



Project Title: Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova (EDMITE III)

Project Number: XXXX

Implementing Partner: UNDP

Start Date: 01 August 2024

End Date: 31 December 2028

LPAC Meeting date: 23 July 2024

Brief Description

The “Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova” (EDMITE III) project represents a critical intervention to fortify the democratic consolidation in the Republic of Moldova against a backdrop of significant internal and external challenges. These challenges include cyber operations, information operations, illicit political financing, and efforts to delegitimize democratic processes and institutions. The project, developed in response to the 2024 UN Electoral Assistance Needs Assessment Mission, seeks to enhance oversight and transparency of political contestants, strengthen electoral institutions, and deepen civic engagement. The project spans from August 2024 to December 2028, with a focus on aligning with the ODIHR and Venice Commission and supporting the implementation of the CEC and CICDE Strategic plans (2024-2027).

The project is structured around a theory of change that suggests improved oversight and transparency of political contestants, strengthened electoral institutions, and deepened civic engagement will collectively foster a more resilient democratic framework in Moldova. This theory is operationalized through three main outputs targeting different levels of the political spectrum: societal, institutional, and contestant levels.

- **Improved Oversight of Political Finance, Parties, and Campaigns:** This component focuses on enhancing the regulatory framework and oversight capabilities concerning political finance and party activities, aiming to curb illicit financing and increase transparency.
- **Electoral Institutions Strengthened and Made More Resilient:** The project aims to bolster the capacity and resilience of electoral institutions against cyber and information threats, ensuring the integrity and security of electoral processes.
- **Improved Civic Engagement and Inclusivity:** By promoting inclusive participation and civic education, the project seeks to foster a more engaged and informed electorate, increase women’s political participation, and enhance the legitimacy and trust in democratic institutions.

The implementation strategy will be collaborative, engaging with government bodies, civil society, and international partners to achieve its objectives. The project is divided into three phases, with each phase focusing on specific electoral events and incorporating lessons learned for continuous improvement.

By its conclusion, the EDMITE III project aims to establish a more robust framework for managing political finance, a digitally enhanced and legally fortified electoral system, and a more engaged and informed electorate. These outcomes are expected to collectively reduce the vulnerability of Moldova’s democratic processes to internal and external threats, thereby supporting the country’s ongoing democratic development in alignment with national interests and priorities.

<p>Contributing Outcome (UNSDCF, CPD):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNSDCF Outcome 2. • CPD Outcome 2. <p>Indicative Output(s) with gender marker¹:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved oversight of political finance, parties, and campaigns. (GEN1)
--

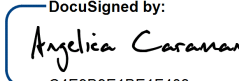
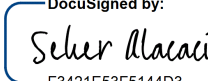
Total resources required:	\$9,416,840	
Total resources allocated:	Don or:	NORAD: \$ 2,468,613 GAC: \$163,037

¹ The Gender Marker measures how much a project invests in gender equality and women’s empowerment. Select one for each output: GEN3 (Gender equality as a principle objective); GEN2 (Gender equality as a significant objective); GEN1 (Limited contribution to gender equality); GEN0 (No contribution to gender equality)

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

<p>2. Electoral institutions strengthened and made more resilient. (GEN2)</p> <p>3. Improved civic engagement and inclusivity. (GEN3)</p>	<p>Unfunded:</p>	<p>\$6,785,190</p>
---	-------------------------	---------------------------

Agreed by (signatures)²:

Central Electoral Commission	UNDP
<p>DocuSigned by:  <small>C4E9B9E1BE1F403...</small> Angelica Caraman, Chairperson, CEC</p>	<p>DocuSigned by:  <small>F3421E53F5144D3...</small> Seher Ariner, Resident Representative a.i.</p>
<p>Date: 12-Aug-2024</p>	<p>Date: 09-Aug-2024</p>

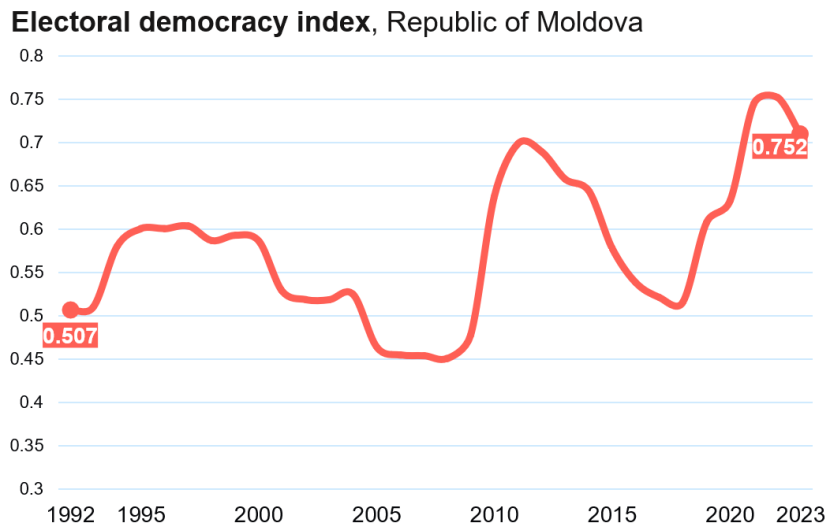


² Note: Adjust signatures as needed

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

I. Development Challenge

This project reflects an elevated threat environment for Moldova’s political institutions and electoral processes for the forthcoming national elections and referenda. Moldova’s leaders and political institutions have made significant progress in strengthening the country’s democratic processes (see chart). However, geostrategic dynamics mean that electoral processes – in consolidated and front-line democracies alike – are the targets of unprecedented pressure from cyber threats, information operations, and illicit political financing. Moldova’s democratic institutions are already the target of extensive hostile information and cyber operations, while the political party and campaign systems in Moldova continue to be targeted by illicit financing and undemocratic participants, including by state-backed threats.



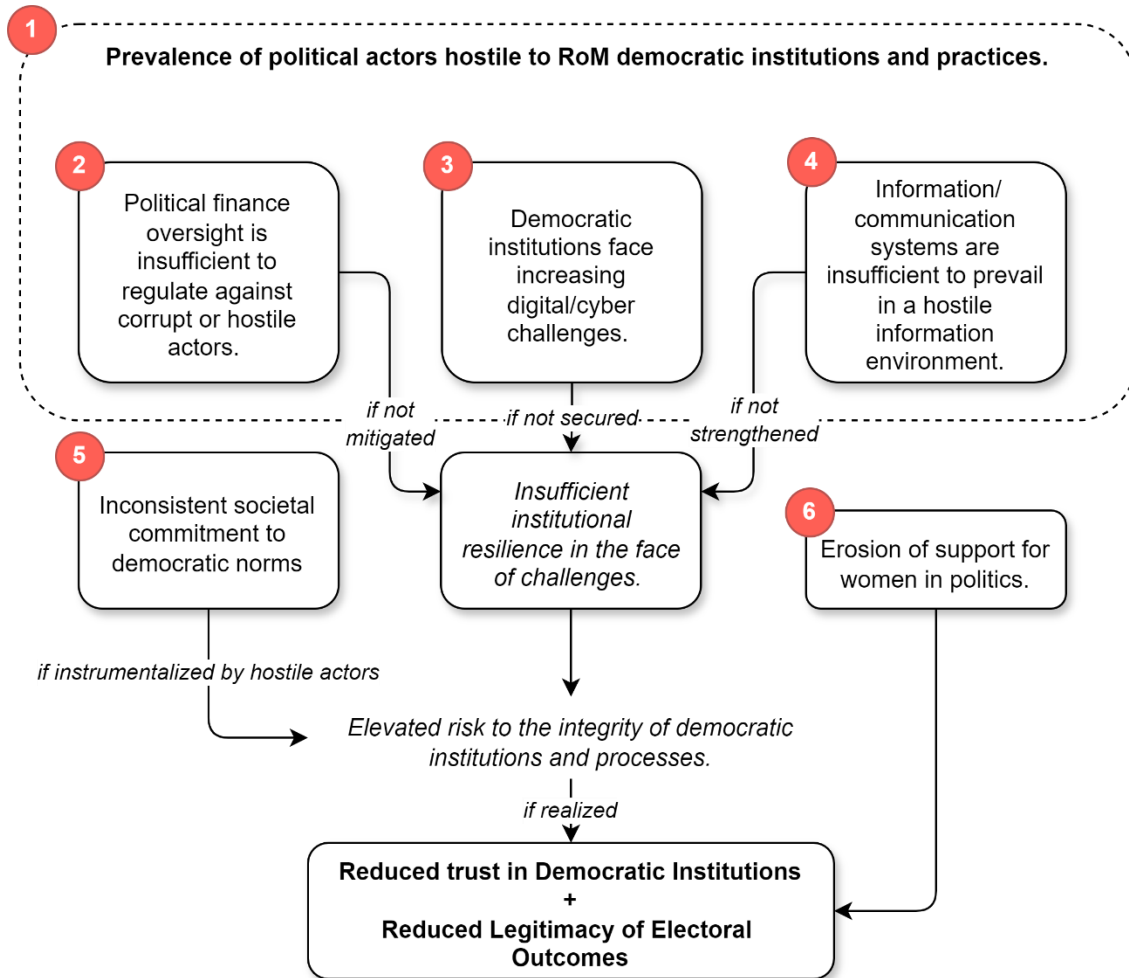
Data: Based on the expert estimates and index by V-Dem. It captures to which extent political leaders are elected under comprehensive voting rights in free and fair elections, and freedoms of association and expression are guaranteed. It ranges from 0 (least democratic) to 1 (most democratic).

Reflecting this context, the **UN Electoral NAM to the Republic of Moldova** recommended that UNDP develop an integrated electoral assistance program for the period of 2024-2028 in collaboration with other UN entities, to complement national programs and strategies. The unclassified report of the NAM is annexed to this document.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

Problem analysis:

We have identified five sub-problems which contribute to a core problem related to democratic resilience and an additional sub-problem which interfaces with trust and legitimacy. The diagram below lays out how we understand the current threats, risks, weaknesses and implications.



PROBLEM 1: There is a significant political and institutional risk related to the prevalence of political actors hostile to the Republic of Moldova’s democratic institutions and practices.

The tactical exploitation of electoral processes by undemocratic forces can be an existential threat to democratic regimes (the fall of the Weimar Republic being the paradigmatic example of the risks.) Regulating the participation of undemocratic actors in electoral processes can be a legitimate action to protect democratic governance from backsliding or collapse (indeed most European democracies have banned at least one party on these grounds). Nonetheless, the response to perceived threats can also challenge institutions, or compromise political rights and due process of law.

The debarring of parties/contestants by the GRM/CES in 2023 created significant political controversy and concern from some political actors as well as outside observer groups. The events of 2023 took place under exceptional laws and lacked sufficient legal remedies or graduated, and proportional sanctions. Since Moldovan political institutions are likely to face similar quandaries in the future, it’s imperative that an inclusive consensus is reached on how to respond to similar threats in the future, and that a legitimate legal frameworks and procedures are put in place to provide for both action and remedy.

PROBLEM 2: Political finance regulation and oversight remains incommensurate to the threat of illicit funding and illegal activities such as vote buying.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

The political/electoral systems in Moldova are heavily targeted by illicit campaign/party financing, including that linked to corruption, foreign state-backed illicit financing, and undue influence in public office.³⁴⁵⁶ There are also credible indications of widespread voting buying. Political financing issues appear to be undermining public trust in state institutions.⁷

The Moldovan Government (GRM) and Parliament have taken specific and politically controversial actions to protect against illicit financing and banned/barred parties and individuals from contesting in recent elections. These actions have subsequently been weaponized in hostile information operations. In addition, the spectrum of modalities to fuel illicit political party/campaign financing has also become more diversified and appears to flourish per recent reports of the Security and Intelligence Service (SIS) of Moldova (the agency specialized in ensuring national security).

A robust legal framework is now in place to counter political finance problems. Successive governments have made this a priority, and since 2012, Moldova has made considerable progress in strengthening political financing legislation and systems including the introduction of substantial public funding mechanisms. The most recent changes include revisions to the electoral code and political party law with strengthened campaign finance provisions, aligning with recommendations from the ODIHR, the Venice Commission, and GRECO.

The challenge is now on the implementation of this framework. Even though the CEC's ability to regulate and oversee political party and campaign finances has been enhanced, challenges persist in keeping track of the ever-changing modalities to fuel illicit party financing especially considering geostrategic interest in the region. At both the central and regional levels, there are difficulties in cross-checking expenses with income and publishing timely reports, impacting the transparency and accountability of the oversight process. A 2023 report from the Independent Anti-Corruption Advisory Committee (CCIA) recommended 27 distinct actions that the CEC should take to regulate political finance (another 24 recommendations targeted other institutions, including the Parliament).⁸

Successive electoral processes have illustrated the challenge. The local elections that took place in November 2023 further demonstrated the significant capacity gap in identifying illicit financing, threatening the integrity of the electoral process.⁹

CEC capacity is improving but insufficient to the scale of the problem. While the CEC oversees the enforcement of political and campaign finance laws, it still lacks the forensic accounting capabilities needed to detect and prevent illegal financing in elections and protect electoral integrity¹⁰. In cases where the CEC identifies instances of illegal party financing, their capacity to follow up on related criminal proceedings is limited. Additionally, the CEC lacks the necessary influence to foster an intersectoral preventive response to these issues. To address these limitations, it is vital to not only strengthen the CEC's capabilities to identify the cases but also to establish new collaborative mechanisms to counter threats to electoral integrity. In this regard, the timeliness and rigorous investigations are essential to uncover the extent of the vote buying

3 The issue of money in politics and elections has been one of the most pressing in the last few years. It culminated with the Decision of the Constitutional Court of Moldova no. 10 of June 19, 2023, regarding the control of the constitutionality of the Shor Party, link: <https://www.constcourt.md/ccdocview.php?tip=hotariri&docid=828&|=ro>. This becomes one of the most important reference documents for understanding the extent of political corruption in Moldova.

4 Report of the Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) (Nov 2023). "The Russian Federation finances the criminal group led by Ilan Shor, aiming to compromise the electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova and undermine the security of our country." [Online] Available at: https://sis.md/sites/default/files/comunicate/fisiere/Raport%20SIS_0.pdf.

5 Draft of the CEC Strategy for 2024-2026. Costs and institutional risks of the CEC (pg. 23, 24). [Online] Available at: <https://a.cec.md/ro/procesul-decisional-3379.html>

6 Summary of the Stenogram from the Parliament of Moldova session (April 2024). The Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) Director informed about huge amounts of money, originating from Russia, that Ilan Shor's structures pumped into the electoral campaign to support the derivatives of the former party declared unconstitutional (pg. 31), [Online] Available at: <https://www.parlament.md/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=arQoinGqePo%3d&tabid=128&mid=506&language=ro-RO>

7 See the Public Opinion Barometer for August 2023 at: <https://bop.ipp.md/>

8 Report No3 of the Independent anti-corruption advisory committee - CCIA. Money That Wins Elections (pg.75-84). [Online] Available at: <https://ccia.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-07-12-CCIA-Report-3-Money-that-wins-elections-Eng.pdf>

9 Report of the Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) (Nov 2023). "The Russian Federation finances the criminal group led by Ilan Shor, aiming to compromise the electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova and undermine the security of our country." [Online] Available at: https://sis.md/sites/default/files/comunicate/fisiere/Raport%20SIS_0.pdf.

10 Draft of the CEC Strategy for 2024-2026. Costs and institutional risks of the CEC (pg. 23, 24). [Online] Available at: <https://a.cec.md/ro/procesul-decisional-3379.html>

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

criminal phenomenon and these take time. Detecting violations as early as possible is critical as by the time irregularities are discovered, it may be too late as this can already alter the election results significantly. Addressing illicit financing,¹¹ a major state concern, requires a comprehensive, coordinated response involving multiple stakeholders, including the National Anti-corruption Center, prosecutor's office, forensic institutions, Ministry of Finance, Parliament, National Bank, Border Police and Customs etc. This collective effort is essential to closing legislative loopholes and creating an effective monitoring system.

PROBLEM 3: Democratic institutions - including the CEC and its structures - face increasing digital/cyber challenges.

Contemporary elections require robust digital electoral management systems to organize complex operations professionally, transparently, robustly and in a secured manner. One of the most substantial contributions of UNDP's electoral support since 2008 has been the development and deployment of a comprehensive modular digital system which has been successfully tested and proven in local and national elections, and whose use has been integrated into the legal framework. This system is the State Automated Information System "Elections" (SAISE).

The digitalization of the CEC/CICDE has, however, exposed a new challenge for the robustness and sustainability of the electoral institutions. While the SAISE system has significantly streamlined electoral processes—such as managing subscription lists, ensuring seamless digital operations on election day, and facilitating the submission of financial reports by political parties—it also presents challenges for the robustness and long-term sustainability of the Electoral Management Body (EMB). The CEC is currently struggling with the limited IT resources and with maintaining and enhancing the system demands financial investments, skilled personnel, and ongoing support of it. Moreover, the Government's remuneration packages don't currently allow the CEC/CICDE to pay market rates for digital talent. If the CEC/CICDE can't recruit or maintain crucial skills then crucial digital infrastructure could fail, creating risks for electoral processes. See the section on sustainability for how UNDP intends to help solve this problem.

In addition, threats to the CEC's systems are both foreign and domestic. Moldova (as well as neighboring countries such as Romania, Ukraine) are in the top 10% of countries in the 2024 Global Cyber-Crime Index. To mitigate these threats, the CEC intends to shift the hosting of SAISE to the STISC - the specialized state entity for cyber security. This migration will require significant development work to make existing modules compliant with STISC standards but in time will make the systems more secure. It is worth noting that STISC has been engaged in ensuring interinstitutional election support during the electoral cycles to the EMB within the last 5 years. In addition, aiming to support digital information security, GRM has adopted the 2019-2024 Strategy¹² and adopted the complementing law regulating the cyber security in Moldova dated 02/05/2023 that will enter into force 01/01/2025. Subsequently, at the end of 2023, GRM decided the creation of a new competent body – the National Agency for Cybersecurity. The institution will be responsible for protecting critical information infrastructure, identifying, and recording service providers, implementing a mandatory mechanism for reporting cyber incidents, as well as state surveillance and control of compliance by service providers with the legal framework in the field of cybersecurity.¹³ Despite this, it will take time until these efforts show results, respectively more immediate responses and potential temporary capacity replacements should also be enacted.

PROBLEM 4: Electoral information and communication systems are insufficient to prevail in the current hostile environment.

The CEC is and can be expected to be the target of considerable hostile information operations including misinformation and disinformation that has also be observed in during former electoral cycles when unprecedented cyber-attacks have been conducted apparently to jeopardize electoral processes. The Commission may lack sufficient strategic communications capacity to counter the anticipated volume of mis/disinformation about the election process and the institution itself. It has a communication strategy

¹¹ Ibid 7

¹² Author: Gușan, Nicu Year of publication: 2022 Title of the article: "Guvernul vrea o instituție nouă care să se ocupe de securitatea cibernetică: „La acest capitol, suntem varză”" Website name: Radio Europa Liberă Moldova, link: <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/guvernul-vrea-o-institu%C8%9Bie-nou%C4%83-care-s%C4%83-se-ocupe-de-securitatea-cibernet%C4%83-la-acest-capitol-suntem-varz%C4%83-32194317.html>

¹³ ZDG news platform, 2024, "In R. Moldova va fi creată Agenția Națională pentru Securitate Cibernetică", accessed: 10 May 2024, link: <https://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-sociale/doc-in-r-moldova-va-fi-creata-agentia-nationala-pentru-securitate-cibernetica>

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

developed with the support of UNDP and uses a sufficient range of methods, but has not fully implemented the strategy, and lacks a dedicated spokesperson.

PROBLEM 5: Public commitment to democratic norms is inconsistent. Popular commitment to inclusive democratic processes – demonstrated through *genuine* civic engagement – is the most important firewall against authoritarianism and democratic backsliding.

Regrettably, civic participation in electoral processes in Moldova is declining, and is increasingly fragmented. Though about half of Moldova’s eligible voters cast a ballot in recent national elections, turnout has declined by about 10% per decade in the last 30 years. Some segments of the population appear to be more susceptible to mis/disinformation due to various factors including the primary consumption of media products which do not reinforce Moldova’s democratic norms. Such populations could be vulnerable to instrumentalization by political forces and could be used to discredit or delegitimize credible electoral processes.

A citizen engagement index, developed by CPD (2023) suggests that the percentage of the domestic population which is only minimally engaged in democratic processes is dramatically increasing in recent elections. Following the trends regionally, youth are less engaged than older segments of the population. The sharp declines in engagement, if current trends continue, represent a significant risk to democratic processes in Moldova.

Low levels of engagement increase vulnerabilities: research suggests it is easier to influence the outcome of a low-turnout election, by the vote of an unengaged voter. Reversing this trend will require deepening civic engagement focusing on disengaged populations in the country such as minorities, youth, and in the diaspora. Civic education may help to construct a social firewall against undue influence, vote buying, and other illicit activities.

Voters are increasingly at risk of being targeted by campaigns to undermine Moldovan democratic institutions including fake news, misinformation, disinformation, and vote buying. While engagement is declining, the threat of targeting by anti-democratic actors is at an unprecedented level, representing a risk to democratic continuity in Moldova. In the current digital media era,¹⁴¹⁵ voters operate in challenging environments as electoral contestants often accuse their rivals of wrongdoing in order to gain political advantage or mask their own failings¹⁶¹⁷. This makes it harder for citizens to differentiate between politicians, and to hold corrupt or undemocratic leaders accountable, especially when the formal media is heavily politicized, and leaders deploy disinformation via social media.¹⁸

PROBLEM 6: There is a measurable erosion of support for women political participation and leadership. Although Moldova has made remarkable progress towards achieving equality in terms of women in elected office (from the apex level to local government) there appears to be a measurable backlash against this progress. Citizens are now more likely to tell pollsters that ‘women have no place in politics,’ or that ‘women are less capable of leadership than men.’ The Gender Equality Index 2023¹⁹, developed by the *Centrul Parteneriat pentru Dezvoltare*, reveals a concerning trend. Despite the positive impact of the ‘double quota’ system (which increased women’s representation in public positions), the 2023 local general elections highlighted growing stereotypes and prejudices against women in politics. Barriers continue to persist due to patriarchal traditions, fear of change, constant religious and cultural influences, and a lack of understanding

14 UNDP, USAID (2021), “How social media fuels echo chambering phenomenon in Moldova and how to address it?” [Online] Available at: <https://www.undp.org/moldova/publications/how-social-media-fuels-echo-chambering-phenomenon-moldova-and-how-address-it>.

15 WeForum.org. (2022, October). How to Address Disinformation. [Online] Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/10/how-to-address-disinformation>

16 Ibid 12

17 Gender Equality Platform (2023). Findings of the “Monitoring of Sexist Discourse during 2023 Local Election”. Total 216 cases of sexist attacks and behaviors. [Online] Available at: <https://egalitadedegen.md/platforma-pentru-egalitate-de-gen-dezvaluaie-practici-discriminatorii-discursul-electoral-din-2023/>.

18 Promo-Lex NGO (2023). “Report Summary on Hate Speech Monitoring during the 2023 Elections”. Hate speech and incitement to discrimination messages directed against electoral competitors and/or politicians in election to denigrate or ridicule. Conclusions and findings section (pg. 7-10). [Online] Available at: https://promolex.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Sumar_raport_DU_ALG2023_anul_2024_ENG.pdf.

19 CPD NGO, UNDP, UN Women (2023). “Gender Equality Index 2023”. Underlining a worsening in advancing gender equality (pg. 8-10, 55-56). [Online] Available at: https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Raport-compilat_FINAL-RO.pdf

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

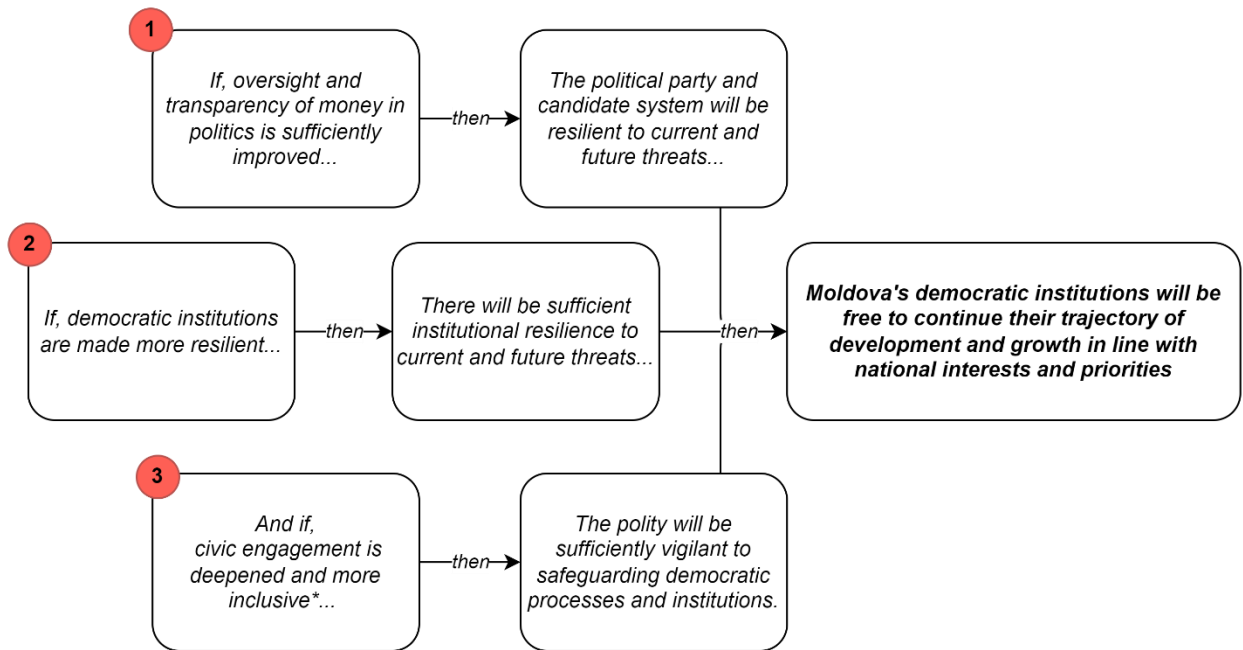
of gender equality principles. The findings showcase that as women seek higher elective positions, societal acceptance diminishes²⁰. Therefore, addressing these challenges is crucial for a more inclusive political landscape in Moldova²¹. Indicators of support for the inclusion of minorities, young people and people with disabilities also declined over the same period. If this trend continues there is a significant risk of undoing much of the progress made in the last few decades.

Each of the problems identified above contribute to the risk that democratic processes, such as elections fail in some important way (such as a cyber-attack, a protest movement which delegitimizes a credible election), which causes a significant loss of trust in the institutions and undermines the legitimacy of the outcome. The risk level could be exacerbated by the rapid introduction of electoral process changes such as the late-cycle introduction of out-of-country postal voting (OCPV). This project is designed to help Moldova’s democratic institutions to build institutional resilience and mitigate these risks.

Strategy

The outcomes, outputs, and activities detailed in this programme document are designed around a theory of change responding to the problems outlined above.

Diagram: High-level theory of change.



* including sub-national/autonomous jurisdictions

1. **If** the oversight and transparency of the political finance system (and the broader candidate/party management) can be *sufficiently* improved then it is reasonable to assume that the body of mainstream political contestants – parties and candidates alike – would *largely* be uncompromised by illicit and corrupt funding sources whether foreign, domestic, direct, indirect, or in-kind. This logic must be caveated that given the geo-strategic risk environment, it is likely that even with robust oversight in place some contestants are likely to be compromised in national/local elections. Nonetheless, provided these are marginal, they are unlikely to compromise the overall quality of electoral processes or the trajectory of the RoM’s political development. [We note that due to the administrative and political arrangements in Gagauzia and Transnistria, contestants in these

20 UNDP, UK Embassy, GGF (2023). Preliminary findings of the “Political Economy Analysis (draft V.2)”. Section: Civic and political engagement of women (pg. 65).

21 Draft of the Strategy of the CEC. Importance to continue gender equality education and support (pg. 38). [Online] Available at: <https://a.cec.md/ro/procesul-decisional-3379.html>

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

jurisdictions will be at greater risk of compromise through foreign influence campaigns. In light of this, the targeting of our interventions will focus resources on areas with the greatest risk.]

2. If Moldova's democratic institutions – most importantly the CEC, but also CICDE, the National Courts of Laws, etc. – become more resilient, then there will be sufficient resilience in the electoral institutions to current and future foreign and domestic threats. Resilience in this context encompasses the integrity of the system from the Chair of the CEC, through the secretariat and the digital electoral management capabilities, the communication and information functions of the institution, to the selection, training and management of frontline election administrators. Given the remarkable progress that Moldova's electoral institutions have achieved since 2008, it is reasonable to infer that these institutions can rise to meet the challenge of the current cycle.
3. If civic engagement is deepened and broadened, then the body politic will be sufficiently vigilant to safeguard democratic processes and institutions against anti-democratic threats, both foreign and domestic. Of the causal pathways, this one will see the most gradual progress within the project cycle since the development of civic consciousness is a gradual process. Nonetheless, the outputs under this causal pathway – which focus on embedding electoral education in secondary and university education – are amongst the most important from a sustainability and developmental perspective.

If each of the aforementioned causal pathways are achieved and validated, and other non-electoral geo-strategic risks are not realized, then it follows that Moldova's democratic institutions would be free to continue the trajectory of development and growth that they have realized over the past three decades of independence in line with national interests and priorities.

The Project will build on the lessons learned from previous experiences, with a conceptual adjustment of the approach in supporting the transparent and inclusive electoral processes, as to ensure a better synergy, sustainability and maximize the expected outcomes.

Sequencing

There are roughly three phases for the programming with declining levels of criticality:

- **Phase I:** 2024 Presidential Elections, and the Referendum on the subject of EU membership.
- **Phase II:** 2025 Parliamentary Elections.
- **Phase III:** 2026-2028. General Local Elections.

Pause and reflect. Phase I, and to a lesser extent II, shall be characterized by prioritizing mission-critical capacity support and event-related interventions. Each shall be followed by a 'pause and reflect' period in which lessons learnt and observer recommendations are re-integrated to the work plan and implemented following approval from the project board.

Strategic framework

The Project will ensure comprehensive, interrelated and multi-stakeholder interventions in addressing a core challenge of the delivery of the trustful and credible electoral processes. It will contribute to the realization of the Republic of Moldova-United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2027 (UNSDCF),²² Outcome 2: *By 2027, more accountable and transparent human rights-based and gender-responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and to contribute to development processes*, and Output 2.3: *People of Moldova, in particular most vulnerable and marginalized, are empowered to claim and exercise their human rights and meaningfully participate in public and civic life, governance and decision-making process*. Furthermore, it will help advance the achievement of the UNDP Moldova's Country Programme Document 2023-2027²³ under the Outcome 2, Output 2.3: *Rights holders, in*

²² <https://moldova.un.org/en/209252-republic-moldova-united-nations-sustainable-development-cooperation-framework-2023-2027>

²³ <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-09/N2240592.pdf>

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

particular the most vulnerable and women, are empowered to participate in transparent and accountable governance.

The Project will support Moldova's progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, particularly SDG 16: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels", and will also tailor its interventions to support the SDG 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"; SDG 10: "Reduce inequalities within and among countries".

Results and Partnerships

Expected Results

The project is designed to deliver three key results - one each at the level of political contestants, electoral institutions, and the level of the polity.

1. Improved Oversight of Political Finance, Parties, and Campaigns.

This output is designed to ensure that the oversight and transparency of electoral contestants (parties, candidates) largely prevent illicit and corrupt funding sources and that sanctions and restrictions are in line with Moldova's commitments.

The project aims to substantially increase the CEC's ability to implement party and campaign oversight during the forthcoming national elections and referenda, by providing additional capacity (centrally and in selected districts). The project will provide advisors to assist the CEC in implementing the 27 recommendations of the CCIA, update laws and regulations as appropriate²⁴, and consult with political contestants. UNDP will also work with the CEC and other actors to undertake a multifaceted approach to counter vote buying that combines training, collaboration, and timely action. We will also explore adaptive interinstitutional mechanisms inclusive of law enforcement, investigation, and responsive measures²⁵.

The disqualification of contestants (parties and candidates) in the 2023 local elections was one of the most controversial acts in recent elections. To mitigate the risk in the forthcoming Parliamentary elections, the project will assist electoral stakeholders in reviewing the approach for managing electoral contestants in line with comparative experience and recommendations from the Venice Commission/ODIHR. The project will sponsor stakeholder discourse activities aimed at knowledge dissemination and consensus building, as well as provide fellowships for topical academic research and dissemination to contribute to the national discourse around this crucial topic. These activities are sequenced to take place after the presidential elections but before the parliamentary elections.

2. Electoral Institutions Made Stronger and More Resilient.

Digital electoral management capabilities. The project will support the CEC/CICDE to secure and strengthen their digital electoral management capabilities. This will include supporting CEC to upgrade SAISE to further digitize and enhance the electoral process, including streamlining electoral processes and political finance oversight²⁶. A key intervention of the Project will focus on developing a new version of the Register of Voters – one of the core modules of SAISE. Likewise, the project will support CICDE to strengthen its digital services offer, including by strengthening its online training and certification platform²⁷.

²⁴ Support to CEC achieving Objective 2.2 "Strengthening institutional integrity", Strategic Plan for 2024 - 2026 of the Central Electoral Commission of the Republic of Moldova, p. 48-50, https://a.cec.md/storage/ckfinder/files/2399%20Anexa_Program%20strategic%20CEC%202024_2026.pdf

²⁵ Support to CEC achieving Objective 2.1 "Increasing the level of political and electoral integrity", p. 46-48

²⁶ Support to CEC achieving Objective 1.2 "Strengthening transparency and efficiency of the electoral process through technology", p. 41-43

²⁷ Support to CICDE achieving Objective 1.1.2 "Certify the electoral training of 100% of the required people for appointment as members of the electoral bodies", including actions 1.1.2.3 "Provide training to candidates for certification examination on the remote training platform" and 1.1.2.4 "Develop the information system for the certification in the electoral field", please see Public Institution 'Centre for Continuous Electoral Training' strategic Program and Action plan for the years 2024-2027, https://cicde.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Program-strategic-CICDE-2024-2027_aprobat_eng.pdf, https://cicde.md/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Plan-de-actiuni-CICDE-2024-2027aprobat_eng-1.pdf

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

This will require seconding some IT staff to the CEC/CICDE on a temporary basis to fill identified human resource gaps. Please [see the note on sustainability](#), for how we will be working towards a longer-term sustainable solution that allows the CEC/CICDE to recruit, manage, and retain sufficient IT capabilities.

Collaborative efforts will enhance the IT system stability and innovation. By engaging external partners, such as technology experts and academia, engaging in Public-Private Partnerships (partnerships with private entities or international organizations can provide technical support) improving the resource constraints. To support decision-making and improve transparency, the project will assist the CEC in building an analytical decision-support practice which allows the CEC to make better decisions and make more usable data available to electoral stakeholders.

Strategic communication capabilities. To strengthen the electoral institutions' engagement in national discourse, the project will enhance the strategic communication capabilities of the CEC. This will include assisting the CEC to implement its Strategic Communications Strategy (developed with UNDP support) including appointing a spokesperson on a pilot basis, to improve communication with the media²⁸.

CEC core functions enhanced. The project will support the CEC in specific areas identified by civil society and observer groups. These include enhancing the capabilities of the [second-level] DECs,²⁹ particularly in relation to their roles in political/campaign finance oversight, and in the certification of the results. In a second activity, the project will also build the capacity of the CEC to handle electoral complaints³⁰. This builds on UNDP's ongoing work to automatize the submission and examination of the extrajudicial contestation submitted by various interested subjects/contestants (electoral candidates, representatives, parties, interested citizens) against the violation of electoral legislation. Lastly, the project will work with the CEC to devise and implement an approach to reduce the prevalence of the diseased cases remaining within the voter register that derives from the register of population of Moldova. Lastly, the CEC will work with CICDE to enhance the electoral education curriculum and delivery of the operational training to polling officials (PEC members).

3. Improved Civic Engagement and Inclusivity.

The civic education system is consolidated. The project will build on and consolidate the civic education systems, curricula, and partnerships developed in collaboration with CICDE³¹. This will increase [by X%] the number of secondary school studies, and university graduates exposed to the electoral education curriculum. We will also build the capacity of CICDE, including its digital curricula and certification processes to fulfill its crucial role in civic and electoral education. The project will also support the organization of thematic town hall meetings, debates, and forums at the local level targeting issues related to democratic integrity including the involvement of students and adults (former students) who benefited from electoral education, promoting active citizenship and democratic participation in the previous EDMITE phases.

Women's political participation is reinforced. To reinforce public confidence in women's political participation/leadership the project will support perception change related to women's political participation, strengthen the policy framework and institutionalization of women's political participation across institutions, widen the pipeline of future leadership candidates, and support the enforcement of laws against misogynistic speech. Each of these activities will be coordinated with UN Women.

The project will specifically support a campaign, focused on perception change related to women's political participation³². UNDP will leverage technical expertise in behavioral science in design and sequencing, and the highest impact delivery mechanisms to maximize the behavioral change impact of this campaign. We will

28 Support to CEC achieving Objective 1.1 "Institutional transparency enhanced", specifically sub-objectives 1.1.2 "Communication between CEC and mass-media organizations improved" and 1.1.5 "Prevention and management of CEC image crises", p. 38-41

29 Support to CEC achieving Objective 1.3 "Increasing the level of transparency of hierarchically lower electoral bodies", including sub-objectives 1.3.1 "Improving visibility and transparency of hierarchically lower electoral bodies" and 1.3.2 "Capacitating communication with the public of hierarchically lower electoral bodies", p. 43

30 Support to CEC achieving sub-objective 1.4.1 "Ensuring transparency of electoral complaints processes", p. 43-44

31 Support to CICDE achieving sub-objectives 1.2.1 "Promote democratic values among voters and future voters through 30 civic and electoral education activities and two information campaigns every year" and 1.2.2 "Integrate electoral education into formal education by conducting 3 trainings per year for teachers and providing them with methodological support"

32 Support to CEC achieving Objective 3 "Strengthening citizens' inclusive participation in the electoral process", including sub-objectives 3.1.1 "Elaboration of a gender analysis following each national electoral process" and 3.1.4 "Information and encouragement for the participation of voters of underrepresented groups", p. 53-57

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

take a robustly empirical approach to targeting and quantifying the impact with a range of quantitative metrics to track impact and value for money.

The project will work with Parliament, the Women Parliamentary Caucus, political parties, and civil society to strengthen the legislative framework for women's political participation, as well as strengthen platforms for women's political participation such as internal party mechanisms.

The project will also work to enhance enforcement of gender-based hate speech in politics by engaging with regulatory bodies and law enforcement agencies on this critical issue. Lastly the project will work to widen the pipeline of candidates for future national leadership by supporting elected women at the local level including mayors.

Electoral processes made more inclusive. The project will develop and implement robust education campaigns targeting population segments more prone to miss/disinformation around the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. This will include the conduct of a behavioral change campaign targeting segments (age/gender/education/geography, etc.) at risk of sub-mean or declining turnout both domestically and in the diaspora designed to increase turnout. To avoid any risk of bias, the targeting of this campaign shall be designed using exclusively empirical criteria agreed in advance with the CEC.

Tech-facilitated gender-based violence and hate speech addressed. UNDP will deploy the UNDP social media listening tool **eMonitor+** to expand national stakeholders' capacities to analyze and address a range of challenges, including but not limited to hate speech and gender-based violence. eMonitor+ collects and analyses thousands of pieces of online content daily from platforms including Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and YouTube, as well as website content and offline media.

The tool integrates external tools and solutions into UNDP-built software to analyze offline and online content. The deployment of eMonitor+ deployment is accompanied by comprehensive technical support including training and capacity building, and enabling national stakeholders to develop and execute information integrity strategies that are evidence-based and tailored to address the unique challenges of their contexts. Outcomes will include advancing long-term digital resilience, particularly in the form of innovative policies, encouraging whole-of-society responses, and enhancing media literacy and public awareness.

Electoral information integrity in the electoral process promoted. In partnership with national stakeholders, UNDP will deploy online tools to promote information integrity during elections, such as **iVerify**, UNDP's fact-checking tool that can be used to identify false information and prevent and mitigate its spread. The tool will allow citizens and partner institutions to submit content for verification through a dedicated website and publicly accessible social media tiplines (e.g. META, WhatsApp, Instagram). Following a three-step verification process within the iVerify system, the fact-checked reports are disseminated online (websites and social media) and offline (radio) to provide citizens with accurate and verified content.

UNDP will provide capacity-building for fact-checkers from the national partner as part of the rollout of the iVerify tool. The support will be accompanied by communication campaigns to raise awareness of the system and the dangers of disinformation. Lastly, the system will facilitate partnership-building and the coordination of responses between various stakeholders involved and mandated to work on the mitigation of disinformation.

Resources Required to Achieve the Expected Results.

Human resources: The project will require a dedicated project team, working closely and at times co-located with national institutions. This team must have sufficient analytical capacity and comparative expertise to deliver credible research and advisory services to the national partners and cooperation partners. The project will make use of international and national consultants and specialized suppliers for specific deliverables. The project management team will include a project manager, 2-3 project officers, and 1-2 project associates with variation according to delivery requirements. Technical oversight will be the responsibility of an international Chief Technical Advisor.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

UNDP Country Office will provide programmatic support (planning, monitoring, reporting to Donor) and quality assurance, as well as support to procurement processes, management of the Project budget and finance, human resources, and administrative matters on a cost recovery basis.

Financial resources: Significant financial resources will be required beyond what is already committed by UNDP and development partners. The details [can be found in the multi-year workplan](#).

Partnerships:

CEC/CICDE. UNDP has a 16-year long-standing partnership with the CEC and with CICDE since the latter's founding in 2012. Our partnership has strengthened both institutions, seen the development of the CEC's digital infrastructure platform (SAISE), delivered improvements to voter registration, management of the election day, and helped in the development of various comprehensive civic education programmes for youth and underrepresented groups of population. This project has been designed with input from CEC and CICDE, and is designed to align with the following national strategies:

- [CEC Strategic plan \(2024 -2026\)](#)
- [CICDE Strategic Programme \(2024 - 2027\)](#)

See notes in the results section which link specific project results within this project with the plans of national institutions.

Parliament. The project will work with the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova to strengthen the role of Parliament in the legal framework for the management of political finance, managing contestants (Output 1), and women's political participation (Output 3). The project will work with the **Women's Parliamentary Caucus** to deliver Output 3.

Political parties. The project will engage with political parties to deliver output 1, specifically in the implementation and enforcement of political finance transparency, compliance and oversight. To ensure neutrality, UNDP will only engage with political parties in a multi-party format.

Center for Strategic Communication and Combating Disinformation. The Center is a new institution with a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of elections and referenda, particularly in the context of heightened risks from disinformation and foreign interference. UNDP will work with the center for delivery of output 2.

Information Technology and Cyber Security Service (STISC). The STISC is responsible for the management and security of Moldovan information technology infrastructure. The project will collaborate with the STISC on delivering Output 2.1.

Ministry of Education and Research (MoER). The project will sign a letter of agreement with and the Ministry to deliver activities under Output 3 related to electoral education in secondary and university levels.

Prosecution and Law Enforcement. UNDP will engage with prosecution and law enforcement (General Police Inspectorate, National Anti-corruption Center, prosecutor's office, forensic institutions, Border Police and Customs) to deliver activity 1.1, as it pertains to the roles of various law enforcement institutions in countering vote buying and political finance violations.

One UN. UNDP will cooperate closely with other UN agencies in electoral assistance including **UN Women** on Output 3, and **OHCHR** on output 1. Under Pillar II of the UNDP/IOM roadmap for cooperation, the project will collaborate with IOM on issues related to diaspora under Output 2, and 3 of this project.

National Civil Society. The project is designed to leverage Moldova's robust and well-established civil society organizations to jointly achieve common objectives. Moldovan CSOs have a crucial role to play in the current electoral cycle, particularly when it comes to ensuring transparency and accountability in the electoral process, as well as voter education. UNDP will collaborate closely with CSOs on a range of project activities

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

including campaign finance monitoring and advocacy for greater transparency and accountability in political financing. In line with NAM Recommendation 75(b), the project will work with the CEC to strengthen engagement with national and international observation organizations.

UNDP will partner with a range of civil society organizations to deliver the project. These include (listed alphabetically):

- [ADEPT](#). Adept is an independent center for analysis of political, electoral, and socio-economic processes, with a record in election monitoring, producing electoral assessments, and studies on transparency, decision-making, political party financing, legal framework amendments, and the performance of political parties. UNDP will sign a [Responsible Party Agreement](#) or [Low Value Grant Agreement](#) with ADEPT for implementation of Activity 1.2.
- [Center for Partnership and Development](#) (CPD). The center has expertise in the equitable empowerment of women and men to promote gender equality in Moldova. CPD will be a [responsible party](#) to deliver Activities 3.2 and 3.3.
- [INFONET](#). Infonet focuses on promoting democracy, the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights, and the sustainable development of communities in Moldova. They will be a recipient of an LVG as part of Activity 3.2.
- [Motivatie](#). Motivatie is dedicated to supporting the needs of people with disabilities in Moldova. They will be a recipient of an LVG as part of Activity 3.2.
- [Promo-LEX](#) Association. Promo-LEX conducts national election monitoring, analysis of electoral and political themes, advocacy, and civic and electoral education campaigns. Promo-LEX will serve as observers on the project board, but not a [responsible party](#).
- Local organizations. UNDP will engage local organizations using the [Low Value Grants](#) mechanism to implement Activity 3.2.

Electoral assistance community. The project has been designed to collaborate/coordinate closely with a range of international electoral assistance providers to jointly achieve common objectives, reduce risk, and optimize the impact of development cooperation.

- UNDP will coordinate closely with the **Council of Europe**, on the implementation of the *Improving Electoral Practice in the Republic of Moldova* project which has collaborated with CEC/UNDP on a SAISE observer module, electoral dispute resolution, and CEC communications and law enforcement (campaign funding related issues), among other activities. Likewise, a number of our project activities are linked to, and support the implementation of advisory opinions by the **COE/Venice Commission**. UNDP's work will be informed by and closely aligned with the work of the Commission.
- UNDP will likewise coordinate closely with the new **USAID/IFES** project on a number of issues related to electoral management including the monitoring of political financing, increasing efficiency of CEC, cyber security, risk prevention, strategic and crisis communication, and leadership training. We will collaborate closely with **International IDEA** on social media monitoring including in their work with the CEC. The project will also coordinate with the **EU Partnership Mission** on issues related to cybersecurity, and counter foreign information manipulation and interference.

UNDP will continue to sponsor [The Electoral Platform](#) as the primary coordination mechanism for CEC/CICDE and international electoral assistance providers. We will augment this with informal coordination mechanisms.

Electoral Observation Organizations. This project is designed to support national authorities in considering and adopting the recommendations of recent election observation missions, specifically, **OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Missions** listed below.

1. Local Elections, 5 November 2023
2. Early Parliamentary Elections, 11 July 2021
3. Presidential Election, 1 November 2020

Since presidential, Parliamentary, and Local Elections as well as a referendum are expected to take place in the life of the project, new recommendations may be expected from the **ODIHR/Venice Commission**. If

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

required, the project work plan may be realigned with these following a decision of the project board. Where our programming will assist with specific recommendations, this is noted in the [multi-year work plan](#).

Risks and Assumptions. The national elections and referenda which will take place during the period of this program present risks that this programme aims to mitigate, and others which are beyond its scope. These include risks related to domestic political tensions (potentially fueled by outside influences), risks of electoral manipulation (in specific sub-regions of Moldova and related to postal voting abroad), risks of technical failures (such as postal voting), controversies related to the presence of deceased people on the voter list, the conduct of the Judiciary in electoral disputes, and a high likelihood of disputed electoral/referenda outcomes. For the project, there is a specific risk that actors may try to politicize or instrumentalize the UN's role in electoral assistance, particularly in an EU membership referendum. A risk log is annexed to this document and will be updated quarterly throughout the life of the project.

Stakeholder Engagement. Considering the large number of electoral assistance providers, close coordination will be essential. CEC/UNDP has already established a coordination mechanism called **The Electoral Partners Platform**. The Electoral Partners Platform is a consultative mechanism to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), and national and international partners on electoral issues. It aims to enhance the integrity, transparency, and inclusiveness of the electoral process in Moldova by bringing together various stakeholders to discuss and address electoral challenges and improvements. The Platform brings together a wide range of partners (development/international, donors and national partners) who are providing support to the electoral processes in Moldova. The Electoral Platform is co-chaired by the CEC Chair and UNDP RR. UNDP is committed to further supporting the platform with a higher frequency of meetings and increased engagement at the technical and Head of Mission levels. The Electoral Partners Platform will be supplemented by ad-hoc and informal coordination mechanisms.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation. The project will facilitate problem-focused knowledge sharing and collaboration between Moldovan electoral stakeholders in countries whose political and electoral institutions face analogous threats and risk profiles. This engagement will be focused on solving specific problems identified by national stakeholders.

Digital Solutions.³³ The project integrates digital solutions as a core component to enhance the resilience and integrity of Moldova's democratic processes. The project aims to bolster the capacity of electoral institutions by upgrading the State Automated Information System "Elections" (SAISE), which streamlines electoral processes and ensures secure digital operations. Additionally, the project supports the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and the Center for Continuous Electoral Training (CICDE) in strengthening their digital services, including online training and certification platforms. By embedding digital solutions, the project seeks to improve transparency, efficiency, and security in democratic processes, thereby fostering a more robust democratic framework in Moldova.

Knowledge Generation and Management. The project will center on empirical knowledge generation and dissemination in collaboration with stakeholders in civil society, academia and electoral institutions. Specifically, the project will support:

1. Strengthening the analytical capacity at the core of Moldova's electoral institutions to strengthen knowledge generation and decision-support functions.
2. Generate, compile and disseminate thematic analytical briefs to project and electoral stakeholders.
3. Sponsor empirical academic research into complex topics without standard straightforward solutions.

Sustainability. UNDP has been providing electoral assistance to the CEC and other Moldovan electoral institutions for 16 years. In part because of this prolonged investment by the international community, the CEC is today a professional and efficient EMB with sufficient technical capabilities consistent with regional

³³ Please see the Guideline "Embedding Digital in Project Design".

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

benchmarks. In lieu of geo-strategic pressures, Moldovan electoral institutions should have ‘graduated’ and would no longer require substantial electoral assistance (indeed in many technical areas the CEC/CICDE are in a position to demonstrate and transfer good practices to other jurisdictions).

There are certain elements of electoral management in Moldova which remain unsustainable at present. The principal of these is the digital/IT capabilities of the CEC/CICDE. Government remuneration packages are not yet commensurate with market rates for the required profiles. While this project will provide short-term capabilities to help the CEC with the immediate crisis, said approach is inherently unsustainable. In parallel, UNDP will collaborate with the relevant government departments to support development of policy/regulatory solutions to this problem so that the CEC/CICDE will, in the future, be able to procure sufficient talent with packages commensurate with market rates.

Project Management

Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness. The project aims to be cost-effective and achieve maximum results with available resources by building synergies with other projects implemented by UNDP, other UN agencies and development partners. The project will deliver sustainable results that will be possible to be replicated in subsequent similar interventions. The project will use regional and global expertise in project development and implementation; using global tools and other knowledge products developed by the Executing UN Agencies and accessing information on the implementation of similar projects to achieve a greater impact. The Project will also use the cost-saving Long-Term Agreements with providers of certain goods and services available for the UN Country Team agencies due to existing arrangements within the UN Moldova Country Office. The Project will ensure the sharing of relevant expertise and implementing joint procurement with other UNDP projects, when relevant.

Throughout the project implementation, the Project team shall maintain attention on other ongoing and planned initiatives (inside and outside of UNDP) and actively explore possible synergies and opportunities for co-ordination and co-operation to ensure complementary, rather than overlapping, activities. Consultations with key public authorities, other donors and financing entities will be conducted throughout the implementation, in combination with required adaptive management, thereby ensuring the most cost-effective and results oriented use of the Donor’s resources assigned for the Project.

Value for Money. Besides UNDP’s project management principles based on the delivery of results and support change in a cost-effective manner, UNDP will use its positioning and neutrality to leverage important development change with relatively modest resources.

The project team will be guided by the principles of Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity in ensuring Value for Money of the implementation process.

- To contribute to the **Economy** of the interventions the project will look for opportunities to build on the results achieved in the previous phase of the project. It will also look at using the cost-saving Long-Term Agreements with certain categories of service/goods providers available for UNDP and UN Country Team agencies due to existing arrangements within the UNDP Moldova Country Office.
- The **Efficiency** will be ensured through the maximum possible mobilisation of beneficiaries so that the impact of the interventions is sizable.
- The **Effectiveness** will be ensured through following the exact path of actions that was planned initially within the project without major reallocations.
- The **Equity** principle will be ensured through giving consideration to the intersectionality for the parts of the project that involve the underrepresented groups.

Project Management

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

The implementation and monitoring of the project activities will be carried out by UNDP in accordance with its applicable regulations, rules, directives and procedures. UNDP Moldova will assume the overall management responsibility and accountability for project administration, including organizing the implementation of Project activities, procurement of goods and services, recruitment of Project personnel and national and international consultants, connecting to national and international expertise and knowledge networks. UNDP will also be responsible for quality assurance, ensuring the timely and expedient implementation of Project activities, including the provision of continuous feedback and information sharing among stakeholders.

UNDP Country Office will provide programmatic, quality assurance, procurement, financial management, human resources and other operational support services. The cost of support services provided will be charged to the Project budget, as described in the table below:

Support Services	Schedule for the Provision of the Support Services	Cost to UNDP of providing such Support Services	Amount and Method of Reimbursement of UNDP
Payments, disbursement and other financial transactions, including direct payments, budget revisions, etc.	As agreed in the Annual Workplan (AWP) from the inception to closure of the project	Cost-recovery based on UNDP Universal Price List and Local Price List ³⁴	Periodic billing based on actual staff costs and agreed percentage
Recruitment of staff, project personnel and consultants, including creation of vendors, selection and recruitment of I-PSA/N-PSA holders, personnel management services and banking administration, etc.			
Procurement of services and goods, including evaluation, proceeding through CAP, contracting, disposal and/or transfer of equipment and assets, customs clearance, etc.			
Travel support, including travel arrangements and authorization, ticket, visa and booking requests, F10 settlement, etc.			
Organization of conferences, workshops and trainings, etc.			
Communication support, ICT support, etc.			

The Project Team will require office facilities and equipment to ensure the functionality and operability of the Project, including computers, a copy machine, phones, maintenance and utilities costs, etc. The Project Team will have a possibility to take part in staff development activities in-country or abroad, as well as to accompany representatives of beneficiary/partner institutions on the study visits, ensuring their good and efficient organization and building their capacities for the effective performance and efficient project implementation.

Audit arrangements

The Project is subject to the standard UNDP audit arrangements. Being a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly and fully a part of the United Nations, UNDP enjoys a special status deriving from the UN Charter,

³⁴ <https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPSubject.aspx?SBjid=184&Menu=BusinessUnit>

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

the general legal framework of the UN, including the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the organization pursuant to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN adopted by the General Assembly in 1946. In accordance with this status, audits of UNDP are guided by the ‘single audit’ principle. Under that principle, any review by any external authority, including any governmental authority, is precluded under regulation 7.6 of the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, which provides that “the Board of Auditors shall be completely independent and solely responsible for the conduct of audit.” This principle was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/272: “The General Assembly [...] 11. Reaffirms the role of the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit as external oversight bodies, and, in this regard, affirms that any external review, audit, inspection, monitoring, evaluation or investigation of the Office can be undertaken only by such bodies or those mandated to do so by the General Assembly”.

The last audit of UNDP Moldova conducted by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) in March-April 2018 covered the period 01 Jan 2017-31 Jan 2018. OAI assessed³⁵ the UNDP Moldova office as ‘satisfactory’ (the highest rating), which means “The assessed governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were adequately established and functioning well. Issues identified by the audit, if any, are unlikely to affect the achievement of the objectives of the audited entity/area”. Satisfactory performance was noted in the following relevant areas: governance, human resources management, procurement and financial resources management.

Financial management

Financial management of the project will be conducted under UNDP Financial Regulation and Rules (FRR). FRR are regulations that govern the financial management of the United Nations Development Programme and shall apply to all resources administered by UNDP and to all the Funds and Programmes administered by the Administrator. They ensure acceptable levels of controls, as well as separation of duties. The new FRR are issued effective 1 January 2012 and governs the broad financial management of UNDP and the funds administered by UNDP, including the budgeting and accounting of resources. They have been updated to reflect the adoption of IPSAS and its terminology; and the revised harmonized cost classifications of the Joint report of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF on the road map to an integrated budget. Financial reporting mechanisms for the Project will follow UNDP rules and procedures and will comply with the reporting requirements of the Donor.

Anti-corruption

UNDP applies the UN Convention against Corruption and strictly follows the UNDP Policy of Fraud and Other Corrupt Practices at the country level. UNDP will provide mandatory capacity building for project staff and personnel to ensure compliance with the UNDP M&E Rules and Regulations, including on anti-corruption. The last audit of UNDP Country Office in Moldova (2018) has been satisfactory and there were no corruption cases identified at UNDP Moldova.

All Project staff will undertake the UNDP mandatory training courses on anti-corruption and ethics during the project inception phase.

The accountability of managers at the country level is prescribed in UNDP’s Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP) and the Internal Control Framework (ICF).

Intellectual property rights and use of logo

Project materials, publications, print or digital deliverables will be branded by the relevant UNDP logo and typography (subject to corporate brand-book) and donor’s logo. All intellectual products produced under the

³⁵ Audit of the UNDP Country Office in the Republic of Moldova, Report no. 1928 (23 May 2018), http://audit-public-disclosure.undp.org/view_audit_rpt_2.cfm?audit_id=1928

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

Project will be equipped with a standard UNDP intellectual property right disclaimer and, at the discretion and agreement with donor(s), may be placed into creative commons.

Results Framework³⁶

Intended Outcome as stated in the UNSDCF/Country Programme Results and Resource Framework: Outcome 2: <i>By 2027, more accountable, and transparent, human rights based and gender responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and to contribute to development processes.</i>
Outcome indicators as stated in the Country Programme Results and Resources Framework, including baseline and targets: Efficient and inclusive governance and rule of law. See baselines and targets here.
Applicable Output(s) from the UNDP Strategic Plan (2022-2025): 2.4 Democratic institutions and processes <u>strengthened</u> for an inclusive and open public sphere with expanded public engagement 6.2 Women’s leadership and participation <u>advanced</u> through implementing affirmative measures, strengthening institutions and civil society, and addressing structural barriers, in order to advance gender equality, including in crisis contexts E.1 People and institutions <u>equipped</u> with strengthened digital capabilities and opportunities to contribute to and benefit from inclusive digital societies
Project title and Quantum Project Number:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	OUTPUT INDICATORS (tentative) ³⁷	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE	TARGETS (by frequency of data collection)						DATA COLLECTION METHODS & RISKS
				Year	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	
			Value							
Output 1 <i>Improved Oversight of Political Finance Parties, and Campaigns</i>	<i>1.1 Percentage of expert political finance oversight recommendations* adopted & implemented (disaggregated by responsible institution).</i>	UNDP (+partners)	<i>To be established by Oct 2024.</i>	2024						<i>Method: Project monitoring against a database of relevant recommendations from the EU, CCIA, Venice Commission, ODIHR, etc. UNDP will commission an expert analysis to establish the baseline by October 2024.</i>
	<i>1.2 Compliance rates among political parties and campaign entities with financial reporting requirements.</i>	CEC, NAC/OPCLM.	<i>To be established by Oct 2024</i>	2024						<i>Method: Project monitoring of CEC data as well as office for Prevention and Fight against Money Laundering (OPCML) a specialized section within the National Anticorruption Center (NAC). UNDP will commission an expert analysis to establish the baseline by October 2024.</i>
	<i>1.3 Proportion of investigations/audits into</i>	CEC, MoF, NAC, GPI.	<i>To be established by Oct 2024</i>	2024						<i>Method: Project monitoring of CEC. Ministry of Finance, Anti-Corruption</i>

36 UNDP publishes its project information (indicators, baselines, targets and results) to meet the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standards. Make sure that indicators are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound), provide accurate baselines and targets underpinned by reliable evidence and data, and avoid acronyms so that external audiences clearly understand the results of the project.

37 It is recommended that projects use output indicators from the Strategic Plan IRRF, as relevant, in addition to project-specific results indicators. Indicators should be disaggregated by sex or for other targeted groups where relevant.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

	political finance violations resulting in enforcement actions.																		Center (NAC) and Law Enforcement (General Police Inspectorate) data. UNDP will commission an expert analysis to establish the baseline by October 2024.
	1.4 Percentage of population perceiving political finance as transparent and well-regulated	3 rd Party Public Opinion Research.	To be established by December 2024.		2024														Method: 3 rd Party Public Opinion Research. UNDP to establish the relationships with the necessary institutions to insert the requisite questions into national surveys.
Output 2 Democratic Institutions Strengthened and More Resilient	2.1 Number of substantiated complaints of electoral irregularities related to voting, counting & results.	CEC	To be established by October 2024.		2023														Method: Project monitoring of CEC data. UNDP to access and review CEC data on complaints to establish this baseline.
	2.2 Mean time to detect (MTTD) - time elapsed between security incident / attack and detection.	STISC	To be established by October 2024.		2024														Method: Project monitoring of STISC data.
	2.3 Percentage of electoral complaints resolved within legal timeframes	CEC	To be established by October 2024.		2024														Method: Project monitoring of CEC data. Calculation: Quotient of complaints (resolved) divided by total complaints. UNDP to access and review CEC data on complaints to establish this baseline.
	2.4 Periodic accuracy assessment of the voter registration database.	VR Assessment	To be established by Feb 2025.		2025														Method: Project analysis of CEC data. Calculated based on a statistical random sample of voter registration entries. UNDP to establish agreement, commission and conduct an assesemnt based on a statistical sample.
	2.5 Public confidence in democratic and electoral institutions, disaggregated by institution and demographics.	3 rd Party Public Opinion Research.	CEC. Baseline 4% v.+ , 37% s/w.+. Parl. Baseline 5% v+ , 31% s/w+. P. Parties. 2% v.+ , 25% s/w+.		2024														Method: Project analysis of third-party polling data (IRI, NDI, etc.)
Output 3 Improved Civic Engagement and Inclusivity	3.1 Rates of engagement, especially among historically under-represented groups.	CPD	To be established by August 2024.		2024														Method: Analysis based on the CPD 'Engagement Index.' Disaggregated by gender, demographics (youth), minority, and jurisdiction. Project to request CPD to establish baselines using existing data.
	3.2 Percentage change in support for	CPD	To be established by August 2024.		2024														Method: Analysis based on the CPD 'Engagement Index.' Project to

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

	women/youth/minority political participation, political leadership.										request CPD to establish baselines using existing data.
	3.3 Percentage change in polling stations meeting national accessibility standards	Motivatie INFONET	23% (Accessible)	Nov. 2024							Method: Analysis based on the Motivatie & INFONET survey data.
	3.4 Percentage change in gender equality (placement & sex ratio) on electoral lists.	CPD	"Baseline: Sex ratio: DC: 45.3% LC: 47.2% UNDP to request CPD to establish average placement data by August 2024.	2024							Method: CPD analysis of CEC data.

Monitoring And Evaluation

In accordance with UNDP’s programming policies and procedures, the project will be monitored through the following monitoring and evaluation plans:

Monitoring Plan

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
Track results progress	Progress data against the results indicators in the RRF will be collected and analyzed to assess the progress of the project in achieving the agreed outputs.	Quarterly, or in the frequency required for each indicator.	Slower than expected progress will be addressed by project management.	All partners involved in implementation.	
Monitor and Manage Risk	Identify specific risks that may threaten achievement of intended results. Identify and monitor risk management actions using a risk log. This includes monitoring measures and plans that may have been required as per UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards. Audits will be conducted in accordance with UNDP’s audit policy to manage financial risk.	Quarterly	Risks are identified by project management and actions are taken to manage risk. The risk log is actively maintained to keep track of identified risks and actions taken.	Project board.	Included.
Learn	Knowledge, good practices and lessons will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project.	Following electoral events , at least annual.	Relevant lessons are captured by the project team and used to inform management decisions.	Project board, and all responsible parties.	Included.
Annual Project Quality Assurance	The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP’s quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project.	Annually	Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed by project management and used to inform decisions to improve project performance.		Included.
Review and Make Course Corrections	Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making.	Following electoral events , at least annual.	Performance data, risks, lessons and quality will be discussed by the project board and used to make course corrections.	Project board.	Included.
Project Report	A progress report will be presented to the Project Board and key stakeholders, consisting of progress data showing the results achieved against pre-defined annual targets at the output level, the annual project quality rating summary, an updated risk along with mitigation measures, and any evaluation or review reports prepared over the period.	Annually, and at the end of the project (final report)		Senior beneficiaries & responsible parties.	Included.
Project Review (Project Board)	The project’s governance mechanism (i.e., project board) will hold regular project reviews to assess the performance of the	Following electoral	Any quality concerns or slower than expected progress should be	Project board.	Included.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

Monitoring Activity	Purpose	Frequency	Expected Action	Partners (if joint)	Cost (if any)
	project and review the Multi-Year Work Plan to ensure realistic budgeting over the life of the project. In the project's final year, the Project Board shall hold an end-of-project review to capture lessons learned and discuss opportunities for scaling up and to socialize project results and lessons learned with relevant audiences.	events, at least annual.	discussed by the project board and management actions agreed to address the issues identified.		

Evaluation Plan³⁸

Evaluation Title	Related Strategic Plan Output	UNSDCF/CPD Outcome	Planned Completion Date	Key Evaluation Stakeholders	Cost and Source of Funding
Mid-Term Evaluation	Outcome 1. Structural transformation accelerated, particularly green, inclusive and digital transitions.	UNSDCF/CPD Outcome 2: By 2027, more accountable, and transparent, human rights based and gender responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and to contribute to development processes.	31 December 2026	CEC, all democratic stakeholders.	\$25,000
Final Evaluation			31 December 2028		\$25,000

³⁸ Optional, if needed

Multi-Year Work Plan ³⁹⁴⁰

All anticipated programmatic and operational costs to support the project, including development effectiveness and implementation support arrangements, need to be identified, estimated and fully costed in the project budget under the relevant output(s). This includes activities that directly support the project, such as communication, human resources, procurement, finance, audit, policy advisory, quality assurance, reporting, management, etc. All services which are directly related to the project need to be disclosed transparently in the project document.

**Note: Complementary budget administered through the Edmite II project code (Award 00094503, Output 00123086) will be administered in a harmonized approach.*

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year					RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		'24	'25	'26	'27	'28		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
Output 1: Improved oversight of political finance and parties, and campaigns Gender marker:1	1.1 Implementation of political finance oversight strengthened.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$699,029
	1.1.1 Immediate capacity support to CEC	\$113,402	\$211,708	\$136,911	\$79,003	\$158,005				
	1.1.2 Advisory and program support to implement political finance recommendations.									
	1.1.3 Strengthening enforcement for vote-buying. <i>nb. additional sub-activities.</i>									
	1.2 Improved framework for managing contestants.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$374,007
1.2.1 Support for discourse and consensus-building on management of electoral contestants.	\$67,321	\$136,683	\$68,001	\$34,001	\$68,001					
	1.2.2 Support for comparative = research on management of electoral contestants.									
	Technical oversight and advisory support	\$22,434	\$89,667	\$89,667						\$201,768
	Translation		\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$28,000
	Monitoring (IC)		\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000				\$12,000
	Direct Project Costing	\$4,063	\$8,961	\$6,092	\$2,460	\$4,720				\$26,296
	General Management Support (8%)	\$16,578	\$36,561	\$24,854	\$10,037	\$19,258				\$107,288

39 Cost definitions and classifications for programme and development effectiveness costs to be charged to the project are defined in the Executive Board decision DP/2010/32

40 Changes to a project budget affecting the scope (outputs), completion date, or total estimated project costs require a formal budget revision that must be signed by the project board. In other cases, the UNDP programme manager alone may sign the revision provided the other signatories have no objection. This procedure may be applied for example when the purpose of the revision is only to re-phase activities among years.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year					RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET			
		'24	'25	'26	'27	'28		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount	
		Subtotal Output 1									\$1,448,389
Output 2: Democratic institutions strengthened and more resilient <i>Gender marker:2</i>	2.1 Digital electoral management capabilities secured and strengthened. 2.1.1 Strengthen/secure CEC digitalization. 2.1.2 Enable CEC to support and retain qualified IT staff 2.1.3 Develop an analytical system for decision support and improved transparency. <i>nb. additional sub activities</i>							UNDP	See detail in .xls	\$3,212,250	
	2.2 CEC strategic communication capabilities enhanced. 2.2.1 Build strategic communication capacity. 2.2.2 Pilot a CEC Spokesperson for the 2024 election period.	\$62,700	\$48,300	\$37,000	\$18,500	\$37,000		UNDP	See detail in .xls	\$203,500	
	2.3 CEC core functions enhanced. 2.3.1 Mechanism for reducing Voter Registry inflation. 2.3.2 Strengthen DEC capacities in PF, digital, results. 2.3.3 Strengthen complaint management capacity. 2.3.4 Operational training enhancements (CICDE).	\$39,000	\$201,000	\$80,000	\$40,000	\$80,000		UNDP	See detail in .xls	\$440,000	
	2.4 Electoral assistance coordination enhanced. 2.4.1 Enhancement of the Electoral Partners Platform	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$8,333	\$4,167	\$8,333		UNDP	See detail in .xls	\$45,833	
	Technical oversight and advisory support	\$22,434	\$88,667	\$89,667						\$200,768	
	Translation	\$3,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000				\$31,000	
	Monitoring (IC)	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000			See detail in .xls	\$12,000	
	Direct Project Costing	\$5,124	\$12,648	\$15,090	\$22,748	\$27,297				\$82,907	
	General Management Support (8%)	\$20,905	\$51,605	\$61,567	\$92,813	\$111,370				\$338,261	
										Subtotal Output 2	\$4,566,519

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year					RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		'24	'25	'26	'27	'28		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
Output 3 Improved civic engagement and inclusivity. Gender marker:3	3.1 Civic education system is consolidated.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$568,333
	3.1.1 Enhance CICDE digital capabilities.									
	3.1.2 Expand electoral education at the Secondary level.	\$115,000	\$195,000	\$103,333	\$51,667	\$103,333				
	3.1.3 Expand university-level electoral education.									
	3.2 Electoral processes made more inclusive.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$192,504
	3.2.1 Behavioral change campaign targeting segments (age/gender/education/geography, etc.) at risk of sub-mean or declining turnout both domestically and in the diaspora.	\$47,501	\$57,501	\$35,001	\$17,500	\$35,001				
	3.2.2 Partner with civil society to build capacities of a group of women/with disabilities/from rural areas/women of Roma ethnicity/women from Gagauzia									
	3.3 Women's Political Participation Enhanced.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$328,170
	3.3.1 Campaign: perception change on women's political participation & leadership using behavioral science.									
	3.3.2 Strengthen the policy framework and institutionalisation of women's political participation	\$24,201	\$154,801	\$59,667	\$29,834	\$59,667				
	3.3.3 Future leadership candidates									
	3.3.4 Enforcement of laws against hate speech									
	3.4 Tech-facilitated gender-based violence and hate speech addressed.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$146,667
	3.4.1 eMonitor+ (AI monitoring tool)	\$34,000	\$46,000	\$26,667	\$13,333	\$26,667				
	3.4.2 Capacity building and training									
3.4.3 Advocacy, media literacy awareness campaign and communication										
3.5 Electoral information integrity in electoral processes strengthened.						UNDP	See detail in .xls		\$174,167	
3.5.1 iVerify (Fact-checking tool).	\$43,500	\$51,500	\$31,667	\$15,833	\$31,667					
3.5.2 Capacity building and training										
3.5.3 Advocacy and awareness raising										
Technical oversight and advisory support		\$22,434	\$88,667	\$89,667					\$200,768	
Translation		\$2,000	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000			\$28,000	

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

EXPECTED OUTPUTS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	Planned Budget by Year					RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		'24	'25	'26	'27	'28		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount
	Monitoring (IC)		\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000				\$12,000
	Direct Project Costing	\$5,773	\$12,029	\$7,120	\$2,763	\$5,327				\$33,012
	General Management Support (8%)	\$23,553	\$49,080	\$29,050	\$11,274	\$21,733				\$134,690
		Subtotal Output 3								\$1,818,311
	Manager NPSA10		\$68,400	\$68,400	\$68,400	\$68,400	UNDP			\$273,600
	NPSA6		\$24,252	\$24,252	\$24,252	\$24,252				\$97,008
	NPSA 7		\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000				\$120,000
	NPSA8		\$122,400	\$122,400	\$122,400	\$122,400				\$489,600
	Gender Specialist 10% NPSA9		\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040	\$5,040				\$20,160
	Office rent and utilities	\$10,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000				\$154,000
	Communication +Microsoft 365	\$6,000	\$6,840	\$6,840	\$6,840	\$6,840				\$33,360
	Supplies and IT equipment	\$20,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000				\$40,000
	Quality Assurance 10% NO, 10% GS		\$13,800	\$13,800	\$13,800	\$13,800				\$55,200
	Staff development/Trainings		\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000				\$20,000
	Project Evaluation			\$25,000		\$25,000				\$50,000
	DPC	\$720	\$6,335	\$6,835	\$6,335	\$6,835				\$27,059
	GMS (8%)	\$2,938	\$25,845	\$27,885	\$25,845	\$27,885			\$110,399	
	Subtotal project management	\$39,658	\$348,912	\$376,452	\$348,912	\$376,452			\$1,490,385	
	Total	\$863,629	\$2,201,741	\$1,935,306	\$1,889,596	\$2,433,332			\$9,323,604	
	Levy 1%								\$93,236	
	Grand Total								\$9,416,840	

Governance and Management Arrangements

Implementation Modality

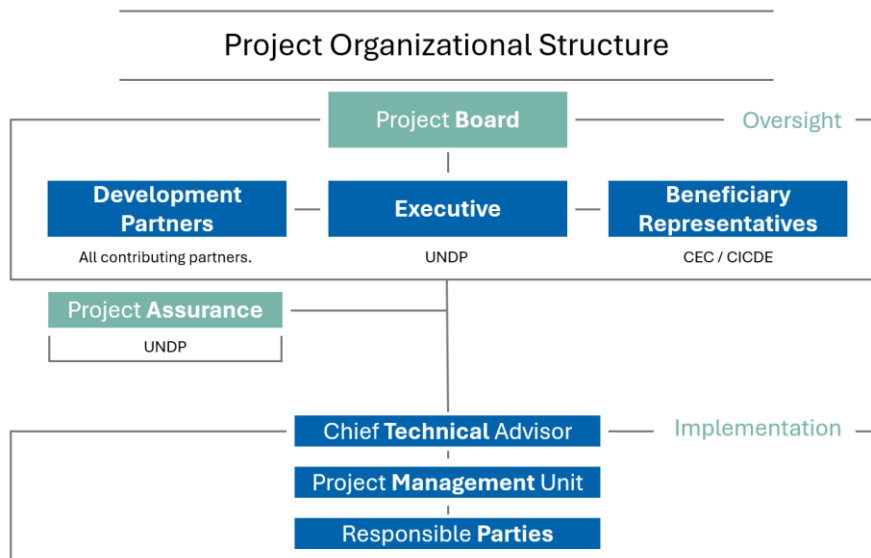
The Project will be implemented under the **Direct Implementation Modality (DIM)**. This means that UNDP will take on the role of Implementing Partner and will assume the responsibility for mobilizing and effectively applying the required inputs in order to reach the expected outputs and outcomes. UNDP will assume the overall management responsibility and accountability for Project administration, including organizing implementation of Project activities, procurement of goods and services, recruitment of Project personnel and national and international consultants, connecting to national and international expertise and knowledge networks, and quality assurance, ensuring timely and expedient implementation of Project activities, including the provision of continuous feedback and information sharing among stakeholders.

UNDP will be accountable to the Project Board for the use of Project resources. UNDP will ensure that communication, consultations, and review discussions are held on an on-going basis. During the Project implementation, synergies and linkages with other on-going Projects, in the areas of democratic governance gender and human rights implemented by UN agencies will be maintained and strengthened.

Project Board

The Project will be governed by a multi-stakeholder board or committee set up to review performance based on established monitoring and evaluation metrics and high-level implementation issues to ensure quality delivery of results, to oversee transparency, accountability and efficiency of the Project operations, as well as assess opportunities, risks and political challenges and link the project to other relevant Government and development partners' initiatives. The Project Board is the most senior, dedicated oversight body for this project. The Project Board will approve the Annual Work Plans, the Progress Reports and the Final Report prepared by the Project team and take decisions on changes in Project activities or financial allocations, if any. The Project Board will hold meetings annually. More frequent meetings of the Project Board may be organized in person or virtually/via email exchanges, if deemed necessary.

More details about the nature of the board, its roles and responsibilities, its composition, and its protocols for working are defined in the Project Board ToR, attached herein.



Project Quality Assurance

On behalf of UNDP, the UNDP Effective Governance Cluster Lead and Programme Associate will have the Project quality assurance role by, inter alia, checking the Project performance and products and ensuring that organizational standards and policies are followed in the Project.

Project Team

The effective implementation of all activities will be ensured through a Project Team that will be staffed in line with UNDP policies, rules and regulations. The Project Team will include:

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

Chief Technical Advisor. Following the recommendation of the Needs Assessment Mission, UNDP will deploy a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) to lead electoral assistance and facilitate coordination between the CEC and international partners and election assistance organizations to promote synergies and avoid duplication. The CTA will have responsibility for the technical leadership, oversight and quality of the Project.

Project Manager. UNDP will delegate the managerial duties for the day-to-day running of the Project to a Project Manager, selected by UNDP through a competitive and transparent selection process. The Project Manager has the authority to run the Project on a day-to-day basis on behalf and within the constraints laid down by the Project Board. The Project Manager's main responsibility is to ensure that the Project produces the planned outcomes within the specified constraints of time and cost. The Project Manager will be in charge of preparing Progress and Final Reports to be submitted to the Donor(s). The Project Manager is responsible for the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation framework. The Project Manager will report directly to the UNDP Effective Governance Cluster Lead. The Project Manager will be supported by the Project Team in the implementation of Project activities.

Project Officers – will provide technical and programmatic support in achieving Project outputs and the overall support to the Project implementation. The Officers will be responsible for ensuring an adequate coordination of activities through high quality planning, coordination and execution to achieve required balance of time, cost and efficiency.

Communication and Public Outreach Officer – will be responsible for ensuring the fulfilment of the communication and visibility activities related to the Project and for preparation, implementation and oversight of the communication and visibility plan of the Project. The Officer will be also engaged in establishing partnerships with Civil Society Organizations targeted by the Project.

Project Associates – will be responsible for performing financial, administrative, procurement and other duties related to Project activities. The Project Associates will work under guidance and direct supervision of the Project Manager to ensure smooth running of the Project and provision of services of the highest quality and standards to the project team, UNDP Country Office, as well as national beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The Project Team will ensure close coordination of the project activities with other relevant programmes, projects and initiatives to avoid possible duplication. The Project Team will ensure results-based project management and successful implementation of the project, close monitoring and evaluation of project progress, observance of procedures, transparency and efficient use of funds, quality of works, and the involvement of national and local stakeholders in the decision-making processes.

Detailed descriptions of duties of the Chief Technical Advisor, Project Manager, rest of the project team shall be reflected in their Terms of References.

Legal Context

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the [Government of The Republic of Moldova and UNDP, signed on 2 October 1992](#) and the Amendment to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement of 05 July 1997. All references in the SBAA to “Executing Agency” shall be deemed to refer to “Implementing Partner.”

This project will be implemented by **UNDP** (“Implementing Partner”) in accordance with its financial regulations, rules, practices and procedures.

Risk Management

UNDP (DIM)

1. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will comply with the policies, procedures and practices of the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS.)
2. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the project funds are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism, that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List, and that no UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used for money laundering activities. The United Nations Security Council Consolidated Sanctions List can be accessed via <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.
3. Social and environmental sustainability will be enhanced through application of the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (<http://www.undp.org/ses>) and related Accountability Mechanism (<http://www.undp.org/secu-srm>).
4. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will: (a) conduct project and programme-related activities in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards, (b) implement any management or mitigation plan prepared for the project or programme to comply with such standards, and (c) engage in a constructive and timely manner to address any concerns and complaints raised through the Accountability Mechanism. UNDP will seek to ensure that communities and other project stakeholders are informed of and have access to the Accountability Mechanism.
5. In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, UNDP as the Implementing Partner will handle any sexual exploitation and abuse (“SEA”) and sexual harassment (“SH”) allegations in accordance with its regulations, rules, policies and procedures.
6. All signatories to the Project Document shall cooperate in good faith with any exercise to evaluate any programme or project-related commitments or compliance with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. This includes providing access to project sites, relevant personnel, information, and documentation.
7. UNDP as the Implementing Partner will ensure that the following obligations are binding on each responsible party, subcontractor, and sub-recipient:
 - a. Consistent with the Article III of the SBAA [*or the Supplemental Provisions to the Project Document*], the responsibility for the safety and security of each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient and its personnel and property, and of UNDP’s property in such responsible party’s, subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s custody, rests with such responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient. To this end, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall:
 - i. put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried;
 - ii. assume all risks and liabilities related to such responsible party’s, subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s security, and the full implementation of the security plan.
 - b. UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of the responsible party’s, subcontractor’s and sub-recipient’s obligations under this Project Document.
 - c. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient (each a “sub-party” and together “sub-parties”) acknowledges and agrees that UNDP will not tolerate sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse of anyone by the sub-parties, and other entities involved in Project implementation, either as

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

contractors or subcontractors and their personnel, and any individuals performing services for them under the Project Document.

(a) In the implementation of the activities under this Project Document, each sub-party shall comply with the standards of conduct set forth in the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13 of 9 October 2003, concerning "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" ("SEA").

(b) Moreover, and without limitation to the application of other regulations, rules, policies and procedures bearing upon the performance of the activities under this Project Document, in the implementation of activities, each sub-party, shall not engage in any form of sexual harassment ("SH"). SH is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. SH may occur in the workplace or in connection with work. While typically involving a pattern of conduct, SH may take the form of a single incident. In assessing the reasonableness of expectations or perceptions, the perspective of the person who is the target of the conduct shall be considered.

- d. In the performance of the activities under this Project Document, each sub-party shall (with respect to its own activities), and shall require from its sub-parties (with respect to their activities) that they, have minimum standards and procedures in place, or a plan to develop and/or improve such standards and procedures in order to be able to take effective preventive and investigative action. These should include: policies on sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse; policies on whistleblowing/protection against retaliation; and complaints, disciplinary and investigative mechanisms. In line with this, sub-parties will and will require that their respective sub-parties will take all appropriate measures to:
- (i) Prevent its employees, agents or any other persons engaged to perform any services under this Project Document, from engaging in SH or SEA;
 - (ii) Offer employees and associated personnel training on prevention and response to SH and SEA, where sub-parties have not put in place its own training regarding the prevention of SH and SEA, sub-parties may use the training material available at UNDP;
 - (iii) Report and monitor allegations of SH and SEA of which any of the sub-parties have been informed or have otherwise become aware, and status thereof;
 - (iv) Refer victims/survivors of SH and SEA to safe and confidential victim assistance; and
 - (v) Promptly and confidentially record and investigate any allegations credible enough to warrant an investigation of SH or SEA. Each sub-party shall advise UNDP of any such allegations received and investigations being conducted by itself or any of its sub-parties with respect to their activities under the Project Document, and shall keep UNDP informed during the investigation by it or any of such sub-parties, to the extent that such notification (i) does not jeopardize the conduct of the investigation, including but not limited to the safety or security of persons, and/or (ii) is not in contravention of any laws applicable to it. Following the investigation, the relevant sub-party shall advise UNDP of any actions taken by it or any of the other entities further to the investigation.
- e. Each sub-party shall establish that it has complied with the foregoing, to the satisfaction of UNDP, when requested by UNDP or any party acting on its behalf to provide such confirmation. Failure of the relevant sub-party to comply of the foregoing, as determined by UNDP, shall be considered grounds for suspension or termination of the Project.
- f. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will ensure that any project activities undertaken by them will be implemented in a manner consistent with the UNDP Social and Environmental Standards and shall ensure that any incidents or issues of non-compliance shall be reported to UNDP in accordance with UNDP Social and Environmental Standards.
- g. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will take appropriate steps to prevent misuse of funds, fraud, corruption or other financial irregularities, by its officials, consultants, subcontractors and sub-recipients in implementing the project or programme or using the UNDP funds. It will ensure that its financial management, anti-corruption, anti-fraud and anti money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism policies are in place and enforced for all funding received from or through UNDP.
- h. The requirements of the following documents, then in force at the time of signature of the Project Document, apply to each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient: (a) UNDP Policy on Fraud and other Corrupt Practices (b) UNDP Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Policy; and (c) UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations Investigation Guidelines. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient agrees to the requirements of the above documents, which are an integral part of this Project Document and are available online at www.undp.org.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

- i. In the event that an investigation is required, UNDP will conduct investigations relating to any aspect of UNDP programmes and projects. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will provide its full cooperation, including making available personnel, relevant documentation, and granting access to its (and its consultants', subcontractors' and sub-recipients') premises, for such purposes at reasonable times and on reasonable conditions as may be required for the purpose of an investigation. Should there be a limitation in meeting this obligation, UNDP shall consult with it to find a solution.
- j. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will promptly inform UNDP as the Implementing Partner in case of any incidence of inappropriate use of funds, or credible allegation of fraud, corruption or other financial irregularities with due confidentiality.
Where it becomes aware that a UNDP project or activity, in whole or in part, is the focus of investigation for alleged fraud/corruption, each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient will inform the UNDP Resident Representative/Head of Office, who will promptly inform UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI). It will provide regular updates to the head of UNDP in the country and OAI of the status of, and actions relating to, such investigation.
- k. UNDP will be entitled to a refund from the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient of any funds provided that have been used inappropriately, including through fraud corruption or other financial irregularities, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document. Such amount may be deducted by UNDP from any payment due to the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient under this or any other agreement.

Where such funds have not been refunded to UNDP, the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient agrees that donors to UNDP (including the Government) whose funding is the source, in whole or in part, of the funds for the activities under this Project Document, may seek recourse to such responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient for the recovery of any funds determined by UNDP to have been used inappropriately, including through fraud, corruption or other financial irregularities, or otherwise paid other than in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Project Document.

Note: The term "Project Document" as used in this clause shall be deemed to include any relevant subsidiary agreement further to the Project Document, including those with responsible parties, subcontractors and sub-recipients.

- l. Each contract issued by the responsible party, subcontractor or sub-recipient in connection with this Project Document shall include a provision representing that no fees, gratuities, rebates, gifts, commissions or other payments, other than those shown in the proposal, have been given, received, or promised in connection with the selection process or in contract execution, and that the recipient of funds from it shall cooperate with any and all investigations and post-payment audits.
- m. Should UNDP refer to the relevant national authorities for appropriate legal action any alleged wrongdoing relating to the project or programme, the Government will ensure that the relevant national authorities shall actively investigate the same and take appropriate legal action against all individuals found to have participated in the wrongdoing, recover and return any recovered funds to UNDP.
- n. Each responsible party, subcontractor and sub-recipient shall ensure that all of its obligations set forth under this section entitled "Risk Management" are passed on to its subcontractors and sub-recipients and that all the clauses under this section entitled "Risk Management Standard Clauses" are adequately reflected, *mutatis mutandis*, in all its sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into further to this Project Document.

Strengthening Democratic Resilience in Moldova

ANNEXES

- 1. Risk Register**
- 2. Project Board Terms of Reference**
- 3. Recommendations of the 2024 UN Electoral Needs Assessment for the Republic of Moldova**