

**FINAL EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF
EUROPE PROJECT “ENHANCING
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS IN THE REPUBLIC
OF MOLDOVA”**

Final report

Council of Europe

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November 2025

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Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
CNTM	National Youth Council of Moldova
DIO	Directorate of Internal Oversight (Council of Europe)
DPC	Directorate of Programme Coordination (Council of Europe)
ECSR	European Committee of Social Rights
EP	Employment Programme for 2022-2026
EQ(s)	Evaluation Question(s)
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESC	European Social Charter
EU	European Union
FG / FGD	Focus Group / Focus Group Discussion
HELP	Council of Europe Programme Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IR	Inception Report
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MER	Ministry of Education and Research
MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
NDS	National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030"
NEET	(Youth) Not in Employment, Education or Training
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan 2018-2022
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
ProDoc	Project Document
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLI	State Labour Inspectorate
SO	Specific Objectives
RPR	Recognition of Prior Learning
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Acknowledgments

Altair Asesores would like to express its gratitude to the many stakeholders who contributed their time and knowledge to this evaluation report and to the staff in the Council of Europe Headquarters and the Office in Chisinau, for their support throughout the field mission and in facilitating the data collection, as well as for sharing their comments and feedback.

Disclaimer

The present report was prepared by an external evaluator. Technical and operational support was provided by the consultancy Altair Asesores, Spain. The views expressed in this report are those of the external evaluator and do not necessarily reflect those of the Council of Europe.

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Executive Summary

1. This Final Evaluation examines the Council of Europe project *“Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova”*, a pioneering initiative implemented between December 2022 and December 2025 with financial support from the Austrian Development Agency. The project was designed to strengthen the observance of social and labour rights in line with European standards, and to expand inclusive and equitable access to vocational education and training (VET) and employment for vulnerable groups, particularly Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) youth, women and girls, and persons with disabilities. As Moldova advances along its European integration path, the project responded to a clearly articulated national need: to modernise labour-rights protection systems, reinforce institutional capacities, and make the VET sector more inclusive, attractive, and relevant.

Evaluation Object, Purpose and Users

2. The evaluation assesses performance across three core areas of work: (1) support to national authorities in promoting and protecting labour rights in line with the European Social Charter (ESC); (2) institutional strengthening of VET providers to ensure inclusiveness and gender responsiveness; and (3) facilitation of access to the labour market for vulnerable groups. The evaluation serves both accountability and learning purposes. It informs the Council of Europe, ADA, and national partners about progress made and identifies opportunities to deepen and scale up gains in future programming.

Methodology

3. The evaluation employed a mixed-methods, non-experimental design guided by an Evaluation Matrix aligned with the ToR and OECD-DAC criteria, combining extensive document review with rich qualitative inquiry. More than 50 documents, including national strategies, legal frameworks, project reports and ESC-related materials, were examined to establish the analytical foundation, while insights from 32 semi-structured interviews with 40 representatives of the CoE, MLSP, MER, SLI, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council, the National Employment Agency, VET schools, civil society organisations, and EU and UN partners provided a multi-perspective understanding of the project’s performance. Two focus group discussions with labour inspectors and representatives from eight VET institutions offered additional depth, and a field mission to Chişinău, Cahul, Orhei and Leova enabled direct observation of institutional practices and local contexts. Data were analysed using triangulation, contribution analysis, responsibility mapping and appreciative inquiry to ensure a balanced and credible assessment. While the evaluation faced some limitations, such as reduced stakeholder availability during summer months, the need to extend the data-collection period, delays linked to a prolonged budget-revision process and change in the evaluator, these did not affect the validity or robustness of the findings.

Findings

Relevance

4. The evaluation finds the project to be deeply relevant to Moldova’s social, educational, and labour-market priorities. National reforms in VET, labour inspection, employment promotion and social protection are progressing rapidly as part of Moldova’s European agenda, and the project’s objectives were closely aligned with this momentum. Ministries and partner institutions consistently described the project as arriving “at the right moment,” particularly for accelerating labour-rights reforms and supporting VET modernisation.
5. This relevance strengthened further during implementation, thanks to updated assessments such as the nationwide NEET survey, the VET graduate tracer study, and accessibility evaluations in seven VET institutions. These studies not only guided implementation but also addressed major national data gaps, making the project a key source of evidence in the fields it worked in.

Effectiveness

6. The project achieved most of its planned results and, in several areas, exceeded expectations. The most notable achievement was the ratification of eight additional ESC provisions in 2024, the first expansion in over two decades, widely viewed by stakeholders as unlikely without the project's technical and policy support. Capacity strengthening also produced significant gains, particularly within the State Labour Inspectorate, where inspectors received targeted training, internal tools were modernised, and detection and legalisation of undeclared work increased markedly.
7. In the VET sector, the creation of the NEET Network established a new collaborative platform that schools described as a "community of practice," helping them advance inclusion, modernise outreach, and build stronger links with employers. The project also introduced important data innovations: the national tracer study across 84 VET institutions led the Ministry of Education to initiate development of a graduate-tracking system, providing the first basis for monitoring VET-to-employment pathways.
8. Support for vulnerable groups, including entrepreneurship and career-development grants for students with disabilities, an employer database, and accessible information materials, was valued for its practical relevance. While broader employment effects are still emerging, the project has laid important foundations for more inclusive labour-market access.

Gender Equality and Human Rights

9. The evaluation confirms that gender equality and human rights were meaningfully integrated throughout the project. The gender-sensitive NEET survey, for example, revealed significant differences between young women and men, reshaping partners' understanding of barriers related to caregiving, affordability, stereotypes, and accessibility. VET institutions reported shifts in attitudes and noted increased enrolment of women in traditionally male-dominated fields, attributable in part to the project's communication and awareness-raising efforts.

Sustainability

10. Many project results show strong potential for sustainability. Several tools have been adopted into institutional routines, such as the HELP course, SLI inspection methodologies, ESC monitoring instruments, and the interactive VET map. The Roadmap of 75 actions, validated across ministries, provides a long-term reform trajectory. Certain elements, particularly the NEET Network and the employer database, require formal institutionalisation and consistent funding to endure. However, national ownership, especially by the MLSP, MER, SLI and VET schools, is strong, and the momentum generated by the project is likely to continue as Moldova advances its EU accession efforts.

Conclusions

11. The project made significant, credible and transformative contributions to enhancing social and labour rights and promoting inclusive VET and employment pathways. Its achievements, especially the expansion of ESC commitments, the strengthening of labour inspection, and the creation of the NEET Network, go beyond short-term results and have laid the groundwork for systemic change. While some structural constraints persist, the project's overall contribution to Moldova's reform agenda is substantial and widely recognised.

Main Recommendations

12. Pursue a phased, multi-cycle approach to reform.
13. Strengthen data systems for monitoring inclusion and employment outcomes.
14. Strengthen gender equality and inclusion mainstreaming.

15. Enhance cooperation with employers and the private sector.
16. Simplify administrative and budgetary procedures to improve efficiency.
17. Ensure adequate human resources and M&E capacity.
18. Institutionalise adaptive management and learning.
19. Strengthen communication, visibility, and advocacy.

1. Introduction

This report presents the final evaluation of the Council of Europe project *“Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova”*(VC 3153), implemented from December 2022 to December 2025 as part of the Council of Europe Action Plans for the Republic of Moldova and co-funded by the Austrian Development Agency. The project aims to strengthen the protection of employment and social rights in line with European standards and to improve the access of vulnerable groups, including NEET youth and persons with disabilities, to inclusive vocational education and training and subsequent employment. Conducted at the end of the implementation period, this evaluation assesses the project’s relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, draws lessons for future programming, and provides accountability to the Council of Europe, ADA and national partners.

1.1. Context

15. In the Republic of Moldova, enhancing the observance of social and labour rights, reforming the vocational education and training (VET) sector, facilitating the labour market access of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), and increasing the inclusion of vulnerable groups in education and employment have remained key national concerns over recent years. These needs continue to be highly relevant and are reflected in both national and European strategic priorities.
16. Key reference frameworks include the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021–2024 and its successor 2025–2028, as well as the National Human Rights Programme and Action Plan 2024–2027, the National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”, the Employment Programme 2022–2026, the Education Development Strategy “Education 2030”, the Youth Sector Development Strategy, and the Programmes for Supporting the Roma Population 2022–2025). Complementary frameworks such as the Strategy and National Programme for Civil Society Development 2024–2027, the EU–Republic of Moldova Association Agreement, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also reinforce the commitment to promoting inclusive growth, human rights, and decent work opportunities.
17. Since ratifying the European Social Charter (ESC) in 2001, the Republic of Moldova has accepted the minimum required 63 out of 98 provisions as of 2022. Despite this formal commitment, progress towards the full implementation of the Charter has remained limited. As confirmed by document review, the institutional capacity to prepare national implementation reports was still weak, awareness of additional ESC provisions among key national actors remains low, and the number of accepted provisions has not increased since ratification¹. Strengthening national mechanisms for the monitoring and reporting on social rights thus continues to be an area requiring sustained support.
18. In the education and training sector, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) has pursued a series of VET reforms aimed at improving the quality and relevance of technical and vocational education, aligning educational offers with labour market needs, and enhancing the employability of graduates². The Education Strategy 2030 identifies persistent gaps in the connection between education, particularly VET, and the evolving demands of employers. Efforts to improve curricula, strengthen school–business partnerships, and support teacher professionalisation remain essential for achieving a modern and inclusive VET system.

¹ According to Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021–2024, Agreement between the Council of Europe and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) on the funding of the project “Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova” – Appendix I: Project Document, Fourth Report on the Non-Accepted Provisions of the European Social Charter, Republic of Moldova.

² Available at <https://ipt.mec.gov.md/>

19. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) has also identified the development of technical and vocational education and training as a priority in its cooperation with the Republic of Moldova. Under the ADA Framework Strategy, the Austrian Development Cooperation focuses on:
- ensuring equal and improved access of youth and adults, including vulnerable groups, to (re)qualification opportunities relevant to the labour market;
 - fostering greater employability of current and future jobseekers, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and
 - promoting higher quality and inclusiveness in VET, lifelong learning (LLL), and recognition of prior learning³.
20. Together, these strategic directions form a coherent framework for enhancing the observance of social rights, strengthening institutional capacities, and improving access to education and decent work—objectives at the core of the project under evaluation.

1.2. Object of the evaluation

21. The Project “Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova” represents the first comprehensive technical assistance initiative of the Council of Europe in the field of social and labour rights in the country. The project was implemented under the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021–2024 and, starting from January 2025, continues under the Council of Europe Action Plan for 2025–2028. Both Action Plans outline support for improving the implementation of the European Social Charter (ESC) and strengthening social rights in general. They also aim to promote enhanced capacities of national authorities to uphold social and labour rights and call for actions to increase the attractiveness of VET, particularly for persons from vulnerable groups, while facilitating their participation in the labour market.
22. The overall objective is: “Observance of social and labour rights is enhanced in line with international standards, and people from vulnerable groups have facilitated access to vocational education and training and subsequent employment.”. To achieve this goal, the project aims to apply a multi-level approach to strengthening social rights and employability, combining policy dialogue, capacity development, institutional strengthening, and pilot interventions at the local level. In support of the overall objective, three specific objectives (outcomes) were defined:
- SO1:** Government officials, members of Parliament and target groups (labour inspectors, trade union representatives, staff from the Ombudsperson Institution and the Equality Council, legal professionals, civil society representatives and others) promote and protect social and employment rights, particularly the employment rights of people from vulnerable groups, in line with European standards.
 - SO2:** VET institutions are more inclusive and gender-sensitive, and better able to identify and attract girls and boys/women and men from vulnerable groups and NEET youth.
 - SO3:** Access to the labour market for vulnerable groups in the VET system is further facilitated.
23. These outcomes are operationalised through a set of expected results (outputs) corresponding to each component:
- Under **SO1**, the capacities of government officials and stakeholders to promote and protect social and employment rights are strengthened in line with European standards.
 - Under **SO2**, VET institutions become more inclusive, gender-sensitive, and capable of identifying and attracting young women and men, including those from vulnerable groups and NEET categories.

³ Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs - *Framework Strategy of the Austrian Development Cooperation with the EU Eastern Partner Countries: The Republic of Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, 2021 and 2024*, Vienna, November 2024.

- Under **SO3**, the linkages between VET and the labour market are enhanced, facilitating smoother transition and employment opportunities for vulnerable groups.
24. The project is implemented in close cooperation with key national partners and beneficiaries, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), the Parliamentary Commission on Social Protection, Health and Family, the State Labour Inspectorate, the National Agency for Employment, the National Trade Union, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council, and eight participating VET institutions: Professional School No. 2 (Cahul), Professional School (Leova), Professional School (Rîșcani), Professional School (Comrat), Professional School No. 11 (Chișinău), Professional School (Orhei), Centre of Excellence in Light Industry (Chișinău) and College “Mihai Eminescu” (Soroca).
 25. The target groups of the project encompass a wide range of institutional and community stakeholders: staff of MLSP and MER, labour inspectors, judges and lawyers, staff of the Ombudsperson Institution and the Equality Council, trade union and civil society representatives, management, teachers, and students of VET institutions, as well as people from vulnerable groups, notably persons with disabilities and NEET youth.
 26. The project has a total implementation period from 15 December 2022 to 31 December 2025. It is co-funded by ADA and the Council of Europe, with a total budget of EUR 1,000,000, of which 90% is financed by ADA and 10% by the Council of Europe (as in-cash contribution). In November 2024, a budget revision request was submitted, proposing an increase of EUR 39,500 to be covered by the Council of Europe for local salary adjustments; which was approved in June 2025.

1.3. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

27. The **purpose of this evaluation**, as stated in the Terms of Reference (ToR), is to assess the progress made towards achieving the project’s intended results and to draw lessons learned for future interventions. The evaluation seeks both to ensure accountability for the use of resources and results achieved and to generate actionable insights for the design and implementation of subsequent programmes in the field of social and labour rights and inclusive vocational education. The evaluation report presents evidence-based findings, identifies lessons learned, and formulates conclusions and recommendations to support institutional learning and performance improvement within the Council of Europe and its partners.
28. The evaluation process was conducted in line with [the Council of Europe Evaluation Policy](#), [the Council of Europe Evaluation Guidelines](#), and the [Council of Europe Code of Conduct for Evaluation](#). It also took into account other relevant institutional and thematic frameworks, notably the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024–2029 and the Council of Europe Human Rights Approach – Practical Guide for Co-operation Projects, which emphasise gender equality, human rights, and inclusiveness as cross-cutting principles in all co-operation activities.
29. According to the ToR, the primary users of this evaluation are: a) the Department of Social Rights of the Council of Europe (as project implementer); b) the Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC) of the Council of Europe, and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), as co-funding partner. The secondary users include national partner institutions, project beneficiaries, and other relevant stakeholders involved in or benefiting from project activities.
30. The evaluation applied three main OECD-DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, and Sustainability)⁴ and was guided by the following specific objectives outlined in the ToR:

⁴ OECD Development Assistance Committee, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use (OECD 2019). Available at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

- to assess the overall progress and results achieved by the project against its planned objectives and outcomes;
 - to evaluate whether the project was implemented as planned, identifying challenges encountered and analysing the adequacy of measures taken to address them;
 - to generate recommendations for future programming, particularly in relation to enhancing the observance of social and employment rights and improving access of vulnerable groups to vocational education and training and employment opportunities;
 - to assess the extent to which gender equality and human rights considerations have been effectively mainstreamed throughout the project cycle.
31. The scope of the evaluation covers all activities implemented by the Council of Europe within the framework of the project *“Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova”* from its inception on 15 December 2022 up to 15 October 2025. The project’s total implementation period extends to 31 December 2025, with a number of activities still ongoing at the time of the evaluation. The evaluation assignment itself was carried out between 24 April and 14 November 2025.
32. In terms of geographical coverage, the evaluation encompasses both national-level interventions and local-level activities implemented in Chişinău and in six partner localities hosting participating VET institutions (Cahul, Leova, Comrat, Soroca, Rîșcani, and Orhei).

1.4. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

33. The evaluation applied a **non-experimental design** and a **mixed-methods approach**, combining qualitative and quantitative evidence to answer the Evaluation Questions (EQs). This approach ensured both depth of analysis and triangulation across different sources and perspectives, in line with the principles of validity, reliability, and utility outlined in the **Council of Europe Evaluation Policy and Guidelines**.
34. The evaluation was guided by an **Evaluation Matrix**, which established the logical sequence for addressing the evaluation criteria and questions, defined corresponding sub-questions and indicators, and linked them to data sources and collection tools. The matrix served as the central reference framework for data collection, analysis, and reporting (see **Annex IX**). The evaluation questions are based on the ToR and one additional question on the project design was added on the stage of the development of the evaluation design,

Evaluation questions:

RELEVANCE
EQ1. To what extent does the project meet the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries as defined in the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024, the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028, National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”, the Employment Programme for 2022-2026, the Development Strategy “Education 2030”, the Youth Sector Development Strategy?
EQ2: How appropriate and coherent was the project design?
EFFECTIVENESS
EQ3. To what extent did the project contribute to the expected outcomes of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024?
EQ4. To what extent has the project achieved its expected results? What have been the reasons and influencing factors for the achievement or lack thereof?
EQ5. To what extent were gender-specific barriers to the realisation of labour rights identified and addressed in project implementation?
SUSTAINABILITY
EQ6. To what extent are the outcomes of the project likely to continue producing effects after its end?
EQ7. What are the factors that could hamper the sustainability of the achieved results?

Data Collection and Analysis Methods:

35. The evaluation combined several complementary methods to ensure data triangulation and credibility of findings.
36. **Desk Review:** A comprehensive **desk review** was carried out throughout the evaluation process, beginning in the inception phase. Over **50 documents** were analysed, including national legislation, strategic frameworks, project documents project document, Logframe, progress reports, communication materials), and relevant EU and Council of Europe policy papers. The full list of reviewed documents is presented in **Annex I**.
37. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews represented the core qualitative data collection method. Respondents were selected based on their **strategic or operational involvement** in the project. The interviews aimed to collect evidence on project relevance, design, effectiveness, implementation processes, outcomes, and sustainability, and were conducted both **in person** (during a one-week field mission) and **online**.
38. Two tailored interview guides were used:
 - one for **Council of Europe project staff** (Strasbourg and Chişinău);
 - another for **project partners and beneficiaries**.
39. In total, 32 interviews were conducted, including 5 with Council of Europe staff and 27 with project partners, beneficiaries, donors, and other stakeholders, involving 40 participants overall (some participated in multiple interviews). Five interviews were held with VET institutions—one online and four on-site (Chişinău, Orhei, Leova, and Cahul). A full list of interviews is provided in Annex II.
40. **Institutions consulted** included:
 - **Public authorities and national institutions:** Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), Ministry of Education and Research (MER), State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), National Agency for Employment, Ombudsperson Institution, Equality Council, National Institute of Justice, and the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR);
 - **Civil society and implementing partners:** Eco-Răzeni Association, Partnership for Development Centre, “Millenium” Training and Development Institute, National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM);
 - **Educational institutions:** Centre of Excellence in Light Industry (Chişinău), Professional School No. 11 (Chişinău), Professional School (Orhei), Professional School (Leova), Professional School No. 2 (Cahul), and Theoretical Lyceum for Visually Impaired Children;
 - **Development partners and donors:** Austrian Development Agency (ADA), Prime Minister’s Office, Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, and UNFPA.
41. **Focus Groups (FGDs):** Two **online focus group discussions** were organised with tailored agendas according to participant profiles and discussion themes:
 - **FGD1:** Representatives of the State Labour Inspectorate (5 participants);
 - **FGD2:** Representatives of eight VET institutions, including project coordinators and teachers (12 participants).

The focus groups explored collective experiences, perceptions of outcomes, and sustainability perspectives, complementing individual interview findings.

Analytical Methods:

42. The evaluation employed several analytical techniques:
 - **Triangulation of data** from multiple sources and methods to ensure consistency and validity of findings;

- **Responsibility assignment mapping**, to analyse institutional roles and interdependencies in project implementation;
- **Contribution analysis**, to understand causal pathways and the extent to which observed changes can be attributed to the project's interventions, while considering external influences;
- **Appreciative inquiry approach**, to identify success factors and positive practices through reflective dialogue with stakeholders, aiming to capture enablers of effective change and replication potential.

Evaluation Phases and Milestones

43. The evaluation followed a three-phase participatory approach:

1. **Inception Phase (24 April – 19 May 2025):**

- Development of the evaluation design, including the Evaluation Matrix and data collection tools;
- Initial consultations with key stakeholders (MLSP, MER, Council of Europe staff);
- Identification of relevant documents and stakeholders;
- Preparation and approval of the **Inception Report**.

2. **Data Collection and Analysis Phase (2 July – 30 October 2025):**

- Desk analysis of project and policy documents;
- Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with partners, beneficiaries, and target groups;
- Field mission (five days) to Chişinău, Cahul, Orhei, and Leova;
- Preliminary analysis and presentation of **initial findings**.

3. **Synthesis Phase (15 September – 14 November 2025):**

- Final analysis of qualitative and quantitative data;
- Development of the **Draft Evaluation Report**, integration of feedback, and submission of the **Final Evaluation Report**.

1.5. **Limitations / Difficulties encountered**

44. Overall, the evaluation did not face major constraints that compromised data quality or analytical robustness. However, three minor limitations were noted:

- **Time constraints:** The initially planned data collection period proved insufficient given the large number of stakeholders and institutions involved. The data collection phase was therefore extended, with corresponding adjustments to subsequent deadlines for analysis and reporting. These changes were discussed and agreed with the project team.
- **Stakeholder availability:** The evaluation period coincided with the summer holiday season and the school vacation period, which affected the availability of some participants for in-person meetings. To mitigate this, additional **online interviews** were organised to ensure comprehensive coverage.
- **Change in the evaluator:** Because data collection required knowledge of Romanian and familiarity with the Moldovan institutional context, it was conducted by one evaluator, while another evaluator was responsible for leading the analysis and preparing the final report. It caused some delays with the report-drafting phase.

45. Despite these challenges, the combination of in-person and remote methods ensured a robust and inclusive evidence base, enabling the evaluation to fully address all planned Evaluation Questions.

2. **Findings**

This section presents findings in response to the evaluation questions for each evaluation criterion:

2.1. Relevance

EQ1. *To what extent does the project meet the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries as defined in the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024, the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028, National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", the Employment Programme for 2022-2026, the Development Strategy "Education 2030", the Youth Sector Development Strategy?*

Alignment with national priorities on protection and promotion of social rights

46. The project's overall objective "to enhance the observance of social labour rights in line with international standards and to facilitate access of persons from vulnerable groups to vocational education and training and subsequent employment" is **closely aligned with Moldova's core policy frameworks and international commitments**. First, it operationalises Chapter 4 of the **EU-Republic of Moldova Association Agreement**, which promotes cooperation in employment policy, social dialogue, social protection, inclusion, and equal opportunities, contributing to "the promotion of more and better jobs, poverty reduction, enhanced social cohesion and improved quality of life". The project focused on providing legal support for the alignment of national legislation with the provisions of such EU instruments as Commission Regulation (EU) No 349/2011 on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, as regards statistics on accidents at work and Council Recommendation of 18 February 2003 concerning the improvement of the protection of the health and safety at work of self-employed workers. The project also builds on the **National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) 2018-2022**, which prioritises rights to work, education, and social protection for people with disabilities and Roma minorities. Through support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), the Ombudsperson Institution, and the Equality Council, the project directly reinforces institutional mechanisms to monitor these rights.

Alignment with national and sectoral strategies for VET development

47. The project is fully consistent with the **Development Strategy "Education 2030"**⁵ and the **National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030"**⁶, which both emphasise the need to modernise vocational education and ensure inclusive access to quality training and lifelong learning. These national strategies identify several weaknesses, in particular insufficient connection between education and labour market requirements, limited inclusion for students with disabilities, and declining enrolment, which the project explicitly targets.
48. The project supports the VET system by **addressing the priorities of the Education Strategy 2030** through several key outputs: *Output 2.1* establishes a "National Network for NEET Integration" to enhance gender-responsive mechanisms for engaging NEET individuals, particularly women and girls. *Output 2.4* focuses on enhancing the capacities of teachers and support services for students with special needs, emphasizing inclusive education through counselling and training. *Output 3.1* aims to strengthen the capacities of VET management and staff, alongside representatives from civil society organizations and trade unions, to assist vulnerable student groups in a gender-sensitive manner for

⁵ According to the Education Strategy 2030, connecting technical and higher vocational education to the requirements and needs of the labour market, through synchronized demand and supply, is a key priority, as formulated under General Objective 1: *Connecting education to the requirements and needs of the labour market from the perspective of sustainable development, by restructuring the human capital development mechanisms*. In this regard, the Strategy propose a series of measures, and expected results, so that by 2030, the education system will be better aligned with labour market needs and contribute more effectively to employment, especially among youth and graduates: *the insertion on the labour market of graduates from technical vocational and higher education to increase by at least 10%; the rate of NEETs aged 15-29 will be reduced to 20%; the share of students in secondary technical vocational education included in dual education programmes will increase to 60%; increase to 90% the share of graduates from technical vocational and higher education who have relevant skills for employment, as well as entrepreneurial, economic and financial skills*.

⁶ European Moldova Strategy 2030 mentions that in the Republic of Moldova, the share of young people not enrolled in education, not employed nor in vocational training (NEETs) is 26.4 %, which exceeds the European average twofold.

labour market integration. Additionally, *Output 3.2* aims to increase knowledge of soft skills and labour rights among these students, while *Output 3.3* promotes employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups under Article 34(4) of Law No. 60, aimed at social integration.

49. The project **aligns with the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030" (NDS)** by focusing on three specific objectives and outcomes: strengthening the capacity of local, central, and CSOs representatives to promote and protect social and employment rights; providing support to VET institutions to increase access to VET for young people from vulnerable groups and those who are NEET; and facilitating access to the labour market for vulnerable groups, including VET graduates.
50. The 2030 NDS Development Vision is focused on improving quality of life in line with the European aspirations set out in the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union. This vision will be based on several key elements, including the creation of decent jobs and the enhancement of skills and productivity; socioeconomic inclusion, whereby the economic system must provide opportunities for all individuals, including those from vulnerable groups; and an education and research system that is relevant, inclusive, and of high quality.
51. The project's objectives and outcomes are directly aligned with two general objectives of the NDS: increasing income from sustainable sources and mitigating inequalities and guaranteeing appropriate and quality education for all throughout life. These objectives include achieving a level of employment similar to the average of Central and Eastern European countries, protecting rights at work, fostering fair pay for work, and promoting employment among young people and individuals from vulnerable groups.
52. The project also addresses the priorities set out in the NDS, such as developing and implementing the national concept of educating the population in the field of human rights and equal opportunities, supporting young people from the NEET group in professional affirmation by stimulating their employment, return to the education and training system, revising the initial and continuous training of teachers, promoting partnerships between educational institutions and enterprises for practical training of teachers, diversifying the public and private educational offer by integrating skills needs forecasting, developing lifelong learning and digital inclusion programmes, and connecting the national normative framework in the field of labour inspection to the provisions of the International Labour Organization conventions and strengthening the institutional capacities of the State Labour Inspectorate, including in terms of combating undeclared work.

Alignment with youth, employment and labour market strategies

53. The project aligns with the general objective of the **Employment Programme for 2022–2026** which is *"to increase labour force participation and boost productive employment and decent work for all"*. Enhancing access to the labour market and thus increasing labour force participation, including for people from vulnerable groups as well as ensuring decent work for all, are key focus areas of the project, thus ensuring the alignment with these priorities are embedded in the project's overall goal.
54. The project aims to address key needs outlined by the Employment Programme (EP) through three specific objectives. The first EP objective focuses on increasing the participation and employment rates of women aged 25-34 from 44% and 43.2% in 2021 to 48% and 47.2%, respectively, by 2026, promoting equal access to the labour market for both genders. The second EP objective seeks to reduce informal employment from 22.9% in 2021 to 19% in 2026, which will be supported by reorganizing the State Labour Inspectorate to improve compliance with labour and social rights as stated in the European Social Charter. Finally, the third EP objective is to raise the employment rate of persons with disabilities from 13.5% to 17.5% by 2026, including initiatives such as feasibility studies on employment access, infrastructure assessments in VET schools, and workshops aimed at social integration and promoting employment for vulnerable groups.

55. In its turn, the **Youth Sector Development Strategy** focuses on achieving sustainable development by enhancing young people's competencies for better access to the labour market and improving opportunities for both formal and non-formal education. It emphasizes the development of skills that promote human rights, gender equality, and equal opportunities. This strategy aligns with the Association Agreement of the Republic of Moldova and aims to contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including: SDG 4.4, which seeks to significantly increase the number of youth and adults equipped with relevant employment skills by 2030; SDG 4.7, which ensures all learners acquire necessary knowledge for sustainable development, including environmental protection and cultural diversity; SDG 4.3.1, which aims to boost participation rates in education and training across genders; and SDG 5.5, which advocates for full participation of women and girls in leadership roles. The project's objectives align closely with these strategic priorities, focusing on training for labour market access, integrating gender equality throughout its activities, expanding educational access for youth, and promoting equal opportunities.

Alignment with the Council of Europe's priorities

56. Social rights represent a highly relevant and timely topic, in which the Council of Europe plays a prominent and credible role. The protection and promotion of social rights is among the priorities set in the **Council of Europe Moldova Action Plans for 2021-2024 and 2025-2028**.
57. At the time the project was planned, there was a noticeable shift in the Council of Europe's cooperation activities, with fewer initiatives specifically addressing labour social rights.
58. The project design aligns with Council of Europe Action Plan 2021-2024 in terms of interventions in the field of social rights, specifically aiming to increase the awareness and understanding of the European Social Charter (ESC) as well as to improve the quality of reporting on the implementation of the ESC.
59. The project design highly aligns with the priorities of the Council of Europe Action Plan 2025-2028, both in terms of intervention in the (labour) social rights and support to VET.

Table 1: Expected Outcomes, Council of Europe Action Plans 2021-2024 and 2025-2028

ACTION PLAN 2021-2024 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR 2021 TO 2024	ACTION PLAN 2025-2028 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR 2025 TO 2028
ENSURING SOCIAL RIGHTS Expected outcomes	Effective implementation of the European Social Charter Expected outcomes
- The national authorities have the capacity to prepare high-quality national reports on the implementation of the ESC; - CSOs have the capacity to submit alternative reports on the implementation of the ESC; - Decision makers have increased awareness of additional ESC provisions and the collective complaints procedure, and additional ESC provisions are accepted; - Targeted professionals have a better understanding of the European Committee of Social Rights' case law and are capable of applying it in practice.	- Harmonised national legislation, policies and practices, including the Labour Code, with the provisions of the European Social Charter; - Strengthened capacity of State and non-state stakeholders, including civil society, to pursue the protection of social rights, particularly the employment rights of persons from vulnerable groups, and address the challenges to social cohesion; - Enhanced capacity of relevant social protection providers to ensure efficient delivery of social services; - Enhanced capacity of State and non-state stakeholders to develop and implement labour market programmes in order to increase formal job creation and the availability of skilled labour. - Improved access to education and employment for all, including persons from vulnerable groups; - Strengthened capacity of VET institutions to facilitate access to VET and subsequent employment to persons from vulnerable groups, including young people not in employment, education or training, and persons with disabilities; - Increased awareness of State and non-state stakeholders, including civil society, of the European Social Charter system, including the

ACTION PLAN 2021-2024 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR 2021 TO 2024	ACTION PLAN 2025-2028 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR 2025 TO 2028
ENSURING SOCIAL RIGHTS Expected outcomes	Effective implementation of the European Social Charter Expected outcomes
	acceptance of the additional provisions of the European Social Charter and the collective complaints mechanism; Improved ECSR monitoring process as a result of better quality of national reports prepared by the national authorities.
MAIN NATIONAL PARTNERS	MAIN NATIONAL PARTNERS
Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection; Parliamentary Committee on Social Security Health Care and Family; State Chancellery; CSOs.	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Education and Research, Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family, State Labour Inspectorate, National Agency for Employment, National Trade Union Confederation, National Agency for Employment, Office of the People's Advocate, Equality Council, National Institute of Justice, civil society organisations (CSOs).

Source: Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024 and Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028

60. This project served as a **pilot initiative for the Council of Europe in the field of labour-related social rights and VET**. It was also the first Council of Europe project on labour social rights in the Republic of Moldova. The project was considered innovative, both in terms of content and approach, and directly contributed to expanding the Council of Europe's portfolio by integrating actions in the VET field.

Needs assessment and responsiveness to beneficiaries' priorities

61. The project was grounded in a **systematic and continuously updated assessment of beneficiaries' needs**, beginning with pre-design diagnostics and refined through targeted studies and institutional reviews during implementation.
62. Prior to design, the Council of Europe conducted two key assessments: a 2020 study on social rights and a 2021 fact-finding mission on vocational education and training (VET). The first highlighted the need for comprehensive reforms in employment, training, labour rights, and support for vulnerable groups. The second identified challenges in VET access, inclusiveness, employability, and attractiveness, evidenced by a steady decline in student enrolment. Together, these studies established the project's strategic direction and ensured its alignment with real sectoral needs.
63. Following launch, continuous consultations with stakeholders (via the Project Steering Committee, coordination meetings, expert discussions, and workshops) kept the project responsive and relevant. This flexibility allowed adjustments based on partner requests and emerging evidence.
64. During implementation, additional research deepened understanding of specific target groups. A national survey of 857 NEET youth informed a 2025 integration roadmap; a tracer study of 1,485 VET graduates across 84 institutions exposed data gaps and led to the development of software for tracking professional pathways of VET graduates. As a result of the review on tracking the professional path, the Ministry of Education decided to develop a software and the project in consultation with the Ministry proceeded with the development of the Business Requirements document for the software. Further assessments of VET infrastructure and employer mapping supported decisions on accessibility and labour market inclusion.
65. The project closely aligned with the reform agendas of both the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) and the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), particularly related to VET reform. Support to the State Labour Inspectorate expanded significantly, meeting the MLSP's urgent reform needs. As noted by one official, *"The Council of Europe's intervention came at the right moment- just when the SLI was being reformed and urgently needed capacity and guidance."*

EQ2: How appropriate and coherent was the project design?

66. The **design of the project reflected the Council of Europe's multi-dimensional approach**, combining legal standard-setting, institutional capacity development, and field-level implementation to address social rights from both a normative and a practical perspective.
67. The project's logframe and monitoring framework embed gender-specific indicators targeting women, NEETs, and persons with disabilities. For instance, *OP1.1.1: Number of recommendations provided on employment rights of vulnerable groups, including recommendations addressing gender issues specifically*, *OP1.3.1: Number of gender-specific recommendations on how to improve labour inspectorate's mandate*, *OC2.1: Percentage of NEET youth enrolled in the VET system*, *OC2.2: Number of gender responsive Action Plans developed for participating VET institutions, for attracting persons from vulnerable groups and NEET youth*, *OC2.4: Percent of Roma girls/women graduated from partner VET institutions in 2025 compared to 2021*. Overall, approximately 61% of all direct participants were women, exceeding the 50% target.
68. Despite these design strengths, **certain weaknesses were apparent in the project's results framework and monitoring design**. While the logical structure was sound, the **feasibility of measuring progress towards some higher-level outcomes was overestimated**. Several impact and outcome indicators, such as *the number of vulnerable graduates from VET institutions (IM2)*, *their employment rate (IM3)*, and *the share of employees from vulnerable groups in VET-related sectors (OC3.1)* were conceptually strong but relied on national data systems that either lacked disaggregation by vulnerability status or were not yet operational. Similarly, one of the project's main impact indicators, *the number of European Committee of Social Rights' conclusions of conformity for the Republic of Moldova within the Labour Rights thematic group (IM1)*, was relevant and clearly defined, but its verification depended on the reporting and evaluation cycles of the European Committee of Social Rights, which extend beyond the project's timeframe⁷. As a result, while this indicator is excellent for long-term monitoring of systemic change, it offers limited utility for end-of-project assessment.
69. **The project's reliance on external data systems introduced practical challenges for monitoring**. National Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and labour market tracking mechanisms did not provide the level of detail required to monitor vulnerable groups. The project team anticipated this limitation and included activities to develop a graduate-tracking methodology and prepare terms of reference for software solutions. However, these efforts are expected to materialize late in the project cycle, leaving limited time to generate measurable outcome data before closure. Moreover, the **absence of baseline data**, particularly in VET and employment, required significant "groundwork" during early implementation. This foundational phase (mapping, data collection, and capacity building) was essential to ensure later interventions were meaningful and sustainable.
70. Beyond this, **the project's scope was somewhat overambitious given the long-term, systemic nature of the reforms it sought to initiate**. The project combined legislative, institutional, and grassroots education reforms within a short implementation timeframe (just 3 years with 6 months of inception period) and limited budget (approximately EUR1mIn).

2.2. Effectiveness

EQ3. To what extent did the project contribute to the expected outcomes of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024?

⁷ 2024 reports will yield conclusions only in 2026, i.e., after project close, making it a weak end-line indicator for this project's timeframe.

Extent to which the project contributed to the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova

71. Under Outcome 1, the project strengthened legal and institutional frameworks for labour and social rights. In 2024, Moldovan authorities ratified eight additional ESC provisions following targeted awareness and technical support activities, thus advancing the Action Plan's goal of deepened ESC commitments. Overall, Outcome 1 indicators on training, ESC acceptance, and reporting outputs directly populate Action Plan metrics on compliance with ESC standards and improved reporting performance. The Ministry of Labor's increased participation in the Council of Europe's Governmental Committee and the election of Moldova's representative to the Bureau signify an important step toward greater national visibility and policy ownership at the European level. Together with improved national reporting mechanisms and the involvement of civil society in submitting alternative reports, these developments indicate that the project has succeeded in embedding social rights into Moldova's institutional landscape.
72. The Action Plan also calls for stronger labour-governance institutions, notably the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI). The project provided the SLI with a *Code of Conduct*, *Visual Identity Manual*, and risk-based inspection tools; 58 inspectors were trained on ESC, undeclared work, integrity, and employer communication.
73. On inclusion and equal access, corresponding to the Action Plan's equality and vulnerability focus, Outcomes 2 and 3 fostered practical mechanisms for participation and employability. The project established a *NEET Network* of eight VET institutions with governance frameworks and regular coordination.
74. All these project's achievements contribute to the Action Plan's indicators on inclusive, gender-responsive education and improved labour-market integration for vulnerable populations.

EQ4. *To what extent has the project achieved its expected results? What have been the reasons and influencing factors for the achievement or lack thereof?*

Extent of achievement of project outcomes and outputs

Outcome 1 "Enhanced observance of social and labour rights in line with international standards"

75. **Outcome 1 is largely achieved.** The project supported the ratification of eight additional provisions of the Revised European Social Charter in July 2024, raising Moldova's accepted provisions from 63 to 71. This is an important legislative milestone that directly contributes to the country's ESC compliance and stands as the project's most significant achievement. This achievement provides Moldova with a legal foundation for continuous policy reform, particularly in employment, labour rights, and social inclusion. Under national law, international treaties take precedence, compelling the revision of national legislation to ensure compliance with international norms. The ratification also strengthens Moldova's alignment with EU *acquis* under Chapter 19 (Employment and Social Policy), reinforcing the country's EU accession agenda. Stakeholders across ministries consistently acknowledged that without the CoE's methodological guidance, legal expertise, and diplomatic facilitation, ratification would likely have been postponed. This represented a historic policy milestone, i.e., the first expansion of Moldova's commitments under the Charter since its original ratification in 2001. The newly accepted provisions include the pivotal Article 10 on Vocational Training, directly linked to the project's policy dialogue with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and Ministry of Education and Research. The ratifications were secured through project-facilitated round tables, interministerial workshops, and

technical support to align national frameworks with European standards. The Ministry initially showed reluctance due to perceived fiscal implications. Following expert consultations and legal analysis organized by the project, the national authorities concluded that most provisions could be implemented without significant additional cost enabling approval. As one senior official noted: *“The Council of Europe ensured continuity and credibility. We could rely on its expertise to explain what ratification truly means, beyond political rhetoric.”*

76. The project activities directly improved complaints handling and monitoring mechanisms of Ombudsperson Institution. After project-supported training on social rights and complaint resolution, the Ombudsperson Institution used new analytical frameworks to prepare and submit a Constitutional Court petition regarding pension rights for disabled prisoners. The petition argued for continued state support during incarceration, a complex human rights issue previously stagnant. The Constitutional Court ruled positively, confirming the right to social benefits for disabled detainees. This case is emblematic of how capacity-building and legal empowerment can translate into tangible social rights enforcement. *“The project’s training gave us the insight to look at the case from a different angle and use Charter provisions as a legal argument.”*
77. The Council of Europe proved to be a crucial partner for the MLSP and SLI (in the absence of available support from other donors) in enabling the reform process, offering both training for labour inspectors and support in revising internal procedures and developing essential methodologies needed to fulfil their mandate.
78. The Council of Europe was one of the contributors who played a significant role in strengthening SLI’s capacity to detect undeclared work. *“CoE’s major contribution was the rapid and large-scale training of newly recruited labour inspectors. Thanks to the support of the Council of Europe, we were able to very quickly onboard these new inspectors to provide critical training on labour law, OSH, and all the different areas. Without this project, the reform might not have succeeded - it came at a critical moment.”* The number of undeclared work cases identified rose sharply *from around 100 before the reform to over 6,000 between 2023 and 2025 with approximately 80% of the detected workers subsequently legalized.* This progress was accompanied by an estimated *8% increase in social tax contributions*, providing clear evidence of fiscal impact and improved compliance. Inspectors also reported greater confidence, professionalism, and communication efficiency following the HELP and customised programmes designed to meet their specific needs.
79. Before the project began, the Labour Inspectorate struggled with low visibility and a poor public image, often perceived by stakeholders as corrupt, punitive, or ineffective. However, through a combination of awareness campaigns, media engagement, and improved communication efforts, the Inspectorate gradually enhanced its public profile, becoming more visible, credible, and trusted among employers, workers, and social partners. As one senior official noted, *“Our inspectors are more confident, our controls are better prepared, and we now have clarity in what integrity means.”* Another official stated, *“Initially, there was a lot of suspicion and fear among businesses that a stronger inspectorate would limit their freedom. But we had zero complaints on integrity, and no public scandals, even as the number of inspections increased. It shows the communication with businesses was constructive”.*
80. All planned outputs under this outcome were completed or ongoing. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment on Social and Labour Rights (2023) was finalised and discussed with stakeholders, identifying gaps and formulating recommendations. A roadmap with 75 actions to implement those recommendations was developed in 2024. The Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council were trained and equipped with a Guide on Monitoring Labour Rights and a Manual for ESC reporting, enhancing their oversight role. The HELP course “Labour Rights as Human Rights” was launched with

46 participants from the judiciary, legal aid, and prosecution, institutionalising ESC knowledge in the justice sector.

Outcome 2 “Increased inclusiveness and gender-responsiveness of VET institutions

81. **Outcome 2** has been **largely achieved** with several systemic advances. A major result contributing to the effort to increase the access to and attractiveness of VET institutions for vulnerable groups and NEET youth was the establishment of the NEET Network, which brought together eight VET institutions from across the country, with governing documents, an action plan, and a joint Memorandum of Cooperation. Additionally, communication plans were developed for each of the eight selected schools, and training sessions were provided for both teachers and students to strengthen their communication skills in promoting educational offers during admission campaigns, as well as to improve the quality of the VET institutions’ websites. One of the VET school representatives underlined: *“We now understand how to make our schools visible. The campaign improved how we talk to youth.”* The establishment of the NEET Network was well received by the participating VET schools and was regarded as a valuable form of support. *“At the beginning, the concept of a “NEET Network” was not entirely clear to us. The expectation was that it would function as a technical alliance of VET schools or Centers of Excellence. Over time, however, we started to recognize its broader vision: a community-based mechanism linking education, social support, and youth engagement structures at the local and national levels”.*
82. Despite being only one year old, it has already produced significant positive effects. It enhanced communication between schools, promoted peer exchange, and increased awareness of inclusive education and NEET issues. Some schools have begun integrating NEET inclusion activities into their regular operations. The network has served as a vehicle for cooperation in other project activities, such as the cascade training on inclusive education, communication skills, and employment of people with disabilities. The interviews with VET schools representatives indicated that the participation in network activities helped shift attitudes and perceptions among school directors and staff. While initially many viewed inclusion as an externally imposed priority, they have begun to recognize its strategic value.
83. At the same time, VET schools face numerous and diverse challenges ranging from the need to improve infrastructure and material resources to curriculum adaptation and the modernisation of teaching and learning processes. Ensuring a sufficient number of students remains a key concern for VET institutions, given that the VET system in Republic of Moldova is funded on a per-student basis.
84. However, at this stage, the effectiveness of the Network in attracting NEET youth and individuals from vulnerable groups remains relatively moderate. For example, *Comrat School* reported growth in NEET student enrolment (from 12 to 16 between 2023 and 2025). *Center of Excellence in Light Industry (Chisinau)* reported rise in NEET participation from 52% to 60% over the last two years. Several factors contribute to this, one of which is the current size of the Network, which is small compared to the overall number of institutions within the VET system in the Republic of Moldova - a total of 81 institutions, including 32 vocational schools, 14 centres of excellence, and 35 colleges. In this context, expanding the Network and strengthening its outreach and coordination capacity could significantly enhance its potential to serve as a driver for inclusive education and targeted engagement of NEET youth across the VET system.
85. Other important outputs achieved by the project under this outcome include the gender-sensitive NEET needs assessment survey which generated the first national evidence base on NEET youth challenges and was shared with policymakers for follow-up. Training for 47 VET staff and students

improved communication and outreach for inclusive integration into the VET system, and accessibility assessments for seven schools guided the MER in planning infrastructure upgrades.

86. The most innovative output under this component is the creation of an interactive online map showing all VET institutions in the country. This is the first interactive map of its kind developed locally and represents a significant step toward improving access to information for potential students across the country. It enables easier navigation and understanding of available educational opportunities within the VET sector. However, while the map serves as a useful tool to increase young people's access to information about VET institutions, its effectiveness in enhancing the attractiveness of these institutions to potential students cannot be accurately assessed at this stage.
87. A grant was also provided to the Theoretical High School for Visually Impaired Children for the development of Braille teaching materials, ensuring equitable access to education⁸. Although, the high school is not formally part of the VET system in the Republic of Moldova, the benefits for both teachers and students with visual impairments is expected to become increasingly evident over time. These benefits include greater participation of children with visual impairments in the educational process and improved quality of teaching. Moreover, the "Reading-Writing in Braille" curriculum developed through this initiative is the first of its kind within the education system of the Republic of Moldova.

Outcome 3 "Improved access of vulnerable groups to the labour market through the VET system"

88. **Outcome 3 is on track for completion by 2025.** A baseline study and research on tracking VET graduates were conducted across 84 institutions, identifying data gaps and leading MER to request software development support. A database of employers open to hiring persons with disabilities was created, complementing Moldova's employment inclusion objectives. The employer mapping exercise, supported by the CoE project, was considered by interviewed stakeholders to be an essential analytical and awareness tool. Its purpose was to identify companies willing to hire NEET youth and vulnerable persons, and to assess inclusion practices in different regions. The mapping provided an updated picture of employer attitudes and potential opportunities. National Employment Agency sees this tool as valuable for future targeting and employer outreach. Employers themselves need education and awareness to understand the benefits of hiring from vulnerable groups. The mapping was a step in that direction and should be expanded nationwide. Production of first-ever information leaflets for persons with disabilities on available employment services allowed to fill a significant information gap.
89. When it comes to support initiatives aimed at enhancing employment opportunities for VET students with special educational needs and disabilities, the *Grant to Enhance Employment Opportunities for VET Students from Vulnerable Groups*, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, has played a key role. The grant has focused on direct engagement with VET students and teachers through career guidance, entrepreneurship training, and capacity-building activities for VET students.
90. The grant contract was signed in May 2025, with project completion expected by the end of October 2025. Approximately 12 students per school participated in the entrepreneurship course, where business ideas were developed based on local needs and will be further elaborated into business plans for each school (e.g., a fitness room at the VET school in Orhei, leisure spaces at the VET schools in

⁸ In total, 5 Braille/tactile alphabets of 7 volumes each were printed. To produce training materials in Braille, the following equipment and stationery were purchased: 4 Braille typing machines (3 for beginners and 1 for more advanced typing), 1 laser printer, 40 spines and 70 hardcovers, 800 units of Braille paper for printing images (thermoform paper) and 2000 sheets for Braille writing.

Leova and Comrat). The initial plan to organize a business plan competition was revised due to lack of capacity of beneficiaries to prepare and implement such activities.

91. Implementation of the business plans is scheduled to take place over two months, with equipment procurement managed by the Eco-Răzeni Association, the grant implementer. Between September and October 2025, activities will include teacher training, a two-day student internship, and networking events.
92. Overall, the project has achieved approximately **90%-95% of its output indicators under Outcome 1-Outcome 3**, with several outcome-level targets already met or surpassed.

Effectiveness of the project in supporting national authorities to fulfil obligations under the ESC

93. The project has been **highly effective** in strengthening Moldova's compliance mechanisms under the **European Social Charter**. Through training, guidance materials, and policy dialogue, the project significantly improved the capacity of national authorities to meet their statutory reporting and implementation duties. The Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council submitted comments to the ECSR on Moldova's ad-hoc report on the cost-of-living crisis, marking their first formal engagement with ESC monitoring. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, supported by project experts, prepared the progress report on the implementation of accepted ESC provisions, aligning national reporting practices with CoE standards. The project also translated and disseminated ECSR documents, including *Conclusions 2022* and the *Digest of ECSR Case Law*, to ensure widespread institutional familiarity with ESC standards. The first alternative reports were submitted by the Ombudsperson Institution and the Equality Council to the European Committee of Social Rights on the national report by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

Support to national authorities in aligning the legal framework on social and labour rights with European standards

94. The project has played a **key role in supporting the legal harmonisation** of Moldova's labour and social protection frameworks with European standards. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment on Social and Labour Rights identified discrepancies between national legislation and ESC provisions in areas such as anti-discrimination, vocational guidance, equal pay, and employment of persons with disabilities. The subsequent Roadmap of 75 actions provides a step-by-step reform agenda for national authorities to address those gaps.
95. The project also offered legal support to the MLSP to align national legislation on occupational safety and health of self-employed workers with ESC and EU standards. These initiatives have increased Moldova's legislative readiness for EU accession and compliance with CoE conventions, directly advancing Action Plan targets on harmonisation with European social rights instruments.
96. Thanks to the project's legal expertise, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has prepared the draft Government Decision (GD) amending the Regulation on the procedure for investigating workplace accidents. The draft GD has been registered in the e-Legiferare system under the unique number 741/MMPS/2025 and is currently pending approval procedure. The draft act partially transposes (specifically Articles 1, 2(1), 3, and Annex I) Commission Regulation (EU) No. 349/2011, as last amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2025/447 of 7 March 2025. On 10 July 2025, the Law No. 193/2025 was adopted. This Law introduces amendments to the Law on Occupational Safety and Health No. 186/2008. The amendments establish provisions concerning the occupational safety and health of self-employed workers. Through the amendment to the Law on Occupational Safety and Health, partial alignment has been ensured with points 1–6 of the Council Recommendation 2003/134/EC of 18 February 2003.

Effectiveness in enhancing access to VET and employment for vulnerable groups

97. The project has been **effective and transformative for the selected VET institutions**. The establishment of the National Network for NEET Integration in the VET System created a structural mechanism for coordination between schools, public institutions, and employers, ensuring sustainable support for vulnerable learners. Training programmes on communication, outreach, and inclusive pedagogy enhanced institutional responsiveness, while accessibility assessments informed concrete infrastructure improvements. Visibility improved dramatically through social-media campaigns and the interactive VET map. One school director stated: *“Our enrolment inquiries now come through Facebook and TikTok - something unthinkable before.”*
98. Through these interventions, the project has significantly improved the ability of partner institutions to attract, retain, and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds, aligning with national and CoE priorities on equitable access to education.
99. Below are more specific examples of how the project helped VET schools.

Center of Excellence in Light Industry (Chişinău)

100. The Center of Excellence in Light Industry in Chişinău benefited substantially from the project’s visibility and communication initiatives. Through participation in the communication and outreach trainings, the institution refined the design, content, and presentation of its promotional materials, adopting more modern, engaging, and youth-oriented approaches. Staff reported that while the overall number of enrolled students has not increased significantly, the quality and diversity of applicants have improved markedly. Many new students now report having learned about the institution through social media channels, a clear indicator of enhanced outreach effectiveness.
101. The Center became an active member of the NEET Network, regularly contributing to its Facebook page by sharing updates on vocational pathways, career stories, and job opportunities. This engagement strengthened both the school’s visibility and the perceived relevance of vocational education. Nonetheless, management underlined that maintaining these communication capacities will require continued support, as funding for outreach and professional promotion remains limited.

Professional School (Rîșcani)

102. The Professional School of Rîșcani reported notable progress in integrating NEET youth through dual education programmes designed for young people unable to relocate from their home communities. Collaboration with local employers has allowed the school to implement practical, community-based training models that combine 20% theoretical instruction with 80% hands-on learning, ensuring that students acquire skills directly relevant to local labour markets.
103. A study visit to Estonia was described by school representatives as a “transformational experience,” deepening their understanding of NEET monitoring systems and inclusive approaches to education. Inspired by this exchange, the school has since sought to embed elements of the Estonian model, particularly in the areas of early career guidance and state-supported follow-up mechanisms.
104. Currently, the school hosts 490 students, of whom 60% are NEET youth, 250 come from socially vulnerable families, and 40 have special educational needs (SEN). Inclusion efforts are particularly strong, with active enrolment of Roma and Ukrainian youth and regular cooperation with social protection departments to address learners’ social and economic challenges.
105. Thanks to project-supported IT and communication training, the school improved its online presence, redesigned its website, and began developing a youth and psychological recreation centre aimed at supporting students’ social and emotional wellbeing. The initiative reflects a growing institutional

awareness of the importance of holistic education that combines vocational training with psychosocial support.

Professional School (Orhei)

106. The Orhei Vocational School highlighted the project's essential role in strengthening both staff capacities and student inclusion. Following its merger with a smaller local vocational school, the institution expanded its geographical coverage and significantly upgraded its infrastructure. Over the past decade, student numbers increased from approximately 300 to 490, while the number of students with special educational needs rose from 20 to 49, illustrating the school's growing inclusiveness.
107. With project guidance, the school established systematic cooperation with the local Social Protection Department to monitor learners' family circumstances and social vulnerabilities. Nearly half of the students come from single-parent or migrant families, positioning the school as an important local actor in social protection and community cohesion. Furthermore, the school used the accessibility evaluation done with project support to request funding from the state budget for infrastructure refurbishment.
108. Teachers and administrators observed gradual improvements in peer attitudes toward students with disabilities, noting a broader shift in school culture toward inclusion and tolerance. As one teacher remarked informally, *"We have learned that inclusion is not just policy, it's daily practice."*
109. Despite these achievements, the institution continues to face challenges in tracking graduates after completion of studies. Many NEET youth migrate abroad or disengage from the education system entirely, limiting the ability to assess long-term outcomes. The school expressed strong interest in adopting a graduate-tracking system similar to the Estonian model, which would allow better monitoring of labour market integration and policy responsiveness.

Main factors affecting the achievement of project results

110. The project **has benefited from a strong national ownership and institutional commitment**. The active engagement of the MLSP, the MER, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council and the National Employment Agency, has ensured that reforms are anchored within national systems. Effective coordination mechanisms, particularly through the project's Steering Committee, provided strategic oversight, coherence, and alignment with other donor-funded initiatives in the employment and social protection sectors. The project also capitalised on the CoE's comparative advantage in the field of social rights, drawing on its unique blend of legal standard-setting, monitoring, and capacity-building expertise. CoE has also maintained regular dialogue and included them as observers in steering committee meetings to avoid duplication and ensure synergy. This coordination has been particularly effective in labour inspection and employment components, where EU and ILO interventions build upon CoE groundwork. Moreover, an evidence-based approach to planning and implementation supported by a sequence of needs assessments, surveys, and evaluations, allowed the project to adjust its activities in response to emerging needs and contextual changes. The geopolitical context (particularly the war in Ukraine) has reinforced Moldova's European orientation. The Russian-Ukraine war has transformed EU integration from a strategic choice into an existential national priority, increasing political will to pursue reforms aligned with European standards. Despite recent elections and cabinet changes, there are no signs of policy reversal. Instead, continuity in leadership at the technical level has ensured stability in cooperation and commitment to the project's reform agenda. Last but not least, the adaptability, commitment, and perseverance of the project team contributed positively to keeping the project on track and aligned with its planned objectives.
111. At the same time, **several factors constrained or slowed progress**. The limited availability of disaggregated data on vulnerable groups and employment outcomes delayed the establishment of a

clear baseline and necessitated the commissioning of additional tracer surveys. Frequent staff turnover within partner institutions at times disrupted implementation continuity, requiring repeated training and orientation of new personnel. During the course of project implementation, multiple changes occurred in the institutional and political landscape, including the appointment of a new Minister of Education and Research, the launch of a reform process targeting the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), and the appointment of a new State Secretary responsible for the Labour Inspectorate and of a new Director of the SLI. These shifts required ongoing adjustments and recalibration of project activities to maintain alignment with policy developments and institutional priorities. Moreover, several planned activities had to be significantly revised in response to requests from national partners. A total of 15 activities modified and new introduced across Outcomes 1, 2, and 3. These included the extended support for the State Labour Inspectorate, the extended analysis of the infrastructure of VET schools, modifications to grant-type activities under Output 3.3, and the awarding of a grant to the Theoretical High School for Visually Impaired Children. While these changes were relevant and aligned with emerging needs, they required time to readjust and restructure implementation. This led to delays in the project and, when compounded by the time needed for a budget revision, resulted in a modification of the activity plan. Some activities were postponed, and many were pushed into the final year of implementation, 2025. Internal administrative procedures (Council of Europe and ADA) also caused delays, especially in relation to the approval of the revised budget and the recruitment of staff.

112. A significant bottleneck was encountered due to an extended budget revision process that lasted almost a year, commencing in July 2024 and concluding in June 2025. The revision was necessitated by an unexpected salary increase for local staff, which resulted in a budget deficit of EUR39,000. While the Council of Europe agreed to absorb the shortfall, formal approval was mandated by the donor via an addendum signed with ADA in Vienna, contributing to a significant delay in activity implementation from March to June 2025. During this interim period, the financial department prohibited any new contracts and procurement, hampering the execution of prepared contracts and events, and leading to the postponement of planned activities for teachers and VET schools to the latter half of 2025. This resulted in a compression of the workload as numerous activities were concentrated and executed between June and November 2025, intensifying the team's efforts in the final months prior to the project's closure.

113. Another challenge was the limited availability of human resources for project implementation. Two staff members left the project team during implementation, and the existing procedure to replace them was a long-lasting one, which affected continuity and delivery capacity. Additionally, identifying consultants with specific and solid expertise in the areas covered by the project proved difficult, impacting the timely provision of technical inputs.

EQ5. *To what extent were gender-specific barriers to the realisation of labour rights identified and addressed in project implementation?*

Identification of specific gender-based barriers to labour rights

114. Throughout the design and implementation phases, the project **systematically identified gender-specific barriers** affecting the realisation of labour rights, particularly in access to education, training, and employment.

115. The gender-based barriers to labour rights were identified by the project in the context of the 2023 report of the European Committee of Social Rights, which concluded that the situation in the Republic of Moldova was not in conformity with Article 4§3 of the European Social Charter. This was due to the lack of effective enforcement of the law on equal pay and the absence of mechanisms for pay comparisons across companies in the private sector (*Conclusions 2022*).

116. Evidence gathered by the project through the gender-sensitive national survey of NEET youth (conducted in 2024 among 857 young people across the country (all 32 districts) also confirmed that women and girls face distinct challenges compared to men. The survey revealed that young women are significantly overrepresented among NEET youth, with female NEET rates exceeding those of men across all age categories. Women also tend to experience longer periods of economic inactivity, reflecting both structural and social constraints.
117. The study further showed that family and care responsibilities remain the primary barrier for women and girls seeking to re-enter education or employment, while men more frequently cited the lack of relevance or attractiveness of vocational education. Affordability of education emerged as another key factor. Forty percent of respondents indicated that the cost of training was prohibitive, and women were particularly affected, as they are more likely to depend on household or spousal income.
118. In addition, many young women perceived vocational education as outdated or irrelevant, which limits their motivation to enrol or complete training. This perception underscores a deeper gendered bias in occupational choices and educational pathways, with women underrepresented in traditionally male-dominated technical fields.
119. Furthermore, the project identified accessibility challenges for women and girls with disabilities, who face compounded barriers in physical access to VET institutions and limited learning support tools. Accessibility assessments conducted in 2024 among seven partner VET institutions revealed significant infrastructure gaps that hinder equal participation. Moreover, the absence of gender-disaggregated data and graduate-tracing mechanisms at national level made it difficult to systematically monitor and address gender disparities in transitions from education to employment.

Level of incorporation of gender sensitive measures into project activities

120. The project integrated the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy (2018–2023) into its design and implementation, as confirmed by documents and interviews. Multiple gender-focused measures were built into activities.
121. At institutional level, the project supported the creation of the National Network for NEET Integration in a gender-responsive manner, ensuring equal benefits for women/girls and men/boys from vulnerable groups. Gender considerations are embedded in the Network's governing documents and 2024-2025 Action Plan, and partner institutions were encouraged to track participation by sex.
122. The project has also strengthened gender-sensitive communication in eight VET institutions through tailored outreach plans and visual materials targeting women and girls from vulnerable backgrounds. Forty-seven staff were trained, resulting in eight new video spots promoting equal opportunities in VET. The developed outreach plans are actively used by the VET schools. Evaluation interviews show that traditionally male-dominated VET schools started to enrol more women in technical fields, while light-industry schools encouraged men's participation. One school noted that portraying both female and male students in promotional materials helped shift perceptions of "men's" and "women's" work.
123. The 2024 gender-sensitive NEET survey produced the first nationwide gender-disaggregated dataset on young people outside education or employment. Its findings informed a 2025 roadmap with seven recommendations on integrating vulnerable groups and thirteen on gender equality in education and employment.
124. Accessibility audits in seven VET institutions informed Ministry decisions to improve infrastructure for students with disabilities, including women and girls. Conducted in partnership with UNFPA, these audits complemented similar assessments in 33 other schools. The project also analysed employment

gaps for persons with disabilities in the public sector and shared findings in a multi-stakeholder workshop.

125. Institutional strengthening included gender-sensitive training for national human rights institutions. The Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council received capacity-building on ESC standards, ECSR case law, and reporting.
126. Gender sensitivity was integrated throughout all training modules, especially the HELP course “Labour Rights as Human Rights.” An amendment to Law No. 180/2001 (paragraph d¹) on combating workplace harassment and discrimination marked progress toward gender-responsive labour legislation.
127. A rights-based approach underpinned all activities. Beneficiaries reported that the project strengthened understanding of social rights as legal entitlements. As one prosecutor noted: *“The ESC training reframed labour rights as part of human-rights protection.”*

2.3. Sustainability

EQ6. *To what extent are the outcomes of the project likely to continue producing effects after its end?*

Mechanisms for securing the sustainability of project results

128. Sustainability was a guiding principle throughout the project’s design and implementation. The project’s objectives were fully aligned with national policy frameworks and the Council of Europe Action Plans for the Republic of Moldova (2021–2024 and 2025–2028), ensuring that activities complemented ongoing reforms rather than operating in isolation. This alignment was operationalised through long-term institutional partnerships with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), the State Labour Inspectorate (SLI), the Ombudsperson Institution, and the Equality Council.
129. Sustainability has been reinforced by capacity-building efforts that strengthened these institutions’ ability to implement and monitor social rights in line with the European Social Charter (ESC). The development of practical tools, such as manuals, guides, and reporting templates, ensures continuity of use beyond the project’s lifetime. In addition, the integration of gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches into vocational education and labour policies embeds these priorities into the national system, creating durable institutional ownership.

Mechanisms for monitoring the sustainability of results and evaluating long-term effects

130. One of the project’s most forward-looking achievements is the jointly developed *Roadmap of 75 Actions*, validated by all relevant national institutions. The roadmap translates needs assessment findings into concrete, time-bound measures for legislative, policy, and institutional reform, identifying responsible entities for each action. While implementation is constrained by limited resources, the roadmap will serve as a strategic framework for the next phase of the project and guide future reforms.
131. The increased participation of the MLSP in the Council of Europe’s Governmental Committee, and Moldova’s election to the Bureau, demonstrate growing policy ownership and visibility at the European level. The ratification of eight additional provisions of the ESC and improvements in national reporting mechanisms indicate a stronger institutional foundation for the continued advancement of social rights in the country.

Integration of project results into institutional practices and national policies

132. Project results have been successfully integrated into several institutional frameworks. The HELP course *"Labour Rights as Human Rights"* has been institutionalised within the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) permanent training curriculum and replicated by the Bar Association, demonstrating sustainability through horizontal transfer. The *Guide on Monitoring the Observance of Labour Rights*, developed in collaboration with the Ombudsperson Institution and the Equality Council, is currently being piloted and expected to be officially adopted. Moreover, the Guide on monitoring the observance of labour rights was developed in close cooperation with both Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council with the support of a national consultant, who is also Vice President of the ECSR.
133. Similarly, three tools for the SLI (a *Checklist for Inspections*, a *Guide on Sanctions*, and a *Code of Conduct*) have been formally approved and published, standardising inspection practices and reinforcing transparency. The *Interactive Map of VET Institutions* has been integrated into MER's official websites, with the ICT Service responsible for maintenance. The Ministry publicly endorsed the map and the project produced a video spot promoting VET institution to accompany its launch. Moreover, the introduction of a *Braille reading and writing curriculum* represents an important step toward inclusiveness in education, pending formal approval by the National Curriculum Council.
134. The infrastructure assessment activity was requested by the MER in order to better understand the current situation and to support the inclusion of VET schools in a ministry-led project on rehabilitation and modernisation of VET schools' infrastructure. However, the actual implementation of rehabilitation and modernisation works in VET schools will largely depend on the national authorities' capacity to attract the necessary funding and on their implementation capacity.
135. The current database of employers includes companies from eight regions of Moldova. To ensure full national coverage and enable integration into the National Employment Agency's website, it would be beneficial to expand the database to include all regions of the country. This enhancement can be discussed and implemented within a new or follow-up project. In October 2025, National Employment Agency launched an employer outreach campaign to raise awareness about subsidies and incentives for hiring persons with disabilities and NEET youth. This is an initiative that reflects lessons learned from CoE-supported activities.
136. In terms of the NEET Network, it continues to function as a voluntary collaborative platform among participating VET institutions. However, institutionalisation of the network remains the major sustainability challenge. Currently, participation is entirely voluntary, depending on the enthusiasm of individual directors. This structure makes the initiative fragile as schools are willing to cooperate as long as it does not create unfunded workload. As one of the stakeholders observed, *"Schools are committed, but this is additional work - they need some support to keep going"*. For long-term viability, the network should be formally recognized by the Ministry of Education and Research or the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. This would ensure accountability and stability, and encourage directors to treat participation as an institutional rather than personal commitment.
137. The developed Communication Strategy for the NEET Network and individual Action Plans for each of the eight partner VET institutions were locally approved and integrated into school management practices. They serve as both promotional tools and operational guides for outreach. Extensive cascade training on *soft skills* and *inclusive education* reached teachers and students nationwide. Teachers trained under the project conducted peer-learning seminars in most of the regions, indicating *institutional absorption* of capacity-building functions.

Accessibility of project results to target groups

138. All key materials, including manuals, guides, ESC-related publications⁹, and communication toolkits, have been disseminated digitally through institutional platforms and the Council of Europe's website. This ensures long-term accessibility for beneficiaries and supports ongoing training, replication, and capacity-building efforts.

Stakeholder ownership of project results

139. Strong ownership has been evident at both policy and operational levels. The project's Steering Committee, co-chaired by the MLSP and MER, regularly reviewed activities and approved priorities, ensuring alignment with national strategies. Partner institutions have integrated project tools into their annual work plans, while the NEET Network continues to function as a voluntary collaboration among VET schools. Additional schools have expressed interest in joining, namely The Center of Excellence in Food Industry in Bălți (north of Moldova), and a Professional School in Chișinău, indicating growing local ownership and recognition of the initiative's value.

Replicability of the project and its results at the local and national levels

140. The project's methodologies and tools are highly replicable across Moldova. The ESC monitoring instruments, inclusive VET models, and graduate-tracking methodology can be adapted to other sectors and regions. The combination of standardised resources, trained national experts, and established institutional partnerships provides a strong basis for scaling up within future Council of Europe, EU, or nationally funded programmes.

EQ7. What are the factors that could hamper the sustainability of the achieved results?

141. Although the project was designed with a strong sustainability orientation, several factors could hinder the long-term continuity of results if not adequately addressed.
142. *Institutional and financial capacity constraints:* While the project has significantly strengthened the technical capacity of key institutions, they remain underfunded and understaffed. This may limit their ability to maintain and expand newly introduced mechanisms, such as ESC reporting and risk-based inspection systems. Without continued financial or donor support, activities like inspector training, awareness campaigns, and NEET Network coordination could lose momentum.
143. *Data limitations:* Despite progress in developing graduate-tracking tools and labour market databases, Moldova still faces structural gaps in data collection and analysis, particularly disaggregated statistics on gender, disability, and vulnerable groups. These gaps constrain long-term monitoring and policy evaluation.
144. *Staff turnover and institutional memory loss:* Frequent staff changes in partner institutions risk undermining continuity and institutional memory. Without structured induction and knowledge-transfer mechanisms, the practical use of developed tools and guides could diminish over time.
145. *Sustainability of the NEET Network:* The NEET Network remains a voluntary platform dependent on the goodwill of school directors. For long-term viability, it requires formal recognition and budgetary support from either the MER or MLSP to ensure accountability and stable coordination.
146. *External contextual factors:* Economic pressures, regional instability, and the consequences of the war in Ukraine may divert national resources away from social and education reforms, affecting implementation capacity and long-term sustainability.

⁹ ECSR Conclusions 2022, the Digest of Case Law of the European Committee of Social Rights, and the Guide on the European Convention on Human Rights – Social Rights

147. *Continued Council of Europe engagement:* The ongoing presence of the Council of Europe in Moldova remains a critical enabler of sustainability. Its commitment to continue supporting social rights and VET reforms provides a strong platform for consolidating achievements, promoting policy continuity, and scaling up successful practices in future programming cycles.

3. Lessons learnt

148. The implementation of the project has highlighted several important lessons which, while not all based on prior planning, have emerged through experience. These insights are particularly valuable for informing the design and delivery of future projects, helping to strengthen both strategic planning and operational effectiveness.
149. **Ambition must be balanced with available resources:** The project design effectively combined three reform agendas (social rights, VET inclusion, and employment governance) under a single framework. While this comprehensiveness allowed for systemic linkages, it also stretched human and financial resources. Future projects of comparable size should either focus on fewer thematic areas or ensure commensurate resources and staffing to manage multi-sectoral complexity.
150. **Indicators must be realistic, flexible, and outcome-oriented:** Several indicators in the original logical framework were overly prescriptive and not aligned with local realities (e.g., large grants for minors, rigid numeric targets). The project team's creative adaptation in close coordination with Steering Committee members allowed progress. Future projects should prioritize indicators that measure change, such as institutional capacity, policy uptake, or behavioural transformation, rather than enumerating activities. Flexibility clauses in results frameworks should allow for contextual adjustments without compromising accountability.
151. **Enabling projects require sequenced interventions:** The project demonstrated that achieving sustainable change in complex systems requires a step-by-step approach. The initial phase should focus on building legal and institutional frameworks (as this project did), while subsequent phases should consolidate implementation and scale-up. Clear articulation of these phases in the design stage helps manage expectations among donors and partners.
152. **Adaptive management is essential for maintaining relevance:** The project's success depended largely on the flexibility and responsiveness of the Council of Europe team. Frequent political changes, evolving partner needs, and administrative delays required continuous adjustments to the workplan. The ability to reallocate resources, redesign activities, and respond to new requests, while preserving strategic coherence, proved a key success factor. Adaptive management should be institutionalized as an intentional feature of project governance.
153. **Complementarity with other donors multiplies impact:** The project's coordination with EU, ILO, and national partners maximized resource efficiency and avoided duplication. For example, the Council of Europe's early work on the Labor Inspectorate reform laid the groundwork for subsequent EU/ILO interventions. This experience shows that targeted, normative, and capacity-building interventions by CoE can effectively complement larger-scale infrastructure or policy programmes supported by other donors.

4. Conclusions

154. The project "*Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova*" has made significant and well-substantiated contributions toward strengthening the observance of social and labour rights and

improving access to inclusive and gender-responsive VET. The conclusions presented below synthesize evidence from the evaluation and respond directly to the key evaluation questions.

155. 1. The project is highly relevant to national priorities and institutional needs.

156. The project's objectives were fully aligned with Moldova's strategic frameworks, including the National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", the Employment Programme 2022-2026, and the Education Strategy 2030, as well as with the Council of Europe Action Plans 2021-2024 and 2025-2028. Evidence confirms that the intervention addressed long-standing needs in ESC reporting, labour inspection, inclusive VET, and labour-market access for vulnerable groups. The project responded dynamically to evolving institutional priorities, particularly the reform of the State Labour Inspectorate and data gaps in VET, demonstrating high contextual relevance and responsiveness.

157. 2. The project design was coherent and strategically sound, though ambitious given structural constraints.

158. The theory of change and multi-level design, combining legal harmonisation, capacity development, institutional strengthening, and local-level interventions, were appropriate for addressing complex social-rights and VET sector challenges. Gender equality and human rights were well integrated into the logical framework and activities. However, some outcome indicators relied on national data systems that were not fully operational, limiting measurability within the project timeframe. The project's scope was also ambitious for a three-year period and required extensive foundational assessments before implementation could accelerate.

159. 3. The project achieved the majority of its expected results and generated several transformative outcomes.

160. Across all three outcomes, the project delivered approximately 90–95% of its planned outputs. Under Outcome 1, Moldova ratified eight additional ESC provisions, the first expansion since 2001, representing a major structural achievement attributable in large part to the project's technical and advocacy support. Capacity of key institutions (MLSP, SLI, Ombudsperson Institution, Equality Council, judiciary) was significantly strengthened. Under Outcomes 2 and 3, the project introduced the first national NEET needs assessment, launched the NEET Network of VET schools, developed the first interactive VET map, conducted accessibility assessments, strengthened inclusive education practices, and expanded tools supporting employment of vulnerable groups. These contributions were substantiated by consistent evidence from interviews, assessments, and documentation.

161. 4. The project introduced gender-sensitive and human-rights-based approaches that effectively addressed identified barriers.

162. The evaluation confirmed that gender-specific challenges, care burdens, affordability, stereotypes, exclusion of women with disabilities, were identified through evidence, including the 2024 national NEET survey. Project activities systematically integrated gender-responsive elements into communication materials, VET outreach strategies, training modules, legislative analysis, and institutional strengthening. As a result, participating VET institutions reported increased awareness and emerging shifts in perceptions regarding women's and men's access to non-traditional professions. These measures demonstrate that gender and human-rights considerations were not add-ons but integral to activity design and implementation.

163. 5. National ownership and institutional integration support prospects for sustainability, though certain risks remain.

164. The project's results are likely to produce long-term effects, as several tools and practices have been formally adopted or institutionalised, including: the HELP course on labour rights, SLI inspection tools

and Code of Conduct, the ESC monitoring guide, and the integration of the VET map into the MER information system. The jointly developed Roadmap of 75 actions provides a structured policy reference for future reforms. The NEET Network has strengthened collaboration between VET institutions, though its sustainability depends on formal governmental endorsement and minimal resourcing. Sustainability risks remain related to limited institutional budgets, staff turnover, and persistence of data gaps on vulnerable groups, all of which could slow reform momentum after project closure.

165. 6. The project contributed to strengthening national systems and advancing Moldova's alignment with European standards.

166. The project's support to ESC reporting, legislative alignment, labour inspection, and VET governance has positioned Moldova to better meet obligations under the European Social Charter and the EU acquis (notably Chapter 19 on Employment and Social Policy). Improvements in the SLI's inspection methodologies and integrity standards, as well as strengthened oversight by the Ombudsperson Institution and the Equality Council, contribute to more accountable and transparent labour-rights protection systems. For VET, the project introduced models and tools that fill longstanding gaps, particularly regarding inclusion, accessibility, employer engagement, and data for tracking graduate pathways.

167. 7. Despite strong progress, structural weaknesses in the national system continue to limit full realisation of the project's long-term outcomes.

168. While the project addressed many capacity gaps, deeper systemic issues remain: limited resources for VET infrastructure upgrades, insufficient labour-market incentives for employers to hire vulnerable groups, inadequate national systems for tracking graduate outcomes, and the need for continuous professional development among labour inspectors and VET staff. These factors could stall further progress unless national institutions or future programmes continue to invest in these areas.

169. On the whole, the project made substantial, well-evidenced contributions to advancing social and labour rights, strengthening institutional capacities, and improving access to inclusive and gender-responsive VET in Moldova. Its achievements, particularly the ratification of new ESC provisions, the reinforcement of labour inspection mechanisms, and the establishment of innovative tools supporting VET inclusion, represent significant progress in line with national and European priorities. While some systemic and operational challenges persist, the project laid a solid foundation for future interventions and demonstrated strong potential for sustainable impact.

5. Recommendations

170. Based on the overall assessment of the project, the following recommendations were formed in relation to improvement of the design and pace of similar projects implementation by the Council of Europe in Moldova.

171. The following table provides a comprehensive listing of these Recommendations addressed to the Council of Europe, Directorate of Social Rights, Health and Environment. Legends are also provided to indicate the Evaluator's consideration regarding the timeframe in which the recommendation may be considered with Short Term (S/T) referring to the project design and implementation strategy of subsequent projects and Long Term (L/T) referring to the steps needed for further strengthening of CoE projects on social rights, VET, and employment inclusion. Legends are also provided to indicate the priority (low, medium, high) which the Evaluator thinks these recommendations should be considered, however clearly future prioritisation of these recommendations should be made by CoE in consultation with stakeholders and partners, and reviewed as the context changes.

No.	Recommendations	Timeframe		Priority		
		S/T	L/T	L	M	H
	Strategic					
1	Pursue a phased, multi-cycle approach to reform. Given the systemic nature of legislative and institutional reforms, the Council of Europe should adopt a sequenced strategy focusing first on institutionalisation and data system development, and then on scaling implementation and monitoring.	▲				▲
	Programmatic					
2	Strengthen data systems for monitoring inclusion and employment outcomes. The absence of disaggregated data on vulnerable groups and employment outcomes remains a systemic barrier. Future interventions should prioritise the development of a national graduate-tracking system	▲				▲
3	Strengthen gender equality and inclusion mainstreaming. Gender-responsive approaches should remain integral to future programming. This includes updating gender analysis, supporting enforcement of anti-discrimination provisions introduced through the project, and promoting women’s participation in VET programmes.		▲			▲
4	Enhance cooperation with employers and the private sector. Building on the employer database and NEA collaboration, deepen engagement with private sector associations to promote inclusive employment. The Council of Europe could facilitate public–private dialogue platforms and design recognition schemes for inclusive employers, linking rights-based standards with business incentives.		▲		▲	
	Operational					
5	Simplify administrative and budgetary procedures to improve efficiency. The long delays caused by internal approval and budget revision processes significantly constrained implementation. The Council of Europe and the donor (ADA) should review and streamline contractual and financial workflows, particularly for budget modifications, to prevent similar disruptions. Consider establishing fast-track mechanisms for low-value adjustments or pre-approved flexibility clauses. Contingency funding should be also considered in future projects to absorb unforeseen costs, such as salary adjustments.		▲			▲
6	Ensure adequate human resources and M&E capacity. Given the project’s complexity, staffing levels should be aligned with its thematic and operational demands. The next phase should include dedicated positions for Monitoring and Evaluation and Communication/Visibility to strengthen evidence generation, reporting, and dissemination of results. Additional administrative support would improve workload balance and ensure timely delivery.	▲				▲
7	Institutionalise adaptive management and learning. The project’s flexibility was a major success factor; however, learning was often ad hoc. The next phase should formalise learning processes (through regular reflection workshops, mid-term reviews, and after-action analyses) to capture insights and inform adaptive planning. The Steering Committee could incorporate a “learning and innovation”		▲		▲	

No.	Recommendations	Timeframe		Priority		
		S/T	L/T	L	M	H
	agenda item in each meeting. Workplans should not also be excessively rigid for being able to adjust to external factors, such as administrative delays or seasonal breaks in the academic calendar.					
8	Strengthen communication, visibility, and advocacy. Visibility proved transformative in shaping public perception of vocational education. Future initiatives should continue to invest in communication as a strategic tool for behavioural change, using multimedia storytelling, youth ambassadors, and employer success stories to amplify results. Communication plans should be aligned with the Council of Europe's and donor's overall visibility guidelines and co-branded with national institutions to reinforce ownership.		▲		▲	

ANNEX I - LIST OF DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Council of Europe General Documents

- Council of Europe (2020), Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024, CM (2020)161, 19 November 2020.
- Council of Europe (2024), Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028. CM (2024)172-final, Strasbourg, 19 November 2024.
- Council of Europe (2020) Evaluation Guidelines, CM(2020)167, Strasbourg, 31 October 2020.
- Council of Europe (2020) - Evaluation Policy, CM(2018)159-final, Strasbourg, 13 November 2019.
- Council of Europe (2016), European Social Charter, Revised - Ref. 080216GB, Strasbourg, November 2016.
- Council of Europe (2023), The European Social Charter at a glance, 2023.
- Council of Europe (2021), Fourth report on the non-accepted provisions of the European Social Charter, Republic of Moldova.

- Council of Europe (2024), Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029, Strasbourg, May 2024.
- Council of Europe (2020), Report on Needs Assessment in the area of Social Rights in the Republic of Moldova, Conducted under the Council of Europe Project “Framing cooperation for social rights development in the Republic of Moldova”, 31 December 2020.

Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova, Project Documentation

- Contract between the Council of Europe and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) on the funding of the Project “Enhancing Employment Rights in the Republic of Moldova”, December 2022.
- Inception report and Annexes, June 2023.
- Annual Interim Narrative Reports and Annexes: N° 1 (19 March 2024), N° 2 (31 March 2025).
- Documentation in Outcomes-Documents and Reports: OC 1 (Outputs 1.1-1.3), OC 2 (Outputs 2.1-2.4) and OC 3 (Outputs 3.1 and 3.3).
- Asociația obștească “Eco-Răzeni” / Eco-Razeni Association, Application form, Appendix1, Proposal for enhancing employment opportunities for vocational education and training students from vulnerable groups, including those with special educational needs.
- Project Steering Committee minutes: 1st SCM (17 May 2023); 2nd SCM (6 March 2024) and 3rd SCM (26 February 2025).
- Project Budget and revisions.
- Council of Europe, Project Logframe revised – reporting on indicators for 2024.

Other documents

- Government of the Republic of Moldova, The National Education Development Strategy (2021–2030) “Educatia 2030”, 7 March 2023.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, National Programme on Human Rights enforcement for the years 2024-2027, 15 January 2024.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, Inclusive Education Development Programme in the Republic of Moldova for the Years 2024–2027, 2023.
- Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, The National Development Strategy “European Moldova 2030”, 17 November 2022.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, Annex No. 1, to Government Decision No. 785/2022, National Programme for Employment for the Years 2022–2026.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, Annex No. 1, to Government Decision No. 168/2023, Youth Sector Development Strategy “Youth 2030”.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, Programme for the Support of the Roma Population in the Republic of Moldova for the Years 2022-2025, approved by Government Decision No. 576/2022.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, Programme for the Development of Civil Society Organizations for the Period 2024-2027, Annex to Government Decision No. 845/2023.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova, National Human Rights Action Plan 2018-2022 (NHRAP)
- United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals.
- Reform Agenda under the Republic of Moldova’s Growth Plan for the years 2025-2027.
- European Union: Association agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part. Document 22014A0830(01)- OJ L 260, 30.8.2014, pp. 4–73.
- Britta Schweighöfer (team lead), Heidrun Ferrari, Anja Simic and Nina Harden, Final Evaluation Report for the external evaluation of the Council of Europe’s Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024, Evaluation commissioned by the Council of Europe.

ANNEX II - LIST OF INTERVIEWS

No.	ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTION	DATE
1	Council of Europe, Project Staff (3 persons) (online)	5 May 2025
2	Council of Europe, Department of Social Rights, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (1 person) (online)	5 May 2025
3	Council of Europe, Directorate of Programme Coordination, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (1 person) (online)	5 May 2025
4	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (1 person) (online)	8 May 2025
5	Ministry of Education and Research, VET Department (1 person) (online)	16 May 2025
6	Equality Council (1 person) (online)	2 July 2025
7	Center of Excellence in Light Industry from Chisinau (1 person) (online)	2 July 2025
8	Council of Europe, Project Staff (3 persons) (online)	3 July 2025
9	Council of Europe, Department of Social Rights, Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (1 person) (online)	3 July 2025
10	European Committee for Social Rights (ECSR) of the Council of Europe (1 person) (online)	4 July 2025
11	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (1 person) (in person)	7 July 2025
12	National Agency for Employment (3 persons) (in person)	7 July 2025
13	National Institute of Justice (2 persons) (in person)	7 July 2025
14	Ministry of Education and Research (1 person) (in person)	7 July 2025
15	Theoretical Lyceum for visually impaired children (1 person) (in person)	7 July 2025
16	Eco-Razeni Association (1 person) (in person)	8 July 2025
17	State Labour Inspectorate (1 person) (in person)	8 July 2025
18	School No. 11 from Chisinau (1 person) (in person)	9 July 2025
19	Professional School from Orhei (2 persons) (in person)	9 July 2025
20	Professional School from Leova (1 person) (in person)	10 July 2025
21	Professional School no. 2 from Cahul (1 person) (in person)	10 July 2025
22	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (1 person) (in person)	11 July 2025
23	Partnership for Development Center (1 person) (in person)	11 July 2025
24	"MilleniuM" Training and Development Institute (1 person) (in person)	11 July 2025
25	National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM) (1 person) (in person)	11 July 2025
26	Coordination Office for Technical Cooperation, Austrian Development Agency (1 person) (online)	11 July 2025
27	Prime Minister's Office (1 person) (online)	15 July 2025
28	Partnership for Development Center (1 person) (online)	15 July 2025
29	"MilleniuM" Training and Development Institute (1 person) (online)	15 July 2025
30	National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM) (1 person) (online)	15 July 2025
31	Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova (1 person) (online)	17 July 2025
32	Ombudsperson Institution (1 person) (online)	17 July 2025
	FOCUS GROUPS	
33	Focus Group, Teachers, VET Schools (12 persons) (online)	16 July 2025
34	Focus Group Labour Inspectors (5 persons) (online)	16 July 2025

ANNEX III – INTERVIEW GUIDE (PROJECT STAFF)

INTERVIEW GUIDE (PROJECT STAFF)

Final evaluation of the Council of Europe project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”

Date: DD/MM/YYYY	
Name(s) and function(s) of interviewee(s) :	
Evaluation phase (inception/data collection):	
In-person/phone interview (please specify):	
Location (for in-person interviews/focus groups):	
Name(s) of interviewer(s):	
In confidence/quotable (please specify):	

Thank you for taking the time to meet me! I am an independent consultant hired by *ALTAIR Asesores SL* and I am conducting the **Final evaluation of the Council of Europe project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”**.

The purpose of this evaluation is to better understand how this Council of Europe project has worked over the period 2023 up to present. This exercise is not an audit, the evaluation is a participatory one, thus we would like to hear your opinion and assessment on several main issues such as: (1) Relevance – the need for project’s activities and assistance, (2) Effectiveness – degree of achievement of the project objectives and (3) Sustainability of results and benefits.

Your opinion and contribution are extremely valuable to us in identifying and understanding all the aspects mentioned above, and we thank you in advance for your collaboration and participation in this discussion.

RELEVANCE

1. How did the socio-economic context and/or changes in the policy field in the Republic of Moldova affect your project during design/preparation? What were the factors to influence the relevance of your project when it was designed?
2. How did the socio-economic context and/or changes in the policy field in the Republic of Moldova affect your operation during implementation? What were the factors to influence the relevance of your project when it was implemented?
3. To what extent were the indicators in your project identified/revised and on which basis?
4. To what extent did your project contribute to a comprehensive solution to the promotion and protection of labour social rights and development of VET sector in the Republic of Moldova?

EFFECTIVENESS

5. Please, provide a brief overview of project results, in quantity and quality and mention whether the results were achieved according to the proposed planning.
6. Which are the most important results of the project, from your personal and organisational perspective that greatly contributed to the achievement of expected outcomes? All the estimated targets (as per proposed indicators) were achieved? If not, please specify the reasons.
7. To what extent the different Components of the project contributed to the achievement of project’s overall objective? Do you consider that all Components contributed equally? If there were cases when some Components encountered difficulties in assuring, a good level of effectiveness?
8. To what extent did the cancellation or delays of activities, implementation of unplanned activities, affect the achievement of results or their quantity and quality? (*Where applicable*)

9. In your opinion, which were the most important factors supporting and/or hampering the achievement of project results? (*Please refer to: legal factors, socio-economic factors, economic factors, cultural factors, environmental factors, implementation, communication modalities, sectors' priorities, etc.*)
10. To what extent the project contributed to an equitable access to employment opportunities, education, for various groups of people (including people in vulnerable situations)? Please offer few examples.
11. On a scale from no (contribution) to high (contribution) please assess whether or to what extent the implementation modality of the project embedded and contributed to promotion of the below mentioned horizontal principles:

Horizontal principles	No contribution	Small (limited) contribution	Medium level contribution	Good level contribution	High level contribution
Equal opportunities for men and women.					
RBA & No one left behind.					
Sustainable development and environmental protection.					
Participation of civil society.					
Concerns of disadvantaged persons.					

12. If there were any factors that greatly facilitated or hampered the observance or promotion of these principles? *If yes, please describe briefly.*
13. Do you consider that the implementation modalities (planning, monitoring system and tools etc.) were adequately chosen and implemented?
14. What elements would you like to see different in the implementation of the project that could facilitate and contribute to a higher level of effectiveness? What could have been done better?
15. Which are the most important lessons learned from implementation of the project?
16. What good practices can be identified based on the implementation of the project?

SUSTAINABILITY

17. Has an adequate level of human and institutional capacity and financial resources been put in place by the key beneficiaries in order to continue delivering the benefits resulting from project?
18. Are there any risks or barriers identified that may limit the continuation of project results?
19. Have the project results been integrated into institutional practices or national policies?
20. Are the project results accessible to the target group in the long term? (*e.g. Training materials, manuals, guides, etc.*)
21. Are there any mechanisms foreseen to monitor the sustainability of the results and evaluate their effects over time?
22. Is there a plan to extend the types of project activities to other locations or to the national level?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

23. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your experience with the project?
24. Do you have any recommendations for improving future projects of this kind? (any recommendations regarding increasing relevance, improving the implementation process, enhancing effectiveness, and ensuring the sustainability of the results achieved during the project, etc.)

Thank you!

ANNEX IV – INTERVIEW GUIDE (PROJECT PARTNERS, BENEFICIARIES)

INTERVIEW GUIDE (PROJECT PARTNERS, BENEFICIARIES)

Final evaluation of the Council of Europe project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”

Date: DD/MM/YYYY:	
Name(s) and function(s) of interviewee(s):	
Evaluation phase (inception/data collection):	
In-person/phone interview (please specify) :	
Location (for in-person interviews/focus groups):	
Name(s) of interviewer(s):	
In confidence/quotable (please specify):	

Thank you for taking the time to meet me! I am an independent consultant hired by *ALTAIR Asesores*. I am conducting the **Final evaluation of the Council of Europe project “Enhancing employment rights in the Republic of Moldova”**.

The purpose of this evaluation is to better understand how this Council of Europe project has worked over the period 2023 up to present. This exercise is not an audit, the evaluation is a participatory one, thus we would like to hear your opinion and assessment on several main issues such as: (1) Relevance – the need for project’s activities and assistance, (2) Effectiveness – degree of achievement of the project objectives and (3) Sustainability of results and benefits.

Your opinion and contribution are extremely valuable to us in identifying and understanding all the aspects mentioned above, and we thank you in advance for your collaboration and participation in this discussion. We will be grateful for your open feedback. The interview is confidential, and your name will not be mentioned anywhere in the report.

INTRODUCTION

1. Please describe your role in the project.
2. In your opinion, what are the current needs and priorities regarding the promotion and protection of the labour social rights, access to vocational education and training (VET) and subsequent employment? Are there any needs for intervention that are not addressed, or not adequately addressed, by the current national strategies and plans, despite their occurrence and recurrence requiring an appropriate and timely response?
3. What are the main problems, obstacles preventing the protection of labour social rights/ access to VET and employment?
4. In your opinion, regarding people from vulnerable groups, what are the main obstacles they encounter in accessing VET and entering the labour market? (*question addressed to stakeholders involved in VET-related activities*).
5. In your opinion what are the main obstacles or difficulties encountered in ensuring equal opportunities, a gender-sensitive approach in the education system and the labour market? (also referring to barriers encountered by people from vulnerable groups).

RELEVANCE

6. Have you been consulted or involved in the selection of activities which have been included in the Council of Europe project? (*during project’s preparatory and/ or implementation stages*)
7. In your opinion, to what extent does the Council of Europe project align with current priorities regarding the promotion and protection of labour and social rights/ access to vocational education and training (VET), and subsequent employment? To what extent does this project address the specific needs and priorities of your institution/organisation?

8. Changes have been made to the project activities. How do you justify the proposed changes, and were they adequately addressed during project implementation? (*where applicable*).

EFFECTIVENESS

9. To what extent do you consider that this type of project has helped the (*beneficiary institution / organisation¹⁰ to be mentioned*) in the implementation of its intervention priorities in the labour social rights / development of VET? (*Question adapted depending on institutional mandate and mission*).
10. What are the concrete benefits your institution / organisation has gained from participating in the project activities? Please elaborate on the activities, results and the benefits received through participation.
11. In your opinion, what type of assistance and support from the project was most helpful for your institution/ organisation (*institution / organisation to be mentioned*)? Were there any project activities that you found unnecessary or of limited usefulness?
12. How has your institution/organisation made use of the results of the project? (*knowledge-transfer, information received during trainings, workshops, studies, manuals, guides, etc.*)
13. To what extent do you consider that the types of activities financed by the project have effects in terms of promotion and protection of labour social rights/ increasing employment rate / increased access and opportunities for people in vulnerable situations? (*Level of access to employment, education, has it increased? Are the services addressed to people in vulnerable situations more diversified? Question tailored depending on the domain of interest for the interviewee*).
14. In your opinion are the project activities effective in producing a real change (in good) in people's life/ end beneficiaries? (*referring to VET students, persons from vulnerable groups, NEET, etc.*). Please justify.

SUSTAINABILITY

15. How does your institution/organisation intend to use the results or benefits gained from your participation in this project after its conclusion?
16. Has your institution/organisation an adequate level of human and institutional capacity and financial resources in order to continue delivering the benefits resulting from project?
17. Are there any risks or barriers identified that may limit the continuation of project results?
18. Have the project results been integrated into institutional/ organisational practices or national policies?
19. Are the project results accessible to the target group in the long term? (e.g. Training materials, manuals, guides, studies, etc.).

CLOSING OF THE INTERVIEW

20. Are you satisfied with the benefits received and your overall involvement in the project? Were there any aspects that you believe could have been improved? You may wish to comment on the quality of collaboration and communication, the implementation approach, project design, proposed activities, or the benefits received.
21. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding your experience with the project?
22. Do you have any recommendations for improving future projects of this kind? (any recommendations regarding increasing relevance, improving the implementation process, enhancing effectiveness, and ensuring the sustainability of the results achieved during the project, etc.)

Thank you!

¹⁰ The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education and Research, the State Labour Inspectorate, the National Agency for Employment, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council, selected VET Institutions, CSOs, etc.

ANNEX V – EVALUATOR’S PROFILE

Katerina Stolyarenko is an independent evaluation consultant and trainer with 19 years of professional experience in international development and European integration, including 17 years dedicated specifically to programme and policy evaluation, evaluation methodology, and capacity-building across more than 30 countries. She has conducted over 75 evaluations for major bilateral and multilateral organizations, applying mixed-methods designs, theory-based approaches, and advanced qualitative and quantitative tools (SPSS, Dedoose, Excel). Her thematic expertise spans crisis management, early recovery, peacebuilding, human rights, rule of law, good governance, and institutional strengthening.

Katerina has extensive experience evaluating large-scale donor-funded programmes in Eastern Partnership countries, including Moldova since 2010. She has substantial experience with Council of Europe interventions, having contributed to multiple assessments including the CoE–Ukraine Action Plan, the Immediate Measures Package, the SDC/DANIDA “Strengthening Local Authorities” programme, the EU–CoE Joint Programme on application of the ECHR and Social Charter across six Eastern Partnership countries, and evaluations of CoE support to ECHR implementation. She also brings strong evaluation experience in human rights and rule of law programming with OHCHR, IDLO, and UNODC.

Before becoming an independent consultant, Katerina worked for six years in monitoring and evaluation roles with the Management Science for Health, International Organization for Migration and the American Bar Association. She holds a Master’s degree in Evaluation from the University of Melbourne, a BA in International Relations, and a certified diploma in Monitoring and Evaluation from Carleton University. She is a member of the American Evaluation Association and the European Evaluation Society and is fluent in English and Russian.

ANNEX VI – PERCEPTION OF NEEDS AND RELEVANT ACTIVITIES – STAKEHOLDERS' VIEW

The opinions presented below were formulated by individuals interviewed during the evaluation process (through interviews and focus groups). Many of these refer to needs or types of activities that respondents would like to see funded in projects, while others concern implementation methods or necessary interventions aimed at enhancing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, coordination, and impact of (future) projects. These opinions reflect the views of the respondents and are not necessarily shared by the evaluator.

Types of necessary activities or currently perceived needs:

A). Regarding the implementation and monitoring of European Social Charter

- Guide for employers and employees to help them take into account the provisions of the European Social Charter;
- Organisation of e-learning courses (which could facilitate increased access to training) on the topic of the European Social Charter;
- The National Human Rights Plan includes the principle “Equal pay for equal work”, but financial resources are needed for monitoring its implementation and compliance;
- Organisation of training courses by the Council of Europe via the platform on social rights (covering various types of social rights such as the right to work, the right to education, the right to health, etc.);
- Eliminating language barriers – trainers should speak the native language, and courses should also be delivered in English and French, to allow for in-depth understanding of specific terminology in these languages;
- Instructions for newly recruited staff in partner/beneficiary institutions (with role in monitoring and reporting on ESC);
- A methodological guide on social rights—not limited to labour social rights—that assists in monitoring their observance and implementation;
- Regarding social rights, the establishment of a discussion platform and the presentation of good practices;
- Organisation of visits to the European Committee of Social Rights;
- Organisation of training-of-trainers sessions on social rights (for relevant monitoring institutions).

B). Regarding the enforcement and observance of labour rights, reform of labour Inspectorate- related activities:

- English language training courses;
- Training in occupational safety and health;
- Training in communication and presentation skills, integrity, application/ implementation of the Code of Conduct;
- Training on the petition review process;
- Training on improving the reporting process (e.g., accurate drafting of reports, minutes, etc.) for labour inspectors;
- Digitization courses (modalities of using translation platforms, using IT tools, etc)

C). Regarding the VET type interventions, employment of NEET and vulnerable groups:

- Organisation of experience exchanges, study visits including in institutions where are enrolled students with special educational needs (SEN);
- Creation of youth-friendly spaces for students enrolled in VET schools;
- Equipping classrooms with modern equipment;
- Covering transport costs for the promotion of the educational offer of VET schools;
- Continued support for VET schools in promoting their educational offer;
- The need to hire or appoint a person responsible for communication within VET schools or MER to collaborate with a company to produce promotional and presentation materials;

- Organising career fairs at the level of VET schools and local municipalities to attract NEET youth and promote the educational offer.
- Training for teaching staff on working with the families/parents of enrolled students;

Project' modality of implementation:

- Training courses with a stronger practical component (placing greater emphasis on practical aspects rather than theoretical ones); Training face to face preferred with physical participation in classes;
- A larger budget allocated for such types of projects;
- Improved coverage of physical support (tools, logistics, equipment etc.);
- Experts' recommendations should be more specific, targeted, and concrete, avoiding a high degree of generalization and should take into account the legislative framework of the country in which they operate;
- With regard to recommendations, redundancy should be avoided; it should be verified whether the recommended actions are not already covered by other mechanisms or projects;
- Predictability regarding the types of projects and funding available;
- Course content should be updated regularly, in line with developments in the legislative framework;
- Issuance of certificates upon completion of training courses;
- Greater operational flexibility;
- To ensure coordination with other projects and donors;
- To be close to the beneficiaries;
- Support is required for the implementation of proposed activities, deliverables, or newly introduced practices carried out through projects (for example, methodologies;)
- There is a need to strengthen collaboration between VET schools/NEET networks and other institutions such as the National Employment Agency (ANOFM), local authorities, and social assistance institutions;
- Employers (or their representatives) should be involved as partners in the project.

The inter-institutional collaboration:

- Strengthening inter-institutional cooperation for the implementation of projects or programmes supporting the transition from school to the labour market;
- It is necessary to improve the relationship between VET schools and employers;
- Public communication regarding the needs and challenges faced at community level;
- Closer linkage with VET-to-employment transitions: Especially through monitoring employment outcomes of NEET graduates;
- It is necessary to establish a Coordination Council for initiatives within each sector to ensure effective communication between partners (donors) and to prevent the duplication of efforts;
- Establishment of an interaction mechanism or discussion platform between institutions responsible for monitoring compliance with labour rights, with the moderation of this platform by the Council of Europe.

ANNEX VII - SYNTHESIS OF MAIN ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED AND DELIVERABLES

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES
OUTCOME 1: Government officials, members of Parliament and target groups (social workers, labour inspectors, trade union representatives, Ombudsperson Institution, Equality Council, legal professionals, CSO representatives and others) promote and protect social and employment rights, particularly employment rights of persons from vulnerable groups, in line with European standards.	
1.1 Need for harmonization of the Labour Code and relevant national policies, legislation and practices with international standards in the area of employment rights of persons from vulnerable groups is acknowledged and the acceptance by the Republic of Moldova of additional provisions of the European Social Charter protecting rights related to persons with disability, employment, and vocational training is promoted and facilitated.	• Needs assessment of the relevant national policies, laws, and practices pertaining to social labour rights, specifically the employment rights of persons from vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova (including, but not limited to the Labour Code) was conducted. • Round table organized for presentation and discussion of the draft needs assessment report for 44 representatives (28 women and 16 men) of national authorities and relevant stakeholders. • Main areas identified as most needing support to adjust the situation in the Republic of Moldova (both in law and in practice) to international standards, especially to the standards of the European Social Charter: protection against discrimination in employment, vocational guidance, training and rehabilitation, equal pay for equal work, vocational training and employment of persons with disabilities, etc. • Report on defining the missing baseline indicators and target values for the project impact, outcomes, and outputs with due regard to the social and gender perspective. • Round table held for 37 staff members (28 women and 9 men) from relevant national authorities¹¹ aiming at enhancement of their understanding of the Republic of Moldova's obligations under the ESC and the benefits of accepting additional provisions. • Workshop organised for 37 staff members (29 women and 8 men) from relevant national authorities, including five Ministries, the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council and social partners, aiming at improvement of their understanding of the ESC system and their skills in the preparation of quality statutory reports to the ECSR. • Support provided to facilitate the participation of two representatives of the MLSP, including the Minister, in the High-Level Conference on the European Social Charter in Vilnius, Lithuania on 4 July 2024 and the side event on the protection of social human rights in times of war in Ukraine held also in Vilnius on 3 July 2024. • Roadmap developed, to ensure the sustainable implementation of recommendations from the needs assessment report in the field of social rights, • Workshop held, with the participation of 28 representatives (20 women and 8 men) from partner institutions for reviewing the roadmap, which outlines follow-up initiatives and actions. • Legal support provided to the MLSP to align the national legal framework in the field of health and safety at work of self-employed workers and work accidents to the European standards, including the European Social Charter standards. • Support provided to the MLSP with translation and proofreading of the Report on the progress of the Republic of Moldova on the implementation of the first group of accepted provisions (articles 2&1, 3&1, 3&2, 3&3, 4&3, 5, 6&1, 6&2, 6&4 and 20) from the revised European Social Charter. • The Digest of the Case Law of the European Committee of Social Rights translated into Romanian and published on the project webpage, as well as disseminated to the project partners and relevant stakeholders. • The Guide on the case-law of the European Convention on Human Rights – Social Rights was translated into Romanian and made public on the project webpage. • The European Committee of Social Rights Conclusions 2022 regarding the Republic of Moldova were translated into Romanian, proofread, published (200 copies) and disseminated to the project beneficiaries. • The Report on the needs assessment in the field of social rights with a specific focus on labour rights and employment rights of people from vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova was printed (200 copies) and disseminated to the project beneficiaries. • The publication on How can National Human Rights Institutions and National Equality Bodies engage with the European Committee of Social Rights under the monitoring system of the European Social Charter and National Equality Bodies engage with the European Committee of Social Rights was translated into Romanian, proofread, and published (150 copies). • Project leaflet on key achievements during 2023 – 2024 was developed in English and Romanian and printed (100 copies).
1.2 Capacities of different actors, including legal professionals and staff from the Ombudsperson's Office and Equality Council, are further developed to effectively implement the new gender sensitive legislative amendments in the area of labour rights of persons from vulnerable/disadvantaged groups and relevant international standards.	• Workshop organized for 50 participants aiming at enhancing the dialogue between the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council and the European Social Charter monitoring bodies for ensuring a better monitoring of the observance of social and economic rights of persons, including those from vulnerable groups in the country. • HELP course "Labour Rights as Human Rights" was adapted¹² to the national legal order. • 100 copies in English, 500 copies in Romanian of the European Social Charter were printed and are disseminated at project events. • Workshop organised, with the participation of 18 representatives (12 women and 6 men) from the Ombudsperson's Institution, the Equality Council, trade unions, social partners and civil society organisations on the ESC and increased understanding of their engagement with the European Committee of Social Rights. • HELP Course" Labour Rights as Human Rights" organized for 46 judges, prosecutors and lawyers (26 women and 20 men) – which contributed to enhancing their knowledge on labour rights standards as set forth by the ESC and other international standards. • 31 legal professionals (18 women and 13 men) were acquainted with the ESC standards on labour rights during the launch of the HELP Course "Labour Rights as Human Rights". • Guide on monitoring the observance of labour rights in the Republic of Moldova for the Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council was developed and published (March 2025). • Workshop for reviewing the draft guide attended by 22 staff members (17 women and 5 men) of Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council. • Alternative Reports submitted by the Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council to the European Committee of Social Rights on the national report prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. • The Progress Report on the implementation of non-compliant provisions from the revised ESC prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was translated and proofread in English. • The Manual on the preparation of national reports on accepted provisions under the reporting procedure of the European Social Charter was published in Romanian and English versions.
1.3 The National Labour Inspectorate is capacitated via institutional assessment, to efficiently carry out its mandate in a gender sensitive manner.	• 6 tailored training sessions organized for 58 State Labour Inspectors (topics aiming at improving the efficient implementation of their mandate: the European Social Charter system and the European Committee of Social Rights case law, the national legal and normative framework on labour inspection, the effective communication with businesses, international standards, regulations and practices regarding integrity, the application of contravention fines for undeclared and under-declared work, etc.) • Support provided to the State Labour Inspectorate in developing secondary legislation and internal regulations which provides the labour inspectors tools to combat undeclared work and communicate efficiently with businesses. The following documents were developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection: a) Checklist for identifying undeclared work during the thematic control visits by labour

¹¹ National authorities including the Parliamentary Commission on Social Protection, Health and Family, the State Chancellery, eight Ministries, National Employment Agency, social partners, the National Office of Social Insurance, and the Ombudsperson Institution

¹² by two national HELP certified tutors

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES
	inspectors and a questionnaire for employers and employees on undeclared work; b) Guide on the application of sanctions by the labour inspectors; c) Guide on effective communication skills for labour inspectors. • Workshop organised with 50 participants, labour inspectors (18 women and 32 men) for discussing and reviewing the Draft Code of Conduct for the State Labour Inspectorate. • The Code of Conduct for the State Labour Inspectorate developed and approved by Order No. 87 of 21 November 2024 of the Director of the Inspectorate. • Brandbook developed to outline the new visual identity of the Inspectorate, with the aim to modernise the appearance of the institutional communication, including a refreshed logo, a standardised colour palette, typography, and clear guidelines on brand application across digital and print media. • The methodology on risk criteria analysis and establishing the risk level in the control areas of the Inspectorate, complemented by a draft Government decision on amending Annex 1 to the Government Decision No 849/2018, and a database of risk criteria processing were developed in co-operation with the Inspectorate. • HELP course organized, on Labour Rights as Human Rights in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (November 2024-april 2025) for labour inspectors (24 labour inspectors successfully completed the course). The course contributed to improving the capacities of labour inspectors and strengthening knowledge on workers' rights as provided for in the European Social Charter and other international standards.
OUTCOME 2: VET institutions are more inclusive and gender responsive, and better able to identify and attract girls and boys/women and men from vulnerable groups and NEET youth.	
2.1 A “National Network for NEET Integration in VET system” is created to share knowledge and develop mechanisms in a gender responsive manner to better involve women/girls and men/boys from NEET in the VET system.	• Assessment of the vocational education and training institutions in the Republic of Moldova conducted in March 2023, to identify and select those in need of support to facilitate the access to VET for persons from vulnerable groups and their subsequent employment. • 8 VET institutions selected (that became project partners). • The report on the assessment and selection of VET institutions that will be provided support to identify and attract people from vulnerable groups and NEET youth and ensure their subsequent employment was developed. • Round table on the creation of a gender responsive NEET Network held, with 21 participants (15 women and 6 Men) • Workshop held (April 2024, on the development of constitutive documents of the NEET Network (Memorandum of Co-operation, Rules of Procedure for the NEET network functioning and Action Plan for 2024-2025), attended by 17 participants (11 women and 6 men) from member VET institutions. • 8 online meetings, attended by 16 NEET Network representatives per each meeting, aiming to finalise the constitutive documents and assist in preparing for the official NEET Network launch and the 1st General Assembly Meeting of the Network were organised (April – June 2024). • National Network for NEET youth integration into the VET system established, comprising 8 VET member institutions across the country. • Official Launch of the NEET Network was organised on 25 June 2024, attended by 44 representatives (25 women and 19 men) of the national authorities, social and youth partners and project stakeholders. • NEET Network Facebook page created.
2.2 Improved knowledge about VET related needs of women/girls and students from vulnerable groups in selected regions.	• Gender sensitive needs assessment survey focused on the current needs of NEET youth vis-à-vis the VET system (857 NEET young people across the country participated). • Report elaborated based on the survey data, on NEET youth inequalities and opportunities for educational and vocational integration outlining recommendations for further strategic measures and policies to support NEET young people in their transition to an active and productive life. • Round table organised for presentation of the findings and recommendations of the report, with 35 relevant stakeholders (25 women and 10 men) from various governmental and non-governmental institutions and social partners. The report was translated into English and was made public on the project webpage. • Roadmap to promote access to education, training and employment for NEETs was developed. • Roadmap for the implementation of the recommendations from the Gender-sensitive Needs Assessment Survey on NEET Youth in the Republic of Moldova developed and discussed during a round table attended by 25 representatives of national authorities and key stakeholders.
2.3 Need for improved communication/outreach to various NEET and vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls, is acknowledged and reflected in communication strategies of VET institutions.	• Roadmap for the implementation of project activities (aiming at consolidating the capacities of the eight selected VET institutions to integrate girls and boys/men and women from vulnerable groups and NEET youth in the VET system and facilitate their access to the labour market) • Two-day workshop held with 31 participants (19 teachers and 12 students - 10 men/boys and 21 women/girls from eight VET institutions). The objective of the workshop was to enhance their communication skills in promoting educational offers during the admission campaigns and improving the quality of the VET institutions’ website content in line with the developed Guide on strategies and tools to improve communication on the VET institutions’ websites. • Two-day training held with 16 teachers (10 women and 6 men) from eight VET institutions for improving their skills in drafting messages for social media channels to effectively promote their educational offers to different target groups. • Communication strategy to promote the National Network for integration of NEET youth and people from vulnerable groups into VET system was developed. • Communications plans for each VET institution (based on communication strategy), members of the Network were developed in cooperation with the VET institutions. • 8 Rollups aimed to promote the visibility and educational offers of the NEET Network VET institutions were produced. • Tender conducted for selection of a provider for the development of the interactive, informative, and visually perceptive map of the VET institutions in the Republic of Moldova and an IT company was contracted to develop the interactive map. • Interactive Map of Vocational Education and Training Institutions of the Republic of Moldova developed and integrated on the official website of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry’s website dedicated to the vocational education institutions.
2.4. Capacities of teachers and support services with regard to students (girls and boys/women and men) with special needs within VET are further developed.	• Eight (8) in-person meetings held with the selected VET institutions (to discuss their needs and priorities vis-a-vis project specific areas of intervention). • The infrastructure of seven VET institutions was assessed, including an analysis of accessibility for people with physical disabilities to and within the premises of these institutions. • A grant to support the Theoretical High School for Visually Impaired Children in the development of the Braille ABC book, the curriculum for the course "Reading-Writing in Braille" and procurement of the Braille support materials was awarded and implemented. • Braille ABC book and Curriculum for teaching Braille reading and writing developed. 5 Braille/tactile alphabets of 7 volumes each were printed. Also the following equipment and stationery were purchased: 4 Braille typing machines (3 for beginners and 1 for more advanced typing), 1 laser printer, 40 spines and 70 hardcovers, 800 units of Braille paper for printing images (thermoform paper) and 2000 sheets for Braille writing. • A training of trainers course on inclusiveness, gender equality and integration from a social rights perspective for VET teachers and students was developed and conducted for a pool of 25 teachers from VET institutions.
OUTCOME 3: Access to the labour market for vulnerable groups in the VET system is further facilitated.	

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES
3.1 Capacities of VET management and teaching staff, as well as representatives of CSOs, trade unions and National Agency for Employment are developed to support VET students from vulnerable groups in a gender sensitive way to integrate in labour market.	• Preparatory work carried-out for mapping the companies willing to employ the persons with special needs (identification of potential employers, collection of data about their policies, practices, and employability of persons with disabilities, creation of a geographical map of employers and a platform where employers interested in hiring persons from vulnerable groups like persons with disabilities, NEET youth, could connect, share best practices and offer mutual support). • Baseline developed to support the employment and integration of people from vulnerable groups into the labour market and facilitate intersectoral co-operation. It comprised a report with challenges identified in the integration of socially vulnerable groups into the labour field and recommendations to address key issues and enhance inclusivity. • Database of companies willing to employ people with special needs from 8 selected regions of the Republic of Moldova. • Round table held with the participation of 20 representatives (4 men and 16 women) of 8 VET institutions, NEA, the Trade Union, the National Confederation of Employers, and public and private companies from 8 regions (the discussions focused on the findings of the baseline report, the current situation, challenges, and opportunities for intersectoral co-operation and integration of people with special needs in the labour market). • Concept of the study visit of VET institutions’ staff was prepared and coordinated with the Ministry of Education and Research. • Leaflet on the benefits of employing people with disabilities was developed in cooperation with National Employment Agency in Romanian, Russian and Braille languages, printed and disseminated among beneficiaries.
3.2 Knowledge of soft skills and labour rights is increased among VET students from vulnerable groups.	• Three-day Training of Trainers Course on Soft Skills and Labour Rights (non-formal education) organized with the participation of 20 VET teachers and civil society representatives from 7 regions (the ToT will be followed by cascade trainings for students to be organised in autumn 2025).
3.3 Employment opportunities provided by the Article 34(4) of Law No. 60 of 30 March 2012 on the social integration of persons with disabilities, as well as employment of persons from vulnerable groups are promoted among potential employers.	• Research (survey) on tracking the professional path of VET graduates, including the graduates from vulnerable groups was conducted among 84 VET institutions and 1485 students. • Round table organised to discuss the research (survey) findings and recommendations, with 44 representatives of different institutions (34 women and 10 men). The final report was submitted to MER, outlining follow-up initiatives and actions. • Draft Call for proposals for grant awarding on “Enhancing employment opportunities for VET students from vulnerable groups, including those with special educational needs and disabilities” was developed. • A Grant to enhance employment opportunities for VET students from vulnerable groups, including those with special educational needs and disabilities, was awarded (implemented in 2025). • Assessment of the Needs and Gaps in Employment of People with Disabilities in the Public Sector was carried out among 33 public institutions and all higher education institutions across the country. The assessment findings and recommendations were analyzed in the Report “Towards Inclusive Workspaces: Assessing Needs and gaps in Employment of People with Disabilities” developed within the project. • Workshop on social integration of people with disabilities, with a focus on promotion of their employment and internship opportunities, organized, attended by 43 representatives of various ministries, agencies, social partners, universities and civil society organizations (discussions on findings and recommendations of the assessment). • Development of the Business requirements document for the development of a software for monitoring the professional path of VET graduates for the Ministry of Education and Research, was initiated.

Source: Consolidated document by the evaluator, based on interim reports, interviews, and data on the progress of implementation (reference date: October 2025)

ANNEX VIII – STATUS OF ACHIEVEMENT THE SET TARGETS UNDER EACH OUTCOME¹³

Intervention Logic ¹⁴	Indicators ^{15 16} Indicate a target value for each indicator	Reporting on indicators for 2024	Sources of Verification List the source of verification / information for each indicator	Risks & Assumptions
IMPACT Observance of social labour rights is enhanced in line with international standards, and persons from vulnerable groups have facilitated access to vocational education and training and subsequent employment.	IM1: Number of European Committee on Social Rights' conclusions of conformity for the Republic of Moldova within the Labour Rights thematic group. TV: 13 BL: 8 (2018 conclusions)	IM1: In March 2023 the European Committee of Social Rights issued its conclusions with regard to the situation in the Republic of Moldova in the field of labour rights, based on the statutory report submitted by the Government in 2022. The Committee issued 6 conclusions of conformity (Articles 2§3, 2§5, 2§6, 2§7, 6§1 and 29) and 9 conclusions of non-conformity (Articles 2§2, 2§4, 4§3, 4§4, 4§5, 5, 6§3, 6§4 and 28) with the Charter standards. In respect of the other 5 situations related to Articles 2§1, 6§2, 21, 26§1 and 26§2 the Committee needed further information in order to examine the situation.	Data source: activity reports, baseline assessments, municipal data and websites, news media, reports by VET institutions, reports of national agencies, reports of other international organisations. Collection method: project staff research, documents and records, focus groups, questionnaires and surveys. Frequency: Annual Responsibility: Project staff and project partners	Risks: Political instability or sudden lack of political support following elections in the Republic of Moldova or changes in the counterparts and points of contact; the new counterparts possibly not interested in the implementation of the project.
	IM2: Number of persons from vulnerable groups who have completed the vocational education programs TV: 1600 BL: 800	IM2: Ministry of Education and Research (MER) uses the online platform Education Management Information System (EMIS) to collect, manage and analyse data related to the education system, including VET institutions. While EMIS provides data on the total number of VET graduates, it does not disaggregate information for students from vulnerable groups. The total number of VET graduates recorded was 11,175 (6,318 boys and 4,857 girls) for the 2022/2023 academic year and 10,482 (5,984 boys and 4,498 girls) for the 2023/2024 academic year. At the national level, MER does not collect centralised data on VET students from vulnerable groups, though individual institutions often gather such information independently. Through the project's collaboration with eight partner VET institutions, data specific to people from vulnerable groups were collected. These data reveal that out of 1,186 VET graduates from vulnerable groups in the 2022/2023 academic year , 116 graduates secured employment. The project will ask the 8 VET partner institutions to provide data for 2023/2025 year, if available. This information will be reflected in the final project report.		
	IM3: Percent of persons from vulnerable groups employed after graduating vocational education.	IM3: Ministry of Education and Research uses the online platform Education Management Information System (EMIS) to collect, manage and analyse data related to the education system, including VET institutions. While EMIS provides data on the total number of VET graduates, it does not disaggregate information for students from vulnerable groups.		

¹³ For the period December 2022-October 2025

¹⁴ Please provide reference to relevant SDG targets and EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III objectives, and indicate contribution to the respective indicators.

¹⁵ Indicators should be disaggregated in terms of gender and social determinants (e.g. age, disability, majority / minority), where relevant and feasible. In case the required disaggregation is not feasible, please provide a justification.

¹⁶ Target values for indicators not determined, will be fixed during the planning phase of the project in consultation with beneficiaries.

	TV: to be fixed during the first year of project implementation ¹⁷ BL: to be acquired during the first year of project implementation	Employment outcomes, lacking disaggregated data for graduates from vulnerable groups, indicate that 3,060 graduates from the 2022/2023 cohort and 1,941 from the 2023/2024 cohort found employment in their respective specialties. At the national level, MER does not collect centralised data on VET students from vulnerable groups, though individual institutions often gather such information independently. Through the project's collaboration with eight partner VET institutions, data specific to people from vulnerable groups were collected. These data reveal that out of 1,186 VET graduates from vulnerable groups in the 2022/2023 academic year, 116 graduates secured employment. The project will ask the 8 VET partner institutions to provide data for 2024/2025 year, if available. This information will be reflected in the final project report.		
OUTCOME 1 Government officials, members of Parliament and target groups (social workers, labour inspectors, trade union representatives, Ombudsperson's office, Equality Council, legal professionals, CSO representatives and others) promote and protect social and employment rights, particularly employment rights of persons from vulnerable groups, in line with European standards	OC1.1: Number of CoE recommendations incorporated in the revised/developed policy documents and legislation TV: 5 BL: 0	OC1.1: The needs assessment report in the field of social rights, with a specific focus on labour and employment rights of people from vulnerable groups from 2023 and the roadmap included several recommendations that were incorporated into the revised legislation as follows: - Article 8 of Law No. 180 of 10 May 2001 on State Labour Inspectorate was amended by introducing paragraph d¹ on the prevention and combating of workplace harassment and discrimination within the companies/entities: LP140/2001 Article 8 par. d¹ entered into force on 20 May 2025.	OC.1. Data source: Policy documents Collection method: request to the government/search of public documents Frequency: Annual Responsibility: Project staff	Risks: Low motivation of the target groups and insufficient acknowledgement of social and labour rights among different partners.
	OC1.2: Number of gender sensitive national strategies and policies in place to promote, employment of persons from vulnerable groups. TV: 3 BL: 0	OC1.2: National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", the Development Strategy "Education 2030", the Employment Programme For 2022-2026, the Youth Sector Development Strategy promote the employment of people from vulnerable groups.		
	OC1.3: Number of accepted provisions of the European Social Charter by the Republic of Moldova in 2025 TV: 65 BL: 63	OC1.3: As a result of the project's awareness-raising and training efforts, the national authorities decided to assume additional commitments under the Charter. In July 2024 the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova ratified eight additional provisions of the revised European Social Charter (Article 4, paragraph 2; Article 7, paragraph 6; Article 10, paragraphs 1-5; Article 15, paragraph 3), thus raising the number of accepted provisions to 71 (Law No. 185 of 18 July 2024). Key among these provisions include overtime compensation, protection of children and youth, access to vocational training and rights of persons with disabilities.		

¹⁷ For indicators the baseline/target value of which will be defined during the project's first year of implementation, a revised logframe will be submitted to ADA, together with the first annual progress report.

Output 1.1. Need for harmonization of the Labour Code and relevant national policies, legislation and practices with international standards in the area of employment rights of persons from vulnerable groups is acknowledged and the acceptance by the Republic of Moldova of additional provisions of the European Social Charter protecting rights related to persons with disability, employment, and vocational training is promoted and facilitated	OP1.1.1: Number of recommendations provided on employment rights of vulnerable groups , including recommendations addressing gender issues specifically TV: at least 2 BL: 0	OP1.1.1: Seven specific recommendations on promoting the integration of people from vulnerable groups into the labour market and thirteen recommendations addressing gender aspects were included in the roadmap developed to ensure the sustainable implementation of recommendations from the needs assessment report in the field of social rights, with a specific focus on labour and employment rights of people from vulnerable groups from 2023.	OP.1.1. Data source: Labour Code Collection method: government documents Frequency: once Responsibility: Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection Data source: CoE project Collection method: Frequency: once Responsibility: CoE project team	Risks: - Recommendations too vague to be implemented. Once recommendations provided, no political will to incorporate them in the Labour Code - Little political will to accept additional provisions; belief among government partners that accepting new provisions is not important or consequential Assumptions: - Legislative/policy documents are available and CoE team has the means to evaluate practices in the country - Leaders in relevant ministries and the government genuinely want to promote Moldova's continued adherence with the European Social Charter
	OP1.1.2: Number of the various stakeholders participating in knowledge exchange/analytical activities. TV: 60 BL: 0	OP1.1.2: Data are included in the annual reports. The final data will be included in the final project report.	Data source: European Social Charter ratification services, project report Collection method: online Frequency: Once, in 2025 Responsibility: Government	
Output 1.2 Capacities of different actors, including legal professionals and staff from the Ombudsperson's Office and Equality Council, are further developed to effectively implement the new gender sensitive legislative amendments in the area of labour rights of persons from vulnerable/disadvantaged groups and relevant international standards	OP1.2.1: Number of participants in training courses, disaggregated by sex. TV: 250 (150 women) BS: 0	OP1.2.1: 272 persons participated in trainings/seminars/workshops as follows: Fifty persons (15 men and 35 women) participated in the workshop aiming at enhancing the dialogue between the Ombudsperson Institution, the Equality Council and the European Social Charter monitoring bodies held on 22 November 2023. 38 labour inspectors (28 men, 10 women) participated in the training on the treaty system of the European Social Charter and the European Committee of Social Rights with regard to social labour rights on 11-14 September 2023. 18 representatives (12 women and 6 men) from the Ombudsperson's Institution, the Equality Council, trade unions, social partners, and civil society organisations received a training on the ESC and increased understanding of their engagement with the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) within the framework	OP.1.2. Data source: CoE project statistics Collection method: participant tracking Frequency: Quarterly Responsibility: CoE project team	Risks: Possible delays in the project implementation caused by crisis situations (i.e. restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic, military aggression in Ukraine) Assumptions: staff from these agencies and legal professionals want to use all legislative and normative tools to promote rights of persons from vulnerable groups.

		of the European Social Charter's monitoring system during a workshop organised on 9 April 2024. 4. Workshop "Republic of Moldova vis-à-vis the European Social Charter: acceptance of additional provisions of the European Social Charter in the area of social and economic rights", attended by 37 participants (28 women and 9 men) on 28 March 2024. 5. Workshop on presenting and discussing the draft Guide on monitoring the observance of labour rights in the Republic of Moldova for the Ombudsperson Institution and Equality Council, attended by 22 staff members (17 women and 5 men) on 20 September 2024. 6. Workshop on improving the statutory reports to the European Committee of Social Rights for the national authorities from the Republic of Moldova, attended by 37 participants (29 women and 8 men) on 9 October 2024. 7. 46 judges, prosecutors and lawyers (26 women and 20 men) have successfully completed the HELP Course "Labour Rights as Human Rights" and enhanced their knowledge on labour rights standards as set forth by the ESC and other international standards. 8. 24 labour inspectors (8 women and 16 men) have successfully finalised the HELP Course "Labour Rights as Human Rights".		
	OP1.2.2: Number of participants using the acquired knowledge after the training. TV: 100 BS:0	OP1.2.2: Final information will be included in the final project report. To assess the impact of the trainings conducted for labour inspectors during June-October 2023, the project prepared an online evaluation questionnaire and shared it with 58 labour inspectors at the end of December 2023. As a result, 20 responses were received. The following aspects are worth mentioning: • Most of the labour inspectors make references to the European Social Charter. • Most of the labour inspectors highly appreciated the training on communication with businesses. They mentioned that their communication with employers and employees has become better and more efficient. • Most of the labour inspectors used successfully the checklist for identifying undeclared work during the visits. With regard to the guide on the application of sanctions, they found it useful but requested to develop additionally the mechanism for the application of sanctions for undeclared work. • Most of the labour inspectors mentioned that they became more efficient in carrying out their mandate and they confirmed that they incorporated the knowledge gained into their work routines, particularly in combating undeclared work. However, they noted that more trainings are needed on the methods and techniques to identify undeclared work. Additional information will be included in the final project report.		

Output 1.3 The National Labour Inspectorate is capacitated via institutional assessment, to efficiently carry out its mandate in a gender sensitive manner	OP1.3.1: Number of gender-specific recommendations on how to improve labour inspectorate's mandate. TV: 1 BL: 0	OP1.3.1: Six specific recommendations on improving labour inspectorate's mandate were included in the Roadmap developed to ensure the sustainable implementation of recommendations from the needs assessment report in the field of social rights, with a specific focus on labour and employment rights of people from vulnerable groups.	OP.1.3. Data source: Labour Inspectorate CoE project statistics Collection method: email participant tracking Frequency: Once Responsibility: CoE project team	Risks: Poor absorption rate of knowledge transferred within capacity development activities (VET management, labour inspection officials, civil servants, civil society organisations). Lack of capacities/resources of beneficiaries (VET, labour inspection, etc) to commit to the project implementation. Assumptions: The government wants to allocate the necessary resources and skills to the Labour Inspectorate to carry out its functions
	OP1.3.2: Number of staff from the Labour Inspectorate who participated in trainings, disaggregated by sex. TV: 20 (10 women) BL: 0	OP1.3.2: In 2023, 58 State Labour Inspectors (41 men and 17 women), within 6 tailored training sessions, increased their knowledge on different topics aiming at improving the efficient implementation of their mandate: the European Social Charter system and the European Committee of Social Rights case law, the national legal and normative framework on labour inspection, the effective communication with businesses, international standards, regulations and practices regarding integrity, the application of contravention fines for undeclared and under-declared work. 24 labour inspectors (16 men and 8 women) successfully finalised the HELP course on Labour Rights as Human Rights for State Labour Inspectors, organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in April 2025.		
OUTCOME 2 VET institutions are more inclusive and gender-responsive, and better able to identify and attract girls and boys/women and men from vulnerable groups and NEET youth.	OC2.1: Percentage of NEET youth enrolled in the VET system TV: 3% (at least 1.5% female) BL: 1.7%(approx.3400 persons)	OC2.1: At the national level there are statistical data on the NEET youth. According to the National Bureau of Statistics for quarter 3 2024 the NEET rate for the age group 15-29 was 23,2% in comparison with quarter 3 from 2023, which was 25,4%. At the national level, there are no statistical data on the number of NEET youth enrolled in the VET system. Some VET institutions collect individually these data. The project collected data from eight VET institutions, project partners. Out of the eight VET institutions, only four were able to provide such data. This data reveals that 104 individuals were enrolled in the 2022 academic year and 157 in the 2023 academic year. We will ask the eight VET partner institutions to provide us data for 2024 and 2025. We will include this data in the final project report.	OC2. Data source: - Baseline and final assessment of the inclusivity of VET institutions and their capacity to attract students from vulnerable groups and NEET - Information from VET institutions Collection method: - Direct data collection from institutions and students, document analysis Frequency: Annually and regularly after the adoption of strategies and promotional events Responsibility: CoE project team and project experts	Risks: Lack of motivation or knowledge of the partners (Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, VET aamanagers, National Agency for Employment) regarding gender mainstreaming, which would require awareness raising on the importance of gender perspective. O Assumptions: Aside for these interventions, VET institutions are equipped to include students from vulnerable groups/NEET
	OC2.2: Number of gender responsive Action Plans developed for participating VET institutions, for attracting persons from vulnerable groups and NEET youth TV: 5 BL: 0	OC2.2: The project selected 8 VET institutions to provide support for the integration of people from vulnerable groups into the VET system. The project developed 8 communication plans, each tailored to a specific VET institution, aiming to attract people from vulnerable groups to the VET system.		

	OC2.3: Number of guides for the VET institutions on the gender sensitive integration of NEET youth in VET developed, validated by Ministry of Education and Research and piloted TV: 1 BL: 0	OC2.3: The roadmap on the implementation of recommendations from the survey on NEET youth in the Republic of Moldova will serve as a guide for further actions to integrate the NEET youth in VET. The roadmap was developed and presented during the round table on 30 June 2025. Thirty representatives of different stakeholders participated in this event.		
	OC.2.4: Percent of Roma girls/women graduated from partner VET institutions in 2025 compared to 2021 TV: at least 10% annually BL: 0%	OC.2.4: At the national level, Ministry of Education and Research does not collect centralised data on Roma VET students. The VET institutions collect individually these data. The project collected data on Roma students from eight VET institutions, project partners. These data reveal that 8 Roma students graduated 8 VET institutions in the 2022/2023 academic year . We will ask the eight VET partner institutions to provide us data for 2024/2025 academic year. We will include this data in the final project report.		
Output 2.1 A “National Network for NEET Integration in VET system” is created to share knowledge and develop mechanisms in a gender responsive manner to better involve women/girls and men/boys from NEET in the VET system	OP2.1.1: Number of participants disaggregated by target groups (NEET, NEET women/girls, CSO and VET representatives, employers) participating in the network meetings TV: 50 BL: 0	OP2.1.1: 98 representatives of different institutions participated in 11 events aiming to establish the NEET Network during 2023-2024: - A round table on the creation of a gender responsive National Network for NEET Integration into the VET system, attended by 21 participants (15 women and 6 men) on 27 February 2024. - A workshop on the development of draft constitutive documents of the NEET Network, including the Network Concept, Rules of Procedure, Memorandum of Cooperation and Action Plan, attended by 17 participants (11 women and 6 men) on 30 April 2024. 8 online meetings to finalise the constitutive documents and assist in preparing for the official NEET Network launch and the 1st General Assembly Meeting of the NEET Network, attended by 16 participants from each of 8 Network member institutions on 25 April – 24 June 2024. - Official Launching Event of the National Network for integration of NEET Youth into the VET System, attended by 44 participants (25 women and 19 men) on 25 June 2024. The representatives are disaggregated by target groups: Ministries - 5 National Agency for Youth – 2 National Youth Council – 4 Chamber of Commerce – 1 National Employment Agency – 3 VET institutions – 47 Club of Young Makers – 1 Rayonal Council Leova – 1 Territorial subdivision of the agency for employment Leova – 1 Republican Professional Education Development Center of the Continuous Training and Leadership Center – 1 Chamber of Commerce and Industry – 1 Sector Committees for Vocational Training – 5	OP.2.1. Data source: Information from the Network Collection method: - Direct data collection from Network participants - Direct observation Frequency: annually Responsibility: CoE project team and project experts	Risks: No sound interests and commitment from beneficiaries to establish the National Network for NEET Integration in VET system and activate it. Assumptions: Interest of national and local partners to participate in this Network

		ADA – 2 GIZ – 4 UNFPA – 1 CEDA – 1		
	OP2.1.1: Number of meetings of the network held during the project duration TV:6 BL:0	OP2.1.1: 17 NEET network meetings were organised. 11 events were organised to establish and launch the NEET Network. Following NEET launching event on 25 June 2024, 6 additional network meetings were organised on different topics: 1. 1 round table on presenting and discussing the research findings and recommendations following the VET related needs assessment survey focused on the current needs of Neet youth, 24 September 2024, - 28 participants (20 women, 8 men); 2. 1 workshop on social integration of people with disabilities, with a focus on promotion of their employment and internship opportunities, attended by 48 representatives of various ministries, agencies, social partners, universities and civil society organisations on 1 April 2025 ; 3. 1 round table on the presentation of the draft roadmap for the implementation of the recommendations provided in the gender sensitive needs assessment survey focused on the current needs of NEET youth, with a particular emphasis on women/girls, 30 June 2025, - 25 participants (19 women, 6 men); 4. 2 workshops on social integration of people with disabilities, with a focus on promotion of their employment and internship opportunities to be organised in November 2025.		
Output 2.2 Improved knowledge about VET related needs of women/girls and students from vulnerable groups in selected regions	OP2.2.1: Number of regions for which gender sensitive detailed data on situation of NEET women/girls is available TV: 4 BL: 0	OP2.2.1: The needs assessment survey focused on the current needs of NEET youth vis-à-vis the VET system was carried out among 857 NEET young people across the country (all 32 districts).	Data source: CoE project team; Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Collection method: survey result analysis Frequency: once, after output activities carried out Responsibility: CoE project team and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	Risks: Not finding the right local partners who can credibly conduct surveys and who have credibility with NEET youth Assumption: Survey will provide a clearer picture of NEET situation
	OP2.2.2: Number of recommendations implemented to address the needs of NEET women/girls vis-à-vis VET integration. TV:3 BL:0	OP2.2.2: One of the recommendations of survey focused on the current needs of NEET youth vis-à-vis the VET system was to provide support for the accessibility of VET institutions. The project conducted an assessment of accessibility for people with physical disabilities to and within the premises of 7 VET institutions. The Ministry of Education and Research will use the assessment findings and recommendations to refurbish the existing infrastructure of VET institutions. Additionally, the results of this assessment were shared with the VET partner institutions. They		

		will use this information when requesting funding from the state budget for the refurbishment works.		
Output 2.3 Need for improved communication/outreach to various NEET and vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls is acknowledged and reflected in communication strategies of VET institutions	OP2.3.1: Number of VET institutions adopting the developed communication strategy aimed at attracting more students, particularly targeting vulnerable groups and notably women/girls TV: 15 BL: 0	OP2.3.1: The project developed a communication strategy for the NEET network aiming at integrating NEET youth into the VET system in cooperation with the eight VET institutions, project partners. The eight VET institutions discussed and approved the communication strategy for future use. Based on the developed strategy, the eight VET institutions developed their individual communication plans aiming at implementing the actions from the strategy.	OP2.3. Data Source: - Baseline and final assessment of the communications strategy to attract more students from vulnerable groups to the VET system - Official government statistics - Expert reports Collection method: - Direct observation, information from experts and participants Frequency: - Annually - Regularly as and when events are held Responsibility: CoE project team and project experts	Risks: - Very vulnerable groups (without access to internet and not currently in schools) may not be reached - The communication strategy might not increase number of NEET youth in VET system because of other structural barriers (e.g. lack of social welfare/family support) Assumptions: - Attendance of students from vulnerable groups/NEET is low because of a lack of awareness of the VET system and not because of other structural barriers - A large number of these beneficiaries have access to the internet or are attending school at the moment
	OP2.3.2: Number of communication campaigns aimed at attracting more students, particularly targeting vulnerable groups (including women/girls) actually carried out TV: 5 BL: 0	OP2.3.2: As part of the awareness raising activities on attracting more students to VET institutions by promoting their activities and educational offers, the following was implemented: - Following the establishment of the NEET network, a facebook page was created for the promotion of the NEET network activity as well as VET Institutions' work and educational offers. - Mentoring is provided to communication specialists from each VET institution to promote the VET Institutions' work and educational offers on the web pages of VET institutions and social media pages, including the Facebook page of the NEET network. - The project developed the map of VET institutions on the web page of Ministry of Education and Research. - A video spot was produced to promote the VET map and the educational offers of VET institutions. - Nine video reels are produced to attract more NEET youth to VET system: October-November 2025.		
Output 2.4 Capacities of teachers and support services with regard to students (girls and boys/women and men) with special needs within VET are further developed.	OP2.4.1: Number of teachers in VET system trained in inclusive and gender sensitive education from social rights perspective TV: 40 BL: 0	OP 2.4.1 78 VET teachers were trained on inclusiveness, gender equality and integration from a human rights perspective.	OP2.4. Data source: - Trainings attendance records - VET institutions Collection method: - Direct data collection participant tracking Responsibility: CoE project team, VET institutions	Risks: - Possible delays in the project implementation caused by crisis situations (i.e. restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic, military aggression in Ukraine) - Poor absorption rate of knowledge transferred within capacity development activities (VET management,
	OP2.4.2: Number of VET student councils trained in inclusive and gender sensitive education TV: 4 BL: 0	OP2.4.2: The representatives of student councils were trained during the cascade seminars. Data will be collected after the organisation of all cascade seminars and presented in the final project report.		

	OP2.4.3: Number of students with special needs that benefitted from guidance and counselling in partner VET institutions, disaggregated by sex TV: 50 (25 women/25 men) BL: to be confirmed during the first year of project implementation	OP2.4.3:			labour inspection officials, civil servants, civil society organisations). - Lack of capacities/resources of beneficiaries (VET, labour inspection, etc) to commit to the project implementation. Assumptions: Willingness of teachers to take part in inclusivity trainings Capacity of institutions to establish counselling and support services
		At national level, there are no data available on the number of VET institutions in which teaching support staff operate. The unit for teaching support staff is not provided for in the staff lists of VET institutions. However, the VET institutions can request the psychopedagogical unit assistance, if needed.			
		The project conducted a survey among the eight VET institutions, project partners, requesting information on the existence of teaching support staff within their institutions. Four VET institutions reported that they have a psychologist, two VET institutions have a psychologist and a psychopedagogue, one VET institution requests assistance from the Centre Youth-Friendly Health Center 'Pro-Life, if need be, and one VET institution does not have any teaching support staff.			
		Please, see below the detailed information:			
		Institution Name	No of students who benefitted from support services in 2022	No of students who benefitted from support services in 2023	
		1.VET school, Leova	15	17	
		2. Vet school, Orhei	8	7	
		3. College "Mihai Eminescu", Soroca	No evidence	No evidence	
		4. VET school 11, Chisinau	69	88	
		5. Centre of Excellence in Light Industry, Chisinau	No evidence	No evidence	
6. VET school No.2, Cahul	No evidence	50			
7. VET school, Riscani	63	78			
8. VET school, Comrat	4	3			
		The data for 2024 and 2025 will be requested in autumn 2025.			
		The aspect related to the teaching support staff in VET institutions and provision of counselling support by VET teachers to VET students with special needs was addressed during the ToT on inclusive education. The psychologists and psychopedagogues from the eight VET partner institutions participated at the ToT course and cascade seminars.			
	OP2.4.4: Number of proposals/advice provided to VET institutions on adjusting infrastructure and environment for students with special needs, taking gender issues as well in consideration TV: 3 BL: 0	OP2.4.4:	The infrastructure of seven VET institutions was assessed, with special focus on accessibility for people with physical disabilities to and within the premises of these institutions. The Ministry of Education and Research will use the assessment findings and recommendations to refurbish the existing infrastructure of VET institutions. The assessment report for each of these 7 institutions included the following information:		

		• Orhei VET Institution – 13 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 2 on accessibility; • Cahul VET Institution – 12 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 2 on accessibility; • Comrat VET Institution – 12 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 2 on accessibility; • Rascani VET Institution – 12 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 2 on accessibility; • Leova VET Institution – 11 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 1 on accessibility; • College Mihai Eminescu – 12 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 2 on accessibility; • Centre of Excellence in Light Industry - 12 recommendations on improving infrastructure, including 2 on accessibility;		
	OP2.4.5: Degree of satisfaction of students with special needs with the inclusiveness of VET institutions by the end of the project, notably women/girls. TV: Increased by 20% BL: to be determined during the first year of project implementation	OP2.4.5: The degree of satisfaction of VET students is evaluated through evaluation questionnaires during the cascade seminars. The data will be included in the final project report.		

OUTCOME 3 Access to the labour market for vulnerable groups in the VET system is further facilitated	OC3.1: Percentage of employees from vulnerable groups in sectors connected to VET system TV: Increase by 10% BL: to be determined during the first year of project implementation	OC3.1: There is no monitoring mechanism to track the employees from vulnerable groups in sectors connected to VET system. Also, there is no monitoring mechanism to track the professional evolution of students who have completed the vocational education programs from vulnerable categories and were subsequently employed. Based on the project's findings and recommendations from the research on tracking the professional path of VET graduates, the Ministry of Education and Research decided to develop a software aiming at tracking the professional path of VET graduates. The project prepared the Terms of Reference for the development of this software under the current project. The software will be implemented in the new/follow up project, as such an activity was not planned in the current project.	OC3. Data source: Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Collection method: document review Frequency: End of project Responsibility: CoE project team	Risks: VET graduates are attracted away from their profession (emigration, military, etc) Assumption: - companies in the sectors concerned are looking for skilled labour (as they indicated in fact-finding mission) - persons from vulnerable groups actually do want to seek employment in the sectors involved in the project
	OC3.2: Availability of gender mainstreamed methodologies of the Ministry of Education and Research for tracking the professional path of VET graduates implemented and adapted to inclusive education TV: 1 BL: 0	OC3.2: A research on tracking the professional path of VET graduates, including the graduates from vulnerable groups was conducted among 84 VET institutions and 1485 students (40,5% women and 59,5% men). The research report with findings and recommendations outlining follow-up initiatives and actions was discussed during a round table and the final report was submitted to Ministry of Education and Research.		
	OC3.3: Number of persons from vulnerable groups (disaggregated by age, sex and vulnerability status) that benefitted from (re-)qualification measures through VET TV: 100 (50 women/50 men) BL: 0	OC3.3: There is no public information regarding the number of people from vulnerable groups that benefitted from (re-)qualification measures through VET. However, the National Employment Agency implements the procedure for vocational training of the unemployed through voucher-based courses. In 2022, 1062 unemployed people, 744 of whom were women, completed the qualification, retraining, further training and specialisation courses provided by the National Agency for Employment ¹⁸ . 762 unemployed people benefitted of vocational training through voucher-based courses in 2023 ¹⁹ , and 602 in 2024 ²⁰ . The eight VET institutions, project partners, were requested information on the number of persons that benefitted from (re)qualification measures through VET institutions. Only two schools collect information in this regard. 265 persons benefited from (re)-qualification measures in VET school from Riscani and 43 persons – in VET school from Cahul.		

¹⁸ <https://gov.md/ro/content/somerii-din-republica-moldova-vor-primi-vouchere-pentru-formare-profesionala>

¹⁹ <https://anofm.md/ro/node/20582>

²⁰ <https://www.delucru.md/articles/de-ce-acum-somerii-nu-pot-beneficia-de-vouchere-pentru-formare-profesionala>

Output 3.1 Capacities of VET management and teaching staff, as well as representatives of CSOs, trade unions and National Agency for Employment are developed to support VET students from vulnerable groups in a gender sensitive way to integrate in labour market.	OP3.1.1: Level of understanding/awareness among target groups on integration into the labour market, including on gender aspects, particularly for students from vulnerable backgrounds TV: Increase by 30% BL: to be determined during inception phase	OP3.1.1: During the workshop on 1 April 2025, the employment opportunities for people with disabilities were discussed with representatives of national authorities, CSOs, universities, public and private companies. The participants were aware of the mandatory employment quotas for people with disabilities. However, they were not fully familiar with all elements of accessibility standards for PwD at work, for example, materials in Braille, easy-to-read formats, digital accessibility, or IT support programs tailored for PwD. Following the discussions and presentations made during the event, these aspects became clearer. Participants were able to propose concrete examples and solutions to address some of the practical challenges identified. Two more workshops on this topic will be conducted in November 2025 in the south and north of Moldova. The level of awareness will be also determined during these workshops.	OP 3.1. Data source: - Baseline, progress and final project report - Feedback forms on trainings organised Collection method: - Direct data collection from participants - Surveys with participants Frequency: yearly and when events take place Responsibility: CoE project team and project experts	Risks: Lack of capacities/resources of beneficiaries (VET, labour inspection, etc) to commit to the project implementation. Assumptions: teaching staff see career guidance as part of their role
	OP3.1.2: Number of VET managers and teachers trained in gender sensitive career support and labour integration, disaggregated by sex TV: 50 BL: 0	OP3.1.2: Data will be provided in the final project report.		
	OP3.1.3: Number of mentors and practical coordinators in VET institutions trained in mentoring skills with a focus on inclusive employment in gender sensitive manner, disaggregated by sex TV: 30 BL: 0	OP3.1.3: Data will be provided in the final project report.		
	OP3.1.4: Number of students (disaggregated by age, sex and vulnerability status) that benefitted from guidance and counselling in partner VET institutions TV: 50 BL: to be determined during the first year of project implementation	OP3.1.4: Data will be provided in the final project report.		
Output 3.2 Knowledge of soft skills and labour rights is increased among VET students from vulnerable groups.	OP3.2.1: Number of VET teachers and CSOs representatives trained at a ToT disaggregated by sex TV: 30 (15 women/15 men) BL: 0	OP3.2.1: 20 VET teachers and CSOs representatives were trained on soft skills and labour rights.	OP3.2. Data source: - Tracking of attendance - Feedback from VET students - Test results Collection method:	Risks: Poor attendance and information retention by students because the topics of trainings are not appealing

	OP3.2.2: Number of students participating in non-formal trainings, disaggregated by sex, vulnerability TV: 300 (180 women/girls/120 men/boys) BL: 0	OP3.2.2: Data will be provided in the final project report.	- Direct data collection from participants - Surveys with participants - Quizzes on labour rights following workshops	Assumptions: -VET students, and those from vulnerable groups in particular, generally lack soft skills that are helpful in the labour market
	OP3.2.3: Level of knowledge of soft skills and labour rights among VET students following the trainings TV: Increase by 30% BL: to be captured before trainings	OP3.2.3: Data will be included in the final project report.	Frequency: when events take place Responsibility: CoE project team and project experts	-Students will use the knowledge they gain on employment rights to craft a better career path
Output 3.3 Employment opportunities provided by the Article 34(4) of Law No. 60 of 30 March 2012 on the social integration of persons with disabilities, as well as employment of persons from vulnerable groups are promoted among potential employers	OP3.3.1: Number of CSO/trade union representatives trained in the social integration of persons with disabilities and promotion of employment, disaggregated by sex TV: 40 (20 women/20 men) BL: 0	OP3.3.1: 20 representatives (5 men and 15 women) of 8 VET institutions, National Employment Agency, the Trade Union, the National Confederation of Employers, and public and private companies from 8 regions of the Republic of Moldova discussed the findings of the baseline report, the current situation, challenges, and opportunities for intersectoral cooperation and integration of persons with special needs in the labour market during a round table held on 25 April 2024. 45 representatives (8 men and 37 women) of national authorities, CSOs, universities, businesses, participated in the workshop on the social integration of people with disabilities and promotion of employment opportunities and internships for them held on 1 April 2025. Two more workshops on the social integration of people with disabilities and promotion of employment opportunities and internships for them will be organised in November 2025 and the results of the discussions will be presented in the final project report.	OP3.3. Data source: - Tracking of attendance - National Employment Agency statistics Collection method: - Direct data collection from participants - review of statistics Frequency: - when events take place - At end of project Responsibility: CoE project team and project experts	Risks: - partners prefer working separately rather than cooperate - Stigmas surrounding persons from vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities persevere and prevent an improvement of the integration into the labour market Assumptions: - companies are seeking skilled workers, no matter the background or special needs
	OP3.3.2: Number of persons with disabilities/persons from vulnerable groups employed by potential beneficiaries following dialogue with representatives of CSOs and trade unions, disaggregated by sex TV: 30 BL: 0	OP3.3.2: During the events on 25 April 2024 and 1 April 2025, the possibility of engaging people with disabilities was discussed with representatives of national authorities CSOs, universities, public and private companies. During the discussions some participants mentioned that they have people with disabilities working within their organisations and are willing to employ more persons. However, they raised lot of concerns with regard to the employment of people with disabilities: - the accessibility of the job application process in the public sector. Under the current law on public servants, they are required to follow strict procedures that do not regulate/allow for alternative or accessible forms of examination. A proposed solution was to review the law to better meet accessibility requirements. - lack of accurate data on the number of PwD employed in the public sector. Many persons do not disclose their disability status to employers due to fear or stigma. As a result,		

		employers are unaware of the reasonable accommodations they should provide. To be more inclusive towards PwD and other vulnerable groups, a proposal was made to create an online platform - accessible to all - that would serve as a centralized info-hub for opportunities (educational, employment, cultural, economic, etc.). All ministries and public authorities would be required to publish relevant information on this platform. The role of civil society organizations was seen primarily in supporting the dissemination of available opportunities, as well as in connecting institutions with potential beneficiaries, particularly through relevant CSOs. Two more workshops on the social integration of people with disabilities and promotion of employment opportunities and internships for them will be organised in November 2025 and the results of the discussions will be presented in the final project report.		
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ANNEX IX - EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	Sub-Question	Measure(s) / Indicator(s)	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Data Source(s)	Data Analysis
RELEVANCE	EQ1. To what extent does the project meet the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries as defined in the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024, the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028, National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030", the Employment Programme for 2022-2026, the Development Strategy "Education 2030", the Youth Sector Development Strategy?	1.1. To what extent are the project overall objective and outcomes aligned with the priorities and policies of the Republic of Moldova in the areas of protection and promotion of social rights, development of VET sector and increasing the employment rate including for vulnerable groups?	Evidence of consistency between the project's outcomes and the priorities and reform strategies. Advancement towards implementing related national policy priorities.	- Desk review - Semi-structured interviews	- The Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024, the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2025-2028, - National strategic documents, - Council of Europe Needs assessment studies, - Project documents, reports and deliverables, - Interviews with key stakeholders	Content analysis of documents. Qualitative, analysis of interviews.
		1.2. To what extent is the project design aligned with the Council of Europe's priorities as defined in the Council of Europe's Action Plans for 2021-2024 and 2025-2028?	Advancement towards implementing the Council of Europe's priorities as defined in the Council of Europe's Action Plans for 2021-2024 and 2025-2028 Evidence of consistency between the project's outcomes and the Council of Europe Actions Plans 'priorities.			
		1.3. Is the project based on a systematic and updated assessment of the beneficiaries needs?	Evidence of qualitative and relevant preparatory needs assessment activities undertaken. Evidence of updated needs assessment studies or reports.			
EFFECTIVENESS	EQ2. To what extent did the project contribute to the expected outcomes of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024? EQ3. To what extent has the project achieved its expected results? What have been the reasons and influencing factors for the achievement or lack thereof?	2.1. Are the project outcomes and their indicators contributing to the expected outcomes and the indicators of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024?	Evidence of project' outcomes and their indicators contributing to relevant outcomes and indicators of the Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024.	- Desk review - Semi-structured interviews. - Focus group	- Project documents, reports and deliverables, - Interviews with key stakeholders - Council of Europe Action Plan for the Republic of Moldova 2021-2024 - Monitoring reports. - European Social Charter - Monitoring reports. - Relevant national and European strategies - Focus group minutes/ notes	- Contribution Analysis. - Content analysis of documents. - Qualitative, analysis of interviews.
		3.1. Have project's targets at outcomes and outputs level been achieved?	Rate of actualization per outcomes and outputs indicators. Comparison and analysis of performance with targets rates.			
		3.2. To what extent has the project been effective in helping the national authorities to fulfil their statutory obligations under the European Social Charter (ESC)?	Evidence of activities focused on improving the capacity of different relevant national actors to promote and implement the ESC. Evidence of improved reporting on ESC. Evidence of new ESC provisions accepted by the national authorities.			
		3.3. To what extent has the project supported the national authorities in their effort to align the legal framework in the field of social and labour rights with European standards?	Evidence of activities focused on improving the knowledge and capacity of relevant stakeholders. Evidence of legislative amendments or policy initiatives in the field of social and labour rights influenced by the project – e.g. new laws, legal amendments, government decisions, secondary legislation. Number and type of recommendations (including gender specific recommendations) issued by the project on legislative reform in the field of social and			

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	Sub-Question	Measure(s) / Indicator(s)	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Data Source(s)	Data Analysis
			labour rights that have been adopted by national authorities. Roadmap on implementing the recommendations developed. Number of relevant staff involved in activities, including participation in consultation and training sessions, workshops, etc. Evidence of guides, manuals or various documents elaborated during the project subjecting labour and social rights submitted to relevant institutions.			
		3.4. To what extent has the project been effective in helping the selected VET institutions to facilitate the access of persons from vulnerable groups to vocational education and training and subsequent employment?	Availability of indicators measuring the enrolment rate and employment rate for persons from vulnerable institutions, as a direct result of the project or before and after the project to measure any significant increase. Evidence of target to be achieved in increasing access to VET and employment rate for people from vulnerable groups. Evidence of targeted support (technical, financial, methodological) provided by the project to selected VET institutions. Evidence of actions initiated or implemented by the VET schools, with the project's support and assistance, for facilitation of access of persons from vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities, Roma etc) to VET and subsequent employment (ex: promotion campaigns, new procedures adopted, partnerships with employers, availability of career counselling and guidance services etc.).			
		3.5. What are the main factors that have influenced the achievement of project results, either positively or adversely?	Evidence of internal influencing factors (staff, retention policies in place, turnover registered, funds available, project management, procedures available, monitoring system, etc.). Evidence of external influencing factors (socio-economic context, policies' design, policy-decision process, political and institutional stability, etc.).			
	EQ4. To what extent were gender-specific barriers to the realisation of labour rights identified and addressed in project implementation?	4.1. What specific gender-based barriers to labour rights were identified?	Type of gender-specific barriers identified during the project.	• Desk review • Semi-structured interviews • Focus-groups	• Project documents, reports and deliverables. • Interviews with key stakeholders • Monitoring reports. • Focus-groups minutes/notes	Contribution Analysis Content analysis of documents. Qualitative, analysis of interviews.
		4.2. What type of gender sensitive measures were incorporated into project activities?	Evidence of gender-sensitive measures incorporated into the project activities. Evidence of gender-disaggregated data used throughout the project implementation.			

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	Sub-Question	Measure(s) / Indicator(s)	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Data Source(s)	Data Analysis
SUSTAINABILITY	EQ5. To what extent are the outcomes of the project likely to continue producing effects after its end?	5.1. Are there any mechanisms for securing the sustainability embedded in the overall design of the project?	Plan for ensuring sustainability incorporated in project design (including financial resources allocated)	• Desk review • Semi-structured interviews • Focus-groups	• Project documents, reports and deliverables. Interviews with key stakeholders. • Monitoring reports. • Focus-groups minutes/notes • Studies, analysis. • Strategies, plans for scaling-up and replicating the project results.	Content analysis of documents. Qualitative, analysis of interviews.
		5.2. Are there any mechanisms foreseen to monitor the sustainability of the results and evaluate their effects over time?	Existence of a sustainability monitoring plan. Evaluation plan established to track long-term effects and impact.			
		5.3. Have the project results been integrated into institutional practices or national policies?	Existence of institutional strategies or plans incorporating project results.			
		5.4. Are the project results accessible to the target group in the long term? (e.g. Training materials, manuals, guides, etc.).	Number of project-supported practices, services, or tools still in use post-project.			
		5.5. Have project stakeholders assumed and demonstrated genuine (technical and/or financial) ownership of its interventions?	Degree to which project's stakeholders have been actively engaged in planning, implementing and monitoring to ensure continuation of its activities and benefits. Initiatives, networks and training programmes operational after the end of the project.			
		5.6. Is the project, along with its results and best practices, replicable at the local or national level?	Evidence of assessment reports, studies, actions, plans, or partnerships aimed at replicating and scaling up the project.			
	EQ6. What are the factors that could hamper the sustainability of the achieved results?	6.1. Are there any risks or barriers identified that may limit the continuation of project results?	Institutional stability Human and Institutional capacity Financial stability Longterm strategic planning Stakeholders' engagement and ownership	• Desk review • Semi-structured interviews • Focus-groups	• Project documents, reports and deliverables. • Interviews with key stakeholders. • Monitoring reports. • Focus-groups minutes/notes.	Content analysis of documents. Qualitative, analysis of interviews.