to May 2011 CESC review; Target: 100% increase in stakeholder submissions to relevant international bodies/review by 2017; Progress: 65 national-level stakeholder entities were involved in submissions to the 2016 UPR (170% increase on 2011). Overall 36 alternative submissions were made in 2016 against 16 in 2011 (125% increase).</p> <p>Assessment: The public trust in NGOs and media has deteriorated since 2011, most probably due to the overall dissatisfaction of the situation in the country and it is unlikely that the targets will be attained by 2017. A positive trend has been observed in gender sensitive reporting in the media. As of 2015, 30 media outlets reflect on a permanent basis on women's economic and political empowerment as well as on elimination of violence against women. This represent an increase of 67% compared to 2013 when only 18 media institutions reflected on gender equality. According to a six-month media monitoring survey (Sept 2015-Feb 2016)¹⁴⁸, women were featured in 16% of all news at the beginning of the monitored time period, and in 27% of all news at the end of the time period, i.e. an increase of 11 percentage points. At the same time, there was an impressive increase in the volume of alternative international reporting and number of national stakeholders authoring these submissions, the targets being overly achieved.</p> <p>Operating space: LARGELY CONDUCIVE – after a period of political turmoil, the political stability in 2016 is expected to create better conditions for enabling the civil society regulatory environment. The enforcement of the 2% law (i.e. the right to redirect 2% of the income tax to support public benefit non-profit organizations and religious institutions) is expected to be brought back to discussion with decision-makers. The remaining issues addressed by outcome 1.4 are outside the Government control.</p>		
Output 1.4.1 - Civil society capacity as regards human rights and equality law, democratic governance and rule of law standards, as well as its ability to act in and shape policy processes, is manifestly strengthened		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
<p>a. Number of independent CSOs or other independent groups submitting alternative reports to international review bodies, in particular UPR</p> <p>Baseline: 24 national-level stakeholder entities involved in submissions to 2011 UPR; 13 national-level CSOs involved in submissions to May 2011 CESC review; 40 national NGOs involved in the alternative CRC reporting process</p> <p>Target: 60% increase in stakeholder submissions to all relevant international bodies/review by 2017 (UPR, Human Rights Committee, CERD, CESC, CAT, CEDAW, CRPD, CRC and relevant Special Procedures)</p>	<p>Indicator and baseline similar to outcome indicator 1.4.c).</p> <p>65 national-level stakeholder entities involved in submissions to the 2016 UPR (170% increase compared to 2011). 36 alternative submissions made in 2016 against 16 in 2011 (125% increase) http://www.upr-info.org/en/review/Moldova-(Republic-of). These are quantitative evaluations of the progress.</p> <p>Progress on qualitative shadow reporting, diversity of reported issues and the quality of used evidence as well as follow-up on the reflection of information provided in the respective recommendations should be used as benchmark for the improved capacity in concert with progress on mechanisms under Outcome 1.3 and Outputs 1.3.1 and 1.3.2.</p>	Good progress
<p>b. Legal and regulatory framework for civil society to be able to operate independently, including capacity of service provider in place</p> <p>Baseline: Development of framework initiated but not yet completed</p> <p>Target: Law on social contracts in place and in conformity with best practices; law on 1% support in place</p>	<p>Law on 2% support adopted, but without a fully operational mechanism in place to be adopted by the Government. Mechanism developed with the participation of civil society, yet not adopted since late 2014.</p> <p>No progress on social contracting (e.g. eligibility criteria for NGOs to participate in public tenders for the provision of the social, health and educational, youth services, etc.). Issue not politically sensitive, but the financial-economic crisis partly affected the adoption of the mechanism and of the social contracting.</p>	Limited progress

¹⁴⁸ API (2013), "Autoevaluarea instituțiilor mass-media prin prisma dimensiunii de gen (presă scrisă și presă on-line)", http://api.md/upload/editor/RAPORT_FINAL_autoevaluarea_institutiilor_mass-media_prin_prisma_dimensiunii_de_gen.pdf, accessed on 26.05.2016

Output 1.4.2 - Media, including social media, reports more frequently on human rights and equality concerns, adopts human rights-based approach, and has heightened human rights impact, thereby heightening journalistic ethics		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Increase in quality of human rights and gender equality reporting by media, including social media <u>Baseline:</u> Media cover events and issues related to human rights and gender equality, without addressing or raising the human rights aspects. <u>Target:</u> Significant increase in quality of human rights-based and gender-sensitive reporting	Indicator similar to outcome indicator 1.4.b), see assessment above. Good progress on gender-sensitive reporting. Monitoring activity on the respect of the children rights ¹⁴⁹ and gender equality rights conducted by the CCA (Coordinating Audio-visual Council).	Good progress
b. Civil society and Press Council monitors gender and human rights quality and impact of media <u>Baseline:</u> Sporadic monitoring <u>Target:</u> Systematic annual monitoring	2013 Monitoring Report produced by Press Council and available at www.consiliuldepresa.md The Ethics Code voluntarily implemented by a number of audio-visual media in their activity.	Good progress

PILLAR 2 – HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Outcome 2.1 - People have access to more sustainable regional development, economic opportunities - innovation and agriculture in particular - and decent work

Indicators:

- Level of absolute and extreme poverty (national, regional; rural areas urban areas; gender). Baseline: National 21.9% and 1.4%; Rural areas 30.3% and 2.1%; Regions: North 23.7%, Centre 29.6%, South 27.7%, Town 14.2% and 0.3%, Cities 7.3% and 0.4%; Gender (head of household): 22.1% male and 21.6% female (2010); Target: National 19% and 1%; Rural areas 25% and 1.5%; Regions: North 21.7%, Centre 27.6%, South 25.7%, Towns 12.2% and 0.2%, Cities 5.3% and 0.3%, Gender (head of household) 20.1% male and 19.6% female; Progress: Absolute and extreme poverty rates: National 9.6% and 0.2%; Rural areas 14.5% and 0.3%; Towns (absolute): 5.7%; Cities (absolute): 1%; Gender (head of household) (absolute): 10.2% male and 8.4% female (2016); Regions (absolute): North 11.7%, Centre 14.9%, South (incl. ATU Gagauzia) 16.7%, city Chisinau 2.6% (2015).
- SADI, multiple deprivations by region (North; South; Centre; Autonomous Territorial Unit (ATU) Gagauzia). Baseline: North: 472, South: 455, Centre: 462, Chisinau municipality: 808, ATU Gagauzia: 629; Target: Increased SADI indicator per region by 10%; Progress: unknown¹⁵⁰
- Employment rate, disaggregated by urban/rural, geographical areas, gender and age. Baseline: General 39.4%; Women 37.1%; Urban 44.1%, Rural 36%, Regions: city Chisinau 49.2%, North 37%, Centre 37.6%, South (incl. Gagauzia) 34.7%, People aged 55-64: 40.9%; Young aged 15-24: 18.9%; Target: General 60.0%; Women 62.0%; People aged 55-64: 62.0%; Youth: 10.0%; Progress: General 40.3%, Women 38.4%, Urban 42.0%, Rural 38.9%, Regions: city Chisinau 47.8%, North 42.4%, Centre: 37.3%, South (incl. ATU Gagauzia) 32.8%, People aged 55-64: 41.4%, Young aged 15-24: 18.2% (2015)

Assessment:

Of the three indicators, only the first one on absolute and extreme poverty has registered significant progress as early as 2014. The second indicator is not evaluable since the methodology for calculating the SADI has meanwhile changed, thus available data for 2014 are not comparable to the baseline. Qualitative and methodological revision of SADI was undertaken and options for its institutionalization were explored. SADI has been correlated with the priorities and objectives of the regional development policy promoted by the Government. An assessment of the quality of data sources used for calculation of the index and their compliance with UN and Eurostat criteria was undertaken. As far as employment is concerned, there was a slight increase in 2015 compared to the previous year of the overall rate and the ones for women and people aged 55-64 (disaggregations for which a target was set), but their low current level does not leave any hope that the targets will be reached by 2017.

Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCIVE - Shared vision Government - UN, several UNPF priorities resonant with NDS "Moldova 2020"; good track record of working together; however political and economic crisis has seriously hampered progress of reforms in areas under this outcome; following a promising start in decentralization reform with the adoption of the Decentralization Strategy, commitment for deeper reforms faded, thus essential measures such as the territorial-administrative restructuring were put on hold; regional development has progressed slowly, due to insufficient capacity of the regional structures, but also due to poor coordination between regional development and other sectorial policies; economic opportunities as well as development of agriculture were hindered by the economic crisis and later by the locked international financial assistance.

Output 2.1.1 - Government and relevant public institutions and private sector have increased capacities to support economic opportunities, and better use of Moldova's innovation and export potential

¹⁴⁹ CCA, <http://cca.md/protectia-minorilor>, accessed 17.04.2015

¹⁵⁰ The figures for 2014 provided to the evaluation team by the RCO are the same as the baselines and were therefore not considered.

Indicator	Progress by December 2015	Assessment
[a. Indicator has been removed after the MTR as it is not deemed relevant.]	The only indicator for this output has been removed following the MTR. As a result, output 2.1.1 is not evaluable	na
Output 2.1.2 – LPAs and partners in the North, Centre, South, Chisinau, ATU Gagauzia and Transnistria development regions are better able to ensure equitable access to quality services		
Indicator	Progress by December 2015	Assessment
% of population with permanent access to sewage systems and quality water, disaggregated by urban/rural and geographical area <u>Baseline</u> : access of population to piped water: 60.2%; urban: 90.8%; rural: 37.5%; + city Chisinau: 96.3%, North: 37.8%, Centre: 46.7%, South: 71.1%; access of population to public sewage system: 32.1%; urban: 72.8%; rural: 1.9%; + city Chisinau: 87.6, North: 22.4%, Centre: 9.7%, South: 13.2% Note: South includes ATU Gagauzia (2011) <u>Target</u> : access of population to piped water: 65%; urban: 92%; rural: 40%; Access of population to public sewage system: 38%; urban: 76%; rural: 5%	Access of population to piped water: 65.3%; urban: 91.2%; rural: 45.6%; city Chisinau: 97.9%, North: 39.1%, Centre: 54.6%, South: 81.2% (2015) Access of population to public sewage system: 32.2%; urban: 72.8%; rural: 1.4%; city Chisinau: 87%, North: 20.6%, Centre: 12.1%, South: 12.4% (2015) High prospects for achieving the final targets in 2017, except the one on public sewage system in the rural areas. Technical support provided via the joint UNDP-UN Women “Integrated Local Development Programme” for the development of the regulatory mechanism for inter-municipal cooperation. Ten municipal enterprises formed in 10 clusters of 40 rural communities in Moldova to provide public services in water and sanitation, road maintenance, snow removal, waste management, greening, and public lighting, thus contributing to improved living conditions and access to new services for over 120,000 women and men and 1,000 small businesses.	Good progress
c. Share of capital expenditures in the total expenditures of local budgets <u>Baseline</u> : 13.7% (2011) <u>Target</u> : 17%, representing 0.5 p.p. annual increase	17.9% (2015) The target has been already reached.	Good progress
Output 2.1.3 - SMEs and potential entrepreneurs, including from rural areas, have increased access to business infrastructure and financial services, including agriculture and agrifood business		
Indicator	Progress	Assessment
Number of SMEs per 1,000 people, disaggregated by region and by women/youth-led rural SMEs <u>Baseline</u> : 13 SMEs per 1,000 people; North: 6; Centre: 6; South: 4; ATU Gagauzia: 8, city Chisinau: 37; Women-led 28%, Young people 15-34 years old: 23% (2009) <u>Target</u> : 17 SMEs per 1,000 people; North: 8; Centre: 8; South: 7; Women-led 35%; Young people 15-34 years old: 30%	15 SMEs per 1,000 population; North: 6; Centre: 7; South: 5; ATU Gagauzia: 9; city Chisinau: 43. Led by women: 28%; Young people aged 15-34: 13% (2015) Significant UN contribution to reaching the target: numerous interventions have addressed the need for SMEs development. CBM, JILD and marginally Syslab have contributed to establishing new businesses and strengthening the potential of the existing ones.	Good progress
Share of medium- and long-term loans from the total amount of accessed loans <u>Baseline</u> : 39% share of medium-term loans and 18% of long-term loans from the total amount of accessed loans <u>Target</u> : 20 p.p. increase for medium-term loans share and 15 p.p. for long-term loans	4.7 p.p. increase by the end of 2015 Unclear if referring to medium or long-term loans, but in any event much lagging behind the set target.	Limited progress
Output 2.1.4 - Government and social partners are better able to promote decent work and employment opportunities, particularly for vulnerable groups		
Indicator	Progress	Assessment
Number of people employed as a result of	Data for 2015: 16,780, of whom women: 8,769/ 52,25%; people aged 50-65: 3,233/19.3%; youth (16-24): 3,620/21.6%). Still, out of	Good progress

active labour market measures per year (disaggregated by sex and age) <u>Baseline:</u> 13,548, of which women: 7,738/57%; people aged 55-64: 2,400/18%; young people aged 16-24: 3,350/24% (2011) <u>Target:</u> 15,580, of which women: 9,036/58%; people aged 55-64: 2,600/17%; young people aged 16-24: 4,360/28%	2,605 returned migrants, only 679 (25.5%) employed ¹⁵¹ , accounting for 4% of the job seekers who were employed as a result of active employment measures. Slight decrease compared to 2014, but still good progress. Nevertheless, the underlying factors of the decrease in 2015 should be considered and addressed in the next UNPF.	
Number of bilateral agreements on labour and social security signed between the Republic of Moldova and countries of destination for Moldovan migrants <u>Baseline:</u> 7 agreements on social security and labour migration <u>Target:</u> 14 agreements	11 agreements on social security in place (2015) Negotiations for signing labour agreements with Turkey and Latvia in progress; negotiations with Israel started. Negotiations for the review of the labour agreement with Russian Federation in progress. Negotiations with Qatar and Turkey initiated ¹⁵² . Considerable UN's contribution to reaching this target. Extensive ILO assistance to the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family in developing and negotiating the respective agreements.	Good progress
The share of youth aged 15-34 out of the total migrants' group <u>Baseline:</u> 55.8% (2011) <u>Target:</u> 52.2% (2017)	60.6% (2015) Negative trends registered, level of indicator worse than the baseline. UN has contributed to the provision of job opportunities (including self-employment) for young people through Syslab, CBM and JILDP projects which incentivised them to set up and run SMEs. Yet, taking into account the difficult economic and political environment, which led to increased youth migration, more comprehensive and targeted measures are needed to address this issue.	No progress

Outcome 2.2: People enjoy equitable access to quality public health and health care services and protection against financial risks

Indicators:

- Life expectancy at birth, disaggregated by urban/rural, sex, ethnicity, income quintiles, education, geographical area (if available); Baseline: Total 69.1 yrs, Men: 65, Women: 73.4 (2010); Target: Men 69 yrs; Women 75.5 yrs; Reduction in the gap between the sexes of 2 yrs; Progress: Total 71.6 yrs; Men 67.6 yrs; Women 75.5 yrs (2014); Gap 0.9 yrs
- Under-five mortality rate, disaggregated as per indicator (a); Baseline: 13.6 per 1,000 live births; Urban: 9.6 per 1,000 live births; Rural: 14.8 per 1,000 live births (2010); Target: Decrease of 10% in total figure; Decrease of 15% among most disadvantaged population; Progress: Total: 11.7 per 1,000 live births; urban: 13.6 per 1,000 live births; rural: 10.6 per 1,000 live births (2015, based on place of registration)
- Private households' out-of-pocket payments on health as % of total health expenditure, disaggregated as per indicator (a); Baseline: 48.4%; Target: Decrease to 35%; Progress: 39.6% (2014)
- Percentage of adults and children with HIV still alive and known to be on antiretroviral therapy at 12 months, 24 months, and 60 months after initiating treatment; disaggregated by age, sex, regimen type, first/second line drugs; Baseline: 12 months: 88%; 24 months: 79%; 60 months: 73% (2010); Target: 12 months: 88%; 24 months: 80%; 60 months: 75%; Progress: 12 months: 84%; 24 months: 75.7%; 60 months: 65.3% (2015)
- Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births), disaggregated as per indicator (a); Baseline: 44.5 per 100,000 live births; Urban: 35% of total maternal deaths; Rural: 65% of total maternal deaths (2010); Target: 13.3 per 100,000 live births; Progress: 31.1 per 100,000 live births (2015)

Assessment:

Life expectancy at birth has increased for both sexes and overall between 2010 and 2015. The gap between the sexes is half the set target and it is difficult to predict if it will be achieved by the end of 2017. Under-five mortality rate registered a decline to 11.7 per 1,000 live births, the target being already achieved. Nevertheless, the indicator has worsened in the urban areas, according to 2015 data. The extent of out-of-pocket payments on health decreased significantly and there are good chances to reach the target of 35% by the end of UNPF implementation period. The HIV-related indicator is particularly worrying, the values for all time thresholds scoring a regress. As mentioned by UNAIDS in its one-pager summary of achievements and challenges, there is a "modest progress on impacting HIV burden, especially related to 90-90-90 UNAIDS initiative - 90% of people are diagnosed (around 50% as per 2015); 90% on treatment - 18% as per 2014 and 90% with viral load undetectable". As far as maternal mortality is concerned, the target of 13.3 per 100,000 live births is unlikely to be met by 2017 given its current high value of 31.1 and reversed positive trend over the last year (15.5 in 2014). As detailed in Annex 8 and similar to previous outcome, regrettably most indicators assigned to outcome 2.2 are impact indicators, the attainment of which is the result of complex factors and interventions of multiple stakeholders. Contributions of UN could be clearly identified at output level¹⁵³ (see below), but hardly to the developments occurring in impact indicators such as life expectancy or mortality rates. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to conclude that UN Moldova was an important contributor to increasing the equitable access of people to health care services.

¹⁵¹ NEA/MLSPF (2016), "Activity report for 2015 year", page 22, <http://www.anofm.md/files/elfinder/Raport%20de%20activitate%20ANOFM%202015-Final.pdf>, accessed on 04.05.2016

¹⁵² MoLSPF (2015), "Annual Social Report 2014", pages 32, 69 and 70, <http://www.mmps.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/rsa2014en.pdf>, accessed on 24.05.2016

¹⁵³ And to a certain extent at outcome level, too (see assessment of outcomes 2.3 and 2.4).

Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCTIVE - common ground / shared vision Government – UNCT; Government commitment to address NCDs, HIV and TB; space for dialogue; experience of shared working; good sector coordination and available national partners, i.e. MoH, health care providers, medical universities and colleges, CSOs, etc.); still significant challenges brought about by the fragmented health care delivery system, unequal distribution of services across the country, high level of out-of-pocket payments, emigration of health professionals, global anti-vaccination movement, financial constraints.		
Output 2.2.1 - Adolescents and youth have increased aged appropriate knowledge and skills to adopt gender-sensitive healthy lifestyle behaviours		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Percentage of youth 15-24 years old who benefit from Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHCs) in locations where such services exist <u>Baseline:</u> 20%, disaggregated by rural/urban, sex, age groups, regions <u>Target:</u> 40% disaggregated by rural/urban, sex, age groups, regions	32% – 35 rayons and two municipalities (2015) Excellent progress towards the target. Capacities of YFHC network strengthened with UNICEF support through the development of the legal framework and capacity building for managers and specialists. Capacities of the network also improved to develop and implement an outreach programme for young people with the aim to increase the demand for YFHC services. Efficient referral mechanism and partnerships established between YFHCs, Reproductive Health Cabinets, LPAs in 5 localities and NGOs.	Good progress
b. Percentage of women and men aged 15-24 who had more than one partner in the last 12 months who used a condom during their last sexual intercourse <u>Baseline:</u> Men 15-19 years old – 60.6%; Women 15-19 years old – 19.8%; Men 20-24 years old – 45.7%; Women 20-24 years old – 49.7% <u>Target:</u> Men 15-19 years old – 70%; Women 15-19 years old – 70%; Men 20-24 years old – 70%; Women 20-24 years old – 70%	Men 15-19 years old: 87.2%; Women 15-19 years old: na; Men 20-24 years old: 64.3%; Women 20-24 years old: na (2014) Significant progress reached for men in all age categories. Unavailable data for women to measure progress. Successful UNFPA contribution to enhanced access to reproductive health commodities and family planning, improved policy-making on reproductive health, scaled up reproductive health curricula for school nurses.	Good progress (for men)
c. Number of abortions per 1,000 females aged 15-19 years old [new indicator] <u>Baseline:</u> 13.0 per 1,000 females (2011) <u>Target:</u> decrease by 30%	9.4 per 1,000 females (2015) Target almost achieved. Successful UNFPA contribution to enhanced access to reproductive health commodities and family planning, improved policy-making on reproductive health, scaled up reproductive health curricula for school nurses. Human rights-based reforms of the health sector supported by OHCHR and UNDP, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health.	Good progress
Output 2.2.2 - National stakeholders have enhanced capacity to ensure equitable access to HIV and TB prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care of key populations		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Treatment success rate - number and percentage of new smear-positive TB cases successfully treated (cured plus treatment completed) among the new smear-positive TB cases registered in a given year <u>Baseline:</u> 57.3% (2011, National TB Programme) <u>Target:</u> 65% (2013), 69% (2014), 74% (2015 cohort)	80% (2015, for 2014 cohort) Target already achieved. First-line anti-TB drugs for adults for Transnistrian region and paediatric formulations for the whole country provided through the WHO Green Light Committee. National Tuberculosis Control Programme 2016-2020, developed with WHO assistance, expected to be adopted mid-2016.	Good progress
b. Percentage of individuals belonging to key populations who have been covered by HIV prevention services in the last 12 months <u>Baseline:</u> Coverage with harm reduction (Chisinau): injecting drug users (IDUs) 7.4%; sex workers (SWs) 15.3%; men who have sex with men (MSM) 25.7% (2009-2010) <u>Target:</u> 60% for each population group	Coverage with harm reduction (Chisinau): IDUs 16.5% (2013), SWs 49.4% (2013), MSM 24.0% (2014) Uneven progress upon target groups compared to the baseline. Results of the strategy to scale up access of key populations to community HIV testing and counselling through rapid testing (2014), developed with UN assistance (UNAIDS, UNODC) unknown yet. Communication campaigns to reduce stigma and discrimination, as one of the most severe barriers to access services (UNAIDS). National HIV Control Programme 2016-2020, also developed with UN assistance (to be adopted mid-2016) might increase the percentage of key populations covered by HIV prevention services, but the target of 60% unlikely to be achieved by 2017 in the case of IDUs and MSM.	Some progress
c. Mother to child HIV transmission (MTCT) rate (disaggregated by rural/urban) <u>Baseline:</u> 2.8% (disaggregation by rural/urban TBD in 2013) <u>Target:</u> MTCT rate under 2% (disaggregation by rural/urban TBD in 2013)	1.6% programmatic data (2015) Target already achieved. Information System in Primary Health Care launched in 2014. Capacities and reach of specialized community support services expanded for several target groups, i.e. youth, people living with HIV, injecting drug users. With UN support (WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF), elimination of MTCT of syphilis validated by GVAC (June 2016). Application for EMTCT validation for HIV planned for 2017.	Good progress

d. Percentage of young people aged 15-24 who both correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmission of HIV and reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission [New indicator] <u>Baseline:</u> Total – 38.2% (2010) <u>Target:</u> Total – at least 50%	BSS survey conducted in 2015, but not available data yet. Peer-to-peer network scaled up with UNFPA support to increase access of young people to age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education and prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. Over 8,800 young people reported in the MTR as having an increased awareness following Y-PEER campaigns, camps, festivals (around 24,000 young people for 2013-2015). Outreach activities carried out by YFHC and school nurses to also raise awareness of around 10,000 young people, of whom 2,000 at-risk adolescents received different services, and 1,000 were tested for HIV.	Unknown (but some positive prospects)
Output 2.2.3 - Public and private sector has increased capacity to manage the NCDs and developed improved environments enabling healthy choices to address key risk factors		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Premature mortality from NCDs (cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases) in the age group 30-70 years (rate per 100,000 people disaggregated by sex and rural/urban) <u>Baseline:</u> 591.5 (of which male 772.2; female 429.7; rural 679.9; urban 477.4) (2011) <u>Target:</u> 10% reduction (based on annual reduction by 2%, same disaggregation will be applied by sex and rural/urban)	480.1 (of which male 653.3; female 324.3; rural 534.9; urban 411.5) (2014) ¹⁵⁴ Substantial reduction of premature mortality from NCDs due to strengthened policy and legal framework for the control of non-communicable diseases; implementation of the NCD Control Strategy and targeted National Programmes (on tobacco, alcohol, food and nutrition, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases), etc. Level of indicators expected to further decrease with the implementation of the Action Plan of NCD Control Strategy developed with UN assistance, in particular WHO, and adopted in 2015. Improved access for 85% of the population to antihypertension medicines through medicines reimbursement reforms supported by the UN.	Good progress
b. % of regular daily smokers in the population, age 15+ (disaggregated by rural/urban and age groups) <u>Baseline:</u> (disaggregation by rural/urban and age groups TBD in 2013): 47%; Female 6% (WHO KAP Study, 2012) <u>Target:</u> (disaggregation by rural/urban and age groups TBD in 2013); male 3% reduction annually; Female 0.5% reduction annually	Male 41%; Female 4% (WHO KAP Study, 2014) ¹⁵⁵ Progress according to the plan. Higher decrease of regular smokers in the population above 15 years old expected in the near future as a result of the enactment of the new Tobacco Control Law (2015) developed with UN assistance and campaigns aimed to increase the knowledge and awareness among different target populations regarding the harmful effects of tobacco.	Good progress
Output 2.2.4 - Health care and public health service providers, particularly at primary health care level, have enhanced capacity to ensure equitable access to deliver integrated quality health services, medicines and vaccines, with a focus on vulnerable populations including reproductive health, mother & child health and immunization		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Rate of coverage by doctors and nurses as primary health care level to 10,000 people <u>Baseline:</u> nurses/doctors - Average 15.0/5.2; Highest region 22.1/6.8; Lowest region 7.8/2.6; Rural 18.2/4.3; Urban 10.7/6.7 (2011) <u>Target:</u> nurses/doctors - Average 16.0/6.5; Highest region 22.1/7.0; Lowest region 9.0/3.5; Rural 18.5/5.0; Urban 11.5/7.0 (2017)	Average 13.0/4.9; Highest region 17.5/6.1; Lowest region 12.4/2.6; Rural 14.8/3.6; Urban 10.6/6.5 (2015) Situation worsened compared to 2011 which is the baseline year. Moldova faces severe challenges related to the mobility and emigration of health workers. Policy dialogue organized on payment for performance in primary health care, nursing education and legislation. Model bilateral agreements developed to regulate the movement of professionals at international level. Yet with no visible effects in terms of managing the shortage of doctors and nurses, their uneven distribution across the country and their migration. First 'Human Resources for Health Strategy' endorsed by Moldova in March 2016, but unlikely to reverse the tide by 2017.	No progress
b. Coverage with measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine of children under 24 months <u>Baseline:</u> 92.8%; Highest district – 99.8%; Lowest district – 73.5 % (2011) <u>Target:</u> more than 95%; Highest district – 99.8%; Lowest district – 93%	88.3% (under 1 year of age); Highest district: 99.7%; Lowest district: 76.3% (2015) Decreased coverage with MMR vaccine in 2015 to a level below the baseline, less in the lowest district WHO, UNICEF and UNDP provided support to improve vaccination coverage rates, including through the European Immunization Week campaign, capacity building for vaccine and cold chain management and more efficient immunization programmes in Transnistrian region. Still, limited success also due to global anti-vaccination movement and parent/provider hesitancy, and false contraindications. National Immunisation programme 2016-2020 developed with UN support (to be adopted mid-2016) might reverse the trend and increase the vaccination coverage. Technical workshops organised by WHO to tackle false contraindications, and evaluate parent hesitancy, including in the Transnistrian region.	No progress (but some positive prospects until 2017)

¹⁵⁴ The RCO provided preliminary data for 2015. The evaluation however decided to stick to secure figures for 2014.

¹⁵⁵ The RCO provided figures for 2015. However, the evaluation used the KAP figures for 2014 in order to ensure comparability with the baseline.

c. Percentage of pregnant women covered by antenatal care services starting at 12 weeks of pregnancy <u>Baseline:</u> 78% (2011) <u>Target:</u> 85%	80.4% (2015) Some progress in the coverage of pregnant women by antenatal care services, but far from the set target.	Some progress
d. The share of expenditures for medicines in the total out-of-pocket payments (information to be available including for vulnerable groups and income groups) <u>Baseline:</u> 73.1% <u>Target:</u> 45%	Average: 80.4%; by quintile: Q1: 85%; Q2: 88%; Q3: 81%; Q4: 78%; Q5: 80% (2014) Increased share of expenditures for medicines in the total out-of-pocket payments for 2014 and above the baseline, most worrying for the poorest people. New evidence on financial protection and out-of-pocket payments for medicines provided to central health authorities by WHO; also better coverage by health insurance, but no effects so far.	No progress
Output 2.2.5 – People, including those most marginalized, are able to claim and exercise their rights to health, seek health services and benefit from them		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Percentage of people who did not seek health care when they felt it was justified <u>Baseline:</u> Men 17.6%; Women 20%; Rural 18.4 %; Urban 20.3% <u>Target:</u> Men: less than 15%; Women: less than 16%; Rural: less than 15%; Urban: less than 16%	No data to measure the progress.	Unknown
b. Percentage of children of one year of age benefiting from health care supervision according to national health care standards <u>Baseline:</u> 74 % <u>Target:</u> 90%	73% (2014) There is a slight decrease in 2014 compared to the baseline. The set target of 90% is unlikely to be achieved by the end of the programming period.	No progress
Outcome 2.3: All children and youth enjoy equitable and continuous access to a quality and relevant education system		
Indicators:		
a. Gross enrolment rates in pre-school, primary and lower secondary education (disaggregated by urban/rural, girls/boys, children, quintile for pre- and primary school). <u>Baseline:</u> Pre-school: 77.1%; rural/urban: 67.1%/94.5%; boys/girls: 77.4%/76.9%; by quintile: 75.9%/102.4%; Primary: 93.6%; rural/urban: 88%/104%; boys/girls: 94%/93.2%; by quintile: 103.5%/108.7%; Lower secondary: 88.1%; rural/urban: 84.3%/95.6%; boys/girls: 88.4%/87.8%; Enrolment rate of refugee children: 100% (2010); <u>Target:</u> Increase by 10% the overall enrolment rates in pre-school and lower secondary and by 5% in primary. Increase by 15% the enrolment rates in pre-school and lower secondary and by 8% in primary of the most disadvantaged groups. <u>Progress:</u> Preschool: 83,9%; urban/rural: 103,9%/72,2%; boys/girls: 84,3%/83,4%; Primary: 92.4%; urban/rural 109.3%/82.5%; boys/girls 92.9%/91.9%; Lower secondary 86.8%; urban/rural 98.7%/80.4%; boys/girls 86.9%/86.7% (2014/2015)		
b. Percentage of educators and teachers applying child-centred methodologies. <u>Baseline:</u> Less than 1%; <u>Target:</u> Increase by 10% annually; <u>Progress:</u> Educators: 79%; teachers: 15% (2015)		
Assessment: Planned gross enrolment rates in pre-school education are almost achieved (total and for all disaggregations) and the contribution of UN (in particular of UNICEF) in this respect is highly commendable. In the case of primary and lower secondary schools, there is a negative trend, the rates for the school year 2014-2015 being lower than the baseline; there are limited chances of attaining the targets for the respective indicators by the end of 2017. No data are available to measure progress in enrolment of vulnerable groups (by quintile, by 'the most disadvantaged groups', by refugee children). There are nevertheless tremendous results obtained in the area of inclusive education for CwD, but less for Roma children (as depicted by the output indicators analysed below) who require particular attention in the years to come. A breakthrough was done in professionalising the education staff in terms of applying modern, child-centred methodologies. A major progress has been registered in the case of educators who were neglected for years and left without any opportunity for upgrading their knowledge and skills.		
Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCIVE - common ground / shared vision Government of Moldova – UNCT; Government's commitment for expansion of preschool education within the framework of Global Partnership for Education (GPE), but still significant legal and financial constraints for nationwide replication; space for dialogue; experience of shared working, but better sectoral coordination needed for increasing access of vulnerable children; disaggregated data partially available, impeding monitoring of vulnerability (see the case of many indicators below); available national partners i.e. MoE, State Chancellery, Ombudsman, schools and kindergartens, rayon education departments, CSOs, parent-teacher associations.		
Output 2.3.1 - The government at all levels, stakeholders and caregivers increase inclusion, enrolment and retention of all children and adolescents, especially vulnerable ones, in mainstream pre-schools and schools		

Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in mainstream pre-school institutions and schools (grades 1-9) disaggregated by age and sex <u>Baseline:</u> For school (grade 1-9) 17.6%; For preschool: 5% <u>Target:</u> 50% for schools, 30% for pre-schools	28% for schools (grades 1-9) (2015); 36% for pre-schools (children aged 3-6) (2013); Enrolment of CwD in mainstream pre-schools already overpassed the target. Progress in the enrolment of CwD in mainstream schools uneven: 44% in 2013, but only 28% in 2015. Nevertheless, prerequisites in place (legal framework, trained teachers and service providers, trained cross-sectoral community teams and parents, education standards, tools for child development assessment, inclusive education and psycho-pedagogical assistance services), as a result of concerted UN work, to support a steady inclusion of this vulnerable group in mainstream schooling in the years to come.	Good progress
b. Completion rate by sex <u>Baseline:</u> Primary education total-91.1%; boys-92.0%, girls-90.2% (2011) <u>Target:</u> 94% in total, for boys and girls	Total primary: 90.9%; boys 90.8%; girls 91.1% (2014/2015) Completion rate of primary education in the school year 2014/2015 lower than the baseline, except for girls, after positive developments in 2013 (total: 93.0%, boys 93.4%, girls 92.7%). Prompted UNICEF to support the Government to develop the Programme and Action Plan for School Dropout Prevention.	Limited progress
d. The number of communities that have Roma segregated schools or classes <u>Baseline:</u> 3 <u>Target:</u> 0	3 communities still with Roma segregated schools or classes (2015) Positive practices of transferring several Roma children from a segregated school (Vulcanesti) to a mainstream schools (Cioresti). Package of measures to end segregated education in Otaci approved by the Government in 2013. Roma community mediators trained in advocacy and practicalities of working on desegregation and school inclusion of Roma children. Awareness raising and dialogue initiatives between Roma parents and schools. Still insufficient to meet the target unless more intensive efforts are done in the coming period to overcome educational segregation in the three targeted communities.	No progress
Output 2.3.2 - Education authorities at all levels apply new quality education standards and mechanisms for improved teaching skills, learning environment and learning outcomes in ways which reduce disparities		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a. Percentage of educators and teachers trained on child-centred methodology or inclusive education <u>Baseline:</u> teachers 10%, educators 35% (2012) <u>Target:</u> teachers 60%, educators over 80%	Educators: 79%, Teachers: 15% (2014) Both targets already reached. Capacities of educational professionals increased through mentoring, promoting innovative approaches to teaching and learning, child-centred training and communication for inclusive education. Quality education standards in line with the Child-Friendly Schools concept adopted and tested.	Good progress
b. Percentage of children who meet early learning development standards (ELDS) <u>Baseline:</u> 80% (2014) <u>Target:</u> 82%	ELDS developed and applied nationwide (Global Partnership for Education Grant). Educators trained to apply the new learning outcome standards, national mentors (including teachers, inspectors and methodologist) trained on child-centred education for young children. Improved pre-school infrastructure and services for children under age contributing to increased access of young children to quality early learning and care services. Around 75,000 young children could demonstrate improved cognitive and non-cognitive skills (MTR, 2015). Nevertheless, no data available to measure the proportion of the children in early childhood education programmes who registered progress in terms of motor, cognitive and socio-emotional development implied by the ELDS.	Unknown (but some positive trends)
b.1. Percentage of educators who apply professional standards [New indicator] <u>Baseline:</u> 79% (2014) <u>Target:</u> 82%	Improved professional standards for educators and nationwide application (Global Partnership for Education Grant). 50 key mentors mastering new knowledge and training a further 260 local mentors to support professional development of 7,000 pre-school teachers and educators. Educators trained in new standards, however no data available to measure the extent to which they actually apply these standards in their everyday work with children.	Unknown (but some positive trends)
c. Percentage of children ready for school, disaggregated by sex, rural/urban <u>Baseline:</u> 97.5% (2012) <u>Target:</u> 97.5% (to maintain the same high level)	Slight decline to 97.1% in the school 2015/2016, after a peak of 97.7% in 2014 Quality education standards in line with the Child-Friendly Schools concept adopted and tested in 15 general schools, including standards for monitoring school readiness, might reverse positively the trend towards the target.	No progress
d. Percentage of pupils competent in reading, mathematics and sciences (PISA report) <u>Baseline:</u> 43% of pupils are competent in reading; 39% in mathematics; 53% in sciences (PISA 2009+) <u>Target:</u> 10 percentage points increase in each of the three domains (2017 results of PISA 2015)	No data to measure the progress.	Unknown
Outcome 2.4: People enjoy equitable access to an improved social protection system		
Indicators:		

- a. Percentage of the poorest quintile covered by social aid. Baseline: 9.7% (2010); Target: 20% (2017); Progress: 11.9% (2015)
- b. Rate of children (under 18) living in formal care by the end of the year per 100,000 children, disaggregated by the rate in family-based care and rate in institutional care. Baseline: 1,885 per 100,000, including 908 per 100,000, in residential care and 977 per 100,000 in family-based care (2010); Target: 1,900 per 100,000 children, including 500 in residential care and 1,400 in family-based care; Progress: 1,994 per 100,000 children under 18, including 323 per 100,000 children in residential care and 1,621 per 100,000 children in family-based care (foster parents or guardians) (2015 estimates)
- c. Number of beneficiaries of social home care (outreach services). Baseline: 25,403 persons (2010); Target: 27,000 persons; Progress: 23,166 (2014)
- d. Number of adults/families benefited from specialized social services for adults and persons with disabilities. Baseline: 5,240 (2010); Target: 7,500; Progress: 7,551 (2014)
- e. Population with health insurance to ensure access to care (including to primary health care), disaggregated by urban/rural, sex, income quintile, education, geographical area (if available). Baseline: 74%; Rural 68%; Urban: 83%; Roma: 23% (2011); Target: Increase to 100% (2017); Progress: 85% (2014)

Assessment:

The percentage of the poorest quintile of the population covered by social aid has slightly increased over the last five years and it is unlikely that the target of 20% will be reached by 2017 given the low targeting accuracy of social assistance spending. The current reform process aimed to shift the focus from a categorical cash benefits system to a means-tested scheme takes time to effectively function and it usually requires adjustments during the first years of implementation for correcting the exclusion and inclusion errors. The ratio between children in residential care and children in family-based care has dramatically decreased since 2010. In this respect, UNICEF and its partners have successfully supported the Government and local authorities to amend the legal and institutional framework, develop capacities, establish social workers at community level and develop foster care and community-based services. With UNICEF support, the social protection authorities in the region undertook measures towards deinstitutionalization of children and improving their access to alternative care. UNICEF provided technical assistance to local authorities in the Transnistrian region on area-based MICS within the fifth Global round of MICS, with results expected in 2016. The UNPF target will be most likely achieved by the end of the programming period, although there are some worrying trends concerning the deinstitutionalization of children under three and CwD as well as the steady percentage of new cases entering the residential care (51% in 2012 and 2013), indicating certain flaws in the gatekeeping system. The number of beneficiaries of social home care registered a decline in 2014 compared to 2013 (24,530 people) and it is difficult to assess if the target set for 2017 will be reached. A more positive trend has been registered in the number of PwD benefitting of specialised services, where the target has been exceeded; however setting the indicator in nominal values only does not allow the assessment of the extent to which the needs of the PwD for such services are covered. The UN supported the Government in restructuring and transforming Moldova's social protection systems, in order to improve both its coverage and its performance. As far as health insurance is concerned, the available figure for 2014 indicates an increase in the coverage rate to a level of 85%, well above the target, but no disaggregated data are available to assess the situation of rural people and Roma who usually go uninsured.

Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCIVE - some common ground/shared vision between Government of Moldova and UNCT on child deinstitutionalisation and the social inclusion of PwD, but some differences, too, especially due to competing public funding priorities; growing experience for shared working with local authorities, social workers and referral professionals, but their capacity is still weak, on the background of insufficient service provision as well as overall public administration weaknesses (staff turnover, etc.); space for dialogue; improved sectoral co-ordination; available national partners, most notably the National Council for the Protection of Children's Rights chaired by the Prime Minister, MoLSPF, MoH, training providers, NGO platforms/coalitions); cooperation with *de facto* authorities in the Transnistrian region challenging, but finally effective.

Output 2.4.1 - Social protection system has functional continuum of services, with special attention to individuals and groups facing difficulties in exercising fundamental rights, and prevents and addresses violence, exploitation and family separation

Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a.1. Number of districts with functional Common BCIS and SYSLAB providing services [New indicator] <u>Baseline</u> : 28 BCIS ¹⁵⁶ , 1 SYSLAB centre in Chisinau (2013) <u>Target</u> : Functional BCIS in 32 districts, 2 municipalities, Gagauzia; 5 SYSLAB centres	BCIS established and functional in 33 districts of the country. 5 SYSLAB centres functioning in Chisinau, Cahul, Rezina, Comrat and Balti (2016).	Good progress
Output 2.4.2 Right holders from vulnerable or socially excluded groups have increased access to social protection, including services and insurance necessary for realization of social rights		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
a.1. Status of assessment of resilience of the social protection system to respond to the needs of the vulnerable, families, including children, facing shocks, disasters, and crises [new indicator] <u>Baseline</u> : No data on resilience (2014) <u>Target</u> : Resilience component assessed and recommendations provided to improve social protection system (2017)	Resilience component assessed and recommendations provided to improve social protection system. Report on resilience of the social protection system and recommendations validated and presented to the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (2015)	Good progress

¹⁵⁶ The Romanian abbreviation for 'Common Information and Services Bureau'.

<p>b. Extent of regular reporting on the effectiveness of the social protection response to the needs of the most vulnerable established, with focus on child poverty [new indicator] <u>Baseline:</u> Evidence partially available, effectiveness of social protection response to child poverty is not properly addressed in regular reporting (2014) <u>Target:</u> Evidence available and included in regular government reports disseminated annually</p>	<p>Some evidence available, but it is unclear to what extent it influenced a social protection response to address child poverty and contribute to the achievement of output 2.4.2. The effectiveness of the social protection response to child poverty is not properly addressed in regular reporting of the Government (2015).</p>	Limited progress
<p>c. Policy recommendations in place to improve adequacy and coverage with minimum income security, notably of excluded groups [new indicator] <u>Baseline:</u> 1) Lack of policy options to revise the current pension formula, which does not allow for income re-evaluation and maintenance of real value of future pensions; 2) Lack of policy recommendations to enhance farmers' coverage by social security; 3) Lack of methodology to implement risk-based social security with differentiated contribution rates by industry <u>Target:</u> Policy options submitted for consideration</p>	<p>Study on the analysis of the current pension provisions in the Moldovan pension system and Study on the extension of social security for farmers in Moldova – optional policies to overcome identified constraints – available in draft version and expected to be validated by the end of 2016. Methodological standards for calculating the insurance premium for work accidents and occupational diseases finalized and submitted to the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family for further action (2015). Nevertheless, the set target does not allow the measurement of the extent the policy recommendations are in place (as per formulation of indicators), but rather the provision of policy options.</p>	Good progress

PILLAR 3 – ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Outcome 3.1 - Improved environmental management in significantly increased compliance with international and regional standards

Indicators:

- Institutional reform increases capacities for environmental policy implementation; Baseline: Programme and action plan of the government for 2011-2014, draft National Environmental Strategy 2012-2022 and draft Law on Environment Protection foresee creation of an Environment Protection Agency (EPA); capacities for implementation and enforcement are weak; Target: EPA established and fully functional by end of 2017; Progress: The Institutional Reform Concept in the environmental sector was developed in 2015 and is currently under discussion at the Government level.
- Surface of protected areas (% of territory) managed in compliance with international requirements. Baseline: 4.65% (2011); currently not managed in compliance with international standards; Target: 7% of the territory (National Environmental Strategy (NES), 8% in 2023; management plans developed and implemented for all sites; Progress: 5.75% (2015)
- Environmental considerations integrated into sectoral policies or sector-specific environment action plans/policy documents in place. Baseline: Integration of environmental requirements into the sectoral policies and strategies foreseen by draft National Environmental Strategy 2012-2022 and draft Law on Environment Protection; current policies integrating environmental considerations: Environment and Health Action Plan, Concept of Ecological Agriculture; Transport; Target: Sectoral policies and strategies integrate sectoral environmental objectives, actions and indicators; Progress: The draft Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment was finalized in 2015 and is ready for submission for approval by the Government, while six Local Development Strategies (in Cahul, Ungheni, Telenesti, Soroca, Calarasi and Floresti) integrate environmental considerations. Draft Adaptation Strategies for Forestry and Health sectors respond to the environment and climate change challenges and commitments.

Assessment:

Overall, the progress in reaching the targets for this Outcome is modest. A lot of background, preparatory work has been carried out to achieve the outcome, however, mainly due to external factors the desired results have not progressed as expected. EPA is not yet established due to difficult political context. A complicated issue which needs to be settled for the implementation of the upcoming reform is the transfer of the State Forestry Agency "Moldsilva" under the Ministry of Environment, which will be assuming the responsibility of policy implementer rather than policy maker. The prospects for reaching the target for the first indicator by 2017 are unclear. As far as the second indicator is concerned, the Regulation on Operation of the National Park Orhei has been approved, which is a step towards alignment with international requirements for Protected Area System management, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) was approved on 18 May 2015. However, the target of 7% for protected areas is unlikely to be met during the remaining period of UNPF implementation given the slow progress recorded in the last 4 years (5,75% in 2015, 4,65% in 2011). The third indicator is not sufficiently specific as it does not name the relevant sectoral policies which should integrate environmental considerations by 2017, or at least specify how many of them. Thus, we will assume, also judging by the first indicator for Output 3.1.1. that the most important aspect in reaching this target is to have a legal framework in place which prescribes a mandatory environmental assessment and when and how shall be performed. In this regard, the draft Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment would support the mainstreaming process once adopted by the Government. To conclude, there is some progress towards the target and the prospects for reaching it by 2017 are positive. Overall, environmental management can be improved, to a large extent, by 2017, but it depends a lot on the adoption of key institutional and legislative changes.

Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCTIVE - There was active dialogue between Government (MoE) and UN as well as commitment to advance reforms (Moldova 2020, National Environmental Strategy, Government Programme and Action Plans 2011-2014, 2015-2018). However, political and economic crisis have seriously hampered progress particularly in terms of institutional reform and increasing allocations for environmental expenditures. In a context of political turmoil and economic recession, environment is not a top priority on the political agenda.		
Output 3.1.1 – National institutions are able to apply their regulatory, organizational, and technical capacity to mainstream environment and natural resource management into norms, policies, programmes and budgets		
Number of public policies, plans and normative acts at central and local levels that integrate environment and/or undergo SEA <u>Baseline:</u> Existing policies did not undergo environmental assessment, environment is not mainstreamed into sector policies; ex-ante impact assessment for policies, including environmental impacts, is at the piloting stage (30 public policy proposals assessed as of June 2012) <u>Target:</u> Legal framework for environmental assessment of policies, plans and legal acts is in place; all newly developed policies (at least 5 key sectoral development policies) are screened and assessed according to the SEA Law and legal acts are submitted to ecological expertise	Draft Law on Strategic Environmental Assessment ready for submission for approval by the Government. Six Local Development Strategies (in Cahul, Ungheni, Telenesti, Soroca, Calarasi and Floresti) integrate environmental considerations. Draft Adaptation Strategies for Forestry and Health sectors respond to the environment and climate change challenges and commitments.	Some progress
Environmental expenditures at national and local levels in relation to state budget, including allocations in other sectors (%) <u>Baseline:</u> 0.69% (2011) <u>Target:</u> By 2017 the share of environmental expenditures not lower than the average in new EU member states /accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe	Share of total national public budget: (2013) 1.01%, (2014) 1.30%, (2015) 0.90% At the local level: (2013) 2.08%; (2014) 3.32%; (2015) N/A No data available to measure progress against EU benchmark The numbers are fluctuating, particularly at national level. However, definite increase compared to the baseline.	Unknown
Output 3.1.2 - Environmental authorities, private sector and civil society are better able to develop, implement and comply with environmental legislation, policies, programmes/budgets in an accountable, transparent and participatory manner		
Indicator	Status at December 2015	Assessment
Degree of implementation of the 'Environment' chapter of the EU-Moldova AA in line with the action plan <u>Baseline:</u> AA is expected to be signed in 2013 <u>Target:</u> Policy development and Legal Approximation commitments implemented in line with the Action Plan	Draft Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Guidelines on public participation in the EIA (responding to the Directive 2011/92/UE on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment) pending approval. Law on Waste endorsed in the first reading in support to implementation of Directive 2008/98/CE on waste. Law on Animal Kingdom has been updated in line with the Directive 2009/147/CE on conservation of wild birds. In the area of climate change mitigation, draft Low Emission Development Strategy in the process of public consultations and proposed for approval in 2016. Overall, the UN support in drafting legislation is unquestionable, however, adoption was slowed down due to difficult political circumstances.	Good progress
The National Ecological Fund (NEF) has improved regulation and transparent programme and project cycle management in line with sectoral and national priorities; number of financing strategies/budget programmes for programmes/subprogrammes of the Strategy for Environmental Expenditures in place <u>Baseline:</u> The regulation of the NEF was developed and approved in the 1998 with several changes up to 2010 and does not correspond to good international practices; projects from the NEF are not selected based on competition/tenders; currently only one subprogramme (Water Sector) has a Financing Strategy in place <u>Target:</u> New regulation, spending strategies and project cycle management procedures of the NEF in place in line with good international practice; at least 2 additional subprogrammes have financing strategies/budget programmes in place.	Analyses for the restructuring of the National Ecological Fund developed, presented and coordinated with relevant authorities, as well as the draft NEF regulation. Required capacities for further advancement of the environmental fiscal agenda with national efforts in place. Creation of the Agency for National Ecological Fund pending approval in the Government; it will enable institutionalization of transparent and efficient management of environmental funds. National Biodiversity Strategy approved in 2015 has a financing plan in place, while in the area of climate change the approach of mainstreaming monitoring and evaluation of adaptation framework into the national budget planning is under development. Environmental mainstreaming into budgetary processes based on performance ensured in six towns, along with development of spending strategies for „Environment Protection” and „Water Supply and Sewerage” sectors in the planning of Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) 2016-2018. In addition, three budget programmes (Environmental Protection, Water Supply and Sanitation, Extraction of Mineral Resources), which include ten sub-areas, finalized.	Good progress
Surface of natural protected areas (in % of national territory); number of natural protected areas managed in line with international requirements;	Surface of natural protected areas: 5.75% (2015) Indicator similar to outcome indicator 1.3.1 b, see assessment above	Some progress

NBSAP updated and implemented <u>Baseline:</u> (2011) 4.65%; none fully managed in line with international requirements; NBSAP expired <u>Target:</u> at least 7%; all protected areas managed in line with international standards; NBSAP fully implemented		
Quantity of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) present in the country; number of pilot projects with alternative integrated pest management <u>Baseline:</u> 1,500 tons of obsolete pesticides in 23 locations (data source: FAO) <u>Target:</u> at least 10% of existing HHPs sent for disposal plus 1 major high-risk site safeguarded; 5 pilot projects on integrated pest management developed	Only 319 tons present in the country (2015)	Good progress
Outcome 3.2 – Strengthened national policies and capacities enable climate and disaster resilient, low-emission economic development and sustainable consumption		
<p>Indicators:</p> <p>a. Number of communities that implement climate and disaster risk reduction measures in line with National Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and international treaties. <u>Baseline:</u> 0% of 1,681 communities; <u>Target:</u> 10% of communities implement disaster risk management and climate change adaptation measures in line with the national strategies; <u>Progress:</u> 33 communities implement disaster risk management and climate change measures at the local level.</p> <p>b. Energy and resource intensity. <u>Baseline:</u> Energy Intensity 31.7 MJ/US \$ (2006); currently Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) applications are underestimated by both public utilities and the private sector; inefficient use/consumption of natural resources (water, materials and energy) by enterprises and other organizations and implementation of environmentally sound technologies lagging behind; limited incentives for sustainable consumption; <u>Target:</u> Energy intensity: reduce by 7% until 2017 in comparison with 2010 (minus 1% annually on average); resource intensity concept implemented at 100 companies; <u>Progress:</u> (2015) 21.33 MJ/US \$; RECP measures are applied in 157 enterprises;</p> <p>c. Share of renewable energy in gross domestic consumption. <u>Baseline:</u> 5%; <u>Target:</u> 15% by 2017 or increase of minimum 2% annually (20% by 2020); <u>Progress:</u> 13.75% (2015)</p> <p>Assessment:</p> <p>The progress in reaching targets for this outcome is mixed. The lowest progress has been registered in case of the first indicator, taking into account that only 33 out of 168 communities implemented disaster risk management and climate change adaptation measures by 2015. The prospect of reaching the target before the end of 2017 is very low. Progress in reaching the second and third targets are higher. Thus energy intensity was reduced by 10, 37%, hence already exceeding the target set. At the same time, RECP measures are applied in 157 enterprises, against the target of 100. On the side of production and consumption of renewable energy, the progress is significant. UN has contributed to a large extent to reaching these figures. Even though the 2017 target is not met yet, considerable progress was registered against the baseline, reporting a 13,75% figure in 2015. Overall, taking into account the progress in reaching the targets as well as the specific outputs, the national policies and capacities will be, to a large extent, strengthened to enable climate and disaster resilient, low-emission economic development and sustainable consumption by 2017. Drawbacks remain particularly in the field of disaster risk management, where additional effort needs to be undertaken to enhance results.</p> <p>Operating space: PARTLY CONDUCIVE - Strong partnership and shared vision with Government (Civil Protection and Exceptional Situations Department, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Environment). political and economic crisis as well as recovery from the severe draught in 2012; limited capacities of specialized institutions dealing with preparedness and response to disasters; poor capacities for weather and agro-meteorological forecasts for timely information about disaster risks. At the same time, implementing environment more favourable for promoting the use of renewable energy, given the complicated neighbourhood context (the conflict in Ukraine) which put under risk energy security of the country as well as high energy prices which hit the consumers' pockets in a period of economic downturn.</p>		
Output 3.2.1 - Public and private sector and individual consumers change production and consumption patterns towards increased energy and resource efficiency, and use of renewable energy		
Indicator	Progress	Assessment
Energy intensity; number of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) developed and submitted for funding to the UNFCCC; HCFC consumption <u>Baseline:</u> 14,170 total primary energy consumption per dollar of GDP (Btu per Year 2005, US \$ (purchasing power parity); no NAMAs developed at the moment; 2.3 ozone-depleting potential (ODP) tons of HCFCs (2009) <u>Target:</u> - 5% by 2017 (TBC in 2013); at least 4-NAMAs developed and registered with the UNFCCC by 2015 and relevant measurement, reporting and verification system in place for NAMA implementation; 10% reduction by 2015 compared to the basic consumption level	21.33 MJ/US \$ (2015) Four NAMAs under development covering areas such as energy, waste, afforestation and lighting; the target of 10% reduction in HCFC-22 consumption reached and relevant measures undertaken to achieve the following phase-out target of 30%.	Good progress
Percentage of renewable energy in total gross domestic energy consumption; number of biomass heating installations in public buildings/private households;	13.75%; 250/490; 120 (out of these 13 are women) (2015)	Good progress

number of biomass fuel producers <u>Baseline</u> : 5%; 90/fewer than 100, 50 (2012) <u>Target</u> : 15%; 280/700; 140		
Resource and energy efficiency and pollution intensity at the level of enterprises/organizations; role of resource efficient and cleaner production (RECP) in relevant policies implemented at different administrative levels <u>Baseline</u> : 5 enterprises implemented RECP from 2010 and achieved reductions in usage of materials, energy and water and reduction of waste and pollutants <u>Target</u> : At least 90 additional companies implement RECP practices and techniques, resulting in increased resource productivity (through saving water, materials and/ or energy) and decreased pollution intensity (through reduction of waste and emissions) by 2017; government has adopted policy measures that encourage enterprises to implement RECP techniques and practices	RECP measures applied in 157 enterprises as a result of UNIDO project on cleaner production. Roadmap containing an Actionable Plan on RECP submitted to the Government for clarifying the responsibilities and coordination mechanisms for the implementation of administrative requirements arising from multiple environmental-related strategies. In addition, the Roadmap identifies short-term initiatives for RECP promotion, implementation and mainstreaming into environmental and industrial policies.	Good progress
Output 3.2.2 - Policies, mechanisms and capacities strengthened at all levels for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation		
Indicator	Progress	Assessment
Disaster risk management (DRM)/ climate change strategies in place; climate/disaster risk management screening for sector policies implemented; number of local policies/plans adopted/revised with climate change and DRM mainstreamed, incl. number of child-focused and agriculture-focused plans <u>Baseline</u> : No DRM/climate change strategies in place; no climate/DRM screening methodology for sector policies in place (foreseen in the draft National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy); fewer than 20 local plans in place that fully integrate climate change and DRM, none of which is child-focused, number of agriculture-focused plans TBD in 2013 <u>Target</u> : National DRM/climate change strategies adopted; climate and DRM screening framework for sector policies adopted and implemented; 100 local development plans with climate change/ DRM mainstreamed, incl. at least 3 child-focused plans, % of the provisions implemented dedicated to DRM and climate change within the action plan for the implementation of the Agriculture Strategy	National Adaptation Strategy approved in 2014 followed by an iterative National Adaptation Planning process, which resulted in draft Health and Forestry Adaptation Strategies. Climate change adaptation policy measures mainstreamed into the energy and transport sectors. Action Plan for National Strategy on Agriculture and Rural Development approved in 2015, which mainstreams climate change adaptation and mitigation. UN-supported initiatives have assisted three local communities to update their development plans with gender sensitive DRM measures; awareness raising interventions in other three districts to increase DRM understanding. Still, slow progress in terms of DRM-mainstreamed local development plans. UNICEF advocacy for mainstreaming the disaster risk reduction concept in the education sector; recommendations provided to be included in the Strategy "Education 2020" to enhance schools' preparedness and children's participation in reducing vulnerability to disaster risk. No evidence of child-focused local development plans which are DRM mainstreamed. Emergency risk communication workshops undertaken by the WHO (mid 2015, mid 2016); also, emergency preparedness and response evaluations carried out, including in the Transnistrian region.	Some progress
Share of health facilities with an increased level of resilience to disasters and with health personnel having skills in public health and emergency management and disaster response planning and preparedness in place <u>Baseline</u> : the levels of resilience in public hospitals are distributed as follows: 25% - high, 76% - average and 8% - low; number of skilled health personnel: 340 <u>Target</u> : 50%:50%:0%; 480 additional personnel have acquired skills	A Hospital Safety Index (HSI) re-assessment of all public hospital in Moldova is currently on-going (May 2016) and will be completed in late 2016, after which updated data will be available.	Unknown
Number of Actions implemented from the National IHR Action Plan, NBSAP updated and implemented <u>Baseline</u> : 17 actions out of 31 implemented <u>Target</u> : all actions fully implemented	24 actions from the IHR Action Plan implemented (2014) Capacity building cross-sector workshop on core competencies, with special focus on points of entry, conducted. IHR costing tool piloted. Reform process of the Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Services in support of a prevention and preparedness-focused disaster risk management system initiated. Capacity building of the Market Information Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry done by FAO to enhance evidence-based policy-making.	Some progress

Factors promoting or hindering effectiveness

The main factor which contributed to the achievement of UNPF substantive results was the approach used by UNCT Moldova to combine the following ‘ingredients’ in its work:

- **Sound analytic frameworks** that drew on global expertise and leadership;
- **Strong evidence and analysis** from national data and UN own data generation activities, which supported a comprehensive understanding of the issues and root causes in most of the specific intervention areas of the UNPF and which subsequently informed the programmatic interventions and the design of strategies for change;
- **Investment in the development and dissemination of knowledge products** to support policy development by Government;
- **Ability to frame policy issues and options** in ways that are sensitive to national policy makers’ institutional and political context and priorities in Moldova (for instance, human rights in the Transnistrian region);
- **Effective leverage of relationships** that UN agencies had with the Government, Parliament, oversight bodies, civil society, EU and international development partners which have been shaping policy on specific issues; partnerships with authentic change actors (CSOs and organised vulnerable groups), particularly in the area of gender equality, to understand the challenges, engage them in the transformation process and implementation work, and build ownership;
- **Systematic embedment of capacity building** in most UN interventions in a blended learning format, addressing simultaneously the knowledge, attitudes and practices of beneficiaries.

The main factor which affected the country’s development as a whole and hindered the achievement of the UNPF planned results to date has been the political turmoil. The frequent change of Cabinet of Ministers and outflow of staff from regulatory and implementing agencies precluded the advancement of reforms and ownership for change, which, in turn, led to temporary freezing of the external financial aid. This has impacted on the economic and social situation in the country, which has further worsened due to the “banking crisis”. The financial constraints have led to harsh competing priorities and underfunding of several UNPF focus areas, such as continuation of decentralisation reform, environment management, financing of civil society work via social contracting and 2% law, scaling up of successful models for early childhood education especially in poor communities, etc. These key challenges were outlined in the Briefing Book prepared by UN (2015)¹⁵⁷. Some of the risks and their effects have been rightly identified by the UNCT Moldova and addressed accordingly through targeted interventions. Nevertheless, UNCT has in full honesty acknowledged that there was no risks prevention and mitigation strategy at UNPF level to safeguard to the extent possible the achievement of planned results and that more attention should have been paid in this respect.

Other factors which hindered the effectiveness of UNPF implementation and which were under the control of UN, included a too narrow approach of issues in some areas (e.g. migration primarily reflected within the UNPF from the perspective of its negative social effects and less as a potential development catalytic factor) and sub-optimal contribution of several non-resident UN agencies to the commonly agreed outcomes¹⁵⁸ acknowledged by the UN colleagues in Moldova, but also by a number of Government key informants who described the cooperation with non-resident UN Agencies as difficult, time consuming and often with uncertain outcomes.

¹⁵⁷ UN Moldova (2015), “Briefing Book from Development Partners of Moldova”, http://md.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/moldova/docs/pub/strateg/brief_english.pdf, accessed on 20.05.2016

¹⁵⁸ See also poor response to the evaluation’s call for contributions, Annex 5.

Unplanned effects and their implications

It is well known that development support is not free of unintended, and sometimes negative, effects. It is hardly realistic to think that external interventions can be done without any significant consequences apart from the intended ones, all the more since they are usually context-dependent, and can rarely be ascribed to aid levels alone. However, many of the negative effects are connected to the ways in which support is administered and disbursed, and therefore development partners and donors have good opportunities to minimise them by altering their approaches.

As far as UNPF implementation is concerned, there has been no specific attention given to monitoring of some unintended effects of UN support. The evaluation has been nevertheless informed about the occurrence of such effects. For instance, there is evidence of sustainable development and retention of national capacity, which has been achieved with the support provided by the UN programmes and projects (see Sustainability section of the report); at the same time, the unreformed public administration and low remuneration of civil servants resulted in brain drain and outflow from regulatory and implementing agencies towards better-paid jobs, without quick remedial action undertaken by the Government to mitigate the resulting capacity gap. The UN has strived to support the Government efforts to address this challenge. Another example of unplanned effect was the disappearance of some community-based services for vulnerable people due to competing local priorities and budgetary constraints on the background of financial decentralisation reforms supported by UN. It has been also reported to the evaluation team that there have been instances of *apparent* diversion of donor resources from NGOs to UN agencies with the risk of estranging the latter from nationally-established and known human rights/development organizations¹⁵⁹. There are however many examples of partnerships between UN agencies and NGOs whereby resources are mobilized jointly, supporting them to do fund raising as well as effectively implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the results achieved. The ultimate objective of UN development assistance is to enhance national capacity and pursue it through different operational modalities, including National Implementation Modality. Nevertheless, in some cases, Direct Implementation Modality is needed in areas where the national capacity (including that of the NGO sector), is still weak in terms of developing good quality project, implementing them in a timely, efficient and effective manner, and reporting to the donor.

There is evidence of some positive unplanned results of UN interventions. For instance, the UNICEF project on modelling services for children under three in the ten communities allowed a number of 108 mothers to return to the labour market and an additional number of 875 children under three to benefit of early learning opportunities as a result of 35 new crèche groups set up in other communities, triggered by the Project (Final Evaluation Report of the project).

There might be other unintended effects, positive or negative, and they deserve due attention in order to build upon their potential, respectively take remedial action to minimize the risk of the effects actually materializing in a given national or local arena.

Comparative advantages of the UN

The working groups including UN agencies, Government representatives and CSOs, which prepared the UNPF back in 2011, identified a number of UN comparative advantages to be used in the programming of support for the period 2013-2017. There was no structured, more focused attempt to analyse the comparative advantages, including feedback from development partners, and an attempt

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, the EU non-discrimination call which received 5 proposals of which 2 submitted by OHCHR and UNDP, both focused on capacity building.

to map and understand the advantages of other development actors as well. Hence the opinion of some stakeholders that **UNPF programming was spread across too many intervention areas and it was too ambitious for the UN to cope with a large and very diverse range of Government expectations**. The results analysis above reflects some of these concerns.

Nevertheless, the key national stakeholders and international organisations consulted for the purpose of this evaluation were able to clearly identify and praise the **comparative advantages of UN in Moldova**, in particular the following:

1. **Normative, standards setting mandate** (e.g. ICERD, ICCPR, ICESCR, CRC, CEDAW, CAT, CRPD, ILO conventions) which represents a strong advantage in terms of expertise as well as credibility to lead Moldova's efforts towards developing responses to human rights challenges.
2. **Impartiality**, according to which it operates equally under any political regime, and does not impose conditionalities such as other international development partners; however, it does not remain neutral when it comes to human rights.
3. **Neutrality**, particularly in the case of Transnistrian region, UN being among the very few international organisations able to work in the respective region.
4. **Credible and trustworthy partner** for the Government, yet flexible and versatile to cope with emerging needs (e.g. disaster risk management, emergency relief, etc.) and make the most of arising opportunities. In this respect, **UNCT Moldova has creatively used its comparative advantage in selecting UNPF priorities and strategies, and opening up new operating space in order to add value and push the needed reforms**¹⁶⁰ (see examples in Table 8).

Table 8. Making use of arising opportunities to open up the operating space

Opportunity	Action undertaken by UN Moldova (examples)
Publication of the first ever report on the human rights situation in the Transnistrian region ¹⁶¹ (February 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carried out the area-based MICS to collect and analyse data in order to fill data gaps for monitoring the situation of children and women in Transnistrian region (UNICEF) Sharpened the focus of Confidence Building Measures project (UNDP) Supported NGOs to follow up recommendations on development rights Triggered specific support activities aimed to minimize the negative effects of migration upon family members left behind by migrants, including the Transnistrian Region residents¹⁶² (IOM)
EU association agenda for the Republic of Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pushed reforms on human rights, rule of law, anti-corruption, public administration reforms, etc. Mobilised EU High Level Policy Advisors to Moldovan senior government officials in designing, implementing and monitoring policies and measures for acceleration of democratic reforms and implementation of the EU association agenda (instrumental, for instance, for passing the legislation on visa liberalisation)
Economic-financial crisis, public funding cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opened up the market for alternative energy sources/biomass (UNDP) Identified cost-saving interventions for alternative procurement of health commodities (WHO)
Status of middle income country of Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocated for the shift from service provision to policy dialogue, for instance in the area of reproductive health (UNFPA), climate change and disaster risk reduction (UNDP)
Appointment of new Government in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed the Briefing Book (2015) for the new Government (UNCT)
Costly transfer of remittances from abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided support to the National Bank of Moldova for the signature of an agreement between the Moldovan and Italian public post offices (2014)

¹⁶⁰ The minutes of the meetings of the working groups which prepared the UNPF illustrate a series of UN comparative advantages that were identified and used in the programming of support for the period 2013-2017.

¹⁶¹ www.un.md/publicdocget/41/, accessed 3.05.2016

¹⁶² Component 4 of "Targeted Transnistria Region Programme"

	to allow the transfer of remittances at a much lower cost compared to that of corresponding banks; the system involves 9,000 Italian and 1,148 Moldovan post offices (IOM)
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5. **Availability of strong, cross-sector expertise in-house:** UNCT has a solid reputation in the country, while thematic staff and programme managers are often regarded as reference persons when it comes to a specific UNPF areas of intervention. The thematic relevance of UN agencies' mandates for the UNPF subject areas (e.g. WHO and UNFPA in health, UNICEF in child rights, ILO in labour, FAO and IFAD in agriculture and rural development, IOM in migration, UNDP in poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities and exclusion, OHCHR, UN Women and UNFPA in the area of promoting human rights, respectively gender equality) adds value to UN as a top notch expert partner of the Government and non-governmental sector. The adoption of the "Delivering as One" approach strengthened the UN cross-agency expertise available for addressing country priorities and major development challenges.
6. **Ability to quickly mobilise good quality expertise** from Moldova, external expertise from within its regional and international network as well as other resources and partners for joint initiatives; being perceived as a trustworthy implementing agency, it is able to mobilize funds from different donors and channel them to areas in need¹⁶³.
7. **Ability to link work at the local level with policy level,** given its status of international, inter-governmental organization with privileged relationship with the Government.

The evaluation team shares the views of the stakeholders concerning the comparative advantages of UN Moldova and the fact that it worked in programme areas where such advantages have been put at good use. In this respect, the UN Moldova had the following key features:

- **Mandates** to address the development challenges targeted by the UNPF
- **Capacity** to do so as demonstrated by past substantial results during the period 2007-2012¹⁶⁴, by clear progress towards outcomes during the current programming period and by the availability of relevant technical, human, financial and administrative resources; and
- **Positioning** to address specific challenges better than other development partners working in the same area, such as mainstreaming equity, gender and HRBA in institutional development, policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation; ability to collect data, promote human rights and implement development actions in the Transnistrian region; ability to play a bridging role between government and civil society; stronger operational capacity than other inter-governmental organisations in Moldova.

¹⁶³ Several civil society representatives consulted during evaluation nevertheless claimed that UN agencies engage in competition for funds and that mature CSOs, with recognised expertise in particular areas, are not involved as partners in the implementation of the respective UN programmes.

¹⁶⁴ Evaluation Report UNDAF-Moldova, June 2011, <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/UNDAF-Evaluation-Report-Moldova.pdf>, accessed 29.04.2016

5.4 Efficiency

Evaluation of efficiency was based on the following evaluation questions:

How well has the implementation of the UNPF interventions been **managed**? What **monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems** and tools have been used and how did they contribute to the UNPF management process?

How were **risks and assumptions** been addressed during the implementation of UNPF-related programmes and projects?

Have the UNPF results been achieved at reasonably low/lowest possible **cost**? Were resources used appropriately?

To what extent did the UNPF help to minimize **transaction costs** for the Government and for UN agencies?

To what extent and how has the UNPF contributed to achieving better **synergies** among programmes of UN agencies and between them and Government partners? Has the UNPF enhanced joint programming by agencies and/or resulted in specific joint programmes?

How well did the UNCT use **partnerships** to improve its performance?

UNPF coordination and management efficiency

The UNPF required strategic guidance, coordinated implementation and oversight. For UN, it meant coordinating a large number of Agencies and other relevant stakeholders with different operational cultures and working methods. For the Government, it meant coordinating between the State Chancellery and the relevant line ministries and governmental agencies. For civil society actors, it would have meant coordinating among NGOs. Often, a steering committee supervises and leads all these coordination structures, mobilising UN and Government leadership around the development assistance framework. In the case of Moldova, the involvement and coordination role of the Steering Committee set up at the start of the UNPF cycle was rather strong during the preparation of the document and at the beginning of implementation, but it gradually diminished until it ceased to function later on due to political instability and constant changes of key Government representatives. The State Chancellery has been, at its turn, subject to frequent changes in the leadership and key staff, thus facing challenges in fully meeting its role of National Coordinating Authority.

In such a difficult political context, **the UNCT has made intensive and constant efforts to keep the State Chancellery abreast of UNPF progress and involve it and line ministries as much as possible in policy dialogue on key issues and in the implementation of specific projects. However, the monitoring role of the Government in relation to UNPF implementation at outcome level was rather limited and often confused with participation of line ministries in the annual reporting on progress, in the MTR or in some donor coordination meetings. The beneficiaries have not been involved in monitoring the progress either. Practically, the UNCT has unilaterally retained the UNPF monitoring role**, with Results Groups and Outcome Groups assigned for the purpose, apart from joint planning and reporting responsibilities. Nevertheless, the evaluation found little evidence of effective use of monitoring mechanisms and risk assessment tools

by these groups¹⁶⁵ (see more on risks below). The results-based monitoring has been further challenged by the lack of annual targets for output indicators to facilitate the tracking of gradual progress towards the ultimate value set for 2017.

Although the outcome groups were allowed to involve national counterparts and donors in their work,¹⁶⁶ they kept their membership limited to UN agencies. Neither were major civil society actors invited to join. Apparently, this was due to the unresolved dilemma of the dichotomy between inclusiveness and efficiency, but at the cost of national leadership and national ownership of the overall UNPF implementation process and results. According to the feedback received from several key informants consulted for the purpose of the evaluation, **there was a rather limited sense of mutual accountability between the Government and the UNCT for the achievement of UNPF results, although these were definitely a joint responsibility (at least at outcome level)**. This not to say that the UN and the Government did not work together. In fact, there appears to be a strong and close partnership between the UN agencies and the line ministries, but their collaboration did not seem to have been made more strategic by UNPF and its mutually-agreed results. This is also illustrated by the choice and selection of the projects and programmes which was in some instances dictated by the opportunities (emerging needs, new funding sources) rather than by a direct link to UNPF results¹⁶⁷.

Addressing risks and assumptions in UNPF design and implementation

Critical to the achievement of results is sufficient identification and management/mitigation of risks. Whilst operational risk analysis is effectively supported corporately within UN agencies by their corporate risk management system, **the UNPF does not indicate any risk analysis in its design, apart from a list of risks and assumptions included in the Results Matrix**. The list is incomplete, missing some critical risks¹⁶⁸, and not prioritised based on the degree of probability and possible impact. In particular, **risks arising from the challenges of the operating context are not factored in an explicit mitigation/management strategy of the UNPF or its Action Plan**.

It could be argued that Moldova features with extremely high volatile societal environment for operation and that the risks determined by political instability have not been forecastable at the design phase. Nevertheless, no mitigation strategy has been put in place during implementation and especially after the MTR when it became clear that some initially identified risks have occurred and although additional ones were anticipated and discussed during regular UNCT meetings. In practice, the risks derived from political volatility boil to: 1) emergence and prevalence of competing priorities, 2) political rivalry which cuts across the entire institutional framework, rendering the agreed policy/institutional changes redundant and impossible, 3) overhaul of the leadership and key decision-makers in particular intervention areas of UNPF, but also, 4) loss of interest in some priorities if these become politically sensitive. These risks would have required a fine tuned management and feasible mitigation measures to be included in the implementation plans but also to be managed through a dedicated process at UNCT and Results Groups levels or alike.

There are examples of other risks which developed during the implementation period in the area of justice, human rights, public administration, decentralisation, health sector, education, environment

¹⁶⁵ There are no minutes of meetings and it is difficult to trace the monitoring work of Results Groups and Outcome Groups and corresponding results.

¹⁶⁶ See TOR of UN Results Groups under the UNPF 2013-2017 (revised as of June 2014), page 1

¹⁶⁷ E.g. "Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe" (second phase) and "Contribution to the improvement of national legislation on safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage", both under outcome 2.1, with no direct link with the respective outcome.

¹⁶⁸ For instance, risks related to brain drain in the health sector (outcome 2.2), global movement against vaccination (outcome 2.2), Roma school desegregation (outcome 2.3), etc.

management, etc. **The evaluation identified numerous examples of UN management intervention for overcoming the effects of risks, barriers and constraints in UNPF implementation**, such as joint advocacy for domestic financial allocations (e.g. for population census); enhanced policy dialogue with underperforming partners; intensified negotiations on sensitive issues (e.g. in the Transnistrian region, where cooperation is essential when working in such a difficult environment); introduction of adjusted delivery mechanisms based on global UN policies (e.g. conditional finance for businesses via Moldova Innovation Challenge Scheme); development of assistance planning instruments to ensure mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (e.g. migration, gender); reorienting the focus of intervention towards areas which are not dependent on particular reforms (e.g. expansion of surface of natural protected areas, strategic environmental assessment, etc. rather than insisting on the setting up of the Environment Protection Agency), etc.

Nevertheless, the lack of a coherent risks mitigation strategy to address the risks left outcome-level interventions under the UNPF often in a reactive, rather than a pro-active mode – with the danger of compromising efficiency. Risks have been much better managed at project/programme (output) level, based on risks assessments, risks logs, risks reporting and reviewing processes.

In the light of experience to date, the UNCT is fully aware that going forward with risk analysis on all critical dimensions and mitigation measures will be extremely important for the next programming cycle. In this respect, the *UNDG Handbook on RBM*¹⁶⁹ provides useful guidance on systematic identification and prioritization of identified risks and mitigation strategy with clearly assigned responsibilities and explicit accountability.

Efficiency of using resources

The One Budgetary Framework provides a financial overview of available funds, both core and non-core, to support delivery of the UNPF 2013-2017 as well as funding gaps. The framework is updated at the end of each year when UN agencies provide information about progress compared with planned results and actual expenditures. Of the non-core resources, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) is a vehicle, established in 2014, to pool resources for implementation in a common fund.

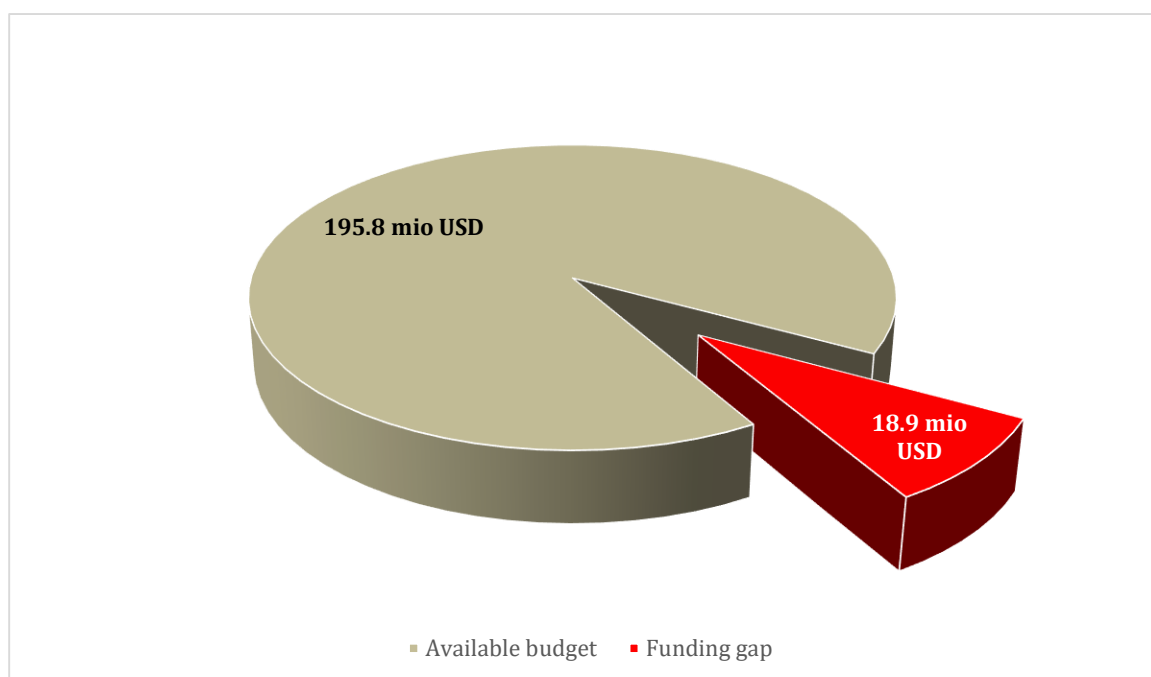
The UNPF has a total planned budget of around 214.7 million USD¹⁷⁰, of which 195.8 million USD represents the amount of available funds, both spent in 2013-2015 and projected for the remaining two years of implementation until 2017.

This creates a total funding gap for the UNPF of around 18.9 million USD or 8.8% of the total (see Figure 5) which, compared to the initially estimated gap of 53.9%, indicates a very skilled UN team in attracting funding for development assistance.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations Development Group (2011), "Results-Based Management Handbook. Harmonizing RBM concepts and approaches for improved development results at country level", <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/UNDG-RBM-Handbook-2012.pdf>, accessed 27.04.2016

¹⁷⁰ This figure has been provided by the RCO following the updating of One Budgetary Framework in May 2016. The UNPF specifies an estimated budget of approximately 217.3 million USD, while the UNPF Action Plan another figure of around 217.9 million USD.

Figure 5. UNPF 2013-2017 budget (million USD)



The two figures below show the projected funds available and funding gaps by pillar until the end of the programme period. For the next two years, pillar 2 accounts for 63% of the total funding gap (11.9 out of 18.9 million USD), which is substantial and requires a very efficient and fast mobilisation of UN and the Government to ensure the required financial resources in time, all the more since this pillar has the lowest level of met targets (see results analysis in the Effectiveness section). This is a shared responsibility and the Government is expected to be at the forefront to support UN to mobilize funds, and to prepare the ground for government cost-sharing eventually.

Figure 6. Available Funds and Funding Gaps (2016-2017): Projections by pillar (in million USD)

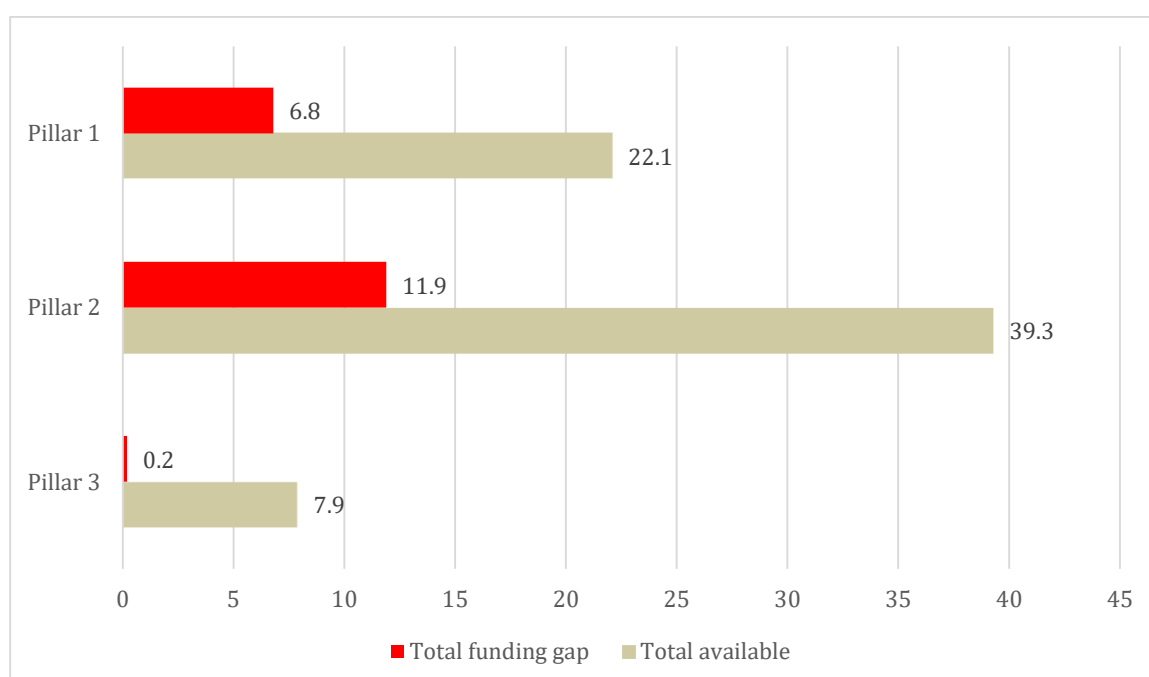
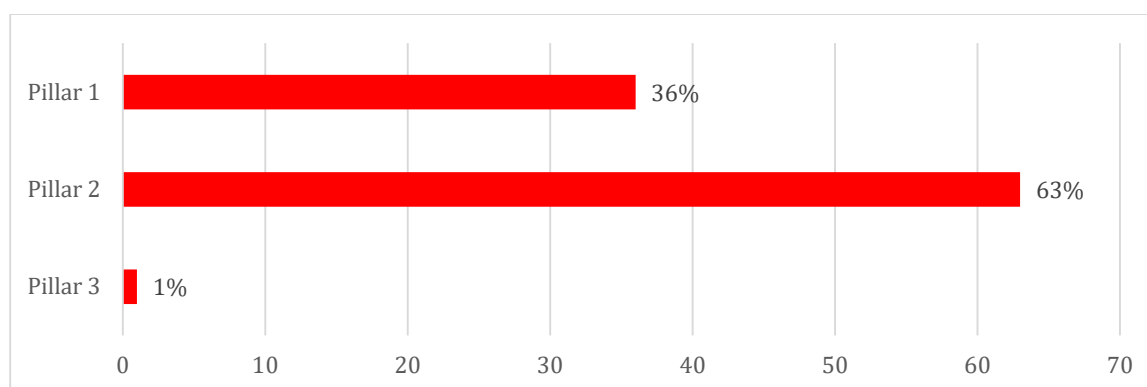


Figure 7. Funding Gaps: Projections by pillar (as % of total gap)



In order to generate greater coherence in programme design and delivery, the UNCT has made constant efforts to align the annual work planning process with the national budget process. The results were suboptimal. Although done with the participation of the Government partners, the alignment was rather complicated given the fact that Moldova is known for very late adoption of the budgets (in May 2016 there was still no budget adopted for the current year). The response of UN agencies to the evaluation questionnaire confirm the limited alignment due to the delays in the adoption of the national budget and concerns that these delays might cause significant constraints in disbursing and using the funds transferred to the Government via the Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) as well as cost-sharing constraints. Apparently, the UNCT does not play a role in communicating with the Government on budgetary contributions, but rather individually, agency by agency (such as done by UNICEF which successfully negotiated with the Ministry of Finance and managed to include the Inclusive Education Programme in the Mid-Term Budgetary Framework of the Government; or by UNFPA which successfully advocated with the Ministry of Health for the procurement of contraceptives for vulnerable groups through national health insurance funds). There is also few evidence of reprioritising of interventions based on available funding.

On the delivery side, the amount spent during the period 2013-2015 was around 126.5 million USD (see Annex 11), representing 58.9% of the estimated UNPF budget which somehow mirror the achievement level of results (see the Effectiveness section). The yearly delivery rate was about 19-20% on average.

The Government, civil society partners and donors consulted by the evaluation perceive that the results of UN cooperation have been achieved in a timely, cost-efficient and effective manner, with little waste and duplication. UN procedures are deemed to be transparent and trustworthy, hence UN is regarded as a 'go-to-agency' by many development partners. The State Chancellery has been particularly appreciative:

"The State Chancellery has enormously benefitted from UN support during cooperation and it highly appreciates the efficiency of the implementation of the projects/programmes from the perspective of management, efficiency of resource utilization, synergy with governmental programmes, cost-benefit, etc." (written response of State Chancellery to evaluation questions, 29 April 2016)

Apart from this general assessment, the Chancellery highlighted the support received from the UN to make its aid coordination work more efficient via the platform www.amp.gov.md. The platform is considered to be a modern system of external aid management, allowing the Chancellery to monitor assistance programmes. **There is additional evidence that the Government beneficiaries were supported to improve the efficiency of their own operations.** Some examples provided to the

evaluation team in the area of UNPF interventions in health, education and child protection are presented in Box 2.

Box 2. Examples of UNPF support for increasing efficiency in education, health and child protection

- Greater transparency and rational use of publicly procured medicines integrated into national regulations (**WHO**)
- New evidence on financial protection and out-of-pocket payments for medicines provided to central health authorities (**WHO**)
- Medicines pricing policy reviewed to introduce gradual mark-up system to cut down drug prices (**WHO**)
- Electronic system for evidence of reproductive health commodities and its integration into the national electronic system for primary health care providers (**UNFPA**)
- Costing of family planning services to establish the national financing baseline for the Government contribution to family planning services and build national capacity to monitor the resource flows (**UNFPA**)
- Study on the cost-effectiveness of opioid substitution therapy, needles/syringe programme and antiretroviral treatment in injection drug users (**WHO, UNAIDS**)
- Mechanism of procuring services from NGOs for harm reduction services for vulnerable populations approved by National Health Insurance Company (**WHO, UNAIDS**)
- National AIDS Spending Assessment (NASA) report provided each year (**UNAIDS**)
- National HIV/AIDS Programme budget developed based on Allocative Efficiency Research providing recommendations on optimizing, cost-effectiveness and best prioritizing of HIV response (**UNAIDS**)
- Economic analysis of Youth Friendly Health Services (**UNICEF**)
- Coefficients for the education funding formula proposed to address disparities in enrolment rates between rural and urban areas, combat discriminatory perception regarding Roma children and children with disabilities, and support their inclusion in regular schools (**UNICEF**)
- Functional review of Ministry of Education and its subordinated structures which provided recommendations for the improvement of its effectiveness and efficiency (**UNICEF**)
- Assessment of funding needs to implement the National Inclusive Education programme (**UNICEF**)
- Technical assistance provided to line ministries on mid-term budgetary planning to improve child-friendly budgeting (**UNICEF**)

As far as comparison with other development partners is concerned, the stakeholders' perceptions about the financial costs of UN programmatic assistance were positive overall. Most of the interviewed Government representatives appreciated the UN practice to use national expertise as much as possible, thus minimizing costs and securing national ownership and capacity development. Nevertheless, there have been some stakeholders who were dissatisfied by the fact that UN is gradually transforming itself into an implementing agency, which raise funds from donors but contributes very little financial resources at its turn. Such opinions indicate the fact that **UN is sometimes associated with a donor rather than a development partner and it is therefore useful that the Communication Strategy includes a key message in this regard aimed to clarify the matter and reorient the public perception¹⁷¹**. In addition, one should not forget that in the context of a middle income country such as Moldova, UN support should be largely directed towards the provision of expertise and policy advice rather than service delivery.

Delivering as One: efficiency gains and challenges

Following the Prime Minister's official request, UNCT Moldova moved towards "Delivering as One" (DaO)¹⁷² as a way to streamline its cooperation with the Government and with a view to ensuring unity in action, increased efficiency of support and better results for people of Moldova.

¹⁷¹ UN Communications Strategy 2013-2017 (revised in January 2016), page 9

¹⁷² See more information about DaO on <https://undg.org/home/guidance-policies/delivering-as-one/>, accessed 20.05.2016

The DaO has several pillars, their implementation status in Moldova being rather advanced (Table 9).

Table 9. DaO implementation status in Moldova (May 2016)

DaO pillar	Implementation Status	Pending issues towards full DaO compliance*
Overarching issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint oversight and ownership agreed between Government and the UN and outlined in agreed terms of reference for a Joint National/ UN Steering Committee Annual reporting on joint UN results in the UN Country progress reports 	Functioning Steering Committee (beyond commitments)
One Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed UNPF at the outcome level Joint Action Plan for UNPF implementation Results Groups set up and chaired by Heads of Agencies 	Better alignment of Results Groups with national coordination mechanisms
Common Budgetary Framework (and One Fund)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium-term Common Budgetary Framework aligned to UNPF/One Programme as a results-oriented resourcing framework for UN resources Annual Common Budgetary Frameworks updated annually with transparent data on financial resources required, available, expected, and to be mobilized (funding gaps) MDTF established; 4 projects supported by 3 contributors channelled through MDTF until end 2015, with a delivery rate of 74%¹⁷³ Joint Resource Mobilization strategy adopted by UNCT in May 2016 	Monitoring and reporting against the Joint Resource Mobilization Strategy in the UN Country progress reports
One Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RC leadership Commitment of the UNCT to work towards common results 	Strengthening of mutual RC-UNCT accountability Empowerment of UNCT to make joint decisions on programming activities and financial matters
Operating as One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Operations Strategy (BOS) endorsed by UNCT Operations Management Team (OMT) set up and chaired by a Head of Agency Operations costs and budgets integrated in the overall medium-term Common Budgetary Framework; 	Better integration of Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) elements into BOS
Communicating as One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint communication strategy approved by the UNCT and monitored and reported against in the UN Country progress reports Communications Group set up and chaired by a Head of Agency 	No particular pending issues

* Based on *UNDG criteria*, in *UNDG (2014), "Standard Operating Procedures for Countries Adopting the 'Delivering as One' approach"*, New York, NY 10017

Most UN agencies which responded to the evaluation questionnaire confirmed that **DaO had a very important role in respect of:**

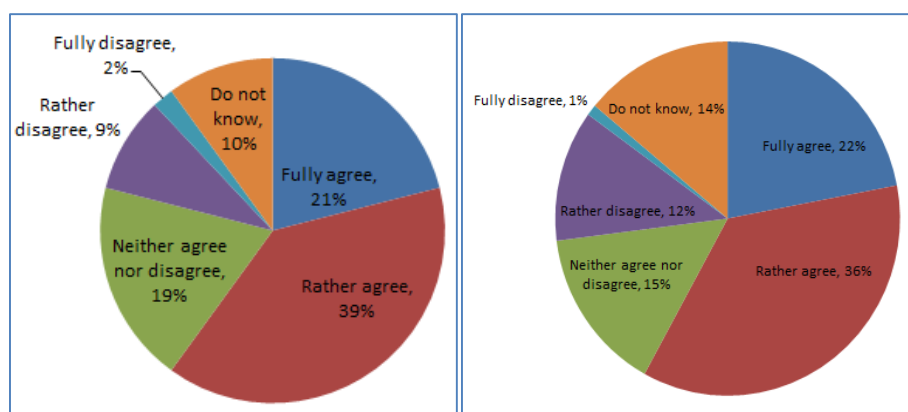
- better programming, coordination and synergising** of the UN work in certain areas (Transnistrian region, governance and local development, migration, PwD, gender equality, violence against women, etc.); and
- availability of a mechanism for joint programmes implementation** (MDTF).

The DaO facilitated the development of joint UN projects where the specialised expertise of each agency has been pooled together to better cover the complexity of needs, with greater impact and cost savings (see Figure 8 on perceptions of UN staff concerning two major benefits of DaO). *"It helped built linkages outside individual silos and reach out to other stakeholders"* (response to evaluation questionnaire of a UN agency, April 2016). It also helped the mainstreaming of human rights, gender and migration across the spectrum of UN-supported projects and programmes.

¹⁷³ UNDG (2016), "Consolidated Annual Financial Report of the Administrative Agent of the Moldova Toward Unity in Action for the period 1 January to 31 December 2015", Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/MDA00>, accessed on 28.05.2016

Figure 8. UN Perceptions on benefits of ‘Delivering as One’

a. DaO helped projects/ programs I work with to achieve a stronger impact b. DaO helped projects/ programs I work with to reduce costs



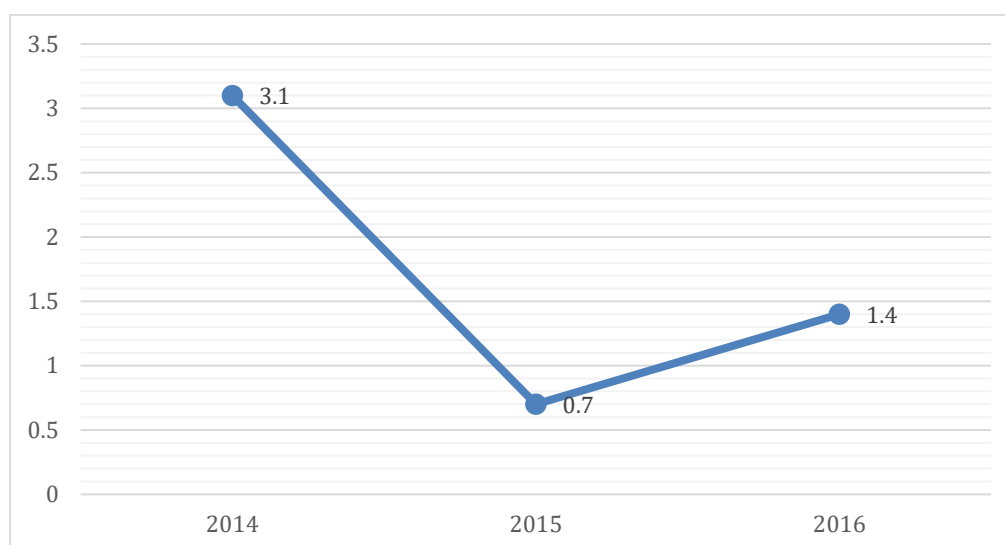
Source: Delivering as One Survey, Resident Coordination Office Moldova, February 2016

As seen in Figure 8 and confirmed by UN staff members during interviews, **important benefits brought about by the DaO were the reduced transaction costs and economies of scale**, derived from the conclusion of 21 long-term agreements (LTAs) with suppliers and service providers. These LTAs are intended to reduce transaction costs (time and labour) costs from the processing of multiple, overlapping procurement procedures for goods and services commonly used for programme delivery (e.g. printing services, fuel, IT equipment, office equipment/printers, office stationary, internet connectivity services, translation services, transportation services, etc.) and generate actual cost-savings through discounted volume purchasing. In this respect, the work of the UN Operations Management Team (OMT) is commendable by all means. The **One UN House** hosts seven agencies with three agencies' projects being accommodated in nearby shared premises. Co-location of offices is expected to generate cost savings on rents and from common services, and additional working efficiencies in terms of improved cross-agency information sharing and strengthened One UN identity. In human resources, the OMT has put in place a **common recruitment process** and salary scale for general services staff and service contract holders as well as a common approach for advertising vacancies. In finance, micro-assessment for common implementing partners and the implementation of **Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)** has been already implemented by three UN agencies and more are expected to join the system.

A MDTF was set up under DaO Common Budgetary Framework (One Fund) pillar (see Table 9) as a vehicle to support joint work in UNPF and secure additional funds that would not otherwise come to Moldova or to the UN. Since its formation in 2013 until May 2016, donor partners have provided 5.2 million USD (actual deposits) for the implementation of four projects¹⁷⁴. Sweden is the largest contributor (60.4%) followed by Norway (27%), Switzerland (11.6%) and the Netherlands (0.8%). **To date, the MDTF made up 2.7% of the total available budget for UNPF implementation and 27.5% of the total funding gap.** The MDTF contributions reached a peak in 2014 and fell abruptly the following year due to political turmoil and instability. Once the political climate calmed down in 2016, the donor contributions started to increase, however reaching only half of the 2014 level (see Figure 9).

¹⁷⁴ http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/MDA00?fund_status_month_to=&fund_status_year_to=2014 , accessed 20.05.2016

Figure 9. MDTF donors' contributions 2014-May 2016 (million USD)



As far as communication is concerned, One UN Moldova website (<http://md.one.un.org/>) was redesigned in 2014 and a common Facebook page “ONU Moldova” has been launched as a go-to resource for citizens, partners and staff alike to personally engage with the UN messages, activities and results. Both the common website and Facebook page were managed by the UNCT in a decentralised manner, with UN agencies working together under the central guidance of the RCO. In 2015 a series of additional joint UN Moldova social media channels were launched to extend outreach, including Twitter, Odnoklassniki, Medium etc., with the active involvement of the UN Communications Group. **The Group has been also instrumental in mitigating the information asymmetry across the UN system in Moldova as well as in increasing the clarity, coherence and consistency of external UN messages¹⁷⁵ through speaking with a common voice on strategic issues¹⁷⁶.** The evaluation was informed that all core elements of the global “Communicating as One” standard operating procedures were achieved: a joint 2013-2017 UNPF Communications Strategy, a functioning Communications Group, common branding materials, planning tools such as a common yearly Communication Plan and calendar, shared premises and an established joint funding mechanism.

The main challenge in the implementation of DaO was raised by the different operational rules and internal procedures of UN agencies (including different levels of delegated authority) which made difficult to reach the DaO desideratum of “Operating as One”, despite the on-going efforts undertaken by the OMT to integrate several Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) elements into its Business Operation Strategy¹⁷⁷.

In addition, it seems that DaO has only marginally reduced the competition for funds, a fact confirmed by some donors, too. It has been mentioned by several agencies in their response to the

¹⁷⁵ The UN Communications Strategy 2013-2017 (revised in January 2016 following the MTR) includes three types of messages, as follows: messages around joint UN work in Moldova; messages around Delivering as One; and messages linked to Partnership Framework priorities and outputs.

¹⁷⁶ The MTR (2015) lists several strategic issues which stayed at the heart of communication initiatives in the first years of UNPF implementation i.e. violence against women and girls, women’s leadership and political participation, anti-corruption, youth, human rights, child rights, health, NCDs and mobility of health professionals, drug abuse and illicit trafficking, global MDGs and the post-2015 agenda.

¹⁷⁷ According to MTR (2015), the UNCT in Moldova was among the first ones globally to develop a joint Business Operations Strategy (BOS). The Strategy supports UNPF implementation, covering the time period 2013-2017. 12 UN agencies are targeted by the BOS.

questionnaire that fund raising for joint projects is not always done in a transparent manner, with relevant and timely information being shared with all UNCT members, and that often not all agency mandates are considered during the fund-raising efforts. In their view, this makes the process partially inclusive for well positioned UN agencies in a specific area, showing lack of coordination within UN in front of the donors and reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of funded projects. There are also mixed views within UN Moldova concerning the potential of the MDTF to support additional resource mobilization for development assistance. It seems that DaO has raised different expectations in terms of fund-raising which were subsequently not mediated well enough by a common understanding across UNCT of the “One Fund” pillar and role of MDTF (despite evidence that the issue has been frequently discussed during UNCT meetings¹⁷⁸). It is expected that the “Joint Fund Mobilization Strategy” adopted recently by the UNCT will help clarify some of these contending issues and ensure the coverage of the funding gap for the remaining two years of UNPF implementation period.

Other reported challenges in the implementation of DaO include: limited capacity (in terms of human resources availability) of some small agencies to carry out the work assigned in joint projects, thus relying on bigger agencies but whose efforts are difficult to cost-recover; unclear accountability for cross-sector issues in joint programmes; additional administrative burden (coordination, information sharing, reporting, etc.) which, based on the feedback of some UN agencies, has not always been justified compared to obtained results and benefits for the respective agency. Since views are shared on the benefits and disadvantages of DaO and there is a clear need to make DaO implementation more effective while ensuring buy-in of all agencies and full mutual accountability between the RC and UNCT, it would be advisable for the UNCT to commission an evaluation aimed to capture the effects of DaO, in particular the additional development results from “jointness”.

Towards synergy for better impact

The analysis of UNPF projects portfolio provided by the RCO reveals that 98 out of 168 projects have been implemented jointly, representing around 58% of the overall portfolio. Most UN resident agencies¹⁷⁹ preferred to implement all their projects in cooperation with another or more UN partners.

The projects portfolio includes plenty of joint projects, such as: “Strengthening the Human Rights in the Transnistria region” (UNDP, UNFPA, OHCHR, IOM), “Enhancing Women’s Political Representation through Improved Capacity and Enhanced Support in Moldova” (UNDP, UN Women – see Case Study in Annex 10), “Support to Ombudsman Institution” project (UNICEF, UNDP), “National Human Rights Institutions project” (UNDP, UNHCR), “Mainstreaming Migration into Development Strategies” (IOM, UNDP, UN Women), “Strengthening the National Statistical System” (UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNICEF), “Communicable Diseases” (WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, OHCHR, UNODC), “Development of the new policy document on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights” (UNFPA and WHO), “Women’s Economic Empowerment Programme/Improving local services” (ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, IOM), “Strengthening the multidisciplinary approach in achieving and sustaining a life free of violence” (UNFPA, IOM), etc.

During interviews but also in their response to questionnaire, the UN agencies were able to identify a series of efficiency gains obtained through synergy, notably avoidance of overlaps, more efficient use of resources, economies of scale, savings. At the same time, there are examples of UN joint projects which achieved notable results as an effect of genuine synergy, cross-practice collaboration and cross-agency harmonization (see Box 3).

¹⁷⁸ See minutes of UNCT meetings 2011-2012, and in particular those on 21.11.2011, 23.11.2011, 25.09.2012 explaining the additional nature of the resource mobilization instrument “One Fund”.

¹⁷⁹ UN Women, IOM, UNFPA, WHO, ILO, UNHCR, UNAIDS, IFAD.

Box 3. Synergy at work for better impact

An example of synergetic UN effort is provided by the “Joint Integrated Local Development Programme”, implemented by UNDP and UN Women. Activities of this programme could have been implemented separately by each of the two agencies. Nevertheless, the effect of working together should not be underestimated. For instance, it is not easy to attract LPAs to participate in trainings on participatory decision-making, but make them listen to women empowerment in a separate workshop is even more difficult. By joining the topics, trainers and venues, the programme achieved greater participation of LPAs and community groups in these activities and helped save costs as well as maximised impact due to increased participation in the courses.

Another example has been reported in the health sector. Given recent problems with national tendering and scarce health budgets, better pricing and lower-cost quality health commodities should be made available to Moldovan population. This required an on-going review of the procurement mechanisms in various key areas (e.g. HIV, family planning and immunizations) and key populations which could have not been covered without a joint effort of WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNAIDS and UNODC as well as other partners (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria - GFATM, GALI Alliance etc.). Working synergistically has also contributed to improved communication at country and regional levels on critical issues, such as elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and/or syphilis (WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF), sexual and reproductive health, and gender mainstreaming (WHO, UNFPA, UN WOMEN), etc. As far as synergy between UN agencies and Government partners is concerned, the MoH assigned a national focal point for development partners and a roster of technical experts responsible for certain areas of work to streamline and speed up the work and improve accountability.

The same goes for the migration area. UNCT includes three specialised agencies - IOM, ILO and UNHCR – which, working together, were able to cover a large spectrum of migration issues, from migration management, and migration and development to decent work, protection of migrant workers, protection of immigrants, including those at risk (refugees, the stateless, asylum seekers).

Other examples of cross-practice collaboration tackled issues in the area of human rights in the Transnistrian region (confidence building projects), governance and environment for strategic policy advice to the Ministry of Environment; migrants, disabilities and gender to increase the access to voting, gender equality and political empowerment (see Case Study in Annex 10), economic empowerment for diaspora or mainstreamed in decentralisation policies and local capacity building, etc.

Using partnerships to improve performance

The partnerships developed by the UN for the implementation of the UNPF included various actors, from governmental institutions/authorities (particularly beneficiary institutions) and donors (e.g. EU) to civil society organizations, consisting of NGOs, professional associations, vulnerable groups associations and media. In general, the selection of partners considered the need for advancing the policy change but also implementation of the respective policies; yet there have been cases when more appropriate implementing partners were needed.

Successful partnerships have been developed with the Government, an excellent example being provided by the UNDP project “Strengthening capacities to undertake environmental fiscal reform to meet national and global environmental priorities”. The project benefited from a valuable partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy. Considering the nature of the project – environmental fiscal reform – any proposal was politically-sensitive and the partner ministries ensured the necessary political links between the project activities and higher levels in the government. This strong cooperation compensated partially the fact that the national commission on environmental fiscal reform was never created even if envisaged in the project document. Another successful partnership between the UN and the Government is the IOM/UNDP programme “Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies”. The Programme supported the capacity building of the Bureau for Diaspora Relations under the State Chancellery and the diaspora policy coordination mechanism, established in 2013, in assessing and considering the full implications of migration and development nexus into policy planning, development and implementation. The capacitating exercise has contributed to the mainstreaming of migration and development considerations into the National Culture 2020 Strategy¹⁸⁰, National Tourism 2020 Strategy¹⁸¹, Strategy on Migration and Asylum 2011-2020¹⁸² and its Action plan for 2016-2020 (draft), Diaspora 2025 Strategy¹⁸³; Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategic Programme on Demographic Security of the Republic of Moldova 2014-2016. There plenty of similar partnerships set up and running for the implementation of UNPF large portfolio of interventions.

As far as other international partners are concerned, **UN Moldova managed to develop a solid partnership with the EU Delegation as partner for policy dialogue and advocacy for pushing forward the needed reforms**. Other important development partners with whom UN has good relationships which helped the implementation of the UNPF include bilateral governments (Sweden, Norway, Austria, Switzerland, Romania, USA, Liechtenstein, Denmark, Czech Republic, etc.).

While strategic partnerships are most frequently regarded by the UN agencies as the ones with the Government and donor agencies, successful and more sustainable results have been obtained when UN developed strategic alliances with citizens as ‘change owners’ and ultimate beneficiaries of change. A notable example is the strategic alliance of UN Women with the Gender Equality Platform. Together they contributed to the recent adoption of the Law on Equality of Chances as well as advocated for the adoption of temporary special measures, and for the regulation of the issue of sexist advertising. The platform got also involved in promoting the political empowerment of women (see Case Study in Annex 10). UN has also facilitated the establishment of the first ever initiative groups of women migrants in Balti, Cahul and Chisinau to network and engage with LPAs with a view to promoting and protecting women migrants’ human and labour rights. In addition, UNFPA has contributed to the establishment of the Platform for Active Ageing that advocates for elderly rights and a youth network on sexuality education (Y-PEER) active in fifteen rayons of the country. UNDP and OHCHR have effectively partnered with the network of organizations active in the area of protecting the PwD for the implementation of Moldova’s commitments related to the CRPD and for preparing the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on individual complaints. For years, the Government has not paid too much attention to the Optional Protocol. After a series of public actions and targeted negotiations, the draft law on the ratification was proposed to the Government. Due to the partnership with end beneficiaries i.e. the PwD themselves, the UN was able to push forward the amendments of the law on social inclusion of PwD including adapted

¹⁸⁰ Government Decision 271/2014, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=352588>, accessed on 10.05.2016

¹⁸¹ Government Decision 338/2014, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=353037>, accessed on 10.05.2016

¹⁸² Draft Government Decision, <http://www.particip.gov.md/proiectview.php?l=ro&idd=3004>, accessed on 10.05.2016

¹⁸³ Government Decision 200/2016, <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=363576>, accessed on 10.05.2016

accommodation. UN got also engaged with networks and associations of parents of CwD, organisations of users and survivors of psychiatry, young bloggers, child friendly journalists. Another successful partnership was established with the private sector within SYSLAB ("Systems Laboratory for Innovation and Employment") , whereby StarNet (a large Moldovan Internet service provider) co-financed the training programmes within the career centres set up by the project, being at the same time the first to consult the SYSLAB "graduates" lists when searching for new personnel.

5.5 Sustainability

Evaluation of sustainability considered the following evaluation questions:

To what extent are the results (benefits) of the UNPF **sustainable** or likely to be maintained over time?

What **measures** has UNCT undertaken to ensure that results to which it contributed are not lost?

The evaluation took place 22 months before the end of the UNPF implementation period. Therefore, the assessment of sustainability focused on the likelihood that outcomes and benefits generated by UNPF continue to exist without or with a lower level of external support. The evaluation assessed the extent to which prerequisites for sustainability are in place or are being put in place and the concrete measures undertaken to date to ensure sustainability of results.

Measures for ensuring sustainability of results

The UNPF and its Action Plan embed various sustainability elements in their design. The formulation of the outcomes in the UNPF indicates an orientation towards sustainable changes at the level of duty-bearers in terms of enabling policy frameworks and strengthened capacities (outcomes in pillars 1 and 3) as well as at the level of rights-holders through sustainable access to opportunities and services (outcomes in pillar 2). Nevertheless, the Results Matrix (column on 'Role of partners') does not specify any accountability for the sustainability of achieved results from the side of the Government.

The UNPF Action Plan contains a commitment of UN "to help strengthen national capacities for implementation, coordination and monitoring, and to help ensure the sustainability of results" (page 2), which is further strengthened by the foreseen implementation strategies and programme management arrangements (page 7). The M&E Plan of the UNPF includes several evaluations aimed to assess the sustainability of results achieved in the framework of various UNPF outcomes and overall (page 13).

At operational level, sustainability is typically embedded in project/programme documents, in the form of a policy/legal component usually combined with other key sustainability prerequisites such as capacity building, infrastructure development, co-sharing of costs¹⁸⁴, strategic partnerships, etc. However, **the projects/programmes do not always have an explicit exit strategy incorporated in the planning documents, leaving the building up of sustainability safeguards to the end of the project when it could be too late¹⁸⁵. In addition, the ex-post monitoring of results from a sustainability point of view (e.g. quality of services, use of equipment and maintenance, sufficient staff and funds to cover the running costs, etc.) seems to be rather an exception;** such monitoring would help identify the shortcomings¹⁸⁶ and trigger remedial action to ensure the initial

¹⁸⁴ IFAD IV, for example, conditioned the infrastructure projects by a 20% contribution from the beneficiaries.

¹⁸⁵ E.g. SYSLAB project still does not have an exit strategy, hoping to be able to attract finances for yet another stage. The evaluation was also informed that difficulties have been encountered by the State Chancellery in getting funding for the maintenance of the aid management platform www.amp.gov.md.

¹⁸⁶ E.g. out of 34 joint information services bureaus set up at rayon level and taken over in 2013 by the rayon authorities, but only 70% still functioning; community mediators initially paid from the state budget in 2013, moved to local budget later on and 'lost' on the way: 48 needed, of whom 43 trained, 25 employed and currently working only 9; creche-groups for children under three set up in 10 localities and still functioning one year after the end of UN support, but with significant quality issues; abandoned databases: DevInfo, IDAM, WB-social aid; several sites not working at the end of the Biomass project (1st phase).

investment is not lost and final beneficiaries have access to quality services similar to those during the project implementation.

Sustainability level of achievements

Although evidence that major initiatives supported by the UN are sustainable will become available only after the end of UNPF, there are several results across all outcomes which are already showing signs of being sustained by the Government and other national stakeholders.

Sustainability was analysed from various perspectives:

- *legal/policy*: adoption of related laws, policies, and regulations for implementation;
- *institutional*: increased institutional capacity to continue the reforms, implement the policies, run the services, etc. developed with UN support;
- *financial*: allocation of Government budget to continue major initiatives beyond the period of various initiatives.

Results to date indicate that the **UN had a tremendous substantive contribution to the development and improvement of the legal and policy advocacy agenda in all focus areas of UNPF. In only three years since the start of UNPF implementation, the UN has supported the revision, improvement, development and adoption of around 66 policy documents, laws, by-laws and regulations as well as national action plans and programmes** (Table 10 and Annex 9).

Table 10. Contribution of UN to policy and legal agenda in Moldova (2013-2016)

Document/Area	No.	Type of UN support	Supporting UN agency
Policy documents (strategies, policy frameworks, reform proposals) Areas: justice, health, education, child protection, migration management, youth, environment	18	critical review/evaluation; evidence demonstrating the need for adopting a new strategy; technical assistance for revision and updating; advice/inputs for development; advocacy for adoption	UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNODC, WHO, IOM, UNDP
Laws, by-laws and regulations Areas: health, education, social protection, migration management, labour, decentralization and local governance, environment, agriculture and rural development, gender equality, free legal aid, refugees	32	evidence demonstrating the need for revision, technical assistance for revision and updating, advice/inputs for development, participation in working groups and consultations, advocacy for adoption and enforcement	UNFPA, UN Women, UNHCR, FAO, UNDP, IOM, ILO, UNICEF, WHO, UNODC
National action plans and programmes Areas: health, education, child protection, migration management	16	participation in working groups and consultations, technical assistance for improvement, advice/inputs for development, advocacy for adoption, technical assistance for scaling up,	UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNODC, WHO, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP
Guidelines, standards, protocols, methodologies Areas: health, food safety, education, social protection, migration management, labour, decentralization and local governance, environment, civil rights	16	evidence demonstrating the need for revision, technical assistance for revision/ updating, advice/inputs for development, advocacy for adoption	UNICEF, WHO, UNODC, IOM, UNDP, UNIDO, ILO, FAO

The concrete changes brought about by this impressive body of documents are likely to sustain the UNPF results in the years to come. **Gender and human rights mainstreaming in a number of policies and plans will also contribute to the sustainability of results in terms of impacts on the most vulnerable. The same goes for the mainstreaming of climate change and disaster risk management into the national, sectoral and local policies and plans.**

There are obvious challenges in the enforcement of the new legal framework and implementation of various strategies and action plans (e.g. strategy on agriculture and rural development, Ombudsman law, decentralisation strategy, youth strategy, etc.), but the prerequisites are in place and enabling.

As far as **institutional sustainability** is concerned, there is evidence of:

- **new institutions/entities set up and integrated into the Government structures at central and local level**, e.g. career advisory centres to support employment and self-employment through business start-ups, taken over by academia and employment agency; Equality Council; health Ombudsman to review cases on mental health care and psychiatry; Diaspora Relations Bureau; Unit within the Bureau of Migration and Asylum (BMA) for taking over the development of the extended migration profile and of the migration monitoring mechanism; Centre of excellence in training for reproductive health (serving Eastern Europe and Central Asia); Demographic Research Centre; Training Centre for Border Guards; inter-municipal enterprises created in 2014 with UN support which are still fully functional; HIV voluntary counselling and testing rooms; joint service bureaus for increasing access of women to information and services;
- **new services developed and taken over by authorities**, e.g. One Stop Shop at the BMA; translation services for refugees taken over by the Government since 2014; system for Assisted Voluntary Return of migrants from Moldova in dignifying conditions; health care provision for HIV infected prisoners; near-miss case reviews or clinical audits; standard operating procedures for laboratories; services for children under three taken over by local authorities in 10 communities, etc.
- **strengthened capacities** (see also the Design and Focus section on capacity development) in terms of:
 - more competent and skilled people;
 - modernised infrastructure, e.g. aid management platform www.amp.gov.md fully functional¹⁸⁷, social infrastructure in the Transnistrian region rehabilitated or developed with the assistance of Confidence Building Measures project, voting facilities for PwD - access ramps, braille language;
 - institutionalised trainings, e.g. reproductive health curricula for school nurses scaled up nationwide, youth friendly health service integrated into the Medical University curricula, family planning and cervical cancer prevention curricula institutionalized in Medical University and college, training packages for LPAs institutionalised in the programmes of Academy for Public Administration; courses for legal aid lawyers institutionalised by the National Legal Aid Council; renewable energy sources introduced as an optional subject in the national curriculum for 2013-2014;
 - new positions introduced in the organigramme of public institutions, e.g. diaspora, migration and development focal points introduced in the line ministries and other central public authorities at political and technical levels;
 - increased capacities for data generation, e.g. stand-alone migration module introduced in the regular National Labour Force Survey to provide nationwide statistical data on the phenomenon for informed policy-making;
 - a wide range of guidelines, quality standards, protocols and methodologies developed with the support of UN (Annex 9).

¹⁸⁷ According to feedback from interviews, the platform nevertheless requires further development, links with Ministry of Finance for MTEF framework, better geographical visualization etc.

The high level of staff turnover in the Government and public institutions, impeding a long-term strategic thinking and action, on the background of significant delays in the implementation of the public administration reforms might decrease the institutional sustainability at least on short-term. Nevertheless, the effects of this risk might be in part mitigated by the implementation of the EU association agenda where public administration reforms figures high among national priorities.

From a financial point of view, the evaluation was informed about several services which were scaled up nationwide and for which the Government has allocated resources, such as:

- community HIV testing and counselling, provision of contraceptives for vulnerable groups; syringes in prisons procured by the Government and covered from state budget;
- gradual take-over the GFATM and /or GAVI Alliance costs (e.g. Moldova already purchasing all first-line TB drugs and partly second-line TB drugs, sputum microscopy for TB, etc.);
- allocation of 2% of the cost per capita per student for inclusive education; coverage of the capital and running costs from state budget for the newly set up institutions (the ones mentioned above);
- maintenance and expansion of water supply systems by most targeted LPAs after the end of IFAD IV project;
- secured funding for strategic health care directions in the Government Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF);
- integration of a specific sub-programme “Supporting diaspora” into the MTEF¹⁸⁸ to allow ministries budget activities addressing diaspora into their own sectorial strategies or to ensure an effective use of resources from diaspora towards key development areas; at the time of evaluation, four sectorial strategies have integrated objectives and actions aimed at Moldovan diaspora, as mentioned in the Efficiency section (partnerships);
- annual violence against women campaign at the national level with partial funding by the state;
- performance-based budgeting system rolled out to all local governments for the 2016 budget as part of the new fiscal decentralisation system.

In the opinion of stakeholders consulted for the purpose of evaluation, policies, regulatory changes and strategies have the highest sustainability prospects, given the fact that most of them have a sustainability plan attached, while the institutional sustainability is challenged by the out-flow of staff from public administration and the volatile nature of the partnerships which were established primarily for the purpose of accessing funds, with small chances of having a life after the project completion¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸⁸ Government portal of open data, <http://date.gov.md/ckan/en/dataset/5014-clasificatia-programelor-si-subprogramelor>, accessed 10.05.2016

¹⁸⁹ See, for instance, MTR (2015), outcome 2.1

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

UNPF – a platform for learning in a context of opportunity

The UNPF 2013-2017 Moldova has been implemented under challenging operating conditions which remain complex, sensitive and unpredictable. UN Moldova has done its best to address the most pressing needs of the country, in particular of vulnerable groups and communities, in a period of protracted political instability and economic-financial crisis. The UN seemed to have been the most loyal and closest partner of the Government and ally of the most needy during these years of turmoil. The feedback received from 164 consulted stakeholders confirms that UN is a respected partner and that its overall interventions were conducted professionally, efficiently and in an inclusive and culturally-sensitive manner.

Although functioning in a challenging context, the UNCT Moldova demonstrated that progress towards planned targets could be achieved by creatively using the existing enabling factors to add value and of opportunities to open up new operating space. UN has thus managed to successfully support the country in advancing the human rights agenda and reforms in key priority development areas, on the basis of intelligent partnerships with the citizens as ultimate change owners and with key international development partners, most notably the EU.

At the same time, there are a number of issues linked to the strategic ownership and joint accountability for results as well as linked to the lack of an underlying ToC and suboptimal alignment of annual work planning with national budgeting processes, etc. which raised challenges and impeded a better effectiveness and delivery rate of support during the first three years of UNPF implementation. The design of the next UNPF for 2018-2022 represents an opportunity for UN, Government of Moldova and their partners to capture learning generated by an ambitious co-operation framework in a low middle-income setting, against the backdrop of a distinctive national political landscape and volatile regional security.

More specific conclusions are presented below.

Design and Focus

- The UNPF 2013-2017 in Moldova has been designed on the basis of five programming principles: HRBA, Gender equality, Environmental sustainability, Capacity development, and RBM.
- HRBA and gender equality standards and principles were effectively used for the programming of UN assistance, being embedded in the formulation of most planned results, indicators and disaggregations. In fulfilling human rights and achieving gender equality, both mainstreamed and targeted interventions were used as key strategies for UNPF implementation. The analytical work which informed the design of the UNPF and the planning process of the UNPF itself were highly participative, involving a wide range of stakeholders who reflected in broad terms the entire spectrum of needs and interests. Still, some vulnerable groups whose rights are repeatedly violated were left out or only marginally addressed.
- Mainstreaming environmental sustainability into UNPF was only partially successful. The planning process was informed by a certain level of understanding of the relationship between environment and development. Yet the UNPF separated the two areas into different pillars and linkages environment-poverty, environment-gender, environment-migration, etc. seemed to have been neglected in the Results Matrix. Lower priority given to inter-sectoral coordination on environmental matters and insufficient awareness of the planners concerning the cross-

cutting nature of environmental sustainability figure among the possible reasons. Nevertheless, at operational level, there are many examples of UN initiatives which mainstreamed environmental concerns into development work.

- Capacity development was mainstreamed across the entire UNPF, being embedded in the formulation of a large number of outcomes/outputs and assigned indicators. Capacity building priorities were informed by a general analysis of the capacity gaps but to a lesser extent by the capacity assets of targeted beneficiaries. At operational level, strengthening the institutional capacities of duty-bearers to protect, promote and fulfil human rights as well as to monitor and report on ratified international standards stayed at the heart of many UNPF activities, but the efficiency of investment has been decreased by high turnover within the state agencies. In case of rights-holders (vulnerable people, citizens, community groups, etc.), the focus was put on increasing their access to quality services, better governance and sustainable development opportunities, and on encouraging participation in voting and local decision-making. Increasing rights-holders' capacity to understand and claim their rights received less attention.
- Insufficient level of data reliability, consistency and disaggregation, posing severe constraints in targeting interventions at the time when UNPF was developed, prompted UN to focus its assistance towards developing the national capacity for disaggregated data collection and analysis. Capacity building is identifiable in the formulation of various outputs and there is a reasonably good level of disaggregation of indicators in the UNPF Results Matrix, in particular by gender, age, urban/rural, region. Disaggregation by disability, ethnicity and migration is however scant. At operational level, there is evidence of successful projects and programmes which fostered evidence-based monitoring, analysis and policy-making and supported the Government to better address the discrimination and disadvantage among specific vulnerable groups .
- The UNPF, including its Results Matrix, adhered to the undg RBM methodology to help ensure accountability for results and utilization of resources as well as to offer a framework to manage the support based on results. However, the road towards change at impact level is not that clear given the lack of an underlying ToC describing how the Government and UN were planning to make a difference. The lack of a ToC has also affected the selection of indicators which were not always suitable enough to accurately measure change at various levels in the hierarchy of results. Reporting, although well structured and informative, was too process-oriented, with insufficient detail concerning the contribution of achieved results to national priority targets. The Results Matrix was flexible enough to accommodate adjustments required by new opportunities and challenges, assuming that financial implications were manageable.

Relevance

- The UNPF was highly relevant for Moldova's priorities and its European and international commitments. It addressed key development challenges of the country and their underlying causes highlighted in relevant situation analyses and country assessments. The document has substantially guided the work of UNCT in planning activities and instrumenting cooperation with national counterparts and international development partners. The UNPF has not necessarily been a guiding framework for the Government, but rather the national strategies with which it has been fully aligned.
- The UNPF results and strategies were driven by the standards and principles of Moldova's ratified human rights treaties and, to a significant extent, by the issues comprised in the concluding observations and recommendations of UN treaty body reports. The work carried out within the framework of the UNPF has also addressed the key issues underlined in the

third MDG report (2013), in particular the areas where progress was lagging behind.

- The UNPF has preserved its relevance in time, due to the large scope of its outcomes, flexibility in adapting the Results Matrix to arising needs, constant preoccupation of UNCT for understanding the needs and staying attuned to the country context, and regular dialogue with the Government and international development partners to ensure alignment of UN work to national reform and EU association agenda.

Effectiveness

- The UNPF implementation to date has brought about significant institutional and behavioural changes which influenced positive trends in relevant national targets. It has also contributed to advancing the EU association agenda. Nevertheless, results achieved to date indicate that the UNPF has been a too ambitious framework for the political context of Moldova, available resources and timeframe.
- Around 58% of the planned targets are likely to be achieved by the end of 2017, the biggest progress being recorded in pillar 1 which falls under the broad human rights, rule of law, equality and democracy mandate of UN. The emerging political stability in 2016 and renewed budgetary (EU) and monetary (IMF) support from the international development partners are expected to create better conditions for the remaining implementation period of UNPF and attainment of most of its targets by the end of 2017. The improved regulatory and institutional framework and strengthened capacities contributed by the UN in partnership with the Government have prepared a solid ground for accelerated progress in 2016 and 2017.
- The UNPF results so far have been facilitated by the excellent approach of UNCT which combined sound analytic frameworks, strong evidence and investment in knowledge products with effective leverage of relationships that UN agencies had with the Government, civil society and other key stakeholders and systematic embedment of capacity building in most UN interventions. Very helpful was also the UNCT ability to frame policy issues and options in ways that are sensitive to institutional and political context and priorities in Moldova. The main factor which affected the country's development as a whole and hindered the achievement of the UNPF planned results to date has been the political turmoil.
- UNCT Moldova has creatively used its comparative advantages in opening up new operating space in order to add value and push the needed reforms, most notably: normative, standards setting mandate; impartiality; neutrality; credible and trustworthy partner for the Government; strong, cross-sector expertise in-house and ability to quickly deploy additional expertise from Moldova, regional and international networks; trustworthy implementing agency, able to mobilize funds from different donors and channel them to areas in need; ability to link work at the local level with policy level. A more structured, focused analysis of comparative advantages of both UN and development actors would have efficiently assisted the selection of UNPF priorities and strategies, and sharpened the focus of support.

Efficiency

- Overall, UNCT managed to ensure an efficient implementation of UNPF, despite severe constraints of the operating space. Stakeholders perceive that the results of UN cooperation were achieved in a timely, cost-efficient and effective manner, with little waste and duplication. UN procedures are deemed to be transparent and trustworthy, hence UN is regarded as a 'go-to-agency' by many development partners. Nevertheless, efficiency was affected by political instability, with uneven participation of the Government in the UNPF steering, coordination and monitoring as well as decreased mutual accountability for results. Alignment of the UNPF

annual work planning process with the national budgeting process was complicated by the late adoption of the national budgets, creating cost-sharing constraints. Yet, the risks arising from the challenges of the operating context were not factored in an explicit mitigation strategy to allow UNCT intervene in a pro-active way.

- On the delivery side, the amount spent during the period 2013-2015 represented 58.9% of the estimated UNPF budget, mirroring the achievement level of results. The yearly delivery rate was about 19-20% on average. The UNCT and its partners have successfully attracted funding for the development assistance envisaged in the UNPF, reducing the funding gap from 53.9% at the beginning of the implementation period to 8.8% currently.
- The implementation of DaO, aimed to ensure increased efficiency of support, is rather advanced. It contributed so far to better programming, coordination and synergising of the UN work through increased cross-practice and cross-agency harmonization (58% projects implemented jointly); reduction of transaction costs; fund raising to cover the funding gap (contribution of 27.5% via MDTF); and improvement of the clarity, coherence and consistency of external UN messages. Apart from these efficiency gains, the implementation of DaO was challenged by the different operational rules and internal procedures of UN agencies and the perception that DaO is unable to reduce the competition for funds – a matter which is expected to be settled by the implementation of the recently-adopted Joint Fund Mobilization Strategy of the UNCT.
- Efficiency has been enhanced by successful partnerships developed with the Government and with citizens that will ultimately influence the sustainability of change in the society. The UNCT has also managed to develop a solid partnership with the EU Delegation as donor and partner for policy dialogue and advocacy for pushing forward the needed reforms.

Sustainability

- Sustainability is part of the UNPF design, which embeds an orientation towards sustainable change at the level of duty-bearers in terms of enabling policy frameworks and strengthened capacities as well as at the level of rights-holders through sustainable access to opportunities and services. The implementation strategies, programme management arrangements and the M&E Plan of the UNPF contain specific sustainability elements. The Government accountability for the sustainability of the achieved results is however not explicit in the UNPF document. At operational level, the projects/programmes embed various sustainability prerequisites, but an explicit exit strategy is rarely incorporated in the planning documents. Ex-post monitoring of results from a sustainability point of view seems to be rather an exception.
- Evidence of sustainability will be available after the end of UNPF, but there are results across all outcomes which are already showing good sustainability prospects.
- UN Moldova had a substantive contribution to the development and improvement of the legal and policy advocacy agenda in all focus areas of UNPF, thus providing an enabling environment for preserving and enriching the UNPF results in the years to come. Mainstreaming gender equality and human rights as well as climate change and disaster risk management into the national, sectoral and local policies and plans will also contribute to the sustainability of results in terms of impacts on the most vulnerable.
- New institutions were set up and integrated into the Government structures at central and local level. New services were developed, scaled up nationwide and taken over by authorities. Capacities were strengthened in terms of more competent and skilled people, modernised infrastructure, institutionalised trainings, new positions introduced in the organigramme of public institutions, increased capacities for data generation, a wide range of guidelines, quality

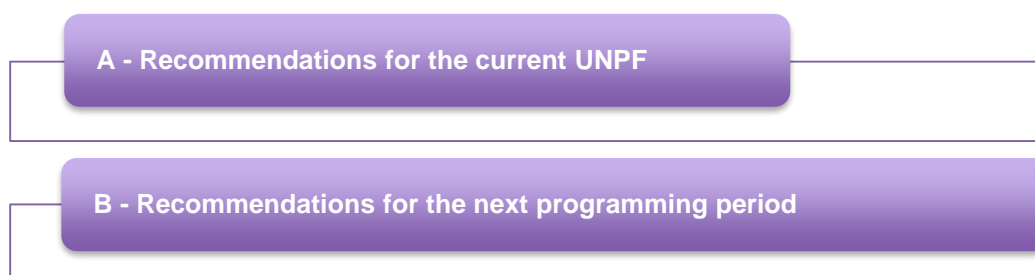
standards, protocols and methodologies developed with the support of UN. High staff turnover in the Government and public institutions, impeding a long-term strategic thinking and action, on the background of significant delays in the implementation of the public administration reforms might decrease the institutional sustainability. The implementation of the EU association agenda where public administration reforms figures high among national priorities might mitigate this risk, at least partially.

6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations presented in Table 11 below are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation as well as on consultation with all key stakeholders that were interviewed during the field phase. Each interview, focus group and round table has checked the perceptions of various stakeholders (UN, Government of Moldova, Parliament, international development partners, CSOs, private sector representatives, media, etc.) and a selected number of final beneficiaries concerning the top priorities for advancing the human rights agenda and economic and social reforms in Moldova in the coming years and consequently the role each of these stakeholders could play. Several preliminary recommendations have been shared with UNCT during the debriefing session and with a number of key stakeholders during interviews and site visits. Validation of recommendations is planned to be done by UNCT and national key stakeholders following submission of the report.

The recommendations are addressed to UNCT Moldova, Government of Moldova and their partners in line with the ToR and the need to engage all major stakeholders in a concerted effort for the continuation of reforms in the Republic of Moldova.

Recommendations are divided into two categories, as follows:



The recommendations are particularly aimed to inform the UN support to the Republic of Moldova for the next programming period 2018-2022. Each recommendation has an addressee and includes references to findings of the evaluation to substantiate the proposed course of action.

Table 11. List of Recommendations

No	Recommendations	Addressee
A. Recommendations for the current UNPF (remaining two years of implementation)		
A1	<p>Carry out an evaluation concerning the effects of DaO implementation to date to inform a concrete line of action towards full implementation of the approach</p> <p>UNCT Moldova is rather advanced in applying the DaO and this approach has already borne fruit, especially in terms of efficiency gains. Nevertheless, the views across the UN agencies are shared concerning the benefits and disadvantages of DaO. There is a clear need to make DaO implementation more effective while ensuring buy-in of all agencies and full mutual accountability between the RC and UNCT. It is therefore recommended that UNCT launches an evaluation aimed to capture the effects of DaO, in particular the additional development results from “jointness”, to improve the understanding concerning the DaO potential and inform a UN common agenda towards advancing the DaO in Moldova.</p>	UNCT Moldova
A2	<p>Ensure that resources are available for the implementation of planned projects/programmes and attainment of planned results in all UNPF pillars</p> <p>Given the significant funding gap for the remaining two years of implementation, the UNCT needs to quickly engage with the Government to discuss ways for greater cost-sharing for on-going programmatic efforts, in particular for interventions under pillar 2 which account for 63% (11.9 million USD) of the funding gap. Advocacy should focus on results areas that are most closely aligned with the sectoral strategies and EU association priorities. At the same time, the potential of MDTF as additional resource mobilization should be fully exploited, based on a common UN-Government lobbying for contributors.</p>	UNCT Moldova and Government
A3	<p>Develop and implement sustainability plans (exit strategies) for current and upcoming projects</p> <p>A number of UN projects which were reviewed during this evaluation do not have a clear sustainability plan (exit strategy) to make sure that results and impacts of assistance are taken over and enhanced by the relevant national stakeholders and mainstreamed in policies and practices. Developing a written sustainability plan could provide a road map for the project management teams and their partners as they work on sustainability actions. The process of creating a written sustainability plan can also strengthen partners' buy-in and understanding of the efforts needed to keep the project operating and improving. Engaging in sustainability planning gives an opportunity to map out how to maintain valuable projects and innovations in a changing environment.</p>	UN agencies in cooperation with the implementing partner

No	Recommendations	Addressee
A4	<p>Carry out a quick check of the sustainability of finalised projects to take remedial action while capitalizing the lessons learnt for future programming processes</p> <p>As mentioned in the findings section of the report, the evaluation identified several issues related to the sustainability of results and benefits of past projects (ended in 2013 and after). Although they were taken over by the local or central government or scaled up nationwide or institutionalised, some of them were discontinued while others strive to survive, with very fragile sustainability prospects and significant quality loss. UN is thus recommended to carry out a quick check of the projects that ended in 2013 and after in cooperation with the relevant national stakeholder and address the identified issues to the extent possible.</p>	UN agencies in cooperation with the beneficiary
A5	<p>Improve the inclusiveness and accountability of the Results Groups</p> <p>At the moment, the membership of the Results Group is confined to UN. At the same time, there is little evidence of their alignment to the national coordination mechanisms and the accountability for the achievement of the planned outcomes is poorly shared with the Government and other key partners. It is recommended that UNCT considers the inclusion in the groups of relevant line ministries and prominent CSOs with the task of ensuring strategic oversight and of monitoring the developing opportunities, risks and constraints. The group will retain the responsibility for the accomplishment of the outcomes. Meetings will be minuted and reporting will be results-based.</p>	UNCT Moldova
B. Recommendations for the next programming period 2018-2022		
B1	<p>Develop an underlying Theory of Change (ToC) for the next UNDAF 2018-2022 to ensure solid connection of UN support to national targets, EU association agenda and SDGs as well as to improve joint accountability for results</p> <p>The lack of a ToC affected the quality of the Results Matrix (selection of indicators), the monitoring by Results Groups and the reporting on results obtained with the framework of the current UNPF. Accountability for results was not always seen as a shared responsibility between the Government and the UN. An underlying ToC would have explicitly connected the expected outcomes to specific national development priorities and targets (indicators) to which they were supposed to contribute higher up in the logical chain. It would have clarified how is change going to be enabled and would have explained the ways in which different factors interact in relation to that change. It would have also been instrumental in identifying the programming priorities by assessing which of the possible pathways are most likely to achieve the desired result, taking the comparative advantages of the UN and other partners into account. UNCT and the Government are therefore strongly</p>	UNCT Moldova and Government in cooperation with national stakeholders involved in the preparation of next UNDAF

No	Recommendations	Addressee
	recommended to develop a ToC as a fundamental building block for the programming of UN support in 2018-2022, able to trace a clear and compelling story line from the outputs expected through to the outcomes and to specific policy priorities and indicators in the national strategies, EU association agenda and SDGs in the post 2015 context . The ToC will be the basis for the development of the Results Matrix. It is expected to contribute to improved joint accountability as it will clarify the responsibilities of UN, the Government and other partners for the development activities and national priorities. In this respect, national counterparts should be an inherent part of the M&E process in order to reinforce mutual accountability.	
B2	<p>Ensure that the next UNDAF 2018-2022 is streamlined and has a strong strategic focus</p> <p>The evaluation found that the current UNPF has been spread across too many intervention areas and too ambitious for the available resources and timeframe for implementation. In several cases, interventions were dictated by opportunities, rather than by a foreseeable contribution towards planned results. No systematic assessment of UN comparative advantages was done. The next UNDAF needs to be less diffused and better focused on strategic priority areas where the UN Moldova has the capacity and the comparative advantage to produce the biggest difference. Where the UNCT decides not to take on a policy gap identified in the CCA, the UNDAF narrative should clarify the reason why not. In this respect, an analysis of comparative advantages of UN and a realistic assessment of what the UNDAF can/cannot do are of utmost importance. The UNCT is suggested to set realistic expectations on what can be achieved, and be inclusive, but focused. Concentrating the M&E system on key strategic results will be essential to show where the UN best contributes.</p> <p>During implementation, the UNCT needs to make sure that efforts and resources are allocated only to those projects and programmes which comply with a minimum set of qualifying criteria, i.e.: have a meaningful link with an outcome; planned results can be scaled up to achieve transformative change; are catalytic, accelerating progress across a broad range of areas; address the rights of the most vulnerable, and strengthen the capacities of duty bearers and right holders; respond explicitly to outstanding recommendations of treaty bodies which could be the common denominator of multi-agency approach in the design and implementation of the project portfolio and in measuring of progress.</p> <p>In priority areas of cooperation and where several UN agencies are contributing, it would be useful to conduct a limited number of formal capacity assessments of partners (both assets and gaps) to ensure that capacity development results and activities are responding fully to the needs, have the potential to generate change and are clearly aligned with programmatic strategies, thus avoiding excessive spread of resources for capacity building outside the strategic focus of UNDAF.</p>	UNCT Moldova and UNDAF planners

No	Recommendations	Addressee
B3	<p>Align the steering and coordination of UNDAF to the national coordination mechanisms to ensure national leadership and ownership throughout the implementation period</p> <p>As explained in the Efficiency section of the evaluation report, the Steering Committee set up at the start of the UNPF cycle ceased to function over the last year due to political instability and constant changes of key Government representatives. Currently, there are discussions between the UNCT and the Government to set up a new Joint National/United Nations Steering Committee to undertake coordinated implementation and oversight of the One Programme (i.e. DaO pillar). The opinions of stakeholders consulted for the purpose of this evaluation are shared, the balance being turned by those who have serious reservations that yet another committee might tackle the issue of coordination, accountability and ownership. The UNCT is recommended to undertake a quick, targeted screening of options with pros and cons and discuss them with the Government as a matter of urgency to ensure that a consensus is reached before the preparations for the new UNDAF are launched. It is nevertheless obvious that the better the steering and coordination of UNDAF is aligned with national coordination architecture the bigger the chances are to get accepted and be functional, with consequent positive effects on alignment of work planning with national budgeting processes.</p>	UNCT Moldova and Government
B4	<p>Engage more inclusively and effectively with citizens and CSOs throughout the entire UNDAF cycle to ensure that nobody is left behind and social accountability standards are observed</p> <p>According to the feedback received from CSOs, there was a rather limited participation of vulnerable groups in the planning of UNPF and in the process of identifying the target groups, allowing for potential self-identification by individuals. This left out a number of vulnerable groups whose human rights are repeatedly violated. The UNCT needs to make sure that it engages with a wider and more diverse range of CSOs that are promoting human rights, including those of more sensitive groups. In this respect, UNCT might consider the need to develop guidance on the participatory development and monitoring of the next UNDAF for the use of UN agencies and Government partners during the preparation and implementation work. As outlined in the Interim UNDAF Guidance of UNDG (2016), the document should be formulated “around a clear identification of population groups being left furthest behind, recognition of their rights and need to enjoy social protection, economic opportunity, access to essential services and participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives”. In order to achieve this desideratum, “the target groups need to be engaged throughout all stages of programming, prioritizing those most marginalized, discriminated and excluded” (page 9). There is a rich body of international experience which could help the process be as inclusive as possible, but keeping it efficient as well, and which could be applied by UN Moldova when preparing the next UNDAF. As far as</p>	UNCT Moldova

No	Recommendations	Addressee
	<p>implementation of UNDAF is concerned, the UNCT needs to involve CSOs in the monitoring of progress towards results at a more strategic level. Social accountability mechanisms needs to be strengthened to allow citizens, including vulnerable groups, to hold the UN and Government accountable for results. This should go hand in hand with empowering the vulnerable groups to better understand and claim their rights and look for redress. The Results Groups should be encouraged and empowered to expand their traditional partnership base and get engaged with a broad range of CSOs for monitoring the progress of UNDAF implementation, while building on the post-2015 consultation platform.</p>	
B5	<p>Mainstream environmental sustainability principles across all strategic priority areas of UNDAF to add value to development work and advance the gender equality and human rights agenda</p> <p>Environmental sustainability has not been sufficiently well mainstreamed in the current UNPF. The UNCT is recommended to partner with the Ministry of Environment in order to develop guidelines for the working groups which will be involved in the preparation of the next UNDAF on how to reflect the principles of environmental sustainability across the entire spectrum of thematic priorities for 2018-2022. It is important to raise the understanding of the planners about the links between environment and poverty, environment and migration, environment and agriculture, environment and regional development, etc. and make use of their potential for development work while mitigating the negative costs as needed. It is also key for the planners to understand that accountability for the protection of the environment and sustainable use of natural resources is a gender and human rights issue as well.</p>	<p>UNCT Moldova, Ministry of Environment and UNDAF planners</p>
B6	<p>Ensure an integrated approach towards migration</p> <p>As described in the Context section of the evaluation report, there is a relatively high proportion of Moldovan migrants and multiple effects produced by migration upon the economic and social development of the country. The current UNPF has addressed the migrants primarily as a category of vulnerable groups, and less as potential actors in the development of Moldova. The next UNDAF would need to address migration in a more complex manner, by considering both the development opportunities brought about by migration and mitigation of its negative consequences. This approach is explored in many countries which are confronted by an increased migration dynamics.</p>	<p>UNCT Moldova and relevant national stakeholders involved in UNDAF planning</p>
B7	<p>Develop a risks mitigation/management strategy to underpin a smooth implementation of UNDAF</p> <p>Risks have been identified in the Results Framework of the current UNPF, but not addressed in a pro-active and systematic manner during the implementation of UNPF. In a country with such a volatile environment and difficult operating space, a proper assessment of risks - in terms of probability of occurrence and severity of</p>	<p>UNCT Moldova and UNDAF planners</p>

No	Recommendations	Addressee
	<p>impact - is key to ensuring an efficient prevention and mitigation course of action. The UNCT needs to make sure that the next UNDAF process pays particular attention to ensuring a risk-informed planning and developing a risks mitigation/management strategy where risks are prioritised and measures and responsibilities are clearly detailed, in line with UNDG guidance on RBM (2011).</p>	
B8	<p>Improve the monitoring and evaluability of UNDAF results</p> <p>Based on the appraisal of indicators and data sources in the current UNPF, the following recommendations are made for the development of the next Results Matrix for 2018-2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - indicators should be assigned to the appropriate level of results (outcome, respectively output) based on the hierarchy of results in the ToC in order to allow stakeholders verify changes relative to what was planned at each intervention level; - indicators should conclusively demonstrate progress towards the result mentioned in the Results Matrix and be capable to measure the whole spectrum of changes in a specific output or outcome to which they are assigned; adequate and realistic targets need to be established; - definition of indicators used in the Results Matrix should be aligned with the national definitions and calculation methodologies used by the National Bureau of Statistics to ensure comparability, access to already collected data and direct links to Government reporting on priority targets; - data disaggregation should allow the identification of the target groups and patterns of exclusion as well as support the monitoring of progress; disaggregation should not be excessive, yet relevant for depicting particular vulnerability profiles (e.g. disability, ethnicity, etc.); - gaps in required disaggregations or other data gaps should be clearly identified during the preparation of the Results Matrix and data generation activities should be included in the M&E Plan and budgeted accordingly in case data cannot be collected through the national data collection systems or proxy indicators for which data is available could not be identified; it is not enough to only identify the means of verification (as in the Results Matrix of the current UNPF), but also to ensure a common understanding of all accountable stakeholders on how data will be gathered - traditional sources of data might not always provide a response to the causes of social exclusion and qualitative data generation is needed; data collected at community level through stories, micro-narratives, people-generated data, etc. represent valuable sources of qualitative data which can inform the planners, decision-makers and implementers of an intervention on causes ('why') and processes ('how') which enabled or hindered the achievement of planned results and targets; understanding the dynamics of the economic, political and social relations with which Roma social inclusion interventions, 	UNCT Moldova and Government (State Chancellery)

No	Recommendations	Addressee
	<p>for instance, engage and of the multiple facets of inequality and discrimination requires the questioning of quantitative data with the use of qualitative data; using a combination of both qualitative and quantitative indicators could often be very useful in terms of allowing a richer understanding of the dynamics at play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitoring will be facilitated by the establishment of an indicators tracking system, with annual targets at the level of output indicators; indeed, apart from final targets at the end of the UNDAF implementation period, interim (e.g. annual) targets could be also established to orient the path for improvement during the implementation; milestones that need to be reached during implementation could be also included; for institutional memory and evaluation purposes, it is also suggested to document and file how targets were set (methodology, reasoning which based the set values); - the recently set up UN Joint Group on M&E of SDGs needs to be aware of the periodicity of indicators so that progress is updated at appropriate times and with the necessary frequency to allow a proper UNDAF monitoring (which should not be confused to yearly reporting) 	