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Sectoral Factsheet:

EU-funded initiatives on Education, Research, Youth and Culture



EU-Moldova

Stronger Together

EU-FUNDED INITIATIVES

Short description of the sector and EU assistance provided for the sector of intervention

Support to implementation of education policies in Moldova

ENI/2021/428-892

Location: Republic of Moldova

Duration: 01/01/2022 – 30/06/2023

Budget: Euro 250,000

Implementing partners:

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and development (OECD)

The project contributes to the efforts of the National authorities to modernise the sector, through with a diagnostic study that aims at providing concrete recommendation in view of the implementation of the Education Development Strategy 2021-30.

The project will focus on undertaking a deeper analysis of selected policy domains that are central to the success of the education reform of Moldova, with a focus on understanding the potential challenges to the implementation of reform initiatives and concrete advice to overcome these.

Three policy domains have been identified:

- professional development of teachers and other education professionals;
- curriculum and learning resources;
- evaluation of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in order to improve their functioning.

Key results:

- The main outputs of the project are two analytical reports that consolidate the policy domains covered and a stakeholder implementation seminar. The reports will be published as part of the OECD Education Policy Perspectives series.

Financial support to the participation of the Republic of Moldova in the EU programme Horizon 2020

ENI/2021/427-084

Location: Republic of Moldova

Duration: (retroactively 2018-19)

Budget: Euro 1,162,472.72

Implementing partners:

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova

The grant is a partial reimbursement (50%) of the annual fees (also known as 'entry tickets') paid by the Government of Moldova in 2018 and 2019 to participate in Horizon 2020, the framework programme for Research and Development.

Key results:

- Moldova has been an associated country to Horizon 2020 since 2014. Under the programme Moldovan entities have participated 93 times to 66 signed grants of collaborative, MSCA, ERC and SME Instrument actions of Horizon 2020, receiving 7.3 million euros of direct EU contribution, while 1.0 million euros is the non-EU budget of Moldovan beneficiaries. Regarding non bottom-up collaborative actions (therefore excluding projects under ERC, MSCA and SME Instrument) of Horizon 2020, Moldovan applicants were involved 349 times (36 times as coordinators) in 315 eligible proposals. Out of 154 high-quality proposals (above threshold), 57 were mainlisted, leading to a success rate (mainlisted over eligible) of 18.1% (as compared to 16.6% for associated countries and 16.3% overall). Moldovan entities have 81 participations (71 times as beneficiaries) in 58 signed grants, receiving 5.9 million euros from EU while 1.0 million euros is the non-EU budget of Moldovan beneficiaries.
- Regarding the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), Moldovan applicants are involved 122 times (14 as coordinators) in 76 eligible proposals. Out of 46 high-quality proposals (above threshold), 9 were mainlisted. MD entities have participated 12 times (of which 11 as beneficiaries) in MSCA actions (0 in Individual Fellowships (IF), 8 in the RISE, 1 in the ITN and 0 in the COFUND programme). Also, there are 3 participations in MSCA-NIGHT and 0 participations in MSCA-NCP programmes). MD beneficiaries have received 1.5 million euros as direct EU financial contribution. A total of 56 researchers of MD nationality have participated in MSCA actions. Finally, 0 successful MSCA-IF fellows applied while established in MD, corresponding to 0.0% of all MSCA-IF fellows.

ONGOING PROGRAMMES

Joboteca – A pilot programme for youth employment in Moldova

NEAR-TS/2020/421-810

Location: Republic of Moldova (4 Rayons)

Duration: 01/01/2021 – 31/12/2024

Budget: Euro 999,356.87

Implementing partners:

Terres des Hommes Romania

Terres des Hommes Moldova

The project (a grant contract awarded under a CfP for CSOs) aims to enhance participation of youth in Moldovan society and economy by piloting an integrated student-centred and demand driven programme for youth (self-) employment.

Specific objectives are:

- Develop and implement an extra-curricular school programme for building young people's key competencies for participation and employability;
- Empower community-based organisations to conduct initiatives that support the integration of youth in local economic activities;
- Build a network of internship opportunities for youth through linkage with a network of local private companies and entrepreneurs.

Key results:

- A national programme for developing young people's technical and employability competencies (Joboteca) has been designed and piloted with 3000 youths from 4 different rayons in Moldova (including youth from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and remote areas).
- Empowered community-based organisations to conduct initiatives that support the integration of at least 250 young people in local economic activities.
- To improve information, knowledge and access of adolescents and youth from 24 communities and towns to employment opportunities at local level.

Moldova Youth Civil Society: a call for stronger and inclusive youth participation (MYCS)

ENI/ 2021/428-892

Location: Republic of Moldova

Duration: 01/02/2022 – 31/01/2025

Budget: Euro 1,010,030

Implementing partners:

- Terres des Hommes Moldova
- National Center for Studies and Information for Women Problems "Partnership for Development"
- Fundația pentru Dezvoltarea Societății Civile

The project (a grant contract awarded under a CfP for CSOs) aims to strengthen local civic Youth Stakeholders capacities to provide inclusive and sustainable youth participation and empowerment programs and services.

Specific objectives:

- Empower youth CSOs to better identify the needs and design qualitative, inclusive and resilient participation services and programs for young people;
- Support youth CSOs and informal groups to deliver services, to advocate for lasting youth participation and to mobilize communities;
- Create an enabling environment for improved participation, collaboration and learning between CSOs, local authorities and young people.

Key results:

- 25 youth CSOs from Moldova have strengthened their capacity to better identify the needs and design qualitative, inclusive and resilient participation services and programs for young people
- At least 10 local actions focused on delivering services, advocating for lasting youth participation and on mobilizing communities, were animated through a grants scheme
- Collaboration and learning mechanisms between youth stakeholders are in place and functional

EU4YOUTH Phase2 (2017-2020)

EU4 Youth is a regional programme open to young people and youth organisations from the 6 countries of the EaP.

The programme fosters the active participation of young people in society and their employability, by developing youth leadership and entrepreneurship through a variety of actions, including capacity building, fellowships, support to policy dialogue, as well as providing grants to organisations active in these areas.

Grants contracts are not managed by the EU Delegations, but in NEAR Unit C2. However, the EU Delegations have a role in monitoring and ensuring proper communication and visibility of the various initiatives in the respective countries

The total budget of the programme is EUR 22.75 million (EU Investment: €20 million).

Key results:

Three projects are implemented in Moldova or have Moldovan partner organisations:

- EU4Youth: School Garden for Agricultural Entrepreneurship (ENI/2018/394-138), EUR 1,500,000 , implementation 01/07/2018 – 30/06/2022
- EU4Youth: Unlocking the potential of young social entrepreneurs in Moldova and Ukraine (ENI/2019/412-346), EUR 1,500,000, implementation 01/02/2020 – 31/07/2022
- EU4Youth: Social Innovation Impact – a strategic partnership (ENI/2019/412-326), EUR 1,500,000, implementation 20/12/2019 - 30/11/2022

ENI/2018/394-138
ENI/2019/412-346
ENI/2019/412-326

Location: Republic of Moldova and other EaP countries

Duration: 2018 -2022

Budget:

Euro 1,500,000 Each of the three grants implemented in MD or with Moldovan partners

Implementing partners:

- ENI/2018/394-138: Green Cross Belarus (BY), Green Cross Ukraine(UA), National Environment Centre, Chisinau (MD)
- ENI/2019/412-346: Gustav-Stresemann-Institut, Pro NGO! e.V.(DE), Egalite International(UA), AXA Management Consulting(MD), CONTACT Centre(MD), ECO-RAZENI Association(MD)
- ENI/2019/412-326: Fundatia Alaturi De Voi (RO), Asociația Obștească Agentia de Cooperare Transfrontaliera Si Integrare Europeana (MD); Asociația de Cooperare Transfrontaliera Eurogiunea Dunarea de Jos (RO); Fundația Ecoul Cernobilului (MD)

Twinning “Enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system”

Economic growth and competitiveness of private companies and the national economy as a whole are largely based on professional and skilful labour force. VET improves the efficiency and productivity of labour force and enhances economic development. A well-designed VET system, based on intensive cooperation between employers and vocational education service providers, can play a crucial role in developing the right skills for the labour market, not only for youth but also for adults in need of up-skilling or re-skilling.

The project contributes to upgrade the education system in Moldova in line with EU and Bologna process best practices and quality education principles. Specific objective are to assist the MoECR and related VET bodies / institutions and actors to further implement the national VET Strategy 2013-2020 by improving the capacities of key-institutions in charge of quality assurance, with a particular focus on teachers' competences and collaboration with private sector.

Key results:

- Institutional and operational capacities and staff competences of the ANACEC are strengthened.
- Capacities for effective cooperation between VET providers and private sector are built
- NQF of Moldova is further implemented
- Pedagogical training to VET teachers of Centres of Excellence is delivered in order to become multipliers

ENI/2019/404-830

Location: Republic of Moldova

Duration: 01/03/2019 – 31/05/2021

Budget: Euro 1,150,000

Implementing partners:

- Lead partner: Omnia, the Joint Authority of Education in Espoo Region (Omnia), Finland
- Foundation Innove (Innove), Estonia
- Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA), Lithuania
- Beneficiary: Ministry of Education, Research and Culture

PREVIOUS INITIATIVES

Sector Reform Contract “Support to the Implementation of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Reform in Moldova”

The overall objective of the SRC Budget Support Programme is to assist the Government of the Republic of Moldova to reconceptualise the Vocational Education and Training sector and streamline the network of VET institutions to increase efficiency in order to provide a competitive workforce that would meet the labour market needs in terms of quality and quantity requirements.

The following specific objectives are targeted by the SRC:

1. Restructure the VET into two levels - secondary and post-secondary and reconfigure the network of institutions.
2. Ensure the vocational training is based on competences and adjusted to the labour market requirements.
3. Increase the quality of the VET by improving the efficiency of the utilization of financial means and by creating and implementing quality assurance systems.
4. Synchronize scientific, cultural and methodological provision of VET, and curriculum adjustment to the National Qualifications Framework.
5. Increase the quality of the teaching staff, including by upgrading the initial and continuing professional development of VET teaching staff.
6. Increase attractiveness and access to Vocational Education and Training, to increase the number of students following a VET track.

The implementation period for EU-Moldova Sector Reform Contract, initially meant to end in 2017 was extended, with the third (and final) tranche of the budget support disbursed in 2019, and the programme formally closed in 2020.

Key results:

- The Performance Assessment Framework of the SRC includes the above six Specific Objectives, which are subdivided in a total of 29 targets directly linked to components of the VET Development Strategy 2013-2020 and Action Plan for implementation.

ENPI/2013/024-404

Location: Republic of Moldova

Duration: 2014 – 2019

Budget: Euro 16 Million disbursed, out of max 25 Million budgeted

Implementing partners:

- Government of Moldova: Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, and Ministry of Finance.

Twinning "Support to promote cultural heritage in the Republic of Moldova through its preservation and protection"

The project contributes to the protection of Moldova's cultural heritage by modernising Moldova's policy(ies) and management of the cultural heritage sector in line with European standards and best practices.

The purpose is to assist the Ministry of Culture and other Institutions to enhance sector governance and regulatory framework, strengthening the capacities of public stakeholders in the field of cultural heritage protection.

Key results:

- Preservation, protection, research and promotion of Moldova's material cultural heritage through an improved legal framework and effective law enforcement mechanisms
- Improvement of administrative and institutional capacity of relevant stakeholders
- Quality education programmes linked with cultural heritage at VET and higher education improved and implemented
- Direct support to heritage protection institutions provided

ENPI/2017/387-025

Location: Republic of Moldova

Duration: 21/08/2017 - 16/11/2019

Budget: Euro 1 Million

Implementing partners:

- Ministero dei beni culturali (Italy)
- Beneficiary: Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, Moldova

SYNERGIES WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES

In addition to projects under the bilateral cooperation, in the area of Education and Human Development the EU has been supporting Moldova through global and regional programmes such as the Erasmus +, Horizon 2020, Creative Europe and others, implemented by various DGs in the European Commission or through Executive Agencies.

BACKGROUND

Education

The Republic of Moldova participates in the Erasmus+ (Higher Education component) since 2015. The Actions of the Erasmus+ for which Moldovan organisations and individuals are eligible are:

- Key Action 1: International Credit Mobility (as partner); Joint Master Degree (as partners in consortium). During 2015-2020 Higher Education Institutions from the Republic of Moldova have been awarded 600 projects involving more than 4000 incoming and outgoing mobilities for students and staff.
- Key Action 2: Capacity Building in Higher Education (as direct applicant or partner); Strategic Partnerships (as partners in a consortium); Knowledge Alliances (as partners in a consortium). Since 2015, the universities from the Republic of Moldova have been involved in 21 CBHE projects, out of which 14 "Joint projects", aimed at helping improve curriculums, governance, and the strengthening of relations between higher education systems, and 7 "Structural projects", modernising policies, governance and strengthening relations between higher education systems and the wider economic and social environment.
- Key Action 3: Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs). A group of Higher Education experts is established in Moldova since 2016.
- Jean Monnet Activities: specific initiatives to promote excellence in teaching and research in the field of European Union studies worldwide. The activities also foster the dialogue between the academic world and policy-makers, in particular with the aim of enhancing governance of EU policies. Since 2014, institutions from the Republic of Moldova have been involved in 22 Jean Monnet projects.

Youth

The EU has been supporting youth policies developments and youth participation mostly through regional EaP initiatives such as EU4Youth (European Commission DG NEAR, Unit C2). Youth legislative and policy framework in Moldova is fragmented, and a comprehensive development of the sector has never been implemented in practice, despite 'on-paper' existence of strategies and implementation plans. A national Strategy for the Youth sector development 2020 was adopted at the end of 2014, with limited funds made available for the implementation of its action plan in the following years. Starting from 2016, the Government started to revise and upgrade the Law on Youth, which dated back to 1999, but the project was multiple times interrupted and never fully implemented. Following Government restructuring, since 2016-17 the Youth policies have been merged into the Ministry of Education Culture and Research (Ministry of Education and Research as from August 2021). A new National Youth Strategy for the period 2021-2030 was drafted in 2020 but has not yet completed the approval procedure.

Culture

Culture (and Cultural diplomacy) has traditionally been a driver of the EU bilateral cooperation in the last 5-6 years. There is a significant potential to use culture as an tool to promote conflict resolution and trust across the two banks of the Nistru river under the Confidence Building Measures.

The EU has been a key-development agent in the Cultural Heritage Sector in Moldova through the Twinning between Moldova and Italy "Support to promote cultural heritage in the Republic of Moldova through its preservation and protection" in 2018-19 (budget EUR 1 Million). The initiative provided transfer of capacities and skills to the Culture's institutions of the country to protect the cultural heritage.

Additionally the country is associated to the "Creative Europe" programme, managed by DG EAC, since March 2015, although there are still obstacles to the full participation of cultural Moldovan actors to the programme. Due to limited capacities of the public and private cultural actors of Moldova, the participation fees that the

country has been paying have been more than the returns in form of approved projects, which is not viable on the long run.

Research and Innovation

The Research and Innovation legislative and policy framework has been in a profound reform process in recent year. The EU main activity in the sector has been to support the reform efforts of the national research system, promoting processes of modernisation and efficiency. In 2016, EU expertise from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) performed a Peer Review of the research and innovation system in Moldova, producing recommendations that set the ground for the development of the new Code of Sciences approved that same year. A reform of the Research and Development sector was initiated in 2017-2018. It led rapidly to transfer the policy-making functions from the Academy of Science to the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, and to create a separate implementing body, the National Agency for Research and Development (NARD), which is now fully functioning.

Moldova joined the EU 7th Framework Research & Development programmes in 2013, has been part of the Horizon 2020 programme and has recently signed (27/10/2021) the association agreement with the European Commission for the Horizon Europe Programme 2021-27.

OPPORTUNITIES

Support to Human Capital Development, across all the domains of Education, Research and Innovation, Youth, Culture is at the core of the EU priorities for the EaP post-2020, and reflected in the regional and bilateral Multiannual Indicative Programmes.

Under bilateral cooperation, **an important Action for Human Capital Development is in preparation** and will be likely included in AAP 2022. If confirmed, the action will support the efforts of the Government of Moldova to complete the modernisation of the education system and bring the reform to the classroom level, improving **equitable access to quality and relevant education for all**.

As well, the bilateral **support to the participation of Moldova the programmes Horizon Europe and Creative Europe** in form of partial reimbursement of the annual fees paid by the country, will likely continue in the period until 2027.

At EaP regional level, opportunities for Moldovan human development will be also under the following programmes:

EU4YOUTH Phase3 (2021-2024): the new phase of this EaP regional initiative aims to further support active participation of young people in society, economy and policy, by stimulating them to achieve leadership and entrepreneurship skills. In addition to a focus on disadvantaged youth, the new phase will also focus more on sustainable and smart growth, social cohesion and the reduction of social inequalities in the Eastern partner countries. The initiative has three components: 1) Grants scheme for youth projects, 2) Support to development and implementation of active labour market policies (on the model of the Youth Guarantee), 3) Scholarships for the College of Europe.

EU4CULTURE:

This EaP regional project, launched in 2021, implemented by Goethe-Institut (lead), Danish Culture Institute, Czech Centres and Institut Français in Georgia, aims to promote culture as an engine for growth and social development across the six Eastern European Neighbourhood countries Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova. The project assists non-capital cities in the region to develop and implement a local Cultural Development Strategy, following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture.. Two cities in Moldova, Chaul and Orhei, have been awarded a grant of EUR 30,000 each to develop their cultural strategy. Only one of the two will receive a grant of EUR 300,000 in 2022 to support the implementation of its strategy.