

United Nations Development Programme

Country: Moldova
Initiation Plan

Project Title : **Strengthening Central and Local Capacities for Resource Mobilization and Improved Delivery of Essential Public Services in Moldova**

Expected UNSDCF/CPD Outcome(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

Expected CPD Output(s) : Output 1.1 National and subnational institutional capacities and policy frameworks for quality, resilient and inclusive service delivery are enhanced

Initiation Plan Start/End Dates : September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2027

Implementing Partner : United Nations Development Programme

Brief Description

The Republic of Moldova's EU accession process and decentralization reform require stronger inter-communal cooperation to improve the planning and delivery of essential public services that benefit equally men and women, including from marginalized/vulnerable groups. While Intercommunal Development Associations (IDAs) have significant potential to support integrated territorial development, they continue to face legal, institutional, and capacity constraints. The project will support the Government of the Republic of Moldova, through the State Chancellery and partner local authorities, to strengthen the inter-communal cooperation framework by improving the regulatory framework, developing and piloting an integrated strategic planning methodology for IDAs, and establishing a digital platform for coordination and knowledge sharing. The project will also facilitate peer exchange with French local authorities to strengthen capacities in territorial governance, essential and inclusive public service delivery, and access to EU funding, contributing to more effective people-centered local governance and enhanced readiness for EU integration.

Programme Period: 01.09.2026 – 31.08.2027

Quantum Project Number: _____

Quantum Output Number: _____

Gender Marker: Output 1, Output 2
GEN 2

Total resources required 100,000 EUR
(estimated 114,285 USD)

Total allocated resources: 114,285 USD

- Regular _____
- Other:
 - Donor DCTCIV (France)
 - Donor _____
 - Government _____

Unfunded budget: _____

In-kind Contributions _____

Agreed by UNDP: Daniela Gasparikova, Resident Representative

DocuSigned by:

Daniela Gasparikova Jul-2026

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PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

Background and Rationale

As Moldova advances on its path toward European Union accession, the implementation of the EU Growth Plan has significantly increased the volume and complexity of resources available to support national, regional and local development priorities. While central public authorities are in the process of strengthening coordination mechanism for external assistance and public investment, local public authorities continue to face challenges in effectively organizing and delivering essential public services, including in mobilizing resources for local development.

Building on this foundation, there is a need for targeted and practical support aimed at strengthening operational capacity at local level, particularly related to the development of the quality of and access to essential public services that would equally benefit men, women, youth, including vulnerable population groups of both genders.

At the same time, public services - such as water and sanitation, waste management, energy efficiency, and local public infrastructure - remain a core concern for citizens, with specific implications particularly for women, elderly, people with disabilities, other vulnerable population groups, and a key area where EU and IFI's funds can deliver visible results in living standards. Experience from EU Member States shows that municipalities of all sizes can significantly improve service delivery resource optimization through professional local administrations and well-established inter-municipal cooperation structures.

France offers particularly relevant experience in this regard. Smaller French cities and municipalities that are comparable to Moldova's Growth Poles cities, have developed pragmatic models for organizing essential and inclusive public services and managing infrastructure through professional local administrations and well-established inter-municipal/communal cooperation structures. These models have proven effective in improving service delivery, optimizing resource use, and enabling smaller municipalities to manage complex public services.

Structured, focused exchanges with French counterparts can therefore provide Moldovan local authorities with practical, transferable solutions aligned with EU standards. The objective is to create a platform for a "learning by doing" approach, as well as inter-municipal exchanges and collaboration, which can be replicated throughout Moldova. Based on the UNDP's experience of working with Cahul and Ungheni regions as growth poles, the intervention is planned to focus on them as emerging promoters of the various modalities of intercommunal cooperation. Their experience is to be spread throughout the country.

The inter-municipal cooperation promoted by this initiative is expected to facilitate the Local Public Administration reform (LPAR), by showcasing the benefits of joint efforts.

Objectives and Outputs

The **Overall Objective** is to strengthen the institutional and operational capacity of central and local public authorities to organize and deliver inclusive, gender-responsive essential public services, including through enhanced inter-communal cooperation, and the exchange of practical experience with French counterparts.

The Project will pursue two complementary development outputs.

Output 1: Local public authorities apply improved planning and organizational approaches for the delivery of essential, inclusive and gender responsive public services through effective inter-communal cooperation.

Under the Output 1, The project team will provide technical assistance to review and enhance the normative and legislative framework governing inter-communal cooperation, with particular attention to strengthening the institutional and operational framework for Intercommunal Development Associations (IDAs). The review will also assess the extent to which the existing framework enables equitable access to essential public services for women and men, marginalized/vulnerable population groups, incl. women from these groups, and will formulate recommendations to integrate gender-responsive and human-rights based planning and service delivery principles where relevant. Building on this, the project will develop and validate a standardized methodology for integrated

strategic planning at the IDA level and pilot its application in the Cahul and Ungheni IDAs to demonstrate practical approaches for coordinated service planning and investment prioritization. The methodology will integrate gender-responsive and human-rights based planning principles, encouraging the use of sex-disaggregated, and where available vulnerability disaggregated data, inclusive stakeholder consultations, and consideration of the differentiated needs of women and men when identifying service priorities and investment projects. Capacity development activities will ensure gender-balanced and inclusive participation and strengthen the capacities of local authorities to apply gender-responsive and inclusion approaches in strategic planning, public service delivery, and investment prioritization. To facilitate collaboration and ensure long-term knowledge exchange, the project will also design and operationalize a digital platform supporting inter-communal cooperation, enabling information sharing, dissemination of methodological guidance, and coordination of planning processes. To ensure that the digital platform meets the needs of end-users, a diverse group of stakeholders - including women and men representatives of local public authorities and IDA from different regions of the country, will be involved in the design and testing of the platform.

Output 2: Local capacity to enhance inclusive and essential service delivery is strengthened due to the facilitated targeted exchange of experience with French smaller cities.

Under the output 1, the project team will establish a focused partnership between selected Moldovan local authorities - including localities led by women mayors, growth pole cities and functioning IDAs, and local authorities demonstrating commitment to inclusive and gender-responsive local governance, as well as a French counterpart to identify common priority areas related to essential service delivery, inter-municipal cooperation, and access to EU funding opportunities. A study visit to France will provide Moldovan representatives with practical exposure to successful models of inter-communal governance, public service organization, public-private partnerships, and mechanisms for planning, financing, and implementing local development investments. The exchange will also highlight French practices in ensuring inclusive and gender-responsive local governance, citizen engagement, and equitable access to essential public services. Building on the lessons learned, the project will organize a follow-up knowledge transfer workshop in Moldova, bringing together women and men French practitioners and Moldovan stakeholders to adapt relevant approaches to the national legislative, institutional, and administrative context.

Expected Strategic Results:

The project will establish stronger institutional foundations for inter-communal cooperation by combining policy improvements, practical implementation tools, digital solutions, and international partnerships. These interventions are expected to:

- improve coordination among local authorities,
- strengthen evidence-based and integrated territorial planning,
- increase the readiness of local governments to mobilize external financing,
- implement quality infrastructure and public service projects.

In the longer term, the project will contribute to more resilient, efficient, inclusive and gender-responsive local governance by strengthening institutional capacities to plan and deliver essential public services that respond to the diverse need of women and men, while, supporting Moldova's decentralization reform and European integration agenda.

Gender and human rights integration

Gender equality and human rights-based approach will be mainstreamed throughout the project implementation. Beyond ensuring balanced participation of women and men, including from under-represented groups, the project will promote gender-responsive planning and decision-making by encouraging the use of sex-disaggregated data, inclusive stakeholder consultations, and the integration of gender and inclusion considerations into strategic planning, public service delivery, and institutional capacity development. Particular attention will be given to promoting women's leadership and participation in inter-municipal cooperation structures and local governance processes, in line with Moldova's commitments on gender equality and inclusive local development.

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Initiation Plan will be implemented through Direct Implementation Modality (DIM) in consultation and close collaboration with State Chancellery.

The responsibility for the overall management and coordination of the Initiation Plan lies with UNDP Moldova, while a Technical Coordination Group, composed of representatives of the State Chancellery and UNDP, will have the task of guiding the Initiation Plan strategically and help it achieve the delivery of Outputs. The Technical Coordination Group shall meet at least twice during the duration of the Initiation Plan to guide the implementation of the Initiation Plan outputs.

The Implementing Partner for this Initiation Plan is UNDP. The Implementing Partner is responsible and accountable for managing this project, including the monitoring of project interventions, achieving project outputs, and for the effective use of resources. UNDP is responsible for:

- Approving and signing the multiyear workplan.
- Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year.

The UNDP Project team will be comprised of a Project Manager (to be covered 100% by UNDP) and a Project Analyst in public services (to be covered 100% from the project, for a period of 6 months), as well as other consultants, as needed.

MONITORING

In accordance with UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the Project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation activities:

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action
Track Results Progress	Progress data against the results indicators in the workplan will be collected and analysed to assess the progress of the initiation plan in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.
Monitor and Manage Risks	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP's audit policy to manage financial risk.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken
Learn	Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured		Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action
	regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.		to inform management decisions
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP's quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.
Review and Make Course Correction	Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making	Bi-annually	Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the technical coordination group and used to make course corrections
Project report	Describe major results against set indicators and targets, recommendations and roadmap for the development of a full-fledged initiative	at the end of the Initiation Plan	Major results and outline of future intervention designed.

WORK PLAN

Period¹: 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027

EXPECTED OUTPUTS <i>And baseline, indicators including annual targets</i>	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME					RESPO NSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		2026		2027				Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3				
Output 1 Local public authorities apply improved planning and organizational approaches for the delivery of essential, inclusive and gender-responsive public services through effective inter-communal cooperation <i>Baseline:</i>	1.1 Activity Result: Legislative and normative framework strengthened related to inter-communal cooperation, including from a HRBA and gender equality perspective Activity actions: - Conduct a comprehensive gender and human rights sensitive review and assessment of the existing legal, regulatory, and institutional framework - Prepare draft legislative and normative proposals, including recommendations for amendments, in line with HRBA and gender equality principles - Present and validate the proposed legal/regulatory recommendations, draft standardized strategic planning methodology for IDAs, in keeping with HRBA and gender equality principles	X	X				UNDP	France/ DCTCIV	Local Consultants/Personnel, DPC	6,642

¹ Maximum 18 months

EXPECTED OUTPUTS <i>And baseline, indicators including annual targets</i>	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME					RESPO NSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		2026		2027				Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3				
- <i>Fragmented legal and institutional framework for inter-communal cooperation.</i> - <i>No standardized methodology for integrated strategic planning at IDA level.</i> - <i>No operational digital platform supporting inter-communal cooperation.</i> - <i>0 IDAs applying standardized planning tools.</i> <i>Indicators:</i> - <i>Number of IDAs applying the standardized integrated strategic planning methodology and digital platform.</i> - <i>Number of institutional tools (legal, methodological, and digital) developed and operationalized to strengthen inter-communal cooperation.</i> <i>Targets:</i> - <i>2 IDAs (Cahul and Ungheni) applying the methodology and digital platform.</i> - <i>3 institutional tools operationalized:</i> <i>legislative/normative improvement package,</i> <i>standardized IDA strategic planning methodology,</i> <i>operational digital platform.</i>	1.2 Activity Result: A standardized methodology for inclusive and integrated strategic planning at the Intercommunal Development Association (IDA) level is developed, validated, and successfully piloted in Cahul and Ungheni IDAs, Activity actions: - Conduct a gender and human rights sensitive assessment of existing strategic planning practices, institutional capacities, and development planning needs of selected IDAs, identifying gaps and opportunities for integrated territorial planning. - Develop a standardized methodology and practical toolkit for preparing integrated development strategies at the IDA level, including guidance on stakeholder participation, prioritization of essential public services, equitable access to men and women, including from vulnerable groups, to public services investment planning, and alignment with national policies and EU programming frameworks - Provide technical assistance and capacity-building to the Cahul and Ungheni IDAs and pilot the methodology in the selected IDAs		X	X	X		UNDP	France/ DCTCIV	Local Consultants/Personnel DPC	27,896
	1.3 Activity Result: A functional and inclusive digital solution supporting inter-communal coordination, information sharing, and planning processes is operationalized Activity actions: - Conduct a gender and human rights sensitive needs assessment and define the functional and technical requirements for the digital platform in consultation with central and local public authorities, IDAs, and other relevant stakeholders - Design, develop, and test the digital platform, including user-friendly functionalities that support inter-communal cooperation - Pilot the platform, deliver training and user support to gender-balanced groups of stakeholders' representatives, including from vulnerable groups, and officially launch and operationalize the digital platform		X	X	X	X	UNDP	France/ DCTCIV	Contractual Services, DPC	14,391

EXPECTED OUTPUTS <i>And baseline, indicators including annual targets</i>	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME					RESPO NSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		2026		2027				Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3				
Output 2 Local capacity to enhance inclusive and essential service delivery is strengthened due to the facilitated targeted exchange of experience with French smaller cities <i>Baseline:</i> - No structured institutional cooperation mechanism exists between Moldovan local authorities/IDAs and French local authorities. - Limited practical exchange on inter-communal governance, essential public services, PPPs, and EU funding) - 0 local authorities applying practices acquired through a structured international peer-learning programme. <i>Indicators:</i> - Number of Moldovan local authorities/IDAs, disaggregated by gender, applying knowledge and practices acquired through	2.1 Activity Result: Selected a gender balanced mix of Moldovan local authorities and a French partner institution establish a functional cooperation partnership that facilitates the exchange of knowledge, identification of priority areas for collaboration, and development of practical solutions to improve essential and inclusive public service delivery and EU fund absorption capacity Activity actions: - Identify and select participating Moldovan local authorities, including functioning Intercommunal Development Associations (IDAs), ensuring gender-balanced participation - Identify and engage a suitable French partner institution with relevant expertise in territorial governance, essential public service delivery, and EU-funded local development - Develop and endorse a Partnership Roadmap (or Joint Cooperation Plan) outlining the objectives, priority themes, exchange modalities, timeline, and expected results of the peer exchange programme			X	X		UNDP	France/ DCTCIV	Contractual Services, Local Consultants/Personnel, DPC	18,819
	2.2. Activity Result: A structured study visit is successfully implemented, enabling participating Moldovan local authorities (gender balanced representation) to acquire practical knowledge and establish institutional links Activity actions: - Develop the study visit programme in collaboration with the French partner institution - Organize and implement the study visit to France, including technical meetings, site visits, peer-to-peer exchanges, and practical demonstrations for both, women and men representatives of local public authorities and IDAs.			X			UNDP	France/ DCTCIV	Contractual Services, DPC	18,819

EXPECTED OUTPUTS <i>And baseline, indicators including annual targets</i>	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME					RESPO NSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		2026		2027				Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3				
the France–Moldova peer exchange programme. - Number of institutional cooperation mechanisms established between Moldovan and French partner institutions. <i>Targets:</i> - At least 2 local authorities/IDAs apply at least one practice or recommendation resulting from the exchange programme. - 1 formal partnership and cooperation roadmap established and operational between Moldovan and French partner institutions.	2.3. Activity Result: Relevant French good practices on inter-communal cooperation, essential public service delivery, public-private partnerships, and EU fund absorption are adapted and contextualized for practical application by Moldovan local authorities and IDAs Activity actions: - Design the workshop agenda, methodology, and working sessions in cooperation with French practitioners and Moldovan stakeholders, (ensuring their gender-balanced representation) - Organize the knowledge-transfer workshop in Moldova. Ensure gender-balanced participation of stakeholders in the knowledge-transfer workshop - Develop practical recommendations and localized solutions for improving user-centric inter-communal service delivery, inclusive strategic planning, public-private cooperation, inclusive and gender-responsive local governance, and EU funding readiness			X	X		UNDP	France/ DCTCIV	Contractual Services , Events and workshops, DPC GMS	22,583
Project Management		X	X	X	X	X		France/ DCTCIV	Project Management and Implementation costs	4,004
Levy – 1%										1,131
TOTAL										114,285

PROJECT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE/ORGANIGRAM

