

Migration MPTF

Annual Report

PROJECT INFORMATION	
Joint Programme Title:	Leveraging the positive impact of migration on Moldova's development through improved policy evidence and better engaged diaspora.
Country(ies)/Region (or indicate if a global initiative):	Republic of Moldova
Project Identification Number:	
Start and Planned End Dates	13 September 2023 – 11 September 2026
Convening Agent (Lead PUNO):	International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mission to the Republic of Moldova
PUNO(s) (PUNOs):	IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO
Key Partners: (include Implementing Partner)	State Chancellery, Bureau for Diaspora Relations, Statistics Office
Project Period (Start – End Dates):	13 September 2023 – 11 September 2026
Reporting Period:	1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024
Total Approved Migration MPTF Budget: (breakdown by PUNO)	IOM: USD 800,000 UNDP: USD 610,000 UNICEF: USD 250,000 WHO: USD 340,000 Total: USD 2,000,000
Total Funds Received To Date: (breakdown by PUNO)	IOM: USD 560,000 UNDP: USD 427,000 UNICEF: USD 175,000 WHO: USD 238,000
Report Submission Date:	31 March 2025
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Executive Summary

The Programme reporting period, accounted for significant progress in advancing the collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, against the backdrop of the country's progress towards the European Union (EU) accession. The joint programme came in timely to support the EU integration path with its implementation strategy, data and capacity building components, sustainable and innovative approaches aligned to this process, and engagement of the diaspora's skills and competences for policy reforms. The Programme worked in support of the current **national priorities**, strategies and policies as outlined in the *National Development Plan for 2024-2026*, the *National Action Plan for the Accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union for the years 2024-2027*, the *Government Action Plan for 2024*, and the *National Diaspora Program for 2024-2028*.

The Programme's work contributes to the Republic of Moldova's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 10.7.2 "The country governance framework integrates migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people".

The Programme activities in 2024 contributed to achieving the **United Nations-Moldova Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework's** Outcome 1: "By 2027, institutions deliver human rights-based, evidence-informed and gender-responsive services for all with the focus on those who are left behind", in particular through work on achieving Output 1.1. "Regulatory and policy framework that is evidence-informed and takes into account demographic trends promotes gender-responsive and human rights-based social protection and equal access to basic services". It also worked towards reaching the Outcome 2: "By 2027, more accountable, and transparent, human rights-based and gender-responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and to contribute to development processes", through work on Output 2.2. "Institutions at all levels have increased capacities to produce, share and utilize quality disaggregated data in line with national priorities and in accordance with international standards and methodologies" and Output 2.3. "People of Moldova, in particular most vulnerable and marginalized, are empowered to claim and exercise their human rights and meaningfully participate in public and civic life, governance and decision-making processes". It worked to support the Outcome 3: "By 2027, all people of Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from inclusive, competitive and sustainable economic development and equal access to decent work and productive employment", through contribution to Outputs 3.1. "Policy and institutional frameworks create an empowering environment for inclusive and sustainable economic development that promotes the creation of productive and decent work" and 3.3. "Enterprises are more resilient to crises and have strengthened capacities to efficiently utilize resources, generate decent employment and integrate innovations to enhance productivity and competitiveness". The present Programme also contributes to Outcome 4: "By 2027, institutions and all people of Moldova benefit from and contribute to green and resilient development, sustainable use of natural resources and effective gender-responsive climate change action and disaster risk management", through contribution to the Output 4.4. "Public institutions and civil society have increased capacities to promote meaningful engagement of local communities and other rightsholders in development and deployment of sustainable solutions to address environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters and hazards".

The Programme worked towards reaching the planned Outcome 1, its outputs and activities working to ensure that the national public governance and development programs and policies effectively and efficiently facilitate diaspora engagement based on improved evidence.

Under Output 1.1, Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) made significant progress in analyzing the profile of various categories of migrants available, in support of policymaking, with a focus on gender aspects of migration, the impact of migration and remittances on groups left behind (children).

Under Output 1.2, PUNOs developed and piloted methodology and data collection tools for mapping of diaspora communities, through the implementation of a range of activities.

Under Output 1.3, the capacity of public officials to deploy, implement and use statistical and administrative data and statistical tools was enhanced, by facilitating access to the best available international practices, including those related to the integration of human mobility dimension in the conduction of the National Census 2024, and analysis of the respectively collected data; the application of international statistics requirements on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Statelessness; Climate Change-Related Statistics; and alignment of the national migration statistical system with the SDG indicators.

The Programme made good progress towards reaching Outcome 2, towards ensuring that the Moldovan diaspora is engaged to contribute to sustainable homeland development via developing and deploying innovative and sustainable models.

Part of the work to develop and operationalize a nationally owned and sustainable platform for diaspora dialogue and engagement in public governance and development opportunities to support the acceleration of the national development agenda. Under Output 2.1, the PUNOs have advanced the establishment of a sustainable platform for diaspora dialogue and engagement in public governance, by providing thematic support and commissioning expertise to develop the concept of the platform and operationalizing it. The platform is now nearing completion, with the Regulation on the establishment of the Diaspora Advisory Board and joint thematic working groups having been thoroughly consulted and soon to be formally adopted. Additionally, a comprehensive road map and action plan have been prepared to guide the platform's implementation, ensuring its alignment with national priorities. This progress represents a significant step towards fostering structured, inclusive, and meaningful diaspora participation in Moldova's public governance and sustainable development processes.

Under Output 2.2, the PUNOs designed and operationalized a mechanism for leveraging the intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students at foreign universities in key development areas in the Republic of Moldova.

Under Output 2.3, the PUNOs developed and operationalised a mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners in priority areas for development, at the national and local levels.

Within Output 2.4, the project worked to engage diaspora business leaders as development promoters and business envoys, through the organization of high-profile thematic events for diaspora and Moldova-based business leaders on partnerships building, investment opportunities and local economic

development notably, a key event took place in Washington, D.C., USA, from 19-21 April 2024, followed by the Diaspora Business Forum on 18 August, held under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Moldova. These events gathered over 400 participants, including high-ranking officials from major state institutions, diaspora members, investors, business leaders, representatives of international organizations and development partners, as well as diaspora entrepreneurs and returning citizens committed to investing in their home country.

As part of Output 2.5, the project started work for developing instruments and services for productive investment of remittances in the Moldovan economy, by “Developing the concept of the financial literacy pilot program, mechanism of implementation and sustainability options, financial literacy toolkit, training curricula, promotion materials, monitoring mechanism and in-take forms, training program and calendar”, and by operationalisation of the financial literacy pilot program. The PUNOs reviewed best practices for developing financial literacy programs and worked in synergy with other current initiatives, to initiate the development and testing of financial literacy activities.

A significant overall challenge was the increase in prices for the expert services and goods, which put pressure on the budget and delayed the procurement process for selection of service providers and consultants. Other challenges were the complex regional security context, superimposed on the political processes in Moldova (2024 was an electoral year), the continued refugee dynamics and energy crisis.

Other challenges were the complex regional security context, superimposed on the political processes in the Republic of Moldova; 2024 was an electoral year, in which the Presidential elections and a Referendum on the EU accession were organised; under both, the democratic engagement of the diaspora through its massive unprecedented participation and active pro-EU and pro-democracy stance, were decisive for the outcomes of the two democratic exercises; the continued refugee dynamics; the continued war in Ukraine; the external actors attempts to destabilise the internal political situation in the country, and the acute energy crisis. The challenges called for adoption of coping measures by the Programme.

Annual Progress

1. Summary and Context

During the reporting period, significant progress was made in enhancing public governance, engaging the diaspora, and developing innovative models for sustainable development highlighting the programme's effectiveness.

The year saw unprecedented diaspora engagement in the Presidential elections and the EU accession referendum. This fact reinforced the importance of the present initiative as a milestone of UN contribution to the efforts of the Republic of Moldova to nurture and advance the engagement of its large diaspora in development and democratic processes in the homeland. The Programme monitored the discourses, arguments, suggestions and requests by the diaspora, voiced during the electoral period, to ensure that they feed into the analyses, policy and programmatic developments, and instruments for practical engagement being developed under the present initiative.

The present Programme, being **the flagship UN initiative** in support of the Government-diaspora engagement, served as a fundamental reference point for expertise, capacity-building support and source of innovation and best practices.

The Programme, in synergy with the other UN initiatives, provided important policy and best practices input in support of the Republic of Moldova's participation in the 29th Conference of Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, from the angle of human mobility nexus and diaspora' contribution to climate change action. The Programme worked in close (initially unplanned) synergy with another, IOM-funded and implemented 2024 initiative "*Diaspora for Climate Change Action*" (D4C), which provided significant policy and analytical level input to the present Programme's further work, following the execution of an analytical study on the "Involvement of the diaspora in climate actions - opportunities and challenges in the Republic of Moldova"; the facilitation of policy dialogue between the Government and the Diaspora, through organization of a series of events within the Diaspora Days 2024; creation of a joint thematic expert group on climate actions; piloting the integration of the climate action dimension within the national DAR 1+3 programme, through the provision of grants at the community level.

The present Programme valorized the outputs of the important progress made by another, IOM-funded and implemented initiative "*Save More In Migration: Supporting Migrant Workers From Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to Enhance Savings, Remittances & Sustainable Benefits of Labour Migration*" (SMIM). The present initiative took on board and advanced the behavioural economics approach and practice, used therein for improving the financial literacy of Moldovan migrants going to Israel, by working to adapt it and expand it to other labour migration corridors – notably Moldova-Germany. The synergies between the two initiatives, and the experience from the SMIM initiative will allow the present Programme to develop, under the Output 2.5, a national-level financial literacy pilot program, with mechanism of implementation and sustainability options, financial literacy toolkit, training curricula, promotion materials, monitoring mechanism and in-take forms, training program and calendar. The present Programme will valorize the partnership with *Expert-Group*, a key Moldovan think tank, involved through one of its experts, in the implementation of the financial literacy exercise under the SMIM project. The analytical work conducted under the SMIM, reviewing the financial literacy status quo and propensity of the Moldovan labour migrants going to Israel, will serve to guide and input the diaspora mapping exercise under the present Programme, informing the development of the national level financial literacy pilot program. The Programme will further valorize the dialogue and partnership developed with commercial banks / private sector under the SMIM project, for the piloting of the national-level financial literacy programme. Concerning the same output 2.5, the present Programme managed to make significant progress by valorizing the (initially unplanned) opportunity to contribute to the organisation of a range of *Diaspora Invest* forums in 2024, jointly with the Moldova Invest Agency, and the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova. The present Programme's input to three of the Diaspora Invest events (in Dublin, Madrid and Bucharest), focused on the promotion of financial literacy and awareness of investment tools and opportunities available for the Diaspora in Moldova. The Programme's input and the respective work, contributed to the establishment of a *Diaspora Invest Program*, by the Moldova Invest Agency, as a new segment of the Agency's mandate. Under the same output, the present initiative synergized and joined

efforts with a US-based Moldovan diaspora-funded initiative on advancing financial literacy of rural youth, whereby the Programme will fund the scaling up of the work to a number of 20 schools in rural Moldova. The respective work will feed a youth-related angle for the development of national level financial literacy pilot programme.

The present Programme also capitalized on the synergies with the ongoing UNDP-Swiss initiative, “STRONG Project,” which aims to improve the living standards of people in Moldova through a more inclusive, accountable, responsive, and evidence-based model of governance, while enhancing the participation of migrants and the diaspora in Moldova’s sustainable development. The Project provided expertise and assistance to the management and members of the Alliance of Hometown Associations (HTA Alliance), contributing to the consolidation of a sustainable umbrella organization with increased capacities and a meaningful program portfolio. Addressing a key challenge for diaspora engagement—strengthening the cultural and social ties of diaspora representatives, particularly youth, with their home communities - the project partnered with the Bureau for Diaspora Relations to organize an immersive DOR Programme activity. In addition to the summer camps independently organized by HTAs, this initiative facilitated the participation of over 100 diaspora and local youth in thematic visits, fostering stronger community connections. Moreover, fifteen hometown associations, including five emerging ones, received targeted assistance through the HTA Alliance to enhance their skills in fundraising, democratic governance, and the integration of public participation, LNOB and HRBA principles in community development within the framework of the Next Level Programme. Additionally, the Community Development Support Programme, implemented through 13 HTAs in partnership with Local Public Authorities, supported the execution of community action plans aimed at empowering and uplifting communities, fostering sustainable development, enhancing social cohesion, and promoting inclusive governance.

Despite facing challenges such as increased prices and regional security issues, the programme has successfully advanced its objectives, contributing to Moldova's development and EU accession efforts. The continued collaboration with the key partners and the strategic focus on data, capacity building, and diaspora engagement ensure that the programme remains aligned with its goals and poised for further success in the upcoming reporting period.

2. Results

Under *Output 1.1*, the PUNOs initiated the analysis of migrants’ profiles, focusing on gender aspects, migration and remittances impact on children left behind. They initiated a comprehensive sociological analysis, launched the "People Next to Us" campaign to encourage diaspora engagement, and supported the development of draft legislation on diaspora. Under *Output 1.2*, they developed and piloted data collection tools for mapping diaspora communities, assessed migration data systems, re-established the inter-agency Technical Working group on Extended Migration Profile (EMP) and initiated the upgrading of the EMP to include gender, children, and health aspects. They also assessed the IT data solutions for the Ministry of Health, to support it to better measure the loss of medical personnel from the system. Under the *Output 1.3*, they enhanced the capacity of public officials to use statistical tools and data, integrating human mobility into the National Census 2024 and aligning with the international statistics requirements

and SDG indicators. The work under the Outcome 1 meets the national priorities outlined in the *Government Action Plan for 2024*, and the *National Diaspora Program for 2024-2028*.

The Programme respective work contributed towards achieving the following **indicators at Outcome 1** level:

Indicator 1a: *The country's governance framework integrates migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people*, Indicator 1d *National statistical system produces regular estimates of number of diaspora and circular migrants, based on usual residence definition*, and Indicator 1e *National institutional, coordination, policy mechanisms, programmes, tools, and services enhanced, and capacities strengthened to assume an enhanced and sustainable role of coordination of Diaspora, Migration and Development areas*, through the work on assessing the migration data systems, re-establishing the inter-agency working group on Extended Migration Profile (EMP), initiating the work on up-grading of the EMP to include gender, children, and health aspects, improving the IT data solutions for the Ministry of Health and providing access to national stakeholders on international best practices and standards on international migration statistics. This will contribute to making progress also under the UNSDCF's indicator 1.b (under the Output 1.1) and the SDG indicator 10.7.2 (*The country governance framework integrates migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people*). The work is in progress and changes in indicators metrics will be provided in the next report(s).

Indicator 1b *Number of institutional, policy and legal/regulatory amendments, programmes, coordination mechanisms, services, and data instruments for an efficient engagement of diaspora in homeland development, incl. In climate change action, developed in a participatory manner and submitted for endorsement by the Government*, through the work on enhancing the national legislation on diaspora – one legislative proposal was drafted (activity A1.1.4). The work is in progress and changes in indicators metrics will be provided in the next report(s).

The Programme made progress towards achieving the planned **Outputs**, under the Outcome 1, in 2024, as follows (note: reference to indicators progress is provided within the Results Reporting Framework table below):

Under the **Output 1.1**, the PUNOs made significant progress to *make analysis of the profile of various categories of migrants available, in support to policymaking, with focus on gender aspects of migration, impact of migration and remittances on groups left behind (children)*, through the implementation of a range of activities:

- The PUNOs initiated and advanced the activity 1.1.1, by preparing and launching the execution of comprehensive sociological analysis in Moldova for profiling migrants, incl. children.

The ToRs of the exercise were developed in close coordination with the stakeholders (see Annex 1). In coordination with the stakeholders, the scope of the study, described by the ToRs, was set to include execution of a representative and interdisciplinary sociological study on the numbers and profiles of returning/circular Moldovan migrants, foreign labour migrants, and diaspora (foreigners residing on a long/er-term basis) residing in Moldova, as well as the specific vulnerabilities of children left behind,

including on health-related impacts. This includes an extended profile of Moldovan returning/circular labour migrants, foreign labour migrants, and foreign diaspora residing in Moldova and children left behind.

The expert team for execution of the study was commissioned through joint procurement process by the relevant PUNOs (IOM, UNICEF and WHO), and the methodological instruments were developed and coordinated with the stakeholders (see Annex 2) at the end of the reporting period.

The present Programme's work on reviewing the health dimension of wellbeing and integration of foreigners residing in Moldova, under the activity 1.1.1, is implemented in close coordination with and based on the outputs of the IOM-funded and implemented project "*Strengthening International Migrants' Access to Health Services in the Republic of Moldova*". The Programme's sociological study, covering the review of profile of immigrants in Moldova, developed the ToRs and the methodological instruments based on the results of a study commissioned and conducted under the respective project, titled "*A qualitative study on foreigners' access to health services in the Republic of Moldova*"; its findings will be taken into account and not be duplicated, but rather integrated in the scope, planning, and execution process of the activity 1.1.1.

- Progress on activity 1.1.2 will be reported in the following report, as per the workplan.
- Part of the activity A 1.1.3: "Organising outreach, promotion and information campaigns spurring Government/country-diaspora engagement", the PUNOs launched a campaign titled "People Next to Us.", encouraging the various target groups to participate in the return home program. It

Outreach, Promotion, and Information Campaigns to Foster Government-Diaspora Engagement

To foster Government-Diaspora engagement and the qualified diaspora's return, the Programme and the BRD started implementing two programs in June 2024 as part of Diaspora Engagement Hub (DEH): one for graduates from abroad and another for highly skilled professionals. Promotional materials were developed and distributed and individual and group meetings with stakeholders were organized. A series of 4 promotional videos, weekly posts on social media, 4 interventions on TV and radio and two printed flyers were designed, totaling 1,000 copies. These materials provided information on applying for the DEH programs, including eligibility criteria and benefits. The flyers were distributed at various public events for the youth (two in August, two in September, one in October and one in December 2024), including 3 Job Fairs and 3 events dedicated to the young diaspora. More than 30 meetings with different stakeholders were organized, including 5 presentations for public authorities, more than 15 individual meetings with both highly qualified diaspora members, 3 presentations for highly qualified diaspora.

A meeting organized by IOM and BRD took place on November 25th, 2024, with over 10 beneficiaries of the program. This event was structured as a networking discussion aimed at laying the groundwork for future collaboration with these young individuals.

A set of 50 Local Public authorities who were beneficiaries of the DAR 1+3 program (2024 edition) were informed about the DEH programs for graduates and professionals through an online session and in-person during the handover procedures. A significant target audience was achieved when more than 300 participants engaged with info about DEH programs during the Diaspora Days and the Diaspora-Government Roundtable, which occurred on August 16-18, 2024. Furthermore, the introductory speech by the IOM Chief of Mission at the Diaspora business forum included a call of interest from the participants for the DEH programs, with about 150 people and the event was streamed live.

IOM consultant at BRD played a vital role in promoting information campaigns that encouraged diaspora engagement across various central government institutions and public events, as well as through posts on BRD's social media and IOM Moldova's pages.

highlights the program's positive impact and promotes its beneficial results.

The programme developed and disseminated video materials aimed at promoting initiatives under the MPTF project. By commissioning specialized expertise and services, the Programme ensured the production of high-quality visual materials designed to highlight the impact of the implemented actions and the results achieved.

These materials were created to enhance the project's visibility, raise awareness among the public and decision-makers about the importance of the adopted measures, and strengthen strategic communication efforts. Additionally, the dissemination of these multimedia resources contributed to mobilizing broader support for the initiatives supported by MPTF.

- Within the activity A1.1.4: “Supporting the development of institutional, coordination, policy and legal/regulatory amendments, programmes, tools and services for an efficient diaspora engagement”, PUNOs commissioned expertise and provided thematic input for developing draft legislation on Diaspora, working in close coordination with the stakeholders.

Following an express request from the Parliament, the Programme developed the ToRs (see Annex 3) and commissioned expertise for supporting the development of a draft law on Diaspora. The scope of work, as defined by the TORs, included a brief analysis of the current national legal and institutional framework in the diaspora engagement field, focusing on existing legal bottlenecks, as well potential risks, costs, possible limitations, opportunities and benefits for the developing and adopting a Diaspora Law. Based on the brief analysis, supporting the Moldovan national stakeholders in developing a draft Moldovan Diaspora Law which will define Moldovan diaspora, further systematize existing Moldovan diaspora policy and clearly determine the areas of responsibility amongst state institutions and defining core activities of diaspora policy. A national consultant was contracted to provide legal expertise supporting the evidence-based policy development of a Moldovan diaspora law. The expert developed the draft law, and the justification note, as per the above, with PUNOs coordinating the document with the national stakeholders (see the documents in Annex 4). The respective documents were undergoing further coordination, review and endorsement, as per the national lawmaking process, at the end of the reporting period.

Under the **Output 1.2**, PUNOs made progress towards *developing and piloting nationally owned methodology and data collection tools for extended, coordinated, sustainable and systematic mapping of diaspora communities*, through implementation of a range of activities:

- Part of the activity A1.2.1 “Assessing the statistical and administrative migration data systems, incl. health-related”, the ToRs were developed and coordinated with the stakeholders.

In close coordination with the national stakeholders, the ToRs (see Annex 7) were developed describing the scope of work to include the execution of a comprehensive Data Assessment Report (DAR) covering (i) the most recent migration trends in the region that impact Moldova, (ii) the latest migration management policy, legislative, and institutional reforms in Moldova, (iii) the national statistical and administrative migration data systems’ progress, changes and current capabilities, (iv) integrating in-depth aspects related to gender, children left behind and other vulnerable groups, migrant health, mobility of health personnel and the related specialized data systems; (v) brief mapping of the recent developments in the global and regional frameworks (incl. Agenda 2030/SDGs, Global Compact for Migration, Migration Governance Indicators, European Migration Network etc); (vi) desk research, consultations and exchanges with the national data producers to thoroughly assess the effectiveness of the current Moldovan EMP data collection, analysis, and dissemination processes to identify existing data gaps, needs, and priorities.

The joint recruitment process for selection of the expert team responsible for execution of the Data Assessment was conducted by the concerned PUNOs (IOM and WHO), and a team of three national experts was selected. The PUNOs, working in close coordination with the national stakeholders developed a workplan (see Annex 8), and the expert team started the work on its basis.

The project supported the re-establishment of the inter-agency Technical Working Group (TWG) on the Extended Migration Profile. The TWG resumed its work and supported by the IOM experts, led the data collection for the assessment (see above A1.2.1).

The experts developed the methodological instruments for the assessment, which were circulated to all the national data producing institutions for input. The data collection was finalised, and a draft Data Assessment Report (see Annex 9) was produced at the end of the reporting period, being subject to review by the stakeholders.

- Within the activity A1.2.2 “Upgrading the Extended Migration Profile (EMP) to integrate in-depth aspects related to gender, children left behind and other vulnerable groups, migrant health and mobility of health personnel”, the ToRs and workplan for EMP’s upgrading were developed and coordinated with the stakeholders.

In close coordination with the national stakeholders, the ToRs (see Annex 7) were developed describing the scope of work to include drafting, based on the DAR findings, of a set of the updated/new indicators and an enhanced template for the updated EMP content and structure relevant for Moldovan context, including integrating in-depth aspects related to gender, children left behind and other vulnerable groups, migrant health, mobility of health personnel, those related to measuring the institutional capacities for governing migration etc; supporting the consultations and the validation of the updated EMP with the IOM RES, GMDAC and national stakeholders; provision of capacity-building needed for an effective hand-over of the EMP updated tool to the Moldovan Government; provision of support for the EMP data collection process, including for data reception and verification; proposing contributions for adjustment of the IOM’s Global Migration Profile Guidelines to be used by other interested Governments to implement their own nationalized EMPs tools.

The expert team was commissioned and upon the DAR finalisation and validation, will propose a set of the updated/new indicators and an enhanced template for the updated EMP content and structure.

- Progress on Activity 1.2.3. will be reported in the following report, as per the workplan.
- Under activities 1.2.4 and 1.2.5: “Developing a methodology for and conducting an extended diaspora mapping, including migrant children, integrating skills, needs, engagement propensity and plans, diaspora health related variables profiling”, the ToRs of the mapping exercise were developed and coordinated with the stakeholders.

The scope of work as agreed with the stakeholders, and described in the attached ToR (see Annex 5), includes developing a methodology for an extended Moldovan diaspora mapping, providing overall guidance and support in conducting the extended diaspora mapping survey, including with migrant children, as well as assessing diaspora’s health variables in selected destination countries, oversee and

coordinate the efforts in developing the mapping methodology, data collection, analysis and participate in report validation. The expected diaspora mapping report will enhance the understanding of the specific nature of the diaspora and construct a profile of the diaspora population. The study will identify subgroups within the larger diaspora population based on factors such as period/duration of migration, age/generation, socioeconomic profile, expertise, skills, current occupation, health-related aspects, future plans, propensity to engage, cultural and linguistic profile, and more. The final results will support Moldovan public authorities in engaging the diaspora through an ongoing communication and engagement strategy aimed at establishing long-term cooperation and supporting the EU integration process. The mapping results on the sociodemographic characteristics of a population, challenges, including health-related issues, their current and desired engagement behaviors, and the resources they may eventually mobilize for specific purposes, will be used to identify potential future intervention areas and public services based on the specific needs, interests and developed competences of sampled diaspora populations.

The joint procurement process for selection of the sociological company responsible for execution of the diaspora mapping study was conducted by the concerned PUNOs (IOM, UNICEF and WHO), and a sociological company was selected. The methodological instruments were developed in close coordination with the stakeholders (see Annex 6), and following their validation and testing, the diaspora mapping study was initiated. A first field study mission was conducted (to UK, in mid-December 2024).

- Part of activity 1.2.6 “Up-grading IT data solution and the Automated Human Resources Information System for the Ministry of Health”, the IOM experts initiated the assessment of the existing system of the Ministry of Health, within the data assessment process under the activity A1.2.1 above.

Further progress on activity 1.2.6 will be reported in the following report.

Under the **Output 1.3**, the PUNOs made significant progress to *enable the public agencies to operate the developed methodology and data collection tools*, through implementation of a range of activities:

- Within the activity 1.3.1, the *capacity of public officials to deploy, implement and use statistical and administrative data and statistical tools was enhanced*, through facilitating their access to the best available international practices.

The national statistical office was provided with the opportunity to access and review the best available international practices incl. related to the integration of human mobility dimension in the conduction of the National Census 2024, and analysis of the respectively collected data; the application of international statistics requirements on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Statelessness; Climate Change-Related Statistics; and alignment of the national migration statistical system with the SDG indicators.

The present Programme’s timely alignment, synergies and support related to the conduction of the National Census 2024 allowed facilitation of access (through the Programme’s support) to the best available international practices for the integration of human mobility dimension in the conduction of the National Census 2024. This will allow for further support in the upcoming period in analysis of the respectively collected data on the human mobility dimension. The Programme’s support allowed the

National Statistical Bureau to learn, exchange and showcase its experience, related to the integration of migration in the censuses, but also the application of international statistics requirements on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons, and Statelessness; Climate Change-Related Statistics nexus, relevant for Moldova's efforts to measure diaspora's contribution to climate change adaptation; and the further alignment of the national migration statistical system with the SDG indicators.

100 % (all) of the outputs under Outcome 1 are on-track. None (0%) is fully achieved yet.

Information on the number and type of beneficiaries of outputs under Outcome 1 is provided within the Results Reporting Framework table below.

The Programme worked towards achieving the planned **Outcome 2**, its outputs and activities being directed to ensure that the *Moldovan diaspora is engaged to contribute to sustainable homeland development via innovative and sustainable models*. Under the reporting period, the Programme made important contributions towards the planned Outcome 2, as follows:

The PUNOs made significant progress in developing and operationalizing platforms and mechanisms to engage the Moldovan diaspora in public governance and development. They initiated the establishment of a sustainable platform for diaspora dialogue, developed and deployed mechanisms to leverage the intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students abroad, and created a system for short-term engagement of highly qualified diaspora practitioners.

The PUNOs engaged diaspora business leaders through a high-profile event in the USA, a Diaspora Business Forum organized under the auspice of the Government of Moldova and initiated a financial literacy pilot program to promote productive investment of remittances in the Moldovan economy. The work under the Outcome 1 meets the national priorities outlined in the *National Development Plan for 2024-2026*, the *National Action Plan for the Accession of the Republic of Moldova to the European Union for the years 2024-2027*, the *Government Action Plan for 2024*, and the *National Diaspora Program for 2024-2028*.

The Programme respective work contributed towards achieving the following **indicators at Outcome 2** level:

Indicator 2d *Share of population (15+) that has a bank account (Nationalized SDG indicator 8.10.2), disaggregated by sex and migration status*, through the work on developing and piloting a national financial literacy pilot program.

Indicator 2e *Diaspora funds/migrants' resources channeled for productive investment into the Moldovan economy and local development, per program (incl. new ones)*, through the work for developing instruments and services for productive investment of remittances in the Moldovan economy.

Outcome Indicator 2d *Number of new partnerships, business, trade and academic links, initiatives and development projects*, through the work on engaging diaspora business leaders as development promoters and business envoys.

The work is in progress and changes in indicators metrics will be provided in the next report(s).

The Programme made progress towards completing the planned **Outputs**, under the Outcome 2, in 2024, as follows (note: reference to indicators progress is provided within the Results Reporting Framework table below):

Under the **Output 2.1**, the PUNOs made significant progress towards *establishing and operationalizing a nationally owned and sustainable platform for diaspora dialogue and engagement in public governance and development opportunities*, through the implementation of a range of activities:

- Within the activity 2.1.1, the PUNOs have advanced the establishment of a sustainable platform for diaspora dialogue and engagement in public governance, through providing thematic support and commissioning expertise to develop the concept of the platform and operationalizing it through the establishment of the diaspora-Government Consultative Council, thematic expert groups and the Secretariat.

The Programme has strengthened its collaboration with the Government of Moldova to conceptualize and design a comprehensive Diaspora Engagement Platform (DEP), a pioneering initiative under the oversight of the State Chancellery. The platform is now nearing completion, with the Regulation on the establishment of the Diaspora Advisory Board and joint thematic working groups having been thoroughly consulted and soon to be formally adopted. Additionally, a comprehensive road map and action plan have been prepared to guide the platform's implementation, ensuring its alignment with national priorities. This progress represents a significant step towards fostering structured, inclusive, and meaningful diaspora participation in Moldova's public governance and sustainable development processes. Led by the State Secretary of the State Chancellery and working closely with the dedicated Diaspora Relations Bureau, the DEP will serve as a robust framework for inclusive dialogue and comprehensive problem-solving. The primary objective of the DEP is to establish a cohesive and strategic framework that empowers the Moldovan diaspora to actively contribute to the socio-economic progress and cultural enrichment of the Republic of Moldova. By fostering a strong sense of belonging and partnership, the goal is to leverage the diverse skill sets, experiences, and perspectives of the diaspora, encouraging their active involvement in policy-making processes and enabling effective collaboration for the collective advancement of the nation. (see annex 33 for the Concept of the Diaspora Engagement Platform (DEP) and the Roadmap on diaspora engagement).

- Progress on Activity 2.1.2 will be reported in the next report, following the finalisation and validation of the concept of the platform for diaspora dialogue and engagement.

Under the **Output 2.2**, the PUNOs *designed and operationalized a mechanism for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students at foreign universities in key development areas in Moldova*, through the implementation of following activities:

- Within the activity 2.2.1, PUNOs developed in close coordination with the stakeholders the concept and its operational mechanism for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students of foreign universities.

The PUNOs developed in close coordination with the stakeholders the ToRs (see Annex 10) for commissioning the expertise to support the development of the concept and its operational mechanism for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students of foreign universities.

The PUNOs commissioned expertise for supporting the development of the concept and its operational mechanism. The commissioned expert started the work and finalised the documents (see Annex 11 for the Regulation on the functioning of the mechanism, the selection criteria, application and selection procedure, application and reporting documents). In coordination with the Diaspora Relations Bureau, it was decided to integrate the a) mechanism for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students of foreign universities, and b) the mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners (see the Output 2.3 below) into the Government operated Diaspora Engagement Hub (DEH), as two DEH sub-programs. This will ensure sustainability of the program, as well as more efficient promotion and outreach to the target groups.

- Progress on Activity 2.2.2 will be reported in the next report.
- Within the Activity 2.2.3 the PUNOs supported the operationalisation of the mechanism through counselling, facilitation of professional/academic placement, case-management, coverage of travel costs and an indemnity incentive.

Following the development of the concept and its operational mechanism for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students of foreign universities, under the activity 2.2.1 above, the actual operation of the mechanism was launched.

The Programme provides support for Moldovan overseas graduates' professional placements in Moldova's labor market sectors that align with the knowledge and skills the Moldovan graduates have developed abroad. This initiative aims to facilitate the reintegration of returning graduates into the local

Mrs. Valeria Roșcovan, a beneficiary of the program for graduate students from the diaspora, returned to Moldova in July 2024 after finishing her studies at Babes Bolyai University in Cluj, Romania.

In August 2024, Valeria began working as a project assistant at the Social Investment Fund of Moldova (FISM). The reintegration program helped her supplement the initial salary set at the Moldovan legal minimum wage. This support eased her transition back to Moldova, enabling Valeria to focus on professional development.

By January 2025, she had secured a new stable contract with ILO. Valeria's example shows that the program provides good foundations; she obtained the needed support to build her career in Moldova after graduating abroad. The program offered financial support and encouragement to stay committed to her goals and her country, paving the way to contribute to Moldova's development.

Valeria's story is an inspiring example of how the program can unlock opportunities and empower Moldovan diaspora members to make meaningful contributions at home.

workforce by providing them with opportunities that valorize their expertise, as well as promote networking opportunities among returning peers, exchanges of ideas, and mutual support. The target is to provide to a total of 50 Moldovan overseas graduates information and logistical support to inform their return and reintegration back home, reimbursement of their international travel expenses, and a monthly living allowance for up to six months, as a top-

up to their base salaries in Moldova, as outlined in the operational manual of the sub-programme (see Annex 11).

The Programme provided counselling and facilitation of professional/ academic placement and case-management to a total first 24 (7 men and 17 women) returning beneficiaries (see the list of beneficiaries and the placement details in Annex 13), as a **tangible benefit** to the target group. Out of the 24 persons, who were provided full counselling support, 19 persons (5 men and 14 women) were actually supported with professional placement, and provided with financial support. By the end of the reporting period, the total number of served beneficiaries and those manifesting interest who were in the pipeline for provision of counselling was 38 persons (13 men and 25 women). The total target of beneficiaries to be supported under the Programme is 50 (of which 25 women).

As part of its unwavering commitment to strengthening medical education and professional development, in the Programme enabled physicians and young medical residents from the Department of Infectious Diseases to participate in the International Conference—17th Course on Teaching Pediatric Infectious Diseases, held under the auspices of ESPID (European Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases) for 9 participants, five third-year residents, and four infectious disease physicians.

This high-level educational event, organized with the Faculty of Medicine of Transilvania University of Braşov, the Romanian Society of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, and the Braşov Children's Hospital Foundation, was a testament to the power of collaboration through this joint initiative, the Programme facilitated access to advanced training and knowledge exchange, enhancing the capacity of medical professionals in pediatric infectious diseases and strengthening their role in improving child health outcomes.

- Part of the activities A1.1.3 and A2.2.4, the program for return of Moldovan graduates was promoted to the diaspora and the Moldovan public, through producing and disseminating visibility materials to the target group and stakeholders (see more details under A1.1.3 above).

Under the **Output 2.3**, the PUNOs *developed and operationalised a mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners in priority areas for development, at the national and local levels*. This was achieved through the following activities:

- Within the activity 2.3.1, PUNOs developed in close coordination with the stakeholders the concept and its operational mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners.

The PUNOs developed in close coordination with the stakeholders the ToRs (see Annex 10) for commissioning the expertise to support the development of the concept and the operational mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners.

The PUNOs commissioned expertise for supporting the development of the concept and its operational the mechanism. The commissioned expert initiated the work and developed the concept and the description of the mechanism (see Annex 11 for the Regulation on the functioning of the mechanism, the selection criteria, application and selection procedure, application and reporting documents). In coordination with the Diaspora Relations Bureau (BRD), it was decided to integrate both: a) the

mechanism for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students of foreign universities, and b) the mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners (see the Output 2.2 above) into the Government operated Diaspora Engagement Hub (DEH), as two DEH sub-programs. This will ensure sustainability of the program, as well as more efficient promotion and outreach to the target groups.

- Within the activity 2.3.2, PUNOs worked to strengthen health workforce coordination and institutional governance, incl. on management of health workforce mobility, comprehensive retention strategies, migrants' health and social inclusion and integration and mainstreaming of health in all policies

The Programme, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, has undertaken key actions to strengthen health workforce coordination and governance, focusing on:

- Establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track health workforce flows and assess their impact on accessibility of health care services.
- Conducting an analysis of migration drivers and developing strategic recommendations to improve health human resource planning.
- Supporting the Ministry of Health in developing policies and mechanisms for recruitment, equitable distribution, and workforce retention.

Initiating actions for health professionals, including mentoring programs, career advancement opportunities, and access to continuing professional development; developing curricula for continuing medical education; and promoting information resources available in Health Inter-Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) and other Research4Life programs.

- Under the activity 2.3.3, the PUNOs supported the operationalisation of the mechanism through counselling, facilitation of professional/academic placement, case-management, coverage of travel and per-diem costs.

Upon the development of the concept and the operational mechanism for short-term engagement/temporary return to Moldova of highly qualified practitioners, under the activity 2.3.1 above, the actual operation of the mechanism was launched.

The Programme provides support to Moldovan public institutions, including those in education, research, development, and health sectors, in identifying and engaging in sustainable cooperation with highly skilled Moldovan diaspora and returning professionals. This activity aims to harness the expertise and resources of diaspora members and highly skilled returning migrants through temporary or permanent physical and/or virtual returns to advance the transposition of EU *acquis communautaire* into national legislation, institutional and policy reforms in the public institutions in Moldova, including advancing the reforms in education, research and development, health as well as other sectors. By facilitating collaboration between diaspora members and highly skilled professionals and local institutions, this component seeks to leverage the knowledge and networks of the diaspora for the benefit of Moldova's development and EU accession priorities. The target is to provide a total of up to 80 selected beneficiaries with information and logistical support to inform and prepare their short-term missions to Moldova, a daily allowance,

along with coverage for their international travel expenses based on the nature of their engagement in Moldova and their involvement with host institutions in the country, as outlined in the operational manual of the sub-programme (see Annex 11).

The PUNOs commissioned expertise to strengthen the capacity of governmental institutions in engaging diaspora expertise. This was achieved through a series of workshops and the development of the practical guide "Mapping Needs for Engaging Diaspora Expertise." Designed for representatives of central and local government authorities, state agencies, educational and medical institutions, the guide provides essential tools to identify institutional needs and opportunities for involving highly qualified diaspora members. By facilitating systematic needs assessments, it enhances policy, service, and program coherence, ensuring they are equitable and responsive to community needs. The mapping exercise supports institutions in setting priorities and criteria for identifying financial, human, and other available resources while outlining concrete actions to improve policies, services, programs, and organizational structures for more effective diaspora engagement (see Annex 34).

The Programme provided counselling, facilitation of short-term missions and case-management to a total first 11 (4 men and 7 women) beneficiaries (see the list of beneficiaries and the placement details in Annex

Mrs. Janna Cropotova, PhD, Associate Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, expert in bioeconomy and a member of the Moldovan diaspora in Norway, shared her experience with the academic community in Moldova on the topic of writing successful European project proposals for scientists.

Janna successfully conducted the first expertise transfer mission in November - December 2024, organizing a series of workshops at the National Agency for Research and Development (ANCD). These workshops brought together over 25 researchers and academics from Moldova to develop practical skills in bioeconomy and the sustainable valorization of food resources, focusing on writing, securing, and successfully implementing research projects. Participants came from institutions such as the State University of Moldova, the Technical University of Moldova, the National Institute for Applied Research in Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, and the ANCD.

The mission was more than a knowledge transfer; it was also an opportunity to initiate international collaboration. Following the mission, a joint cross-border research team led by Mrs. Janna Cropotova was created. The team prepared two Erasmus+ project proposals, opening new horizons for integrating Moldovan research into the European innovation space.

Through her technical expertise and the inspiring energy shared with Moldovan colleagues, Mrs. Janna Cropotova demonstrated that the diaspora can become a driving force for change by providing valuable material and immaterial resources as well as international connections.

14), as a **tangible benefit** to the target group. Out of the 11 persons, who were provided full counselling support, 9 persons (3 men and 6 women) were actually selected for provision of support for execution of short-term missions to Moldova. By the end of the reporting period, the total number of served beneficiaries and those manifesting interest who were in the pipeline for provision of counselling was 55 persons (19 men and 36 women). The total target of beneficiaries to be supported under the Programme is 50 (of which at least 35 women).

The Medical University will be involved

in a series of actions to carry out these actions in 2025.

- Under the activity 2.3.4, PUNOs “Developing the concept and supporting the implementation of a national twinning centre on human resources in health with diaspora involvement”

The Programme will deliver a series of actions to carry out these actions in 2025.

- Through the activities A1.1.3 and A2.3.5, the Programme promoted the mechanism and its results to the diaspora and the Moldovan public, through producing and disseminating visibility materials to the target group and stakeholders (see more details under A1.1.3 above).

Within the **Output 2.4**, the PUNOs engaged *Diaspora business leaders as development promoters and business envoys (in trade, tourism, and investment attraction) and fostered their cooperation with national stakeholders*. This was achieved through the following activities:

- Under the activity 2.4.1, the Programme engaged diaspora business leaders as development promoters and business envoys, through organization of a first high-profile thematic event for diaspora and Moldova-based business leaders on partnerships building, investment opportunities and local economic development, in Washington DC, USA, on 19-21 April 2024.

The PUNOs partnered with the Moldovan Government, private sector, and diaspora groups for the organisation of a series of high-profile diaspora engagement events in Washington DC, USA on 17-19th April 2024.

On day 1, the 10th edition of the Moldovan American Diaspora convention meeting took place in the Library of Congress of the USA / Thomas Jefferson Building, gathering high-profile speakers from the political and international development sectors in USA and R. Moldova.



The Administrator of the USAID, Ms. Samantha Powers, Mr. Scott Nathan, the CEO of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, the US Congresswoman Mrs. Deborah Ross of North Carolina who co-chairs the Congressional Moldova Caucus with the USA Mr. Michael Lawler, a Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Mrs. Erin E. McKee, Assistant Administrator for the Europe & Eurasia Bureau, USAID joined their voices in support of Moldova's democratic reform process, EU accession, combatting corruption and undue outside influence, highlighting the importance of diaspora as a factor of change and progress. The event was joined by the Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, several state secretaries, head of the export and investment promotion agency, several high-profile businessmen based in Moldova – and over a hundred of active and well-established Moldovan diaspora members from the USA and Canada.

On Day 2, the event continued with the Diaspora Business Forum, which was organized at the Army Navy Country Club, in Arlington. The event started with a speech by the Deputy Prime Minister, who touched upon the country's strategic development considerations, and was joined by the Deputy Secretary General of NATO. The Business Forum continued with a discussion on the challenges, risks and

opportunities posed by the longer-term horizon of development of Moldova, concrete sectors, and opportunities for investing in Moldova were discussed, outlining the merits and risks.

The US and Moldovan Government officials praised the transformative role the diaspora is playing for Moldova, in economic, democratic, and political, social development areas, noting the importance of both financial and “democratic” remittances, contribution to reforms and EU accession through returns and expertise sharing. The Programme contributed to the organisation of the event in DC, incl. via facilitating the organization of a panel on engaging the Moldovan diaspora in the USA for business development, trade, and investment in Moldova. The event featured the Programme and PUNOs work and experience on engaging diaspora’s resources for development.

The event brought together more than 230 participants, of which more than 100 were women. See the agenda of the event in Annex 15, and the summary report of the proceedings in Annex 29. In terms of **tangible outputs of the event**: the event hosted a satellite meeting of Transportation and Logistics business representatives with more than 50 participants from the industry; representatives of the wine industry present at the event found new distributors in the US; several follow-up business events were held in Moldova as a result of connections made at the event; three infrastructure projects were financially and logistically supported by the event participants: a community centre was renovated; a water well pump was installed; a playground was built. Funds were raised from the members as follows: 20,000 USD for the Academic Excellence and Civic Engagement Award awarded in May 2024 to 60 students in 20 schools in Moldova; 36,000 USD for 36 awards in 2024-2025 school year; 14,000 USD to support DHub (NGO established in Moldova, funded by the USA-based Moldovan diaspora); 1,000 USD for an award presented to students from diaspora for scholar achievements and civic engagement during a Student Gala in December 2024.

Under the same activity, the PUNOs partnered with the Moldovan Government, through the Diaspora Relations Bureau, alongside central public institutions, diaspora associations, and the private sector, to organize a two-day high-ranking event hosted in Chisinau - the Diaspora Business Forum, under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Moldova. As an integral part of the Diaspora Days in Moldova, an annual event established by Government Decision No. 735/2016, the 11th edition of the Forum took place on August 18-19, 2024. The event served as a key platform to attract diaspora entrepreneurs and potential investors, facilitating discussions on economic trends, partnership opportunities, and investment prospects while promoting local products, attracting investments, and expanding export opportunities.



The Diaspora Business Forum provided a valuable opportunity to inform the diaspora about investment prospects in Moldova, foster collaboration between diaspora entrepreneurs and local businesses, and showcase available business support programmes from the Government and development partners. It also contributed to opening new markets for Moldovan products and services, engaging diaspora entrepreneurs in sector-specific discussions to address challenges and opportunities, and advocating for policies that support diaspora-led businesses. Additionally, the Forum highlighted success stories of diaspora entrepreneurs who have established businesses in Moldova, inspiring further engagement and investment. The event brought together more than 150 participants, of which more than 80 were women. See the agenda of the event in Annex 35.

- Under the Activity 2.4.2 PUNOs facilitated the allocation of expertise to foster business partnerships between the diaspora and Moldovan entrepreneurs. To gain deeper insights into the challenges, perspectives, and needs of the diaspora in engaging with the local economy, the Programme commissioned a qualitative study. The findings of this research served as a foundation for developing targeted tools and methodologies to facilitate business connections and enhance diaspora involvement in Moldova's economic landscape.

Building on these insights, the Programme organized two Business-to-Business (B2B) events aimed at connecting diaspora representatives with the local private sector and national stakeholders. The first event took place during the Diaspora Business Forum 2024, featuring face-to-face meetings on the first day and an online participation platform (B2Mach) on the second. Over these two days, a total of 25 B2B meetings were facilitated, enabling direct engagement between diaspora entrepreneurs and local businesses. The second B2B event was held in November as part of the Trade Forum, an annual event focused on fostering partnerships between producers from both banks of the Nistru River. This year's edition expanded its scope to include connections with diaspora representatives, leveraging a dedicated B2B platform. The event attracted 125 participants and facilitated 8 scheduled meetings, further reinforcing business linkages.

The Moldovan Chamber of Commerce provided strategic support in tracking the development of partnerships initiated during these events. As a direct outcome, three promising collaborations emerged: two focused on exporting Moldovan wine to Belgium and the USA, and one aimed at exporting Moldovan fruits and vegetables to France. The Programme team remains actively engaged in supporting these diaspora entrepreneurs to ensure the sustainability of these emerging business partnerships.

One of the key lessons learned from this initiative is the critical need for ongoing institutional support to sustain and expand business partnerships between diaspora, local entrepreneurs and national stakeholders. In response, The PUNO is developing a mechanism for joint local economic development initiatives, which is set to be piloted in collaboration with the Moldova Investment Agency in 2025. The Programme will continue to monitor and support the partnerships formed through the B2B events, ensuring that they contribute meaningfully to Moldova's economic growth and diaspora engagement efforts.

Part of **Output 2.5**, the project started work for developing instruments and services for productive investment of remittances in the Moldovan economy, through initiating and implementing a range of activities as follows:

- Under the Activity 2.5.1 PUNOs have developed the concept of using the information system for issuing state securities to raise the resources of residents and the diaspora for financing local development projects

The instrument leverages the existing legal framework in Moldova, which enables municipalities to issue bonds, and builds on successful past experiences, such as those of Singera, Ciadir-Lunga, and Chisinau. The approach aims to create an attractive investment instrument for the diaspora and local residents, offering an alternative to traditional savings while fostering stronger connections to their communities of origin. By channelling investments rather than donations, this system enhances financial literacy, promotes civic engagement, and supports projects in key areas like infrastructure and energy efficiency. The bonds will be accessible via the eVMS platform, allowing for secure transactions and broad participation, including small-scale investors from the diaspora. This initiative is expected to boost local autonomy, stimulate economic growth, and strengthen partnerships between local authorities, diaspora associations, and national stakeholders.

- Within the Activity 2.5.2 the PUNOs initiated the work for establishing a digital platform to support migrants to manage and monitor the remittances sent to the households in Moldova.

The PUNOs engaged in coordination with the stakeholders, to plan the implementation of the present activity. As the Programme was developed in 2021-2022, it was jointly decided to map the available digital instruments, review the current fundamental needs of the remittance recipients, as well as the perspective of the remittances senders (migrants), in order to apply an evidence-based approach to the development of the concept of the digital platform. To that end it was jointly agreed that the Programme would first commission a study, to identify and evaluate the current financial instruments and platforms that assist migrants in managing and monitoring remittances sent to households in Moldova. The study will evaluate the needs of migrants and remittance recipients in managing and monitoring these remittances. Additionally, it will seek to propose recommendations for developing new monitoring tools and/or enhancing existing ones to better meet the needs of the primary beneficiaries.

The detailed ToRs of the exercise were developed in close coordination with the stakeholders (see Annex 16). The process of selection of the expert to conduct the study was launched at the end of the reporting period.

The application deadline has been extended until January 24, 2025. The submitted offers are under evaluation and the selected candidate will proceed with the mapping the existing platforms to support migrants to manage and monitor the remittances sent to the households in Moldova as per ToR (Annex 16).

- Under the Activity 2.5.3, PUNOs initiated the work for developing the concept of the financial literacy pilot program, mechanism of implementation and sustainability options, financial literacy toolkit, training curricula, promotion materials, monitoring mechanism and in-take forms, training program and calendar.

The current Programme builds upon the significant progress made by another IOM-funded initiative, “Save More In Migration: Supporting Migrant Workers From Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to Enhance Savings, Remittances & Sustainable Benefits of Labour Migration” (SMIM). The present Programme adopted and advanced the behavioral economics approach used to improve the financial literacy of Moldovan migrants traveling to Israel developed under SMIM and initiated the work to expand it to other labor migration corridors, particularly Moldova-Germany. The synergies and experiences from both initiatives will enable the current Programme to develop a national-level financial literacy pilot program under Output 2.5. This program will include implementation and sustainability mechanisms, a financial literacy toolkit, training curricula, promotional materials, a monitoring mechanism, intake forms, and a training program and calendar. The respective documents will be developed using the input produced under the SMIM project. The present Programme will leverage the partnership developed by IOM with Expert-Group, a key Moldovan think tank, which was involved in the financial literacy exercise under the SMIM project. The analytical work conducted under SMIM, which reviewed the financial literacy status and tendencies of Moldovan labor migrants to Israel informs the development of the national financial literacy pilot program. Additionally, the Programme will build on the dialogue and partnerships established with commercial banks and the private sector under the SMIM project to pilot the national-level financial literacy program but also develop / adapt financial services and products to meet migrants’ and their families’ needs.

The Programme team joined the national inter-agency working group on financial education, convoked and chaired by the National Bank of Moldova (NBM). In that quality, the Programme provided expert input, contributing to the process of developing a National Financial Education Program for 2025-2028 (see the Draft in Annex 19). Part of the dialogue taking place under the NBM working group, the Programme initiated consultations with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/OECD’s Financial Consumer Protection and Education Unit of the Capital Markets Division, which operates a Regional Project on Financial Literacy supported by the Dutch Ministry of Finance. The two initiatives work in synergy, to support the national level processes for building financial literacy and inclusion.

Following the Programme’s work firstly on the Moldova-Germany labour migration and remittances sending corridor, the accumulated experience and practices, in conjunction with the SMIM deliverables and behavioural economics approach, will guide the development of a financial literacy pilot program. It will include a mechanism of implementation and sustainability options, financial literacy toolkit, training

curricula, promotion materials, monitoring mechanism and in-take forms, training programme and calendar.

The detailed ToRs of the exercise for supporting the development of financial literacy pilot programme were developed in close coordination with the stakeholders (see Annexes 17 and 18). The Moldova-based expert is responsible for adaptation and pilot-testing of the financial education training materials developed for the Moldova-Israel migration corridor for the Moldova-Germany route. A Germany-based, Moldovan diaspora expert was selected, responsible for providing contextual expertise, and providing on the ground support to the process of adaptation and pilot-testing of the financial education training materials in Germany.

Two experts were selected and started the work. During the reporting period, the experts supported the Programme with producing the following deliverables and outputs:

- Draft paper on Analysis of the financial-banking products/services market in Germany relevant for Moldovan migrants (see Annex 21)
- Organization of focus group meetings with Moldovan labour migrants in Berlin to better understand their needs and challenges in accessing financial-banking services in Germany (see the report on the focus groups discussions in Annex 22).
- Development of two briefs with recommendations to two partner commercial banks in Moldova on developing / adapting financial services and products to meet migrants' and their families' needs (see Annexes 23 and 24).

The respective deliverables will inform and support the operationalisation of the financial literacy pilot program.

- Under the Activity 2.5.4, the PUNOs initiated work for preparing the operationalisation of the financial literacy pilot programme.

The PUNOs reviewed best practices for developing financial literacy programs and worked in synergy with other current initiatives, in particular SMIM (see activity 2.5.3 above).

The Programme's started to work firstly testing the operationalisation of the financial literacy pilot program on the Moldova-Germany labour migration and remittances sending corridor, for Moldovan labour migrants working in Germany.

The detailed ToRs of the exercise for supporting the operationalisation of financial literacy pilot program on the Moldova-Germany corridor were developed in close coordination with the stakeholders (see Annexes 17 and 18).

Two experts were selected and started the work for both the development of the concept and implementation mechanism documents (see activity 2.5.3 above), as well as supporting their operationalisation. They are responsible for the adaptation of the migrant guide "Save More in Migration" for the German context. The guide will be designed for labour migrants that are new to opening a bank account in Germany and are not aware of financial services provided for them by German banks. The guide will help migrants understand steps that need to be taken to open a bank account in Moldova and

Germany, will explain why migrants need to use official channels for sending remittances back home and what options are there for them to do that. The experts will adjust the training module for financial education for migrants in Germany, producing a sub-module for group sessions and elaboration of a sub-module for individual counselling on financial planning. The experts will support the Programme in piloting financial education sessions for Moldovan migrants in Germany, and provision of individual counselling upon request by Moldovan migrants.

The Programme will continue and advance the engagement (initiated under SMIM) of commercial banks from Moldova for the development and pilot-testing the banking products tailored to the needs of Moldovan migrants in Germany, but also other destination countries.

The Programme initiated dialogue with the German Organisation Arbeit und Leben (AuL) team to discuss and transfer SMIM's best practices in implementing the financial education. The AuL is an institution working on youth and adult education, funded by the German Trade Union Confederation and the adult education centers. Its educational opportunities impart knowledge to people, promote opinion-forming and encourage social participation. It offers counselling to the foreign labour migrants working in Germany. The present Programme discussed with AuL the possible adaptation of its counselling services, to include financial literacy topics, in Berlin but also across Germany.

The current Programme achieved significant progress by leveraging the opportunity to contribute to the organization of various Diaspora Invest forums in 2024, in collaboration with the Moldova Invest Agency and the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova. The Programme's contributions to the organisation of three Diaspora Invest events (held in Dublin in July 2024, Madrid in September 2024, and Bucharest in November 2024) focused on promoting financial literacy and raising awareness about investment tools and opportunities available for the Diaspora in Moldova. These efforts helped establish a Diaspora Invest Program by the Moldova Invest Agency, adding a new segment to the Agency's mandate. The three Diaspora Invest events reached out to and brought together more than 300 diaspora members, who were familiarized with investment opportunities, financial and banking products and services, and actors currently mandated and operating in Moldova (see Annex 26 for the Diaspora Agency report for 2024, reflecting also the Diaspora Invest events).

The Programme joined forces with a US-based Moldovan diaspora-funded initiative (DHub) to advance financial literacy among rural youth. The Programme contributed to the joint organisation of an event in rural Moldova, geared at fostering financial literacy for a number of 90 young people (61 girls and 29 boys) in Cimislia town (see the concept in Annex 27). A second event, focusing on the digitalization in the financial services context (see the concept in Annex 27), brought together 84 young people (53 girls and 31 boys). The collaboration with the DHub (the US-based diaspora NGO) will further enable the Programme to expand its efforts to 20 schools in rural Moldova. The respective activities are incorporating a youth-focused perspective into the development of a national-level financial literacy pilot program. The Programme drafted the ToRs for a national consultant, to be responsible for the provision of the financial literacy course to rural schools' students (see Annex 25). The consultant was selected at the end of the reporting period and will deliver the trainings at the beginning of the year 2025.

At a later stage, based on the above experience and practices, the Programme will operationalize the national financial literacy programme concept, developed under the activity 2.5.3, through organisation of workshops for stakeholders, training of financial literacy consultants, organisation of the information campaign (leaflets, posters, on-line, business/investment guides) and training sessions, deployment of the consultants and of the monitoring mechanism, regular de-briefings, mid-term and final evaluations of the pilot and provision of lessons learnt and recommendations on the sustainable operation of the financial literacy programme.

100 % (all) of the outputs under Outcome 2 are on-track. None (0%) is fully achieved yet.

Information on the number and type of beneficiaries of outputs under Outcome 2 is provided within the Results Reporting Framework table below.

Results Reporting Framework							
INDICATORS	Baseline	Target (end of programme)	Results achieved for the reporting period (only provide data for the specified year)			Cumulative Results <i>Note: For Y1 report, this will be the same; For Y2 report, it will be Y1+Y2; and for Y3 report, it will be Y1+Y2+Y3</i>	Notes
			Y1	Y2	Y3		
OUTCOME 1							
Indicator 1a: The country governance framework integrates migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people (Global SDG indicator 10.7.2)	86.7	91.7					The work is in progress and changes in Outcome indicators metrics will be provided in the next report(s), once the level of achieved changes will be measurable.
Indicator 1b: Number of institutional, policy and legal/ regulatory amendments, programmes,	0	15					

coordination mechanisms, services, and data instruments for an efficient engagement of diaspora in homeland development, incl. In climate change action, developed in a participatory manner and submitted for endorsement by the Government							
Outcome Indicator 1c: Proportion of public services made accessible through digitalisation to the diaspora/expatriated Moldovans, %	TBD (in process)	TBD (in process)					The work is in progress and changes in Outcome indicators metrics will be provided in the next report(s), once the level of achieved changes will be measurable.
Outcome Indicator 1d National statistical system produces regular estimates of number of diaspora and circular migrants, based on usual residence definition	No	Yes					
Outcome Indicator 1e National institutional, coordination, policy mechanisms, programmes,	0	80%					

tools, and services enhanced, and capacities strengthened to assume an enhanced and sustainable role of coordination of Diaspora, Migration and Development areas, for elaborating and implementing diaspora-engagement policies and services following training and exposure to international expertise, improving the access and exchange of information for engagement in homeland development.							
OUTPUT 1.1							
<p>Indicator 1.1a:</p> <p>Comprehensive sociological analysis in Moldova of the various categories of migrants and their families, gender, profiling of needs of children left behind (UNICEF), other vulnerable groups impacted by</p>	No	Yes	No			No	Work is on track.

migration, and the mobility of health personnel							
<p>Indicator 1.1b:</p> <p>Number of policymakers involved in policy dialogue on diaspora engagement, incl. in health sector (WHO) and specific needs of children left behind (UNICEF), disaggregated by sex, (IOM)</p>	0	100	40, of which 24 women			40, of which 24 women	Members of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Diaspora, Migration and Development
<p>Output Indicator 1.1c</p> <p>Number of public officials and diaspora reached out, enhanced awareness on mutual engagement, disaggregated by sex (WHO and IOM).</p>	0	25,000	1,970			1,970	Work is on track.
<p>Output Indicator 1.1d</p> <p>Number of institutional, coordination, policy and legal/regulatory amendments, programmes, tools, and services for an efficient diaspora</p>	0	6	1			1	Draft diaspora law.

engagement developed in a participatory manner and submitted for endorsement by the Government (WHO 1.7, IOM)							
OUTPUT 1.2							
Indicator 1.2a National data systems for measuring the number and profile of diaspora assessed and recommendations for upgrading made available.	No	Yes	Yes			Yes	
Indicator 1.2b Current information system for health workforce management assessed and recommendations for upgrading made available (WHO 1.3.1)	No	Yes	Yes			Yes	Work is on track.
Indicator 1.2c Number of statistical and administrative data and statistical tools (methodologies,	0	5	3			3	Diaspora Mapping. Sociological study in Moldova. Extended

questionnaires, surveys, intake forms) developed/ amended to enable the production of data, including disaggregated by gender, migration status, as well as forecasting migration, estimating economic impact of diaspora, assessing the impact of migration and remittances on groups left behind, required for developing, monitoring, and evaluating national and sectoral policies.							Migration Profile Exercise.
OUTPUT 1.3							
<p>Output Indicator 1.3 a</p> <p>Number of public officials and national experts made aware of and enabled to deploy, implement and use the new statistical and administrative data and statistical tools,</p>	0	100, of which 40 women	8, of which 7 women			8, of which 7 women	Statisticians, familiarised with international best practices and standards.

disaggregated by sex (WHO, IOM and UNICEF).							
OUTPUT 1.4							
Output Indicator 1.4a National data systems measuring diaspora's economic contribution assessed and recommendations made available for their up-grading	No	Yes	No			No	Work is on track.
Output Indicator 1.4b Number of data strategies, amendments, improved data tools allowing for sustainable and systematic assessment of the impact of diaspora contributions beyond remittances and public agencies	0	3	0			0	Work is on track.
OUTPUT 1.5							
Indicator 1.5a Number of public officials and national experts made	0	100, of which 40 women	0			0	Work is on track.

aware of and enabled to deploy, implement, and use the data tools for assessment of economic impact of diaspora, disaggregated by sex.							
OUTCOME 2							
<p>Indicator 2a:</p> <p>Percentage of people who trust governance institutions (Parliament, Government, justice) by sex, migration status</p> <p>(Indicator D under the UN SDCF's Outcome 2)</p>	<p>Baseline (2021)</p> <p>Parliament: Total: 15%; Men/Women: 14%/16%; Urban/ rural: 15%/15%; Migrants (2020): 6.6%</p> <p>Government: Total: 19%; Men/ Women: 16%;/21%; Urban/rural: 18%/19%; Migrants (2020): 8.4%</p> <p>Justice: Total:</p>	<p>Parliament: Total: 30%; Men/ Women: 30%/30%; Urban/rural: 30%/30%; Migrants: 10%</p> <p>Government: Total: 30%; Men/ Women: 30%/30%; Urban/rural: 30%/30%; Migrants: 12%</p> <p>Justice: Total: 30%; Men/Women:</p>					<p>The work is in progress and changes in Outcome indicators metrics will be provided in the next report(s), once the level of achieved changes will be measurable.</p>

	19%; Men/Women: 18%/19%; Urban/rural: 20%/18%. Migrants (2020): 7.8	30%/30%; Urban/rural: 30%/30%; Migrants: 11					
Indicator 2b: Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted (%), (SDG indicator 10.c.1)	5,8%	4.9%					
Indicator 2c Share of population (15+) that has a bank account (Nationalized SDG indicator 8.10.2), disaggregated by sex and migration status	43.79%	48%					
Indicator 2d Diaspora funds/migrants' resources channelled for productive investment into the Moldovan economy and local development, per program (incl. new ones)	TBD in 2025 (following the execution of the diaspora mapping study)	TBD in 2025 (following the execution of the diaspora mapping study)					The work is in progress and changes in Outcome indicators metrics will be provided in the

Total USD.							next report(s), once the level of achieved changes will be measurable.
Indicator 2e Number of new partnerships, business, trade and academic links, initiatives and development projects created/implemented/ established at national and local level following/with diaspora engagement, Total	TBD in 2025 (following the execution of the diaspora mapping study)	TBD in 2025 (following the execution of the diaspora mapping study)					
OUTPUT 2.1							
Indicator 2.1a Sustainable and regular dialogue and engagement of Diaspora in development action and expertise sharing (UNDP, WHO, IOM)	No	Yes	No			No	Work is on track.
Indicator 2.1b Diaspora engagement is performed via innovative online/digital means (IOM)	No	Yes	No			No	Work is on track.
OUTPUT 2.2							

Indicator 2.2a Intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students at foreign universities leveraged in key development areas.	No	Yes	Yes			Yes	The concept developed, launched and operationalised.
Indicator 2.2b Government, officials, graduates, and students improved knowledge, and engaged in development action and professional/academic cooperation (IOM), by sex	0	Total: 100, of which women 50: 50 returned graduates and students, of which 25 women 50 public officials, of which 25 women	24, of which 17 women			24, of which 17 women	Work is on track.
Indicator 2.2c The diaspora and Moldovan public made aware of the opportunities for leveraging intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and	0	5,000	1,970			1,970	Participants at various events.

students at foreign universities, number of reached persons (via internet & promotional materials)							
OUTPUT 2.3							
<p>Output Indicator 2.3a</p> <p>Highly qualified diaspora practitioners involved in priority areas for development, through short-term engagement missions/ temporary return to Moldova at the national and local levels.</p>	No	Yes	Yes			Yes	The concept developed, launched and operationalised.
<p>Output Indicator 2.3b</p> <p>Number of diaspora professionals and governmental stakeholders engaged in development cooperation and expertise sharing (IOM, UNDP, WHO 2.3.1)</p>	0	<p>120, of which at least 50 women:</p> <p>80 highly qualified diaspora professionals (at least 35 women): 40</p>	<p>11 highly qualified diaspora professionals, of which 7 women</p>			<p>11 highly qualified diaspora professionals, of which 7 women</p>	Work is on track.

		(IOM), 10 in health sector; WHO), 30 (UNDP) 40 central and local government stakeholders (at least 15 women)					
Output Indicator 2.3c National health policy, institutional, governance, coordination, academic and research framework integrate health workforce mobility, engagement of expatriated health personnel and retention incentives aspects (WHO 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4)	No	Yes	No			No	Work is on track.
Output Indicator 2.3d Highly qualified diaspora practitioners and Moldovan public made aware of	0	1,000	1,970			1,970	Participants at various events.

opportunities for short-term engagement missions/ temporary return to Moldova, number of reached persons (via internet & promotional materials) and engaged							
OUTPUT 2.4							
Output Indicator 2.4a Number of partnerships/ initiatives established at national and local level between diaspora business leaders and national stakeholders (UNDP)	0	10	0			0	Work is on track.
Output Indicator 2.4b Number of business leaders who promote development and/ or serve as business envoys and/or cooperate with national stakeholders (UNDP)	0	10	0			0	Work is on track.
OUTPUT 2.5							
Output Indicator 2.5a	0	3	0			0	Work is on track.

Number of governmental programmatic instruments for productive diaspora contributions, remittance management and investment attraction reviewed, re-designed and/or developed (UNDP, UNICEF)							
Output Indicator 2.5b Financial literacy toolkit and training curricula developed for more productive investment of diaspora/migrants' remittances and savings, including by young people, families left behind, women migrants and other vulnerable groups (IOM)	0	2	0			0	Work is on track.
Output Indicator 2.5c Number of migrants, young people, families left behind, women migrants and other vulnerable groups in Moldova who enhanced	0	10,000, or which women 5,000	714, of which 364 women			714, of which 364 women	Work is on track.

their entrepreneurship culture and financial literacy, and were enabled to access financial / banking services, by gender (IOM).							
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3. Partnerships

The Programme builds upon PUNOs longstanding dialogue and experience of cooperation with the national agencies, academia, civil society, and diaspora associations, which laid a solid base for making sure that the Programme activities are implemented in an efficient manner. The excellent cooperation continued and was further advanced with the following institutions: i) State Chancellery of the Government of the Republic of Moldova; ii) Diaspora Relations Bureau of the State Chancellery; iii) Ministry of Labour and Social Protection; iv) Ministry of Education and Research; v) Ministry of Health; vi) National Bank of Moldova.

New partnerships were established, notably with the Moldova Invest Agency (the public agency responsible for investment attraction and export promotion), jointly targeting the engagement of diaspora as development promoters and business envoys (in trade, tourism, and investment attraction), under the activities 2.4.1 and 2.4.2.

Another new partner included the Parliament, whereby its Labour and Social Protection Committee requested PUNO's support for the development of a draft bill/law on diaspora (see activity 1.1.4).

The Government agencies' **role** was to provide strategic guidance and orientation to the project, partner in developing and piloting new programmes, policies, public services, dialogue platforms; the Government agencies on the other hand are beneficiaries of the Programme's expert input, trainings, capacity building, participation in international events, familiarizing with the best practices. The Government is providing input to the studies' methodologies, ensuring that they answer to the evidence base needs for policy making. Other **strategic contributions** provided by the Government include: staff time and expertise; policy coordination; involvement of mandated institutions (such as the Embassies and Consulates) in the diaspora outreach work; matching the funds of the present Programme e.g. for the joint organisation of diaspora engagement events, such as the Diaspora Invest forums (see activities 2.4.1 and 2.4.2).

The cooperation was expanded to new segments of stakeholders, such as academia, notably the "*Nicolae Testemițanu*" State University of Medicine and Pharmacy, under the component for engaging the expatriated/ diaspora-based medical professionals, under the activity 2.3.1, through its *DiaMed* (Medical Diaspora) association. The *DiaMed* is an initiative by Nicolae Testemitanu University in the area of engagement of Moldovan medical diaspora in medical research and transfer of competences. The cooperation targets the establishment of a mechanism for short-term employment/temporary return of highly qualified practitioners to the Republic of Moldova's priority development field. The mechanism aims to be sustainable and proposes testing and operationalizing this method at national and local levels. The *DiaMed* is an excellent example of how collaboration can promote the development of the medical and scientific community in Moldova, and its experience will be scaled up under the present Programme.

The Programme also entered into dialogue and collaboration with the private sector entities, namely two commercial banks, focusing on financial literacy services for Moldovan migrants (see activities 2.5.3 and 2.5.4), and development of financial products and services. They contribute to the Programme with their staff and resources for engaging the diaspora and migrants as clients, but also as beneficiaries of important services.

Another new type/class of partners includes the Moldovan USA-based diaspora-funded NGO Diaspora Hub (DHub), located in Moldova; for the first time, the Moldovan diaspora established and funded a civil society organisation based and operating in Moldova. The Programme cooperates with the DHub, both sides providing matching funds for organizing financial literacy activities for rural youth (see activity 2.5.4). Another new partner includes the Moldovan-American Convention (MAC), which is a lead association of the Moldovan diaspora based in the USA; the Programme partnered with MAC in organizing the Diaspora Business Forum event in USA in April 2024 (see activities 2.4.1 and 2.4.2), both sides providing matching funds; MAC fundraised with high-net worth members of the Moldovan diaspora based in the USA, to co-fund the event, but also to mobilise funds for development work in Moldova. Diaspora associations and members were also consulted in a range of events (see activities 2.4.1 and 2.5.4), providing input for policy and public services development, improvement of business climate, financial literacy, bank products and services. Overall, the Programme uses participatory dialogue, co-design, and co-delivery methods, illustrated above, ensuring that the needs of the ultimate beneficiary target group – the diaspora and migrants, are taken into account, and their rights protected and served.

Diaspora continues to be involved throughout the implementation, benefiting from innovative engagement tools and capacity interventions, but also contributing to the development of key deliverables, through consultations and co-design approaches, policy consultations, as well participation in the Programme's governance structures. *Highly qualified expatriated practitioners* provide expert input, transfer their know-how and academic knowledge, support strategic policy and institutional development in their areas of expertise, provide recommendations for new initiatives, and inspirational good practices in various sectoral areas of governance, both at central and local levels, participate in proceedings and outcomes of the diaspora engagement platform/counselling board, foster the development of cross-border professional and academic partnerships, and are involved in improving various public services and provide mentoring to Moldovan and expatriated professionals. They are selected via a competitive public process, based on profile, experience, and relevance of the proposed input. *Moldovan students abroad and the recent graduates* of international academic institutions contribute their intellectual potential for key development priority areas and the targets of the 2030 Agenda, engage in policy-making process at the national and local levels, bring in innovative perspectives in the operation and reformation of public institutions and services. They are selected via a competitive public process, based on profile, experience, and relevance of the proposed input. *Diaspora associations and leaders* coalesce larger groups of diaspora members into dialogue with the GoM, community development work, defining diaspora's perspective on policy, programmatic and institutional development, and public services modernization issues, engagement modalities, outreach, and communication. *Diaspora business leaders* are engaged as development promoters and business envoys in cross-border trade, tourism, and investment attraction areas, advancing cooperation with national stakeholders in Moldova, and facilitating partnerships of the Moldovan businesses with foreign counterparts from the countries of destination. They are engaged based on profile, experience, relevance of the proposed input and quality of business partnership ideas.

During the reporting period, synergies were continued and advanced through maintaining close coordination with other projects and entities, including the following: i) the IOM IDF project "Diaspora for Climate Change Action" (D4C), working to valorize the Moldovan diaspora's input for climate

change adaptation action; ii) the IOM IDF project “Save More in Migration: Supporting migrant workers from Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to enhance savings, remittances, and sustainable benefits of labour migration”, which works, using insights from behavioral economics to enhance financial literacy of Moldovan migrants and incentivize them to use their savings towards developing sustainable livelihood activities, including entrepreneurship; iii) the UNDP, SDC-funded project “Resilient and inclusive markets in Moldova”, which aims to contribute to the promotion of integrated approaches to inclusive and sustainable local economic development and employment creation, targeting both local population, as well as returning migrants and refugees, as well as the Swiss-UNDP project “Strengthen social cohesion through inclusive participation and empowered citizens” that aims to establish, through multi-dimensional partnerships and interventions, a model of efficient cooperation and strengthened social cohesion through empowered diaspora members, returning migrants and other citizens and responsive local governance.

During the reporting period, the Programme activities enjoyed the full support of the key national stakeholders, the state authorities, civil society, academia and private sector, being engaged in all aspects of the action and its coordination to ensure full national ownership of the results.

The key stakeholders maintained a continuous commitment to the Programme’s objectives, including sharing information, harmonizing their coordination procedures, and working together. An example to this end is the consensus solution on the agenda of the regular coordination meetings, the upcoming Steering Committee, as well as the joint updating of the work plan of the Programme by the four PUNOs, in a participatory way with input and endorsement of the key stakeholders' agencies. The stakeholder agencies made a sufficient number of relevant staff available to Programme activities, so that the skills and knowledge obtained will be properly applied and transferred to colleagues, beyond the Programme’s closure.

The Joint Programme has ***not entered into any formal implementation agreements*** (financial or other) with local government and/or related entities (e.g. provincial, municipal, district agencies), nor with non-governmental stakeholders, during the implementation period.

4. Cross-Cutting Issues

The Programme deployed and consistently used *gender-responsive and child-sensitive approaches*. In the Programme’s call for experts as well as in other vacancies published by the Programme or with any other professional profile needed, women experts are encouraged to apply. The Programme ensures a gender-sensitive approach to selecting participants in Programme structures, consultation meetings, workshops, trainings and other events, and provides a gender-disaggregated statistics on participants. In practical terms, that meant e.g. the inclusion of women in technical working groups and Programme teams of all four PUNOs agencies and the Steering Committee (11 out of 17 participating members are women).

All the research and data collection under the Programme collect disaggregated data and promote equitable representation to the maximum extent possible. The surveying methodology ensures the equitable representation of all genders, and consultation of their perspective. The development of research tools ensures that the collected data is disaggregated, including but not limited to gender, age, disability status, incorporate gender and health variables, assess the specific vulnerabilities of Moldovan *children* left behind by migrant parents. In particular, the research works to assess the migrant children physical and mental health in the Republic of Moldova, the psycho-emotional

challenges and difficulties with education and community in the country, increased child delinquency, decreased school performance/attendance among others, assess how migration affects children's education, social interaction, and social integration, differentiated by age group, gender. The research will pay attention to teenagers as a separate group with specific psychological issues related to children's puberty, perils of drug/alcohol addiction, conflict with law among others.

All the Programme's work concerning/involving children adhere to the UNICEF's Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. Data protection, privacy, confidentiality and archiving requirements of UNICEF will be followed. The contractors will document all ethical issues and mitigation strategies in the Study Protocol and must complete UNICEF or other equivalent ethics training prior to commencement of work. Steps will be taken to consistently capture the opinions of the vulnerable and marginalized groups. Informed consent will be granted prior to every focus group (FG) or interview from the participants.

In accordance with the UNICEF's Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, the Study Protocol, the data collection instruments, and safeguarding approaches underwent an independent ethical review, that was facilitated through UNICEF globally established long-term agreement with an Ethical Review Board (ERB). If any ethical issues are highlighted by the ERB, the Study Team shall make subsequent changes to avoid any ethical issues.

The Programme's partner *DiaMed* initiative embeds *human rights-based approach* and principles throughout its activities. This initiative fosters inclusivity and diversity within its membership by ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. Moreover, the DiaMed promotes research addressing healthcare disparities and challenges prevalent in underserved populations, thus aligning with the principles of social justice and human dignity. The DiaMed recognizes the importance of gender equity in advancing medical research and practice. To achieve this, the initiative actively promotes the participation and leadership of women in scientific endeavors, thereby challenging traditional gender roles within the field.

5. Programme Management and Coordination

The main Programme's authority is the **Programme Steering Committee (PSC)** that makes all decisions on resources and amendments to the Activity Plan. PSC is responsible for providing strategic guidance to the project, overseeing the progress, reviewing, and approving the Annual Reports, Work Plans, as well as the Final Report. The SC is a Programme Management tool used to steer and monitor the Programme implementation, enabling participatory Programme supervision and ensuring transparency through Programme Management Team (PMT) regular updating of the members (see the Annex 30 for the Regulation of the PSC). It provides a means for the implementing agencies, the Moldovan partner institutions to be empowered to take key decisions for the Programme.

To ensure wide ownership of the Programme results, the SC and its members work in close partnership with central and local authorities, diaspora/migrant associations and groups, youth, employers, professionals in various sectors, civil society, research, and academia sector etc. The SC works in close coordination with the UNCT Migration Taskforce (UNCT MT) in Moldova, which brings together all the UN agencies working on migration in Moldova.

As an application of the *whole-of-the-Government approach*, the Government established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Diaspora, Migration and Development (DMD), which coordinates the

development and implementation of vision and policies on DMD and ensures the proper coordination of Programme interventions among all Governmental institutions. It is comprised of focal points representatives of all ministries, at state-secretary level, and at head of departments level. PSC and the Programme as a whole works in close coordination with the Inter-Ministerial Committee on DMD collectively, but also its individual members, seeking strategic and policy guidance, direction on the main milestones of the Programme and regularly reporting progress at its meetings.

The next meeting of the **Programme Steering Committee** is scheduled for 17 February 2025; at the end of the reporting period, the PUNOs initiated the coordination of the agenda and organisational preparations.

Besides the PSC, the Programme established and regularly convoked monthly **Programme Technical Coordination Team meetings**, which comprise the PUNOs programme management and key expert staff, but also the Head of the Diaspora Relations Bureau and a range of key staff of BRD. The Head of the BRD consulted and coordinated key Programme progress matters with the State Secretary of the State Chancellery (who is also the Chair of the PSC), prior to and after each monthly meeting. This arrangement ensured flexibility, fast coordination, steering and guidance from the Government. The PUNOs also made sure to consult and update/brief the other key participating ministries, of key progress elements under the Programme. Accordingly, no PSC meeting was organized in mid-2024, given that the Programme Technical Coordination Team meetings ensured the needed level of steering and reporting.

The Programme works to regularly consult civil society, local authorities, diaspora/migrant associations and groups, youth, employers, professionals in various sectors, to ensure that its decisions are relevant and informed through the needs assessments/discussions/consultations of the stakeholders, conducted part of the implemented activities.

Women, and groups in vulnerable situations due to their migration context (returning migrants), youth and children left behind will have their specific needs and challenges assessed and approached through the execution of the Sociological Study under activity 1.1.1 and the Diaspora Mapping study under activity 1.2.5. Their voices will be integrated in the implementation of the activity 2.5.2, with the mapping, redesign, and development of new instruments for remittances and investments management and monitoring, informed through the conduction of a dedicated study. The study will inform the inclusion of gender specific aspects in the innovative mechanism allowing men and women remittance senders to have a stronger say and control over the use of the remittances by the family members, the vouchers scheme allowing them to direct more significant shares to health and education needs of children, sustainable livelihood development solutions, family projects and limit the un-productive use of the remitted funds. The application of a *people-centered approach* by the project works to ensure that the designed policies, products, services are evidence- and needs-based, gender- and child-sensitive, and have at their centre the requirements of the most vulnerable groups. To that end, the cooperation with the commercial banks on the development of targeted banking services and products is evidence and needs-based, focusing on migrants as the beneficiaries of services, using the evidence collected through the studies conducted under the Programme.

6. Constraints, Adjustments, Lessons and Good Practices

One of the most significant challenges faced was the increase in prices for expert services and goods. This surge in costs put considerable pressure on the budget and delayed the procurement process for selecting service providers and consultants. The Programme had to navigate these financial constraints by prioritizing essential activities and negotiating better rates with providers to ensure the continuity of the activities. One adopted solution was to contract the same expert(s) for a cluster of activities, rather than several different experts for individual activities; e.g. for both assessing the statistical and administrative migration data systems (activity 1.2.1) and for upgrading the Extended Migration Profile (activity 1.2.2); the same expert was commissioned for both developing a methodology for extended diaspora mapping (activity 1.2.4) and for conducting extended diaspora mapping (activity 1.2.5).

Another major challenge was the complex regional security context, which was further complicated by the political processes in Moldova. The year 2024 was an electoral year, featuring both Presidential elections and a Referendum on EU accession. The democratic engagement of the diaspora was unprecedented, with massive participation and a strong pro-EU and pro-democracy stance that were decisive for the outcomes of these democratic exercises. Additionally, the acute energy crisis added to the challenges faced by the Programme. The Programme had to adapt to this dynamic political environment by closely monitoring the situation and ensuring that its activities remained relevant and supportive of the democratic processes. This involved collaborating with local and international partners to secure the necessary resources and support, coordinating and adapting the communication and outreach efforts.

The continued refugee dynamics posed another layer of complexity. The ongoing war in Ukraine led to a steady influx of refugees, which strained local resources and required the Programme to adjust its focus to account for the overall national and regional emphasis on support for refugee integration and assistance. This situation was further exacerbated by attempts from external actors to destabilize the internal political situation in Moldova. The Programme had to remain vigilant and responsive to these external pressures, ensuring that its initiatives were resilient and adaptable to the changing circumstances, through adapting its communication and outreach strategy.

To strengthen the relevance and effectiveness of the joint programme and enhance the coherence and coordination of UN system support, several adjustments were made. The Programme increased its focus on capacity building and knowledge sharing among stakeholders to ensure a unified approach to addressing the challenges; e.g. the work on upgrading the Extended Migration Profile under activity 1.2.2 closely involved the public agencies staff, relying extensively on their expertise, buy-in, and methodological insights. Regular coordination meetings were organized to align the efforts of various UN agencies and local partners. The Programme also worked towards ensuring a heightened focus on leveraging technology (such as the diaspora engagement electronic platform) and innovative solutions to streamline processes and improve efficiency, ensuring that the objectives were met despite the constraints.

Conclusion and Next Steps

In 2024, the Joint Programme achieved remarkable progress in fostering collaboration with the Government of Moldova during a pivotal phase in the country's journey toward European Union (EU) accession. By aligning its initiatives with Moldova's national priorities and leveraging innovative

approaches, the programme provided timely and strategic support. It focused on data-driven policymaking, capacity building, and diaspora engagement, ensuring its activities were relevant and impactful in advancing Moldova's development goals.

The Programme's efforts were deeply rooted in Moldova's key strategies, including the **National Development Plan (2024-2026)**, the **National Action Plan for EU Accession (2024-2027)**, and the **National Diaspora Program (2024-2028)**. Moreover, its alignment with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, particularly **indicator 10.7.2**, demonstrated a commitment to integrating migration policies that promote safe, orderly, and responsible mobility. This emphasis on sustainable governance frameworks was reflected in its contributions to multiple outcomes outlined in the **UN-Moldova Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF)**.

One of the Programme's core achievements was its role in improving human rights-based service delivery in Moldova. It worked to ensure that governance frameworks and development policies facilitated effective diaspora engagement. Through initiating sociological studies to profile migrants and assess their needs, the Programme will provide critical data to inform gender-sensitive and child-focused migration policies. Campaigns like "People Next to Us" were launched to encourage the diaspora to return home, highlighting the tangible benefits of participation. Support to legislative efforts will further strengthen institutional frameworks, ensuring long-term engagement with the diaspora.

Another significant focus was on enhancing governance transparency and accountability. The programme prioritized improving institutional capacities to make evidence-based decisions using high-quality disaggregated data. This included reviving the inter-agency Technical Working Group on migration data and developing and deploying advanced methodologies for mapping diaspora communities. Special attention was given to vulnerable groups, such as women and children left behind, ensuring that migration policies were inclusive and equitable. Familiarization with best international practices will support the upgrades to Moldova's migration statistical systems aligned with international standards, further reinforcing the country's ability to manage migration effectively.

Economic development was another key area where the programme made substantial contributions. It worked to foster inclusive and sustainable growth by creating mechanisms to leverage the expertise and resources of Moldovan diaspora communities. Efforts included preparing the establishment of platforms for diaspora dialogue, developing and deploying mechanism for engaging Moldovan graduates and professionals abroad, and facilitating their temporary or permanent return. These initiatives not only strengthened ties between the diaspora and their homeland but will also contribute to national socio-economic development. Additionally, a financial literacy pilot program was launched to help channel remittance inflows into productive investments, supporting sustainable economic growth.

The programme also made strides in promoting environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient development. Through the established synergies with other programmes, it encouraged meaningful engagement of diaspora in climate change adaptation action. These efforts reflected a commitment to fostering green development and resilience in the face of climate change and natural disasters.

Despite these accomplishments, the programme faced several challenges. Rising costs for services and consultancy placed pressure on budgets and delayed procurement processes. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the resulting refugee dynamics added complexity to operations. Moldova's political

landscape, particularly during an electoral year that included a referendum on EU accession, benefitted from significant democratic engagement of the diaspora, which offset the other negative and destabilizing factors. Additionally, the country faced an acute energy crisis, which further strained the national resources. However, the programme demonstrated resilience and adaptability, maintaining its momentum through collaboration and innovative solutions.

Overall, the Joint Programme made notable progress in supporting the advancement of Moldova's EU integration and development goals. Its data-driven approaches, emphasis on diaspora engagement, and focus on inclusive policymaking showcased its strategic alignment with both national priorities and international standards. By addressing key issues such as demographic trends, gender disparities, and migration impacts, the programme laid the groundwork for sustainable and equitable growth. Its achievements, particularly in governance, economic development, and environmental sustainability, underscored the transformative potential of strategic partnerships and diaspora contributions.

In terms of the **next steps** under the Programme, the following key outputs and activities will be implemented in 2025:

- Analysis of the profile of various categories of migrants will be made available, in support to policymaking, following the execution of the sociological research in Moldova, and the finalization of the diaspora mapping abroad
- Nationally owned methodology and data collection tools will be developed and piloted, following the upgrading the Extended Migration Profile to integrate in-depth aspects related to gender, children left behind (UNICEF) and other vulnerable groups, migrant health, and mobility of health personnel; and the development of a statistical methodology for estimating the number of diaspora and circular migrants, as well as for estimating the economic impact of the diaspora beyond remittances
- The public agencies will be enabled to operate the developed methodologies and data collection tools, through training and exchanges
- A nationally owned and sustainable platform will be made available and operational for diaspora dialogue and engagement in public governance and development opportunities, following the designing, launching, and promoting the up-graded multi-functional electronic web-portal for operationalisation of the platform for dialogue and engagement of Diaspora
- Intellectual potential of Moldovan graduates and students at foreign universities will continue being leveraged in key development areas in Moldova, using the mechanism developed and deployed in 2024
- Highly qualified diaspora practitioners will continue being involved in priority areas for development, through short-term engagement missions/ temporary return to Moldova at the national and local levels, using the mechanism developed and deployed in 2024
- Diaspora business leaders will continue being engaged as development promoters and business envoys, through organisation of a range of events abroad and in Moldova
- Business partnerships between diaspora and Moldovan entrepreneurs will be facilitated, through development of support mechanisms for joint initiatives dedicated to local economic development
- New instruments and services will be proposed for productive investment of remittances in the Moldovan economy, following the evaluation of the current frameworks,

recommendations for establishing a digital platform to support migrants to manage and monitor the remittances sent to the households in Moldova

- Migrants and diaspora will enhance their entrepreneurship culture and financial literacy following the development of a concept of national financial literacy pilot program and its pilot operationalisation through workshops, trainings and outreach.

As Moldova continues its path toward EU membership, the Joint Programme's work provides a strong foundation for future progress. While external challenges remain, the Programme's innovative frameworks and commitment to resilience position it as a vital partner in the country's development journey.

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