



Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnerships Fund

Phase II

- Terms of Reference¹ –

December, 2022

¹ This initial TOR is for the opening of the new MPTF. It will be revised to include key outputs for the MPTF in Moldova. This will be done once the Funding Framework is developed.

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List of abbreviations

AA	Administrative Agent
CCA	Common Country Assessment
DFA	Development Finance Assessment
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross National Product
IFI	International Financing Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
PUNO	Participating United Nations Organizations
PO	Participating Organization
RC/O	Resident Coordinator/Office
SAA	Standard Administrative Arrangement
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Framework
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Group
VNR	Voluntary National Review

I. Executive Summary

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund, Phase II (hereinafter as the Fund) is an inter-agency pooled funding mechanism to leverage funding towards the implementation of the UNSDCF 2023-2027, as well as to support the country's EU accession process.

It is conceived in a specific development context as the Republic of Moldova needs to deliver on its development and reform commitments to transform the country towards the EU membership. Moldova also needs to invest significant efforts in the implementation of the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", as the global policy framework for sustaining and improving economic and social progress, halting climate change and delivering on the promise to leave no one behind.

At the initial stage, thematically the Fund will support two of the four strategic priorities of the new UN Moldova Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027, specifically:

- I. Just and inclusive institutions and equal opportunities for human development;
- II. Participatory governance and social cohesion;

At a later stage of development, the Fund is envisaged to cover all the Cooperation Framework priorities, this change to be included once more donors and partners show interest in contributing to the Fund and Cooperation Framework.

The Fund also builds on the legacy and experience of the previous country level pooled funds (starting in 2014) and is conceived as an advanced and innovative tool for leveraging strategic partnerships that addresses the development challenges in Moldova in a coordinated and synergetic manner. It also comes as a tool to enhance implementation of the UN Reform at the country level.

The management of the Fund is entrusted to the Joint Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Government of Moldova and the UN Resident Coordinator. The Joint Steering Committee is also foreseen as a forum for deliberations and dialogue with the development partners and donors. The Secretariat of the Fund will be embedded within the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, while the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office will perform the duties of the Administrative Agent.

II. Background and context

Moldova is an upper middle-income country with an estimated population of 2,6 million (the figure does not include a population in the Transnistrian region) characterized as the poorest country in Europe, with a declining and ageing population and massive out-migration.

Low living standards and a lack of jobs and income-generating opportunities, especially in rural areas, have led to large-scale emigration. Over the last eight years, the resident population has decreased by 10.5 per cent (from 2,844,000 in 2015 to 2,597,100 in 2021). These demographic dynamics have led to an average annual population decline of 1.8 per cent, due to massive emigration and negative population growth.

Moldova has experienced boom and bust periods. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a GDP contraction of 8.3 per cent in 2020, but there was a bounce back to 13.9 per cent GDP growth in 2021, mainly driven by investments and private consumption stimulated by higher wages, social transfers and remittances. Weak economic diversification, especially the heavy reliance on primary agriculture, and lack of compliance with international and European quality standards, is affecting the exports significantly.

Moldova has received its candidate status for EU membership in 2022 and has formally started the work on the 35 negotiation chapters of the EU accession. The EU is an important partner as well as the largest provider of development assistance to the country. It is Moldova's biggest trade partner, accounting for 52.2% of its total trade, followed by Russia (10.5%) and China (8.3%). Around 63% of Moldovan exports are destined for the EU market. With the approval of the candidate status, the EU accession criteria thus become the main drivers of reforms in the country, with significant development assistance and support from the EU in this regard. As the work on the negotiation chapters has only started, the funding mechanisms for the process are yet to be established, Moldova being part of the Eastern Partnership within the ENP framework.

Moldova's response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has been voiced through the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030". This is an umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy of Moldova that is managed by the State Chancellery (general secretariat) of the Government.

The UNSDCF 2023-2027 through the CCA defines several key bottlenecks and challenges to be addressed directly by the Fund:

- The social protection systems offer insufficient protection for people living in vulnerable situations, especially poverty shocks.
- The health and education systems have systemic and structural inefficiencies and imbalances stemming from inadequate budgeting and weak mainstreaming of human rights and gender equality in policies and the provision of services.
- Policy development and budgeting processes are not always based on evidence and do not fully take into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Gender equality needs to be further mainstreamed into central and local-level processes for budgetary planning, resulting in the country’s limited progress towards achieving gender equality, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda.
- Migration policies are not effective enough to enhance the valorization of the diaspora and the potential of migrants to mitigate the skills depletion crisis, increase productive investment and continue to decrease financial shocks for households under poverty levels
- Insufficient economic diversification and slow development of the green economy, with overall limited investment in climate action and the business environment.
- The impact of **climate change on Moldova is growing** and is expected to accelerate, leading to extreme weather conditions that will not only affect the economy but also social aspects of sustainable development. In addition, **emergency preparedness, the reduction of vulnerability to disasters, green recovery, energy security and climate change mitigation and adaptation are still pending issues.**
- The divisions in Moldovan society are pronounced: the protracted Transnistrian conflict, racial discrimination and bias-based exclusion, hate speech, intolerance, negative attitudes towards marginalized groups and weak social cohesion impede security and the full exercise of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, as well as the resilience of people and communities.

Impact of the war in Ukraine

The Ukraine crisis is producing far-reaching impacts on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with wide-ranging socio-economic shocks and setbacks forecasted at global, regional, and national levels. These challenges are compounded by skyrocketing food, energy, and fertilizer prices, given the leading role of Russia and Ukraine in these markets, upending the efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda especially for the most vulnerable populations in country and region.

III. Rationale for the Moldova SDGs Partnership Fund II

There are only eight years left to achieve SDGs. **Moldova is at a crucial stage of its national development, with adopting the new National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” and becoming a EU accession candidate.** Moldova needs to invest significant efforts in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as the global policy framework for sustaining and improving the social progress, halting climate change and delivering on the promise to leave no one behind. Furthermore, the country has to deliver on its reform commitments under the EU accession process to transform the country towards its eventual full membership.

The UN Country Team (UNCT) in Moldova has experience in establishing and managing country level pooled funds. Moldova has been a Delivering as One country since its pilot phase started in 2013 and since then the UNCT has established and managed two country level pooled funds. Based on the current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of the participating UN Organizations, the current country pooled fund – the *Moldova 2030 SDG Partnerships Fund* was planned until 31 December 2022 under the cycle of the UN Partnership Framework for Sustainable Development (UNPFSD) 2018-2022 but was prolonged to accommodate the ongoing joint programmes until 2024. Given that UNCT Moldova would like to have a pooled fund to further support the UNSDCF during 2022-2027, a next phase of the Fund is therefore to be established to continue advancing the 2030 Agenda.

The new Fund will take into account lessons learnt from previous funds in order to improve relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, with the new fund the UNCT will aim to increase Government contributions to the fund, gain the EU as a strategic partner and possibly a contributor, pilot test innovative funding and financing mechanisms.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is a vehicle to bridge the gaps and support implementation of the UNSDCF 2023-2027 and the National Development Strategy. It is an advanced and innovative tool for strategic partnerships that will address the development challenges in Moldova in a coordinated and synergetic manner. The Fund will gather strategic partners and give leverage to the UN System in supporting the processes that propel the sustainable development and the EU accession. It also comes as a new generation of pooled funding mechanisms and a tool to enhance implementation of the UN Reform at country level.

Moldova currently does not have any specific formal policy framework for tracking or fostering financing of the SDGs, nor a system to track public finance allocation to the SDGs. The ability to mobilize development financing from the constantly evolving potential sources, and from prudent management of public resources at national, local government and sectoral levels, are some of the critical attributes of an integrated national financing framework.

IV. Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is a pooled funding mechanism that aims to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the imminent achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Moldova, as well as to support the country's EU accession process and to implement the National Strategy "European Moldova 2030".

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is a tool for the Government, the United Nations System in Moldova and other strategic partners to align their strategic development efforts.

The Fund will yield its impact through financing strategic, targeted and transformative interventions that accelerate the processes of sustainable development and the EU accession. As such, the purpose of the Fund can be described through:

Coherence. The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will support policy and programming coherence in the areas of strategic importance for sustainable development of Moldova – interlinks between the EU Accession and the 2030 Agenda,

support to the EU accession and overall sustainable transformation of the society. As such, the Fund could fill the critical gaps and support underfinanced national priorities with the potential to catalyse further financing.

Consolidation. The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will bring together strategic partners – the Government, the United Nations and contributors to the Fund, while also keeping close contact with the civil society, academia, private sector and other development partners. As such, the Fund will be one of the platforms that reduce fragmentation with respect to particular priorities and increase synergies between the development actors, and between the development actors and the private sector.

Risk management. The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II, as a pooled funding mechanism, facilitates mitigation of shared risks, increases the visibility and transparency for all development actors. It provides a common platform for joint sharing and management of common risks.

Strengthening national systems. The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is established to support the achievement of national priorities of joining the European Union and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As such, one of the clear aims of the Fund is to strengthen national systems to carry out this complex work ahead.

Innovation. The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II has a potential to host piloting of innovative financing mechanisms in Moldova. The Moldovan financial market is rather small with limited and concentrated financing tools, where, depending on the context and appetite, the Fund could host deployment and/or testing of innovative financing products. Innovative finance can be achieved by linking fund initiatives with private sector and individual contributions.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is not developed in isolation. It will be closely related to and informed by other important initiatives run by the United Nations and other strategic partners (IFIs, development community, international organisations, civil society, private sector).

Fund Strategy

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will support integrated and coherent resource mobilization through centralised and transparent allocation of resources on strategic interventions that propel the sustainable development. The Fund will finance development and implementation of integrated activities to meet the SDGs, advance EU accession process and support implementation of the UNSDCF 2023-2027.

The **strategic and thematic focus of the Fund** at the initial state, is based on and aligned to the first two strategic priorities of new UNSDCF 2023-2027. In addition, the Fund will support acceleration of the EU accession process through the 2030 Agenda framework. The Fund seeks to support synergetic moments between these two transformational agendas. The Government, as the primary duty bearer, and people of Moldova, as the primary duty bearer and, in turn, who are the beneficiaries of systemic UN interventions, has the opportunity to

yield on efficiency gains when tackling these two processes simultaneously. At a later stage, depending on the commitments secured from partners and UNCT priorities for resource mobilization, the Fund’s strategy will updated accordingly, to enlarge the programmatic scope.

Beyond the policy coherence element and the support towards UNSDCF implementation, the Fund will produce benefits of triggering more joint UN action – in planning, programming and implementation – as one of the major calls of the UN Reform.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is **a platform for partnerships**. The structure revolving around the Fund will gather various partners – civil society, academia, representatives of women and youth, and other vulnerable groups, international community, private sector and experts in the areas that were designated as the priority for a particular Outcome. The partners will add value to the quality of the interventions, while significantly contributing to its sustainability and impact through the complementary activities and through taking over in cases where the UN’s interventions are phasing out.

Fund Theory of Change and Programmatic priorities

The Fund’s overall strategy is guided by the UN Development system reform and the drive to strengthen system-wide coherence and promote integrated solutions for more strategic transformative UN’s support to the country’s priority development needs.

As a financing vehicle established in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) implementation, the Fund is firmly anchored in the UNSDCF, its scope, Theory of Change and Results and M&E Framework.

The UNSDCF 2023–2027 puts a strong emphasis on the transformative nature of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UNSDCF Theory of Change is based on the premise that a better quality of life for all people of Moldova can only be achieved if the country’s prosperity is shared among all people and if the most vulnerable and marginalized are empowered to exercise their human rights and to participate meaningfully in all spheres of life.

The theory of change of the Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II is:

- If** we create a framework for value-based contributions from our strategic partners, and
- If** we establish a funding mechanism for formulation of interventions that accelerate implementation of the UNSDCF 2023-2027, and, through that angle support implementation of the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030” and the EU accession efforts, and
- If** we create more opportunities and means for the UN Organisations and the development partners to jointly address complex development and humanitarian challenges,
- Then** we will more strategically address the priority development needs of Moldova, fill the critical development gap and be in position to provide holistic, advanced and leveraged support to the Government and people in Moldova to deliver on

reform commitments in the process of irreversible transformation of the society towards the EU membership and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals,

Because Moldova has insufficient nimble financing and coordination mechanisms that could address the contemporary and ever-changing development challenges, and

the Fund produces a series of positive externalities through attracting new partnerships with the capacity to unlock the development potential, and offers a space for close cooperation of strategic partners,

the modality of pooled funding is the well-known global tool for financing development and humanitarian contexts and has proven successful in numerous contexts across the time.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will finance only strategic interventions related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the EU accession process, in a way that strengthens the implementation of country-level UN Reform.

Thus, the Fund will have, initially two programmatic priority areas (windows), that derive from the two of the four UNSDCF 2023-2027 strategic priorities and Outcomes. The focus of the Fund will be to complement and leverage support for these strategic priorities, along with other actions of the UNCT. In this context the specific targets and indicators attributable to the Fund will be developed and approved once more partners are committed to the Fund and UN Agencies align their priorities. Specifically, the Fund will contribute to these priorities (with targets and indicators to be developed and approved later), specifically:

Strategic Priority/Outputs	National SDG indicators/performance indicators (disaggregated)
Strategic Priority 1: By 2027, institutions deliver human rights-based, evidence-informed and gender-responsive services for all with the focus on those who are left behind	
Output 1.1. Regulatory and policy framework that is evidence-informed and takes into account demographic trends promotes gender-responsive and human rights-based social protection and equal access to basic services	1.1.a Government budget allocations to social sectoral policies and programmes as percentage of total government budget allocations (related to SDG indicator 1.a.2)
	1.1.b The country governance framework integrates migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people (SDG indicator 10.7.2)
	1.1.c Population projections at national and subnational level are developed to inform policy framework (related to SDG indicator 17.19.2)
	1.1.d Number of budgeted, evidence-informed national (multi-) sectoral strategies, policies and/or Action Plans targeting social protection and equal access to basic services, with a focus on those furthest left behind, developed and implemented between 2023–2027 (contributing to SDG targets 1.3 and 1.4)
Output 1.2. Health, education and food systems are strengthened and become more resilient to ensure universal access and quality of services and respond to humanitarian needs	1.2.a Percentage of pupils in the last grade of secondary school with minimum literacy skills and minimum knowledge of mathematics (national SDG indicators 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.2)
	1.2.b Proportion of the target population covered by all vaccines included in their national programme (national SDG indicator 3.b.1)
	1.2.c Student-to-computer ratio (primary and secondary education) (related to SDG indicator 4.4.1)
	1.2.d Existence in school curriculum of the curricular modules/contents: 1) human rights, 2) gender equality, 3) health education; and ensuring their quality implementation through an interdisciplinary approach in order to form the graduate profile and teacher training (based on national SDG indicator 4.7.1)
	1.2.e Adolescent birth rate (age 15–19) per 1,000 women in same age group, urban/rural (usual resident population) (national SDG indicator 3.7.2)
	1.2.f Food consumption per capita (daily average) (SDG indicator 2.2.1)

	1.2.g Share of students with special educational needs and disabilities in general education institutions (% out of total enrolled) (contributing to SDG indicator 4.5.1)
	1.2.h Number of refugee children enrolled in formal education (by educational levels, by sex and disability) (contributing to SDG indicator 4.5.1)
Output 1.3. Public institutions and CSOs/CBOs have enhanced capacities to ensure quality sustainable people-centered service delivery that is responsive to social, economic and environmental shocks and emergencies	1.3.a Percentage of individuals belonging to key populations (PWUD, SW, MSM), who are covered by HIV prevention services (contributing to SDG target 3.3)
	1.3.b International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness (SDG indicator 3.d.1)
	1.3.c Number of institutions and service providers with strengthened capacities and knowledge to improve the provision of essential services, goods and/or resources for all, with a focus on vulnerable groups (contributing to SDG target 1.4)
	1.3.d Level of satisfaction of service users with the co-implemented digital services (contributing to SDG target 1.4)
	1.3.e Percentage of displaced persons (including refugees and disaster affected population) covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex (contributing to SDG indicator 1.3.1)
	1.3.f Percentage of migrants and refugees, including victims of trafficking, who are covered by national public health insurance scheme, by sex (contributing to SDG target 1.3)
	1.3.g Number of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes (contributing to SDG target 1.3)
Output 1.4. Rights holders, in particular from vulnerable groups, are empowered to access and claim for quality public services	1.4.a Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care (SDG indicator 5.6.1)
	1.4.b Percentage of people living with HIV who know their status; percentage of persons with HIV enrolled in treatment and percentage of those with viral suppression (contributing to SDG target 3.3)
	1.4. c Proportion of vulnerable women, such as women who use drugs and PWUD with children accessing crisis services, including shelter and rehabilitation (related to SDG indicator 3.5.1)
	1.5.a Share of women and girls who access services after experiencing violence or discrimination

Output 1.5 State institutions and CSOs ensure effective prevention and improved multisectoral response to address all forms of violence against women and girls, including harmful practices and discriminatory gender norms and stereotypes	(contributing to SDG target 5.2)
	1.5.b Number of developed guidelines, protocols and standard operating procedures to strengthen EVAWG services in line with the Essential Services Package (contributing to SDG target 5.2)
	1.5.c Number of state institutions and CSOs with increased capacities to address discriminatory gender norms and violence against women and girls (contributing to SDG target 5.2)
	1.5.d Proportion of rayons covered with advocacy initiatives addressing gender social norms and male engagement programmes (contributing to SDG target 5.2)
Strategic Priority 2: By 2027, more accountable, and transparent, human rights-based and gender-responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and to contribute to development processes.	
Output 2.1. Regulatory framework and capacities of government and non-government institutions are enhanced to promote human rights, gender equality, non-discrimination and accountability	2.1.a Number of laws, policies, strategies, Action Plans and programmes adopted, revised and repealed to advance gender equality and international human rights standards (contributing to SDG targets 5.1 and 10.3)
	2.1.b Level of implementation of international human rights recommendations by Moldova (contributing to SDG target 16.b)
	2.1.c Youth Action Plans: a) National multisectoral, gender-responsive adolescent policy/Youth Action Plan exists (reflecting sectoral commitments for adolescents)
	b) Proportion of local public authorities with evidence-informed, human rights-based annual Youth Action Plans that are budgeted
	2.1.d Number of national partners with capacities to apply Gender Responsive Budgeting tools in the budget cycle (contributing to SDG indicator 5.c.1)
	2.1.e Number of human rights initiatives implemented by civil society members trained on human rights, HRBA and gender equality (contributing to SDG targets 5.1 and 10.3)
	2.1.f Extent of alignment of the national legislative/normative framework to international commitments to eliminate violence against women and girls, in particular under the Istanbul Convention

	(contributing to SDG target 5.2)
	2.1.g Multi-stakeholder development financing mechanisms to strengthen public sector agility and efficient allocation of resources for policy implementation (contributing to SDG target 17.3)
Output 2.2. Institutions at all levels have increased capacities to produce, share and utilize quality disaggregated data in line with national priorities and in accordance with international standards and methodologies	2.2.a Informational system on demographic and social statistics is in place and operational (managed by NBS) (contributing to SDG target 17.18)
	2.2.b Proportion of SDG indicators available at national level according to relevant disaggregations and the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (national SDG indicator 17.18.1)
	2.2.c Number of statistical and administrative data initiatives and statistical tools (methodologies; questionnaires) developed and/or revised to improve the availability and use of data, including disaggregation by sex, age, disability, ethnicity, migration and legal status and other characteristics to inform, monitor and evaluate national policies and programmes and international commitments (contributing to SDG target 17.18)
	2.2.d SDG online monitoring platform, owned by government, makes up-to-date disaggregated data publicly available (contributing to SDG target 17.18)
	2.2.e Number of public authorities that have strengthened knowledge and skills and use data as evidence in the policymaking process (contributing to SDG target 17.18)
Output 2.3. People of Moldova, in particular most vulnerable and marginalized, are empowered to claim and exercise their human rights and meaningfully participate in public and civic life, governance and decision-making processes	2.3.a Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments, (b) local governments and (c) executive positions/ministers (cabinets) (national SDG indicator 5.5.1.a&b)
	2.3.b Number of national participatory and inclusive review and monitoring processes in the context of implementation of international human rights standards (contributing to SDG target 16.a)
	2.3.c Percentage of out-of-country voters, out of the total number of voters (contributing to SDG target 16.7)
	2.3.d Percentage of people reached by election awareness-raising campaigns who voted during the (local/national) elections (contributing to SDG target 16.7)

	<p>2.3.e Number of CSOs working on human rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment (especially women’s organizations) that have strengthened capacities to exercise their leadership role towards the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment rights, as well as human rights (contributing to SDG targets 5.1 and 10.3)</p>
	<p>2.3.f Number of sustainable participatory mechanisms, as well as new programmes and services for diaspora engagement, supported by the government</p>
	<p>2.3.g Number of community-based initiatives implemented by young people at local level that promote civic engagement, participation and gender equality</p>
	<p>2.3.h Number of national and local initiatives implemented to enhance accountability, transparency and participation in decision-making (contributing to SDG target 16.6)</p>
<p>Output 2.4. Government and non-government actors have strengthened capacities and resources to address the humanitarian crisis, sustain peace and security at the national and regional level and ensure access to justice for all</p>	<p>2.4.a Share of women in leadership roles of the Thematic Working Groups (TWG) for the Transnistrian conflict settlement process (contributing to SDG target 5.5)</p>
	<p>2.4.b Access to legal services and remedies: i) Number of initiatives implemented to strengthen access to legal services and remedies; ii) number of people accessing legal services and remedies virtually (contributing to SDG target 16.3)</p>
	<p>2.4.c Percentage of girls and boys in conflict with the law who are subject to a diversion order or alternative measure as opposed to a custodial sentence (contributing to SDG target 16.3)</p>
	<p>2.4.d Number of initiatives, including on human rights and gender equality, aimed to strengthen confidence, trust, social cohesion and contribute to sustained peace</p>
	<p>2.4.e Number of border management authorities enabled to ensure migrants’ and refugee protection, aviation security and carry out special investigation operations, integrating anti-corruption, gender and human rights commitments (contributing to SDG target 16.6)</p>
	<p>2.4.f Percentage of people feeling safe in Moldova (contributing to SDG target 16.1)</p>

Working on these solutions is complex in nature and meaningful implementation **requires holistic and systemic, whole-of-the-UN approach**. In this context, the pooled funding mechanisms is a tool to strengthen collaboration and coordination among the Participating UN Organisations, as well as other development actors in the field.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will also benefit from complementarities taking place in other sectors of development as well as be informed by the (i) currently ongoing Development Finance Assessment initiative that will provide preliminary mapping of Moldovan public and private financial flows vis-à-vis the SDG, and equip the Government with tools to regularly report on how much it invests in certain SDGs, to the (ii) Development Partners Coordination mechanism as a platform for aligning and coordination of international development actors and the national institutions, and that is currently being organized by development partners and the Government of Moldova.

To facilitate and promote holistic and whole-of-system approach to complex solutions, the Fund will consider establishing an additional Window on “Cross-cutting issues”. It will focus on funding joint policy and programming solutions, preferably as joint and/or area-based programmes, that cut across two or more Outcomes. Funding support for strengthening UNCT coordination capacities to advance cross-cutting issues and joint processes related to UN’s normative agenda, joint programme delivery and joint RBM, common business operations, joint advocacy and communications will be also sought through this window.

While offering a solid starting point, the theory of change of the fund will remain nimble to new developments and processes happening in Moldova: VNRs, annual EU Report on Moldova, UN Common Country Assessment, the World Bank and the EBRD diagnostics on Moldova, IMF’s Article IV Consultations, and other relevant analytical pieces.

Gender, Human Rights and LNOBs

Vulnerable groups

According to the CCA, 24 multiple factors account for vulnerability and exclusion in Moldova, including geographic location (urban/rural), gender, age, source of income and size of family, ethnicity, disability and socioeconomic status.

The most vulnerable and discriminated against populations, as identified in the CCA

Women survivors of violence; vulnerable women and children, particularly in rural areas; Roma and ethno-linguistic minorities; victims of human trafficking; vulnerable migrants; persons with disabilities; persons living with and affected by HIV; LGBTQI+ persons; people in detention; asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons; older people; NEET youth; and small agricultural producers.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will adhere to and implement the UNSDCF guiding principles of leaving no one behind (LNOB), Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, as well as a Human Rights-Based Approach as crucial cross-sectoral policies. It is planned that the

Fund will direct a minimum of 15% of resources towards actions to promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.

The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II will prioritise support to those interventions that significantly or principally contribute to Gender Equality and Human Rights (marker score of 2 or 3).²

V. Governance and operation of the Fund

Governance of the Fund will be entrusted to the joint structures established by the Government of Moldova and the United Nations. The main principles for results-oriented governing of the Fund are fairness, transparency, accountability, and professionalism. It is a joint endeavour of Moldova and the United Nations to support processes of sustainable development and the EU accession.

Steering Committee

The *Joint Steering Committee* bears the overall responsibility for management of The Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II. The Steering Committee will be co-chaired by the State Chancellery as the national coordinating authority of the UNSDCF and the UN RC and will include Heads of Agencies of the Participating UN Organizations and relevant development partners representatives. The Administrative Agent (MPTF Office) and Fund secretariat will be included in the Steering Committee as ex-officio. The Steering Committee will have a maximum number of 9 representatives – 6 PUNOs, State Chancellery and 2 development partners. The Ministry of Finance, as the national coordination authority of the external assistance, will be invited as an observer.

The main functions of the Fund's Steering Committee will be to:

- Review and approval of the strategic direction of the Fund and allocated resources, its Terms of Reference and other statutory documents;
- Endorsement of the Fund risk management strategy and regular review of risk monitoring.
- Endorsement of the UNSDCF funding priorities and allocation of available resources;
- Ensuring conforming of Fund's operations with the requirements of the Fund Terms of Reference (TOR) and MDTF agreements (MoUs, LoAs);
- Guidance for resource mobilization strategies to capitalize the Fund in line with the overall UNSDCF resource mobilization strategy;
- Fund transfers requests to the Administrative Agent (signed off by UN Resident Coordinator as a co-chair of the Steering Committee);
- Approval of the Fund's extensions and other updates to the Fund TOR, as required. In case of departures from the generic TOR, the TOR of the SC should be referred for endorsement to the HQs Fiduciary Management Oversight Group;

² More information about the UN Guidance on Gender Equality marker: <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/UNCT%20GEM%20UN%20INFO%20final%20draft%20June%202019.pdf>

- Other guidance related to the structuring of the Fund and its procedures, as it deems necessary.

The Steering Committee makes funding and programming decisions by consensus. Decisions can also be made electronically. In the case of non-consensus, the SC co-chairs will decide, based on consultation with SC members.

The UN Resident Coordinator as Co-Chair of the Steering Committee

The Resident Coordinator will provide governance and oversight of the Fund, by co-chairing the Steering Committee with the Secretary General of the Government (State Chancellery). As a co-chair of the Steering Committee, the Resident Coordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Provide strategic leadership of the Fund, in coordination with the SC co-Chair and the other members of the JSC;
- Ensure that the Fund aligns with UNSDCF, national development needs and priorities, and the 2030 Agenda;
- Facilitate resource mobilization and partnerships for the Fund in coordination with the UNCT and other members of the JSC, based on the UNSDCF resource mobilization strategy;
- Oversee the management of the Fund, in coordination with the SC co-Chair and the other members of the Steering Committee including making funding allocations;
- Signing all Fund Transfer Requests and other documents addressed to the Administrative Agent on behalf of the Fund, on the basis of decisions endorsed by the JSC. Supervise the Secretariat of the Fund (part of RCO) on behalf of the JSC. If additional resources are approved by the Steering Committee to fund the Secretariat as a direct cost project, make best efforts to host the staff members comprising the Secretariat within the premises of the Resident Coordinator's Office, notwithstanding the fact that the Secretariat Support project will be under PUNO implementation.

Secretariat

The Fund Secretariat provides technical and management support to the Resident Coordinator and Joint Steering Committee on matters pertaining the Fund. In cases when the Fund receives unearmarked funding contributions, the Secretariat main functions are:

- Advise the Resident Coordinator and co-chair of the Joint Steering Committee on strategic priorities, programmatic and financial allocations (based on inputs of inter-agency working groups, as applicable)
- Provide secretarial, logistical and operational support to the Joint Steering Committee related to the Fund
- Organize calls for proposals and appraisal processes
- Review and clear formulation and structuring of proposals to the Fund with regard to the following:
 - general eligibility in line with the respective Call for proposals and decisions of the Outcome Groups/PCG,
 - completeness of the application and conformity with the template,

- accuracy of submitted information against relevant UNINFO and other available records, and
- for proposed continuation of funding support to projects through subsequent allocation rounds, validation of information on reported programmatic results and financial delivery of earlier received funds.
- Provide feedback and request necessary adjustments to the proposing entities to ensure completeness, coherence, quality, and the formats of the Fund.
- Ensure that the Fund's projects have a gender marker; and at least 15% or more of resources are allocated to programmes where gender equality is a principal objective
- Submit proposals for technical review and endorsements
- Ensure the monitoring of the operational risks and Fund performance.
- Consolidate annual and final narrative reports provided by Outcome Groups and/or Joint Programmes and share with the Steering Committee for review as well as with Administrative Agent for preparation of consolidated narrative reports
- Liaise with the Administrative Agent on developing Fund's Operations Manual which would include, fund administration issues, including submitting the funds transfer requests and issues related to project/ Fund extensions and project/Fund closure.
- Submits final project reports to the Administrative Agent for operational closure
- Monitor financial closure, ensuring that projects are financially closed within 18 months from their operational closure
- Develop Fund's communication strategy and ensure proper visibility of all the fund partners, including contributors and participating organizations
- Develop the Fund's resource mobilization strategy in line with the overall UNSDCF resource mobilization strategy.

The Secretariat function will be provided by the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) with the head of the Fund Secretariat directly reporting to the Resident Coordinator as co-chair of the Fund Steering Committee. One of the PUNOs will receive funds from the Fund to support the RCO who will manage the Secretariat support project .

As per the MDTF MOU/SAA, the costs of the Secretariat may be charged as direct costs to the MDTF through a project approved (separately from programmatic activities) by the Steering Committee. The budget is agreed and approved annually by the Steering Committee, and should not exceed 3% of the total resources of the fund. The costs will include expenses for consolidating reports, monitoring and evaluating the fund and any operational needs of the Fund.

UNSDCF Results Groups

To ensure Fund's alignment with and integration into the UNSDCF implementation and to avoid additional transaction costs, the Fund will rely on the existing UNSDCF structures and processes.

The UNSDCF Results Groups' specific responsibilities in regard to the Fund are as follows:

- **Project identification and planning:** Based on relevant call for proposals by the Fund Secretariat, timely agree on priority interventions (joint or individual) that will be submitted to the Fund by proponent PUNOs. Ensure that proposed interventions are based on the Joint Work Plan and developed in consultation with relevant national partners. Hold consultations on amounts to be requested by each proposing agency - based on the scope, expected contribution of proposed interventions towards common results and targets, and value-for-money considerations. Record decisions and deliberations and submit to the Secretariat.
- **Coordination:** Facilitate collaboration and coordination between POs to ensure interventions are implemented and monitored in an integrated and coherent way.
- **Donor engagement:** Support the Fund JSC and Secretariat in ensuring regular dialogues with donors; facilitate consultations and programmatic and operational engagement with donors throughout the implementation, as relevant.
- **Communications:** With support from the UNCG, promote the visibility of the Fund, its partners, activities and results.
- **Reporting:** With support from the UNCT M&EL group, provide timely and quality consolidated inputs on relevant Outcome results to periodic Fund's reports, reviews and evaluations and other ad hoc updates to donors, MPTFO, other as may be required.

Fund Administration

The Administrative Agent

The Fund is administered by the UN MPTTF Office under the pass-through management modality. The Fund's administration services, whose costs are 1% of received contributions, include:

- **The Fund's establishment:** support to the Fund's design (Terms of Reference and Operation Manual), and development of legal instruments
- **The Fund's administration:** receipt, administration and release of funds to POs in accordance with decisions from the Steering Committee, and financial report consolidation
- **The Administrative Agent (MPTFO) is responsible for the following functions:**
 - Provide support to the design of the Fund
 - Sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Participating Organizations
 - Sign SAAs with donors and receive contributions from donors that wish to provide financial support to the Fund/Programme through the AA. It is noted that the AA cannot enter into any other agreements with donors that would impose responsibilities on POs without their prior written consent;
 - Administer such funds received in accordance with its regulations, policies and procedures, as well as the relevant MOU and Fund Terms of Reference (TOR) and SAA, including the provisions relating to winding up the Fund account and related matters;
 - Subject to availability of funds, disburse such funds to each of the POs in accordance with Fund Transfer Requests signed by the UN Resident Coordinator/co-chair of the Fund, taking into account the budget set out in the approved Joint Work Plans (JWPs);

- Ensure consolidation of statements and reports , based on submissions provided by each PO, as set forth in the TOR and provide these to each donor that has contributed to the Fund/Programme account and to the JSC;
- Provide final reporting, including notification that the Fund has been operationally completed;
- Disburse funds to any PO for any additional costs of the task that the JSC may decide in accordance with the approved programmatic document.
- Provide tools for fund management to ensure transparency and accountability

Participating Organizations

Participating Organizations sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the MPTF Office.

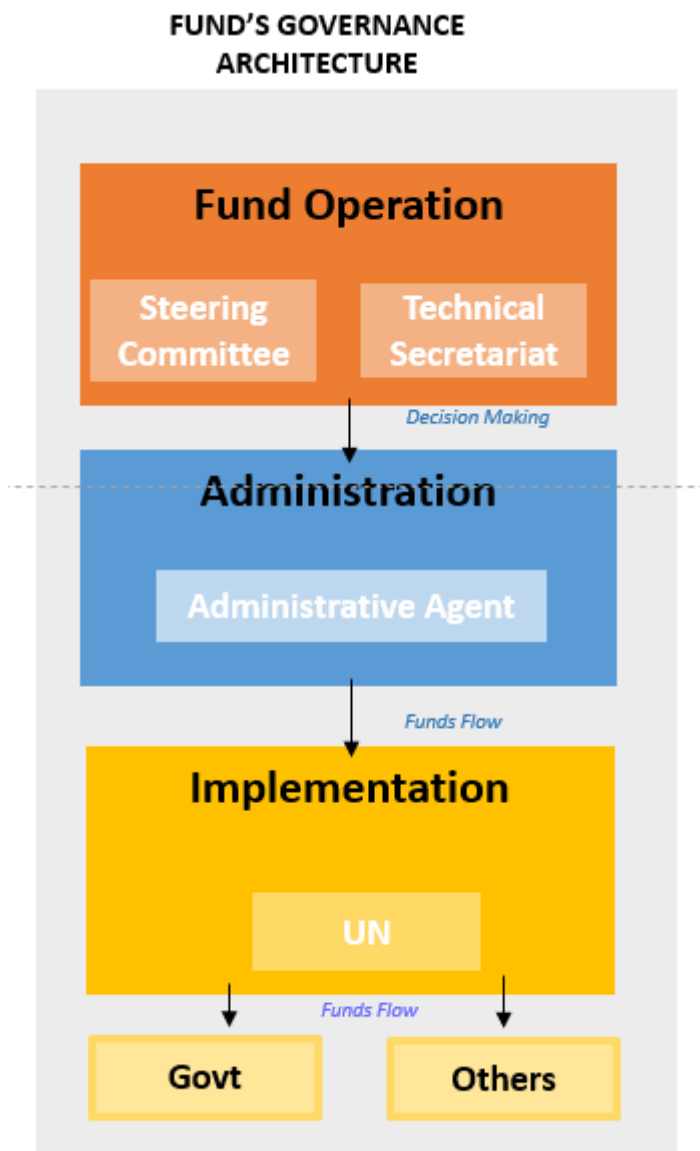
Each Participating Organization shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent. Such funds will be administered by each UN Agency, Fund and Programme in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures. Each Participating Organization shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent.

In addition, each Participating UN Organization (PUNO) will:

- Provide narrative and financial reports through the Secretariat and Administrative Agent;
- Guarantee a proper risk management in all Fund- supported projects and programmes;
- Ensure programmatic safeguards in the design and implementation of activities in line with shared values, norms and standards of the UN System;
- Advise the Secretariat and the AA of operational completion of all activities and ensure financial closure of projects within 18 months after operational closure;
- Ensure visibility of the Fund when reporting individually on Fund-supported projects and results, and give due credit to relevant work by other PUNOs.
- Engage in joint efforts to promote the Fund in line with the UNSDCF resource mobilization strategy
- Perform additional tasks regarding to the Fund’s operation as may be requested by the JSC;

Indirect costs of the Participating Organizations recovered through programme support costs will be 7%. All other costs incurred by each Participating Organization in carrying out the activities for which it is responsible under the Fund will be recovered as direct costs.

Figure 1 Governance diagram



VI. Project Approval Cycle (for un-earmarked contributions)

For un-earmarked contributions, the Fund Secretariat develops a call to submit proposals for identified priority themes with the indication of available programmable resources and a clear and realistic timeline for the submissions.

Prior to the proposal development, Participating Organizations (POs) consult within relevant RGs to identify priority (joint or individual) interventions within the scope of the call and available funding range. This is to ensure that all proposals are:

- mutually supportive and aligned to relevant strategy and priorities of the Outcome Group;
- aligned with agreed division of labor within the Group as per JWPs;

- coordinated with other key activities within the sector; and have realistic budgets.

RGs record their decisions regarding agreed interventions and transmits the minutes to the Fund Secretariat. POs submitted their individual proposals per the established template within the announced timeline to the Fund's Secretariat with cc to relevant Group Secretariat.

Review of Projects

The Secretariat will conduct an initial review of the project proposal to ensure the administrative completeness of the submission. This review validates the following: (i) general eligibility in line with the respective Call for proposals and decisions of the RGs, (ii) completeness of the application and conformity with the template, (iii) accuracy of submitted information against relevant UNINFO and other available records, and (iv) for proposed continuation of funding support to projects through subsequent allocation rounds, validation of information on reported programmatic results and financial delivery of earlier received funds. Proposal template will be captured in the Operations Manual.

Technical Review

Upon successful passing the Secretariat review, proposals are then transmitted by the Secretariat for a technical assessment.

The RGs leads program-related quality control of the proposal to ensure that Fund's interventions are aligned to priorities of the UNSDCF and relevant national strategies, coordinated with existent and foreseen activities, and developed in consultation with relevant actors. Criteria for the technical review to assess the quality of proposed projects include the following:

- Relevancy and coherence with other submissions to the Fund; coordination with other existing or foreseen activities within the sector by the UN and other partners;
- Technical quality, inc. focus on measurable contribution to CF results, integration of the UNSDCF guiding principles and the UN system-wide strategies on GEWE, Youth and Disability Inclusion
- Sustainability, engagement, national ownership and value for money
- Innovation
- In case of projects submitted for continuation of funding by the Fund, to facilitate performance-based allocations, the review will also consider the following:
 - Achievement of programmatic results
 - Financial delivery of received resources

NB! Funding proposals for Joint Programmes will be given priority among other proposals.

Based on the results of technical review captured in project scorecards, Secretariat shall apply agreed formula. Details of formula will be provided in the Operations Manual.

Project approval and funds transfer

Once the review is finalised, projects recommended for funding will be submitted to the UNRC, as JSC co-chair. The Steering Committee endorsement decisions will be recorded and shared electronically by the Steering Committee Secretariat.

The Secretariat will prepare a fund transfer request to be signed by the Resident Coordinator as co-chair of the JSC for each endorsed program/project with approved budget. The MPTFO will carry out transfers approved by the Steering Committee to POs no later than five (5) working days after the receipt of the FTR. Upon completion of the transfer, the representative of the PO and the Secretariat will be notified through electronic mail.

VII. Risk management

The Fund is also envisaged as a vehicle for sharing the risk among partners - the host country, the United Nations and the contributors.

The Secretariat will develop a risk management strategy to facilitate the achievement of Fund’s objectives with consideration of contextual, programmatic, and institutional risks it may encounter. Fund’s risk management strategy will be observed by the Joint Steering Committee. The Fund’s processes, such as the identification of thematic priorities, allocation criteria, regular monitoring and reviews will reflect the Fund’s risk management strategy in order to accelerate delivery and increase fund impact, and to ensure that fund operations ‘do no harm’ and are used for their intended purpose. Every programme approved by Fund shall comply with the risk management strategy. The Fund risk management strategy is however not a replacement for programme risk evaluation/management.

The Fund’s risk management strategy will:

- Develop shared understanding of risks faced by the Fund and the risk drivers
- Determine risk treatment through measures of mitigation or adaptation
- Establish the Fund's policies regarding identified risks
- Establish information strategies and common messages about the risks

Moldova 2030 SDGs Partnership Fund II: Risk Matrix (major contextual, programmatic, and institutional risks)

	Event	Category	Level	Likelihood	Consequences	Mitigating Measures
1.	Insufficient capitalization of the Fund to address all prioritised themes	Contextual	High	Possible	Moderate	Further prioritization of areas to be funded by the Fund Seeking other sources of funding Scaling down and sequencing interventions supported through the Fund to fit available resources
2	Low interest from Development Partners in the	Contextual	High	Possible	Major	Regular engagement with DPs for awareness raising about the Funding Compact and Fund’s development results and impact on UN coherence and resource integration

	pooled funding mechanism					Broadening of donor base to include non-traditional donors, foundations, philanthropies, the private sector and smaller contributors
3	Insufficient results/ impact	Programmatic	Medium	Unlikely	Major	Monitoring, revisions to project prioritisation and selection criteria, adjustments to the design and implementation modalities – all in full alignment with the UNSDCF
4	Insufficient capacity at the Secretariat (RCO) to deliver full range of responsibilities	Institutional	low	Unlikely	moderate	Ensuring dedicated HR capacities at the Secretariat through approval of up to 3% of the funds to the Secretariat, seeking additional financial resources
5	Lack of transparency and poor reporting system during projects implementation at local level	Institutional	low	unlikely	Moderate	Capacity building of local development actors on financial and programmatic reporting.
6	Low level of sustainability of initiatives supported by the Fund	Programmatic	High	Possible	Major	Selection criteria to include demonstrated level of national ownership, including through co-designing interventions and possibly govt cost-sharing/or parallel financing

VIII. Contributions

In support of the overarching aim of the Fund, and to ensure maximum flexibility and adaptation to national priorities, a guiding principle for resource mobilization would be that donors are encouraged to contribute with multi-year and unearmarked resources for pooling in the Fund. Earmarking is generally discouraged, and donors are asked to contribute unearmarked funds to the degree possible. However, if this is not possible, earmarking at the outcome or window level may be accepted. To ensure transparency, and facilitate co-ownership of Fund's results, funding partners will be consulted for priority theme identification within the scope of the UNSDCF. Earmarking to a PUNO or to a specific project is not possible.

Funds should be provided in fully convertible currency and shall be deposited in the bank accounts designated by the MPTF Office as Administrative Agent. The value of a contribution-

payment, if made in other than United States dollars, shall be determined by applying the United Nations operational rate of exchange in effect on the date of payment.

Acceptance of funds from the private sector will be guided by criteria stipulated in the UN system-wide guidelines on cooperation between the UN and Business Community (the UN Secretary General's guidelines: (<https://www.un.org/en/ethics/assets/pdfs/Guidelines-on-Cooperation-with-the-Business-Sector.pdf>)). Funds from the private sector will be subject to the outcome of applicable due diligence processes.

IX. Accountability

Each Participating Organization shall assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to it. Such funds will be administered by each organization in accordance with its own regulations, rules, directives and procedures. Each organization shall establish a separate ledger account for the receipt and administration of the funds disbursed to it by the Administrative Agent.

X. Reporting

Responsibilities related to reporting are described in detail in the Memorandum of Understanding. All Participating Organizations will submit annual and final reports on program activities to the Secretariat (through Outcome Groups/PCG or ECG in accordance with the modality of project administration) in line with the approved format.

Narrative reports

For each project, the PUNO/POs will submit the following reports to respective Outcome Group Secretariats or in case of Joint Programmes to Lead PUNOs for initial consolidation and further transmissions to the Secretariat for submission to the Administrative Agent:

- a. Annual narrative reports to be provided no more than three months (March 31st) after the end of the calendar year.
- b. Final narrative reports after the end of activities contained in the program-related approved document, including the final year of such activities, to be submitted no more than four months (April 30th) in the following year after the financial closure of the project.

Annual and final reports will exhibit results based on evidence. Annual and final narrative reports will compare actual results against estimated results in terms of outputs and outcomes and they will explain the reasons of higher or lower performance. The final narrative report will also include the analysis of how the outputs and outcomes have contributed to the Fund's overall impact.

Consolidated annual narrative reports should include a section on the activity of the Steering Committee.

Financial Reports

For each project, the POs will submit the following financial statements and reports to the Administrative Agent:

- a. Annual financial statements and reports to December 31st, regarding released resources by the Fund to them; these shall be provided no more than four months (April 30th) after the ending of the calendar year.
- b. Final certified financial statements and financial reports after the completion of activities contained in the program-related approved document, including the final year of such activities, to be submitted no more than six months (June 30th) in the following year after the financial closure of the project.

Based on these reports, the Administrative Agent will prepare consolidated narrative and financial reports which will submit to each of the Fund's Contributors and to the Steering Committee as per the schedule established in the Standard Administrative Agreement.

XI. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the Fund will be carried out in accordance with the national context, a results-based management method will be applied, with overall coordination by the UN system. The continuous monitoring and evaluation will be done by the Participating Organizations and coordinated by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat with support from the UN ME&L Group will monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes against the programmatic framework of the Fund, consolidate all reporting submitted by POs, and send consolidated reports to the Steering Committee.

The monitoring and evaluation system for the Fund will serve two functions: first, periodic assessment of project implementation and performance of projects (M&E of Project Performance), and second, evaluation of their results in terms of relevance, effectiveness and impact of the fund (M&E of fund Impact).

XII. Audit

The Administrative Agent and the PUNOs will be audited according to their own financial rules and regulations, in line with Framework for Joint Internal Audits of UN Joint Activities which has been agreed to by the Internal Audit Services of POs and endorsed by the UNDG in 2014. The details are included in the Fund MOU.

Public Disclosure

The MPTFO website, Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org>), is a web-based service portal that provides real-time financial data issued directly on contributions in and out of the fund account, from the UNDP accounting system. The Fund will have a dedicated page on the Gateway which will allow partners and the public at large to follow-up the Fund contributions, transfers and expenses, and access key documents and reports.

The Secretariat and the MPTFO will ensure that the Fund's operations are posted on the Gateway. Further, in accordance with the Funding Compact, the Fund should specifically mention individual contributors in all results reporting.

Each PO will take appropriate measures to promote the Fund. Information shared with the media regarding beneficiaries of funding, official press releases, reports and publications will acknowledge the role of the Fund.

XIII. Amendments, duration and termination

The Joint Steering Committee will be able to modify any of the provisions of these terms of reference in writing as it deems necessary, including the extension.

The last date to transfer funds to PUNOs will be 30 June 2026 (i.e. at most 1 year before the operational end date of the Fund). Completion of all operational activities will be 30 June 2027. The dissemination deadline of the final narrative report will be 31 December 2027 (i.e. 6 months after the operational close of the Fund).

All PUNOs will provide certified final financial reports on financially closed projects by no later than five (5) months (31 May) after the end of the calendar year in which the financial closure of the activities in the approved programmatic document occurs, or according to the period specified in the financial regulations and rules of the Participating Organization, whichever is earlier. The dissemination of the certified final financial statement ("Source and Use of Funds") is to be provided no later than seven months after the end of the calendar year in which the financial closing of the Fund.

The Fund will terminate upon completion of all programmes funded through the Fund and after satisfaction of all commitments and liabilities. Notwithstanding the completion of the initiatives financed from the Fund, any unutilized balances will continue to be held in the fund account until all commitments and liabilities incurred in implementation of the projects/programmes have been satisfied and project activities have been brought to an orderly conclusion. The Steering Committee will decide on the use of any unutilized balance of the Fund. Any balance remaining in the Fund Account, upon closure of the Fund, will be used for a purpose mutually agreed upon, or returned to the Donor(s) in proportion to their contribution to the Fund as agreed upon by the donor(s) and the Steering Committee.

Annex 1 [Results](#) Framework of the UNSDCF 2023-2027

Annex 2 [SOP UNCT Moldova Joint Programming FINAL](#)