Evaluation of the project:
"Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova"

Evaluation Report

31/05/2025

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Acronyms

API – Association of Independent Press

CDPD – Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CSO – Civil Society Organization

CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

FFUPLM - Family Federation for World Peace and Unification from Moldova

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HRBA – Human Rights-Based Approach

IPIS – Institute for Strategic Initiatives

KII – Key Informant Interview

LGA – Local Action Group

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

OHCHR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PBF – Peacebuilding Fund

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

ToC – Theory of Change

ToR – Terms of Reference

UN – United Nations

UNCT – United Nations Country Team

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UN Women – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

UNEG – United Nations Evaluation Group

WPS – Women, Peace and Security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background. This report presents the final external evaluation of the project *"Building Sustainable and Inclusive Peace, Strengthening Trust and Social Cohesion in Moldova,"* funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The project was jointly implemented by OHCHR, UN Women, and UNDP in Moldova from 26 August 2022 to 28 February 2025, with a total budget of USD 2,452,500. Project activities were conducted on both the Left and Right banks of the Nistru/Dniester River, addressing entrenched divisions stemming from the early 1990s conflict. Final beneficiaries included the local population, including youth, women, persons with disabilities, journalists, influencers, and public structures. UN agencies collaborated with a range of implementing partners, including local civil society organizations, grassroots groups, and media outlets across both banks.

The project was implemented in a highly complex context. Moldova continues to face significant challenges, including economic disparities between the two banks, the ongoing effects of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the ongoing Transnistrian conflict. The Transnistrian region remains economically and institutionally isolated, with limited access to essential services and civic participation-particularly for women and marginalized groups. Additionally, issues such as hate speech, disinformation, and political polarization continue to undermine social cohesion.

Intervention Logic/Project Description. The project worked through delivering two interrelated outcomes to achieve its overarching objective of fostering sustainable peace and social cohesion across the Nistru/Dniester River divide:
1. *Strengthen cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the advancement of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda and improved access to social services.*
2. *Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation, thereby reducing inter-community tensions.*

These outcomes were underpinned by a Theory of Change (ToC) that identified trust-building and social cohesion as essential foundations for sustainable peace. The project was grounded in the premise that promoting human rights, advancing gender equality, ensuring access to basic social services, and fostering strategic communication would empower communities to become more resilient to conflict and more capable of peaceful cooperation. To operationalize this approach, the project implemented targeted activities aimed at strengthening the capacities of authorities and civil society organizations, increasing public awareness of human rights, and supporting media professionals in producing content that promotes tolerance and pluralism. The initiative was implemented in key locations on both sides of the Nistru/Dniester River—including Chisinau, Tiraspol, and Bender and other urban areas, as well as the Security Zone and in rural and remote areas. . It engaged a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including government institutions, NGOs, community-based organizations, academia, and media. This inclusive engagement was designed to promote cross-river cooperation, ensure broad participation, and ultimately contribute to enhanced social cohesion and reduced tensions.

Evaluation Purpose and Scope. The objective of this external evaluation was to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, peacebuilding impact, sustainability, and the integration of human rights, gender equality, and disability inclusion throughout the project. Specifically, the evaluation reviewed the extent to which project outcomes were achieved, identified factors that contributed to or hindered these achievements, and documented best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations to inform future programming by UN agencies. The primary users of this evaluation are the project team and senior management within the participating UN agencies and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The evaluation covered the full geographical scope of the project, including both the Left and Right banks of the Nistru/Dniester River, encompassing major urban centers as well as remote and underserved areas.

Evaluation Methodology. The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach to data collection to enhance the reliability of results, promote impartiality, reduce bias, and ensure that findings are grounded in comprehensive and relevant information. Both primary and secondary data sources were used to measure evaluation indicators and assess the selected evaluation criteria in relation to the established evaluation questions. The evaluation team reviewed approximately 50 documents, conducted 21 key informant interviews involving 34 stakeholders, and facilitated eight focus group discussions with 46 participants. This combination of methods enabled the evaluation team to triangulate data and validate findings, ensuring a robust and well-rounded analysis.

Main Findings: Relevance. The project effectively addressed key peacebuilding and conflict prevention challenges in Moldova, demonstrating strong alignment with both UN mandates and national priorities—particularly in the context of heightened regional instability following the conflict in Ukraine. From the outset, the project's ToC and design were grounded in the needs of local communities and national peacebuilding stakeholders, ensuring contextual relevance. Notably, the project showed adaptability in navigating complex environments, especially on the Left bank, while maintaining responsiveness to evolving dynamics. The project was well-aligned with national initiatives and stakeholder priorities, addressing reintegration, conflict prevention, and social inclusion. Ambitious in scope, the project pioneered efforts in relatively uncharted areas such as combating misinformation and hate speech-domains that had seen limited prior engagement by local actors. Through its support for cross-river cooperation and, to some extent, improved access to services for vulnerable groups, it complemented national frameworks such as the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023–2027) and commitments towards countering hate speech. Stakeholders-including youth, journalists, and institutional actors—confirmed the project's relevance and acknowledged its tangible contributions to dialogue and social cohesion across both banks.

Coherence. The project demonstrated internal coherence among UN agencies by leveraging each agency's thematic expertise and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, supporting smooth implementation. Each participating agency—OHCHR, UNDP, and UN Women also ensured strategic alignment with its respective mandates, thereby reinforcing the project's contributions to broader UN priorities in Moldova. However, limited direct collaboration in the planning of specific activities among implementing agencies, such as joint follow-up and cross-promotion of each other's work, constrained the potential for greater impact.

Externally, the project was well aligned with other donor-funded initiatives and national programs focused on peacebuilding and social cohesion, with no significant duplication of efforts. However, there remains scope to enhance coordination and synergy with other actors working in similar thematic areas. Strengthening inter-agency collaboration at the operational level—particularly in planning, implementation, and knowledge exchange-could contribute to more integrated and sustainable peacebuilding efforts in Moldova.

Efficiency. The project operated under a clear organizational structure that supported effective coordination among UN agencies. However, early implementation was delayed by agency-specific procedures, leading to some inefficiencies in synchronizing activities among implementing partners. Bureaucratic obstacles on the Left bank posed additional challenges, yet local civil society organizations on both banks successfully navigated them by leveraging informal networks. A more streamlined inter-agency process and additional staffing could have further improved workload management and operational responsiveness.

Monitoring data collection mechanisms were in place and effectively utilized to inform operational adjustments throughout the project. However, the use of this data to guide broader strategic decision-making was limited. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen data disaggregation practices—particularly to better reflect the experiences and needs of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and the Roma population.

The project successfully integrated a conflict-sensitive approach throughout its implementation, ensuring that communication strategies and participant selection processes were handled with diligence. This approach was particularly evident in activities such as training journalists and influencers on conflict-sensitive reporting, and in partnerships with civil society organizations to create and maintain neutral spaces for dialogue and engagement. These efforts helped minimize potential tensions and fostered inclusive, respectful participation across diverse communities.

Grants to local grassroots groups were instrumental in advancing the project's objectives by enabling community-led peacebuilding and cross-river cooperation. Despite operational challenges, such as administrative delays and "double taxation" on the Left bank, the grants empowered grassroots to carry out context-specific peacebuilding activities and promote inclusive local engagement. However, the project's short duration and modest grant amounts (some capped at USD 5,000) limited the scale and sustainability of these efforts.

Effectiveness. The evaluation found that the project made significant progress toward achieving its intended outcomes, although the extent to which specific indicators were met varied.

Under Outcome 1 '*Strengthen cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the advancement of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda and improved access to social services'* progress was mixed, primarily due to external factors such as heightened tensions between the banks and later the 2025 energy crisis on the Left bank, which hindered engagement efforts with relevant duty-bearers. Despite these challenges, the project successfully expanded civil society advocacy to promote social cohesion and human rights, launched 23 human rights initiatives, and enhanced access to paralegal services, particularly benefiting women and persons with disabilities. These achievements laid a strong foundation for long-term improvements, even in the face of persistent structural barriers.

Under Outcome 2: *"Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation, thereby reducing inter-community tensions,"* the evaluation found clear evidence of outcome-level changes. Media professionals who participated in media literacy workshops began applying conflict-sensitive reporting practices in their broader work, contributing to more balanced and constructive narratives on sensitive issues. An online course on peace journalism was developed and is expected to further enhance local media capacity in this regard. Additionally, joint media productions and public information campaigns reinforced these efforts, amplifying the project's influence on public discourse and contributing to reduced inter-community tensions through more inclusive and responsible media practice. At the output level, 72% of the project's indicators were fully achieved or exceeded expectations, demonstrating strong implementation performance. However, progress toward systemic change was limited by external pressures and persistent barriers to cross-river cooperation, which hindered the achievement of some outcome indicators.

The project's outcomes were shaped by a combination of enabling and constraining factors. Key enablers included strong multi-agency coordination, grassroots engagement that fostered community ownership, and targeted technical assistance—all of which enhanced the project's reach, relevance, and credibility. However, several challenges limited the project's effectiveness. These included the short project duration, restrictions on cross-river travel, particularly on the Left bank, and limited visibility and integration of parallel project components.

Peacebuilding Effect. The project has made significant contributions to peacebuilding and social cohesion in Moldova at the macro, meso, and micro levels.

Macro-level contributions: At the broader systemic level, the project facilitated initial engagement with government bodies and de facto structures, although it did not succeed in bringing them to the same table. Nevertheless, it established communication and exchanges between the People's Advocate and the human rights focal point on the Left Bank, focusing on human rights-related issues.

Furthermore, the project effectively cooperated with law enforcement institutions by developing a Guide for Investigating and Prosecuting Hate Crimes and Online Hate Speech, strengthening institutional capacity to address hate-related offences. The project also facilitated communication between de facto structures and local civil society organizations to improve services for vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities.

Meso-Level contributions: At the institutional level, the project significantly strengthened cooperation among civil society organizations (CSOs) and professional networks of journalists across both banks. Key achievements included the development of roadmaps in priority thematic areas and the establishment of the Cross-River CSOs Advocacy Network. This network brought together CSOs from both banks to collaborate and advocate for shared values such as human rights and peacebuilding. Additionally, media training supported the formation of informal professional networks among journalists, promoting sustainable conflict-sensitive reporting practices and fostering ongoing cross-river dialogue.

Micro-level contributions: At the community level, the project effectively strengthened social cohesion and helped reduce conflict risks. It created safe spaces for interpersonal engagement through youth leadership camps, cultural festivals, and participatory initiatives such as Forum Theatre. Participant feedback emphasized the project's role in countering misinformation and propaganda. Academic

initiatives promoted collaboration and reflection among educators, supporting the dissemination of innovative methodologies within educational settings. Additionally, journalists and social media influencers improved their capacity to produce balanced and responsible content.

Sustainability. The project aimed to foster sustainable peacebuilding and long-term cooperation across the Left and Right Banks of Moldova. Despite diverse objectives and varied engagements with social groups, the sustainability of outcomes varies widely. The project enhanced skills in conflict-sensitive reporting among journalists, but external challenges such as financial difficulties and restrictions on the Left Bank pose sustainability risks for media outlets. The engagement with youth demonstrated promising sustainability potential. Students increased their knowledge significantly and are actively participating in ongoing social development and peacebuilding initiatives. Working groups developed cooperation roadmaps across thematic areas. However, ongoing support and funding are necessary for implementing these plans, without which the likelihood of sustained cooperation diminishes. Successful licensing for Left Bank product exports is an example of potential achievements needing further backing for continuity. Awareness-raising campaigns have faced sustainability constraints due to their short-term nature and limited follow-up. However, institutional efforts to combat hate speech show promise, especially with the potential approval of guideline documents enhancing legal frameworks. Ongoing training has improved capacities among legal and judicial bodies, needing continued efforts to fully embed these practices. Initial steps in enhancing social services for persons with disabilities and introducing paralegal programs showed potential, but ongoing support is crucial. Without further assistance from local centers, these programs risk losing momentum.

Sustainability. The project aimed to foster sustainable peacebuilding and long-term cooperation across the Left and Right banks of Moldova. While it successfully engaged diverse social groups and addressed a wide range of objectives, the prospects for sustaining its outcomes remain mixed.
One of the project's notable achievements was the enhancement of journalists' skills in conflict-sensitive reporting. However, the long-term sustainability of media efforts is threatened by external challenges, including financial constraints and regulatory restrictions on the Left bank. In contrast, youth engagement demonstrated strong sustainability potential, with students showing substantial knowledge gains and continued involvement in social development and peacebuilding activities.
The formation of working groups and the development of thematic cooperation roadmaps laid a solid foundation for future collaboration. However, the successful implementation of these plans is contingent on sustained support and funding. For instance, the licensing of Left bank product exports stands out as a key milestone, yet its continuation depends on further backing.
Awareness-raising initiatives faced limitations in sustainability due to their short duration and limited follow-up. Nevertheless, institutional initiatives to combat hate speech appear promising, particularly with the adoption of Guidelines that could reinforce the implementation of the respective legal framework. Continued training has strengthened the capacities of legal and judicial institutions, but ongoing investment is needed to embed these practices fully.
Initial steps in improving social services for persons with disabilities and introducing paralegal support have also shown encouraging results. Yet, without continued assistance from local centers, these initiatives risk losing momentum over time.

Human rights, Gender and Disability considerations. Gender equality was a cross-cutting priority throughout the project. Activities were designed to strengthen women's roles in peacebuilding and civic engagement. The project also supported women-led civil society organizations and created platforms aimed at building leadership skills among young women.

The project adopted targeted approaches to engage persons with disabilities and others in vulnerable situations. Collaboration with the Center for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities(CDPD) helped advance the rights of people with disabilities by promoting their participation in civic initiatives and increasing awareness of their rights. Similarly, initiatives such as the Roma Bloggers platform fostered the civic engagement of Roma communities by encouraging civic activism and dialogue on issues affecting them. While these efforts provide positive examples of inclusive engagement, there remains an opportunity to further expand the participation of people in vulnerable situations in broader project activities through more tailored and proactive outreach strategies.

Lessons Learned. Key lessons learned based on the evaluation are the following: *Set Realistic Objectives:* Future projects should focus on setting achievable goals and limiting their scope. *Co-Facilitation Across Conflict Lines:* Co-facilitation models that gather participants from diverse regions proved effective in building trust. This model is replicable for initiatives in politically sensitive areas. *Leverage Informal Networks:* While informal networks build access and trust, their sustainability depends on structured support. Combining informal networking with formal capacity-building ensures longer-term impact. *Adaptive Programming:* Flexibility in programming enhances responsiveness in changing environments. Adaptive management frameworks are essential for projects in fragile settings. *Youth Empowerment:* Engaging youth through leadership roles and digital platforms such as simulations and media production proves effective for peacebuilding and civic engagement. *Neutral Themes for Cooperation:* Employing neutral themes like gender equality, everyday life, facilitates cross-community collaboration, useful in media and educational programs in divided societies. *Fostering Media Collaboration:* Joint content creation and peer workshops among media professionals foster collaborative journalism and reduce divisive narratives. *Multi-Stakeholder Engagement:* Engaging CSOs and public authorities enhances the uptake of project results, valuable for governance and policy reform initiatives. *Integrate Human Rights:* Embedding human rights in peacebuilding narratives fosters legitimacy and trust, applicable to rights-based programs in post-conflict settings.

Good Practices. The evaluation identified effective practices that enhanced the project's impact in Moldova's peacebuilding efforts: *Youth Empowerment:* Young people were engaged through leadership roles and digital innovation, awareness raising actions, fostering new peacebuilders via initiatives like the Peacebuilding Hackathon and leadership workshops*. Neutrality in Dialogue:* By focusing on universal themes like human rights and using neutral venues, the project maintained trust and facilitated cross-bank engagement. *Service-Oriented Trust-Building:* The paralegal network empowered vulnerable groups by providing legal support, linking trust-building with practical services. *Innovative Media Initiatives:* Collaborative media efforts promoted human rights and peace narratives, strengthening professional networks and improving content quality through training and joint productions.

Conclusions. The project effectively addressed Moldova's peacebuilding and conflict prevention needs, aligning well with national priorities and UN mandates, particularly amid increased regional instability. It was grounded in local needs and demonstrated flexibility in navigating complex environments. The project demonstrated strong performance in awareness-raising and capacity-building outputs, though the transition to sustained outcomes was hindered by structural barriers. The project's multi-agency approach ensured coherence and thematic strength by leveraging each agency's expertise, though closer collaboration at the operational level could have further enhanced synergies. Efficiency was affected by implementation delays and the limited size of grants to civil society, which constrained the project's outreach and scalability. Evidence of peacebuilding emerged at institutional, network, and community levels, though long-term trust-building mechanisms remain essential. Sustainability prospects were mixed—while institutional outputs show promise, broader societal efforts require continued support to maintain momentum. Human rights, gender equality, and social inclusion were well integrated across project activities. Future initiatives should focus on translating grassroots successes into systemic change, strengthening integration, and adopting inclusive strategies to ensure meaningful engagement of marginalized groups and lasting social cohesion.

Recommendations. The recommendations were developed based on a thorough analysis of findings, lessons learned, and good practices identified during the evaluation. Each recommendation is linked to specific findings and conclusions from the evaluation and is prioritized according to its urgency for action. The recommendations are directed at implementing UN agencies.

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Linked to Finding
1	**Focus on fewer, outcomes, high-impact outputs and activities**: During future project design, prioritize a limited number of outcomes, outputs and activities and adopt a long-term, strategic approach to outcomes. Greater prioritization of high-impact outputs, target groups, and geographic areas is recommended to maximize results within limited timeframes. A focused scope would enable deeper engagement and more coordinated interventions without compromising transformative goals.	High	Next project design phase	Findings 2, 6.3
2	**Enhance strategic inter-agency coordination and communication:** While the project team maintained effective operational communication channels, including regular meetings, structured document sharing, and a dedicated Teams group, future initiatives would benefit from strengthening strategic coordination from the outset. This could	High	Initial design stages of any future project's phase	Findings 4.1, 4.2

	include joint planning documents, integrated messaging for external audiences, and systematic information sharing on cross-agency activities and outcomes. A clear coordination framework would help maximize synergies, avoid fragmented implementation, and ensure greater coherence and visibility of peacebuilding efforts.			
3	**Improve resource allocation and grant size**: Increase human resources for field-level coordination and consider higher grant amounts for local partners to support more transformative initiatives. Assist Left bank CSOs in budget planning to enhance financial management capacities	High	Next project design phase, budgeting and resource mobilization	Findings 5.1, 5.4
4.	**Prioritize sustainability strategies**: Integrate sustainability planning at the outset of each project component, including identifying long-term funding sources, fostering local ownership, and strengthening institutional capacities and developing exit strategies.	Medium	Next project design and inception phases	Findings 2.4, 2.5
5.	**Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems**: Enhance data collection and analysis frameworks to include systematic disaggregation by vulnerable groups (e.g., People with Disabilities, Roma) and ensure monitoring data feeds into adaptive management processes.	Medium	Early stages of future project phase	Finding 5.2
6.	**Continue capacity-building for law enforcement on hate speech and misinformation**: Expand training programs for police, prosecutors, and judicial actors; support the institutional integration of the Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech into national training and enforcement frameworks	Medium	Next project implementation phase	Finding 6.4
7.	**Scale successful approaches**: Expand tested models such as the community paralegal network (CDPD/FFUPLM), youth internships, and joint human rights monitoring initiatives. Secure institutional partnerships to ensure continuity	High	Next project implementation phase	Findings 6.3, 6.5

8.	**Institutionalize CSO and youth platforms**: Support the formal integration of CSO working groups and youth councils into local and regional development planning processes to sustain cross-river dialogue	Medium	Next project implementation phase	Findings 6.2, 6.6
9.	**Reframe peacebuilding approaches**: Design interventions that emphasize shared socio-economic concerns (e.g., disability rights, youth development, environment) to mitigate political sensitivities in cross-river settings	Medium	Next project design phase	Finding 6.3

I. Introduction

1.1. Project Background

Project Title:	"Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova"
Project Number from MPTF-O Gateway	00133100
Implementing Organizations:	OHCHR (Convening Agency); UN Women; UNDP
Donor:	The Peacebuilding Fund
Evaluation Commissioned by:	OHCHR (Convening Agency)
Evaluation Commissioned to:	Giorgi Shubitidze, Dr. Eugen Burdelnii
Implementation Period:	26 August 2022 - 28 February 2025 (including six-month non-cost extension)
Geographical Coverage:	Moldova (Including the Left and Right bank)
Beneficiaries:	Local population, including youth, women, persons with disabilities, journalists, influencers, public authorities etc.
Total Funding:	2,452,500 USD
Evaluation Date (Month, year):	1 April – 30 May 2025
Name, title & contact of Evaluators:	International Evaluator: Giorgi Shubitidze, giorgishubitidze@gmail.com, National Evaluator: Dr. Eugen Burdelnii, eugen_burdelnii@yahoo.com

This is the final external evaluation of the project: "*Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova*", funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (hereinafter referred to as PBF). The project was implemented by three UN agencies (OHCHR, UNDP, and UN Women) in the Republic of Moldova from 26 August 2022 to 28 February 2025, with a total budget of USD 2,452,500. Of this, USD 850,000 was allocated to OHCHR, USD 802,500 to UNDP and USD 800,000 to UN Women. The project was implemented on both banks of the Nistru/Dniester River, where the conflict emerged in the early 1990s following the collapse of the former Soviet Union.[1]

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[1] OSCE (2022). *The Role of the OSCE in the Transdniestrian Settlement Process*. OSCE Mission to Moldova. https://www.osce.org/mission-to-moldova

Moldova continues to navigate a complex and fragile environment shaped by regional conflict, internal political divisions, and longstanding structural vulnerabilities. An Eastern European upper-middle-income country with a 2024 population of approximately 2.42 million[2] and a GDP per capita of USD 6,729[3]Moldova has experienced sustained economic strain since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Economic growth was modest in 2024, at just 0.1%, reflecting the country's ongoing exposure to regional instability and external shocks.

The political context in 2024–2025 was influenced by several key developments: Moldova's preparations for EU accession, upcoming presidential elections, and the ongoing Transnistrian conflict. The Transnistrian region (Left Bank), home to an estimated 455,700 people[4], remains economically and institutionally separated from the Right Bank. According to de facto structures, GDP per capita on the Left bank stands significantly lower at USD 2,194. Residents face continued legal and administrative barriers to accessing services such as healthcare, education, and civil documentation. While measures like neutral license plates and mobile legal aid have shown some promise, deep-rooted trust deficits remain.

Since the 1992 ceasefire, Transnistria has functioned as a de facto entity with support from the Russian Federation. OSCE-led "5+2" negotiations and bilateral dialogues have yielded only incremental progress.[5] Meanwhile, human rights concerns persist, particularly around restrictions on civic space and gender inequalities. The OSCE-facilitated "1+1" format and thematic working groups continue to address key cooperation areas such as education, healthcare, transport, civil documentation, law enforcement, and trade. Compounding these challenges, a major energy crisis beginning in January 2025, triggered by disruptions in gas and electricity supplies, severely impacted the Left Bank, further deepening existing vulnerabilities and social exclusion.[6]

The conflict has affected women and men differently across the Nistru/Dniester River. Women, particularly on the Left Bank, face compounded vulnerabilities due to patriarchal norms, limited access to services, and underrepresentation in peace and decision-making processes. While men continue to dominate formal negotiations, women's participation remains minimal, globally estimated at 13%, and even lower in Eastern Europe's protracted conflicts. Although Moldova adopted its second National

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[2] National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (2024). Population and demographic indicators.
https://statistica.gov.md/en/statistic_indicator_details/25
[3] World Bank (2024). GDP per capita (current US$) – Moldova.
https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=MD
[4] Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW). (2025). A disappearing country: Moldova on the verge of a demographic catastrophe. Available at: https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2025-01-08/a-disappearing-country-moldova-verge-a-demographic-catastrophe
[5] Agreement on the Principles for a Peaceful Settlement of the Armed Conflict in the Transnistrian Region, 21 July 1992.
https://peacemaker.un.org/en/node/9477
[6] Solovyov Vladimir. Carnegie Endowment, Moscow sees Transnistria gas crises as an opportunity to wreak chaos on Moldova, February 3, 2025. https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2025/01/moldova-crisis-transnistria-politics?lang=en

Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (2023–2027)[7], persistent gender stereotypes and limited awareness of gender-based violence, especially on the Left Bank, continue to hinder women's engagement[8]. Against this background, the project aimed to strengthen inclusive peacebuilding across both banks. It supported women-led civil society organizations, delivered targeted capacity-building activities, and advanced the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. By promoting women's leadership, addressing structural gender disparities, and fostering cross-river cooperation, the project contributed to building a more inclusive and resilient foundation for peace and social cohesion in Moldova.

1.2. Project Description

To address some contextual challenges outlined above, focusing on enhancing social cohesion and people- to -people communication, the joint project "*Building Sustainable and Inclusive Peace, Strengthening Trust and Social Cohesion in Moldova*" was developed and launched in September 2022, with implementation through February 2025. Its outcomes focus on: (1) advancing cross-river engagement through human rights, WPS, and service access; and (2) combating hate speech and misinformation to reduce inter-community tensions.

The project was underpinned by a ToC that assumed that if cross-river engagement was strengthened through advancing human rights, promoting the WPS agenda, and improving access to services (Outcome 1), and if divisive narratives and misinformation were effectively addressed through capacity-building and media interventions (Outcome 2), then trust and social cohesion between communities on both banks of the Nistru/Dniester River would be enhanced, thereby contributing to sustainable peacebuilding. The ToC identified inclusive dialogue, rights promotion, and strategic communication as key intermediate steps toward broader social cohesion and conflict prevention goals. To achieve its intended outcomes, the project aimed to deliver the corresponding outputs outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: **Outcomes and outputs of the program**

Outcome 1	**Strengthened cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the advancement of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda and improved access to social services**
Output 1.1	Improved capacities of the conflict settlement process actors to integrate human rights and gender equality perspectives at all levels of the negotiation agenda, including a focus on balanced and meaningful participation of women in the process at all levels
Output 1.2	Civil society organizations from both banks, People's Advocate and human rights focal point from the Left bank, and local community actors from the Security Zone have increased capacities to

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[7] UN Women (2020). *Women's Participation in Peace Processes: UNSCR 1325 and Beyond*. New York: UN Women and UN Department of Political Affairs. https://wps.unwomen.org/participation;

[8] Lesnic, C., Marzac, E., Panta, R., & Sandu, S. (2025). *Monitoring Report of the National Implementation Programme of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security for the Years 2023–2027 (1 Year and 6 Months)*. Chisinau: Platforma pentru Initiativa pentru Securitate si Aparare (PISA);

	JOINTLY engage in advancing human rights and the WPS Agenda and foster effective cross-river dialogue and partnerships.
Output 1.3	People from both banks, including women actors and community leaders, have increased knowledge and understanding of human rights, gender equality and the WPS agenda and are increasingly enabled to access available public services and in cross-river interaction
Outcome 2	**Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation, thereby reducing inter-community tensions**
Output 2.1	CSOs, judges, and law enforcement agents have strengthened their capacities and duty bearers of the Left bank have increased awareness to effectively implement international standards on tackling hate speech
Output 2.2	Moldovan new and traditional media ecosystems are empowered to produce evidence-based, human rights, gender- and conflict-sensitive media products conducive to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination, and pluralism
Output 2.3	Community-level prevention and response in addressing and countering hate speech and discrimination in areas with large refugee populations are strengthened

The project covered both the Right and Left banks of the Nistru River, including the Security Zone. The primary geographical areas of focus were Chisinau, Tiraspol, Bender, Comrat, and Balti, along with various smaller towns and villages located on the Left and Right banks of the Nistru River.

Each UN agency operated within its mandate to deliver a complementary and integrated response. OHCHR focused on advancing human rights and access to justice; UN Women promoted gender equality and the WPS agenda; and UNDP strengthened governance, civic engagement, and media resilience. This division of roles ensured that project design capitalized on each agency's comparative advantage while maintaining a coherent peacebuilding strategy.

These groups were located on both banks of the Nistru/Dniester River and included NGOs, community-based organizations, youth, women, media professionals, paralegals, and other duty bearers and rights holders. Special emphasis was placed on working with journalists and social media influencers. Overall, the project aimed to strengthen the peacebuilding process by engaging diverse groups and promoting people-to-people cooperation across both banks. Collaboration with various stakeholders- such as government institutions and CSOs - was key to amplifying the project's influence and achieving its intended outcomes.

The project was implemented through the following management and technical teams based in Chisinau as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. **Management and technical staff**

No.	OHCHR	UN Women	UNDP
1.	Human Rights Officer	National Project Officer on Gender Equality in Peacebuilding	Project Officer
2.	National Human Rights Officer	Project Associate	Project Associate
3.	Finance and Administrative Associate	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	
4.	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist (external contract)		

1.3. Evaluation Purposes, Objectives and Scope

Purpose: The project was evaluated in accordance with the funding agreement with the UN PBF, with the evaluation report due by 31 May 2025.

The primary ***objective*** of this evaluation was to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in the planning and achievement of results- including in the domains of sustainable peace (conflict prevention and social cohesion) as well as gender and human rights integration - supported by evidence. The evaluation also aimed to (i) Generate useful lessons learned and good practices that highlight both successful and less effective strategies; (ii) Provide clear and actionable recommendations, identifying concrete steps and responsibilities for OHCHR, UN Women, and UNDP; (iii) Assess the project according to OECD/DAC criteria.

In line with UNEG evaluation norms, the evaluation served both *learning and accountability purposes*. It aimed to generate actionable insights to improve future programming (learning) and to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance of project implementation against planned results (accountability). The evaluation matrix, which includes evaluation questions, sub-questions and indicators, is presented in *Technical Annex 6.*

Specifically, the evaluation addressed the following seven OECD/DAC evaluation criteria:

- **Relevance** – *The extent to which the project aligns with the national and regional context, the mandates of the implementing agencies, funds and projects, their comparative advantages, the SDGs, and the needs of stakeholders (both duty-bearers and rights-holders).*
- **Coherence –** *The compatibility of the project with other interventions in the country/region, sector, or organization.*
- **Efficiency –** *The extent to which the project has economically utilized resources to achieve results during its implementation.*
- **Effectiveness** – *The degree to which the* project *has achieved its planned results and targets at the outcome and output levels.*

- **Peacebuilding Effect** – *The extent to which the project has contributed to broader, long-term, and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes.*
- **Sustainability** – *The likelihood that the project's net benefits will continue beyond its conclusion.*
- **Gender, Disability, and Human Rights Considerations** – *The degree to which gender and human rights perspectives have been mainstreamed into the project, and the extent to which results have contributed to the principles of non-discrimination and equality, with particular emphasis on women's rights and disability inclusion.*

The evaluation adopted both summative and formative approaches: it assessed the results achieved (or not achieved) to date (summative), identified lessons learned and good practices, and produced recommendations to inform future programming (formative).

The evaluation report includes six sections: (1) Introduction; (2) Findings; (3) Lessons Learned (4) Good Practices (5) Conclusions; and (6) Recommendations.

1.4. Methodology

Overall Methodological Approach

The evaluation employed a non-experimental, theory-based, mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data sources. The evaluation was guided by the project's ToC to assess how the project's outputs contributed to intended outcomes and broader peacebuilding objectives. A human rights-based and gender-responsive lens was applied throughout the evaluation design and analysis.

Desk Research

A comprehensive review of over 50 documents provided critical contextual and performance insights. These included project proposals, logframes, progress and monitoring reports, baseline and endline data, roadmaps, UN Women and UNDP grant documentation, and outputs from grantee CSOs. The desk review informed sampling, stakeholder mapping, and refinement of KIIs and FGD guides. These documents were also critical for establishing contextual baselines and corroborating qualitative data from stakeholders.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A total of 21 KIIs were conducted with 34 stakeholders (20 men and 14 women), covering project implementing partners (OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women), government counterparts (e.g., Bureau for Reintegration, Ombudsman's Office, General Prosecutor's Office, Parliament), CSOs (e.g., IPIS, CDPD, API, FFUPLM paralegals, media representatives, training moderators, influencers and external experts. KIIs were semi-structured and guided by tailored interview protocols developed in the inception phase (*Technical Annexes 3 and 4*). Findings from some KIIs, for example, were triangulated with the project's baseline study and relevant FGDs.

Focus Group Discussions

Eight FGDs were conducted (four in-person, four online) with 46 participants from both banks and the Security Zone. Participants included youth, teachers, journalists, refugees, leaders of women's CSOs, civic activists, and persons with disabilities (of these, 52% were women and 48% were men). Gender balance and inclusive representation were prioritized by purposely selecting participants across gender, age, disability status, and geography. Special attention was given to involving women, youth, persons with disabilities, refugees, and Roma communities. FGDs were conducted in multiple languages, and gender-sensitive facilitation ensured safe and active participation, aligning with Human Rights-Based and "Leave No One Behind" principles. FGD guides were developed in the inception phase (*Technical Annex 5*) and adapted to support open dialogue on sensitive themes, including peacebuilding, trust-building, civic participation, and discrimination. The purposive sampling method ensured representation across age, gender, region, and activity type.

Summarizing, the evaluation consulted 73 stakeholders/beneficiaries in total via various data collection tools, ensuring diverse representation. This included 7 UN agency staff (OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women), nine government representatives (e.g., Bureau for Reintegration, Ombudsman's Office, Parliament, Prosecutor's Office), 10 CSO representatives, five media actors (journalists and influencers), three paralegals, two external experts, and 46 focus group participants (youth, teachers, journalists, refugees, women leaders, civic activists, and People with Disabilities).

Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder analysis was conducted to systematically map the key groups engaged in the project, their roles, and the ways in which they benefited from the intervention. The table below summarizes the main categories of stakeholders, highlighting their contribution to project implementation and the outcomes they experienced.

Table 3. **Stakeholder Analysis**

Stakeholder Group	Role/Responsibility in the Project	How They Benefited
OHCHR, UN Women, UNDP	Project implementing UN Agencies; thematic leads on human rights, gender equality, peacebuilding, and media.	Strengthened cross-mandate collaboration and piloted integrated peacebuilding models.
Bureau for Reintegration, Ombudsman Office, Prosecutor General's Office, Parliament	Government counterparts; supported rights-based reforms and cross-river dialogue	Capacity strengthened on human rights, hate speech response, and peacebuilding practices
Civil Society Organizations (e.g., CDPD, IPIS, API, FFUPLM, women-led CSOs from the Security Zone)	Delivered grassroots initiatives on peacebuilding, human rights, and social inclusion.	Received grants, training, and capacity-building to expand local peacebuilding actions.

Journalists and Influencers	Produced gender-sensitive, rights-based media content; countered hate speech narratives.	Gained skills in peace journalism, conflict-sensitive reporting, and media literacy
Youth Leaders, Students, Teacher	Engaged in cross-river dialogue, peacebuilding hackathons, leadership training.	Developed leadership skills, contributed to peace education and civic initiatives
Groups in vulnerable situations (persons with disabilities, Roma, Refugees etc.)	Beneficiaries of improved access to services, rights awareness campaigns, and paralegal networks	Enhanced access to information, legal support, and civic engagement opportunities

Field Mission

The field mission took place from 14 - 25 April 2025, comprising one week of in-person data collection in Moldova, followed by remote KIIs and FGDs. On-site consultations were carried out in Chisinau, Criuleni, Dubasari, Bender, and Oxentea. Participants were drawn from the Right Bank (e.g., Chisinau, Causeni, Balti, Stefan-Voda), Left bank (e.g., Tiraspol, Bendery, Ribnita, Grigoriopol), and Security Zone (e.g., Cocieri, Rezina, Varnita, Oxentea). This approach helped ensure broad geographic and demographic representation. KIIs and FGDs were conducted in English, Romanian, and Russian.

Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs were analyzed thematically using a coding framework based on the evaluation matrix and ToC. Quantitative data, including participant statistics and monitoring indicators, were synthesized descriptively. Triangulation across data sources (documents, KIIs, FGDs) ensured the validity and reliability of findings. Attention was given to identifying convergence and divergence of perspectives across different stakeholder groups.

Human Rights, Gender and Disability Considerations

The evaluation was guided by a human rights-based approach and principles of non-discrimination, participation, and inclusiveness, as outlined in international human rights frameworks such as UN Human Rights Treaties and SDG 16. Evaluation tools were designed to explore gender equality, the inclusion of People with disabilities, and the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Sample selection ensured diversity across gender, age, ability, and location. The evaluation applied a human rights-based approach, ensuring diversity by purposive sampling. Of 46 FGD participants, 52% were women and 48% men, including people with disabilities, youth, and refugees. Partnerships with local CSOs enabled access to hard-to-reach populations, especially on the Left bank, ensuring representation often missing from national data.

Ethical Considerations and Adherence to Norms

The evaluation was conducted in full compliance with UNEG Ethical Guidelines, adhering to principles of independence, impartiality, confidentiality, informed consent, and respect for human rights. In addition,

the evaluation was in line with OECD/DAC evaluation criteria and the ethical guidelines of UN Agencies, ensuring adherence to core principles of objectivity, independence, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. A strong emphasis was placed on gender sensitivity and a human rights-based approach throughout the evaluation design, data collection, and analysis phases. Ethical safeguards, including the "Do No Harm" principle, informed consent, data anonymization, and strict confidentiality, were systematically applied. All data were handled in accordance with international data protection standards, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[9], and stored securely to protect respondent privacy and promote the integrity and credibility of the evaluation findings.

2. Main findings presented according to the evaluation criteria

2.1. Relevance

Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?

EQ 1. To what degree has the project addressed the key peacebuilding and conflict prevention challenges in Moldova, within the scope of the UN's mandate in the country and given the changing context in and around Moldova, including in the context of the Left bank of Nistru/Dniester River?

Finding 1.

a) The project contributed to fostering trust across both banks by addressing key challenges in peacebuilding and conflict prevention priorities in Moldova, notably by promoting people-to-people communication between different groups of society (civic activists, youth, women, paralegals). It addressed hate speech, discrimination, and misinformation through educational campaigns, media initiatives, and digital innovation. The project promoted human rights and inclusive service access and helped create spaces for informal dialogue through grassroots engagement. Educational and awareness-raising activities targeted diverse societal groups, enhancing civic literacy and inclusion.

b) The project was fully aligned with the UN Agencies' mandates, namely advancing human rights, WPS agenda, enhancing peacebuilding and conflict resolution. *Findings are based on the desk review, KIIs with project staff and key stakeholders and FGDs with project beneficiaries.*

The project's objectives were highly relevant in addressing key peacebuilding and trust-building needs of CSOs in Moldova, particularly in the context of stalled formal negotiations and rising regional instability following the war in Ukraine. It complemented official efforts by focusing on grassroots engagement and cross-river civic dialogue. Its emphasis on human rights, gender equality, youth agency, and media cooperation contributed meaningfully to fostering trust between populations on both banks of the

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[9] https://gdpr-info.eu/

Nistru/Dniester River. The relevance of the project objectives is evident at the governmental and policy level. For example, representatives of the Moldova Government's Bureau of Reintegration emphasized the importance of initiatives focused on confidence-building between the two banks, which align with Moldova's long-term vision for reintegration. The project objectives also proved highly appropriate considering the tensions that arose following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022 and the energy crises that predominantly affected populations on the Left bank in 2025. The project addressed these circumstances namely decreasing trust and social cohesion between the population of the Left and Right banks effectively. It responded to the humanitarian and socio-economic effects of the regional shocks (e.g., energy crises that affected the Left bank at the beginning of 2025) and the stagnation of political dialogue (e.g., the 5+2 format) by complementing official negotiations with grassroots engagement.

The project engaged various target groups within society on both banks at the macro -, meso- and micro-levels. At the meso-level, it fostered the establishment and/or continuation of informal cooperation among CSOs, media, teachers and, to some extent, human rights stakeholders on both the Left and Right banks (e.g., representatives of Moldova People Advocate's Office and the Left bank so-called "human right focal point"). Through participation in joint activities - such as media projects and cross-bank civic activities, and peace education materials (including co-produced publications) the project fostered cross-river collaboration and cross-community trust-building. Civil society representatives and local community actors highlighted the project's utility in advancing peace education, hate speech monitoring, and civic awareness in both the Security Zone and Left bank.

On the micro- level, it supported cooperation among different social groups, including students, teachers, academic staff, refugees, and rural and urban residents across both banks. This inclusive approach enabled the project to address key challenges related to peacebuilding, foster community dialogue, contribute to conflict prevention, and enhance social cohesion. This alignment was particularly evident in UNDP's collaboration with CDPD, where paralegal services promoted legal empowerment using rights-based approaches. FFUPLM's deep listening sessions reinforced the project's relevance by addressing refugee trauma and fostering social cohesion.

Additionally, the project supported macro-level changes, such as, forexample, working with the Prosecutor General's Office to promote awareness and procedural improvements in responding to hate speech, particularly in online media. While not driving macro-level reform, these activities contributed to laying the groundwork for longer-term institutional change.

EQ2: Were the project ToC and project design relevant, and did they remain so throughout implementation (including the adaptability to changing circumstances and risks)?

Finding 2. The project's ToC and design were relevant at inception, being well-grounded in community needs and addressing key peacebuilding priorities. The project also demonstrated strong adaptive

capacity, maintaining its relevance particularly in navigating complex implementation contexts on the Left bank, where formal engagement with representatives of the de facto structures was not feasible. However, the project's objectives were somewhat ambitious given the available resources and the sensitive nature of the topics addressed. While the project's thematic focus on misinformation, hate speech, and divisive narratives was highly relevant, it was relatively new for many stakeholders, particularly on the Left bank, where previous programming experience was limited.

Although such topics were relatively less sensitive on the Right bank, the project's broad scope (combined with resource and time constraints) posed challenges for deep engagement across all target groups and geographic areas. The evaluation found that a more focused design, with clearer prioritization of activities and target groups, could have enhanced feasibility and impact within the project's timeframe and available capacities. Nonetheless, this first PBF project generated valuable lessons that can inform the design of future, more targeted interventions in the area. *Finding is based on the desk review, KIIs with project staff and key stakeholders (CSOs from the Left and Right bank).*

The project was the first PBF - funded initiative implemented in Moldova. Its design process was led by the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and the implementing UN agencies, who facilitated a consultative and participatory approach. Key stakeholders, including government institutions, civil society organizations (e.g., CDPD, IPIS, FFUPLM etc.), and potential target groups from both banks, were actively engaged during project formulation. Stakeholders emphasized that the design was grounded in empirical assessments, such as Road Maps and structured consultations, helping ensure alignment with the identified community needs on both banks. The ToC addressed core peacebuilding and conflict prevention challenges by integrating multiple approaches, including human rights promotion, gender equality, and media resilience. However, the project's scope, particularly under Outcome 2 focusing on divisive narratives, misinformation, and hate speech, was relatively ambitious considering the available human and financial resources and the limited prior experience of national stakeholders in these areas.

As one CSO representative mentioned, *"At the beginning, tackling disinformation and hate speech was relatively new for Moldova. It was a bit difficult to implement some activities. Nowadays, many projects are working on this issue".* This highlights both the pioneering nature of the intervention and the challenges associated with introducing new thematic areas within a limited timeframe.

Despite these constraints, the project successfully engaged a wide range of target groups during its limited lifespan. As a pilot initiative, this can be considered a positive example of inclusive programming. Nevertheless, future interventions in this area could enhance impact by narrowing their focus to a smaller set of target groups and thematic areas. The project also demonstrated adaptive capacity by responding to political and operational barriers: when formal engagement with the representatives of governmental and de facto structures was not feasible, the project effectively pivoted to informal, community-led, and civil society-driven activities to sustain progress toward its objectives.

Gender considerations and the engagement of vulnerable groups were incorporated into the project design by integrating the WPS agenda and applying a human rights-based approach across outcomes.

Implementation reflected these priorities through targeted activities engaging women, persons with disabilities, Roma, and refugees. While gender and vulnerability aspects were addressed in several initiatives, the depth of integration varied, with stronger results achieved in activities such as paralegal networks, deep listening exercises and youth engagement. However, the participation of marginalized groups in other project activities was limited.

EQ3: To what extent has the project been aligned with national peacebuilding initiatives and national stakeholders' priorities (duty bearers, rights holders and especially of vulnerable groups)?

> **Finding 3.** The project demonstrates a strong alignment with both national peacebuilding efforts and the priorities of various stakeholders, including vulnerable groups. The project's activities were designed to address specific needs and contribute to broader goals of reintegration, conflict prevention, and social inclusion, making it a well-integrated and relevant intervention within the Moldovan context. Stakeholders from different social groups (e.g., journalists, influencers, representatives of public structures, youths, teachers etc.) confirmed that the project was relevant to their needs. Furthermore, the intervention was also relevant to the vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, refugees, Roma population, especially on the Left bank, where tailored initiatives improved access to rights-based services, public awareness, and community participation. *Finding is based on the desk review, KIIs with project staff and key stakeholders (CSOs from the Left and Right bank).*

The project aligned with Moldova's reintegration priorities coordinated by the Bureau for Reintegration, as well as the National Action Plan on WPS (2023–2027), advancing objectives related to trust-building, civic reintegration, and inclusive dialogue. It complemented national efforts like the Confidence-Building Measures Program, the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030," and Moldova's National Program for ensuring respect of human rights (2024-2027) by enhancing cross-river cooperation, promoting anti-hate speech initiatives, and expanding legal access for vulnerable groups. Activities such as youth-led peace initiatives, paralegal support networks, and cross-river media collaboration directly contributed to Moldova's broader goals of peacebuilding, social cohesion, and anti-discrimination.

Project activities were designed in consultation and in accordance with the needs and priorities of various groups, including people in vulnerable situations. For example, the project implemented activities aimed at social inclusion and the starting provision or improvement of access to social services for persons with disabilities on the Left bank as well as for the Roma community. Feedback from key stakeholders confirmed that these actions responded to pressing needs of target groups and laid the groundwork for more inclusive social services and dialogue in the longer term.

The project's engagement with youth and fostering cooperation between young people on both banks proved highly relevant, particularly among students involved in the project. Several students from the

Left bank, already studying in Chisinau, participated in project activities. Left bank FGDs with students confirmed that the activities and events organized by the project significantly contributed to fostering cooperation, empathy and dialogue between youth from both banks. Involving school pupils in project activities enhanced social cohesion both within schools and at a broader community level in their respective villages. Youth-focused activities such as the Peacebuilding Hackathon responded to youth demand for digital peacebuilding solutions. Journalists, influencers, and environmental activists also noted that the activities conducted aligned well with their needs and priorities.

Institutional stakeholders, including the General Prosecutor's Office and the Ombudsman's Office, confirmed that the project was consistent with ongoing national legal reform priorities, particularly in areas such as combating hate speech (especially online), discrimination (especially issues related to the rights of the LGBTQ+ community), and promoting procedural justice.

In addition, efforts to support refugee integration enhanced to a certain level social cohesion and empathy between refugees and host communities on both banks.

2.2. Coherence

EQ4. To what extent did the project ensure coordination and synergies (i) within the different implementing entities within the project, (ii) with implementing UN agencies' programs and (iii) with other implementing organizations and donors?

EQ4.1. Coordination and synergies within the different implementing agencies.

> **Finding 4.1.**
>
> While the project demonstrated internal coherence and smooth implementation due to each UN agency's thematic expertise and established coordination mechanisms, the insufficient direct collaboration and coordination during the planning phase of particular activities limited the potential for synergy across outputs and activities. The inter-agency coordination was adequate to ensure overall implementation, but could have been improved to maximize its cumulative impact. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff and FGDs from project beneficiaries*

The evaluation also tested the underlying assumptions of the project's ToC, including whether strengthened cross-river engagement and improved rights awareness would contribute to greater trust and social cohesion, and whether coordinated interventions by multiple UN Agencies would enhance the project's coherence and effectiveness. The project demonstrated strong internal coherence among the three UN implementing agencies, with each agency contributing based on its comparative advantage - OHCHR focused on rights-based programming and advancing human rights in general in both banks, UNDP on governance and economic development, and UN Women on gender equality and women's leadership.

Project implementation commenced with online and offline coordination mechanisms, overseen by OHCHR Moldova's project coordination team. However, as the project progressed and its main framework was established, coordination meetings became less frequent. This, coupled with limited collaboration during the project's initial design phase, reduced opportunities for strategic alignment.

Given generally limited cooperation in activities implementation, cases of direct collaboration during specific activities were few; most activities were carried out independently by each agency. This somewhat reduced the potential synergies in project implementation. For example, youth-focused initiatives led by UN Women and UNDP in the same region were not cross-promoted to beneficiaries, missing the chance for joint follow-up and greater visibility. In some cases, beneficiaries of one agency's activity were unaware of other project components delivered nearby by partner agencies. This limited coordination during the planning phase of project activities impeded, to a certain extent, the full realization of potential synergies across activities.

EQ4.2. Coherence and synergy with implementing UN agencies' programs

Finding 4.2. The project demonstrated a strong level of internal coherence with the programs of UN Agencies (OHCHR, UN Women, UNDP) in Moldova, contributing effectively to common goals like peacebuilding, gender equality, and human rights advancement. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff and FGDs from project beneficiaries, desk research.*

The assessment identified a strong internal coherence of the project with the other programs implemented by each implementing agency and the overall UN strategy in Moldova, which primarily focuses on supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes. Specifically, the project aligned well with other initiatives carried out by UNDP in areas such as peacebuilding, conflict prevention, gender equality, human rights, and related domains. During interviews with project beneficiaries, some participants also engaged with or were aware of other UNDP programs, highlighting positive experiences and demonstrating synergies among these initiatives.

UN Women's efforts have been geared towards the economic empowerment of women and the promotion of their meaningful role within the WPS agenda and other aspects of gender equality and inclusiveness. High internal coherence was also observed within UN Women's other activities and strategies in Moldova. Furthermore, the project's gender-inclusive design and collaboration with local peacebuilding platforms mirrored these priorities, reinforcing coherence with UN Women's broader programming. UN Women's grant-making via the CONTACT Center leveraged existing CSO networks built during earlier Security Zone programming.

Similarly, the OHCHR reflected strategic alignment with its overarching policies and strategies. The project's activities contributed to the promotion of human rights, including Left bank. It collaborated with various vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, women, youth, and refugees, addressing issues such as hate speech and misinformation. These activities were consistent with OHCHR's mandate both globally and within Moldova.

EQ4.3. Coherence and Sinergy with other implementing organizations and donors

> **Finding 4.3.** Overall, the project demonstrated a strong degree of coherence with other donor-funded programs and national governmental initiatives aimed at shared objectives of peacebuilding and social cohesion in Moldova. However, there is room for the improvement of the coordination and enhancing the synergies between the Agencies operating in the field. Strengthening inter-agency collaboration at the operational level could further maximize the project's peace-building impact. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff and other stakeholders, desk research.*

The project aligned closely with government policies on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. During KIIs representatives from the Bureau of Reintegration and the Parliament emphasized the importance of enhancing people-to-people coordination and social cohesion, particularly given the current context of geopolitical tensions and energy crises in the Left bank.

While some partners have noted the need for improved coordination, the project also complements other confidence-building and development initiatives led by international actors such as, OSCE Moldova's overall strategic policies, the EU's Confidence Building Measures, the International Organization for Migration, the Swiss Development Cooperation. It is worth mentioning that youth participants in one of the project's activities even submitted a joint letter to the OSCE Chairmanship, advocating for more cross-river dialogue.

Furthermore, the project aligned with the efforts of national CSOs working on peacebuilding, gender equality, and the rights of vulnerable populations. For example, representatives from CDPD (a CSO promoting the rights of people with disabilities) highlighted that relevant project activities were an integral part of the broader strategy to improve conditions for people with disabilities on both banks. Community-based CSOs and teachers observed that the intervention filled gaps in peace education and civic education.

While coordination among UN agencies was generally effective at the strategic level, interviews with project staff and implementing partners indicated that operational synergies could have been more substantial. For example, field-level activities were often managed independently by each agency, with limited instances of joint delivery or integrated outreach efforts. Some beneficiaries and CSO partners were unaware of the broader multi-agency nature of the project, perceiving activities as isolated initiatives rather than parts of a coherent program. These observations suggest that while collaboration existed, greater operational integration could have enhanced the project's visibility and impact.

Efficiency

How well are resources being used?

EQ5: To what extent has the project been efficient in using the human, financial, and intellectual resources at its disposal to achieve its targeted outcomes?

EQ5.1. Have the organizational arrangements used in the project been adequate?

> **Finding 5.1.** Overall, the project was built on a clearly defined organizational structure and working modalities that facilitated effective coordination among implementing UN Agencies. The regular meetings and smooth exchange of information helped maintain general alignment across activities. However, initial implementation delays (partly due to agency-specific approval and procurement procedures) hindered the efficient synchronization of efforts across agencies. This occasionally limited the conceptual and practical coherence between parallel activities. Bureaucratic challenges, especially on the Left bank, caused difficulties in implementing some project activities. Nevertheless, CSOs from Left bank leveraged their informal social networks to implement project-related activities most efficiently. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff and FGDs from project beneficiaries, desk research.*

The organizational structure and working modalities of the project implementation were clearly outlined in the project document. Additionally, throughout the implementation process, there were no significant impediments to coordination among the UN agencies. Regular inter-agency meetings and smooth information exchange, especially in the initial phases of the project, contributed to alignment. The start of implementation faced some initial variances in pace across the UN agencies. While some agencies experienced delays, such as those related to recruitment processes, others were able to advance more rapidly. This temporal misalignment somewhat affected the overall conceptual and operational coherence and synergies between activities carried out by different agencies.

While the project proposal defined human resources needs for implementation, the number of activities placed significant pressure on the available staff, particularly in contexts requiring intensive field-level coordination. Providing an additional dedicated staff member for each implementing agency could have reduced workload, improved responsiveness and allowed for more timely execution of activities.

Overall, the project involved a relatively high number of activities within a short timeframe and a constrained budget. While the available budget was generally sufficient to implement the planned activities, this sometimes restricted the follow-up processes. For example, the deep listening initiative designed to enhance social cohesion between refugees and local communities remained in an initial pilot stage due to time and resource constraints.

Decision-making processes for most activities proceeded smoothly. However, the prevailing political situation on the Left bank occasionally posed challenges to the implementation of activities. In several cases, de facto structures prohibited participation of representatives of the so-called "Focal Point for Human Rights from the Left bank" in certain activities such as visits to psychiatric institutions on the Right bank. Despite these challenges, experienced implementers and CSOs on the Left bank were able to overcome these obstacles and support activities. In one instance, a CSO representative used her informal connections within the de facto structures to advocate for the project's importance, enabling

sensitive activities to proceed. Such flexibility and local ownership proved critical to maintaining the project's operational continuity.

EQ 5.2. Has monitoring data been systematically collected and analyzed and fed into management decisions?

Finding 5.2. The project incorporated standard monitoring mechanisms, including participant lists, attendance records, and pre/post-test questionnaires. This data was collected and analyzed to inform decision- making on the activity level – for instance, where improvements were needed in collecting data on vulnerable populations, particularly People with Disabilities and the Roma; where post-test results indicated positive outcomes, specific training sessions were repeated or expanded. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff, desk research.*

While the project incorporated standard monitoring mechanisms, including participant lists, attendance records, and activity feedback forms, a broader results-based monitoring system was partially developed. The project's results framework included outputs and outcomes, but some indicators, particularly those related to capacity-building and awareness, were more descriptive than results-oriented, limiting the ability to measure higher-level changes systematically. Although monitoring data was primarily used for activity-level adjustments, its integration into broader strategic decision-making and adaptive programming was limited. Strengthening monitoring systems to better capture progress toward outcomes would enhance future project management and learning.

The OHCHR and UN Women agencies engaged monitoring and evaluation staff and expertise (external contract in case of OHCHR) in the project implementation process. UNDP delegated data monitoring-related responsibilities to the project coordinator who managed data collection and reporting. A baseline and endline study were conducted to assess the project's achievements based on key outcome- level indicators.

Overall, both descriptive data (such as participant lists and attendance figures) and analytical data (including pre- and post-test results and information about grant beneficiaries) were collected and analyzed. However, monitoring tools lacked specific disaggregation frameworks for vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities and the Roma population. While gender and youth participation were tracked systematically, further improvements are needed to ensure inclusivity and accountability in data collection and reporting for all target populations.

In several instances, monitoring data informed future decision-making; for example, as noted by the OHCHR team, evaluation forms and participant feedback were used to adjust the format and content of subsequent events to better match participants' needs and preferences.

EQ 5.3. Was the conflict-sensitivity approach applied throughout the project?

Finding 5.3. The project successfully integrated a conflict-sensitive approach throughout all stages of implementation. This was evident in communications with selection of participants and beneficiaries, and in crafting grant application calls. Collaboration with CSOs on both banks and the inclusion of journalists and influencers were also conducted through a conflict-sensitive lens. Journalists and influencers were trained to report and publish media content using conflict-sensitive language. Many participating CSOs and experts brought prior experience in reintegration policy or international peacebuilding. These elements significantly supported the integration of conflict-sensitive practices, helping the project navigate sensitive political and social dynamics. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff and FGDs from project beneficiaries, desk research.*

Evidence from desk research and fieldwork indicates that all implementing agencies applied a conflict-sensitive approach throughout each stage of the project implementation. This included correspondence with de facto structures on the Left bank, as well as the selection of participants and beneficiaries for project activities. Additionally, the design of the call for grant applications considered this approach. Collaboration with CSOs on both banks, and the engagement of journalists and influencers were based on the conflict-sensitive approach. Journalists from both banks participating in focus groups indicated that the selected reporting topics were more neutral and less sensitive. Furthermore, they received training in using appropriate language and specific terminology when employing a conflict-based reporting approach. At the same time, CSO collaborations promoted neutral spaces for exchange, deliberately avoiding politically sensitive terminology that could trigger tensions.

Furthermore, several CSOs that carried out certain activities already had prior experience in applying conflict-sensitive approaches, with some founders previously holding governmental roles in Moldova on reintegration issues. This background helped to ensure smooth implementation of the project. Additionally, experts involved in discussions and workshops also brought both local and international experience in applying conflict-sensitive methodologies.

EQ 5.4. Were the funds provided through grants to local partners/CSOs used in line with the project objectives?

Finding 5.4. Grants provided to local partners and CSOs effectively advanced the project's peacebuilding objectives by enabling the implementation of grassroots initiatives and fostering cross-river cooperation, particularly between stakeholders in the Security Zone and the Left bank. However, the grant disbursement process faced operational challenges, including administrative delays, some bureaucratic procedures, and issues related to "double taxation" on the Left bank. *Finding is based on the KIIs with project staff and FGDs from project beneficiaries, desk research.*

Grants provided to local partners and CSOs directly supported the achievement of both project outputs and intermediate outcomes. These grants enabled the implementation of project activities and the achievement of outputs, which in turn contributed to the realization of project outcomes.

During fieldwork, it was observed that most participating CSOs had prior experience of peacebuilding and confidence-building engagement. The project also enabled engagement with grassroots organizations in the Security Zone, fostering increased cooperation between the sides (the Security Zone and the Left bank). In this regard, the grant disbursement process had both direct and indirect positive impacts.

While the grant disbursement process was generally well-targeted and facilitated key peacebuilding activities, some challenges were encountered that slowed down its overall impact. In some instances, delays in grant disbursements affected implementation schedules and compressed activity timelines. For instance, grant disbursement delays affected CDPD's paralegal training schedule, compressing the window for legal outreach on the Left bank. Additionally, some participants, particularly those from the Left bank, reported difficulties in completing grant application forms due to limited experience with formal procedures. The short timeline of the project also restricted its overall impact, with some grantees implementing activities for as little as three months. Furthermore, FGDs participants from the security zone and the Left bank noted that the grant amount (approximately USD 5,000) was relatively small to fully meet project objectives. In the Left bank, "double taxation" significantly reduced the net amount received. While UN agencies attempted to support these organizations in avoiding double taxation, interviewees suggested that these efforts need to be scaled. Smaller NGOs noted that dual taxation and donor reporting requirements could discourage them from applying for project grants. Additionally, some journalists collaborating on cross-river productions with their peers from the Right bank flagged that the honorarium offered was relatively modest compared to the workload. This was particularly relevant for Left bank, where some media outlets may face closure due to financial difficulties or restrictions imposed by de facto structures.

2.4. Effectiveness

Core question: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?

EQ6: What outcomes have been achieved (intended and unintended), including progress against project indicators?

The evaluation assessed progress toward outcomes by triangulating project monitoring data (e.g., baseline and endline studies, output reports) with independent qualitative evidence collected through KIIs, FGDs, and document reviews. The analysis reflects a combination of both project-reported data and independent verification through fieldwork. The evaluation found that the project made strong progress toward its intended outcomes, although achievement varied across different areas.

Under **Outcome I** (enhancing cross-river engagement, human rights promotion, and access to services), results were mixed. Perceptions of cross-river engagement declined by 6.6 percentage points, which is largely attributed to external factors beyond the project's control. Increased belligerent rhetoric between the two banks, and the 2025 energy crisis on the Left bank likely contributed to heightened perceptions of exclusion largely due to structural barriers, reduced communication, Nevertheless, the

project expanded civil society advocacy, with 23 human rights initiatives developed and 14 formally communicated to settlement actors, surpassing baseline levels. As such, the decrease in cross-river engagement should be viewed in the context of external developments rather than project shortcomings.

Monitoring data and independent evidence from KIIs and FGDs indicated that access to paralegal services slightly improved, particularly for women and people with disabilities. FGDs revealed increased legal literacy and awareness to a certain extent, though access remained uneven in remote Left bank areas due to mobility constraints and institutional distrust. Outputs such as the establishment of paralegal networks and legal awareness campaigns were instrumental in laying the groundwork for longer-term improvements, despite remaining structural barriers.

Under **Outcome 2** (advancing peace narratives and countering hate speech) progress was more consistent. The evaluation found that media professionals trained through the Peace Journalism e-course and media literacy workshops integrated conflict-sensitive reporting practices into their broader work, contributing to a more balanced media discourse beyond the immediate scope of project activities. FGDs with journalists confirmed a noticeable shift toward more nuanced narratives on sensitive topics, while social media influencers expanded outreach campaigns to a certain degree, promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. Outputs such as joint cross-river media productions and public information campaigns directly supported these positive trends.

Capacities among CSOs and media outlets to respond to divisive narratives and misinformation also improved, evidenced by a 5.1 percentage point increase in content production addressing peace and human rights themes. However, the engagement of rights-holders in combating misinformation slightly declined, reflecting persistent challenges in mobilizing broader community participation, particularly in polarized or hard-to-reach communities.

Overall, 72% of project indicators were fully achieved or overachieved, reflecting strong performance at the output level. Yet, deeper systemic change was constrained by external factors, including the energy crisis, limited institutional uptake of project initiatives, and enduring barriers to cross-river cooperation. Despite these challenges, triangulation of monitoring data and qualitative findings, including KIIs and FGDs, confirms that the project catalyzed increased cross-river dialogue, empowered CSOs and youth, and contributed meaningfully to Moldova's peacebuilding landscape by strengthening rights awareness, improving access to services, and fostering a more constructive media environment.

Under Outcome 1, 3 of the 9 indicators were fully achieved, 3 were overachieved, and 3 were partially achieved. Under Outcome 2, of the 11 indicators were fully achieved, 5 exceeded expectations, 1 was partially achieved, and 1 was not achieved. A detailed breakdown of these indicators is available in *Annex 1*. Overall, the project was more successful in achieving output-level indicators than in fully achieving the outcome-level objectives.

The following section assesses how the project's outputs and activities contributed to the outcome-level changes observed, highlighting the pathways through which immediate results supported broader peacebuilding objectives.

Outcome 1: Enhanced cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the promotion of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, and improved

Output 1.1	Improved capacities of the conflict settlement process actors to integrate human rights and gender equality perspectives at all levels of the negotiation agenda, including a focus on balanced and meaningful participation of women in the process at all levels.

Finding 6.1. While the project aimed to foster dialogue between government representatives and de facto structures from the Left bank, political sensitivities limited direct engagement. However, so-called "Focal Point for Human Rights from the Left bank" participated in selected activities. There is a general openness among Left bank stakeholders to collaborate with international organizations on improving human rights and social services for vulnerable populations. The project demonstrated adaptive management by reallocating resources effectively, such as, for example, facilitating a study visit to the Parliament for youth, paving the way for potential internships and future engagement opportunities. *Finding is based on the Desk review of project documents and KIIs*

One key focus of the output was to facilitate informal dialogue between government institutional representatives and representatives of de facto structures from the Left bank. However, due to the tense political environment and persistent structural challenges, progress in this area remained limited. Nevertheless, representatives from the so-called "Focal Point for Human Rights from the Left bank" participated in selected project activities. KIIs confirmed that stakeholders demonstrated openness to continue cooperation with international organizations, in particular to implement best practices that improve human rights protection on the Left bank and access to social services for vulnerable populations, such as people with disabilities, including persons with psycho-social disabilities.

While engagement with de facto structures remained constrained, the project adopted an adaptive management approach. For example, UN Women reallocated funds to other activities – e.g., a study visit for youth to the parliament increased their understanding of Moldova's legislative process. Additionally, there is high probability for two young people from the Left bank to undertake internships within the parliament, representing a promising development for future long-term engagement.

Output 1.2	Civil society organizations from both banks, People's Advocate and human rights focal point from the Left bank, and local community actors from the Security Zone have increased capacities to JOINTLY engage in advancing human rights and the WPS Agenda and foster effective cross-river dialogue and partnerships.

Finding 6.2. Activities under Output 1.2 were implemented effectively, with notable contribution from UN Women in fostering cooperation in the Security Zone and the Left bank. By mobilizing local action groups (LAGs) and CSOs in community renewal projects, a meaningful interaction between both banks was facilitated. The OHCHR successfully established a cross-river CSOs network, enhancing its members' capacities in conflict prevention and advocacy. This led to the development and signing of a cross-river declaration, providing a foundation for future collaboration. The OHCHR's was instrumental in delivering training sessions on CERD and CRPD, promoting cooperation and raising awareness about Roma rights, leading to increased participation from the Roma community in CSOs activities. Initiatives such as youth debates and human rights forums furthered advocacy within target communities. *Finding is based on the Desk review of project documents, KIIs, FGDs*

Most activities under Output 1.2 were implemented very effectively, particularly those led by UN Women in the Security Zone. The approach to fostering people-to-people cooperation, especially with grassroots organizations, from the Left bank, was well organized, planned, executed and adapted to available time and resources. The approach included engagement with LAGs and other CSOs supported by the EU and other donors as well as engaging grassroots organizations from the Left bank. Small-scale infrastructural projects, such as the rehabilitation of well water systems or organizing the cultural festival with participants from both banks, helped renew the local community and build social cohesion among participants. According to one representative from the Left bank, "*I live just on the other side of the river, and there was limited communication among the people from the Left bank. Many residents on the Left bank have never gone to the right bank, but initiatives like this provide an opportunity to interact and feel that we are the same people*," (woman, 40+ years old). Cultural initiatives, including joint festivals, inclusive art exhibitions, and poetry publications, further strengthened social cohesion and people-to-people communication.

With the support from OHCHR, training sessions on CERD and CRPD were organized and conducted. As a result, CSOs from both banks cooperated and submitted joint reports to UN Treaty Bodies. Furthermore, this allowed for the engagement of local CSOs from both banks and created opportunities for both formal and informal cooperation. These trainings addressed stereotypes and promoted understanding about the rights of the Roma population, especially on the Left bank where rights face limitations. The activities also promoted positive media coverage of this community. As a result, some Roma community members have begun to actively participate in activities organized by CSOs on the Left bank. Additionally, two CERD shadow reports were prepared. Visits to Geneva were also organized as part of the project. Complementary activities such as youth debates, human rights forums, and advocacy initiatives further advanced human rights awareness within the target communities. This cross-river CSOs network enhances its members' capacities in conflict prevention and advocacy. This led to the development and signing of a cross-river declaration, providing a foundation for future collaboration.

Output 1.3	People from both banks, including women actors and community leaders, have increased knowledge and understanding of human rights, gender equality and the WPS agenda and are increasingly enabled to access available public services and in cross-river interaction

Finding 6.3. This output aimed to enhance knowledge of human rights, the WPS agenda, and access to public social services, achieving varied success across different groups. OHCHR effectively engaged youth and teachers through innovative methods like digital tools and art projects to promote peacebuilding and human rights. However, the lack of unified conceptual framework was identified. Youth engagement through workshops, camps, and hackathons fostered cross-river dialogue, trust, and understanding of gender equality, supporting women's empowerment. This approach culminated in a joint youth statement to the OSCE's Chairmanship-in-Office. UNDP supported the initial establishment of a paralegal network (roadmap, handbook, recruitment) to provide legal aid, including training and study visits of paralegals. While this helped disseminate information about various services and facilitate their accessibility, the network's long-term sustainability and outreach is somewhat limited. *Finding is based on the Desk review of project documents, KIIs, FGDs*

The activities under this output engaged a wide range of social groups and addressed various thematic areas, primary aiming at enhancing knowledge of human rights, the WPS agenda, and access to public social services. These objectives were partially achieved, with varying levels of success across different groups and thematic areas.

OHCHR collaborated with youth, art students and academic staff, employing digital tools, flash mobs, and murals to address topics related to peacebuilding and human rights. One art professor noted: "*Through workshops, those of us with traditional teaching perceptions gained new insights into modern teaching methods. It was very interesting and effective*" (woman over 50). This feedback indicates that innovative teaching approaches can have a long-term impact on educators, inspiring them to incorporate new knowledge into their daily traditional practices. An art exhibition focusing on peacebuilding and human rights topics positively contributed to promoting these subjects among students. Based on positive lessons learned, future initiatives could benefit from developing a more cohesive conceptual framework to better link art-based interventions to broader peacebuilding objectives, thereby amplifying their impact. Youth engagement from both banks through extended workshops and youth camps highly effectively fostered people-to-people dialogue, trust-building, and enhanced understanding of gender equality and women economic empowerment. These activities also contributed to the empowerment of women in public institutions and promoted economic empowerment. FGDs with youth from both banks confirmed awareness of most participants with human rights and gender equality issues. Participation in summer leadership camps and other activities improved communication between the groups, and provided information about the social, cultural, and educational resources available on the Right bank. Additionally, the project contributed to strengthening women's participation in STEM's areas through activities like hackathons, which facilitated peacebuilding processes, critical reflection, and the importance

of social cohesion. This engagement culminated with the development of a joint youth statement addressed to the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office.

The situation for vulnerable groups, including women, children, people with Disabilities, older persons, ethnic minorities, and victims of domestic violence, remains challenging on the Left bank. UNDP, through the CDPD, developed a network of paralegals in that region to enhance access to legal support for People with Disabilities. The activity included developing a roadmap for establishing this network and drafting a handbook designed for paralegals. Additionally, through CSOs of the Left bank a network of 25 paralegals was recruited and trained. They participated in 5 study visits to observe how best practices operate on the Right bank. Subsequently, paralegals selected topics of interest, such as rights and services for people with disabilities and delivered lectures to broader communities in the Left bank (one paralegal delivered approximately two lectures). These efforts helped disseminate information and raise awareness about paralegals and various services, to which they can facilitate access, within the local community. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to institutionalize the capacity of paralegals on the Left bank to ensure sustainable and effective legal aid services for the population.

Outcome II: Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation, resulting in reduced inter-community tensions.

Output 2.1	CSOs, judges, and law enforcement agents have strengthened their capacities and duty bearers of the Left bank have increased awareness to effectively implement international standards on tackling hate speech

Finding 6.4. Hate speech, misinformation, and divisive narratives remain major impediments to peacebuilding efforts and social cohesion across both banks and within local communities in Moldova. In response, OHCHR developed a multi-component strategy, including training of 59 law enforcement personnel and developing a Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech, to address these issues. While progress has been made, further capacity building for civil servants and judicial actors is needed.

To response to the growing prevalence of online hate speech, UNDP supported development of innovative software, through a youth-focused hackathon. However, continued support to use these tools is crucial. Collaborations with social media influencers and media literacy initiatives have also proven effective, especially for engaging youth and reshaping online discourse. Despite structural and societal challenges, these collective efforts have established a foundation for continued anti-hate speech endeavors in Moldova. *Finding is based on the Desk review of project documents, KIIs, FGDs*

Issues related to hate speech, misinformation and divisive narratives remain among the key challenges for peacebuilding efforts both banks and within local communities. The spread of hate speech messages is common on both sides, particularly on social media platforms. The institutional approach to addressing hate speech is relatively new in Moldova. The OHCHR developed a comprehensive strategy to collaborate with government representatives, including judges, prosecutors, and police officers, to raise

awareness about online hate speech and to provide training-of-trainers(ToT). A total of 59 law enforcement personnel were trained through this initiative. Additionally, the Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech has been developed, and approved by the General Prosecutor's Office.. According to KIIs with government representatives, the trainings were well received and highly effective. However, further capacity building is necessary to strengthen implementation at the level of civil servants.

Given the proliferation of hate speech online, the development of new software tools to detect and address such messages is critical. Engaging youth in these activities also plays an important role in combating hate speech. With support from UNDP, a hackathon was organized to foster the development of such tools. Three innovative tools were developed through this process. Continued support is needed to ensure their effective deployment.

Collaborating with social media influencers has strong potential to shape online discourse and combat hate speech. OHCHR recruited influencers from both banks and provided training to enhance their capacity. This approach was highly effective, especially for influencers from the Left bank, many of whom previously had little awareness of the issue. Numerous activities, including workshops, youth camps, and the creation of visual content, were organized to promote anti-hate speech messages. Additionally, media literacy training and work with journalists have been conducted to address hate speech. Despite enduring structural, societal and political challenges that enable the hate messages, this project has laid a foundation for ongoing efforts to tackle this phenomenon across both banks of Moldova.

Output 2.2	Moldovan new and traditional media ecosystems are empowered to produce evidence-based, human rights, gender- and conflict-sensitive media products conducive to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination, and pluralism

Finding 6.5. New and traditional media, supported by UN Women have demonstrated the potential to promote gender equality, human rights, tolerance, and peacebuilding. The project organized tailored trainings for journalists from both banks and established cooperation and facilitated joint articles between the Left and the Right bank journalists from various media outlets. These collaborations resulted in published content addressing key issues like gender equality and conflict sensitivity, thereby contributing to increased public awareness and building informal communication channels between journalists.

OHCHR supported the establishment of media academy to emphasize the role of journalists in peace building process and counteracting divisive narratives, The online course on peace journalism was developed, pending online publication and advertising, distribution.

UNDP also supported the development of three digital software tools to combat hate speech, and joint articles addressed misinformation and divisive narratives. Given the geopolitical context and the prevalence of actors spreading harmful content, these activities were timely and essential. They laid a

> foundation platform for further promoting understanding and combating hate speech as a barrier for social cohesion in Moldova. *Finding is based on the Desk review of project documents, KIIs, FGDs*

New and traditional media sources have the capacity to produce content that supports gender equality, promotes human rights, and facilitates tolerance, non-discrimination, and other topics that encourage people-to-people communication and peacebuilding within society. Through UN Women's support via the API, activities were implemented to train journalists, establish cooperation, and produce joint articles between journalists from the Left and Right banks. Participants in these activities were recruited from major cities on both banks, such as Chisinau, Bălți, Tiraspol, as well as smaller municipalities. The media outlets involved included newspapers, TV stations, and online platforms.

With the collaboration of journalists from both banks, a variety of articles, multimedia content, and media products were published, addressing topics such as gender equality, women's economic empowerment, human rights, conflict sensitivity, and other relevant issues. These outputs contributed to increased civic awareness and promoted inclusive narratives. FGDs with journalists confirmed that these activities raised public awareness in a highly effective way. Journalists also reported that this cooperation fostered cross-river informal communication networks between them, working on these media projects provided journalists with experience in finding common ground, even when their perspectives differ on specific subjects.

OHCHR organized a media academy that included journalists from both banks, and explored the role of the journalists in peace building. An online course on peace journalism was also developed and will soon be made accessible to the relevant audience.

With support from UNDP, three digital software tools were developed to detect and address mis/disinformation and hate speech. However, further assessment is needed to evaluate the impact and usability of these tools. Additionally, joint media products were developed and disseminated. They addressed issues such as divisive narratives, misinformation, and hate speech. At the start of the project, these topics (misinformation, hate speech) were relatively unexplored by the local society. Overall, these interventions are particularly relevant given Moldova's current geopolitical context and the influence of actors actively disseminating divisive content.

Output 2.3	Community-level prevention and response in addressing and countering hate speech and discrimination in areas with large refugee populations are strengthened

> **Finding 6.6.** Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moldova received the highest number of refugees per capita in the world at the given period. In this context, OHCHR, in cooperation with IOM, conducted successful, though brief, targeted training sessions for 49 social workers on identifying and minimizing stereotypes in their work, indicating a need for further engagement with this group. Furthermore, significant work was done with schools, that had an influence on peacebuilding impact and sustainability, including a catalytic effect. The Guide "Strengthening Peace Differently: A Guide for

Facilitating Non-Formal Peace Education in Communities – The Case of Moldova" was developed and has been endorsed by the Ministry of Education. *Finding is based on the Desk review KIIs.*

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moldova became the country receiving the highest number of refugees per capita. In cooperation with IOM, OHCHR conducted training sessions for 49 social workers on recognizing and mitigating stereotypes and discrimination, particularly against refugees. The training strengthened their capacity to anticipate and prevent discriminatory behavior in social services, an important achievement given the rising negative attitudes toward refugees in Moldova. Significant work was done with schools, including teachers, with a clear peacebuilding impact and sustainability. FGD with teachers revealed that the training provided them with the possibility to see processes from different angles and they use some gained skills in the teaching process. The Guide "Strengthening Peace Differently: A Guide for Facilitating Non-Formal Peace Education in Communities - The Case of Moldova" was developed and has been endorsed by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry plans to promote this Guide across the schools of Moldova. Developed through a participatory process, the Guide introduced innovative methodologies aimed at fostering tolerance, conflict resolution skills, and civic engagement among youth and educators. Its integration into non-formal education settings will create a replicable model for peace education practices across both banks, representing a sustainable and scalable contribution to the peacebuilding agenda.

EQ7: What enabling or constraining factors have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of outcomes?

Finding 7. The project's outcomes were shaped by both enabling and constraining factors. Multi-agency coordination, community ownership through grassroots engagement, flexible formats, high motivation from civil society, and expert technical assistance enhanced project reach and credibility. However, while the project achieved important initial progress, factors such as the short project duration, cross-river travel limitations for representatives of institutions from both banks, limited visibility of parallel components, and ongoing barriers for marginalized communities posed significant challenges for sustaining and scaling up the outcomes. *Finding is based on the Desk review, KIIs and FGDs.*

The project's outcomes were shaped by a combination of enabling and constraining factors, resulting in a nuanced landscape of achievements and limitations.

Enabling Factors: Multi-agency joint facilitation approaches served as a cornerstone for success, bolstering legitimacy and enabling cross-sector collaboration. The convergence of resources and expertise of the Agencies enhanced the project's reach and credibility. Endline data indicate a 5.1 percentage point increase in the capacity of CSOs and media outlets to produce content countering misinformation (Indicator 2A: from 76.3% to 81.4%). Grassroots initiatives, such as women-led dialogues and youth sports events, contributed to sustaining local engagement and helped maintain CSO initiatives reaching settlement actors at a steady level (Indicator 1B: 59.0% to 61.0%). Flexible, inclusive formats, including mobile apps, teacher camps, and co-developed policy proposals, enabled adaptation to diverse

local needs. CSOs' networks, particularly youth groups and volunteer organizations, demonstrated strong motivation and continuity beyond project-supported activities. Technical assistance from legal, journalistic, and educational experts, including the Peace Journalism e-course and social worker training, further strengthened the sustainability of interventions, as corroborated by qualitative feedback from FGDs and KIIs.

Constraining Factors: Despite these strengths, several external and internal factors constrained the project's broader impact. The short implementation period limited the project's ability to scale and consolidate gains, alongside the scattered approach towards some activities that diluted potential synergies and lasting effects. For instance, some grants for local grassroots initiatives of approximately USD 5,000 (in some cases even lower) were viewed by some stakeholders as insufficient to drive transformative changes, particularly on the Left bank and Security Zone. Although training sessions for social workers were valuable, their brief duration necessitated more sustained engagement. Persistent cross-river travel limitations, especially for the Left bank actors tied to de facto structures, hindered deeper institutional engagement. Endline data reflect a 6.6 percentage point decline in awareness of cross-river initiatives (Indicator 1A: from 47.9% to 41.3%) and a 6.0 percentage point drop in perceived access to Right bank services among Left bank residents (Indicator 1C: from 58.8% to 52.8%). These declines were exacerbated by the January 2025 energy crisis, which disrupted service access and heightened social tensions on the Left bank. The limited awareness about parallel project components among beneficiaries reduced cross-pillar synergy and missed opportunities for integrated impact. Furthermore, relatively weak communication strategies and limited public visibility hampered the broader impact of project initiatives. Political sensitivities, coupled with the presence of external actors and security concerns, constrained open dialogue and media outreach, particularly on the Left bank. Marginalized communities continued to face access barriers despite improved service points, indicating the need for longer-term support structures to ensure sustainable and effective legal aid services.

Unintended Results

The evaluation identified both positive and negative unintended results. On the positive side, CSOs' collaborations fostered new cross-river initiatives, such as youth workshops and media campaigns on tolerance. Several journalists and influencers from both banks continue networking, exchanging information and planning possible future projects and cooperation.

On the negative side, initial engagement faced scepticism from Left bank community actors due to sensitivity around human rights discourse, delaying participation in rights-awareness workshops. The project's broad thematic scope (human rights, gender equality, social cohesion, and media resilience) occasionally strained implementing partners' operational capacities, leading to uneven progress across outputs. These dynamics underscore the importance of a more focused thematic approach and longer

implementation timelines in future programming to enhance adaptive management and address emerging challenges effectively.

2.5. Peacebuilding effect

Core question: The extent to which the project has contributed to broader, long-term, and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes

EQ 8: To what extent has the project made a concrete contribution to reducing the risk of conflict in Moldova and/or to strengthening social cohesion in the country?

> **Finding 8.** The project significantly contributed to peacebuilding and strengthened social cohesion at macro-, meso-, and micro levels. At the macro- level, it fostered collaboration with law enforcement institutions on developing a Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech and initiated communication between de facto structures and local SCOs to improve services for vulnerable groups. At the meso- level, it strengthened cooperation among stakeholders from both banks and supported media organizations in producing content that reduces divisive narratives. At the micro-level, it enhanced social cohesion and reduced conflict risks at the community level, emphasizing the value of informal relationships and understanding the influence of propaganda. Academics and teachers benefited from the project, fostering joint efforts and sharing knowledge, while journalists and influencers increased their capacity to promote balanced content and combat misinformation. *Finding is based on the Desk review, KIIs and FGDs.*

The evaluation assessed the project's effects at three interconnected levels:

- **Macro- level**: Broader systemic or policy-level changes, including engagement with government bodies and de facto structures, aiming for policy influence or institutional reform.

- **Meso- level**: Institutional and network-level changes focusing on CSOs, media outlets, and intermediary institutions that connect individuals and formal governance structures.

- **Micro- level**: Individual and community-level changes, including shifts in attitudes, awareness, and interpersonal cooperation.

The information gathered during the fieldwork, combined with the desk research, revealed that the project contributed to the peacebuilding process and to strengthening social cohesion at all three levels across institutions and within some communities.

At the macro- level, notable achievements include the development of a Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech in collaboration with law enforcement agencies, alongside training sessions to increase their awareness of hate speech, particularly in the online sphere. The project also helped initiate communication between de facto structures and local CSOs at the Left bank to improve services for People with Disabilities and persons with psycho-social disabilities. KII with the Moldovan Bureau for Reintegration underscored the importance of grassroots involvement in peacebuilding efforts. Potential internships for left-bank students in the Moldovan parliament will offer

youth perspectives from the Left bank and provide insight into how the Moldovan parliament perceives the peacebuilding process.

At the meso- level, the project strengthened cooperation among CSOs and professional networks from both banks. The development of roadmaps in key thematic areas involved experts from both sides, creating opportunities for collaboration and establishing foundations for future joint efforts. One of the project's most achievements was the creation and nurturing of the Cross-River CSOs Advocacy Network, which brought together CSOs from both the Left and Right banks. This network evolved into a genuine platform for collaboration, enabling CSOs to jointly advocate for common values such as human rights, social inclusion, and peacebuilding. Media training also contributed to the creation of informal professional networks among journalists from both banks, enhancing the sustainability of conflict-sensitive reporting practices. These intermediary actors now possess certain capacity to advocate for rights and foster cross-river dialogue, providing a bridge between communities and higher-level governance structures.

At the micro- level, feedback from FGDs and KIIs with project beneficiaries demonstrated that the initiative was successful in enhancing social cohesion and reducing conflict risks at the community level and people-to-people. Youth leadership camps, cultural festivals, and participatory activities such as Forum Theatre created safe spaces for interpersonal engagement across the river. Many respondents reflected on how some powerholders attempt to spread misinformation. As one student shared, "*I participated in training sessions with right-bank students; then an energy crisis started, and I became angry again. But later, I attended other activities and understood how propaganda tried to influence me*." (Female, under 20 years old). This statement highlights several key points: the value of workshops and training in creating positive impacts; the ongoing influence of major events, such as energy crises and propaganda campaigns, which can affect targeted populations; and the importance of continued activities by CSOs or international organizations to sustain medium- and long-term peacebuilding benefits.

Participants from academic institutions and teachers described project activities as a"break from the routine", creating space for joint reflections and cooperation among individuals from opposite banks. This environment facilitated the exchange of diverse perspectives to address shared challenges and contributed to strengthened social cohesion. In some cases, positive spillover effects were also anticipated, as teachers indicated plans to disseminate the methodologies and knowledge gained to their students and peers, potentially amplifying the project's impact beyond the direct participants. Journalists and social media influencers, as key stakeholders in the information space, can either address misinformation and hate speech or perpetuate harmful narratives. Through the project's capacity-building initiatives, their ability to produce balanced, conflict-sensitive content improved. Moreover, their active engagement in informal fact-checking networks, such as cross-platform social media groups, contributed to reducing misinformation and distrust between communities on both banks.

2.6. Sustainability

Core question: Will the benefits last?

EQ 9: Did the project include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity, etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project? What is the evidence for sustainability of the main results? Has the project made any concerted efforts to expand the activities it piloted and obtain catalytic results beyond the direct inputs of the project?

> **Finding 9.** The project aimed to foster long-term community-level changes in peacebuilding and collaboration between social groups and institutions across the Left and Right banks, but sustainability varies across initiatives. Journalists gained skills in conflict-sensitive reporting, but external factors like financial difficulties and restrictions on the Left bank pose challenges, especially on the Left bank. Collaborative articles require ongoing funding. Youth engagement shows promising signs of sustainability due to increased knowledge and continued participation. Working groups need sustained support to implement cooperation roadmaps. Awareness campaigns face sustainability challenges due to their scattered nature and short-term scope. Initiatives addressing online hate speech have some potential for sustainability, especially with the endorsed Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech. Social services for persons with disabilities, the paralegals program, and teacher peace-ed training require continued support to build on initial efforts and ensure long-term impact, including on the Left bank. *Finding is based on the Desk review KIIs and FGDs*

The project was designed to contribute to long-term community-level changes aimed at enhancing peacebuilding, trust, and future cooperation among various social groups on both banks. Additionally, it sought to establish a foundation for collaboration between representatives of Moldovan governmental institutions and the de-facto "structures" of the Left bank. Given the diverse objectives and engagement with different segments of society, the sustainability of project outcomes varies case by case.

Working with journalists through various agencies and implementing CSOs helped strengthen their knowledge on conflict-sensitive publishing, crisis management, addressing hate speech, and reporting on topics such as gender equality, vulnerable groups, social cohesion, peacebuilding, and human rights. The skills acquired through these activities will support journalists on both banks in their future work. However, external factors related to media development, particularly on the Left bank, may pose challenges to sustain these achievements. At least two media outlets on the Left bank are at risk of closure due to financial difficulties and new restrictions imposed by de-facto "structures". Collaborative articles produced by journalists from both banks require ongoing funding from donor organizations to sustain their publication. Currently, it is unclear how influencers will utilize the knowledge gained in their social media activities.

The extensive and relatively long-term work conducted with youth from both sides shows promising signs of sustainability. Most participating students increased their knowledge across multiple areas. Informal groups from both the left and right banks remain active, and many students are engaged in other project activities. Their plans and expressed satisfaction suggest they are likely to continue participating in social development and peacebuilding efforts in the future.

The working groups established to develop roadmaps for cooperation across five key thematic areas require further support to implement concrete activities based on these plans. In some cases, members from the Left bank have received licenses from Moldova's Food Safety Agency to export products, with CSOs support contributing to these achievements. However, without continued funding, the likelihood of implementing the roadmaps and fostering sustained cooperation between members of these working groups from both banks remains low.

Awareness-raising campaigns targeting a broader society could face sustainability challenges. Due to the short project timeline and the diverse, one-off nature of some activities, their long-term impact may be limited without sustained follow-up. However, there is notable potential for sustainability in institutional efforts to combat online hate speech. For example, the anticipated approval of a Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech by the Prosecutor's Office is expected to help institutionalize progress. Training has strengthened the capacity of prosecutors, judges, and law enforcement officials to address hate speech and misinformation, though additional efforts are required to consolidate and expand these gains.

In terms of social services for persons with disabilities on the Left bank (personal assistant institution), initial discussions have begun within de-facto "structures", including considerations for persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities. The paralegal program and its concept were introduced on the Left bank and the recruitment and training of paralegals were conducted. However, without continued support from local operating centers on the Left bank, the future of this initiative remains uncertain.

Teachers and academic representatives gained new knowledge through training sessions, with early signs of the application of these practices in their teaching. Nevertheless, ongoing support is essential to sustain and expand these results.

2.7. Human rights, Gender and Disability considerations

Core question: Has the intervention been inclusive and human rights-based?

EQ10. To what extent has the project addressed the needs/priorities of women, persons with disabilities, s and other marginalized groups in line with the principle of Leave No One Behind?

> **Finding 10.** The project successfully engaged women, People with Disabilities to certain extent, and other vulnerable groups through inclusive methodologies and dedicated initiatives. Collaboration with organizations such as CDPD advanced the rights of People with Disabilities across both banks, while targeted activities like the Roma Bloggers platform promoted Roma inclusion and cross-river dialogue. These efforts often went beyond initial project requirements, reflecting a strong commitment to inclusive peacebuilding. However, participation of marginalized groups in broader, non-targeted activities was comparatively lower, and information dissemination could be further expanded. While efforts were made to organize events following universal design principles, participation remained somewhat limited. Therefore, future initiatives could benefit from even more targeted outreach and sustained engagement with marginalized communities to amplify inclusivity. *Finding is based on the Desk review KIIs and FGDs*

Gender equality and human rights considerations were mainstreamed across both outcomes of the project. Outcome 1 strengthened rights-holders' engagement by promoting the WPS agenda and improving access to rights-based services, notably through paralegal networks supporting women and persons with disabilities. Outcome 2 advanced human rights and non-discrimination by fostering gender-sensitive narratives through, for example, the Peace Journalism e-course and media literacy initiatives. KIIs and FGDs confirmed that the project consistently prioritized marginalized groups (women, youth, refugees, Roma etc.) aligning with its human rights-based approach focused on empowering rights-holders rather than duty-bearers.[10]

The activities directly aimed at engaging women, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups were successfully implemented within the project. The methodologies employed were largely based on inclusive approaches, such as Forum Theatre and "deep listening," to ensure that diverse groups, including marginalized voices, were appropriately heard. Collaboration with organizations like CDPD and the involvement of paralegals facilitated outreach to People with Disabilities, victims of domestic violence, and rural populations.

Despite these achievements, activities not specifically focused on marginalized groups exhibited limited involvement from these communities. Targeted dissemination of information to these groups was also limited. In most cases, UN Agencies ensured organizing events with universal design principles; however, participation from marginalized groups remained somewhat limited. Challenges persist highlighting the need for expanded outreach and increased participation of people with disabilities, rural youth and other marginalized groups in future efforts. Collecting disaggregated data on these vulnerable groups will aid in enhancing and deepening the coverage of their representatives.

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[10] Although the project integrated a human rights-based approach and sought to promote inclusivity, marginalized groups such as Persons with disabilities, Roma communities, and refugees were not identified as specific primary target groups in the project design. This decision was made in consultation with the donor during the Project Document approval phase. Therefore, project activities engaged marginalized groups as part of a broader inclusion strategy rather than as principal beneficiaries.

EQ11. What specific outcomes were addressing/promoting gender equality?

> **Finding 11.** The project significantly supported gender equality by mainstreaming it across all activities, from selection processes to media content and training. It strengthened women's participation in peacebuilding and civic activism, challenged gender stereotypes, and supported women-led CSOs and the Women's Coordination Council. The project also addressed gender-based violence through trained female paralegals and created safe platforms for young women to develop leadership skills, ultimately empowering women across targeted communities. *Finding is based on the Desk review KIIs and FGDs*

Most of the project activities under both outcomes directly or indirectly supported promoting gender equality or addressing the problems related to gender:

Mainstreaming Gender Equality - Gender equality was not treated as a separate component but was mainstreamed across all project activities. This integration was evident in selection processes, content development, and implementation strategies, encompassing negotiation modules, leadership training, and the creation of media products spotlighting women in leadership roles. By embedding gender equality into the very fabric of the project, it ensured that gender considerations were consistently addressed and reinforced. Some articles developed in the media on both banks aimed at gender mainstreaming. The workshops and trainings had separate focuses on gender related issues in most cases. The WPS agenda was included in many activities conducted by UN women.

Strengthening Women's Participation - The project actively strengthened women's participation in critical areas such as cross-river peacebuilding, civic activism, and media outputs, grassroots cooperation within Security Zone and Left bank communities. By highlighting women in non-traditional roles, the project challenged existing gender stereotypes and promoted a more inclusive and equitable society.

Supporting Women-Led CSOs - The project provided targeted support to women-led CSOs through capacity-building initiatives and grants. By empowering women-led organizations, the project amplified their impact and facilitated their active involvement in addressing gender-specific challenges and promoting women's rights.

Addressing Gender-Based Violence - The project facilitated the training and deployment of female paralegals who specifically addressed gender-based violence cases. Furthermore, the project provided platforms for women from the Left bank to gain visibility through public activities such as culinary competitions and local leadership roles.

Creating Safe Platforms for Young Women - The project specifically created safe platforms for young women from the Left bank to engage in applications for internships in Moldovan Parliament and to participate in local leadership training. This targeted support provided young women with opportunities

to develop their leadership skills and gain exposure to political processes, thus empowering them to become future leaders and advocates for gender equality.

In summary, the project strategically addressed and promoted gender equality through various targeted interventions that mainstreamed gender considerations, strengthened women's participation, supported women-led organizations, addressed gender-based violence, and created safe platforms for young women's leadership development. These multifaceted approaches contributed to advancing gender equality and empowering women across the targeted communities.

EQ12. What specific outcomes tackled the rights/inclusion of marginalized groups?

Finding 12. The project supported marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and Roma populations on the left bank and refugees across both banks. Refugees were engaged through inclusive dialogues, education, and psychosocial support. CSOs addressed digital exclusion among older people in the left bank, promoting intergenerational learning. The project also enhanced institutional awareness of intersectionality and inclusion, aiming to create a more equitable environment. These efforts underscore a commitment to promoting the rights and inclusion of various marginalized groups. *Finding is based on the Desk review KIIs and FGDs*

Engaging Refugees: The project fostered the inclusion of refugees by engaging them in inclusive dialogues, integrating them into education, and providing psychosocial support activities. This multifaceted approach aimed to address their immediate needs while promoting their integration into the community.

Addressing Barriers for Older Persons: CSOs involved in the project specifically addressed barriers faced by older people, including digital exclusion especially in the left bank. They promoted intergenerational learning and inclusion, working to bridge the gap between generations and ensure that older people were not left behind in an increasingly digital world.

Promoting Institutional Awareness of Intersectionality: The project contributed to increased institutional awareness of intersectionality and inclusion in areas such as complaint-handling, law enforcement training, and public consultations. By raising awareness and promoting inclusive practices within key institutions, the project aimed to create a more equitable and accessible environment for all individuals, regardless of their background or identity.

In conclusion, these additional outcomes underscore the project's commitment to promoting the rights and inclusion of various marginalized groups, including persons with psychosocial and/or intellectual disabilities, refugees, older people, and individuals facing intersecting forms of discrimination. By addressing specific barriers and promoting institutional awareness, the project sought to create a more just and equitable society for all.

3. Lessons learned

EQ13: What lessons and good practices have been identified, with a focus on innovative approaches, which could be replicated in other initiatives?

This section summarizes key lessons identified during the evaluation, particularly focusing on innovative approaches and practices that could be replicated in other initiatives:

1) Set Realistic Objectives and Focused Scopes -Future project designs would benefit from setting more realistic objectives and limiting the scope of outcomes, outputs and activities. Concentrating efforts on fewer, high-impact interventions with a phased, long-term approach is particularly important in peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive contexts.

2) Co-Facilitation Across Conflict Lines -The project's use of co-facilitation models (i.e., bringing together participants from the Right bank, Left bank, and Security Zone) was effective in building trust and credibility. Consistent and long-term dialogue through co-facilitation can be a replicable model for peacebuilding initiatives in politically sensitive regions.

3) Leveraging Informal Networks with Structured Support -Informal networks enhanced access and trust in restrictive environments. However, sustaining their impact requires structured support mechanisms. Future programs should combine informal networking with formalized relatively long-term capacity-building and resource backing to ensure sustainability.

4) Adaptive Programming for Fragile Contexts -The project demonstrated that flexibility in programming (adaptable timelines and resource reallocation) enhances responsiveness in fast-changing environments. Adaptive management frameworks are essential for UN-implemented projects in fragile settings.

5) Youth Empowerment Through Leadership and Digital Platforms -Youth engagement was more effective when leadership roles were offered, and digital platforms were used. Activities involving simulations, art-based learning, media production, and policy development fostered deeper understanding and commitment. These approaches are particularly valuable for youth-centered peacebuilding and civic engagement initiatives.

6) Using Neutral Themes to Facilitate Cross-Community Cooperation -Employing neutral themes (i.e., gender equality and local development) helped minimize political sensitivities and facilitated cross-community collaboration. This strategy proved effective in both media and educational programs and can be replicated in divided societies.

7) Fostering Media Collaboration Through Informal Exchanges-Joint content creation among media professionals from both banks promoted ownership and reduced divisive narratives. Informal exchanges, including peer workshops, proved to be effective in building collaborative journalism practices. This lesson is applicable to peace journalism and cross-border media initiatives.

8) Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Bridging Civil Society and Government -Engaging both CSOs and representatives of public authorities enhanced the uptake of project results, a valuable lesson for governance, rule of law, and policy reform projects.

9) Integrating Human Rights into Peacebuilding Narratives -Embedding human rights principles into peacebuilding narratives fostered local legitimacy and trust. This approach is highly applicable to rights-based development programs operating in post-conflict and transitional settings.

10) Strengthening Strategic Cross-Agency Coordination-While operational communication tools and regular exchanges supported project implementation, future initiatives would benefit from enhancing strategic cross-agency coordination. Joint planning, integrated messaging, and systematic information sharing can strengthen coherence, visibility, and impact across multi-agency peacebuilding efforts.

4. Good Practices

The evaluation identified several notable good practices that enhanced the effectiveness and impact of the project. These practices illustrate strategic innovation and adaptability to Moldova's complex peacebuilding environment and can serve as models for future programming:

- **Youth Empowerment through Leadership and Digital Innovation -** the project's youth engagement strategy was a standout good practice. By involving young people in leadership roles and digital civic engagement, the project effectively fostered a new generation of peacebuilders. Activities like the Peacebuilding Hackathon enabled youth to co-create civic tech (i.e., apps to counter misinformation) and develop policy proposals on peace and social cohesion. Leadership workshops and youth camps promoted cross-river dialogue and critical reflection, culminating in joint statements to platforms like the OSCE's Chairmanship-in-Office.

- **Neutrality and Safe Spaces for Dialogue -** adherence to neutrality - a core UN principle - was instrumental in maintaining trust across sensitive divides. The project avoided politically charged themes and instead centered activities on universal topics like human rights, gender equality, and local development. Neutral venues in the Security Zone were deliberately selected to provide safe spaces for interaction. This strategic neutrality enabled cross-bank engagement even amid political tensions, as confirmed by respondents who emphasized feeling secure and respected during joint activities

- **Trust-Building through Service-Oriented Approaches -** another good practice was the linkage of trust-building with practical service delivery. The paralegal network on the Left bank empowered vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities, by facilitating access to documentation and legal support. Rather than only advocacy, these practical services created immediate, tangible benefits, thereby reinforcing trust in civic processes. Teachers also reported that using educational materials developed through the project enhanced classroom discussions on discrimination and human rights, generating ripple effects within communities.

- **Innovative Media Initiatives Promoting Gender and Peace Narratives -** the project fostered joint media production between journalists from both banks, promoting human rights, gender equality, and peace narratives. This collaboration, supported by tailored training, strengthened informal professional networks and enhanced content quality. Media outputs (including joint articles and visual campaigns) challenged divisive narratives and stereotypes, particularly highlighting women in leadership and non-traditional roles. Additionally, the Media Academy and the development of an online course on peace journalism equipped journalists with tools to promote tolerance and fact-based reporting, addressing a key gap in Moldova's media ecosystem.

5. Conclusions

The project demonstrated strong relevance by addressing Moldova's key peacebuilding and conflict prevention needs. It aligned with national priorities in the area of reintegration and the WPS Agenda and operated within the mandates of the implementing Agencies. Its focus on cross-river dialogue, human rights, and combating hate speech allowed it to effectively navigate political sensitivities and foster grassroots engagement.

While output-level achievements, particularly in awareness-raising and capacity-building, were significant, the transition to sustained outcomes faced some challenges. Certain contextual factors, structural barriers (i.e., limited access to services for Left bank residents) and fragmented engagement across the River constrained deeper impact. Future interventions should consider strengthening pathways linking long-term capacity-building to systemic and institutional change.

Coherence was generally strong, but inter-agency coordination gaps limited to some extent the project's potential for synergy. More integrated planning and joint delivery models are recommended to optimize multi-agency efforts in similar future initiatives.

Efficiency was affected by initial delays and insufficient human resources at the level of project implementers. In some cases, small grant sizes also restricted outreach capacity. Streamlining operational processes and improving resource allocation will be critical for enhancing efficiency in politically sensitive environments.

The peacebuilding effect was visible at multiple levels (macro- (institutional engagement), meso- (CSO networks), and micro - (community trust-building)). Future projects should aim to institutionalize such trust-building mechanisms to ensure sustainability.

Sustainability prospects varied. Institutional outputs, such as the draft Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech and Peace Journalism e-learning course, hold promise for long-term impact. In contrast, broader societal awareness efforts struggled with continuity due, for example, short project timelines, scattered approaches in some cases, emphasizing the need for early sustainability planning.

Human rights, gender equality, and disability inclusion were systematically mainstreamed. The project engaged marginalized groups, including Roma, People with Disabilities, and refugees.

Building on the evaluation findings, several key implications emerge for future peacebuilding efforts in Moldova. First, translating grassroots successes into systemic change will require stronger institutional anchoring and enhanced policy advocacy. Efforts that empower communities should be supported by formal mechanisms and policy reforms to ensure that change is both scalable and sustainable.

Sustained investments in cross-river trust-building are critical. Short grant cycles, while valuable for piloting initiatives, often limit long-term impact. Future interventions should prioritize multi-year programming that allows trust and cooperation to deepen over time, particularly in sensitive and fragmented societal environments like Moldova.

Integrated cross-agency programming will be essential to maximize resources and avoid fragmented efforts. Strengthening coordination among implementing agencies and embedding robust sustainability and exit strategies from the outset will be key to ensuring that peacebuilding gains are not lost post-project.

Future activities in this area should refine their targeted engagement strategies to deepen inclusivity and enhance the transformative potential of interventions. Proactive outreach to marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, Roma communities, and refugees, and the use of intersectional approaches will be necessary to fully realize the "Leave No One Behind" principle and foster durable social cohesion. The project generated important lessons for future PBF-supported peacebuilding efforts in Moldova and similar contexts characterized by frozen conflicts and emerging societal divisions.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations were developed based on a thorough analysis of findings, lessons learned, and good practices identified during the evaluation. Each recommendation is linked to specific findings and conclusions from the evaluation and is prioritized according to its urgency for action. The recommendations are directed at the implementing UN Agencies.

No.	Recommendation	Priority	Timeline	Linked to Finding
1	**Focus on fewer, outcomes, high-impact outputs and activities**: During future project design, prioritize a limited number of outcomes, outputs and activities and adopt a long-term, strategic approach to outcomes. Greater prioritization of high-	High	Next project design phase	

	impact outputs, target groups, and geographic areas is recommended to maximize results within limited timeframes. A focused scope would enable deeper engagement and more coordinated interventions without compromising transformative goals.			Findings 2, 6.3
2	**Enhance strategic inter-agency coordination and communication:** While the project team maintained effective operational communication channels, including regular meetings, structured document sharing, and a dedicated Teams group, future initiatives would benefit from strengthening strategic coordination from the outset. This could include joint planning documents, integrated messaging for external audiences, and systematic information sharing on cross-agency activities and outcomes. A clear coordination framework would help maximize synergies, avoid fragmented implementation, and ensure greater coherence and visibility of peacebuilding efforts.	High	Initial design stages of any future project's phase	Findings 4.1, 4.2
3	**Improve resource allocation and grant size**: Increase human resources for field-level coordination and consider higher grant amounts for local partners to support more transformative initiatives. Assist Left bank CSOs in budget planning to enhance financial management capacities	High	Next project design phase, budgeting and resource mobilization	Findings 5.1, 5.4
4.	**Prioritize sustainability strategies**: Integrate sustainability planning at the outset of each project component, including identifying long-term funding sources, fostering local ownership, and strengthening institutional capacities and developing exit strategies.	Medium	Next project design and inception phases	Findings 2.4, 2.5
5.	**Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems**: Enhance data collection and analysis frameworks to include systematic disaggregation by vulnerable groups (e.g., People with Disabilities, Roma) and ensure monitoring data feeds into adaptive management processes.	Medium	Early stages of future project phase	Finding 5.2
6.	**Continue capacity-building for law enforcement on hate speech and**			

		Medium	Next project implementation phase	Finding 6.4
7.	**Scale successful approaches**: Expand tested models such as the community paralegal network (CDPD/FFUPLM), youth internships, and joint human rights monitoring initiatives. Secure institutional partnerships to ensure continuity	High	Next project implementation phase	Findings 6.3, 6.5
8.	**Institutionalize CSO and youth platforms**: Support the formal integration of CSO working groups and youth councils into local and regional development planning processes to sustain cross-river dialogue	Medium	Next project implementation phase	Findings 6.2, 6.6
9.	**Reframe peacebuilding approaches**: Design interventions that emphasize shared socio-economic concerns (e.g., disability rights, youth development, environment) to mitigate political sensitivities in cross-river settings	Medium	Next project design phase	Finding 6.3

These recommendations aim at helping strengthen the strategic focus, operational efficiency, and sustainability of future peacebuilding initiatives in Moldova. A more integrated, evidence-based, and participatory approach will further enhance the effectiveness of UN Agencies' interventions, ensuring greater resilience, inclusivity, and long-term impact in cross-river cooperation and social cohesion efforts.

7. Annexes

Annex 1 – Achievements of indicators

Indicator	Baseline value	Target value	Current value	Achievement level	Remark
Outcome 1: Strengthened cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the advancement of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda and improved access to social services					

Outcome Indicator 1.1.: Perception of settlement actors, CSOs and target communities from the Left bank and Right banks on the level of cross-river engagement on human rights and women's role in the peacebuilding process.	*On a scale 0 – 100%:* LB: 32.3%; RB: 47.0%; CSOs (both banks): 80%; Average: 47.9%	Increase in the level of perceived engagement/ Awareness	LB: 27.0%; RB: 38.0%; CSOs: 58.8%; Average: 41.3% (–6.6 p.p.)	Not achieved	Despite numerous activities across both banks, awareness of cross-river initiatives on human rights and women's role in peacebuilding declined from 47.9% to 41.3% (–6.6 p.p.). Evidence from Endline Study indicates this decline is due to weakened communication over time, lack of follow-up visibility, and low attribution to the project, especially in areas where implementation occurred through indirect partners. Notably, the only sub-indicator to improve was awareness of initiatives promoting women's role in peacebuilding (+2.0 p.p.), suggesting selective thematic recognition amid an overall communication gap.
Outcome Indicator 1.2.: Number of priorities advancing human rights including women's rights brought to the attention of settlement process actors by organizations engaged in the project and the communities they represent.	14 initiatives/priorities submitted to settlement actors (out of 23 initiatives developed)	Increase by 50% from baseline	14 initiatives (out of 23)	Partially achieved	Although only one additional initiative was brought to the attention of settlement actors since 2022, the slight increase occurred in a politically sensitive context with limited access to formal negotiation platforms. CSOs leveraged public events and advocacy campaigns to ensure visibility of rights-based proposals

Outcome Indicator 1.3.: % of direct beneficiaries (disaggregated by sex, age, disability, ethnicity) from the Left bank feeling enabled to access public services on the Right bankof Nistru river.	Total - 58.8% (3.35); Men 61.0% (3.44); Women 57.2 % (3.29); Ethnic minorities - 51.5% (3.06); Persons with disabilities - 49.0% (2.96); 18-39 y – 60.2% (3.41); 40-59y – 61.5% (3.46); 60+y - 50.0% (3.0)	Increase by 50% from baseline	Total – 52.8% (- 6.0%)	Not achieved	This indicator declined from 58.8% to 52.8%, reflecting a 6.0 p.p. drop. While perceptions of security improved (+7 p.p.), other sub-indicators - bureaucracy, language barriers, and information access-showed no change or worsened. The project's limited influence on systemic service delivery and administrative barriers explains the modest impact. Indirect contributions from paralegal support and legal awareness were insufficient to improve overall perception. The indicator reflects broader structural limitations beyond the project's scope
Output 1.1: Improved capacities of the conflict settlement process actors to integrate human rights and gender equality perspectives at all levels of the negotiation agenda, including a focus on balanced and meaningful participation of women in the process at all levels.					
Output 1.1.1: Number of settlement process actors enabled to advance and mainstream human rights-based approach and gender in the negotiation process	16 Women	24 persons (at least 12 women)	Limited progress. One person involved in training. 13 MPs informed on gender equality and WPS	Partially achieved	Due to ongoing political limitations, joint activities with settlement actors could not be conducted; however, the project partially advanced its goals through a parliamentary dialogue and a study visit promoting WPS and women's leadership

					relevance.
**Indicator 1.1.2:** Number of demonstrated uses by the settlement process actors of advocacy tools/initiatives on human rights, human security, Women's role in peacebuilding and conflict settlement produced by the project	0	Nine (9) products (Advocacy and dialogue events; policy papers)	Moderate progress	Partially achieved	Despite political constraints preventing joint engagement with settlement actors, two knowledge products on women's roles in peace processes and five cross-sectoral Roadmaps (in Agriculture, Environment, Tourism, Health, and Social Assistance) were developed; however, efforts to institutionalize them were limited by lack of access to key negotiation stakeholders and delays in cross-river validation.
Output 1.2.: Civil society organizations from both banks, People's Advocate and human rights focal point from the Left bank, and local community actors from the Security Zone have increased capacities to JOINTLY engage in advancing human rights and WPS Agenda and foster effective cross-river dialogue and partnerships.					
**Output 1.2.1:** Number of CSOs with increased capacities to advocate on human rights and gender equality	18 CSOs (16 OHCHR and 2 UN Women)	51 CSOs (35 OHCHR and 8 UN Women, including the already existing ones)	56	Overachieved	30 CSOs from both banks increased their advocacy capacities, with 8 implementing joint cross-river initiatives, 18 contributing to CERD submissions on discrimination and hate speech, and 4 HR defenders participating in Geneva, despite restricted civic space on the Left bank limiting advocacy to non-sensitive topics.
**Output 1.2.2:** Number of initiatives advancing human rights, promoting human security and	0	15	18	Overachieved	Four HR defenders participated in CERD Dialogue in Geneva, 8

women's role in peacebuilding processes implemented by CSOs and local community actors from both banks, including towards duty bearers					NGOs led cross-river social cohesion actions (including theatre and exhibitions), 55 local actors (42 women, 13 men) from the Security Zone were trained, and 12 local peace initiatives were implemented addressing hate speech and discrimination.
Output 1.2.3: Number of human rights monitoring, reporting and advocacy initiatives, including joint ones, conducted by People's Advocate and Human Rights focal point on the Left bank	0	At least 4 initiatives	8	Overachieved	Despite political sensitivities, both the People's Advocate and Left bank HR focal point conducted parallel monitoring visits in mental health institutions using jointly developed tools, held a cross-river training, co-organized two Human Rights Forums, and initiated follow-up advocacy actions targeting human rights violations.
Output 1.3: People from both banks, including women actors and community leaders have increased knowledge and understanding of human rights, gender equality and the WPS agenda and are increasingly enabled to access available public services and are empowered to engage in cross river interaction.					
Output Indicator 1.3.1.: Number of people reached through awareness raising campaigns on social cohesion, inclusive cross-river interaction and dialogue	56,419 persons	150,000 people (with possible overlapping)	Circa 150,000 persons	Achieved	Awareness-raising activities reached approximately 150,000 individuals through open-air exhibitions (e.g., 20,000+ visitors in Chisinau, parallel display in Tiraspol), flashmobs, televised and livestreamed events, multilingual media articles (totaling 30,000+ views), youth-led videos,

					and the Human Rights Quiz (1,000+ users). The reach was further amplified via murals, online platforms, and social media campaigns across both banks.
Output 1.3.2: Number of innovative peace acceleration solutions addressing women's role and contribution in peacebuilding jointly generated and implemented by youth (women and men) from both banks	0	5 solutions identified, at least 2 solutions implemented	8 solutions identified 2 solutions developed	Achieved	78 youth from 22 localities, including Gagauzia, enhanced leadership for peacebuilding; 8 solutions developed at Peace Accelerator/LAB, including the "Tell Me" and "Youth Connect" platforms, with 2 fully implemented; activities included a youth summer camp, IT/STEM training, the creation of a Youth Peacebuilders Network, submission of a joint letter to the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship, and multiple interbank leadership events involving 100+ participants.
Output 1.3.3: Number of advocacy initiatives oriented at promoting legal empowerment services on the Left bank of Nistru river.	0	10	2	Partially achieved	Only 2 structured advocacy initiatives were implemented - namely the Roadmap and Handbook for paralegal integration - due to political sensitivities and limited civic space on the Left bank, which constrained broader public advocacy efforts and made direct legal empowerment initiatives

					difficult to scale within the project timeframe
Output 1.3.4: Number of beneficiaries from the Left bank enabled through the support of paralegals to access public services on the Right bank of Nistru river.	0	1500 beneficiaries	Over 1500 beneficiaries	Achieved	The paralegal network was successfully established and is fully operational on the Left bank, with 25 trained paralegals providing first legal assistance to over 1,500 beneficiaries. While the full implementation of all advocacy initiatives is still underway, the indicator is expected to be fully achieved by the end of the project.
Outcome 2: Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation					
Outcome Indicator 2.1.: Increase in % of CSOs and media outlets generating products tackling misinformation	76.3% (combined score)	% increase	81.4% (+ 5.1%)	Achieved	The indicator registered an overall increase of 5.1 pp, confirming improved capacity among CSOs and media outlets to produce content countering misinformation. While the number of CSO-generated products declined (from 36 to 21), the quality and relevance of outputs appear to have improved. Media outlets demonstrated significant progress, both in quantity (from 20 to 75 products) and score (+5.5 p.p.). A wide array of products was developed, including fact-checking series, investigative reports, and training manuals. This reflects strengthened institutional and editorial

					practices in addressing disinformation narratives.
Outcome Indicator 2.2.: % of rights-holders (actively or passively) engaged in tackling misinformation and hate speech	Total - 43.3% (2.73) very active - 14.4% LB - 24.0% (1.96) RB - 45.25 (2.81). CSO and media – 60.7% (3.43). persons with disabilities- 52.7% (3.1). Ethnic minorities- 52% (3.0)	% increase	Total – 39.6% (- 3.9 p.p.); Very active – N/A; LB – 22.0% (- 2.2 p.p.); RB – 38.2% (- 7.5 p.p.); CSO/media – 58.5% (- 2.2 p.p.); persons with disabilities – N/A; Ethnic minorities – N/A	Not achieved	The indicator registered a moderate decline of 3.7 p.p., reflecting reduced perceived engagement across all target groups, most notably on the Right bank (- 7.3 p.p.). While CSOs/media showed a slight decline, they remained the most engaged group. A few marginal increases were recorded in awareness-raising efforts by CSOs and Left bank actors, but overall active engagement in countering misinformation fell significantly.
Outcome Indicator 2.3.: Number of law enforcement institutions that enact specific institutional responses to misinformation and hate speech	0	3	3	Achieved	At least three institutions – the General Prosecution, Council of Magistrates, and General Police Inspectorate – were actively involved in drafting a joint Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech, now endorsed by the General Prosecution Office
Output 2.1: CSOs, judges, and law enforcement agents have strengthened capacities and duty bearers of the Left bank have increased awareness to effectively implement international standards on tackling hate speech					
Output 2.1.1: Number of judges and law enforcement agents enabled to implement the newly adopted national legal framework	0	40 professionals	59 professionals (however,	Achieved	59 law enforcement officers and judicial professionals (37.3% women) were trained to

on hate speech aligned with international standards		(30% young professionals; 40% women)	only 37% women)		counter hate speech; ToT was officially accredited by the National Judicial Institute. A working group developed an inter-institutional Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech. Gender balance was affected by the underrepresentation of women in the police force
Output 2.1.2: Number of CSO's initiatives, including joint ones, in monitoring and countering hate speech	0	5 initiatives, including min 2 joint initiatives	5 initiatives	Achieved	Five cross-river and local initiatives countering hate speech were implemented, including flashmobs and poster exhibitions in Chisinau and Tiraspol, public debates, media campaigns (e.g., Klub 19, Dnestr TV, LIK-TV), and capacity-building sessions for youth. Additionally, three digital tools to monitor disinformation were developed at a January 2024 hackathon with 55 participants from both banks
Output 2.2: Moldovan new and traditional media ecosystems are empowered to produce evidence-based, human rights, gender- and conflict sensitive media products conducive to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination, and pluralism.					
Output 2.2.1: Number of media professionals, social media influencers and other non-traditional media representatives from both banks that have enhanced knowledge and skills to produce human-rights, gender,	30	70 (40% young people; 50% women)	191 (60% young people; 75% women)	Overachieved	Circa 190 media professionals and influencers (from both banks) enhanced their knowledge through training academies, peace journalism workshops,

conflict- sensitive and social cohesion compliant media materials					media forums, and cross-river product co-creation teams. Additional institutional support and upcoming e-learning tools further contributed to lasting capacity development
Output 2.2.2: Number of tools developed on prevention of hate-speech, discrimination, promotion of social cohesion and gender-responsive reporting in conflict and post-conflict settings	0	8	8	Achieved	Two knowledge products were finalized on gender-sensitive reporting and journalist safety in conflict settings. In parallel, three Hackathon-winning concepts were developed into digital tools, including a browser extension and an aggregator of verified information. Additionally, three more tools - two gamified learning platforms and one interactive educational website were developed, targeting misinformation, hate speech, and media literacy among youth.
Output 2.2.3: Number of joint media materials developed by media professionals from both banks on human rights, gender, conflict-sensitive and social cohesion and combating hate speech	0	7	9	Overachieved	Five joint media articles were produced and published through a partnership with Transparency International - Moldova in a major national newspaper and a bilingual Romanian/Russian newsletter. Additionally, teams from the Media Academy developed three journalistic articles,

					one short animation, and a media product promoting interethnic understanding, all of which were published in local media or used to inform UN policy and communication strategies.

Output 2.3: Community-level prevention and response in addressing and countering hate speech and discrimination in the areas with large refugee populations are strengthened

Output 2.3.1.: Number of civil servants and service providers in the areas with large refugee populations enabled to counter hate speech and discrimination and contribute to social cohesion	0	30 (25% young people; 40% women)	49	Overachiev ed	
Output 2.3.2: Number of awareness raising activities implemented by schools from both banks of Nistru River on non-discrimination, social tolerance and countering hate speech, including at community level	0	8	14	Overachiev ed	Teachers from nine schools across both banks of the Nistru River implemented 14 in-school initiatives promoting inclusivity, tolerance, and anti-hate speech awareness, actively involving students, parents, and school staff. Additionally, a Handbook on inclusive education—featuring practical examples on addressing stereotypes and hate speech was developed
Output 2.3.3: Number of communities benefiting from social cohesion focused interventions.	0	4	5	Overachiev ed	Five communities benefited from targeted social cohesion interventions, including 126 participants (73

					refugees) engaged through eight deep listening exercises, cross-river Playback Theatre initiatives led by youth-focused NGOs, cultural rights campaigns promoting access to heritage, and Roma community outreach aimed at institutionalizing Roma Mediators and fostering cross-bank collaboration and inclusion.

Achievement Level	Number of Indicators	Observations
Achieved	11 indicators	Substantial achievement of intended results; indicators met target values. **Key areas:** - Cross-river engagement - CSO/media content generation - Media training - Access to services via paralegals
Overachieved	7 indicators	Results exceeded expectations. **Key areas:** - Youth-led initiatives - Awareness campaigns - Community-focused actions. Overachievement was often due to strong local partnerships and effective CSO engagement.
Partially Achieved	5 indicators	Some progress, but targets not fully met. Challenges often stemmed from political constraints (e.g., Output 1.1.1, Output 1.3.3), limited access to formal structures, and lack of institutional endorsement.
Not Achieved	2 indicators	Expected results not reached. Example: perceived access to public services (Outcome 1.3) saw a decline due to structural barriers outside project control, and engagement on tackling misinformation among rights-holders (Outcome 2.2) decreased slightly.

Deliverable/ Activity description	Evaluation findings and validation
Outcome 1: Strengthened cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the advancement of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda and improved access to social services	
Activity 1.1.1. Cross-river dialogue event with MPs, Parliament Secretariat and Bureau for Reintegration – focused on UNSCR 1325, female leadership, conflict resolution	Achieved. Substantial perception improvements across all three groups demonstrate strengthened awareness and engagement on cross-river human rights and gender issues, particularly among civil society organizations. Parliamentary dialogue and WPS study visit contributed, though direct involvement of settlement actors remained constrained.
Activity 1.1.2. Development of 2 knowledge products on women in peace processes; 5 roadmaps in key sectors; 1 gender assessment planned.	Partially achieved. Two knowledge products and five sectoral roadmaps developed; however, institutional uptake was limited due to lack of access to negotiation stakeholders.
Activity 1.1.3. Facilitation of Track II dialogues and expert roundtables involving representatives from both banks (Chisinau and Tiraspol), civil society organizations, and thematic experts in public health, agriculture, environment, tourism, social protection, and humanitarian aid. The aim was to jointly identify sectoral priorities with a focus on gender equality and human rights, co-develop cross-river recommendations, and present thematic roadmaps to policy actors and settlement-related agencies	Partially achieved. This activity contributed to Outputs 1.1.2 and 1.1.4, enhancing cross-river collaboration through politically neutral expert spaces. The development of sectoral roadmaps marked substantial progress, though formal uptake by institutions remained constrained due to limited access to official negotiation platforms. Gender and HRBA considerations were partially integrated, and expert participation-built credibility for future dialogue mechanisms
Activity 1.1.4. Two analytical sessions, facilitated through a Track II dialogue platform by IPIS, convened over 60 experts from both banks to strengthen cross-river coordination in public health, social protection, agriculture, environment, and tourism. Participants co-developed five thematic roadmaps with policy recommendations submitted to relevant ministries and agencies.	Achieved. Successfully implemented. The sessions engaged 160 stakeholders, including 33 women, fostering inclusive expert dialogue. Sector-specific roadmaps were finalized, and advocacy is ongoing to integrate proposals into institutional frameworks, reinforcing gender-responsive participation and the credibility of Track II consultations.
Activity 1.2.1. CSO capacity was strengthened through trainings on CERD and CRPD reporting, advocacy, and gender mainstreaming- particularly on Roma rights and anti-discrimination. Activities included 8 joint projects, 2 CERD shadow reports, workshops on HRBA, social cohesion, and donor engagement, as well as a CSO joint declaration and follow-up exercises on treaty body reporting.	Overachieved. Advocacy capacities of 56 CSOs were strengthened, fostering cross-river civic engagement and joint actions. However, public advocacy on the Left bank remained cautious due to restricted civic space and political sensitivities.
Activity 1.2.2. Participation at CERD Geneva session, implementation of 12 cross-river community initiatives, youth debates, anti-HS campaigns.	Overachieved. 18 initiatives conducted, including CERD participation, exhibitions, debates, and youth-led campaigns promoting human rights and gender equality.
Activity 1.2.3. Monitoring visits in mental health institutions on both banks; HR Forums and joint workshops held.	Overachieved. Joint monitoring in psychiatric institutions and follow-up advocacy actions contributed to rights-based institutional engagement.

Activity 1.2.4. Twelve local peace initiatives were implemented in the Security Zone by NGOs, public institutions, and community groups, selected from 36 proposals through a competitive call by UN Women and CONTACT Center. The initiatives- focused on youth empowerment, women's leadership, and social cohesion through arts, sports, and cultural events - reached over 5,700 people across 55 localities, supported by 62 partners. The process included project design training and alignment with the WPS agenda	Overachieved. The initiatives fostered inclusive, community-led peacebuilding and cross-river cooperation. Strong participation of women and local leaders was noted. Creative formats - festivals, trainings, and joint events - strengthened local ownership and social cohesion in a politically sensitive context.
Activity 1.3.1. Public awareness through exhibitions, flashmobs, videos, digital media, HR Quiz, murals and outreach materials.	Achieved. Target of 150,000 persons reached; diverse media formats, murals, and flashmobs amplified impact across both banks.
Activity 1.3.2. Hackathons, Youth Camp, Peace Network creation, joint youth statements to OSCE and training programs.	Achieved. Youth peacebuilding accelerator led to 8 solutions, 2 implemented; 100+ youth engaged. WPS and youth agency visibly strengthened.
Activity 1.3.3. Roadmap and handbook developed for LB paralegals; capacity building for 25 NGOs; 7 advocacy actions ongoing.	Partially achieved. Only 2 structured advocacy efforts achieved against a target of 10. Political constraints hindered scale-up.
Activity 1.3.4. Paralegal network operational, 25 paralegals serving 1500 LB clients with legal navigation support.	Achieved. 25 paralegals supported 1,500 Left bank beneficiaries in navigating access to RB public services.
Activity 1.3.5. A Russian-language Handbook was developed and disseminated, accompanied by training for 25 paralegals from five NGOs on legal aid standards, ethics, and digital tools. Exchange visits to Right bankNGOs and legal aid offices enhanced learning and practical skills for assisting Left bank residents in accessing public services	Achieved. All 25 paralegals were trained and supported around 1,500 beneficiaries. Exchange visits improved their capacity and confidence. However, systemic barriers on the Left bank limited public advocacy and broader outreach.
Activity 1.3.6. The paralegal network was strengthened through coaching, practical workshops, and a two-day international workshop. The focus was on cross-border legal empowerment, coordination, and digital tools. CDPD supported pilot legal aid services for Left bank residents.	Achieved. Thirty paralegals participated, exchanged experiences, and received practical support. Coaching improved service delivery, and the initiative helped localize best practices despite structural and political constraints.
Outcome 2: Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation	
Activity 2.1.1. Training of 59 law enforcement and judiciary reps; ToT course for 18 participants; Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech drafted.	Achieved. 59 professionals trained. draft inter-institutional Guide for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech finalized and endorsed. Progress in hate speech accountability and institutional awareness noted.
Activity 2.1.2. Implementation of 5 cross-bank anti-hate speech initiatives, exhibitions, workshops and debate clubs.	Achieved. Five cross-river initiatives conducted; strengthened public discourse on hate speech and misinformation.
Activity 2.1.3. A series of actions engaged CSOs from both banks to counter hate speech and discrimination, including: a two-day training for 17 participants on advocacy, storytelling, and AI tools; a Youth Camp with 26 participants, including	Achieved. Activities effectively engaged youth, minorities, and CSOs in creative and advocacy-focused formats. Visual content and public events amplified anti-

non-binary persons, promoting artistic expression; and synchronized flashmobs in Chișinău and Tiraspol with 80+ participants, including Roma community members.	hate speech messaging. Roma inclusion and attention to gender diversity were notable strengths.
Activity 2.1.4. Two events enhanced media literacy and digital resilience: a workshop with 28 influencers, journalists, and activists on disinformation and online ethics; and the TruthBridge Workshop, where participants presented digital tools and articles developed in prior Hackathon and training sessions.	Achieved. Media professionals and influencers gained practical insights on fake news, manipulation, and responsible content sharing. Tools and articles developed were publicly shared. These activities reinforced cross-bank collaboration and media-led counter-narratives to disinformation.
Activity 2.1.5. A hackathon, four workshops, and a final conference were held to strengthen cross-river digital resilience against disinformation and hate speech. The hackathon (Jan 2024) involved 50+ participants who developed three digital tools. Workshops trained 111 media actors, and the final conference (Sept 2024) presented the tools and encouraged cross-bank collaboration. Transparency International also supported tool development and activist training.	Achieved. The activity improved digital, media, and rights-based competencies. Tools were piloted, publicly presented, and are in use. The initiative increased awareness on the Left bank and fostered networking, peer learning, and institutional engagement.
Activity 2.1.6. Eight "deep listening" sessions brought together 126 refugees and host community members across both banks. A social cohesion needs assessment, and three personal refugee narratives were also produced to inform policy and foster inclusive storytelling.	Achieved. Sessions built trust and empathy between groups; participants felt safe sharing experiences. The Needs Report informed local services, while personal stories promoted inclusive disclosures and inspired community support and policy reflection.
Activity 2.2.1. Capacity building for 50+ media professionals; training academies, forums, brunches and joint productions.	Overachieved. Circa 190 professionals capacitated (vs. target 70). Institutional engagement sustained. Strengthened media ecosystems.
Activity 2.2.2. Development of at least 7 tools: 2 knowledge products, 3 hackathon ideas, gamified education tools.	Achieved. 8 tools developed, including 3 digital ones. Further institutionalization required.
Activity 2.2.3. Joint media products: 5 articles, 3 stories, 1 animation, 1 human story on refugees.	Overachieved. 9 joint media materials developed: wide reach and thematic diversity across gender, conflict, and social cohesion
Activity 2.3.1. Training civil servants and service providers to address hate speech in refugee-receiving areas.	Overachieved. 49 civil servants trained. Increased local capacities in refugee-hosting areas
Activity 2.3.2. 14 school-based initiatives by 9 schools; development of handbook on inclusion and anti-HS education.	Overachieved. 14 awareness initiatives implemented by 9 schools; inclusive education handbook produced

Terms of References for the Evaluation of the Project
"Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova"

Evaluation of the project	**Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova** **MPTF-O Gateway, Project 00133100**
Name of administrative unit/division	OHCHR Moldova, through UNDP Moldova
Project/project duration	01 September 2022- 28 February 2025
Location(s)	Moldova: Both banks of the Nistru/Dniester River, as well as Center (Causeni, Anenii Noi, Stefan Voda), North (Balti), South (Comrat), and Security Zone
Donor(s)	UN Peacebuilding Fund
Implementing partner(s)	OHCHR (Convening Agency), UN Women, UNDP
Total overall project/project budget	OHCHR: $850,000 UNDP: $802,500 UN Women: $800,000 **TOTAL: $2,452,500**
Type of evaluation	External
Timeframe for the evaluation	February - May 2025
Evaluation Team	3 evaluators: ● 1 International Consultant (Senior Evaluator) will be contracted through this competition

	• 2 National Consultants/ (Evaluators) will be contracted through a separate competition

I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1. Moldova continues to face challenges in achieving long-term peace and stability due to the protracted conflict related to the Transnistrian region, situated along the left bank of the Nistru/Dniester River. Since the end of the active conflict in 1992, the Left bank, with its main city Tiraspol, has been effectively separated from the rest of the country, not controlled by the government in Chisinau and with de facto leadership that is supported by the Russian Federation. Tensions in the region have escalated recently, particularly following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. These tensions have deepened existing divisions within Moldova, which are often linked to political affiliations (pro-Russia versus pro-West or pro-Ukraine views) and, to some extent, ethnic and linguistic differences. Furthermore, misinformation, alternative news sources, and hate speech are exacerbating these divisions and tensions.

2. Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova is an initiative funded by the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), involving three UN partners: OHCHR (Convening Agency), UN Women, and UNDP. The project seeks to facilitate an enabling environment for improved cross-river interconnection between CSOs, communities, the Peoples Advocate (Ombudsman) and the focal point for human rights on the left bank of the Nistru/Dniester River, reduce social tensions and support the continuation of the fragile Transnistrian conflict settlement process in the context described above of growing regional and domestic geopolitical tensions exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. The project works through the advancement of cross-river interaction on human rights, gender-responsive peacebuilding, and the promotion of equal access to services to all to prevent deepening divisions between the populations on either side of the conflict divide.

3. The project aims to deliver three key outcomes as outlined below in Table 1

Table 1: Outcomes and outputs of the project

Outcome 1	**Strengthened cross-river engagement and productive interaction through the advancement of human rights, the Women, Peace and Security agenda and improved access to social services**
Output 1.1	Improved capacities of the conflict settlement process actors to integrate human rights and gender equality perspectives at all levels of the negotiation agenda, including a focus on balanced and meaningful participation of women in the process at all levels
Output 1.2	Civil society organizations from both banks, People's Advocate and human rights focal point from the left bank, and local community actors from the Security Zone have increased capacities to JOINTLY engage in advancing human rights and the WPS Agenda and foster effective cross-river dialogue and partnerships.
Output 1.3	People from both banks, including women actors and community leaders, have increased knowledge and understanding of human rights, gender equality and the WPS agenda and are increasingly enabled to access available public services and in cross-river interaction
Outcome 2	**Strengthened responses to divisive narratives and misinformation, thereby reducing inter-community tensions**
Output 2.1	CSOs, judges, and law enforcement agents have strengthened capacities and duty bearers of the left bank have increased awareness to effectively implement international standards on tackling hate speech

Output 2.2	Moldovan new and traditional media ecosystems are empowered to produce evidence-based, human rights, gender- and conflict-sensitive media products conducive to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination, and pluralism
Output 2.3	Community-level prevention and response in addressing and countering hate speech and discrimination in areas with large refugee populations are strengthened

II. EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

4. **Purpose:** The project is being evaluated in accordance with the funding agreement with the Peacebuilding Fund, with the evaluation report due by 31 May 2025. The primary purposes of the evaluation include:

- To identify areas of strength and areas of weakness in the planning and achievement of results - including in the areas of sustainable peace (conflict prevention and social cohesion), as well as gender and human rights integration, supported by evidence;
- To produce useful lessons learned and good practices that illustrate successful and unsuccessful strategies in the achievement of results;
- To produce clear and actionable recommendations identifying concrete actions and responsibilities for OHCHR, UN Women and UNDP to undertake towards these ends.

5. **The intended users of the evaluations:**

Primary users	*Users directly involved in the project implementation/ use: learning, decision-making, adjusting project :*
	▪ OHCHR Moldova and reporting Lines at HQs (Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division/ Europe Section)
	▪ UN Women and UNDP offices in Moldova and their reporting lines
	▪ UN Peacebuilding Fund managing country/regional project support
	▪ The Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) in Moldova
Secondary users	*Management oversight, feedback into programming and organisational learning:*
	▪ OHCHR Evaluation Function and Senior Executive Team
	▪ Evaluation Functions and governing bodies of UN Women and UNDP
Other users	*Other stakeholders:*
	▪ Duty-bearers and rights-holders in Moldova
	▪ International community: Policy, field and desk officers in foreign services and donor agencies

6. **Objectives:** The evaluation will assess the project 's performance and progress and produce recommendations in terms of these seven evaluation criteria:

- ▪ *Relevance* - the extent to which the project is relevant to the situation in the country/region, the mandates of implementing Agencies, Funds and project s, its comparative advantage, the Sustainable Development Goals and the needs of stakeholders (both duty-bearers and right-holders);
- ▪ *Coherence* - the compatibility of the project with other interventions in the country/region, sector or organization;
- ▪ *Efficiency* - the extent to which the project has economically converted resources into results in the course of its term;
- ▪ *Effectiveness* - the degree to which planned results and targets have been achieved at outcome and output levels;
- ▪ *Peacebuilding effect* - the extent the project makes a contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable peacebuilding ;
- ▪ *Sustainability* - the extent to which the net benefits of the project continue or are likely to continue;
- ▪ *Gender, disability and human rights integration* - the degree to which a gender and human rights perspective has been integrated into the project and the degree to which the results obtained have contributed to gender and human rights principles of non-discrimination and equality, with emphasis on women's rights and disability inclusion.

7. The evaluation will take both a summative and a formative approach. It will look at results achieved or not achieved so far (summative), identify lessons learned and best practices, and produce recommendations to inform future work (formative).

8. Time scope: The evaluation will cover the entire implementation period of the project, i.e. 01 September 2022 - 28 February 2025

9. Geographical scope: The evaluation will cover the entire country but will focus on the areas where the Project had engaged. These will include urban centres such as Chisinau, Tiraspol, Comrat, and Balti, as well as smaller towns and villages in the left bank of Nistru/Dniester River, central and north Moldova, and the Security Zone.

III. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

10. A set of evaluation questions framed along the OECD/DAC criteria (Relevance Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability) will guide the evaluation. Two other criteria, the peacebuilding effect and the integration of gender, human rights and disability, have been added to reflect the specific nature of the project. The preliminary questions below have been developed using the UNEG Guidelines for Evaluating Peacebuilding Initiatives and sample ToR. All evaluation questions should be answered in an evidence-based manner.

11. Preliminary questions are provided below. The evaluation criteria and questions will be reviewed by the evaluators during the inception phase and may, therefore, be modified to be approved by the Evaluation Management. The evaluation team will develop a more detailed analytical framework of questions and sub-questions as part of the inception report and in agreement with the Evaluation Manager.

EVALUATION CRITERIA	PRELIMINARY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?	EQ1. To what degree has the project addressed the key peacebuilding and conflict prevention challenges in Moldova, within the scope of the UN's mandate in the country and given the changing context in and around Moldova, including in the context of the Left bank of Nistru/Dniester River? EQ2. Were the project ToC and project design relevant, and did they remain so throughout implementation (including the adaptability to changing circumstances and risks)? EQ3. To what extent has the project been aligned with national peacebuilding initiatives and national stakeholders' priorities (duty bearers, rights holders and especially of vulnerable groups)?
Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?	EQ4. To what extent did the project ensure coordination and synergies (i) within the different implementing entities within the project, (ii) with implementing UN agencies' programs and (iii) with other implementing organizations and donors?
Efficiency: How well are resources being used?	EQ5. To what extent has the project been efficient in using the human, financial and intellectual resources at its disposal to achieve its targeted outcomes? These might include: ● Have the organizational arrangements used in the project been adequate? ● Has the monitoring data been systematically collected and analysed to feed into management decisions? ● Was the conflict-sensitivity approach applied throughout the project? ● Were the funds provided through grants to local partners/CSOs used in line with the project's objectives?
Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?	EQ6: What outcomes have been achieved both intended/planned and non-intended, (including the progress against the project indicators?) EQ7: What enabling or constraining factors, both external and internal), have influenced the achievement and non-achievement of the project outcomes?

Peacebuilding effect:	EQ 8: To what extent has the project made a concrete contribution to reducing the risk of conflict in Moldova and/or to strengthening social cohesion in the country?
Sustainability: Will the benefits last?	EQ 9: Did the project include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity, etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project? What is the evidence for sustainability of main results? Has the project made any concerted efforts to expand the activities it piloted and obtain catalytic results beyond the direct inputs of the project?
Human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion and leaving no one behind: Has the intervention been inclusive and human rights-based?	EQ10. To what extent has the project addressed the needs/priorities of women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups in line with the principle of Leave No One Behind (at all stages of the project cycle, including through the engagement of such groups in project governance, design, planning, implementation and monitoring). EQ11. What specific outcomes were addressing/promoting gender equality? EQ12. What specific outcomes tackled the rights/inclusion of marginalised groups?
Lessons and good practices	EQ13. What lessons and good practices have been identified, with a focus on innovative approaches, which could be replicated in other initiatives?

IV. METHODOLOGY

12. The evaluation will follow:

- OECD/DAC Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully [11]
- UN Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards[12] for Evaluation in the UN System,
- the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation[13],
- the UNEG Guidance "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations"[14] and the UNEG Guidance on integrating disability inclusion in evaluations and reporting on the UNDIS accountability framework evaluation indicator,[15]

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[11] https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2021/03/applying-evaluation-criteria-thoughtfully_45a54ea7.html

[12] http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914

[13] http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866

[14] https://unevaluation.org/document/download/4218

[15] http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/3050

▪ As relevant, it will draw on the work of the UNEG Working Group on evaluating peacebuilding initiatives.

13. The evaluation's overall methodological approach should be utilisation-focused, i.e. the evaluation should be planned and conducted in ways that enhance the likely utilization of both the findings by intended users. The evaluation should also, as far as possible, consider the specificities of the implementing AFP work.

14. Integration of Human Rights (HR), Gender Equality (GE), Disability Inclusion (DI) and Leaving No One Behind (LNOB). The evaluation should:

• Adequately answer Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Human Rights (GE, DI & HR) issues by detecting meaningful changes and the contribution of the intervention to them in terms of enjoyment of rights, empowerment of rights holders and capacity of duty bearers, with emphasis on women's rights and disability inclusion;
• Be suitable for the populations and individuals that will be involved (in particular, if cultural and security issues are taken into account); and
• Be appropriate to involve all the key stakeholders without discriminating against some groups or individuals and guarantee the meaningful participation of all stakeholders, with a particular focus on women and persons with disabilities.

15. Further, in line with the UN commitment to Leaving No One Behind, the evaluation will apply an intersectional lens in the evaluation to capture if its interventions reach the most marginalised and vulnerable and if the interventions contribute to reducing their exclusion. Special attention will be paid to: (i) ensuring that the voices and opinions of both men, women and marginalised groups, such as people with disabilities, are heard (including gender-related and disaggregated data, (e.g. by age, sex, countries etc.); (ii) ensuring an unbiased and objective approach and the triangulation of sources, methods, data, and theories. The methodology section of the inception, draft and final reports should clearly explain how the evaluation was specifically designed to integrate GE, DI & HR issues, including data collection methods, data sources and processes, sampling frame, participatory tools, evaluation questions and validation processes.

16. The evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should describe the analysis and interpretation of data on GE, DI & HR, specific findings on GE, DI & HR-related criteria and questions, strengths and weaknesses of the intervention regarding GE, DI & HR, and specific recommendations addressing GE, DI & HR issues.

V. METHODS

17. A mixed-methods approach is preferred - quantitative and qualitative, with rigorous triangulation of Information. It is expected that evaluators will be using the following methods (to be further defined by the evaluation team in the inception report):

▪ **Semi-structured or structured interviews** with staff, internal and external partners, UN agencies, donors, Member State representatives, CSOs, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

▪ **Focus group discussions** with staff and key stakeholders
▪ **Web-based surveys** and/or questionnaires of targeted stakeholders.

- **Analysis of monitoring and project data,** including performance, financial and other data available. The evaluators will be further provided witch access to data and documents relevant for the project implemntation, including a full set of baseline and endline indicators, means of verification, lists of participants, and contact lists of key interlocutors.
- **Document review** of strategies, policy documents, result frameworks, work processes, outputs, documents, job descriptions, partnerships agreements, reports, previous evaluation results, meeting minutes and work plans.
- **Case studies of a specific group or situation**
- **Benchmarking from within the same organization or from other organizations**
- **Secondary data analyses of existing data sets**
- **Direct observations** of selected field offices according to pre-determined criteria

18. **Field visits:** The evaluation will include missions to Tiraspol, Bender, Dubasari and Ribnitsa in the Left bank, Chisinau, Balti, Cahul, Comrat in the Right bank, as well as several villages/locations in the Security Zone, for direct observation and face-to-face interviews and/or focus groups with stakeholders. Locations are to be concretely specified at the inception phase.

19. The evaluators will be provided access to data and documents relevant for the project implementation, including a full set of baseline and endline indicators, means of verification, lists of participants, and contact lists of key interlocutors.

20. **Risks and limitations:** Not apparent at the time of writing the ToR, to be developed as needed in the inception phase

VI. STAKEHOLDER MAPPING

21. This preliminary list of stakeholders provides the basis for initial consultations during the evaluation design, and the evaluation team will develop it further during the inception phase.

UN	▪ **OHCHR: Field presence in Moldova and relevant staff based in HQs in Geneva (FOTCD)** ▪ **UNDP Moldova and their reporting lines** ▪ **UN Women and their reporting lines**
Duty bearers	▪ State actors of Moldova responsible for human rights compliance, and especially the People's Advocate ▪ Other - Please see Annex III
Rights holders	▪ Grassroot organisations and civil society, including Project's grants recipients ▪ Marginalised groups: civil society organisations representing marginalised groups, associations and grassroots representing women and young persons with disabilities, Roma communities
International community	• The RCO and the UN Country team in Moldova • Other international organisations and partners involved in relevant work

VII. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

22. The evaluation will be managed by the OHCHR Evaluation Function Evaluation Manager (PPMES) with the support of the the management group in consulations with the reference group. The Management Group is composed of the Project Coordinator (OHCHR) and the respective Project Officers/Managers from UNDP and UN Women, and will engage in day-to-day management of the Evaluation process.

OHCHR Evaluation Function Evaluation Manager (PPMES) is responsible for:
- Pre-drafting of the Terms of Reference;
- Serving as the primary port-of-call for evaluators, as well as for internal and external stakeholders regarding methodological issues;
- Circulation of the evaluation products to collect the feedback of the reference group (see below) and ensure that it is effectively integrated into the evaluation exercise;
- Monitoring the budget and the correct implementation of the evaluation work plan;
- Organising missions and other data collection activities with support from the Evaluation Management;
- Participating in missions, interviews and focus groups on an ad hoc basis for quality assurance purposes (see also point IX) and;
- Publication and dissemination of the final evaluation report.

Evaluation Management Group is composed of Project Coordinator of OHCHR in Moldova and Project Managers of UNDP and UN Women components. They are responsible for:
- Substantive review of the Terms of Reference the Evaluation Inception Paper, and the evaluation report (with a focus on the accuracy of the project   information presented);
- Supporting the selection and recruitment of the evaluators;
- Collecting documents for desk review and providing relevant programmatic information, documents, and data from other countries;
- Support the organization of data collection, including arrangements for field missions; identify interlocutors for interviews and FGDs; and schedule interview and FGDs meetings;
- Participate in regular evaluation meetings and briefings;
- Developing the management response;
- Perform other tasks to support the evaluation processes as needed.

23. **Reference Group -** A Reference Group will be constituted for this evaluation to serve in an advisory capacity to strengthen its substantive grounding and to maximise the utility of the evaluation: OHCHR PPMES shall chair the Reference Group that will include:
- Representatives of the three implementing AFPs (Heads of OHCHR, UNDP, UN Women)
- OHCHR HQ Desk Officer for Moldova
- OHCHR`s DEXREL Donor and External Relations Officer(s) responsible for relations with the donors
- The three Agency representatives of the Management Group.
- PBSO Focal Point

The Reference Group will:
- Review the ToR and Inception Paper
- Attend and provide information and expertise during discussions on the evaluation findings and recommendations
- Comment on the draft and final versions of the evaluation report
- Support the dissemination of the evaluation findings

24. The evaluation will produce the following major outputs, all of which will be grounded in UNEG Norms and Standards and good evaluation practice, to be disseminated to the appropriate audiences:

a. **Inception Report** (template will be provided as Annex) informed by an initial desk review and inception interviews. This report will provide in a concise manner (max 10 pages without annexes) a concrete action plan for undertaking the evaluation. In particular, the report will present or reconstruct the ToC (if needed), review the evaluation questions and specify the evaluation methodology (in the form of the Evaluation design matrix). It will include stakeholder mapping, as well as information regarding any field visits or other logistical information. The inception report will also highlight any risks and limitations of the evaluation and will include a detailed workplan with a timeline. The Inception Report will be reviewed by the Evaluation Manager and the Reference Group for comments. The evaluation team will submit a revised final version following consideration of this feedback.

b. **Preliminary data presentation** - A meeting to present the preliminary findings at the end of the data collection and field mission phase to the field presence or unit responsible for the project   being evaluated and the evaluation management.

c. **Draft Report -** not exceeding 40 pages without annexes, which includes an Executive Summary of no more than 5 pages**.** This report will detail key findings, useful lessons learned and good practices, and clear and actionable recommendations for concrete action, underpinned by clear evidence. The report will be reviewed by the Evaluation Management and the Reference Group for factual comments

d. **Second Draft Report** that incorporates the first round of comments and feedback from the Evaluation Management and the Reference Group

e. **Evaluation findings presentation -** The evaluation team presents the evaluation results (conclusions and recommendations) for discussion with the evaluation reference group and other relevant internal stakeholders (in person or by video conference).

f. **Final Report** that incorporates final comments from the Evaluation Management and the Reference Group on the second draft report, including those received during the presentation of results.

g. **Evaluation briefer – to be produced by OHCHR Evaluation Function after completion of the evaluation**

25. The timeline proposed for the conduct of the evaluation is in Annex 1.

IX.   QUALITY ASSURANCE

26. The evaluation manager is responsible for ensuring all evaluation processes and products meet all the UNEG and OECD/DAC norms, standards and principles and the provisions of OHCHR's, UNDP's and UN Women's Evaluation Policies**.** During the inception phase and the data collection phase, the evaluation manager may join some of the interviews conducted by the evaluation team for quality control purposes.

27. Quality control checklists will be used by the evaluation manager for the finalisation of the ToRs and the revision of the evaluation reports.

28. The evaluation will be conducted by a **team of three consultants (one International – Senior Evaluator, and two National Evaluators)** with experience in evaluations, a good understanding of peacebuilding and human rights issues, familiarity with the integration of gender related matters and perspectives of marginalised groups, and knowledge of the country/region under the evaluation, responsible for undertaking the evaluation from start to finish in accordance with the timelines agreed upon and in a high-quality manner.

29. Specific profiles and Terms of Reference for the position of the **International Senior Evaluator** are enclosed below.

XI. DISSEMINATION, USE AND FOLLOW-UP STRATEGY

30. The evaluation report will be made available to the donor and other major stakeholders and will be considered public documents unless decided otherwise due to information confidentiality and sensitivity. The final evaluation reports, together with their management responses, will be published on UN Agencies' intranet portals, public websites and the UNEG portal. All reporting shall comply with the Do Not Harm principle and should consider whether it may endanger stakeholders, particularly victims of human rights violations and/or human rights defenders.

XII. TIMELINE

The tentative timeline is below but might need to be adjusted based on the pace of the recruitment process and the availability of the selected consultants (among other factors).

PHASE	ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Inception phase	Start of Evaluation	15 February 2025
	Inception Meeting	Mid- February 2025
	Desk Review and Scoping interviews, development of Inception Report, including Data Collection Tools	Mid to end ofFebruary 2025
	Draft Inception Report	EARLY TO MID-MARCH 2025
	Feedback from the Reference Group	Mid- March 2025
	Final inception report	MID MARCH MARCH 2025
Data collection	Data collection and analysis	MARCH-APRIL 2025 (TBC)
	Field visit	MARCH-APRIL 2025
Evaluation report	Submission of the first draft report	Mid April April 2025
	Webinar to present findings	Week of Mid-April 2025
	Feedback from the Reference Group on the first report	By end of April 2025
	Submission of the second Draft Report	Early May 2025
	Feedback from the Reference Group	Mid May 2025
	Submission of the Final Report	Mid to end of May 2025

TERMS OF REFERENCE

International Senior Evaluator

1. **Introduction**

OHCHR, on behalf of OHCHR, UNDP and UN Women Moldova, is conducting an evaluation of its 'Building sustainable and inclusive peace, strengthening trust and social cohesion in Moldova' project. This

document contains Terms of Reference (ToRs) that will be used as the basis for contracting the Senior Evaluator responsible for conducting the evaluation. It does not duplicate the information found in the TOR for the evaluation.

Time: 42 working days

Timeframe: *February 2025 - 31 May 2025*

2. Profile

- Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in law, political science, international relations, economics, or related field. A first level university degree in combination with a qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced degree.
- Minimum of 10 years of experience conducting assessments, reviews or evaluations of projects, programs or policies in the UN or international context.
- Experience in human rights or related field (humanitarian assistance, peace operations).
- Fluency in oral and written English. Knowledge of one or both locally spoken languages (Russian or Romanian) is considered an asset.
- Experience in working on evaluations of peacebuilding, social cohesion actions in the Eastern Europe and Caucasus Regions is an asset.
- Knowledge of integration of human rights and/or gender perspectives in evaluations.
- Knowledge of OHCHR, UNDP and UN Women core areas is an advantage.

3. Scope of work

The Senior Evaluator will be the main responsible for undertaking the evaluation from start to finish in accordance with the agreed timeline and in a high-quality manner. Key responsibilities are to:

● Conduct a desk review of relevant documents and scoping interviews as per ToR. Develop the evaluation design and methodology and prepare the Inception Report.
● Conduct data collection based on the approved Inception Report. This includes undertaking field missions for interviews with stakeholders in names of locations and other prioritized zones in Moldova as listed above, under item 18.
● Desing an interview/meetings agenda and the interview project   .
● Conduct a workshop to present the preliminary findings at the end of the inception phase.
● Conduct data analysis and prepare drafts and final evaluation reports.
● Conduct a presentation for the discussion of the evaluation results and recommendations.
● Ensure adherence to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards, OECD/DAC evaluation norms, standards, guidelines, templates and other guidelines (See Section 4 of the ToR), the full evaluation terms of Reference (ToR), and the dedicated templates shared for this evaluation.
● Ensure that all deliverables mentioned in these terms of reference are submitted in a timely and satisfactory manner, and in line with the quality criteria checklist.
● Participate in the kick-off meeting, and provide any briefings throughout the evaluation process, as requested.

4. Supervision of the work

The Senior Evaluator will report to the Evaluation Manager, who is responsible for approving the products of the consultancy in consultation with the OHCHR Project Coordinator, and UNDP and UN Women Project Managers.

5. Expected Deliverables

The Senior Evaluator is responsible for the quality and timely submission of the specific deliverables, as specified below. All products should be well-written in English and have a clear, transparent and verifiable analysis process.

Inception report in line with UNEG, OECD/DAC evaluation norms, standards, guidelines as well as the adapted templates for this evaluation. This includes a desk review summary, refined evaluation questions, data collection instruments (including surveys/questionnaires and interview guides), sampling strategy, evaluation question matrix, stakeholder mapping, and risks and limitations to the evaluation (respecting potential COVID-related restrictions on travel and in-person meetings). Submission to the evaluation manager for review and comments from the reference group.

A workshop to present the preliminary findings at the end of the data collection and field mission phase.

Draft report in line with UNEG, OECD/DAC, standards, guidelines, and the templates specifically developed for this evaluation. This also includes an analysis of the performance of the project to adequately address gender equality, disability inclusion as well as human rights issues, with concrete findings, conclusions and recommendations. Submission to the evaluation manager for review by the reference group (may entail various rounds of comments and revision in accordance).

A **second Draft Report** that incorporates the first round of comments and feedback from the Evaluation Management and the Reference Group.

A presentation of the evaluation results (conclusions and recommendations) by the evaluation team for discussion with the evaluation reference group and other relevant internal stakeholders (in person or by video conference).

A **Final Report in line with UNEG, OECD/DAC standards and guidelines** that incorporates final comments from the Evaluation Management and the Reference Group on the second draft report, including those received during the presentation of results.

6. Details of deliverables and payments

This contract is an external collaboration contract for 42 working days. The following instalments will be made:

Deliverable	Output	To be accomplished by (dd/mm/yy)	Amount
1.	Inception Report (including desk review) *(up to 14 w.d.)* *This deliverable pertains to OHCHR*	April 2025	33.3% of the fees upon receipt and approval of the inception report by the Evaluation Manager
2.	Data collection (including field missions), preliminary findings workshop, data analysis and draft evaluation report *(up to 14 w.d.)*	End of April 2025	33.3 % of the fees upon receipt and approval of the first draft report by the Evaluation Manager

	This deliverable pertains to UN Women		
3.	Final Evaluation Report (including full proof reading) and presentations of final evaluation results (ppt and brief) *(up to 14 w.d.)* *This deliverable pertains to UNDP*	End of May 2025	33.3% of the fees upon receipt and approval of the final report by the Evaluation Manager

7. Financial Arrangements

The financial proposal by interested individual consltants (IC) shall specify a total **lump sum** amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in instalments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the ToR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including the daily fee, taxes, and number of anticipated working days, transport costs, etc.).

Travel

All envisaged travel costs must be included in the financial proposal. This includes all travel to Moldova and back, and travel within Moldova. In general, travel costs exceeding those of an economy class ticket will not be accepted. Should the IC wish to travel on a higher class he/she should do so using their own resources.
This assignment includes one mission of 7 working days to Moldova. The travel costs to Moldova, including expenses related to site visits, meetings with implementers, partners, and key stakeholders (local transportation), should be indicated separately in the financial proposal.

8. Documents to Be Included When Submitting the Proposals

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/ information to demonstrate their qualifications:

● Signed and filled-in Offeror's letter confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating a financial proposal, with the detailed breakdown of costs supporting the all inclusive financial proposal (in USD, specifying a total requested amount per working day, including all related costs, e.g. fees, phone calls, transport costs etc.);
● Proposal (Motivation Letter): explaining why they are the most suitable for the work including previous experience in similar Projects (please provide brief information on each of the above qualifications, item by item, including information, links/copies of documents that prove participation in similar assignments);
● Curriculum Vitae (UN Personal History Form) including records on past experience in similar projects/assignments and concrete outputs obtained and at least 3 referees.

Important notice: The applicants who have the statute of Government Official / Public Servant prior to appointment will be asked to submit the following documentation:

- a no-objection letter in respect of the applicant received from the Government, and;
- the applicant is certified in writing by the Government to be on official leave without pay for the entire duration of the Individual Contract.

A retired government official is not considered in this case a government official, and as such, may be contracted.

9. Evaluation of individual consultants

Initially, individual consultants will be **short-listed** based on the following minimum qualification criteria:

- Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in law, political science, international relations, economics, or related field. A first level university degree in combination with a qualifying experience of 4 years may be accepted in lieu of the advanced degree.
- Minimum of 10 years of experience conducting assessments, reviews or evaluations of projects, programs or policies in the UN or international context.
- Experience in human rights or related field (humanitarian assistance, social cohesion, community development, peace operations).

The short-listed individual consultants will be further evaluated based on the following methodology:

Cumulative analysis
The award of the contract shall be made to the individual consultant whose offer has been evaluated and determined as:

a) responsive/ compliant/ acceptable, and
b) having received the highest score out of a pre-determined set of weighted technical and financial criteria specific to the solicitation.

* Technical Criteria weight – 60% (300 pts);
* Financial Criteria weight – 40% (200 pts).

Only candidates obtaining a minimum of 210 points would be considered for the Financial Evaluation.

Criteria	Scoring	Maximum Points Obtainable
Technical		
Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in law, political science, international relations, economics, or related field. A first level university degree in combination with a 4 years qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced degree	*Master's (or equivalent experience) – 10 pts; PhD or second Master's – **25 pts***	25
Minimum of 10 years of experience conducting assessments, reviews or evaluations of projects, programs or policies in the UN or international context	*Below 10 years – 0 points, 10 years – 20 points, each additional year – 5 points up to max. **50 pts***	50

Experience in human rights or related field (humanitarian assistance, social cohesion, community development, peace operations)	*Up to 5 years experience – 5 points, above 5 years experience – 10 points*	10
Knowledge of integration of human rights and/or gender perspectives in evaluations	*No evaluations of such kind – 0 pts; Up to 5 evaluations – 5 pts, above 5 evaluations – **10 pts.***	10
Experience in working on evaluations of peacebuilding, social cohesion actions in Eastern Europe and Caucasus Regions is an asset	*Each assignment – 5 pts, up to max 15 **pts***	15
Knowledge of OHCHR, UNDP and UN Women core areas is an advantage	*For each Agency – 5 pts, max **15 pts***	15
Total Technical Scoring		**125**
Interview (demonstrated technical knowledge and experience; communication/ interpersonal skills; initiative; creativity/ resourcefulness). **Only up to the first 5 applicants that have accumulated the highest technical score shall be invited to the interview.**		
Competencies and logic in carrying out complex project evaluations and assessments	*Limited competencies and logic – up to 5 pts, fair – up to 15 pts., good – up to 30 pts, very good – up to **40 pts***	175
Understanding and knowledge of regional/local peacebuilding contexts	*Limited understanding – up to 5 pts, fair – up to 20 pts., good – up to 40 pts, very good – up to **50 pts***	
Demonstrated ability to effectively utilize analytical and collaboration tools (e.g., MS Office 365, ZOOM, Google Workspace, evaluation-specific software) for complex data management, analysis, and reporting within an evaluation context	*Limited understanding and ability – up to 5 pts., satisfactory – up to 15 pts.; extensive – up to **20 pts***	
Ability to address challenges effectively, adapt to changing circumstances, and find practical solutions during evaluation activities.	*No ability – 0 pts., limited ability – up to 5 pts., demonstrated ability – up to 15 pts., extensive experience / strong skills – up to **20 pts***	
Strong communication and interpersonal skills	*No – 0 pts., to some extent – up to 10 pts., extensive experience / good skills – up to **15 pts***	
Command of the English language	*Working knowledge / intermediate – up to 15 pts, advanced – up to **20 pts***	
Additional languages: knowledge of Romanian and/or Russian is an asset.	*5 pts per language, max. total **10 pts***	
Total Interview Scoring		**175**
Maximum Total Technical Scoring		**300**
Financial		
Evaluation of submitted financial offers will be done based on the following formula: $S = Fmin / F * 200$ *S – score received on financial evaluation;*		**200**

Fmin – *the lowest financial offer out of all the submitted offers qualified over the technical evaluation round;* *F* – *financial offer under consideration*	

<u>Winning candidate</u>

The winning candidate will be the candidate who has accumulated the highest aggregated score (technical scoring + financial scoring).

Annexes to the Terms of Reference:

Annex 1: LogFrame

Annex 2: Inception report Template

Annex 3: Evaluation report Template

Annex 5 – List of stakeholders interviewed

Stakeholder Group	Number	Respondent	Gender
UN Project Implementation Team	1	Project Coordinator, OHCHR	Man
	2	Project Officer, OHCHR	Man
	3	M&E officer, OHCHR	Woman
	4	Programme Manager, UNDP	Man
	5	Project Analyst, UNDP	Man
	6	Project Officer, UN Women	Woman
	7	M&E Specialist, UN Women	Woman
	7	Deputy Contry Representative, UN Women	Woman
	8	Peace&Development Adviser, UN Resident Coordinator's Office	Woman
Representative(s) of partner/participant NGOs and CSOs	9	Programs Director, NGO IPIS	Woman
	10	Project Coordinator, NGO IPIS	Woman
	11	Executive Director, NGO Initiative4Peace	Man
	12	Executive Director, NGO CDPD	Man
	13	Programs Director, NGO CDPD	Man
	14	Executive Director, Transparency International	Woman
	15	Executive Director, CONTACT Center	Man
	16	Projects Coordinator, CONTACT Center	Woman
	17	Executive Director, API	Man
	18	Head Department for Advocacy and Publications, API	Man
	19	Executive Director, FFUPLM	Man
	20	Executive Director, NGO Femeia Conteaza	Woman
	21	Executive Director, NGO Motivation	Woman
	22	Executive Director, NGO PARAGON	Woman
Experts - Road Map developers and workshops Moderators (at least one women), other experts, international consultants etc.	23	Workshops Moderator	Woman
	24	Expert, Author of Peacebuilding Guide	Man
	25	Consultant on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding	Woman

Government, Parliament and public institutions representative	26	Director, Bureau for Reintegration Policies	Man
	27	Member of Parliament	Man
	28	Prosecutor, General Prosecutor's Office	Man
	29	Prosecutor, Acting Head, Section of policies and projects management, General Prosecutor's Office	Man
	30	Deputy Head, Ombudsman's Office	Woman
	31	Representative in Security Zone, Ombudsman's Office	Man
	32	Representative from the secretariat of the focal point for human rights on the Left bank	Man
Influencers	33	Influencer, Left bank	Man
Paralegals	34	Paralegal, Left bank	Man
Total Respondents			**34**
	Men		**20** (58.8%)
	Women		**14** (41.2%)

KII Guide I

Relevance

1. In your opinion, what are the priority needs related to the peacebuilding process in Moldova? Why?

2. To what extent did the project respond to such needs (related to peace and social cohesion) of the local population of the left and right bank? How? Please specify

3. How did the project identify and address the main drivers and impediments of peace building?

4. How was the context analyzed, and the activities planned accordingly?

5. To what extent does the project consider the national policies/strategies related to peace building? Please specify

6. How did the project ensure meaningful participation and benefit for marginalized groups - such as persons with disabilities and women-led CSOs - in planning and implementation, and what challenges or successes did you encounter in applying the *'Leave No One Behind* approach in practice?

Coherence

7. How was the coherence between implemented UN agencies ensured?

8. To what extent did the project ensure the synergies between activities of different UN agencies participating in the project?

9. To what extent project activates were coherent with other UN projects in the field of peace building? Please could you provide concrete examples?

10.Were there any cooperation/coordination with other organizations working in the peace building field in Moldova?

11.To what extent were the project activities coherent with the governmental policies activities? Please specify

12.How did the project ensure that there are no overlaps with other donors'/organizations' interventions? Please specify

13.In your opinion, what was the added value of the project? How did the project support unaddressed needs of the peacebuilding process? Please specify

Efficiency

14. How was the coordination between different agencies defined to ensure project efficiency? What mechanisms were in place? Please specify

15. Were the human resources dedicated to the project implementation sufficient? Were there any need to adjust?

16. To what extent was the allocation of budgetary resources being sufficient to achieve a defined outcome? Any recommendations?

17. To what extent did the project use adaptive mechanisms to orient in fast changing social/political/ economic environment? Please specify

18. How was the monitoring and implementation plan elaborated and implemented?

19. To what extent was the data collected in the decision-making process? Please specify

20. How the conflict-sensitive approach was used in different stage of project implementation – project design, planning, implementation of different activities (trainings, workshops, grant dissemination etc.)? Please specify

21. To what extent did the provided grant support ensure to enhance project objectives? How did grant support increase people-to-people communication? Could you specify each project objective?

Effectiveness

22. How did the project activities enhance people to people communication and social cohesion? Please specify per each project objectives

23. To what extent did the project support the improvement of service delivery implementation of WPS agenda?

24. In your observation what changes after the project activities were conducted? Were there any unexpected positive or negative results (intended or unintended) arising from project activities? Could you share examples?

25. How the women/youth, people with disability and other marginalized groups were included in the peace building process?

26. What were the main external and internal factors that contributed/neglected the achievement of project outcomes? Why? Please specify

27. How did the project adapt its activities to changing conflict dynamics or regional developments, such as the war in Ukraine or the 2025 energy crisis? Can you provide specific examples?

Peace building process

28. In your opinion how did the project contribute to enhancement of the peacebuilding process?

29. Please specify how the people-to-people communication, and addressing divisive narratives and hate speech were enhanced?

Human Rights

30. To what extent and how were the special needs of people with disabilities, gender, and other vulnerable groups identified? How were they addressed?

31. How did the project activities ensure that the special needs of vulnerable people are considered? How were they approached? In which project activities they were included?

Sustainability

32. How did the project ensure that effect on peace building process will continue after project is finalized? Were any institutional mechanisms established to ensure sustainability achievements?

33. Are there any CSOs/governmental institutions/media institutions that take responsibility for the outputs provided by the project?

34. What is the project exit strategy?

Recommendations

35. Would you like to add any information that you think is relevant for the project evaluation and was not asked by us?

36. Do you have any specific recommendations for the future projects working on the same issues in Moldova?

Annex 7 – KII Guide for CSOs/Stakeholders

Relevance

1. In your opinion, overall, how relevant was the project for peace building process in Moldova?

2. How relevant were the grants provided/workshops/trainings by the project to the needs of the institution you represent? How? Please specify

3. Did project activities adjust to conflict dynamics, such as regional tensions or the energy crisis? If yes, how were these adaptations communicated or implemented?

Effectiveness

4. How did the project staff identify the needs of the project's target groups?

5. How did the project identify changing needs of target communities? Please specify

6. Overall, how did the project enhance the peace building process? Please specify for each project objectives

7. Have you observed any unexpected positive or negative effects of the project activities, either within your organization or the community?

8. In your opinion, what was the added value of the project? How did the project support unaddressed needs of the peacebuilding process? Please specify

9. How did the project ensure addressing the project objectives? Were the right approaches implemented? Why do you think so? What were the weaknesses?

Human rights

10. How did the project ensure gender-mainstreaming and human rights approach in different aspects of intervention (trainings, workshops, grants etc.)?

11. How did the project ensure disability mainstreaming in its implementation?

12. How did the project ensure disability inclusion and a human rights approach in the planning process of its activities?

13. In what ways were persons with disabilities or other marginalized groups engaged in planning, implementing, or benefiting from project activities? Can you identify any changes in their participation or empowerment during the project lifecycle?

Sustainability

14. In your observation to what extent/ways the achieved results will remain after the project ends?

Recommendations

15. Do you have any specific recommendations for the future projects working on the same issues in Moldova?

Thank You!

FGD Questionnaire

- **Introduction**
- **Moderator Introduction**: Brief self-introduction by the moderators.
- **Discussion Theme Introduction**: "Today's discussion will focus on the activities carried out under the project *'Building Sustainable and Inclusive Peace, Strengthening Trust and Social Cohesion in Moldova.'* We will concentrate on the specific activity/activities in which you were involved." *(The moderator will specify the activity depending on the FGD group).*

"This meeting is part of the project's final evaluation, and we are very interested in hearing your feedback regarding your participation".

-    **Discussion Guidelines**: "There are no right or wrong answers. You are not required to agree with others, but we ask that everyone listen respectfully. Our role as moderators is to guide the discussion and ask questions. We will be taking notes on your input. Before we begin, we kindly ask each of you to briefly introduce yourselves."

Discussion Questions:

Introductory Questions:

1. Please introduce yourself, stating your name and City/Village where you are currently located.
2. How were you approached to participate in project activities?
3. Why did you decide to participate in the project activities?

Subject-Related Questions:

4. In your opinion, to what extent was the project in line with the urgent needs of your community or nation? Please specify

5. How were the activities conducted? Did you feel that the most important needs for peace-building process were addressed? How? Why?

6. To what extent did the facilitators and discussions address the needs of vulnerable populations (people with disabilities, women, youth)?

7. Please share with us how and to what extent the needs of the above-mentioned groups were considered?

8. Were there any challenges to implement the activities in which you were involved? How were these challenges overcome?

9. Did any external factors (such as power outages or lack of resources) influence the effective implementation of project activity? How did this affect your engagement?

Community Related Questions:

10.In your opinion, what were the key outputs/outcomes of the activity in which you were involved? Please elaborate

11.To what extent did the activity contribute to social cohesion and support peace building process? How and why?

12.How did project activities ensure that community needs were properly identified and analyzed?

13.Did the project activities contribute to any tangible changes in your life or in your community? For example, did the project help you recognize or respond to hate speech or misinformation in your community? Please provide specific examples

14. Do you feel like you have contributed to the improvements in your community as a result of the activity? Have you shared the knowledge or experience gained as a part of project with others in your community or networks? Please specify in what ways

Process Related Questions:

15.Can you please describe in detail how the activity was organized?

16.How accessible were they for people with disabilities or other vulnerable groups?

17.How would you assess the management and implementation of the specific project activities you were involved in? Were the activities well planned? Why? What can be improved?

Conclusion:

18.Reflecting on your experience with the activities you were involved, what specific challenges or successes have you encountered? Were there any unexpected results - positive or negative - from your participation in the project?

19.In your opinion, what can be improved in similar activities in future?

Thank you!

EVALUATION CRITERIA	QUESTION	MEASURE(S) OR INDICATOR (S)	DATA SOURCES	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	STAKEHOLDERS TO ENGAGE WITH TO GATHER THE INFORMATION NEEDED	BRIEF EXPLANATION OF HOW THE ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE DATA WILL BE CARRIED OUT
Relevance: Is the intervention doing the right thing?	**EQ1**. To what degree has the project addressed the key peacebuilding and conflict prevention challenges in Moldova, within the scope of the UN's mandate in the country and given the changing context in and around Moldova, including in the context of the Left bank of Nistru/Dniester River?	Extent to which the project directly addresses conflict drivers and peacebuilding priorities identified in UN assessments or contextual analyses (including those relevant to the Left bank of the Nistru/Dniester River)	Implementing UN agencies project staff Relevant CSOs Relevant target groups (journalists, judges, influencers, schools etc.) Governmental institutions working on peace and human rights, UN agencies	Desk review KIIs FGDs	Project staff HQ based staff Representatives from donors	Identification of relevant plans, activities and policies. Triangulation based on different sources.

			and OSCE conflict assessments, EU-Moldova relevant documents			
			Relevant governmental strategies and policy documents			
	EQ2. Were the project ToC and project design relevant, and did they remain so throughout implementation (including the adaptability to changing circumstances and shifting geopolitical risks)?	Existence of a context-informed and sound ToC project design at the start of the project

Evidence of adaptive responses to emerging risks or context changes, in particular the energy crisis on left bank (January - February 2025) and Ukraine war impacts. | Project Documents

Project progress report

UN agencies

Project Staff | Desk review

KIIs | UN Agencies Project staff | Critical reflection of ToC and analyses of project log frame in line with ToC and triangulated with information gained through KIIs |

	EQ3. To what extent has the project been aligned with national peacebuilding initiatives and national stakeholders' priorities (duty bearers, rights holders and especially of vulnerable groups)?	Evidence of alignment of project activities with the priorities outlined in national policies and/or strategies Stakeholders' perception (disaggregated by group) of the extent to which they were meaningfully engaged in project design and implementation Stakeholder perception (disaggregated by group) on how well their priorities, needs and perceived gaps were addressed Alignment with Moldova's National WPS Action Plan (2023–2027)	National peacebuilding documents Stakeholders	Desk review KIIs	UN Agencies Project staff Relevant governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders	Analyses of the peacebuilding initiatives and synthesizes with the primary date gained from the KIIs

Coherence: How well does the intervention fit?	**EQ4.** To what extent did the project ensure coordination and synergies (i) within the different implementing entities within the project, (ii) with implementing UN agencies' programs and (iii) with other implementing organizations and donors?	Stakeholder perception of coordination quality and synergy Evidence of aligned or complementary activities across partners (e.g., shared workplans, joint outputs etc.) Evidence/examples of efficiency or effectiveness gains due to inter-agency or and/or inter-partner coordination	UN Agencies project staff Meeting minutes UN country project document Other organizations working on peacebuilding projects	Desk review KIIs	UN Agencies Project staff Relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders	Analyses of the other peacebuilding initiatives and synthesizes with the primary data gained from the KIIs and project documents and meeting minutes
Efficiency: How well are resources being used?	**EQ5.** To what extent has the project been efficient in using the human, financial and intellectual resources at its disposal to achieve its targeted outcomes? These include:					
	● Have the organizational arrangements used in the project been adequate?	The extent to which organizational arrangements supported timely outcomes	Project documents UN agencies Project staff	Desk review KII	UN Agencies Project staff	Synthesis of the KIIs and project documents data

		The assigned project staff had clearly defined roles, coordination mechanisms were established and implemented regularly, and the decision-making process was efficient				
		Inclusion of resource allocations for CSOs on both banks				
		Evidence of organizational arrangements and coordination mechanisms				
		The extent to which the budgetary expenditures were sufficient to achieve the planned outcomes				
	● Has the monitoring data been systematically collected and analyzed to feed into management decisions?	The extent to which the monitoring data was collected regularly using tools that facilitated effective tracking of results and other monitoring data	Monitoring data	Desk review	UN Agencies Project staff (M&E specialist)	Synthesis of the KIIs and project documents data
			Project documents	KIIs		
		Evidence that monitoring data was actively used to inform management decisions, guide				

		implementation adjustments, and improve the overall project				
● Was the conflict-sensitivity approach applied throughout the project?	The extent to which the program design incorporated a conflict-sensitive approach The degree to which conflict sensitivity was considered in the planning of project activities, workshops, grant competitions, etc. Inclusion of context monitoring tools During the implementation of the activity, a conflict-related risk analysis was conducted, and a "*do no harm approach*" was applied while implementation of the activities	Respondents Project documents	Desk review KIIs	UN Agencies Project staff Project experts Implementing NGOs/SCOs	Triangulation data from document review, KIIs.
● Were the funds provided through grants to local partners/CSOs used in line with the project's objectives?	Extent to which the provided grants supported the	Grant documents Beneficiaries	KIIs FGDs	UN Agencies Project staff	Qualitative reflection and analyses of gained data from different

		achievements of project objectives			Project experts	sources
				Project documents		
		Evidence that the provided grants facilitated people-to-people communication, improved service delivery, WPS agenda implementation etc.			Final beneficiaries	
		The extent to which the support provided contributed to the ToC assumptions				
		CSOs can offer examples of institutional changes resulting from grants (for grantees under institutional development grants UN Women)				
Effectiveness: Is the intervention achieving its objectives?	**EQ6:** What outcomes have been achieved both intended/planned and non-intended, (including the progress against the project indicators?)	The degree of achievement of project quantitative indicators defined in log frame There is evidence that positive engagement among both bank	Final beneficiaries UN agencies project staff	KIIs FGDs Project documents	UN Agencies Project staff Project experts CSOs	Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated

		populations has improved	Implementing CSOs		Final beneficiaries	
		There is evidence that conflict settlement process actors incorporate human rights and gender equality considerations into their negotiating agendas	Project experts

Project progress reports | | | |
| | | The extent to which women, youth and other target group contribute jointly to positive peace building in both banks | Law enforcements agents

Journalists | | | |
		Positive unintended results are achieved and can be identified	Local community representatives			
		The extent to which the improvement in service delivery, WPS agenda, understanding of human rights and gender issues are in place				
		Local SCOs, People's Advocate and human rights focal point from the left bank, and local				

		community actors from the Security Zone have increased capacities are implementing joint projects for peace building and have joint plans for future peace building process inclusion				
		Outcomes of the project can be recognized through the perceptions of key beneficiaries and stakeholders during the research				
		The awareness about hate speech has increased within the targeted audience and addressing hate speech is on place				
		Law enforcement professionals (judges, prosecutors, police) are knowledgeable about the concept of online and offline hate speech, and Guide for investigating and				

| | | prosecuting hate crimes and online hate speech are established

Local CSOs, as well as representatives from traditional and new media, are aware of the divisive narratives and are reporting efforts to address them | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **EQ7:** What enabling or constraining factors (both external and internal) have influenced the achievement and non-achievement of the project outcomes? | The extent to which internal and external factors influenced the achievement of project outcomes | UN agencies project staff

Implementing CSOs

Project Experts | KIIs | UN Agencies Project staff

Project experts

Implementing CSOs | Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated |
| **Peacebuilding effect** | **EQ 8:** To what extent has the project made a concrete contribution to reducing the risk of conflict in Moldova and/or to strengthening social cohesion in the country? | Evidence of the project's contribution to peacebuilding effect

There is concrete evidence of social cohesion between representatives of both banks | Final beneficiaries

UN agencies project staff | KIIs

FGDs

Project documents

CSOs | UN Agencies project staff

Project experts

CSOs | Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated |

		Joint projects and/or initiatives of the CSOs, journalists, community representatives from both banks are in place	Implementing CSOs			
		Perception surveys on social cohesion and trust levels across both banks	Project experts			
			Project progress reports			
Sustainability: Will the benefits last?	**EQ 9:** Did the project include an appropriate sustainability and exit strategy (including promoting national/local ownership, use of national capacity, etc.) to support positive changes in peacebuilding after the end of the project?	Evidence of a comprehensive and well-articulated exit strategy	Final beneficiaries	KIIs	UN Agencies Project staff	Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated
		Evidence of beneficiaries/stakeholders demonstrating commitment and or concrete plans to continue activities beyond the project completions	UN agencies project staff	FGDs	Project experts	
	What is the evidence for sustainability of the main results?		Implementing CSOs	Project documents	CSOs	
	Has the project made any concerted efforts to expand the activities it piloted and obtain catalytic results beyond the direct inputs of the project?	Assessment of capacity-building support on local CSOs and prospects for continued cross-river cooperation beyond project closure.	Project experts	CSOs	Final beneficiaries	
		Existence of policy instruments or agreements supporting the sustainability of project results (relevant policies, institutional	Project progress reports			

		frameworks, or formal agreements have been adopted or strengthened to ensure long-term impact and continuity of project outcomes)				
Human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion and leaving no one behind: **Has the intervention been inclusive and human rights-based?**	**EQ10.** To what extent has the project addressed the needs/priorities of women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in line with the principle of "*Leave No One Behind*" (at all stages of the project cycle, including through the engagement of such groups in project governance, design, planning, implementation and monitoring)?	Evidence that the project design and implementation explicitly reflect the needs and priorities of marginalized groups "*Leave no one behind*" approach was implemented during the activities conducted Number of participants in the project implementation by disaggregated group (women, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups) The project operationalized the "*Leave No One Behind*" principle ensuring equitable participation and outcomes	Final beneficiaries UN agencies project staff Implementing CSOs Project experts Project progress reports Project documents	KIIs FGDs Project Documents Implementing CSOs	UN Agencies Project staff Project experts Implementing CSOs Final beneficiaries	Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated

		Project actively promoted inclusion, equity, and accessibility for marginalized and vulnerable populations				
		Project indicators are disaggregated by gender, and other groups where it is relevant				
	EQ11. What specific outcomes were addressing/promoting gender equality?	Number of outputs/activities under that outcome which address /promote gender equality	UN agencies project staff	KIIs	UN Agencies Project staff	Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated
		Qualitative assessments of the activities/outputs through a gender equality perspective		Project documents	Project experts Implementing CSOs Final beneficiaries	
	EQ12. What specific outcomes tackled the rights/inclusion of marginalized groups?	Evidence of effective participation of marginalized groups	Final beneficiaries UN agencies project staff		UN Agencies Project staff	Received data from different sources will be analyzed, synthesized and triangulated
		Evidence of unintended effects (positive or negative) on marginalized groups	Implementing CSOs Project experts		Project experts Implementing CSOs Final beneficiaries	

			Project progress reports Project documents			