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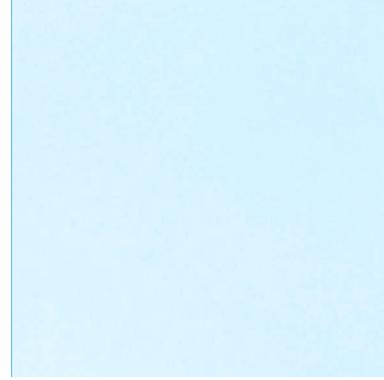
MINISTERUL AGRICULTURII ȘI
INDUSTRIEI ALIMENTARE
AL REPUBLICII MOLDOVA



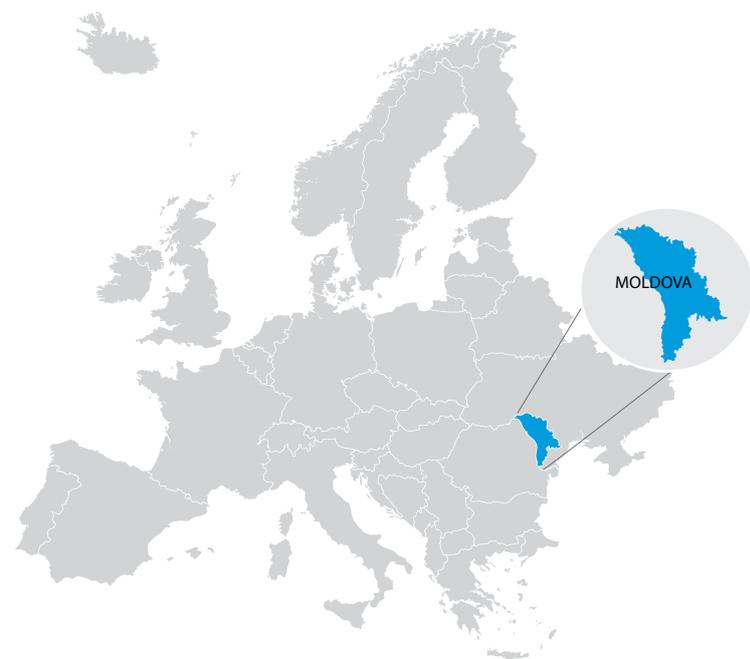
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Albina Mereuță: Balance and Determination for Food Safety in Moldova

NEWSLETTER



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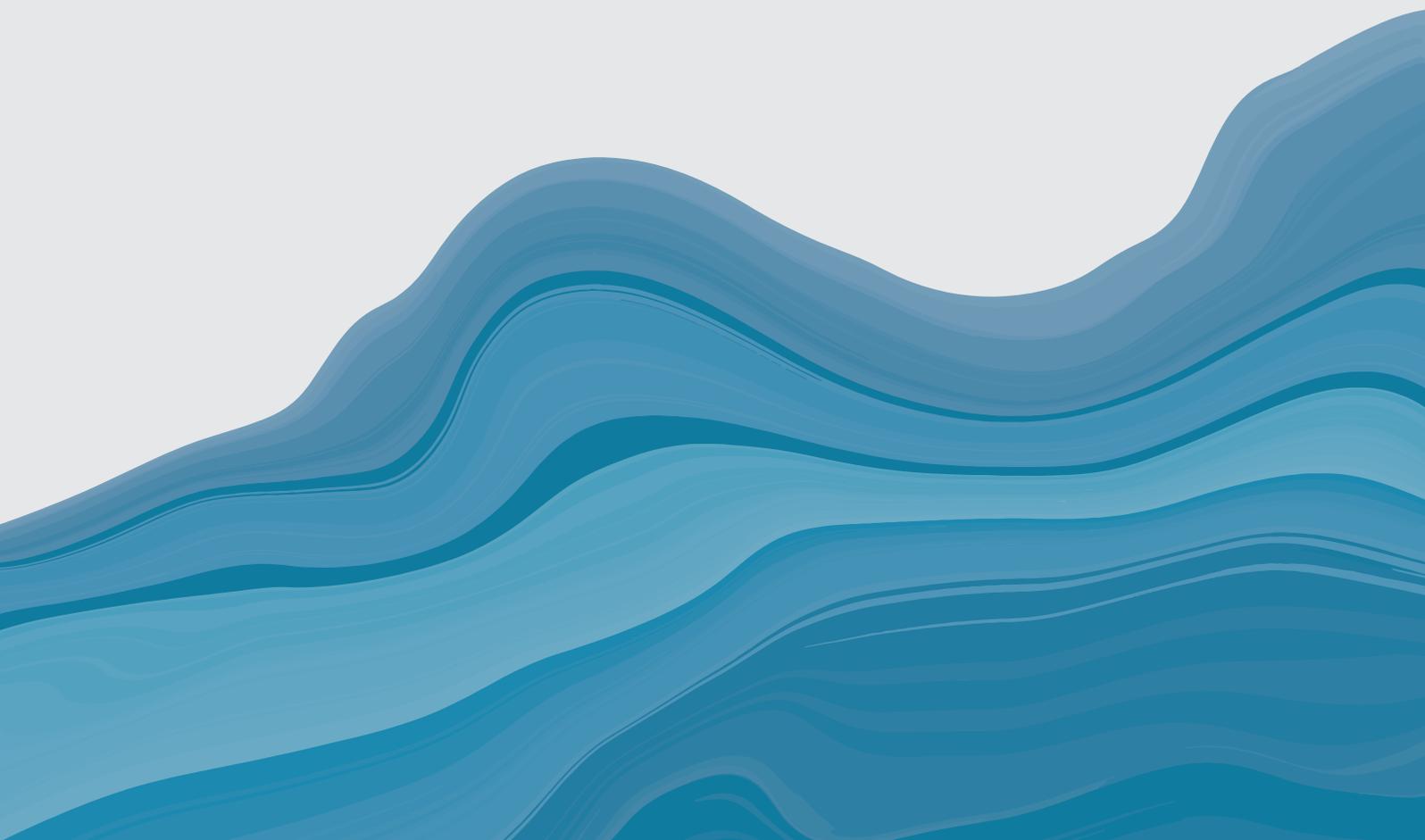
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I. Albina Mereuță: Balance and Determination for Food Safety in Moldova

PORTRAIT OF A PUBLIC SERVANT

When Albina Mereuță first stepped into the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Safety (MAFI), on October 27, 2014, she was 26 years old and driven by a sincere curiosity: *How does a policy impact on farmer's life and business?*

She had just graduated from the Faculty of Food Technology and Industry and taken her first steps in the private sector, but something seemed to be missing. She wanted to understand the essence, the mechanisms behind it all—how a policy document is actually developed and how it ends up influencing the quality of food on a family's table.

"In my first week, I was given the task of drafting a Government Decision. It felt overwhelming," she recalls. "I still remember it—it was the decision on establishing the rapid alert system for food and feed. It's routine for me now, but back then... I learned everything step by step: drafting, consultations, promotion, and approval."

Years later, in 2023, she took over the coordination of the food safety sector within the MAFI. What isn't visible from the outside? Countless hours of teamwork, calm yet determined leadership.

Her modesty doesn't let her take credit. But the fact that, in 2024, Moldova adopted Law No. 82 on official controls in the agri-food sector is largely thanks to the efforts of MAFI's Head of the Food Safety Directorate. She led the meticulous behind-the-scenes work on this fundamental framework document, which aligns the country with European food safety standards.

With support from experts of the **"Improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring"**-project, funded by the European Union and implemented with support from UNIDO, the MAIA team successfully transposed the provisions of EU Regulation 625/2017 in the field of food safety.

"Just today, we had a meeting with the World Bank and European partners. Everyone acknowledged that Moldova has already managed to transpose the regulation on official controls. With UNIDO's expert support, we'll soon have the secondary legislation in place as well. There's a long list—dozens of normative acts—so there's a lot of work to be done, but we're not stopping here."

BETWEEN BRUSSELS' EXPECTATIONS AND CHIȘINĂU'S REALITIES

Albina knows the biggest challenge isn't writing the laws—it's finding balance between European requirements and the country's realities.

"Now, as we are actively aligning and transposing EU policies, we have to strike a balance—adapting them to our national context. The major challenge is not to favour one group over another."

Our common goal is simple: safe, high-quality products that people can enjoy. In this complex ecosystem, MAIA designs the policies, the National Food Safety Agency (ANSA) implements the controls, and producers must understand and apply the new rules. Dialogue is key," she says. "But it's not always easy. We want openness and feedback from the business"

Figure 1. Albina Mereuță and her colleagues: moments of work



sector right from the consultation stage. It's very difficult when we receive no input. Their contribution is essential to developing good and realistic policies."

Beyond regulatory efforts, her work also has a strategic dimension. Through coherent, harmonized policies, the Ministry can contribute to rural development, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.

"In the end, an informed entrepreneur is a protected one. Yes, there are costs at the beginning, but in the long run, it means profit, quality, and consumer trust."

And still, Albina Mereuță says, there are inspiring examples that give her and her team the strength to keep going:

"There are cases where entrepreneurs are very responsive. Over the years I've worked with regulatory documents, I've noticed that those producers who value integrity in their business approach, who take full responsibility for their product throughout the entire production chain up to market placement—those are the people who contact us proactively, share the challenges they face, and offer suggestions to improve the legal framework. That's the greatest motivation for us, the MAIA team. It gives us the strength to continue."

But beyond regulations, controls, and technical terms, the Head of MAIA's Food Safety Directorate always keeps her eyes on long-term impact. Asked how she views the cumulative effect of official control policies on food business, rural development, employment, or food security in the near future, she smiles and recalls a conversation with a European expert:

"I asked him what impact we should aim for when developing these policies. He was clear: everything rests on the responsibility of the economic operator. And he's right. Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and Law 306/2018 say the same thing—the final responsibility for product safety lies with the producer. Every entrepreneur knows that when they embark on this path, they take on certain risks."

What we do through MAIA's policies is mitigate some of those risks—through information, clear rules, and transitional periods. Ultimately, we want small and medium-sized enterprises to be protected from losses or bankruptcy, to develop sustainably, and to be able to export to the EU and beyond. Yes, it may seem costly at first—but these costs pay off in time. And in our new policies, we've included realistic transition periods. That's where the feedback from sectoral associations is extremely valuable, es-

pecially when it comes to estimating the costs businesses would bear in the modernization process—equipment, facilities, standards, staff training. Only this way can we build realistic, supportive policies."

Figure 2. Albina Mereuță, MAFI's Head of the Food Safety Directorate



A WOMAN IN A TECHNICAL FIELD: BALANCE, EMPATHY, AND PRECISION

Even though she works in a technical domain—where men are often more visible in the field—Albina Mereuță has understood that the voice of solid arguments, professionalism, and perseverance carries weight regardless of the context.

"In the field of policymaking, what matters are professionalism, attitude, the ability to build bridges, and openness to dialogue."

She speaks with admiration about the people who drive the agri-food sector: from those who start businesses out of passion to those who tenaciously manage production, processing, or sales. In her view, the determination of these individuals contributes to the transformation of communities.

"To young people who want a career in technical fields or policy development, I say this: responsibility, perseverance, and authenticity. Present your product in an attractive way. But don't forget that, in the end, we all want to eat something that's not only safe but also nutritious."

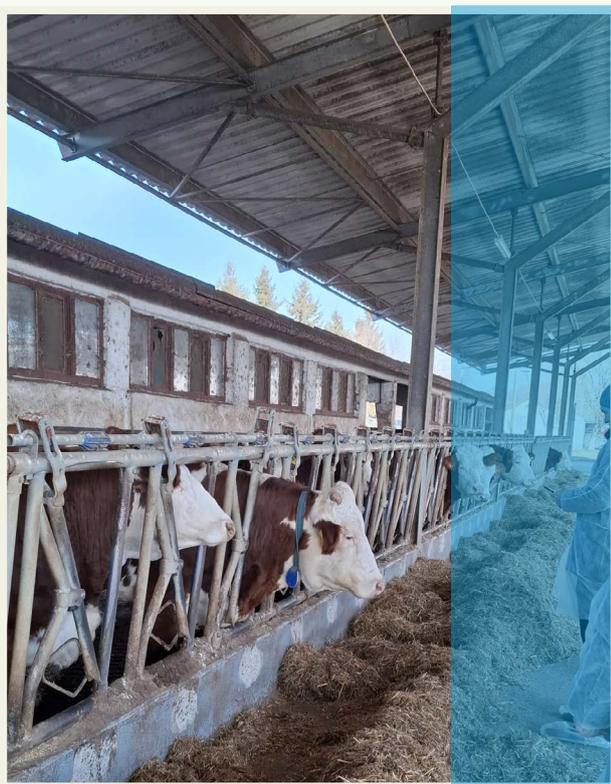
Albina Mereuță is more than a public servant. She's a visionary, convinced that every safe and high-quality product begins with the work of professional, honest, and detail-oriented people. Yes, safe and healthy food grows in farmers' fields—but it is also made here, in the offices where the laws that keep everything in balance are written.

II. Exchange of Experience on Raw Milk Quality Control

From February 9 to 14, 2025, a delegation of veterinary and food safety specialists from the National Food Safety Agency (ANSA) of the Republic of Moldova conducted a working visit to the Cluj County Directorate for Veterinary and Food Safety (DSVSA Cluj), Romania, as part of ongoing efforts to enhance the knowledge related to control of raw milk quality and antibiotic use as well as the cross-border cooperation in the field of food safety.

Organized with the support of the EU- UNIDO project “**Improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring**”, the visit focused on key aspects related to the control and monitoring of raw milk quality, the use of antibiotics in livestock, and the supervision of milk processing establishments.

Figure 3. Cattle farm, Cluj, Romania



KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

Over the course of four working days, the Moldovan delegation took part in expert presentations, technical discussions, and site visits aimed at exchanging best practices and aligning approaches with European standards. The visit covered:



The legal and institutional framework for official control of milk production and processing, including EU and national legislation;



Milk quality monitoring and surveillance mechanisms at the level of primary production;



Oversight of antimicrobial use in dairy cattle and the restriction periods for milk usage post-treatment;



Implementation of national residue control programs, including sampling methods, traceability, and laboratory analysis;



Official inspections and food safety procedures at authorized dairy farms and milk processing facilities.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TECHNICAL INSIGHTS

The program included visits to large-scale and small-scale dairy farms, an integrated milk processing unit located on a farm, and an industrial milk processing plant authorized for intra-community trade. During these visits, participants observed how Romania manages milking hygiene, antibiotic usage, production documentation, waste management, and traceability at each stage of the milk supply chain.

The delegation also visited the Cluj County Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Laboratory and the private Milk Quality Control Foundation, where they were presented with procedures for laboratory sample reception, identification, testing, and communication of results. Both institutions showcased advanced systems and best practices for monitoring milk safety, including tests for bacterial counts and antibiotic residues.

The study visit is part of broader efforts to support the Republic of Moldova’s progress in harmonizing its regulatory framework with European standards, ensuring the integrity of food production systems, and building consumer confidence both domestically and for future export markets. This exchange of experience **contributed significantly to strengthening institutional capacities and fostering Moldova’s alignment with EU food safety standards.**

Figure 4. ANSA team exchanging experiences with colleagues from Cluj, Romania



III. Development Partners Unite to Strengthen Veterinary Education and Livestock Sector in Moldova

Early March, representatives from key development organizations, including *the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI), the Austrian Agricultural Cluster, the Austrian Development Agency, the World Bank, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the EU Delegation* in Chisinau gathered at Brătușeni College of Veterinary Medicine and Agrarian Economics to discuss strategies for enhancing Moldova's livestock sector. The focus was on addressing the skills development needs, technical education, and lifelong learning in the field.

The Brătușeni College of Veterinary Medicine and Agrarian Economics is the only such institution in the Republic of Moldova. It annually forms about **200 students in areas such as veterinary medicine, food safety, merchandising, business planning and management and more.** The institution is working hard to achieve a specific dream that teachers and thousands of graduates live – the rehabilitation of the institution's teaching farm. Currently, the few animals living on the farm are maintained from the enthusiasm of students and pedagogues. The college envisions a new, modernized milk farm that would not only improve education for its students but also serve as a training hub for local farmers in northern Moldova.

The leadership at Brătușeni College is determined to make the farm a cornerstone of technical training in animal husbandry. They aim to create a comprehensive training model that bridges theory and practice, starting with the initial education of young specialists and extending to consultancy services

and continuous training programs for veterinarians and farmers throughout the region.

In this respect, the team behind the **“Improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring”**-project has offered to facilitate a study visit to Austria for the college's management team. The visit will provide an opportunity to explore best practices in livestock education at similar institutions in Austria, in collaboration with the Austrian Agricultural Cluster, which is an association of technical organizations, businesses, and educational institutions.

Answering the questions of the curious students, **Herman Wieser, director of the Austrian Agricultural Cluster,** gave a brief incursion into the organisation of the Austrian livestock system, which counts around 54 thousand cattle farms and around 1,6 mln cattle, of which more than half a million are dairy cows. Notably, around 95% of Austria's dairy cattle are raised on small family farms, with an average of 28 cattle per farm.

Figure 5. Students of Bratruseni College - in dialogue with the guest delegation





“In each region of the country there are schools with a zootechnical profile. So that every young farmer, even those raising animals for domestic consumption, has at least 3 years of studies in zootechnical, agricultural or veterinary medicine. Veterinary medicine is a profession of the future in which it is worth investing”, said Herman Wieser.

Valentin Roșca, Head of Policy in the Livestock Sector, MAFI, also mentioned:



“Over the last 4-5 years, the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry to support the livestock sector have become considerable. But we do not yet have a sufficient pace of development. One of the main reasons is that we do not have enough skilled specialists in the sector. Since 2022, a very important condition for obtaining State subsidies has been put in place. Every farmer must hold a university degree or a technical professional in the field of animal husbandry or veterinary medicine. This is precisely why the role of your college is so important”.

Ilona Gruenewald, Programme Manager for Agriculture and Rural Development, Food Safety, EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, reiterated the EU’s support to the livestock development in the Republic of Moldova, the potential of strategic partnership with European institutions and access to modern and competitive technologies, while recalling that the most suitable formula is defined locally:



“We are here to meet and listen to the College management, teachers and students, visit the school facilities and a milk farm, to better understand the challenges and solutions for the support we can offer. Together with partners, we can create synergies and realize better projects than we could do individually. People in the sector, including young professionals, are making the way to change and the sector to progress. We encourage the college team to take the lead and proactively steer the dialogue with development partners and the business sector, to match their educational offer with the skills and labor market needs and identify the most suitable farm model and technologies, which will be attractive to both young professionals and the region. We believe the college can serve as a focal point to boost the development of the livestock sector for the whole country”.

Figure 6. Herman Wieser, director of the Austrian Agricultural Cluster



Figure 7. Valentin Roșca (from the left), Head of Policy in the Livestock Sector, MAFI



Figure 8. Ilona GRUENEWALD, Programme Manager for Agriculture and Rural Development, Food Safety, EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova



The study visit was organized by the EU-UNIDO project team **“Improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring”** as part of its efforts to support institutions within the value chains of meat, poultry, and

milk products. This initiative is an important step in fostering collaboration between local institutions and international partners to enhance the technical capabilities and long-term sustainability of Moldova’s agricultural sector.

IV. Strengthening Veterinary Traceability Systems: Study Visit to Germany Inspires Moldova’s Digital Reforms

As part of Moldova’s continued efforts to advance the digitalization of veterinary medicine oversight, a delegation from *the National Food Safety Agency (ANSA)* carried out a study visit to Oldenburg, Lower Saxony, Germany, from March 30 to April 2, 2025. The visit aimed to strengthen the country’s traceability systems for veterinary medicinal products and support the alignment of Moldova’s regulatory framework with European Union standards.

The study tour was conducted under the framework of the EU-funded project **“Improving the Standards Compliance through Increased National Capacities for Residue Monitoring”** implemented by UNIDO, which aims to support the development and integration of the State Register of Veterinary Medicines within Moldova’s national e-Governance platform, e-ANSA. The mission’s objectives included exploring digital tools used in Germany to manage the distribution and administration of veterinary medicines, antibiotic traceability, and the collection of reliable, real-time data from animal farms and veterinary clinics.

LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICES

Over the course of four days, participants visited public authorities, private veterinary clinics, and an animal farm to gain insights into Germany’s approach to veterinary oversight. A key focus was the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2019/6 and its provisions on medicine distribution, prescription, and usage reporting.

In Germany, the traceability of veterinary medicinal products is maintained through IT systems individually adopted by veterinary clinics. At two clinics visited—*Dr. Robert Klukas’ practice* and *the Wiefelstede Veterinary Clinic*—delegates observed the use of EasyVet and Vetera, two robust software solutions that manage real-time inventory, treatment records, and semi-annual antibiotic usage reports. Both clinics demonstrated how medicine stocks are monitored, stored under proper conditions, and dispensed exclusively by veterinarians.

Figure 9. Visiting veterinary clinics and animal farms, Oldenburg, Lower Saxony, Germany.



„Traceability is not just about compliance. It’s about creating transparency and accountability throughout the entire value chain”, noted Dr. Robert Klukas, whose clinic serves over 180 livestock farms in Lower Saxony.

The Moldovan delegation also visited a large sheep farm where they learned how medicine administration is tightly controlled. No medicinal stocks are kept on the farm, with the exception of antiparasitics that can be stored for up to 30 days under veterinary oversight. Treatment records are printed directly from the veterinary clinic’s information system and archived on-site.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The delegation also engaged with representatives from LAVES (Lower Saxony State Office for Consumer Protection and Food Safety), which oversees veterinary pharmaceuticals in the region. LAVES presented Germany’s multi-level control system involving regional authorities, pharmacists’ chambers, and dedicated supervision offices. Central to the national oversight are two interconnected databases: *HI-Tier* – the national animal traceability system, which includes modules for antibiotic administration; and *Minimi* – a platform for monitoring and reducing antibiotic use, supported by corrective action plans developed by farmers and reviewed by inspectors.

Germany’s legislation outlines strict guidelines for veterinary medicine handling, prescription types, and farm-level administration practices. The law emphasizes pharmacovigilance, mandatory antibiograms, and responsible antibiotic use.

„We were particularly impressed by the structured, multi-stakeholder system that Germany has in place. It gives us a clearer path for what we need to build—technically and institutionally—in Moldova”, said Victor Pislaru, Head of Veterinary Medicines Products Control and Animal Feed Department – ANSA.

INSPIRING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

This study visit provided valuable insight for the development of Moldova’s digital traceability subsystem for veterinary medicines. The ability to connect veterinarians, clinics, farms, and regulators through a modern IT infrastructure is critical for data-driven policy decisions and for reducing the misuse of antibiotics.

While Germany does not yet operate a unified national veterinary IT system, but separate for its federal states, the visit demonstrated how decentralized digital solutions can still support strong traceability and compliance when combined with rigorous regulation and institutional collaboration.

As Moldova advances in developing its e-ANSA platform, the lessons from Oldenburg will contribute to more efficient data collection, improved medicine oversight, and alignment with EU food safety and animal health standards.

V. Project at a Glance



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IMPROVING THE STANDARDS COMPLIANCE THROUGH INCREASED NATIONAL CAPACITIES FOR RESIDUE MONITORING

CONTEXT

After signing the Association Agreement, Moldova has undertaken the task of adapting its national food safety legislation to the requirements of the relevant EU laws and regulations. To reduce the technical barriers to trade and to increase access to and trade with the EU market, Moldova needs to achieve a higher level of compliance with EU technical requirements such as standards, technical regulations and product-related directives and needs to upgrade related controls or conformity assessment.

Thus, the overall objective of this Action is to enhance national consumer safety and access to safe, healthy and nutritious food and to improve trade opportunities and create a conducive business environment for SMEs, thus contributing to resilient, sustainable, and inclusive economic development as well as paving the way to a fully-fledged Green Deal for the Republic of Moldova.

This Action will specifically support Moldova in improving the standards compliance through increased national capacities for residue monitoring.

STRATEGY

The intervention will contribute to increasing national capacities for residue monitoring in animal feed and products of animal origin (pesticides, veterinary medicine, contaminants, and prohibited substances). Actions under this intervention can be clustered as:

- Supporting harmonization process with the EU regulation on official control and animal health, conducting sector analyses and providing policy advice at the macro level.
- Enhancing the capacities of the competent authorities, and public and private laboratories at the meso level.
- Providing specialized training and capacity building for producers at the micro level to strengthen their competitiveness and market access.

IMPACT

- Improved practices of competent authorities (ANSA and MAFI) through strengthened institutional and analytical capacities, and revamped legal and regulatory frame work and effective enforcement of official control at central and regional levels.
- Improved practices of public and private laboratories through expanded testing capacities, demonstrating proof of compliance.
- SMEs and Food Business Operators (FBOs)' application of best practices enhanced, quality awareness raised and culture for quality among producers, consumers and support institutions promoted in the value chains of meat, poultry and milk products.

WORKING TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



REGION



GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

COUNTRY



DURATION

February 2023 –
January 2027



TOTAL BUDGET

Total 4,040,000
(EU – 4,000,000 and
UNIDO/Germany – 40.000)



PARTNERS

- European Union (EU)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- National Food Safety Agency (ANSA) and its national reference laboratories
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI)
- Sectoral and Business Associations



CONTACT

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VI. Additional Information

Counterparts and Contributing Entities

National Food Safety Agency (ANSA)

The National Agency for Food Safety is the administrative authority responsible for implementing state policy in the field of regulation and control for food safety in the areas of sanitary veterinary, zootechnical, plant protection and phytosanitary quarantine, seed control, quality of primary products, food, and feed.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI)

The primary mission of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) is to ensure the effective implementation of the governmental programme regarding the development and execution of a sustainable state policy in the agribusiness sector. This is to be achieved by enhancing competitiveness and productivity while ensuring compliance with established international and European safety standards for food, thus providing the necessary conditions for continuous growth and welfare.

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations with a unique mandate to promote, dynamize, and accelerate industrial development. Its mandate is reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9: “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”, but UNIDO’s activities contribute to all the SDGs. UNIDO supports its 172 Member States through four mandated functions: technical cooperation; action-oriented research and policy-advisory services; normative standards-related activities; and fostering partnerships for knowledge and technology transfer. UNIDO’s work is concentrated on three focus areas: ending hunger by helping businesses from farm to fork; stopping climate breakdown by using renewable energy and energy efficiency to reduce industrial greenhouse gas emissions; and supporting sustainable supply chains so that developing country producers get a fair deal and scarce resources are preserved.

Project Core Team

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Fabio RUSSO: | Lead Project Manager / Allotment Holder |
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| Cristian-Ioan DUICU: | International Technical Adviser |
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| Ana TRIFAN: | National Communication Expert |
| Renata CATER: | National Project and Language Assistant |

Available Online Resources

- [European Union and the Republic of Moldova](#)
- [UNIDO Open Data Platform](#)
- [Analysis of the Capacities of NQIS Institutions and the Demand for their Services from the Meat, Poultry and Dairy Value Chains in the Republic of Moldova](#)

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