



Annex C1: Twinning Fiche

Project title: Enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system

Beneficiary administration: Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova

Twining Reference: MD 15 ENI SO 01 18 (MD/34)

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EU funded project

TWINNING INSTRUMENT

1. Basic Information

- 1.1 Programme: 2015/038-136 Technical Cooperation Facility Moldova
- 1.2 Twinning Sector: Social Affairs and Employment
- 1.3 EU funded budget: 1,300,000 EUR

2. Objectives

2.1 Overall Objective(s)

To contribute to the upgrade of the education system in Moldova in line with EU and Bologna process best practices and quality education principles.

2.2 Specific objective

To assist the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and related VET bodies/institutions and actors to further implement the national VET strategy 2013-2020 by improving the capacities of key-institutions in charge of quality assurance, with a particular focus on teachers' competences and collaboration with private sector.

2.3 The elements targeted in strategic documents i.e. National Development Plan/Cooperation agreement/Association Agreement/Sector reform strategy and related Action Plans

National development strategic background:

The **National Development Strategy (NDS) “Moldova 2020”**¹ represents the overall strategic vision of the Government of Moldova for the period 2012-2020. Its main policy objective is to promote sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. It is focused on seven development priorities amongst which the first one is: *“Aligning the education system to labour market needs in order to enhance labour productivity and increase employment in the economy”*. In particular, it is stressed that *“Modernization of the vocational education system and improvement of continuous labour force training will allow citizens to adapt to new labour market conditions. Partnerships between education and labour market will lead to a generation of educational offerings that will meet the quantitative, qualitative and structural labour force needs. This in turn will help reduce unemployment and the flow of citizens who leave the country and the rate of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion”*.

Sectoral development strategic background:

The **Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy 2013-2020** (hereafter the “VET strategy”) is the main policy document in the VET field. The strategy sets medium- and long-term objectives and tasks for the development of VET and provides guidelines and priority directions for the development of the VET system. The Strategy implementation process is based on an Action Plan, which specifies the actions, terms, responsible entities and necessary resources. The specific objectives included in the VET Strategy are:

1. Restructuring and modernization of the VET network, with also establishing Centres of Excellence,
2. Adjusting VET delivery to the labour market needs based on competences,
3. Enhancing the quality of VET through new curricula and QA and NQF developments,
4. Increasing teaching staff quality with student-centred lifelong learning approaches,

¹ http://particip.gov.md/public/files/Moldova_2020_ENG1.pdf

5. Improving the efficiency of VET funding resources,
6. To increase VET attractiveness for the uptake of VET places by 10%.

Contribution to the Association Agreement and to the Association agenda: This Twinning project will contribute to the achievement of the aims of the Association Agreement (AA) signed between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union in June 2014 and fully entered into force in July 2016. In the AA the parties commit themselves to work together on the overall modernisation and reform of the education, training and youth systems in the Republic of Moldova. This cooperation will include work to “[...] *implement and support a strategic approach to vocational education and training (VET) with a view to bringing the Republic of Moldova’s VET system in line with the modernisation of EU VET structures, as pursued through the Copenhagen Process and its instruments [...]*”.

To follow the implementation of the AA, the EU and the Government of the Republic of Moldova agreed on short and medium terms priorities in a document called the Association Agenda. In the field of mobility and people-to-people contacts, among the priorities in the new Association Agenda adopted in 2017, the following reform actions related to VET should be addressed as a matter of priority:

- Enhance implementation of the new Education code at all levels of education;
- Increase the administrative capacity of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and subordinated bodies;
- Carry out the Vocational Education and Training reform, in line with the objectives of the VET Development Strategy and Action Plan (2013-2020), in order to meet the labour market needs;
- Adopt a legal framework for the Sector Committees;
- Encourage the involvement of relevant stakeholders (including businesses and social partners) in all forms of lifelong learning for continuing professional development in order to bring them closer to the labour market needs.

3. Description

3.1 Background and justification

The Republic of Moldova is a post-soviet country, bordering with Romania and Ukraine, independent since 1991. It has a resident population of 3.5 million². During the last 20 years, the EU has been an important development partner of the country, building a reputation as a significant bilateral partner in the key areas of economic reform and decentralization, and as an important contributor to the sectors of social assistance, health, water, rural development, energy, and justice, crucial for the country’s sustainable development.

Based on the first priority of the NDS 2020 and following the adoption of the VET strategy, the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the EU signed a Financing Agreement³ for a Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) in VET for the period 2014-2016, completed by a Technical Assistance (TA) project 2014-2017⁴. The overall objective of the SPSP was in line with the VET Strategy and aimed to assist the Government: “*to reconceptualise the education programme within the Vocational Education and Training (VET) Sector and to streamline the VET institutions network aiming to increase efficiency of professional education and to*

² This is the official figure, which must be temperate since an important part of the population left the country. Pursuant to recent assessments, the resident population is less than 3 million.

³ <http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=356440>

⁴ Financing Agreement on "Support for the vocational education and training sector" (ENPI/2012/023-419)

provide a competitive workforce for national and regional economy that would meet the labour market needs in terms of quality and quantity requirements”.

After the EU intervention, the foundations of a modern, effective VET system exist and the government has demonstrated commitment to implementing the legal procedures. Despite the structural reforms already introduced, the VET reform still needs support to fully achieve the VET strategy objectives at systemic level. This Twinning project aims at supporting the institutional actors of the VET system to achieve their objectives, improving the VET system capacity to reply to the labour market skills requirement.

3.2 Ongoing reforms:

Public Administration Reform (PAR)

The PAR Strategy (2016-2018) and its related Action Plan have been adopted in 2016. Afterwards many activities have been implemented, such as the creation of Centre for Implementing Reform; the creation of the Agency for Public Services; and the reform of the Law on Government, which enabled the reform of ministries. The Centre for Implementing Reforms was created in January 2017 and assists the decision makers on legal reforms implementation. The structure of the Government was modified with a reduction of ministries from 16 to a total of 9, since September 2017. The new Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR) is the result of merging the previous Ministries of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and part of the Academy of Sciences. The role of the deputy ministries has been removed and replaced by General State Secretary and sectoral State Secretaries. The Government reduced the personnel of the ministries by 44% with an increase of salaries. The total amount of civil servants in ministries after the reform is about 1,100. The next step of the Public Administration Reform, according to the Government, is the reform of the supervised bodies (agencies, inspectorates, state owned enterprises, etc.). The Territorial Reform will be the third step of the reform, according to the Government.

Sectoral reform

The 2014 Education Code, the VET Strategy 2013-2020 and the Education Development Strategy 2020 adjust the legal framework to the new socio-economic context. Modernisation of the Classifier of Occupations, based on international standards, a new nomenclature of professions and specialisations for education and training area follow those adjustments. A new National Employment Strategy 2020 was adopted in March 2017 with a work plan aimed at improving the labour market prospects and further development of human capital. Moldova is also adjusting the regulatory framework for Small and Medium Enterprises.

There are Regulations and Ministerial Orders, which cover the development of curricula and qualifications, while the Education Code is an overarching policy, which is designed to modernize the VET system and encourage VET institutes to engage with the economic agents. The policy environment, as evidenced by strategies, action plans and laws, has been implemented to significant extent, and this is the right moment to push forward the VET reform implementation. In particular, the adoption of the Laws on the establishing of the National Qualifications Framework and on the creation and functioning of the Sectoral Committees (November 2017) created a renovated impulse to the on-going reform.

3.3 Linked activities

3.3.1 EU support

Title: Support to the implementation of the Vocational Education Training Strategy (SPSP)

Duration: May 2014-July 2017

Description: The SPSP aimed at re-conceptualising the education programme within the VET sector, streamlining the VET institutions network and increasing efficiency of VET to provide a competitive workforce for national and regional economy, to meet the labour market needs in terms of quality and quantity requirements. The focus was in line with the objectives of the VET strategy listed above.

Budget: € 25 million - Three instalments: total amount of the first 2 instalments € 10.5M. The last instalment by May 2018 for an expected amount from € 4M to € 8 M.

Title: Support for VET Sector in the Republic of Moldova (Technical Assistance)

Duration: Jan. 2014- Dec.2017.

Description: The TA is a complementary measure of the SPSP. It aimed at improving the governance of the VET system by reforming the VET institutions network and enhancing the quality of the learning processes and learning outcomes in line with the labour market demands. The activities, in line with the VET strategy's objectives, covered the following:

- To assist the Government in implementing the structural reform in VET and to improve the social dialogue by establishing 5 or more Sector Committees (SCs) in the most important economic sectors;
- To develop the framework for quality assurance and quality management in VET, as well as to improve the quality of the learning processes and learning outcomes in the 5 selected sectors;
- To strengthen the capacities of the key stakeholders involved in the SPSP and to assist them in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- To raise the awareness of the VET professionals and the general public on the new reformed VET system.

Budget: € 5.0 million, disbursed € 3.6 million.

Title: Joint Initiatives of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) from the both Nistru river banks for Socio Vocational Integration of Disadvantaged Youth from Republic of Moldova (SVIS Moldova)

Duration: Oct. 2016-Feb. 2019

Description: The project is financed under the EU Confidence Building Measures programme with Transnistria. It aims at developing joint initiatives of CSOs from both river banks of Nistru as at establishing a system of socio-vocational integration services of disadvantaged youth. The expected results are:

- Better developed capacities of multidisciplinary team of CSO providing social services in Transnistria and Moldova in disadvantaged youth socio-vocational integration during 16 months;
- 270 disadvantaged youth from both river banks of Nistru are socio-vocationally integrated during 24 months;
- Public Authorities and other communitarian groups within Transnistria region and Moldova are sensitized regarding the necessity and effects of Socio-Vocational Integration Service of disadvantaged youth.

Budget: € 590,900 EU Contribution. Total cost: € 738,737

3.3.2. Other donors

Title: CONCEPT – Strengthening the Vocational Training System in Moldova

Donor: LED (with contributions from other Liechtenstein Foundations)

Duration: Jan. 2008 – June 2018

Description: LED intends to complement the efforts of other actors engaged in VET with an intervention strategy that yields tangible results at different levels. On macro-level, to develop

curricula for selected occupations; on meso-level, to further strengthen the Centre for Continuing Training of the Technical University Moldova and help the country to get a high-quality training structure for the continuing training of the VET system. On the school level, the project supports up to 22 VET schools in implementing high quality training according to the new curricula (management training, material support, teacher training, learning material development). Additionally, the project addresses the various issues of violence and lack of child-friendliness in the VET system and supports VET pupils' councils on the school and national level.

Budget: € 5.3 million

Title: EdAgri – Education for Agriculture

Donor: Liechtenstein Development Service (LED)

Duration: July 2012– June 2018

Description: The project aims to strengthen the training capacity for fruit and vegetable growing and processing. Initially planned to work with 3 agricultural colleges the project has decided to focus its efforts on the Centre of Excellence for Agriculture and Horticulture (in Taul). A special focus of the project is to strengthen the practical training and the use of the demonstration plots in the teaching. For this purpose, capacity building goes hand in hand with investments in demo plots and greenhouse.

Budget: € 800,000

Title: Moldova Employment and Entrepreneurship Education and Training Activity

Donor: Liechtenstein Development Service (LED)

Duration: March 2017 – Feb. 2020 (Phase IV)

Description: To further increase the chance of VET graduates to find a job or to start a micro-enterprise in the country by reaching the following outputs:

1. National capacity to provide entrepreneurial education in VET institutions is built.
2. VET undergraduates and graduates apply their entrepreneurship competencies.
3. VET institutions carry out entrepreneurial activities for better quality of professional training of students and income generation.

Budget: € 757,743

Title: Re-Engineering Vocational Orientation and Career Counselling (REVOCC) for Moldovan labour force competitiveness

Donor: Austrian Development Agency

Duration: Dec. 2014 – Nov. 2017

Description: Vocational orientation and career counselling (VOCC) is an area with major impact on educational integration, initial career decision making and subsequent opportunities of socio-professional insertion. By achieving these goals, the project keeps outlining a system of vocational orientation and career counselling and promotes the necessary changes in the legal framework to ensure implementation at national scale. Implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM), the project focused on:

1. Enhancing the quality of VOCC in VET and secondary education.
2. Strengthening institutional capacity of ANOFM to provide extracurricular vocational orientation and career counselling services. Three VOCC centres were opened in the North, Centre and South of the Country.

Budget: € 627,000

Title: Partnerships for quality and relevance of the ICT vocational education in Moldova

Donors: Austrian Development Cooperation; Government of Romania

Duration: 2015-2018

Description: The overall objective is to contribute to enhance quality and relevance of ICT vocational education. The project activities are focused on advancing the capacity of VET institutions offering ICT specializations to a level that educational offers meet labor market needs and recognized quality standards. The main expected results are:

- an ICT Centre of Excellence for Professional Education established as a resource hub for teachers and an attractive education provider for students;
- the content of the training offer at VET institutions offering ICT specialization is modernized;
- basic standards, organizational procedures and work processes of the National Agency for Quality Assurance developed to create the basis to fulfil its public mandate.

Budget: € 687,650

Title: Vocational education partnership

Donor: Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany

Duration: 2010-2017

Description: Support the VET system to adapt it to labor market requirements by: - close contacts to the economy, - modernization of curricula, - modernization of workshops from selected professional schools in rural areas, - offering technical training for teachers and instructors, - improving the matching system to bring qualified workers into work, - editing didactic materials, - organizing study-trips to Germany and Romania to promote the “German dual system”, - organizing job fairs and production of videos and flyer to improve the image of crafts and of the professional schools in the society of Moldova, - promoting measures to improve workplace safety, etc.

Budget: € 2.2 million

Title: Structural Reform in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Donor: German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), implemented by GIZ;

Duration: 2015-2018

Description: To enhance education policy and institutional framework for the implementation of demand-driven dual VET focusing on three intervention areas: 1. Policy advice for strengthening the framework conditions for dual VET; 2. Promoting involvement of economic operations in piloting dual VET models; 3. Improving the image of VET.

Budget: € 2.0 million

Title: Skills for Jobs

Donor: World Bank

Duration: 2019-2021

Description: Agreement still under negotiation. According to the proposal by the World Bank, the project would include three components: (i) higher education, (ii) adult learning (excluding initial VET), and (iii) labour market information. The first two components are discussed with the Ministry of Education, while the third component is discussed with the Ministry of Labour and the National Employment Agency (NEA). The first and second component will take around 70-75% of the loan. The first component will focus on the university-company cooperation as well as the quality assurance of the education processes. In the second component, the priority will be on the mapping of short-term training providers, quality assurance of trainings as well as company-VET provider cooperation. The third component will focus on the availability, dissemination and use of labour market information, including support to the creation of Labour Market Observatory to improve labour market information and dissemination (within the NEA), the review of NEA business operations and procedures to better use the labour market information.

Budget: proposed credit in the amount of USD 30 million.

3.4 List of applicable Union acquis/standards/norms:

The Twinning project aims to introduce EU best practices dealing specifically with vocational education and training in line with the priorities set by the initial 2002 Copenhagen Declaration and the further processes it triggered. The Copenhagen process forms an integral part of the 'Education and training' (ET 2020) strategic set of rules and seeks to contribute to achieving the education-related targets of the Europe 2020 strategy. The success of this strategy depends on the skills of Europe's workforce. Enterprises need people with the skills required to compete and provide high-quality goods and services. People need the right qualifications to find jobs.

The Copenhagen Process was initiated in November 2002 with an agreed Declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). The Main objectives set by the Copenhagen declaration are:

- Single framework for transparency of qualifications and competences;
- Cooperation in quality assurance in VET;
- Credit transfer system for VET - a system that enables individuals to progressively obtain credit points based on the competences they acquire along their vocational learning route, in both formal and informal settings;
- Common principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning;
- Strengthening policies, systems and practices for lifelong guidance;
- Support to the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level;
- Attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers.

In the Association agreements the parties committed to promote the aims set in the Copenhagen process on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. The Government commitment to proceed with the reform agenda has been shown at the end of 2017 with the approval of several new Laws, including the ones on National Qualifications Framework and Sectoral Committees. After the end of the EU interventions in VET, there are still many areas in need of improvement for a performing VET system. In particular, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research gives priority to the following areas: curriculum development, as only 35% of curricula are available; teacher training on new curricula; quality assurance and development of the regulatory framework for external evaluation; training for potential evaluators; development of training materials, students' assessment according to NQF; development of teaching materials, also digital; development a system to identify the qualifications required by the labor market and adapt VET programs accordingly; further NQF development; revise the VET system financial management, revision of the financing formula; enhance VET managerial capacity.

3.5 Results per component

As a main activity, the Twinning project will build capacities and provide technical assistance to support the reform agenda in the education sector. In particular, the project will provide capacity building and technical assistance to further support the VET reform process in the Republic of Moldova as per the defined objectives and actions included in the National VET Development Strategy 2013-2020, focusing in particular: (i) on the staff of the main bodies responsible for quality assurance (ANACEC) in initial and continuous VET, including lifelong learning options; (ii) on teachers/trainers' pedagogical development and assessment methods at VET providers level; (iii) on the recently approved legislation on the establishment of a National Qualifications Framework for the Republic of Moldova; and (iv) on the collaboration and arrangements with private sector for VET provision.

The **mandatory specific results** to be achieved at the end of this project are the following:

- **specific result 1.1 – Institutional and operational capacities and staff competences of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) are strengthened,**

which is to be achieved under overall result⁵ 'Progress on the EU-Moldova Association Agreement commitments and overall reform process is achieved by closer EU-Moldova cooperation'

- **specific result 1.2 – National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Moldova is further implemented**

which is to be achieved under overall result 'Improved capacity of the Moldovan public authorities for policy making in line with the national reform agenda and the priorities of the approximation process with the EU'

- **specific result 2.1 – Capacities for effective cooperation between VET providers and private sector are built**
- **specific result 2.2 – VET teachers of Centres of Excellence become multipliers through pedagogical training,**

which are to be achieved under overall result 'Selected public authorities have the capacity to implement the undertaken commitments under the EU-Moldova agreements'

Component 1 – Improvement of Quality Assurance mechanisms for VET and LLL at all levels of education

Short Description

The first component will focus primarily on building the institutional capacity of the recently created National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC - Agenției Naționale de Asigurare a Calității în Educație și Cercetare), steered by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, in order to ensure a sound and effective implementation of quality assurance mechanisms for VET and LLL provision, including the methodologies for accreditation of standards, programmes, and providers.

Additionally, this component will contribute to further improve the quality of learning outcomes on VET – quality assurance of new and existing qualifications – and to measure its quality. This is a follow-up to the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Moldova in November 2017, which enabled the resuming of the qualifications reform in the country with a set of priority actions focused on the improvement of quality of existing and new qualifications, including the creation of a National Register of Qualifications.

Result 1.1 – Institutional and operational capacities and staff competences of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) are strengthened

Main achievement: ANACEC legal attributions regarding the introduction of sound and effective quality assurance mechanisms in VET and LLL are implemented according to the defined organigram, available staff and functions.

(Baseline: ANACEC established, February 2018; Target result: ANACEC is fully operational with adequate and trained staff, and delivering quality results, December 2021)

⁵ The overall results are listed as per Commission Implementing Decision ENI/2015/038-136

Sub-results (list not exhaustive):

- 3-years operational programme for ANACEC;
- Operational work plan, including staffing needs;
- Procedures Manual for ANACEC specific departments;
- Training Needs Analysis Report;
- Training programme, training materials and training manual on QA methodologies, processes and procedures in VET and LLL sectors;
- Study visit report.

Recommendations for revision of QA procedures for VET and LLL accreditation of programmes and institutions

Result 1.2 – National Qualifications Framework of Republic of Moldova is further implemented

Main achievement: Relevant and up-to-date information about qualifications and NQF is made accessible on-line, including information about lifelong opportunities and recognition of foreign qualifications

(Baseline: NQF Law was adopted, 2017; Target result: NQF is embedded in the system and assures quality learning outcomes in all types and levels of qualifications, allowing for mobility and lifelong learning, 2021)

Sub-results (list not exhaustive):

- Completed NQF register and relevant complementary information about the qualification system in Republic of Moldova available on-line to different target users in 2021;
- Feasibility study on VNFIL for returning migrants in 2019;
- Training actions for decentralized accreditation institutions for recognition of qualifications in 2019-2020;
- Assessment study on Level 5 qualifications in 2020 and roadmap in 2021.

Component 2. Enhancement of capacities at VET provision level for cooperation with private sector

Short Description

In order to improve the relevance of the VET provision outcomes to the labour market, this component will enhance the cooperation between private sector and the VET system by reinforcing the existing institutional mechanisms at providers levels, by supporting the Centres of Excellence and VET institutes in setting up networks and effective collaboration methods with companies and by enhancing the pedagogical capacities of teachers and trainers, including the definition of assessment models for VET students.

Result 2.1 – Capacities for effective cooperation between VET providers and private sector are built

Main achievement: Cooperation with private sector is introduced at system level.

(Baseline: Work-based learning concept introduced in the country, 2017; Target result: Work-based learning provision is implemented according to the adopted Action Plan, 2021)

Sub-results (list not exhaustive):

- Reports from focus groups;
- Action plan 2021;
- Training programme for management and teaching staff;

- Training report.

Result 2.2 – VET teachers of Centres of Excellence become multipliers through pedagogical training

Main achievement: Capacities of teachers of Centres of Excellence are built to become trainers to teachers of other VET providers.

(Baseline: Absence of a VET teachers pedagogical training model, 2018; Target result: VET teachers pedagogical training model is defined and multipliers are prepared to deliver further training to other VET providers, 2020)

Sub-results (list not exhaustive):

- Pedagogical training model for VET teachers/trainers is defined, including assessment practices and procedures;
- Training programme and training materials on students' assessment models;
- Training programme and training materials on pedagogical competences;
- Training actions to teachers and trainers;
- Pre and post training evaluation reports.

3.6 Means/input from the EU Member State Partner Administration(s):

3.6.1 Profile of the Project Leader

The Project Leader will continue to work at his/her Member State administration but will devote some of his / her time to conceive, supervise and co-ordinate the overall thrust of the twinning project. The Project Leader will allocate a minimum of 3 days per month to the twinning project including a minimum of one visit every 3 months in the country as long as the project lasts.

The Member State Project Leader (PL) is expected to be an official or assimilated agent with a sufficient rank to ensure an operational dialogue at political level. The Project Leader is responsible to coordinate the activities, disseminate project information among stakeholders, take part in discussions with high level officials, present and defend project input and expected outputs, manage the project team, prepare project management reports, help overcome project related problems, and assist the RTA for continuous development of project initiatives. The PL will be expected to devote a minimum of 3 days per month to the project in his/her home administration. In addition, he/she will coordinate, from the MS side, the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which will meet in Moldova every three months.

Qualifications:

Profile of the Project Leader:

- university degree of at least 4 years of study in a field relevant to this contract (such as education, law, management, economy, engineering, agriculture, forestry, science and technology, social science, humanities, natural science, political science) or in its absence an equivalent relevant professional experience of 5 years on top of the years of the following general professional experience;
- Minimum three years of professional experience in vocational education and training sector as official in Member-State administration or equivalent;
- Experience in project coordination, in particular using EU funds will be considered as an asset;
- Excellent command of English in written and spoken;

Tasks of the Project Leader:

- to conceive, supervise and coordinate the overall preparation of the project;
- to prepare the project progress reports with the support of the RTA;
- to coordinate MS experts' work and availability;
- to co-chair the Project Steering Committee;
- to communicate with the beneficiaries and Delegation of the European Union to Moldova (EUD) + closely involve the Project Manager from the EUD in all activities;
- to ensure the backstopping functions and financial management;
- to guarantee from the MS administration side, successful implementation of the project
- to ensure a close political steering.

3.6.2 Profile and tasks of the RTA

The Resident Twinning Advisor (RTA) will be based in the Republic of Moldova to provide full-time input and advice to the project for the entire duration of the project. This expert will bear the responsibility to coordinate in the field and on a day to day basis all the activities planned in the Twinning. The RTA can come from a Member State administration or mandated bodies (full or ad hoc).

Qualifications:

Profile of the RTA :

- university degree of at least 4 years of study in a field relevant to this contract (such as education, law, management, economy, engineering, agriculture, forestry, science and technology, social science, humanities, natural science, political science) or in its absence an equivalent relevant professional experience of 5 years on top of the years of the following general professional experience;
- a professional experience of at least 10 years of working experience in the relevant sector related to the implementation of the *Union acquis* and/or policy objectives and mandatory results/outputs defined in the Twinning Fiche;
- minimum 3 years of experience in vocational education and training public institution(s);
- extensive working experience in capacity building programs targeting VET and adult education staff, and in innovative approaches in education and training, such as assessment based on learning outcomes, work-based learning, and lifelong learning programs will be considered as an asset;
- minimum 3 years' experience in project management in particular using EU funds will be considered as an asset;
- excellent knowledge and skills on planning, administration and monitoring & evaluation;
- Excellent command of English;

Tasks of the RTA:

- to carry out the day-to-day implementation of the twinning project in the Beneficiary Country;
- to guarantee smooth implementation of the work plan;
- to ensure the coherence and the continuity of the successive inputs and the on-going progress;
- to assess continuously the twinning project at all stages and to compare it with the specified benchmarks and time-frame;
- to prepare the material for regular monitoring and reporting;
- to provide technical advice, support and to assist the beneficiary institution in the context of a predetermined work plan.

The RTA shall be supported by a full time project assistant. The RTA assistant will be recruited and funded by the project. He/she will be working together with the RTA for the whole duration of the project. The RTA assistant will provide logistical and administrative support, translation and interpretation services as necessary and assist in the preparation of working documents, organisation of seminars, training and study tours. The profile of the RTA assistant will be specified by the RTA who will proceed to his/her recruitment following the provisions of the Twinning Manual.

3.6.3 Profile and tasks of Component LeadersThe Component Leaders will work in close co-operation with the RTA and the Beneficiary administration in order to meet the mandatory results. The main task of the Component Leaders is to coordinate the activities under the area of responsibility in liaison with the partner institutions.

Qualifications:

Components Leaders shall comply with the following minimum requirements:

- have university-level degree in a field relevant to this assignment or in its absence at least 3 years relevant experience;
- have at least 3 years of professional experience in specific issues related to the purpose of the mission foreseen in the work plan (a non-exhaustive list such as in-depth experience in law and governing of education, dual VET system, TVET funding, NQF, VNFIL, Recognition of foreign qualifications, human resources management, quality assurance of institutions and quality assurance of qualifications);
- Good command of English in written and spoken;

Tasks:

More specifically, Component Leaders will:

- Be responsible of the implementation of a component of the project jointly with their counterparts in the Beneficiary administration;
- Provide practical expertise / advices / coaching to relevant staff for the execution of different tasks related to the project;
- Prepare and implement training tasks based mainly on practical cases (on-the-spot / on-the-job trainings) and their experience in compliance with their mission descriptions;
- Suggest establishment / improvement of relevant procedures / systems;
- Support in drafting new action plans, training plans, studies, etc.;
- Reports on their mission.

3.6.4 Profile and tasks of other short-term experts

The Short Term Experts will work in close co-operation with the RTA Component Leaders and the Beneficiary administration in order to meet the mandatory results.

Qualifications:

Short Term Experts shall comply with the following minimum requirements:

- have university-level degree in a field relevant to this assignment or at least 3 years relevant experience;
- have at least 3 years of professional experience in specific issues related to the purpose of the mission foreseen in the work plan, (a non-exhaustive list such as in-depth experience in law and governing of education, dual VET system, TVET funding, NQF, VNFIL, Recognition of foreign qualifications, human resources management, quality assurance of institutions and quality assurance of qualifications);
- Good command of English in written and spoken;

Tasks:

More specifically, Short Term Experts will:

- Provide practical expertise / advices / coaching to relevant staff for the execution of different tasks related to the project;
- Prepare and implement training tasks based mainly on practical cases (on-the-spot / on-the-job trainings) and their experience in compliance with their mission descriptions;
- Suggest establishment / improvement of relevant procedures / systems;
- Support in drafting new action plans, training plans, studies, etc.;
- Reports on their mission.

4. Budget

Maximum Budget available for the Grant: EUR 1,300,000.00

5. Implementation Arrangements

5.1 Implementing Agency responsible for tendering, contracting and accounting:

The European Union Delegation in the Republic of Moldova is the Contracting Authority, and is responsible for tendering, contracting, payments, accounting and overall supervision of the implementation of the project. The Contracting Authority will be represented by the Programme Officer in charge.

EU Delegation to Moldova

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5.2 Institutional framework

In 2017 a reshuffle of the government and of the central administration was implemented. The new restructured Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR) is responsible for developing and promoting policies in the following fields: Education; Culture and cultural heritage; Research; Youth and Sport. Under the Minister, a General State Secretary is responsible for the coordination of these policies and the execution of the Government's decisions. The General State Secretary is supported by four State Secretaries as follows: State Secretary in education; State Secretary in research (and High Education); State Secretary in culture; State Secretary in Youth and Sport.

The education Department of the Ministry is subdivided into four directorates:

1. General Education Directorate;
2. Vocational Education and Training Directorate;

3. National Qualifications Framework Directorate;
4. Lifelong Learning Section and Adult Education Service.

At policy implementation level, the national institutions related to VET include:

- The Republican Centre for Development of Vocational Education (CRDIP), subdivision of the Institute of Educational Sciences, aims at developing the framework of educational and scientific-methodological policies in the field of VET. At the moment, it is understaffed and does not have the resources to fulfil its mandate (for this reason it is not directly covered by this twinning action).
- The National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) aims at providing an integrated, credible, objective and transparent system of external evaluation and accreditation of vocational education and higher education institutions and programmes, as well as continuous training institutions programmes.
- A network of institutes that includes 11 Centres of Excellence (CoE), 42 schools and 33 colleges composes the provision of the formal VET education. The CoEs have been created during the initial phase of the implementation of the VET reform, with economic sector specialization, merging ISCED level 3 and level 4. In addition, they have a leading role in developing curricular and guiding policies for the sectoral institutions.

5.3 Counterparts in the Beneficiary administration:

5.3.1 Contact person:

Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR)
Mr. Silviu Gincu
Head of VET department
1 Piata Marii Adunari Nationale
MD-2033 Chisinau

5.3.2 PL counterpart

Mrs. Angela Cutasevici
Secretary of State for Education - MoECR
Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR)
1 Piata Marii Adunari Nationale
MD-2033 Chisinau

5.3.3 RTA counterpart

Mr. Silviu Gincu
Head of VET department
Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MoECR)
1 Piata Marii Adunari Nationale
MD-2033 Chisinau

6. Duration of the project

Execution period (number of months): **27 months** i.e. 24 months of implementation plus 3 months

7. Sustainability

The sustainable perspectives and benefits of the Twinning Project will be reflected in the strengthening of institutional capacities of the policy making departments and agencies which impact on the VET sector.

In addition, the Centres of Excellence will contribute to and be provided with policies, systems and procedures for improving the operation and implementation of institutional activities and the Centres of Excellence will be seen as the benchmark for all other VET institutions.

Human resource training accompanied by an appropriate Staff Manual will be provided for CoEs to ensure that all staff members are aware of the requirements and their own contribution to the delivery of a positive learning experience for all students, including those with additional learning needs. In this way should managers or staff leave the sector, the new entrants will be more effectively inducted into a career in VET education by having a reference manual which includes policy documents and procedures which can be readily updated whenever required.

The proposed results and activities in the Twinning Project do not rely on specific individuals, instead the actions are targeted at appropriate regulations, structures, effective communication mechanisms and comparative investigations which will lead to improvement and greater sustainability as they provide the overarching framework within which individuals will operate at all levels.

Mechanisms for inter-ministerial communication will be recommended as part of the Project outcomes, along with a robust means of determining and making use of labour market needs information. The process of developing levelled and credit rated Qualifications will be thoroughly explored and a legacy of the Twinning Project will be to work closely with the MoECR, as well as ANACEC and the ETF to finalise the NQF which is comparable with those in other EU countries. Qualifications will also include an assessment strategy and appropriate examinations through the learner's journey.

Some of the most important outcomes envisaged by this Twinning Project is the creation of capacity in the CoE to become trainers of teachers of other VET providers and the capacity to build education/business cooperation and maintain the alignment with sectoral labour market needs.

8. Crosscutting issues

- Equal opportunities:

Equal opportunity in the project will be guaranteed in accordance with EU standards and the national legislation on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men. The project will be assessed whether it intends "to advance gender equality and women's empowerment or reduce discrimination and inequalities based on sex" according to the Gender Equality Policy Marker⁶. The project will contribute to a better understanding and applying the mainstreaming of equal opportunity.

⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/investment/aidstatistics/37461060.pdf>

- Minorities/Territories with special status:

The project will increase the capacity for integration of the ethnic/national minorities' issue. The plurality of the country should be taken into account (e.g. Gagauzia, Taraclia). Special actions plans will have to be drafted in close cooperation with Transnistrian education sector actors and activities implemented. To the best extend possible, education and training actors of Transnistrian region must be included in the regular Twinning activities.

- Good governance:

All relevant requirements to insure a sound financial management of the project will be fulfilled in accordance with the principle of good governance.

9. Conditionality and sequencing

There is no preconditions set for this twinning project as all the external conditions for achieving the results of the intervention are present, from the commitment of the beneficiary's side to the establishment of the related institutions.

10. Indicators for performance measurement

- Employment rate of VET graduates increases by 2021;
- ANACEC legal attributions regarding the introduction of sound and effective quality assurance mechanisms in VET and LLL are implemented according to the defined organigram, available staff and functions;
- Relevant and up-to-date information about qualifications and NQF is made accessible on-line, including information about lifelong opportunities and recognition of foreign qualifications;
- Cooperation with private sector is introduced at system level;
- Capacities of teachers of Centres of Excellence are built to become trainers to teachers of other VET providers.

11. Facilities available

The Beneficiary commits itself to deliver the following facilities:

- Adequately equipped office space for the RTA and the RTA assistant(s) for the entire duration of their secondment;
- Supply of office room including access to computer, telephone, internet, printer, photocopier;
- Adequate conditions for the STE/MTEs to perform their work while on mission;
- Provide suitable venues for the meetings and training sessions that will be held under the Project;
- Availability of staff that will be involved during the twinning project implementation;
- Full coordination and transparency is expected among all key players involved.

ANNEXES TO PROJECT FICHE

1. Logical framework matrix in standard format

Annex 1. Logical framework matrix

Enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system		Programme name and number	2015/038-136 Technical Cooperation Facility Moldova
Ministry of Education, Culture and Research		Total budget: 1,300,000.00 EUR	Financing: 100% 1,300,000.00 EUR
Overall objective (impact)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumptions
To contribute to the upgrade of the education system in Moldova in line with EU and Bologna process best practices and quality education principles.	Employment rate of VET graduates increases by 5 % by 2022	Labour Force Survey, annual data published by Statistical Office of Moldova	Political support and engagement in VET strategy implementation - including VET provision modernization, NQF arrangements and engagement with private sector - is reinforced and the attention to and pace of reform is kept.
Specific Objective(s) (outcome)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumptions
To assist the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and related VET bodies/institutions and actors to further implement the national VET strategy 2013-2020 by improving the capacities of key-institutions in charge of quality assurance, with a particular focus on teachers' competences and collaboration with private sector.	Number of staff trained (50% of overall VET technical staff trained) at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoERC Departments of VET, NQF, LLL and QA • ANACEC • VET implementation body(ies) • Centres of Excellence 	Training reports	Commitment of the different institutions to implement the project is raised by the MoERC.
Mandatory Results (outcomes)	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Source of Verification	Assumption

<p>Result 1.1 – Institutional and operational capacities and staff competences of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC) are strengthened</p>	<p>ANACEC legal attributions regarding the introduction of sound and effective quality assurance mechanisms in VET and LLL are implemented according to the defined organigram, available staff and functions.</p> <p>Baseline: ANACEC established, February 2018;</p> <p>Target result: ANACEC is fully operational with adequate and trained staff, and delivering quality results, December 2021.</p>	<p>Annual activity reports of ANACEC</p> <p>Governmental decisions</p> <p>Operational work plan and Procedures Manual</p> <p>Training analysis and reports</p>	<p>ANACEC is adequately staffed according to its mandate and functions.</p>
<p>Result 1.2 – National Qualifications Framework of the Republic of Moldova is further implemented</p>	<p>Relevant and up-to-date information about qualifications and NQF is made accessible on-line, including information about lifelong opportunities and recognition of foreign qualifications</p> <p>Baseline: NQF Law adopted, 2017;</p> <p>Target result: NQF is embedded in the system and assures quality learning outcomes in all types and levels of qualifications, allowing for mobility and lifelong learning, 2021.</p>	<p>NQF department of MoERCs annual activity reports</p> <p>NQF register</p> <p>Feasibility Study report on VNFIL and on Level 5 qualifications</p> <p>VNFIL implementation reports</p> <p>Registered number of foreign diplomas recognized by year, and by entity</p> <p>Training reports</p>	<p>The Government maintains priority on NQF reform.</p> <p>Adequate staffing of NQF and LLL department is secured.</p>

<p>Result 2.1 – Capacities for effective cooperation between VET providers and private sector are built</p>	<p>Cooperation with private sector is introduced at system level.</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Work-based learning concept introduced in the country, 2017;</p> <p>Target result:</p> <p>Work-based learning provision is implemented according to the adopted Action Plan, 2021.</p>	<p>Action plan for WBL implementation and related annual reporting</p> <p>Training reports</p> <p>Tracked records of number of companies involved in cooperation with VET providers</p>	<p>Private sector willingness to cooperate with VET system institutions and providers</p>
<p>Result 2.2 – Pedagogical training to VET teachers of Centres of Excellence is delivered in order to become multipliers</p>	<p>Capacities of teachers of Centres of Excellence are built to become trainers to teachers of other VET providers.</p> <p>Baseline:</p> <p>Absence of a VET teachers pedagogical training model, 2018;</p> <p>Target result:</p> <p>VET teachers pedagogical training model is defined and multipliers are prepared to deliver further training to other VET providers, 2020</p>	<p>Models defined</p> <p>Training reports</p>	<p>VET department prepares Centres of Excellence to become resource units for VET teachers/trainers pedagogical training and adopts defined students’ assessment practices and procedures</p>

