Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) Mid-Term Evaluation and Moldova Competitiveness Sector Assessment Activity

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<th>ACRONYMS</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMELP</td>
<td>Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan</td>
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<td>APIP</td>
<td>Association of the Processing Industry (Moldova)</td>
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<td>ASW</td>
<td>Association of Small Winemakers (Moldova)</td>
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<td>APIUS</td>
<td>Light Industry Employers Association (Moldova)</td>
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<td>ATIC</td>
<td>Association of Information and Communications Technology Companies (Moldova)</td>
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<td>CDCS</td>
<td>Country Development Cooperation Strategy</td>
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<td>CEED</td>
<td>Competitive Enhancement and Economic Development</td>
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<td>COR</td>
<td>Contract Officer Representative</td>
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<td>Creative Industries Association in Moldova</td>
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<td>DCFTA</td>
<td>Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area</td>
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<td>USAID Economic Analysis and Data Services</td>
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<td>ET</td>
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<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus group discussion</td>
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<td>FSU</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
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<td>Government of Moldova</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communications technology</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>Moldova Competitiveness Project</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>OCA</td>
<td>Organizational capacity assessment</td>
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<td>ONVV</td>
<td>Oficiul National al Viei si Vinului</td>
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<td>PGI</td>
<td>Protected Geographical Indication (Moldova)</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public-private partnership</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
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<td>SEED</td>
<td>Sector Engagement, Enhancement, and Development</td>
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<td>SOW</td>
<td>Scope of Work</td>
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<td>STEAM</td>
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<td>STEM</td>
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<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</td>
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The goal of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) is to increase competitiveness of four targeted industries—winemaking, light manufacturing, inbound tourism, and information and communications technology (ICT)—through increased productivity, enhanced quality, expanded market linkages, and other improvements in a sector-specific economic and regulatory environment. MCP is intended to help targeted sectors reach maturity levels that enable sustainable improvements in competitiveness, job creation, and income. The project activities are funded by USAID with support from Government of Sweden and UKAID. USAID/Moldova has requested a project mid-term performance evaluation and sector assessment for the targeted industries. The evaluation goal was to assess the progress of the project towards achieving its goals, identifying constraints and unforeseen consequences, and to identify additional approaches to achieve the project objectives. DevTech Systems, Inc. used a mixed-methods design for the evaluation and took advantage of the synergy with the sector assessments during the data collection and analysis to minimize costs and time for the entire task. Document reviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions with project beneficiaries, and a beneficiary survey were primary sources of information for the evaluation. Quantitative and qualitative data collected by the evaluation team suggest that the project is achieving quantitative performance goals, and it is perceived to be effective and efficient. The MCP implementation team brought an impressive amount of co-funding to the project activities. The evaluation team recommends the continuation of project activities supporting SME and the promotion of target industries domestically and abroad. It also recommends steps to support sustainability and industry self-development for future projects and increased cooperation among international donors.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under Contract Number AID-OAA-I-15-00018, Task Order 72011719F00004, the United States Agency for International Development/Moldova (USAID/Moldova) assigned DevTech Systems, Inc. to conduct both a mid-term performance evaluation of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) and a sector assessment for the targeted industries. MCP is a USAID-funded five-year project started in 2015. The MCP’s goal is to grow targeted industries—winemaking, light manufacturing, inbound tourism, and information and communications technology (ICT)—through increased productivity, enhanced quality, expanded market linkages, and other improvements in a sector-specific economic and regulatory environment. The study provides a critical assessment of progress and effectiveness after three years of funding for MCP, and 14 years of USAID funding for competitiveness projects in the country. DevTech leveraged its extensive expertise in conducting evaluations of USAID projects and sector assessments, as well as its extensive experience working in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Eastern Europe to assist USAID/Moldova with this task. The company deployed a team of international and local regional experts with deep understanding of the target industries to Moldova in September 2019 to conduct the data collection necessary to complete this task.

The evaluation priorities stated in the Scope of Work (SOW) included evaluating the progress of the project towards achieving its goals, assessing the contribution of project implementation (collaboration and management structure) to achieving these results, identifying constraints and unforeseen consequences of the project, and identifying additional approaches to achieve project objectives. The purpose of this evaluation was to provide USAID with answers to the following seven questions:

- What is the impact of MCP on competitiveness development in the targeted sectors?
- Is MCP providing the most effective and efficient approaches?
- To what extent have MCP activities provided incentives to supported institutions, systems, and businesses to develop and succeed?
- What is the perceived value added of MCP activities?
- To what extent has MCP provided support to improve the regulatory framework?
- Are the MCP-supported actors sustainable in the long run?
- If any, what are the intended or unintended outcomes?

The evaluation team’s (ET’s) overall approach took advantage of synergy between the MCP mid-term performance evaluation and the sector assessments during the data collection and analysis in order to minimize costs and time for the entire task. Where appropriate, the ET used mixed-methods data collection to triangulate across methods and results. Document reviews, analysis of secondary data, and key informant interviews were the primary common methods of data collection, supplemented by other methods (such as direct observation and mini surveys) specific to each task. The ET conducted 104 key informant interviews (KIs), including ten MCP insiders, three experts, and fourteen government employees. The rest were direct beneficiaries from the four industry sectors targeted by MCP. The ET was able to conduct four focus group discussions (FGDs): one with the directors of all industry associations supported by MCP and three with the representatives of three industries: tourism, light manufacturing, and ICT. Evaluators conducted 40 site visits with the direct beneficiaries around the country. Finally, the team conducted an online survey of 173 MCP beneficiaries and 482 firms in the targeted industries who were not direct MCP beneficiaries. It received responses from 40 MCP beneficiaries and 49 non-beneficiaries.

The evaluation found that:

1. There is compelling evidence collected by the MCP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, presented by the key informants and directly observed by the ET members, that the project is achieving or exceeding the quantitative goals stated in its Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and
Learning Plan (AMELP). A majority of key informants stated that there are visible positive outcomes of the project activities in the target sectors and that the project is achieving its goals of increased productivity and quality, with a better workforce and by adopting innovations; expanding market linkages; and improving the sector-enabling environment with increased local capacity. These statements are corroborated by statistics collected by the project as well as documents provided by industry associations and the government. The key informants and survey respondents especially highlighted MCP’s achievement in increasing competitiveness of the targeted industries and recognition of Moldova-made product on the international and domestic markets.

2. None of the respondents, including industry experts and stakeholders, mentioned that MCP activities were ineffective or inefficient. During the conversations, the ET asked respondents if they would suggest any alternative use of the same funds to benefit the industry but were told that the project funds were used the most efficient way. About half of the key informants mentioned support to industry associations and promotion of local brand as the most relevant to MCP activities; other frequently mentioned activities included trainings and study trips, consultants, and direct support to business actors. Similar results were received through beneficiary and non-beneficiary surveys. The ET also found that MCP approaches to grants and public-private partnerships (PPPs) are effective and tailored for the Moldova environment and allowed the project to stimulate large quantities of co-funding from private and public sources. The ET also identified some potential inefficiencies and areas of most-frequent complaint by the beneficiaries, related to perceived issues of fairness and effectiveness in selecting participants of project activities and perceived quality of the activity design or implementation. None of these were substantiated or mentioned by many informants.

3. According to national statistics, all sectors assisted by MCP demonstrated growth in production and exports value and exports during the project implementation period. Most of the project beneficiaries interviewed by the ET stated that participation in MCP activities stimulated them to start development of their enterprise such as modernization, expansion, or transition to new product, one or several years earlier than they had planned. The results of the enterprises survey demonstrate positive changes in various aspects of business through the MCP implementation period and optimistic expectations for the next five years.

4. When asked directly, all key informants responded that they perceived value added from MCP activities is high and consider most of them successful. The MCP beneficiaries interviewed by the ET attributed the highest value to project activities promoting their industry abroad, trainings supported by the project, support to bringing journalists and potential business partners inside Moldova and organizing participation in international industry events for Moldovan businesses. Key informants also reported changes to livelihood and accelerated business growth as a result of participation in MCP activities.

5. According to the MCP annual report, thirty-six regulations and administrative procedures were eliminated, streamlined, or simplified with MCP support, exceeding by 18 the three-year target. Industry experts interviewed by the ET recognized MCP’s activity supporting the improvement of regulatory framework; other key informants recognized the regulatory changes introduced with MCP support when the ET specifically mentioned the change. The most-recognized MCP activities are the support to creating an information technology (IT) park with 7 percent unified tax for the firms registered at the park, and the VAT tax rate reduction to 10 percent for the tourism industry. However, some experts interviewed by the ET expressed the opinion that these industry preferences, while supporting the targeted industries, harmed overall development of the country by creating legal loopholes and inconsistencies.

6. MCP works with several legal entities including private, public, and government organizations. However, the most direct and targeted project support is provided to the associations in each of the supported sectors that are considered an important part of the business infrastructure for
the industry. Moldovan Association of Information and Communications Technology Companies (ATIC) and the Light Industry Employers Association (APIUS) are two industry associations that were created by MCP predecessor projects and demonstrate a strong capacity and ability to be sustainable. Capacities of other associations are still weak, and their financial model is fully dependent on donor funding. Information from key informants supported by the results of FGDs suggests that none of the industry associations considers that its function can be supported by annual membership fees. Some associations are reluctant to expand the membership base, especially to included small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs), as their workload would increase disproportionally to income from additional fees.

7. Key informants did not mention any positive or negative unintended consequences of the MCP implementation when asked directly. Literature review and analysis of other information allowed the ET to conclude that possible unintended consequences of the project include disproportional development of demand vs. supply of services, disproportional development of infrastructure in the areas supported by the project,¹ and perceived competition between MCP and the organizations it creates and supports. The ET could not find any statistical information to verify the existence of these unintended consequences.

8. The MCP was very successful in bringing additional funding from PPPs and from other donors. According to the year three report, the project established PPPs with a total value over $29 million, with about $24 million coming from sources other than the project. The project activities are also co-funded by government of Sweden, totaling 63 million SEK, and UK Aid in the amount of 3 million GBP. According to key informants, the reason for this success is due to the USAID Moldova’s infrastructure to manage the development projects, the success of the predecessor projects: Competitiveness Enhancement and Enterprise Development (CEED and CEED II), and the effectiveness of the MCP activities.

Based on the evaluation findings, the ET formulated two sets of recommendations: first for the project implementation team, and second for USAID and their donor partners that can be used for future programming and extending project’s best practices beyond MCP.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROJECT

1. **Continue project activities, especially the most-demanded project activities such as promotion of the target industries domestically and abroad.** The current set of the MCP activities seems to be the most effective and efficient at the moment.

2. **Continue support to SMEs in all targeted industries, especially in ICT.** The project is already targeting SMEs in all supported industries, but the continuing focus of the project and its implementing partners should remain on SMEs as they are the least-desirable partners for the market-based industry organizations such as industry associations. The project may consider developing special financial initiatives for the associations to increase the number of SME members and SME representatives in the management bodies. The project could also continue exploring and better engaging existing frameworks that target SME development, such as the Working Group on SME development on the platform of the Economic Council under the Prime Minister.

3. **Aim for greater buy-in of the industry actors for the specific activities.** This may be achieved by designing consultative processes to be implemented by the supported industry associations which gather opinions of the firms in the industry about the direction of the industry development. This process can be organized through opinion surveys, voting, or other means of

¹ Two examples of this include an increased number of tourists interested in the Old Orhei region, which over crowds current transportation and retail infrastructure and an increased number of firms offering tour services around major vineyards, while accommodation capacity remains on the same level.
wide feedback from firms in the target sectors. While this process will increase time for decision-making and may delay project actions, it enables the opportunity to design a market-based model that will ultimately increase sustainability of the industries’ development.

4. **Continue development of the supported associations** with emphasis on their capacity to identify priorities for the industries and then develop action plans to address these priorities.

5. **Utilize information from the grant applications to monitor the state of the supported industries.** This includes keeping information about all applications responding to the call for grants, including information on size of each funding request, amount of co-funding offered by the applicant, the size of the applicant, and the reasons for which the grant was not granted. Based on this information, the project should be able to identify at least the following: (1) capacities missing from grantees, such as equipment or management capacities, based on their inability to articulate specific problems in their submission; (2) priorities of the grant applicants for the market; (3) the size of the businesses and their financial capacity to co-fund the grant activities; (4) expectations of the applicants regarding opportunities for market and industry development in the near future. All this information would provide information to better diagnose the stage of the industry’s development and its most needed actions from the project.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID

While the ET addressed recommendations specifically to USAID as funder of this evaluation, these recommendations may be valuable to all funding partners of the project.

1. **Continue implementing the MCP activities.** The approaches utilized by the project seem to be effective and efficient and the project is on the way to achieving its stated targets. It is continuing to benefit targeted industries recovering from the crisis of 2016 and is well-positioned to support industries adopting to the new government priorities changed in 2019.

2. **Consider expanding MCP approaches for grants and PPPs to other projects in Moldova.** These approaches are tailored to the country environment and allowed the project to stimulate significant co-funding of activities. The approaches will require additional study to determine their core strengths and weaknesses and formalize them in an action package. It then can be broadly shared among other projects through a series of internal USAID workshops.

3. **Consider wine and light manufacturing as “graduated” from project support.** These industries benefited from long-term support by USAID-funded competitiveness projects and experts suggest that irreversible changes occurred in the industries that will insure development of their competitiveness in the future. Given importance of these industries, USAID/Moldova may consider supporting the industries directly through local organizations and should start implementing an exit strategy with MCP project for the industries as soon as possible after the decision is made. The exit strategy may include packaging and transfer of tools, templates, and other products developed by the project team to industry associations or government entities. Some current project staff should be embedded into these entities until the end of the project.

4. **Consider approaches that further support sustainability and industry self-development for future projects.** Use the experience of other USAID-funded competitiveness development programs for future projects combined with best practices of USAID/Moldova projects. One of the approaches may be allowing industry associations to conduct self-implementation of competitiveness actions designed by themselves, with partial funding on competitive basis from a USAID-funded coordination unit that also has capacity to

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2 There were two official changes in the government (Cabinet of Ministers) in Moldova in 2019: in June, the long-standing cabinet of Pavel Philip was seceded by the Cabinet of Maia Sandu and, in November, her cabinet was replaced by the Cabinet of Ion Chicu. The latest government change happened after drafting this report.
monitor and oversee the development of targeted industries. USAID/Moldova may look for the implementation experiences of other missions, for example at the Jordan Competitiveness Program, to draw ideas for future programming.

5. **Revise the process for collaboration between organizations co-funding MCP.** The collaboration may be improved by open discussion of the expectations of the project’s co-funders regarding the collaboration process; this discussion should encompass the internal procedures and regulations of the funders as well. Any current collaboration processes that are not formalized in the grant or contract agreements should be formalized in memoranda of understanding between organizations to insure continuity against possible future changes in staff. One of the goals of the revision would be to increase the sense of involvement for development agencies of Sweden and the UK and allow them to more closely comply with internal regulations regarding project monitoring and reporting.

6. **Develop regular consultative processes for regulatory and legal initiatives** in order to ensure that recommendations by international experts to the Moldovan government are more cohesive. The process could be first initiated by USAID/Moldova in collaboration with MCP co-funders and could set regular quarterly semi-formal meetings to exchange ideas and approaches for legislative and regulatory reforms advocated by other USAID-funded projects. This process can then be extended to include other international development organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with comprehensive discussion of potential collisions in recommendations to prevent negative consequences of one project/organization to the action of other.
INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported economic growth in Moldova for more than a decade, specifically targeting industries that are economy-wide drivers of growth, including: winemaking, tourism, light manufacturing, and information and communications technology (ICT). USAID programming began in 2005 with funding of the Competitiveness Enhancement and Economic Development (CEED) project, followed by CEED II in 2010, and the current Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) in 2015. The MCP’s goal is to grow targeted industries through increased productivity, enhanced quality, expanded market linkages, and other improvements in sector-specific economic and regulatory. The MCP project is intended to help targeted sectors reach maturity levels that enable sustainable improvements in competitiveness, job creation, and income.

MCP plans to achieve these goals by: helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) access finance and investment; working with traditional industry associations and public or public-private implementing bodies to strengthen their capacity and sustainability; and supporting workforce development initiatives to cultivate critical job skills that are aligned with industry needs. MCP has also implemented several innovative initiatives, such as the introduction of science, technology, engineering, and math to Moldova’s classrooms through educational robotics. It has also supported the use of drones to inspect wine fields. According to project reports, MCP has already assisted SMEs in obtaining more than $10 million in new investment, helped more than 3,500 individuals develop new job skills, and has been widely recognized for its innovations. MCP works in conjunction with other projects funded by the EU, the World Bank, and several smaller USAID initiatives (such as High Value Agriculture Activity, Moldova Structural Reform Program, Development Credit Authority, ICT Excellence Center Project, and Agricultural Registry for Wine and Vine) that are also expected to benefit targeted sectors.

USAID/Moldova has requested both a mid-term performance evaluation of the MCP and a sector assessment for the targeted industries. The study provides a critical assessment of progress and effectiveness after three years of funding for MCP and 14 years of USAID funding of competitiveness projects in the country. Due to its experience in conducting evaluations of USAID projects and sector assessments, as well as its extensive experience working in the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Eastern Europe, DevTech Systems, Inc. was selected to assist USAID/Moldova with this task. The company deployed a team of international and local experts with a deep understanding of the target industries to Moldova in September 2019 to conduct data collection necessary. This document describes methodology, findings, and conclusions for the four sectors targeted by MCP. It also provides recommendations to USAID to be applied to future programming targeting competitiveness development in the country.
PROJECT BACKGROUND

MCP (called the CE-WIN activity during the first year of implementation) was designed to support the USAID’s program objective for economic growth. The purpose of MCP is to continue growing and expanding key competitive industries in Moldova that started through the implementation of CEED and CEED II projects. To support the USAID/Moldova Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), the project was designed to address the cross-cutting problem of workforce development and expand trade through the growth of market linkages and sales in target industries. The program was aligned with the USAID/Moldova CDCS Development Objective 2: Increased Investment and Trade in Targeted Sectors, addressing the following Intermediate and Sub-intermediate Results:

- Improved Economic Foundation for Growth (IR 2.1)
- Improved Business and Trade Enabling Environment (Sub-IR 2.1.1)
- Increase Access to Finance (Sub-IR 2.1.2)
- Improved Private Sector Competitiveness in Selected Industries (IR. 2.2)
- Increased Productivity (Sub-IR 2.2.1)
- Expanded Market Linkages (Sub-IR 2.2.2)

The project’s overall objective is to increase sales and investment in targeted industries. The project’s three objectives are:

- Objective 1: Increased productivity and quality, achieving better workforce and adopting innovation
- Objective 2: Expanded market linkages
- Objective 3: Improved sector-enabling environment and increased local capacity

The project used a variety of activities to achieve these objectives by:

1. Providing support to the development of industry associations in the four targeted industries (winemaking, tourism, light industry/textiles, and ICT clusters) and supporting the development of industry excellence centers such as ZIPhouse, a fashion design center, Makers Space, and Creative Hub;
2. Supporting local enterprises through consulting and grants to increase the quality of their products;
3. Developing communications, promotion materials, special events, marketing campaigns, and supporting individual companies and industry efforts to expand in international markets. The project continues to support the development of Wine of Moldova brand and the DININIMA identity; and
4. Providing expert support to assist in the improvement of laws, regulations, and policies to enhance industry competitiveness and growth.

MCP set aside a $5 million Sector Engagement, Enhancement, and Development (SEED) fund to provide grants to businesses and industry associations. The fund is used as cross-cutting mechanism, used for:

1. Capacity-building grants to industry associations and similar institutions;
2. Grants to small businesses for quality improvements, to drive private investment in more modern equipment and technology, and to develop new lines of services or products;
3. Grant support to industry-excellence centers.
OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation priorities stated in the SOW include evaluating the progress of the project towards achieving its goals, the role of the project implementation (collaboration and management structure) to achieving the results, identifying constraints and unforeseen consequences of the project, and identifying additional approaches to achieve the project objectives. The purpose of this evaluation was to provide USAID with answers to the following questions:

- What is the impact on competitiveness development (qualitative & quantitative) in the MCP-targeted sectors? Is the project on track in terms of achieving the intended purpose of the project’s goals and objectives?
- Is MCP providing the most effective and efficient approaches to sector development and export promotion? Which type of assistance is most beneficial to specific actors and to the industries in general?
- To what extent have MCP activities provided incentives to supported institutions, systems, and businesses to develop and succeed?
- What is the perceived value added of MCP activities for stakeholders working in these target industries? Are they able to report changes in their livelihoods and improved abilities to match the requirements of internal and export markets?
- To what extent has MCP provided support to improve the regulatory framework? How are decision makers and government officials reacting to MCP’s proposals? Did the regulatory framework generate incentives from private-sector investments to become more competitive and export-oriented?
- Are the MCP supported actors sustainable in the long run to operate and develop without further project assistance?
- If any, what are the intended or unintended outcomes that the project is achieving, which are not captured by the MCP M&E system or the Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP)? How can MCP’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data be better used for management purposes?
METHODOLOGY

This is a performance evaluation, which means it will assess the effectiveness of completed interventions and the implementation processes. The evaluation seeks to determine what the project has achieved, how it was implemented, its relevance, and whether the expected results are occurring. The purpose of the mid-term evaluation of the MCP is to determine the extent to which the project has successfully developed and promoted the four targeted industries. The evaluation findings are framed to assist USAID and the project staff to assess the roles they have played to address the project goals, to determine which sector components and project activities are working well, and identify which sectors are lagging and require more support.

DevTech’s overall approach took advantage of the synergy between the MCP mid-term performance evaluation and the sector assessments during data collection and analysis to minimize costs and time for the entire task. Where appropriate, DevTech’s evaluation team (ET) used mixed-methods data collection to triangulate across methods and results. Document reviews, analysis of secondary data, and key informant interviews (KIIs) were the primary common methods of data collection, supplemented by other methods (such as direct observation and mini surveys) specific to each task.

The ET’s approach relied on the expertise of senior international experts in each of the targeted sectors supported by local industry experts to understand country context, development pathways and constraints, and access major stakeholders and experts. It also included the synthesis of the information obtained from the systematic and purposeful interviews with key informants in each of the sectors and the extensive use of economic analysis and visualization of statistical data from government, private, and USAID sources. The ET consisted of two international and two local evaluation experts. The ET was also supported by four senior international industry experts (one for each industry) and three local industry experts conducting sector assessments for the targeted industries.

DOCUMENT AND SECONDARY DATA REVIEWS

The ET conducted an extensive review of existing project documentation, including the project Scope of Work (SOW), quarterly and annual reports, project outputs, and research developed by the CEED, CEED II, and MCP projects. A list of the documents reviewed by the ET is presented in the references section of this report. The ET also reviewed statistical information from national and international sources and the data collected by the MCP M&E system. The document review was used to inform the design of the data collection tools and to provide information about the changes in business environments and the effects of these changes on the targeted industries. It also provided extensive information about the substance of specific USAID/Moldova-funded activities and achievements. The local industry specialists reviewed publicly available Government of Moldova (GOM) documents of the four industries, such as industry development strategies, policy research, and documents that are available from industry associations and local experts. The ongoing document review during data collection was conducted by both international and local experts; local experts were able to study those documents only available in the Romanian or Russian languages.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

KIIs were a central data collection method for the MCP evaluation and sector assessment. Three major groups of key informants interviewed by the ET are: (1) MCP insiders, including USAID staff and project experts; (2) MCP beneficiaries, including two major sub-groups (the industry associations and the SMEs), firms, and other organizations supported by MCP; and (3) external experts that included representatives from the GOM and other local and international experts working in Moldova. The list of the key informants is provided in Annex A. The initial list was based on information provided by MCP and the USAID Contract Officer Representative (COR). The key informants, especially MCP beneficiaries, were selected to ensure representation of all targeted industries and locations throughout the country, especially proper coverage of urban areas and villages outside of the capital. The ET worked with MCP
during the preparation for the field data collection to review the initial list of key informants to ensure that all types of beneficiaries and geographic locations are represented. The ET also used a “snowball” technique to expand the KII list; at the end of each KII, the interviewer asked the interviewee to recommend additional experts or similar businesses to get more information on the topics discussed during the interview. This resulted in the inclusion in KIIs of additional independent experts and local firms that are not MCP beneficiaries.

KIIs were conducted during the field data collection from September 4, 2019 to September 25, 2019, by teams of evaluation and industry experts. Typically, the interview team included at least two people, one of which was an industry expert and the other designated as note-taker. Most of the interviews for the sector assessment were conducted by international and local experts in the specific industry. Each KII was guided by a separate, open-ended interview questionnaire for each group of informants. The KII guides were prepared in English, Romanian, and Russian. The interviews were conducted in the language most convenient to the respondent. Each KII team included at least one person fluent in Romanian and Russian, who provided interpretation to the rest of the team when necessary.

The ET conducted 104 KIIs. Table 1 summarizes the number of interviews by sector and type of the respondent. Some interviews, primarily with government representatives and associations, were conducted in a group setting with more than one key informant providing opinions during the interview.

Table 1. Number of Key Informant Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>ICT</th>
<th>Light Industry</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Cross-Cutting</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government/Partners</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry Experts</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCP Insiders/Stakeholders</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations-Beneficiaries</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations/Firms-Direct Beneficiaries</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for Sector</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The ET planned to conduct five focus group discussions (FGDs) to collect information relevant to the sector assessment: one FGD with representatives of industry organizations supported by the MCP, to determine how the project activities and actions affected the institutions, and four FGDs comprising direct project beneficiaries (one in each supported sector) to determine the role of the industry associations in the sector, expectations for the development of the sector, and the required assistances in the future. The FGDs were run as a discussion guided by the ET members (the team leader and senior international or local expert in the relevant industry), with support from a mid-level local evaluation expert who served as a note-taker. The FGDs were conducted in the language most convenient to all participants, including the moderator, which was Russian. The group participants were addressed in the Romanian language at the beginning of each FGD to obtain their consent, and were offered to choose Romanian, English, or Russian as the language for discussion. The ET developed FGD protocols with the main questions for exploration in all three languages.

The ET was able to conduct four FGDs: one with the directors of all industry associations supported by MCP, and one with the representatives of three industries: tourism, light manufacturing, and ICT. The ET engaged industry associations which then recruited the FGD participants. However, despite active support from the winemaking association Ofiiciul National al Viei si Vinului (ONVV) and the Association of
Small Winemakers (ASW), the ET was not able to convene FGDs with the wine producers. The field data collection was conducted during the start of harvest season at the vineyards and the producers were unable to gather in a single location for the FGD.

**SME SURVEY**

The ET also conducted a web-based electronic survey of industry representatives using QuestionPro. The goal of the survey was to collect market participants’ opinions about current developments within the sectors and barriers for doing business, as well as to gather their expectations regarding the future of their business. The survey was sent by email to two samples: the list of 173 MCP SME beneficiaries and grantees provided by the project; and a list of 482 firms who were *not* direct MCP beneficiaries. The latter list was constructed from contacts provided by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Moldova and the Moldovan Association of Private ICT Companies (ATIC). The survey questionnaire in Romanian, Russian, and English also included questions related to experience with the MCP projects.

The ET sent two reminders to the respondents and conducted reminder calls to the direct MCP recipients. In sum, the team received survey responses from 40 MCP beneficiaries (23 percent response rate) and 49 responses from the non-MCP beneficiaries (10 percent response rate). The ET also had access to performance information of project direct beneficiaries (current and historical total sales, export sales, and investments by the company) collected for M&E purposes and analyzed in conjunction with these data.

**ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

To answer questions related to long-term sustainability, the ET was planning to conduct organizational capacity assessments for the industry associations supported by MCP. However, the ET discovered that, for M&E purposes, the project conducts organizational capacity assessments of these organizations every year. The project provided full documentation of the methodology and shared assessment results. Analysis of the methodology revealed that it is based on the USAID organization capacity assessments and was very similar to the methodology planned by the ET. The ET decided to use the assessment data collected by the project and extend these data with special inquiry into the financial indicators of sustainability (such as expectations of the amounts of USAID funding during the next five years). Policies on generating revenue were explored during the KIIIs with organization staff.

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3 The ET used a multi-language survey feature of QuestionPro, which allows survey respondents to choose from one of a selection of pre-set languages after they are directed to the survey page. The ET sent an email invitation with a single link to the survey in three questions, Romanian being the first language in the message.
DIRECT OBSERVATIONS AT PROJECT SITES

The ET used opportunities to conduct interviews with direct beneficiaries for each sector at their site of business to directly observe how these businesses are conducted and if any changes have been introduced in cooperation with the project. Initially, the ET identified a list of 30 observation sites representing different locations across the country and all four sectors in which the project worked. The ET also planned to work with the MCP to identify assets and other visible changes for each site visit location, which would be the basis for individual checklists for each location. However, due to the difficulties encountered while constructing a detailed checklist for each location (based on the information stored by the project), the ET opted to construct a single comprehensive site visit checklist which allowed for an increase in the number of site visits. The ET conducted 40 site visits, with the locations detailed on the map below (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Site Visits by Evaluation Team
FINDINGS

This section presents the findings in response to each of the evaluation questions. Subsections are organized in accordance with the project results framework where possible. Although the project had some numeric targets, the evaluation team looked at a broader spectrum of quantitative and qualitative indicators of effectiveness.

QUESTION 1: IS THE PROJECT ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE ITS SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

Project quarterly and annual reports demonstrated that the MCP steadily achieved or exceeded quantitative targets set for its performance indicators. A review of the project documents, including the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MCP 2015), and interviews with project staff verified that the project has a robust system for data collection for the main performance indicators. The project developed specialized data collection forms for direct beneficiaries (grantees, assisted enterprises, and industry associations) and for partner organizations, including financial institutions that allow the collection of detailed information on the exports, employment, investment of the beneficiaries, and number of participants in the MCP activities. Regular completion of these forms and reporting is included as a requirement in the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and grant agreements. One hundred percent of the MCP grantees who answered the beneficiary survey were aware of the monitoring requirements, and 86 percent of these respondents agreed that the reporting requirements were clear. MCP staff provided an explanation of the reporting requirements and data collection process.

Table 2. Percent Growth in Supported Industries from 2015–2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Respondent</th>
<th>Wine</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Light Industry</th>
<th>ICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of enterprises</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exports</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova

The industries targeted by MCP have experienced growth since beginning of project implementation (Table 2). The survey of beneficiaries also indicates that MCP positively affects targeted sectors of Moldovan economy—67 percent of respondents stated that the effects on industry in general were completely or somewhat positive. The opinions vary broadly depending on the specific industry; the most-positively affected are the wine industry (87 percent) and ICT (83 percent), while tourism (39 percent) appeared to be the least-positively influenced by MCP activities.

Similar opinions were expressed by the 91 key informants in different industries and who are not MCP insiders or country experts. Twenty-five of the key informants (27 percent) stated that the project impacted growth in their industry, while fifteen highlighted positive creation and preservation of the labor force or attracting labor into the sector. Informants also mentioned the more general impact of the project on the work force: five respondents from the wine and tourism sectors mentioned that participation in the project activities led to the return of their children from abroad to participate in the family business (10 percent of informants in these sectors) and six informants from ICT (25 percent of respondents) mentioned an increased interest of children in science, which is expected to lead to greater interest in ICT-related professions. Ten respondents (from all industries) also mentioned MCP’s role in
improving industry ecosystems, primarily by creating or expanding linkages between market actors inside and outside of the country.

Key informants were more explicit when identifying project impacts through the prism of their own business. Eighty-three out of 91 informants (91 percent) noted at least one positive outcome of the project. There were several outcomes mentioned across all the assisted industries, which included enhancing technological and organizational capacity of market participants and developing knowledge and skills. Key informants also observed that MCP activities resulted in an increase in expertise and gain in new markets, but this impact is less-frequently noted by representatives of ICT. Respondents from ICT also did not mention impacts of the promotional campaigns, creation of new brands or new products, or improvement of quality, which were noted by the winemaking, tourism, and light industry sectors. Representatives of winemaking stated the project’s impact on the quality of their product most frequently. Representatives of light manufacturing also mentioned MCP impact on increases in productivity. Finally, representatives of all sectors except light manufacturing remarked on the positive impact of the legal changes introduced with the project support. Most frequently mentioned were the decrease in VAT tax for the travel industry, the single 7-percent tax in virtual IT for the ICT sector, and decreased number of regulations for the winemaking and tourism sectors.

Both the MCP beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries responding to the online survey stated the belief that MCP strongly influenced the following aspects: competitiveness, access to domestic markets, improved image of the industry inside the country, and access to international markets (Table 3). The project’s impact was reportedly weaker, but still positive, on the availability of qualified labor, resources, and regulatory environment. Opinions of respondents representing certain industries correspond to their evaluation of MCP effects on the industry in general; assessments for separate aspects are purely optimistic for the wine industry, followed by ICT and light manufacturing, and quite low for half of the aspects related to the tourism industry.

Table 3. Do you think the MCP activities had positive effect on sector in the following? (survey results, “yes” answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>All n=55</th>
<th>ICT n=12</th>
<th>Light Industry n=15</th>
<th>Tourism n=13</th>
<th>Wine n=15</th>
<th>Beneficiaries n=41</th>
<th>Non-beneficiaries n=14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to domestic markets</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of the industry inside the country</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to international markets</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint actions by industry actors/ companies</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Moldova brands internationally</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government policies for the industry</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection and fair treatment of employees</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory environment</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of resources</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of qualified labor</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry in general</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>69.0</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several key informants also mentioned negative impacts of the project activities on their company performance. One respondent in light manufacturing and three in the tourism sector mentioned that MCP activities led to an increase in the number of enterprises and increased competition in the sector. The negative impacts included loss of sales due to increased supply and increased problems with attracting qualified labor. The informants did not report taking any measures to increase competitiveness in response to these challenges. In all cases, the negative outcomes did not reportedly have catastrophic effects on the respondent’s business and the overall outcome of project activities was considered positive.

The observed effects varied depending on industry: enterprises in light manufacturing reported highest effects on enhancing capacity (78 percent) and increased recognition of Moldovan products (65 percent); the ICT cluster in enhancing capacity (45 percent) and development of knowledge and skills (40 percent); tourism on increased recognition of Moldovan products (67 percent) and development of knowledge and skills (58 percent); and winemaking on quality improvement of the products (65 percent) and increased recognition of Moldovan products (48 percent).

It should also be noted that the project was perceived better by respondents who received a grant from MCP, compared with those who did not. The biggest difference between these groups is for availability of resources (32 percent), access to domestic markets (28 percent), and image of the industry inside the country (28 percent) (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Perceived positive effects, by respondents who received or did not receive grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Did not receive grants n=20</th>
<th>Received grants n=35</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>91.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to domestic markets</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to international markets</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint actions by industry actors/companies</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory environment</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of Moldova brands internally</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of qualified labor</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of resources</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government policies for the industry</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of the industry inside the country</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>82.9</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection and fair treatment of employees</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry in general</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants of FGDs also listed numerous positive changes related to the increase in quality of services and the amount of clients/sales, expanding exports, growth of internal markets (internal tourism, improved attitude to Moldovan clothing brands, etc.), improved cooperation among industry players, introduction of numerous new products and services (e.g., new brands), better business environment (e.g., lower taxes), numerous promotional and networking events inside and outside of Moldova, acquiring knowledge/skills and strengthening capacity, productivity growth, and new businesses in target
sectors. MCP assistance was instrumental to these changes; many of them would not happen without the support of MCP or would take much more time to develop without MCP.

**QUESTION 2: IS THE MCP APPROACH THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT?**

Based on the project’s annual reports and interviews with project staff, MCP implemented a multitude of activities that were customized by market and industry needs at that time. These activities could be grouped in the following categories:

1. Provide technical support to the selected enterprises: MCP provided consultants (international or local) that visited supported enterprises in light manufacturing, tourism, and wine industries to: provide on-site support and consultation in developing modernization plans; implement quality improvement measures; adopt quality standards and apply for certification; and improve the design of products or services.

2. Support development of industry associations in all supported sectors, such as ATIC, ONVV, APIUS, ASW, tourism association ANTRIM, Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) Producer Associations, and the Creative Industries Association in Moldova (COR/M) by: supporting legal processes of establishing associations; providing technical assistance with core association functions, especially lobbying and the development of legal initiatives; funding events implemented by associations such as trainings, promotion activities inside the country, participation of association members in events outside the country, and supporting the excellence centers managed by these associations.

3. Provide grants to enterprises supporting modernization and other activities.

4. Provide science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education initiatives including Future Classroom Lab and Educational Robotics, which provide equipment and teacher training to schools in Moldova to increase youth involvement into the ICT-related education.

5. Create and support industry education and excellence centers, such as ZIPHouse, ARTCOR, Innovation Center at Balti University, and others in order to provide business incubators, space for education and industry promotion events, and other sector-related activities.

6. Implement MCP-organized and funded or co-funded activities, including trainings, sector promotion events, organizing and sponsoring participation in the industry events abroad, and others.

7. Provide technical expertise, research, and support to legislative initiatives and design of policy reforms.

Most of these types of activities except grants are continuing from previous CEED and CEED II projects. MCP continues to support industry associations created and developed during the previous USAID projects, such as APIUS and ATIC, in addition to newly created associations such as ANTRIM and ARTCOR. Similarly, the project continued working with excellence centers created by predecessor USAID projects. This continuity was acknowledged and embraced by all respondents as an example of the effectiveness and efficiency of the project.

There are several distinct features in the way that MCP implements these activities that are recorded in project documents and key informant interviews. First, the project uses public-private partnerships (PPPs) to increase sustainability and receive additional funding for its initiatives. According to the recent annual report, MCP established 38 PPPs during the first three years of the project. A particular model was designed by the project for creating excellence centers: in order to ensure the balance of power in PPPs and protect centers from repurposing after MCP ends, new centers are assets of a government entity (typically, a university), and are managed by an industry association. The center is governed by a board that includes an equal number of voting representatives from the university and the association.
and may include representative of MCP and other organizations who do not have voting power. This model allows government to provide funding for maintaining the property in which the center is located and pay for utilities, while the industry association has the flexibility to develop and fund specific events and activities implemented in the center.

Second, the grants mechanism implemented by MCP requires significant co-funding by the grantee in cash. Some grantees reported investing around 80 percent of their own money to supplement the grant provided by MCP. Some grants also used a reimbursement mechanism, where grantees had to purchase equipment using their own funds, and then received partial reimbursement of the cost. None of the grantees interviewed reported this co-funding requirement in a negative way or considered it as a financial burden. All interviewed grantees reported the grants mechanism as effective and efficient. Most informants mentioned that the application for the grant was not difficult; only one person responded that the application proposal for grantees was complex. Prerequisites for the grant were reportedly clear and grant conditions, including reporting requirements, were adequately explained by the project staff. The grants were usually coupled with technical assistance from project experts, which increased the effect of acquiring new assets by the grantee.

None of the respondents, including industry experts and stakeholders, stated that MCP activities were ineffective or inefficient. During the interviews, the ET asked respondents if they would suggest any alternative use of the same funds to benefit the industry and received confirmation that the project funds were used the most efficient way. Most key informants stated that, without MCP support, the creation of businesses and organizations would not be possible or would happen with greater delay. MCP is reportedly especially efficient in dealing with central and local authorities—advocating legislative changes directly or via created industrial bodies, blocking attempts to reverse changes, creating conditions for cooperation between public and private sectors, etc.

Table 5. Relevance of the MCP activities to grantees and assisted enterprises (survey results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not relevant</th>
<th>Somewhat relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>Game-changing</th>
<th>Did not participate</th>
<th>Do not have answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct assistance by an advisor</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops, seminars, and other discussion events</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resource development, including offline and online trainings</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring and on-the-job coaching at your company</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study tours or exchanges</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management certifications</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry networking events, including abroad</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic industry promotion events, festivals, competitions</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International industry promotion events, festivals, competitions</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality improvement, including support to quality certification, provision of equipment or new business processes</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general, when asked about the most-relevant MCP activities, about half of the key informants mentioned support to industry associations and promotion of local brands; other top-mentioned activities included trainings and study trips, consultants, and direct support to business actors. Similar but stronger results were received from the beneficiary survey (see Table 5). The top three activities most relevant to respondents’ business are: grants (71 percent), domestic industry promotion events, festivals, competitions (71 percent), workshops, seminars, and other discussion events (67 percent).

Several key informants reported negative outcomes of the project activities on their business that they consider decreased the effectiveness of the project. One informant mentioned that MCP and others’ focus on the Orhei area overcrowded it, decreasing the attractiveness of the region. Another mentioned that MCP activities compete with activities of the industry organization, reducing associations’ value to the industry (see box). Similarly, one informant mentioned that ICT participants might be confused with a lot of simultaneous activities conducted by MCP and ATIC, highlighting the importance of avoiding duplication. Several key informants and FGD participants critically commented that due to MCP activity, Moldova is associated solely with wine.

Almost a quarter of informants mentioned other drawbacks of MCP activities. In most cases, they were mentioned one or several times. The most frequently noted include the following:

1. Perceived issues with fairness and effectiveness in selecting participants of project activities, including:
   a. Issues with selection of beneficiaries (participants of exhibitions, trainings) when, for example, representatives of a big winery go on a study tour to a small winery, without any benefit to the smaller one
   b. Lack of transparency and publicity in selection of beneficiaries; respondents mentioned that it is unclear for them why certain companies were selected for project support while their company was not;
   c. Perceived unfairness in the selection of participants for training, for example, when a small and a big company can train an equal number of people or when the project chooses to cooperate with only one association in the industry
   d. Some selected study tours and exhibitions participants were unprepared to effectively participate in an event

2. Perceived issues with quality of the activity design or implementation were reported, including:
   a. A couple of respondents criticized the selection of exhibitions as less effective for achieving their company goals and, therefore, perceived the event to be less effective for the industry than other exhibitions in which they took part.
   b. The selection of consultants who have no relevant experience or can provide theoretical advice only (without knowledge of specific Moldova context) was reported. One example is a trainer who came with ideas for working with large manufacturing units in light industry which was not applicable to Moldova.

---

4 The sum of those who answered, “Very relevant” and “Game-changing.”
c. Some issues with equipment provided or bought with the project money (does not work, some parts are missing, poor quality, does not meet expectations, no manuals in Romanian, no training provided) were reported.

d. The sommelier school training certification is misleading as it takes more time and study to be proficient than is allocated at the school.

e. The DENINIMA store is poorly administrated with an inability to effectively represent respondents’ products, resulting in dissatisfaction with services offered.

f. There is a lack of control over some of numerous simultaneously running projects.

g. There is a lack of coordination with state actors, who are not informed about MCP activities. MCP also did not contribute to their capacity (e.g., did not provide editable versions of promotional materials to work with them).

h. There is a redundant focus on certain tourist destinations, neglecting others, which was based on the respondents’ understanding that several facilities were renovated in one destination, such as Old Orhei, while none were completed in other destinations.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program activities of MCP were not spontaneously remarked upon. Except those directly involved with the activities, respondents did not mention these activities. When prompted, however, some respondents recalled them through experiences of their children and regarded them highly. ICT experts and school staff reported both the robotics and the Future Classroom programs in positive terms. All schools visited by the ET showed equipment provided by the project, mentioned that this equipment is actively used, and also mentioned that the number of the robotics equipment received by the school (two or three robots of the same kind) is insufficient to organize a number of classes that adequately meets the demand from students. Several schools mentioned that equipment from the project stimulated them to purchase additional robots to organize additional classes, while others mentioned limiting the class sizes. The schools also mentioned that an effective robotics class requires several types of robots, while project provided only three robots of the same type. All schools that received equipment budgeted funds to maintain this equipment and to pay the teachers for providing robotics classes. However, some schools experienced difficulties with staffing the robotics class, despite the project-provided training for their teachers.

Similarly, the Future Classroom activity is highly regarded by key informants who were involved in the program. According to the MCP report, the Future Classroom Lab pilot was implemented in 11 schools across Moldova in cooperation with Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and with the Orange Foundation (a private foundation of the Orange telecommunication company). The activity renovated school classrooms and provided digital media, robotics kits, portable science lab kits/sensors for experiments, kits for building microelectronic circuits, 3D printers and scanners, virtual-reality headsets, and panoramic cameras. Training for the teachers was organized on how to use and teach with this equipment. Interviews with key informants, however, showed some concerns with the approach to the design of the activity. In particular, they mentioned that schools did not know which equipment to buy as part of their advance contribution; information about the opportunity to participate in the program and its requirements were not widely disseminated among potential participants; and the program is at risk because teachers are not properly trained. Representatives of the Orange Foundation mentioned that it was attracted to co-fund this activity because of perceived effectiveness of the activities implemented by MCP. However, based on the experience with the pilot, the foundation considers similar future programs parallel to MCP due to a difference in opinion regarding the school equipment and renovation that is needed. At the same time, the foundation reportedly highly regarded its collaboration with MCP; respondents mentioned that communication with the project during the pilot was very interactive and productive.
QUESTION 3: DO MCP ACTIVITIES PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO DEVELOP AND SUCCEED?

As mentioned earlier, most of the project beneficiaries interviewed by the ET reported that participation in MCP activities stimulated them to start developments of their enterprise such as modernization, expansion, or transition to new products one or several years earlier than they planned. In most cases, the respondents mentioned that their development model was to accumulate sufficient funds for the next stage of development and even a small amount of support (a grant or technical support) allowed them to use already accumulated funds in the most effective way immediately. Most key informants stated the intention of further development of their companies/organizations, related needs, and expressed positive expectations for the next five years. A large proportion of them mentioned that they are currently developing their businesses, investing resources into infrastructure improvement (e.g., guesthouse, swimming pool, etc.), new equipment, means of promotion (e.g., web site), or developing new products and services (e.g., wine tourism).

Table 6. Reported changes in 2015–2019 and expectations for the next five years (survey results for beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries together)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business aspect</th>
<th>Q13: How did your company or business change during the period Aug 2015 to Aug 2019?</th>
<th>Q15: Please describe your expectations for various aspects of your company or business in the next five years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of products/services exported</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography of exports</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume of export</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomenclature of products/services</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>produces</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of products/services</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of employees/employee skills</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livelihoods of employees</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in collective action</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with other businesses through industry associations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the survey demonstrate positive changes in various aspects of business through the MCP implementation period and optimistic expectations for the next five years. Based on respondents’ self-assessment, most aspects of their business changed within the 2015–2019 period—at least 50 percent of respondents reported growth for each of the listed items except the number of employees (44 percent).
A small share of companies evidenced decline for various business aspects—the largest was negative change in profitability (19 percent), revenue and number of employees (15 percent each), quality of employees/employee skills (10 percent). Future expectations were even more positive; at least two-thirds of respondent’s state opportunities for growth within the next five years and that the period will be characterized by miniscule decreases (Table 6).

Positive changes during 2015–2019 are more vivid for grantees of the project and negative effects are more pronounced for assisted enterprises and non-beneficiaries. Hence, direct assistance with grants are likely contributing significantly to the competitiveness of beneficiaries.

**QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE THE MCP ACTIVITIES’ PERCEIVED VALUE ADDED?**

When asked directly, all key informants responded that they perceived value added from MCP activities is high and consider most of them successful. MCP beneficiaries interviewed by the ET attribute highest value to the project activities in promoting their industry abroad, trainings supported by the project, the support for bringing journalists and potential business partners inside Moldova and organizing participation in international industry events for Moldovan businesses. The beneficiaries also valued the creation and support of country brands as industry promotion tools. However, when asked if they are ready to pay for using the brand, or if they think that placing brands such as “Tree-of-Life,” DENINIMA, Wine of Moldova, or PGI designations on their products will increase sale price of the product, they provided a negative response. Some producers said that they have experience putting these brands on their products in the past, but since they did not see any advantage, they stopped using these logos. A few respondents suggested that if placing a brand provided some advantage in placing their products (designated shelves for the same PGI designation for wine, ability to place the product in DENINIMA stores for light manufacturing, etc.) they might consider paying a nominal fee for the use of the brands and their logos.

Direct beneficiaries and experts form ICT reported that MCP activities provided high value by co-creating and transforming the ICT cluster in Moldova. In particular, they reported that the project helped create a positive reputation abroad, attracting inward investment and youth to the sector and is on the verge of creating a critical mass. Integration with research and development and applying the IT sector to other Moldovan sectors such as agriculture, automotive, medicine, textiles, and nanotechnology can reportedly boost the economy, increase the value-added proposition of the sector, and entrench the ICT sector, thus achieving critical industry mass.

Key informants also reported changes to livelihood and accelerated business growth as the result of participation in the MCP activities. Several informants mentioned that starting or developing their business in winemaking or tourism attracted their children to return to Moldova (from migration to Italy and other European countries). Respondents in the light manufacturing industry reported that participation in project activities that supported adoption of the standards and business practices needed to export their product led to improved conditions for their workers. Most key informants also reported improved livelihood associated with increased income from their business and increased salaries for their employees.

A majority (81 percent) of MCP beneficiaries (grantees and assisted companies) who participated in the survey report that the project positively influenced their business. The MCP activities were reported to have the highest influence on the quality of products and services they produce, increase quantity of products and services, expand the portfolio of products they offer, improve the position of the business in local markets, and expand potential for export (Table 7).
QUESTION 5: HOW HAS THE MCP SUPPORTED THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK?

According to the MCP annual report, 36 regulations and administrative procedures were eliminated, streamlined, or simplified with MCP support, exceeding the three-year target by 18. Project documents and interviews with the project staff reveal that MCP supported improvements of the regulatory framework through three mechanisms: (1) supporting industry associations (ONVV, APIUS, ATIC, and ANTRIM) to lobby for regulatory changes; (2) conducting research and policy analysis and providing expert support to the government through working groups and direct engagement with government agencies; and (3) directly advocating for regulatory changes or organizing international advocacy for these changes. Most of the regulatory changes in the industries supported by MCP targeted adaptation to EU standards, reduction of regulations for registering and conducting business, and reductions in taxes.

Industry experts interviewed reported MCP support toward improvement of the regulatory framework; other key informants noted the regulatory changes introduced by the MCP after the ET specifically mentioned the changes. Key informants most often mentioned regulatory framework changes through: the development of the Moldovan IT Park and 7 percent tax to the companies registered at the IT Park; and the inclusion of companies that provide graphic design and animation on the list of categories eligible to register at the Park; support to the development of the White Book for tourism, advocating simplified registration of companies providing tourism services, and a VAT reduction of 10 percent for hotels;

Table 7. Effect on aspects of business from MCP activities (survey results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business aspect</th>
<th>Totally negative</th>
<th>Somewhat negative</th>
<th>Neither positive nor negative</th>
<th>Somewhat positive</th>
<th>Completely Positive</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of products/services</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of products/services</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio of products/services</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position on local market</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Export potential</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial indicators</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with industry association(s)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management practices</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing strategy</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to financial resources (loans, investments)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human potential</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with government bodies</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with local authorities</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your business in general</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
changes to laws regarding wine and winemaking; and support to harmonizing these law within the EU’s legal framework. Participants of the tourism and ICT FGDs reported that tax changes implemented with the help of MCP were important for individual players and the development of their industries in general. Several informants also mentioned that MCP (or USAID) efficiently dealt with state authorities to speed up implementation processes or to remove roadblocks (such as IT Park), negotiated the creation of programs/projects involving the state as a partner (ARTCOR, Future Classroom Center), and accelerated payment by the Government to the Vine and Wine Fund.

Not all experts and market participants agree that these regulatory changes benefited the country. There are several international and local tax experts who support budget and tax reform efforts. According to these experts, the special tax rates for the tourism industry and ICT may benefit the specific industries and are like tax regimes in some EU countries. However, there is a counterargument that these special rates create loopholes in the country’s tax laws and reduce the effectiveness of overall tax and budget reforms. The special tax regimes go against recommendations provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the Government of Moldova. A recent IMF Country Report for Moldova\(^5\) presents the IMF position on the issue and states that October 2018 tax changes have not produced expected outcomes. It also explains that difference in VAT rate for hotel industry and its suppliers creates a large stock of tax credit, which is costly in terms of profitability for an industry that runs on thin margins. According to interviewed experts, there was no dialog between the MCP experts and the IMF or other tax experts to develop a unified position. The VAT for the tourism/hotel industry returned to the common rate of 20 percent in July 2019 as the result of IMF pressure on the government. According to the experts, there is lower pressure to revert a special tax rate for the IT Park participants, as it has a provision to last for only ten years. Only one of the key informants, a representative of the GOM, criticized the abolishment of licenses and certifications for the tourism industry, which was supported by the project.

Some market participants also expressed during the FGD that the special VAT tax rate for the tourism industry does not make a significant difference to the operation of the industry. They argued that their experience of the recent (beginning of 2019) increase in the tax showed it does not have a significant impact on profit. The fluctuation in the number of tourists and political and economic factors that influence stability of the country play a more important role in the profitability of the industry and its development than the VAT tax itself. Similarly, numerous market participants in tourism, light manufacturing, and ICT argued that overall economic and political stability, level of national prosperity, and rule of law are more significant in causing brain-drain and skilled labor force emigration in their industries than any special regulations for the sectors. They reported that most labor in their industries moves outside of Moldova to live and work in a more stable environment. These workers, seeking this stability, will leave Moldova even if their wages and benefits become like wages in other countries.

Despite numerous improvements in the regulatory sphere, more than half of respondents representing tourism critically evaluated existing regulations as “uncertain,” “nontransparent legal and fiscal framework,” “confusing legal framework,” and stated an acute necessity for “liberalized law on tourism.” Numerous tourism informants also felt anxious about the possibility of a VAT increase. A couple of respondents mentioned complications dealing with local authorities and inspecting bodies.

A few respondents also mentioned issues characteristic of other industries: unresolved telecom regulations (ICT); legislation on e-commerce, simple customs regulations for regular exporters (light industry); Denomination of Controlled Origin regulations (winemaking industry).

Companies surveyed reported that MCP activities positively influenced government policies for the industry (53 percent) and regulatory environment (49 percent). These effects were most visible in winemaking (87 percent and 80 percent respectively), and lest palpable for the tourism industry (23 percent for both items). The tourism industry response was observed from key informant interviews.

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However, around half of respondents representing the tourism industry selected, “Do not have answer for both items” in the survey (Table 8).

**Table 8. Positive effect of MCP activities on government policies and regulatory environment (survey results)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Government policies for the industry</th>
<th>Regulatory environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All respondents (n=55)</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT (n=12)</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Manufacturing Industry (n=15)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism (n=13)</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winegrowing and wine production (n=15)</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries (n=41)</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Beneficiaries (n=14)</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not receive grants (n=20)</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received grants (n=35)</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTION 6: ARE THE MCP-SUPPORTED ACTORS SUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG RUN?**

MCP works with numerous legal entities, including private, public, and governmental organizations. However, the most direct and targeted project support was provided to associations in each of the supported sectors that are considered an important part of the business infrastructure for the industry. These associations include APIUS in light manufacturing industry, ANTRIM in the tourism industry, ONVV and ASW in the wine sector, and ATIC and COR/M in ICT.

ONVV is a governmental organization based on a PPP. It is regulated by a special law and is funded by the GOM and by contributions from all wine producers based on quantity of production. According to key informants, this funding model allows ONVV to have a higher budget than the Moldova Vine Agency it replaced. Experts agree that the ONVV funding and operation model are sustainable if there are no policy changes. There was recently an attempt to close ONVV by the GOM and return its function to a government agency; this demonstrates that this threat exists. According to key informants, however, it also demonstrated that there is will for collective action to support the ONVV. Literature review and key informant interviews highlighted the important role USAID, the Government of Sweden, and MCP had in advocating for ONVV as a continuing and independent PPP.

Other associations supported by MCP are non-governmental nonprofit organizations and, with exception of COR, were established before the beginning of MCP’s implementation. According to key informants and literature review, these associations were established with support from predecessor USAID-funded competitiveness projects. The project approach to the sustainability of the organizations stated by the MCP leadership considers that donor financing provides additional financial and programmatic support but does not replace the associations’ need or ability to fund their basic operations. According to the project, all MCP-supported associations fund their own operations and, in fact, contribute 22 percent as a cost-share on MCP grants (usually in the form of program management costs). MCP also considers associations’ ability to attract funding (donor or other) for their projects as a measure of sustainability.

MCP directly supported building the capacity of these associations. The project conducts annual assessments of the organizational capacity of the associations as part of its M&E system. The ET reviewed the methodology of this assessment, which is based on USAID’s OCA methodology, and found it to be a valid measure for the association institutional capacity.
Table 9. Organizational capacity assessment self-evaluation scores (as reported by MCP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supported Associations</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>% increase 2016 vs. 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTRIM</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APIUS</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASW</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATIC</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1.15*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of the self-evaluation (Table 9) demonstrate that ATIC holds the strongest institutional capacity. Key informants also reported that ATIC is the most successful and sustainable of the associations in the ICT sector and is the most sustainable among all associations supported by MCP. Informants described it as having a powerful capacity and a portfolio of projects in implementation amounting to over $20 million over the next several years. These projects are focused on attracting investors to Moldova’s ICT industry which, according to key informants, creates an additional element of sustainability for the organization as more opportunities come with industry growth. ATIC charges membership fees according to a published schedule on their website which ranges from €2,000/year to €200/year. However, according to key informants and association leadership, ATIC focuses on lobbying interests of large companies that pay larger membership fees and thus expanding its membership is not a viable option to ensure sustainability. These fees may be able to cover one or two core staff. The association leadership reported their sustainability model is based on applying for and executing industry development projects funded by development agencies and foundations. The organization already has the capacity to apply for and implement grants and has received funding to execute projects funded by donors other than USAID. ATIC is also a prime implementer of the USAID-funded $4 million ICT Excellence Center Project (August 2015–June 2022). According to some key informants, one of the only drawbacks of the association is that SMEs do not receive the association’s support. However, ATIC leadership has announced that they plan to address this issue.

According to KII and the FGD discussion with association representatives, all supported associations have membership fees. These fees are significantly smaller than ATIC’s fees. None of the supported organizations have a sustainability model based on membership fees and contributions. APIUS is another organization that has sustained for period of ten years and has its own unique sustainability model. According to APIUS leadership, membership fees cover only 50 percent of its core activities and services fees from projects (primarily MCP-funded) make up the rest of these fees. The organization is reportedly also sustained by “in-kind” contributions from a few prime members, through staff volunteers or premises for key functions of the association. APIUS interviews also highlighted building its services without MCP’s support. In KII, several members expressed readiness to pay for such services. Other associations mentioned that their financial model currently fully relies on core funding from MCP and management fees for implementing MCP-funded activities.

Representatives of associations that participated in the FGD emphasized that the role of MCP was critical for new associations and significant for older organizations. MCP provided tools for the creation of organization’s strategic approach and organizational capacity, and as a result, associations reported gaining influence in the sector, advocating for regulatory changes and building their public image. Representatives mentioned various IT solutions to provide additional assistance to development of associations (e.g., an application for automation of the membership process), help in developing strategic documents, expertise on specific subjects, funding for communication, networking and membership for international associations, and development of new services for members. None of the FGD participants mentioned a need for assistance in developing a sustainability strategy.

Representatives of the industries supported by the project expressed readiness to pay small nominal association membership fees if associations protect their interests or conduct activities that they consider beneficial to their industry. Table 9 presents a list of functions or services provided by
associations that would make them interested in paying a membership fee, what their perception of a “fair” annual feel. The FGD participants were most interested in promoting the industry, followed by training and networking. Participants responded that companies are paying taxes and expect the state to spend more money to promote Moldova’s tourist brand by supporting tourism and improving infrastructure. Companies can pay more taxes if the state spends more on these activities; they expect the association to lobby to increase funding to promote the country and tourism industry. They were generally not interested in associations providing collective action to lobby other industry interests (such as regulations, tax reductions, etc.).

Table 10. Perception of fair annual fees to participate in an association that implements specific function (FGD results for tourism sector)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function or service</th>
<th>Minimum membership fee</th>
<th>Maximum membership fee</th>
<th>Mean membership fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>€ 50</td>
<td>€ 200</td>
<td>€ 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training (improvement of knowledge and skills)</td>
<td>€ 25</td>
<td>€ 200</td>
<td>€ 105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking (sharing knowledge, experience; informational support; new business opportunities; support)</td>
<td>€ 50</td>
<td>€ 200</td>
<td>€ 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>€ 200</td>
<td>€ 200</td>
<td>€ 200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar results were presented by the FGD participants for light manufacturing and ICT sectors. Some specific suggestions shared by the FGD participants were for the associations to provide a standard set of documents for its members (e.g. job descriptions), and to serve as a marketplace for labor or for creating alliances with enterprises to handle overseas orders that exceed the capacity of a single enterprise (a common problem in both industries). This service may be provided through a special website maintained by the association.

As mentioned above, the ATIC has a robust membership fee structure that the FGD participants generally supported. Participants of the FGD for light manufacturing suggested a need to have a membership fee that ties to the size of the company. They also reported a higher willingness to pay a membership fee if APIUS plays an increased role in solving the more serious threats faced by the industry, such as countering unfair practices of importers, adjusting the legal framework in order to simplify exports to the EU, creating favorable conditions for national producers, or increasing the attractiveness of a career in light manufacturing among the younger generation. The companies also reported that they are ready to pay for additional services that APIUS could offer provided they adjust to their needs.

Table 11. Functions of industry associations suggested by the FGD participants, by sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light manufacturing sector</th>
<th>ICT sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Targeted coaching for every company</td>
<td>To supply the industry with labor force: to create and promote policies and actions for labor force development; to promote IT jobs and provide professional orientation (future occupation courses); to focus on IT education, to change curricular.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the interests of members in relations with national authorities</td>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing trainings and seminars relevant for the development of its members</td>
<td>Support in finding co/finances equipment procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>To lobby interests of the industry: to define state politics related to the industry (together with other actors): to struggle for current conditions for the IT industry. It is important to do this activity continuously and in before issues arise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support in finding co/finances equipment procurement</td>
<td>Informing companies about funding opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying new clients</td>
<td>To promote Moldovan IT companies on foreign markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the image of the industry at the national level</td>
<td>To support not only IT industry, but also subindustries related to the association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing experts for the current needs of the companies</td>
<td>Providing expertise for deploying online sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing expertise for deploying online sales</td>
<td>To protect members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, key informants also expressed dissatisfaction with the qualities of the associations. One respondent referred to an existing conflict, saying she was “keen to solve her company issues, not the sectoral ones.” According to the enterprise survey (both MCP direct beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries), ONVV appeared to be the most effective association, followed by APIUS and ANTRIM (Table 12).

Table 12. Rate the effectiveness of the associations which you are a member in achieving the results that you are interested in, survey results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Totally ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Neither ineffective nor effective</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Know, but not a member</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONVV</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APIUS</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANTRIM</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATIC</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASW</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gli: Codru, Valul lui Traian, Stefan Voda</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine School NGO</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Guides Association</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APIP (Association of the Processing Industry)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QUESTION 7: IF ANY, WHAT ARE THE INTENDED OR UNINTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?**

Key informants did not state any positive or negative unintended consequences of MCP when asked directly. Literature review, an analysis of the KIIs, and an FGD provided several project outcomes that were not intended by the project.

1. There was reportedly some imbalance between supply and demand of services and infrastructure in some geographic areas and for some products supported by the project. Key informants mentioned that a focus on Orhei made the region overcrowded with tourism service providers and tourists, ruining its authentic and remote appeal. They also mentioned promotion activities of the project created a demand for Moldovan products (wine and apparel) that are not yet available on the market in the required quantity, and created expectations from producers that their products (PGI-certified or having Tree-of-Life log, for example) would have special treatment in the marketplace, such as preferred shelving. These expectations are not currently fulfilled.

2. There were perceptions of competition between MCP and the organizations it created and supported. One key informant expressed that MCP activities competes against APIUS. One of the ICT FGD participants also noted that, to some extent, MCP and ATIC are competitors as they are fulfilling the same functions. Several different key informants mentioned that they think

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The sum of those who answered, “Somewhat effective” and “Very effective”. 
since MCP offers higher salaries, it employs higher-quality experts that could otherwise work for the GOM or for business associations.

The ET reviewed the M&E data collection system employed by MCP and found it adequate to capture intended project results. The system is based on a set of electronic forms completed by the project’s implementing partners, grantees, and beneficiaries. The reported results are stored in a single database that enables the retrieval of disaggregated results for each indicator. The system, however, does not allow the user to quickly pull the data about all assistance provided to a single beneficiary (either physical or legal entity). The database can provide information on the assistance provided to a specific beneficiary based on the individual records but requires time to produce a list of activities in which each beneficiary participated, or a list of assets received. Time consumed constructing such lists does not permit an analysis of large quantities of participating project beneficiaries. Thus, the ET excluded this line of inquiry from its methodology. Similarly, the ET found that project-grantee databases store extended information about each specific grant recipient. However, compiling information on the number of grants and other services received by a single grantee is not automatic and requires significant manual effort. The electronic grants management system also does not store information about the grant applicants who did not receive the grant. This information exists in separate files and project staff can assemble the information about all applicants for a specific grant, but it is not an automatic process and requires significant time. No analysis of unsuccessful grant applicants was done by the technical expert on the project.

**FINDINGS OUTSIDE OF SPECIFIC EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

MCP was very successful in bringing additional funding from private and public partners and from other donors. According to the Project Year Three report, the project established PPPs with a total value over $29 million, about $24 million of which came from sources other than MCP. Project activities are also co-funded by other international agencies. According to the USAID database, the MCP project budget is $21.85 million. Project documentation shows that only half of this amount is U.S. Government funding. The project is co-funded by Swedish Government in the amount of 63 million SEK (approximately $6.5 million). Representatives of the Swedish Embassy in Moldova told the ET that the decision to co-fund the project had at least two reasons. First, the Swedish Embassy did not have an infrastructure and staff in country to manage a large development project as efficiently as USAID. Second, they observed the successful implementation of the CEED and CEED II projects and believed that the MCP would support the targeted sectors in the most effective and efficient way. According to key informants, the MCP implemented the project effectively. Similar reasons led the Government of the United Kingdom to provide co-funding to some of the MCP activities in the amount of £3 million starting in December 2018. The UK funding, however, supports project activities in accordance with the funding agency internal rules and regulations, which limit use of its funds to support winemaking sector activities, while the Government of Sweden provided a grant to USAID to co-fund all MCP activities.

According to the key informants, both co-funding agencies are satisfied with the working relations with USAID/Moldova. However, at the initial stages of cooperation the representatives of the agencies had to work together to resolve differences resulting from conflicting requirements and internal regulations of the cooperating agencies. Based on project documentation and information from USAID sources, Swedish and UKAID funds are considered to be donations to the USAID; USAID applies its own branding and internal reporting rules to the management of the funds. However, according to the key informants, both the Government of Sweden and UK Aid require their branding to be placed on the materials produced with their funding. This required some adjustment to the MCP branding policies and practices. Similarly, both co-funding agencies have internal regulations regarding M&E of the funded projects, while USAID internal regulations and funding considers conducting the evaluation only on behalf of USAID. Finally, the USAID program cycle regulations do not provide requirements to invite donors

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7 See MCP project data on explorer.usaid.gov foreign aid explorer portal.
providing grants to the decision-making activities, such as annual project activity planning events. The key informants informed MCP that they did not receive formal project monitoring reports, only project annual plans after they were approved by USAID. Equally, the co-funders expressed concern with not being properly informed and involved in MCP evaluation activities. According to the key informants, while these concerns do not affect current co-funding for the project, they may affect co-funding of USAID/Moldova project in the future.
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This section presents the interpretation of the findings by the ET and its answers to the evaluation questions. The section is organized around the evaluation questions and presents additional conclusions at the end of the section.

QUESTION 1: IS THE PROJECT ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE ITS SET GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

There is tangible evidence from the project M&E system that the project is achieving its stated quantitative targets. There is also a strong expectation from the key informants and experts that the project will continue out-performing most of the stated indicator targets if there is no drastic change in the operating environment.

The project results and long-term outcomes are challenging to analyze, as the MCP is a continuation of previous USAID competitive contracts in the same sectors over the course of 10 years. This project is also implemented by the organization that implemented the previous USAID-funded competitiveness development project in the country (CEED and CEED II) and is currently implementing a similar USAID-funded High Value Agriculture Activity in Moldova. This makes it difficult to distinguish MCP’s progress towards the stated objectives from longer-term outcomes of other USAID-funded activities. Therefore, the cumulative progress and expectations for each of the project objectives in the targeted economy sectors will be discussed and point to understanding of specific contributions of MCP where possible.

Objective 1: Increased productivity and quality, achieving better workforce and adopting innovation

There are visible achievements in all four sectors targeted by the project. Literature reviewed by the ET, as well as results of KILs, suggests that significant modernization was accomplished in the winemaking, light manufacturing/TAFL, and tourism industries. This modernization could be attributed to the grants provided by MCP and to technical assistance to specific enterprises, provided by the experts supplied by MCP and predecessor projects. The modernization has touched not only production equipment and facilities, but also improved working conditions in the case of the light manufacturing industry. USAID support through MCP was especially critical, since it came at a time when all target industries were affected by the closing of Russian markets in 2014 (with a ban on import of Moldovan alcohol in September 2013, increased import duties on Moldovan goods, and disruption of transportation routes as consequences of the Ukraine-Russia conflict). This crisis affected some of the enterprises in the targeted sectors directly by freezing financial assets in the products prepared for the Russian market or by reducing financial assets due to non-payments for products already supplied to Russia. At the same time, an association agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova was signed in June 2014, and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) came into being. This came into effect immediately after signing and presented Moldovan enterprises with the opportunity to expand into European markets. The tight financial situation had happened at the same time as businesses had had to invest heavily to re-orient production toward new European and other markets. Reported by observations and KILs, increased productivity, quality, and adoption of innovation will be achieved by the end of the project in the winemaking and light manufacturing sectors. The project has provided strong evidence on how in-bound tourism can be developed in the country through renovation and investment in the tourism infrastructure, but it seems unlikely that the transformation of the entire sector will happen by the end of the project. ICT and the newly defined creative industry are by their nature more flexible in adopting to new technologies, though productivity and quality in these sectors are constrained by demand and the available workforce rather than other factors.

The overall transformation of the targeted sectors observed by the ET and reported by the key informants is so impressive that the ET explored the possibility that the rapid development of the industries was driven by the international donor funding rather than market forces. Moldova is a small
country with official population of 3.5 million people. The National Statistical Office estimates that number of usual residences of the country is 2.7 million and unofficial estimates by the experts indicate that less than 2 million of the population lives in its territory. The sectors of the economy targeted by USAID assistance in the last several years are relatively small (from approximately 25 thousand employees in ICT sector to approximately 200 thousand people involved in winemaking). USAID and other donors have invested at least $48 million over the fifteen years to support these industries. The results are highly visible and key informants attribute the development of the targeted sectors primarily to donor assistance.

Two reference points can guide USAID/Moldova in answering if support to increasing productivity and quality in the targeted sectors is overwhelming. First is a comparison to similar projects. Although international development projects are difficult to compare because of the differences in country context, prices, project goals, and approaches, quick research suggests that the MCP is on par with similar competitiveness-development projects targeting light manufacturing, tourism, and ICT sectors (Table 13). The size of USAID funding in Moldova to support four industries seems to be proportional to the population of the country if compared, for example, to the project in Kyrgyzstan that targets three industries, or Jordan that targets one industry. Second is a comparison to other countries. A literature review suggests that the development of the light manufacturing and especially ICT sectors in the post-Soviet countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Russia), were driven by market forces. However, the size of the sectors and of the internal markets play an important role and are significantly higher than in Moldova.

Table 13. Examples of USAID competitiveness projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Project length</th>
<th>Project (mil$)</th>
<th>Country population</th>
<th>Territory (sq.km.)</th>
<th>GNI (billion $)</th>
<th>Total dev. assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvador</td>
<td>Economic Competitiveness Project</td>
<td>2017–2022</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6.5 mln</td>
<td>20,720</td>
<td>$24.5</td>
<td>$152 mln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Moldova Competitiveness Project</td>
<td>2015–2021</td>
<td>21.85</td>
<td>3.5 mln</td>
<td>32,890</td>
<td>$10.6</td>
<td>$241 mln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Enterprise Competitiveness Project</td>
<td>2018–2023</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>6.4 mln</td>
<td>191,800</td>
<td>$7.7</td>
<td>$461 mln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>Building Economic Sustainability through Tourism Project (BEST)</td>
<td>2017–2022</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10 mln</td>
<td>88,780</td>
<td>$41.9</td>
<td>$2.9 bln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Macedonia Competitiveness Project</td>
<td>2007–2012</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2.1 mln</td>
<td>25,220</td>
<td>$11.4</td>
<td>$150 mln</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lack of a skilled labor force was mentioned by key informants as one of the main obstacles for all target industries. USAID projects addressed this problem by helping to establish industry communities and associations, developing a closer collaboration with universities and research centers to develop new opportunities to learn required skills, and by establishing centers of excellence and learning. MCP is recognized for its role in developing these opportunities, as well as for bringing world-class technology training and education (especially on ICT-related issues) to schools and other education institutions.

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8 National Statistical Office provides two statistics: resident population of 3.5 million and usual resident population of 2.7 million in 2019
9 Place of usual residence is defined as the place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months, not including temporary absences for poses of recreation, holidays, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage.
10 Based on the country profiles in explorer.usaid.gov
While the project is on its way to achieve its stated targets, the need for a skilled workforce is expected to remain an issue. The project has supported the development and piloting of viable models for education, but project outputs, such as assisting 138 primary schools out of about 1,300, is insufficient to solve the labor problem. Contrary to the increase in productivity and adoption of innovation, the reeducation of the labor force, increased entrance of educated youth into the labor force, and labor migration are unlikely to be resolved by market forces in Moldova in the next decade. Although the GOM provides opportunities for primary schools to renovate, it seems that continued donor support will be needed to support this process. Key informants also pointed out that labor migration from Moldova is caused by general economic and political conditions in the country and would require action outside of specific industries to counteract.

**Objective 2: Expanded market linkages**

The MCP role in establishing market linkages is the most recognized by all key informants. Most project beneficiaries are aware about the new opportunities created by MCP and the links established by predecessor projects. The key informants in government and in the private sector share the same opinion that market linkages and business opportunities in external markets significantly increased due to the activity of MCP staff and support to these activities by sector associations.

However, it is our understanding that while the project exceeds its targets for expanding market linkages in the industry sectors, it is unlikely the number of the linkages established by the end of the project will be sufficient to sustain the development of the industries in the future. While the project is likely to succeed in establishing local capacity for industry promotion within industry associations and the excellence centers (ZIPHouse, TekWill, etc.), these institutions are unlikely to produce funding for these activities. Entrepreneurs in the targeted industries consulted by the ET, except for a few large enterprises in ICT, winemaking, and tourism, indicated that they are not able to dedicate enough funding towards the promotion of external markets. The funding provided by the project was important to facilitate their participation, and it is likely that continued donor funding will be needed past the end of MCP to maintain and expand market linkages.

**Objective 3: Improved sector-enabling environment and increased local capacity**

Moldova is ranked 48th overall according to the World Bank Doing Business Indicator and is ranked 1st among lower and middle-income countries by the World Bank Ease of Doing Business score. In general, the business environment in the country is improving over the duration of the project; it seems that MCP had a significant role in improving a business-enabling environment in the assisted sectors. Based on findings from key informant interviews, most of this improvement could be attributed to increased internal capacity for promotion of the industry by industry associations and to regulatory and legal changes in the specific sectors. While these improvements were generally beneficial to all sector participants, it seems that larger enterprises located close to the capital of the country benefited more from these improvements. The industry association for ICT and light manufacturing concentrated on supporting a few large providers, probably because they are more vocal about their needs, easier to organize, and could benefit more from the improvement of the environment. This may increase the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the local industry institutions. However, this size-specific focus hinders the goal of stimulating development of the country’s rural areas and the development of SMEs. SMEs and rural enterprises appear to be more expensive, with lower immediate outcomes, and therefore are less likely to be commercially viable and addressed by market mechanisms. Continuing donor support to the development of SMEs and regional development is likely needed to achieve overall development goals in the supported sectors.

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11 WB Doing Business Score was steadily increasing from 71.4 in 2016 to 74.4 in 2020 report.
QUESTION 2: IS THE MCP APPROACH THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT?

The MCP approach to project implementation is considered the most effective and efficient by local observers, including international donors from Sweden and the UK, who decided to provide significant co-funding to MCP specifically for this reason. The project seems to be especially effective in organizing the promotion of targeted industries both inside the country and abroad; in encouraging significant cost-sharing from private sources with the grants; and in engaging substantial public and private co-funding for the PPPs established by the project. These three effective approaches implemented by MCP have strong potential for replication by other USAID projects, especially inside Moldova. The project found a unique and effective approach of establishing centers of excellence, which effectively navigates the complex legal and political landscape and could serve as an example mechanism by other projects in the country.

The success of the project activities may have several explanations. First, the MCP project team has accumulated significant experience implementing predecessor projects, employs the best country experts, and has gained respect among government officials and private entities in the country. Second, the project has had significant visible success in promoting industries abroad, and in encouraging significant co-funding for grants and PPPs, which can be explained by project’s objective of “picking the low-hanging fruit.” There seems to be a significant demand from market participants in the targeted sectors to reorient to Western markets and the EU since the 2014 DCFTA, coupled with increased difficulty in accessing Russian markets. The market participants have accumulated funds for this transition. The project helped enable them to make decisions about where and how to invest these funds effectively. The technical support and grants that provided small co-funding from the project stimulated them to make the decision earlier and start investing in restructuring.

If any of these explanations are correct, this will potentially create several risks for USAID continuing these approaches:

1. If the success of the MCP implementation approach is related to the quality and respect to the current project implementation team, USAID will have difficulty replicating these approaches with other implementing partners/project implementation teams inside the country or in other countries.

2. If effectiveness of the MCP activities is related to the team and connections with the government and nongovernment organizations in the country, future effectiveness of the project implementation is susceptible to becoming ineffective based on significant changes in public regulatory authorities or major market players in the targeted sectors. Change in the GOM in 2019 demonstrated how the government can try to change PPPs established by MCP-predecessor projects (the ONVV). It also demonstrated that legal changes introduced through project support may be vulnerable to reverse, such as the decision to use a reduced VAT rate for the HORECA sector. USAID/Moldova will have to better understand the motivations of the main actors in the industry before scaling MCP approaches to a new sector.

3. The effectiveness of current MCP approaches could play a negative role by crowding out market mechanisms and institutions, which is a well-documented problem for long-term development projects. It was already noted by some key informants that since the project is more effective and efficient, they prefer to work with MCP directly rather than receiving services or advocating rights through industry associations. If the effectiveness of the project is related to the strong expertise of the local team, it also presents a problem in attracting the best talent out of market institutions and weakening the ability of these institutions to develop. This problem was also noted by key informants about MCP. In order to achieve sustainability of the project results and continuation of promotion activities in the supported sectors, the project and USAID will have to develop a sector-exit strategy well in advance. This strategy should include mechanisms to transfer local staff employed by the project to the sector institutions and increase the commercial element of some project activities or services. An example of such activities might be
changing the model of supporting participation in international exhibitions from unconditional travel grants to conditional reimbursement schemes—a business is thus offered a travel grant only if the result of its participation in the exhibition is unsuccessful. This scheme would mitigate participant risks and encourage participation, but it would be less expensive and encourage market participants to consider investing its own funds first.

4. The “picking the low-hanging fruit” component of MCP’s effectiveness also runs the risk of decreasing effectiveness of the project’s approaches over time (after all the “low-hanging fruit” is picked). One of the ways to counter this problem would be to conduct an early diagnosis of the problem. One approach could be to analyse changes in the profiles and qualities of the unsuccessful bids for grants provided by the project. Many bidders could be disqualified because they received an MCP grant in the past, or they have insufficient matching funds. These could be indicators of increased difficulty in achieving results in the selected sectors.

QUESTION 3: DO MCP ACTIVITIES PROVIDE INCENTIVES TO DEVELOP AND SUCCEED?

Key informants provided strong evidence that MCP support to the target industries encourages both public and private actors to develop their capacities to succeed. The fact that private companies in all four industries were ready to invest significant funds with technical support or grants from MCP could also be interpreted as a demonstration of the project providing incentives for these entities to succeed. The only concern with the reported effects of the project is if they encourage public and private entities to develop in their desired direction—or if the direction of development is set by the project. A review of the road maps developed by MCP and other project documents suggest that the project actions are driven by international experts based on an objective analysis of the state of each supported sector and an optimal course of action to develop competitiveness of this product. To the best of our knowledge, there is no attempt to learn preferences and priorities of the industry participants or the GOM or to align the course of action with these priorities. As we established earlier, the project actions determined this way are effective, efficient, and lead to achieving the project objectives. However, the activities are externally driven by the market participants. Several key informants mentioned that their actions are opportunistic in nature; they choose to develop businesses or implement programs from available project funding rather than achieving their own agendas. The enterprises, even the ones from members of the industry associations supported by the project, never reported being involved in deciding the course of action the association would take to promote the industry.

This may create problems with the development of sustainable market organizations, such as industry associations, because instead of gaining the capacity to analyze the sector needs and to develop actions to address these needs, the organization may have developed the capacity to analyze available opportunities from donors and that serve the needs of donors. It seems developing of competitive industries in the long run would require actions of market participants to be self-motivated and this may be skill that is currently missing and needs to be developed. USAID and the project could address this problem by establishing a path of progressive involvement of the market participants in the choice of direction for development that is incentivized by the project. It can also be achieved by increasingly less-prescriptive calls for grants. This strategy is partially implemented by MCP already.

QUESTION 4: WHAT ARE THE MCP ACTIVITIES’ PERCEIVED VALUE ADDED?

Evaluation findings from different sources clearly suggest that market participants perceive the MCP activities provided a high value added for their enterprises and for the industry in general. The ET was unable to quantify the value added by the project. The market participants were not ready to pay for placement of logos for the brands developed by the project, but this was an expected outcome at this stage of the industry development and the brands were not designed to be monetized in this way.
Similarly, an indicator of perceived-value-added of project activities in a development association by entrepreneurs in the supported industries could command “fair” annual fees for the functions provided by the association. These fees vary from $27 to $225 a year and probably represent a lower boundary for the value added by the project activities supporting the associations, because the definition of a “fair fee” may be lowered by a perceived lack of capacity in the associations.

**QUESTION 5: HOW HAS THE MCP SUPPORTED THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK?**

Evidence suggests that MCP played an important role in improving the regulatory framework for the targeted industries in two respects: technical support to much-needed work adopting EU standards and regulations for the country, and support to industry associations in advocating for special conditions and regulations to allow for faster growth in the targeted sectors (such as laws on IT parks, removing regulations from the tourism sector, etc.). This work is highly susceptible to external political factors and may increase in importance or be hindered by recent changes in the GOM. The government changes in 2019 demonstrated how quickly the country can change the political appointees in the government. This is a well-known risk for the international development projects in general and best practices recommend projects build relationships with technical experts in the government who tend to be more stable than political appointees. It seems that MCP successfully adopted this approach.

However, the government reform in the summer of 2017 demonstrated that the changes may also affect technical experts and capacities of the government. After the reform, nine ministries remained out of sixteen. Technical units in the government bodies in charge of the sectors targeted by MCP were reformed into smaller units within the Ministry of the Economy and senior technical experts working in these units and familiar with MCP work moved away. Thus, technical capacity for analysis and policy formulation in the new units within the Ministry is significantly lower (some units were changed from employing about 15 people to two or three people within the Ministry structure). Therefore, external technical support to policy analysis and drafting regulations and legislation if of high importance. At the same time, new government brings new priorities. This creates the risk that MCP may be less effective in implementing planned regulatory changes that are not aligned with the new government’s priorities.

Some of the changes already achieved may be reversed, as exemplified by the increased VAT rate for HORECA sector. MCP will also have to build new relations with new government employees, which may slow down the implementation of changes to the regulatory framework in the target industries.

Another important factor in MCP’s support to the improvement of the regulatory framework that may need a revision is advocacy for favorable conditions in the targeted industries. The project was successful in creating preferable development conditions for the targeted industries to stimulate growth to these industries through exceptions in tax laws and other laws and regulations. The project provided industry associations with technical support to help advocate for such changes and is building their capacity to lobby the changes on behalf of the industry. However, preferential conditions that allow the development of particular sectors is not necessarily good for development of the country in general. For example, a special VAT rate creates loopholes in the tax system that reduces tax revenues and stimulates distortions in the development of other industries. In developed democracies with mature government institutions, lobbying of industry interests by associations is usually compensated by a system of checks and balances. In Moldova, it should be expected that this system is weaker and international development projects should make more of an effort to ensure that actions of one project do not contradict actions or recommendations of other international development initiatives. This is not a simple task, since the international development community might not be able to agree on a common approach. However, MCP has an advantage leading this process as it already represents three different donors in Moldova.

Also, MCP benchmarks its legal and regulatory initiatives against international best practices. It engages stakeholders to support policy improvements through open public-private dialogue and consultations with the private sector. However, respondents indicate that they do not consider these regulatory initiatives as their own. Results of the FGDs also show that industry organizations do not consider
lobbying regulatory changes among their major priorities. The evidence collected by the ET is primarily anecdotal in nature and represents opinion of direct project beneficiaries. However, it highlights concerns for sustainability of these activities by industry associations. Although the associations participate in project-directed dialog about support for regulatory reforms, there is no evidence that they are effective in organizing dialog with industry actors to internalize the proposed reforms. As we discussed earlier, perception by industry informants that the reform initiatives are coming from them would increase both the demand for industry associations and their ability to influence the government.

**QUESTION 6: ARE THE MCP-SUPPORTED ACTORS SUSTAINABLE IN THE LONG RUN?**

Among MCP-supported actors, only ATIC and APIUS appear to be the mature and self-sustainable in the long term. Their success is a result of MCP efforts (as well as predecessor projects) and their long-term involvement in implementation. However, their sustainability model, as well as the sustainability model of most other associations supported by the project, is based on prolonged funding from international donors. The model is based on fees for managing parks and excellence centers, such TekWill and ZIPHouse, and implementing international projects like the ones under MCP. The financial model for the IT parks and excellence centers make them unsustainable without donor support. The project has experience supporting institutions with other financial models that are based on government co-funding, with financial contributions from industry actors. This model is successfully implemented by ONVV and is also targeted by ANTRIM. However, broad support with financial contributions by industry enterprises would require tailoring association functions and activities to needs of the businesses. This will require associations to survey industries, conduct industry research, and pursue consensus-building which is currently not an emphasis. There is also a general disbelief by both entrepreneurs and the association management that an association can be funded collectively by the industry—instead of through donors. This perception will hinder implementing any self-funded model in the long term.

**QUESTION 7: IF ANY, WHAT ARE THE INTENDED OR UNINTENDED OUTCOMES OF THE PROJECT?**

The project’s M&E system is good at tracking the agreed indicators. It does not, however, reflect all the outcomes of the project. For example, there is cross-coordination of winemaking and tourism or winemaking and ICT, which is an intended outcome. Capturing this outcome is beyond the capabilities of an M&E system and requires additional research that is outside of current project’s scope. Without additional research, it may not be possible to find any unintended outcomes of the project and key informants were unable to name any positive or negative outcomes that were not originally intended by the project.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation findings and discussion above, we would like to formulate two sets of recommendations. The first set of recommendations refers to current project activities and is intended for the project implementation team. The second set of recommendations is for long-term practices by USAID and donor partners that may be used for future programming and extending the project’s best practices beyond MCP.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROJECT

1. **Continue project activities**, especially the most-demanded project activities such as promotion of the targeted industries domestically and abroad. The current MCP activities seem to be both effective and efficient.

2. **Continue to emphasize support to SMEs in all targeted industries, especially in ICT.** The project is already targeting SMEs in all supported industries, but the continuing focus of the project and its implementing partners should remain on the SMEs. SMEs are the least-desirable partners for market-based industry organizations/associations. The project may consider developing special financial initiatives for associations to increase the number of SME members and SME representatives in their management bodies. The project could also continue exploring and better engaging existing frameworks that target SME development, such as the Working Group on SME development on the platform of the Economic Council under the Prime Minister.

3. **Aim for greater industry actor buy-in for specific activities.** This may be achieved by designing consultative processes implemented by the supported industry associations to gather opinions of their businesses about the direction of that industry’s development. The consultative process could be organized through opinion surveys, voting, or other means of feedback from the firms in the targeted sector. While this process will increase the needed time for decision-making and decrease the speed of the project actions, it will allow a market-based model to be designed that will increase sustainability of the industry development in the long term.

4. **Continue the development of supported associations** with an emphasis on their capacity to identify priorities for the industries and then develop action plans to address these priorities.

5. **Utilize information from the grant applications to monitor the state of the supported industries.** This includes keeping information about all applications responding to the call for grants, including information on size of each funding request, amount of co-funding offered by the applicant, the size of the applicant, and the reasons for which the grant was not granted. Based on this information, the project should be able to identify at least the following: (1) capacities missing from grantees, such as equipment or management capacities, based on their inability to articulate specific problems in their submission; (2) priorities of the grant applicants for the market; (3) the size of the businesses and their financial capacity to co-fund the grant activities; (4) expectations of the applicants regarding opportunities for market and industry development in the near future. All this information would provide information to better diagnose the stage of the industry’s development and its most needed actions from the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID

While the ET addressed these recommendations specifically to USAID as funder of the evaluation, they may also be valuable to all funding partners of the project.

1. **Continue implementing MCP activities.** The approaches implemented by the project seem to be effective and efficient, and the project is on the way to achieving its stated targets. It is continuing to benefit targeted industries which are recovering from the 2016 crisis and are well-positioned to support industries adapting to the new government priorities that changed in 2019.
2. **Consider expanding MCP approaches for grants and PPPs to other projects in Moldova.** These approaches are tailored to the country environment and allowed MCP to stimulate significant co-funding of the activities. The approaches will require additional study to determine core strengths and weaknesses and formalize them into an action package. It then can be communicated among other projects through a series of USAID internal workshops.

3. **Consider winemaking and light manufacturing as “graduated” from project support.** These industries benefited from long-term support by USAID-funded competitiveness projects and experts suggest that irreversible changes have occurred in the industries that will ensure development of their competitiveness in the future. Given the importance of these industries, USAID/Moldova may consider supporting the industries directly through local organizations and should start implementing an exit strategy for the industries as soon as possible after the decision is made. The exit strategy should include packaging and transferring tools, templates, and other products developed by the project team to the industry associations or government entities and embedding some current project staff into these entities until the end of the project.

4. **Consider approaches that further support the sustainability and industry self-development for future projects.** Use the experience of other USAID-funded competitiveness development programs for future projects, combined with best practices of USAID/Moldova projects. One of the approaches may be allowing industry associations to design and implement their own competitiveness actions, with partial funding (on competitive basis) from a USAID-funded coordination unit; that unit could monitor and oversee the competitiveness of targeted industries. USAID/Moldova may look to the implementation experiences of other missions, for example at the Jordan Competitiveness Program, to draw ideas for future programming.

5. **Revise the process for collaboration between organizations co-funding MCP.** The collaboration may be improved by open discussion of the expectations of the project’s co-funders regarding the collaboration process; this discussion should encompass the internal procedures and regulations of the funders as well. Any current collaboration processes that are not formalized in the grant or contract agreements should be formalized in memoranda of understanding between organizations to insure continuity against possible future changes in staff. One of the goals of the revision would be to increase the sense of involvement for development agencies of Sweden and the UK and allow them to more closely comply with internal regulations regarding project monitoring and reporting.

6. **Develop regular consultative processes for regulatory and legal initiatives** in order to ensure that recommendations by international experts to the Moldovan government are more cohesive. The process could be first initiated by USAID/Moldova in collaboration with MCP co-funders and could set regular quarterly semi-formal meetings to exchange ideas and approaches for legislative and regulatory reforms advocated by other USAID-funded projects. This process can then be extended to include other international development organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with comprehensive discussion of potential collisions in recommendations to prevent negative consequences of one project/organization to the action of other.
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ANNEX A: EVALUATION SOW

C.1. BACKGROUND

Moldova is at a crossroads geographically, politically, and economically. Positioned between Western Europe and the former CIS, Moldova has the advantage of geographical proximity to both stable but demanding western markets and growing but risky eastern markets. This position could be an advantage but will require a clear strategy and cooperation among sector actors and policy makers. In the wake of a power shift away from the Communist party toward democracy and the west, political stability has been a challenge but presents numerous opportunities for Moldova. The new democratic government is eager to improve Moldova’s position in the global economy by creating a friendlier environment for business. Finally, in the wake of the global financial crisis, the country has suffered tremendously. What have emerged though are businesses and sectors that have survived, restructured, improved, and are now focusing on market demands.

On average, Moldova’s economy has experienced annual growth rates of 5.5 percent over the past 10 years, helping to drive poverty rates down from 73 percent in 1999 to less than 10 percent in 2015\(^1\). Yet Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, with GDP per capita equating to $2,165 and an average annual salary of $4,152.\(^2\) The structure of the economy has been evolving from a traditional agrarian orientation to a rapidly expanding services sector and restructured industrial sector. While services account for 56 percent of GDP, the sector only employs 33 percent of the Moldovan labor force. By contrast, agriculture employs a similar proportion of Moldovans but only contributes 12 percent to GDP.\(^3\)

Economic actors are dominated by Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Moldova. The post-Soviet breakup of over-capitalized enterprises with poor labor productivity have downsized, divested, or been replaced by smaller and less capital-intensive enterprises. The rise of the services sector has also been driven by small and agile businesses with high productivity of labor. Further advancing the private sector and its contributions to economic growth in Moldova will require a focus on SMEs.

To support Economic Growth in Moldova, USAID began programming in 2005 to support sectors which appeared to have the best chance for success and foster broad based economic growth. The early USAID efforts were CEED and CEEDII projects that ran from 2005 until 2015. USAID introduced the follow-on MCP in 2015. Over the years some sectors have been consistently part of the portfolio and others have been eliminated.

Historic Sectors, Activities and Budget

\(^1\) According to UNDP data sourced from: [http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html](http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-1-no-poverty.html)


USAID/Moldova awarded the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) contract in 2015. The contract’s current period of performance is September 30, 2015 to September 29, 2020 and the total estimated cost is $21,851,382. The goal of MCP is to grow and expand the targeted competitive industries through increased productivity and quality, expanded market linkages and improved sector-enabling environment. The key industries supported by MCP are all export oriented and contribute roughly 13% to Moldova’s GDP. The project supports these industries in reaching a maturity level that promotes sustainable improvements in the sectors’ competitiveness and that provides well-paying and desirable jobs, hereby increasing incomes, alleviating poverty, and reducing emigration.

MCP Objectives

- Objective 1: Increased productivity and quality: (better workforce and adopted innovation)
- Objective 2: Expanded market linkages.
- Objective 3: Improved sector-enabling environment and increased local capacity.

C.2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this task order is to provide USAID with a mid-term evaluation of the MCP progress to date and assess the competitiveness sectors that USAID has supported during the period 2005-2019. After a 14-year period of supporting the key industries, USAID is looking for a critical assessment on the progress achieved to date, its effectiveness in supporting the targeted sectors as well as their sustainability. The results of both the MCP evaluation and the sector assessments are to be used in future USAID strategic planning, design of activities, adapting to changing context and improvement in its overall assistance provision.

C.2.1 MOLDOVA COMPETITIVENESS PROJECT MID-TERM EVALUATION

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to determine the extent that MCP has been successful in developing and promoting the key industries that USAID has assisted including: Wine, Tourism, Light Manufacturing, and Information and Communication Technologies. The findings will help determine what sector components and project aspects are working well and which perhaps are not and why. USAID will also use the findings to help guide USAID’s MCP project over its second half, and if necessary, make modifications and mid-course corrections.
Evaluation Priorities

a) Evaluate MCP’s progress to date in achieving planned goals and objectives;
b) Evaluate MCP collaboration modalities in support of key competitive industries in Moldova;
c) Evaluate MCP management structures and their role in achieving planned results;
d) Identify additional approaches or activities to achieve MCP objectives;
e) Provide pertinent information and statistics that assist will USAID, Sida and the GOM to learn what is being accomplished and the relevant management, financial and cost efficiency findings.
f) Provide recommendations for USAID regarding possible improvements and adjustments to MCP programming.
g) Identify any unforeseen constraints and obstacles that may have affected MCP’s performance and advice regarding adjustments to sector specific interventions which would lead to more rapid self-reliance transition.

C.2.2 SECTOR ASSESSMENT OF USAID TARGETED SECTORS

The Mission seeks to assess the industries of Wine, Tourism, Light Manufacturing, and Information and Communication Technologies that have received USAID assistance since 2005, as well as determine the self-sustaining sectors and sub-sectors that would need further assistance.

Sector Assessment Priorities

a) Assess MCP’s targeted and historic sector support from CEED and CEEDII, MCP’s predecessor projects and provide a sector sustainability assessment;
b) Assess the combined historical support (going back to 2005) of the selected core industries and produce a ‘dashboard’ of each industry’s health and path towards self-reliance or when will donor assistance no longer be required.

C.3. EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

This is a proposed list of questions that can be revised in consultation with USAID.

C.3.1 QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY THE MCP MID-TERM EVALUATION

a) What is the impact on competitiveness development (qualitative & quantitative) in the MCP targeted sectors? Is the project on track in achieving the intended life of project goals and objectives?
b) Is MCP providing the most effective and efficient approaches in sector development and export promotion? Which type of assistance is most beneficial to specific actors and to the industry in general?
c) To what extent have MCP activities provided an incentive for supported institutions, systems and businesses to develop and succeed?
d) What is the perceived value added of MCP activities for stakeholders working in these target
industries? Are they able to report changes in their livelihoods and improved abilities to match the requirements of internal and export markets?
e) To what extent has MCP support improved the regulatory framework? How are the decision makers and government officials reacting to MCP’s proposals? Have the regulatory framework generated incentives from the private sector to become more competitive and export oriented?
f) Are the MCP supported actors sustainable in the long run to operate and develop without further project assistance?
g) Are there any intended or unintended outcomes that the project is achieving but are not captured by the MCP M&E system or the Activity MEL Plan? How can MCP’s monitoring and evaluation data be better used for management purposes?

C.3.2 QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY THE SECTOR ASSESSMENT

a) How well have USAID interventions advanced the capacity building of the targeted sectors: Wine, Tourism, Light Manufacturing, and Information and Communication Technologies in Moldova leading to increased sales and investments?
b) With USAID/Moldova, a substantial amount of resources has been provided in formation of industry-led associations like Moldova National Office of Wine and Vine (ONVV), Association of Small Wineries, ICT Association, etc. What is the role (future and present) of these associations in Moldovan industry clusters development? What are the main areas on which the associations need to focus? Who represents these associations economically? From a sustainability perspective, do the members feel that the associations are worthwhile investments for their members; do they provide services that are worth paying for? Are the associations active enough and advocate for their members’ interests to the government and other entities?
c) What is the overall ‘health’ of each sector USAID/Moldova has historically supported and each sector’s readiness for self-reliance? What steps must be taken to ensure the sustainability of key sectors?

C.4. METHODOLOGY

C.4.0 Methodology Evaluation and Assessment

The contractors must use a mixed methods data collection approach to triangulate across methods and results. Document reviews, analysis of secondary data, and key informant interviews must be supplemented by other methods (such as direct observation and mini surveys) specific to each task.

Document Reviews

Document reviews must be conducted, as needed, throughout the evaluation and the assessment. They must be used to inform the design of the data collection tools and to provide information about changes in business environments and the effects of these changes on the targeted industries. Document reviews will also provide extensive information about the substance of specific MCP activities and achievements.
Secondary Data Analysis

The Contractor must work with local experts and key informants to identify sources of secondary data for each of the target sectors and to analyze this data in order to identify trends and shifts in the production, trade, employment, and other economic characteristics of the sector.

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) must be used to deepen the contractor’s understanding of the implementation of MCP activities, the trends and expectations of different stakeholders for the target industries, their view of the role and contribution of MCP and previous USAID-funded projects, and their assessment of the challenges and unintended consequences of project implementation.

C.4.1 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation must comply with USAID Evaluation requirements as stated in the ADS 201.3.5.9 and the USAID Evaluation Policy. The expected evaluation type is a mid-term performance evaluation.

To supplement the data from the common data collection methods and answer some specific evaluation questions, the Contactor must implement additional data collection as described below.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The Contractor must conduct several FGDs with representatives of industry organizations and direct project beneficiaries, such as trainees and SMEs involved in the project.

SME Survey. The Contractor must also conduct an electronic survey of MCP SME beneficiaries to collect uniform quantitative information about the performance and effect of the project activities on their enterprise. The must collect information about current performance as well as historical information dated before the MCP start.

Organizations Sustainability Assessment. The Contractor must conduct a formal organization sustainability assessment to determine the current level of self-reliance and sustainability for the industry organizations supported by the project.

Direct Observations at Project Sites. Where possible, the Contractor must use opportunities to conduct interviews with the project direct beneficiaries at their site of business to directly observe how these businesses are conducted and (if any) changes introduced in cooperation with the project.
The Contractor’s methodology must adequately cover the capital, Chisinau, as well as districts and villages with MCP implementation, to capture both central and remote project beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The Contractor must disaggregate data as appropriate, taking in consideration categories as: age, gender, ethnicity, type of organization, industry, and geographic region.

The following information will be provided to the Contractor:

- The Statement of Work of the MCP Contract;
- MCP Workplans;
- MCP Quarterly Reports;
- MCP Yearly Reports;
- MCP list of Stakeholders and Supported Businesses;
- Other MCP related information;

**C.4.2 SECTOR ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

The Contractor must apply a mix of quantitative and qualitative criteria, relying on good data and reasoned analysis.

The sector assessment must make a determination of the target sectors' overall 'health' and progress towards self-reliance. A ‘Dashboard’ reporting format must be utilized to give Mission leadership a clear idea of the future growth potential of each industry; the actions required to achieve continued growth without technical and financial assistance and a timeline for its potential to “graduate” from USAID assistance. This will be a key tool for the Mission when evaluating where to emphasize support moving forward.

The sector assessment must also include a Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis for each supported sector and a projected trajectory and associated timeline towards industry self-reliance. The sector assessment must make a clear distinction between the industries’ need for inputs of the type provided by USAID assistance versus inputs, decisions or contributions required of other actors in order for the target industries to be sustainable (such as access to finance, reduced barriers to trade, increased private investment, etc.).

The following are factors that the contractor must take into consideration when conducting the assessment:

**Quantitative factors:**

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5 https://www.usaid.gov/evaluation/policy
- Contribution to GDP
- Contribution to exports; export growth; growth/perspective on non-traditional and higher value-added markets, including EU
- Contribution to employment; employment growth; wage levels and evolution; ability to create quality jobs with living wages
- Contribution to investment; potential for additional investment mobilization or attraction
- Market research of potential export markets.
- Human capital evaluation relating to number of graduates and the quality and relevance of their education
- Institutional capacity to educate the needed number of graduates in the required specializations
- Exports by sector and sub-sector

Qualitative factors:
- Special factors, such as impact on regions, women and youth, innovation, value added, migration and brain drain, living standards, democratic values
- Mid-term and long-term competitiveness perspectives of the industry
- Receptivity and interest of the Government of Moldova and industry stakeholders to cooperate with the donor
- Ability of the donor to contribute assistance useful to the industry that makes a difference in its development trajectory (convening power, technical assistance, grants, trade support, skills development, facilitating public-private dialogue, etc.)
- Potential for contributing to competitiveness of other industries, if relevant
- Vulnerability to regulatory changes
- Vulnerability to single or few national markets
- Comparative advantages and external competitiveness of each of the sectors
- Sector feasibility studies
- Qualitative rating of export potential

C.4.3 STAKEHOLDERS

In conducting the Evaluation/Assessment, the contractor should take into consideration meeting with stakeholders involved in MCP and USAID competitiveness support, including but not limited to:

- USAID/Chisinau staff
- MCP staff in Chisinau (COP, DCOP, etc.)
- Major international donor organizations: World Bank, EU Delegation, DFID, and SIDA.
- Industry led associations: Moldova National Office of Wine and Vine (ONVV), Association of small wine producers, ICT Association, Association of Light Manufacturers, Inbound Tourism Association, etc.
- Host country partners: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education Culture, and Research, etc.
- MCP Beneficiaries: Private companies, their employees (wine, tourism, light manufacturing and information and communication technologies)
- Other private companies, members of associations from the respective domains that are non-beneficiaries or might benefit in future.
C.5. **TEAM COMPOSITION**

The Contractor’s team must be comprised of the key personnel identified in Section F.4 and the following additional team members: four International Industry Experts, three Senior Local Industry Experts, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialists and other team members as needed to successfully achieve a high quality evaluation and assessment.
ANNEX B: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Overview of Methodology

DevTech’s overall approach will take advantage of the synergy between the MCP mid-term PE and the sector assessments during the data collection and analysis to minimize costs and time for the entire task. Where appropriate, DevTech’s Assessment Team (AT) will use the methods of data collection and analysis as described for each task below. Our overall approach is to use mixed methods data collection to triangulate across methods and results. Document reviews, analysis of secondary data, and key informant interviews will be the primary common methods of data collection, supplemented by other methods (such as direct observation and mini surveys) specific to each task.

Table 1 articulates the assessment questions, proposed data collection methods, and analytical approaches to answer these questions. DevTech’s approach is to rely on the expertise of senior international experts in each of the targeted sectors supported by local industry experts to understand country context, development pathway and constraints, and access major stakeholders and experts. It also includes the synthesis of the information obtained from the systematic and purposeful interviews with key informants in each of the sectors, and the extensive use of economic analysis and visualization of statistical data from government, private, and USAID sources. This multi-faceted results-oriented analysis will be critical to providing a high-quality assessment for decision-making and identifying a strong path forward for the growth of each of the industries.

Table 4. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

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<th>Assessment Question</th>
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<td>How well have USAID interventions advanced the capacity building of the targeted sectors – wine, tourism, light manufacturing, and information and communication technologies in Moldova – leading to increased sales and investments?</td>
<td>National Bureau of Statistics, APIUS, ATIC, ONVV, ASW, ANTRIM, ANAT, CCIM</td>
<td>Statistical analysis</td>
<td>Collect data from national statistics and industry associations and analyze trends in industry employment, production, exports, number of enterprises, revenue, etc.; discuss the observed trends with key informants from industry associations and experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the role of ONVV, ASW, ICT Association, and other Moldovan industry clusters on development? What are the main areas on which the associations need to focus? Who represents these associations economically? From a sustainability perspective, do the members feel that the</td>
<td>Industry associations representatives, independent experts, USAID and international org. staff</td>
<td>KII</td>
<td>Collect expert opinions about the role of the industry associations in the development of each target industry through KII; confirm perceived roles through the KII with select project beneficiaries and through information collected from MCP beneficiary SMEs through survey; review information on sustainability of the associations and main factors determining sustainability that was collected through focus groups for the MCP evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Question</td>
<td>Data Source</td>
<td>Data Collection Method</td>
<td>Data Analysis Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>associations are worthwhile investments for their members; do they provide services that are worth paying for? Are the associations active enough and advocate for their members’ interests to the government and other entities?</td>
<td>Representatives of industry associations, Industry representatives, SME in target sectors</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Review current economic and policy research to synthesize main trends for each target industry; confirm conclusions based on the document review through KIIIs with industry representatives and independent experts; analyze the findings using SWOT analysis framework; depict the findings and conclusion in a dynamic dashboard using Tableau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the overall “health” of each sector USAID/Moldova has historically supported and each sector’s readiness for self-reliance? What steps must be taken to ensure the sustainability of key sectors?</td>
<td>Local and international think-tanks, Industry association representatives, independent experts, USAID and international org. staff</td>
<td>Document review, KII</td>
<td>Review current economic and policy research to synthesize main trends for each target industry; confirm conclusions based on the document review through KIIIs with industry representatives and independent experts; analyze the findings using SWOT analysis framework; depict the findings and conclusion in a dynamic dashboard using Tableau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection and Analysis**

This section includes a detailed description of the data collection methods that will be used in this assessment. This process will address the Sector Assessment priorities set up by the Mission:

a) Assess MCP’s targeted and historic sector support from CEED and CEEDII, MCP’s predecessor projects and provide a sector sustainability assessment;

b) Assess the combined historical support (going back to 2005) of the selected core industries and produce a ‘dashboard’ of each industry’s health and path towards self-reliance or when will donor assistance no longer be required.

**Document Reviews**

Document reviews will be conducted, as needed, throughout the assessment. They will be used to inform the design of the data collection tools and to provide information about the changes in business environments and the effects of these changes on the targeted industries. The document reviews will also provide extensive information about the substance of specific USAID/Moldova funded activities and achievements. The initial document and literature review will be conducted during the first two weeks of the assessment. It will be based on the documents provided by USAID and the MCP, including the sector assessments conducted by the CEED and CEED II projects, and sector roadmaps and other documents developed by MCP. The local industry specialist included on the AT will review publicly available Government of Moldova (GOM) documents of the four industries, such as industry development strategies, policy research, and documents that are available from industry associations and local experts. In addition, the document review will be expanded during the field data collection and the analysis phases.
of the evaluation and assessment, based on documents provided by the key informants or obtained from project partners and implementation sites visited by the AT. The initial document review will be conducted by the international evaluation specialist and four international industry experts, with support from local industry experts, with supervision from the team leader. The ongoing document review during the implementation phase will be conducted by both international and local experts; the local expert will also be used to study or translate the documents only available in the Romanian or Russian language.

Secondary Data

Secondary data will be an important source of information for the analysis done for the sector assessments. The AT will study common and industry-specific sources of economic data in order to provide the comprehensive picture and provide information for developing sector dashboards. The AT will use both international and domestic sources of the secondary data. The international industry experts and the DevTech PM will review international business associations and the resources available at USAID, such as IDEAS dashboard country economic profiles, Self-reliance dashboard and UN Comtrade Database. The local industry experts will be tasked to review the country internal data sources for the relevant information, starting with the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, and the relevant industry associations. The AT also expects to get access and use the data collected by MCP monitoring and evaluation system, in particular the information reported by the companies - direct beneficiaries of the project.

Following the contract SOW, the AT will be looking for the following quantitative measure for each sector:

1. Contribution to GDP;
2. Contribution to exports; export growth; growth/perspective on non-traditional and higher value-added markets, including EU;
3. Contribution to employment; employment growth; wage levels and evolution; new jobs with wages above median wage;
4. Contribution to investment; potential for additional investment mobilization or attraction
5. Market share on export markets;
6. Human capital indicators, such as number of graduates with industry related education, as well as number of graduates remaining in the country and in the industry;
7. Institutional capacity to educate the needed number of graduates in the required specializations;
8. Exports by sector and sub-sector;

In addition to this initial list of quantitative indicators, the AT will be seeking recommendations from key information in each sector for additional indicators and sources of information specific to the sector.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews (KII) is our central data collection method for the MCP evaluation with will be shared with the sector evaluation. KIIs will be used to deepen our understanding of the implementation of MCP activities, the trends and expectations of different stakeholders for the target industries, their view of the role and contribution of MCP and previous USAID-funded projects, and their assessment of the challenges and unintended consequences of project implementation.

There are three major groups of key informants that will be interviewed for this ass: 1) MCP insiders, including USAID staff and project experts; 2) MCP beneficiaries, including representatives of the industry
associations, SMEs, and participants of various training activities organized by the project; and 3) external experts, including representatives from the GOM, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think-tanks, and other international experts working in Moldova. The initial list of 120 key informants (see Annex A) is based on information provided by MCP and the USAID contracts officer representative (COR). The key informants, especially MCP beneficiaries, will be selected to ensure representation of all targeted industries and locations throughout the country, especially proper coverage of the urban areas and villages outside of the capital. The AT will continue working with the MCP to during the preparation for the field data collection and first field work to obtain complete list of project beneficiaries and grantees. The evaluation experts will compare the list with the initially suggested list of key informants to ensure that all types of beneficiaries and geographic locations are represented in the KII list. In order to collection opinions of potential beneficiaries and experts independent of the project, the local industry specialist on AT identified local independent experts (included in the initial KII list) and are working with industry associations to further identify businesses outside of the MCP partners to be interviewed. In order to further expend the list of experts, the AT will also use “snowball” technique: at the end of each KII the interviewer will ask interviewee to recommend additional experts or similar businesses to get more information on the topics discussed during the interview.

Interviews will be guided by separate open-ended interview schedules for each group of informants. This will include targeted inquiries to collect precise information to answer specific assessment questions, as well as more open-ended questions to better understanding the how and why of MCP implementation and impact. The KII guides will be prepared in English, Romanian, and Russian). DevTech will obtain all necessary approvals and adjust to changes as requested by the COR and any other key stakeholders. Interviews will be designed to be completed within one hour.

KIIIs will commence as soon as the assessment methodology is approved by the COR. Key informants will be contacted in advance to schedule interviews and will be provided a copy of the KII schedule/questionnaire, if required. If any of the planned KIIIs are not possible during the time the core team is in the country, the local team members will make a second attempt to interview the key informant in-person or over the phone after the international team members have left. To assure accuracy and efficiency, the interviews will be conducted by two- or three-person teams working in parallel. Each team will consist of one international team member, a local junior or mid-level team member, and a local senior expert, where needed. Interviews will be conducted predominantly in Romanian and English, languages which are spoken by most of the AT members and expected to be spoken by most respondents. Where requested by the respondent, the interview will be conducted in Romanian or Russian by a local member of the AT who will provide translation to the interviewee and the international member.

KII information will be analyzed immediately after interviews are completed. Analysts will identify the most common responses to the questions from the key informant interviews and will tabulate these responses. A separate list containing “outlier” responses will be created for further investigation by the AT. Follow-up through in-person interviews or via emails may be conducted by one of the team members if clarification is needed. All data collection and reporting will abide by the ethical principles of informed consent, respect, sensitivity, do no harm, non-discrimination, and confidentiality. Interviewers will read a brief statement about the purpose of the study and voluntary participation during the interview and will provide answers to respondents’ questions before proceeding.

**Focus Group Discussions**

The several focus group discussions (FGDs) will be conducted during the evaluation of the MCP. The FGDs will also be used to collect information relevant to the sector assessment First, there will be one focus group with representatives of industry organizations supported by the MCP. The focus group will be
conducted in Chisinau. The primary purpose of this focus group will be to determine how MCP activities and actions affected the institutions, and what is the expected sustainability of the organizations after the end of the project. Using the Most Significant Change approach, the AT will also try during this FGD to determine the impact of the regulatory changes supported by USAID and the discuss future priorities for the sectors of Moldova’s economy.

Second, the evaluation will conduct four focus groups consisting of direct project beneficiaries, such as the firms involved in the project. The AT will work with the industry associations to identify and convene the 8 to 10 SMEs per focus group, which will represent the widest possible variety types of companies. Since management for most of the firms are in Chisinau, we will organize the focus groups in the capital. The FGDs will focus on discussing the effectiveness of the assistance provided by the project, and expectations for the development of the industries and the required assistances in the future. The FGD participant will be asked to discuss the interventions most needed for the development of their respective industries/sectors of economy, which will provide information for the assessment.

FGDs will be run as a discussion guided by the AT members (the team leader and senior international or local expert in the relevant industry) with support from the mid-level local evaluation expert who will be a note taker. The FGDs will be conducted in the Romanian language, unless English or Russian language is preferred by the participants. The AT will develop two separate FGD protocols (one to the FGDs with industry associations and another for the direct beneficiaries) that will list the main questions for exploration. The results of FGDs will be tabulated and explored for most common themes and issues raised by the group.

**SME Survey**

The MCP evaluation will also conduct an electronic survey of 130 MCP SME beneficiaries and 110 grantees (some of which are the same) to collect uniform quantitative information about their experience with the project, and the performance and effect of the project activities of their enterprise. The survey will also include questions on the barriers to doing business and the beneficiary’s expectations for the industry development. The AT will receive access to the performance information of the individual beneficiaries (current and historical total sales, export sale, and investment by the company) collected by the project. The survey results will be analyzed in conjunction with this data.

A single online survey will be created for both types of beneficiaries; separate set of questions related to participation in the project and the grants will be presented to the beneficiaries depending on the type of assistance they received. The survey will be administered in Romania, Russian and English languages via email using Survey Monkey or similar service. The collection of the survey responses will be managed by a research assistant in DevTech’s HQ. If the survey response rate is low, the local evaluation experts will follow up via phone, prompting participants to respond. The international evaluation expert will be responsible for the survey design and data analysis.

**Direct Observations at Project Sites**

The AT will use opportunities to conduct interviews with the project direct beneficiaries at their site of business for each sector to directly observe how these businesses are conducted and if any changes are introduced in cooperation with the project. During the first week of the fieldwork prior to visiting the beneficiaries, the AT will work with the MCP M&E specialist to determine the types of project assistance received by the beneficiaries to create personalized observation checklist for each beneficiary. Most of the visits will be conducted by a team of two team members: one international and one local.
The site visits locations depend on availability of the key informants and their willingness to interview on site of their production facilities, and willingness to permit AT members to conduct direct observation. This willingness will be ascertained during the initial contact with key informants and set up of the interviews. At minimum, the assessment team’s target is to conduct direct observations of four sites or facilities of the direct project beneficiaries included in the KII list located in or near Chisinau for each of the four industries (total number of at least sixteen direct observations). In addition, the AT members will visit locations in Moldova that are specific to each of the industries and will conduct at least one direct observation per location. These locations include: Comrat and Vulcanesti for the Wine Industry (expected 4 direct observations); Butuceny for the Tourism Industry (expected 2 to 3 direct observations); Cahul, Comrat, and Soroca for the Light Manufacturing Industry (expected at least one observation in each location, for 3 observations total); and Balti for ICT Industry (expected at least 2 direct observations). The Assessment Team will further work with the MCP and COR to discuss potential benefits of using opportunity of AT members’ presence in particular locations for direct observations where multiple industry beneficiaries are present (for example, there are beneficiaries for the Light Manufacturing Industry and the ICT Industry that are located in Balti; and there are ICT Industry beneficiaries and Light Manufacturing Industry beneficiaries located in Cahul facilities, which the team plan to visit). A total of 28 to 30 observations expected to be conducted by the AT.

Data Analysis

The data analysis will be used to specifically address the assessment questions in accordance with the assessment priorities set by USAID/Moldova. The data analysis will yield two distinct sub-products that could be used to summarize the assessment results through: the sector dashboard for each targeted sector; and the SWOT analysis table.

Sector Dashboards

Building on DevTech’s experience in implementing the Agency’s USAID Data Services project, the AT will develop a dynamic depiction of the changes in each of the industries over time and across geographic space. Such visualization often provides ordinary users with a better understanding of economic trends than simple industry analysis and provides quick access to relevant data. In addition to quantitative data of the indicators of interest discussed above for the four target sectors, the AT will identify values of the same or similar indicators for the World and a group of comparable countries and industries to put the country information in perspective. The appropriate comparison group of countries will be identified for each industry and set of indicators and will not necessarily follow the comparison group defined for self-reliance indicators. The qualitative indicators will be grouped in order to further enhance the visualizations, and separate two-page summaries will be prepared for each of the targeted sectors to be used as separate aids to demonstrate the assessment results. Each dashboard will contain six to eight graphs with grouped indicators, like in appearance to the USAID self-reliance dashboard, and short note on the interpretation of the indicators. The DevTech home office PM will use Tableau to create the visualizations used in the assessment report and stand-alone two-page visualizations.

SWOT Analysis for Selected Industries/Sectors

SWOT Analysis will be the main analytical method shaping the approach to the assessment. The AT will construct a SWOT matrix for each of the four industries prior to the data collection to ascertain what quantitative and qualitative data needs to be collected through statistical analysis, document reviews, and key informant interviews in order to enable the SWOT Analysis for the sector. It is expected to include
standard indicators for access to resources, finance, market and customers, industry structure and regulations, and major external factors. It will also include specific factors and information related to an industry, for example threats of climate change to the development of wine industry and the ability of the industry to mitigate these threats. The structure of the SWOT Analysis and major indicators for each industry will be discussed during the focus groups with representatives of industry associations in order to solidify and verify the approach taken by the assessment team.

While developing SWOT Analysis for each sector, in addition to the quantitative indicators reflected in the sector dashboard, the AT will attempt to provide full discussion of the qualitative factors, identified by the Mission as important considerations in the contract SOW:

1. Special factors, such as impact of the industry on regions of the country, women and youth, innovation, value added, migration and brain drain, living standards, democratic values
2. Mid-term and long-term competitiveness perspectives of the industry
3. Receptivity and interest of the Government of Moldova and industry stakeholders to cooperate with the donors, such as USAID, to develop the industry
4. Ability of the donors, such as USAID, to contribute assistance useful to the industry that makes a difference in its development trajectory (convening power, technical assistance, grants, trade support, skills development, facilitating public-private dialogue, etc.)
5. Potential of the sector for contributing to competitiveness of other industries, if relevant
6. Vulnerability to regulatory changes
7. Vulnerability to single or few national markets
8. Comparative advantages and external competitiveness of the sector
9. Qualitative rating of export potential

Finally, the SWOT matrix will be included as a part of the dynamic dashboard that summarizes major assessment findings for each of the industries.

**Table 4. SWOT Matrix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths (Competitive Advantage)</th>
<th>Weaknesses (Competitive Disadvantages)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities (Positive Trends)</td>
<td>Threats (Challenges)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Hello. My name is ________________. My colleagues and I are conducting an evaluation of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) funded by USAID.

USAID has contracted us to conduct mid-line assessment of MCP performance. We will assess the degree to which the implementation of the project has been successful, and the extent to which it has contributed to development of the targeted sectors of economy in the country. Responses gathered in interviews such as this will be used to inform USAID decisions on this and related programs.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. However, a summary results based on key informant interviews will be shared with USAID officials.

During the interview, if we come to any question you do not wish to answer, just let me know and I will go on to the next question; or you can stop the interview at any time. However, we hope that you will participate in this interview since your views are important.

At this time, do you have any questions about the survey?

May I begin the interview now?

Signature of Interviewer: ______________________    Date: ________________________
Question 1
Would you consider yourself familiar with Moldova Competitiveness Project Activities? How are you involved with the MCP support provided to your organization? (Skip where answer is obvious, e.g. project staff).

Question 2
In your expert opinion, is the project on track with achieving its intended results (goals and objectives)?

Prove first, and then remind about project objectives:

• Objective 1: Increased productivity and quality: (better workforce and adopted innovation).
• Objective 2 – Expanded market linkages.
• Objective 3- Improved sector-enabling environment and increased local capacity.

Prove first, and then remind that the project targets four industries: Wine, Tourism, ICT, Light Manufacturing

Question 3
Could you provide a brief assessment of MCP’s effectiveness based on your individual experience and your observations (for example direct or indirect benefits from resources, workshops or trainings received)?

We invite both positive and critical comments.

Prove for their assessment of MCP actions to achieve results of activities in which the respondent took part; then probe for their assessment of the strategies the project took to achieve higher-level results (see question 2 for the list of MCP objectives)

Question 4
In your opinion, what were the MOST successful activities that MCP implemented? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three most successful).

What were the LEAST successful ones? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three least successful).

Prove to identify up to three activities in each category. Which ones should be continued, which changed, and which discontinued? Please identify any changes you think should be made.

Question 5
In your opinion, what type of assistance provided by MCP was the MOST beneficial to the Government of Moldova, target industries, NGOs and firms?

What type of assistance provided by MCP was the LEAST beneficial?

Prove to identify types of assistance in each category (MOST and LEAST beneficial) for various beneficiaries (GM, NGOs etc.). Which ones should be continued, which changed, and which discontinued? Please identify any changes you think should be made.

Prove for specific reasons.
**Question 6**
In your opinion, how do the beneficiaries (including NGOS, the Government of Moldova, and beneficiary firms) perceive value of the project activities?
Which activities, do you think, they value the **MOST** and which ones do they value the **LEAST**?

**Question 7**
In your opinion, are there any observable changes in the target industries that can be directly attributed to the MCP activities?

*Probe for other possible explanations of the same changes or projects/activities that target the same result.*

**Question 8**
To your mind whether the project was successful or not? To what degree successful or not? Why?

If YES: In your opinion, what factors have enabled or contributed to the success of the project?

If NO: In your opinion, were there any factors that have positively influenced the project?

*Clarify that you are looking for factors that are objective, i.e. independent of the project itself. Ask to describe the impact of these factors and the project’s response.*

To ALL: In your opinion, what factors have hindered the success of the project?

*Clarify that you are looking for factors that are objective, i.e. independent of the project itself. Ask to describe the impact of these factors and the project’s response.*

**Question 9**
In your opinion, did the project M&E system capture all the project results and were they accurately reflected in the project reports?

*Probe for unintended consequences that were captured and reported or intended and unintended consequences that may not be reflected in the reports.*
Question 10
In your expert opinion, did MCP produced effects that are not observable now, but will become visible in later years. Please describe them.

Question 11
Would you like to provide any additional insights regarding MCP? Or could you recommend us who to speak with about the same topics?
Key Informant Interview Questionnaire

### KEY INFORMANT NAME(S)

### KEY INFORMANT TITLE AND AFFILIATION

### INTERVIEWER

---

**DATE/LOCATION**

**TIME**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Hello. My name is ________________. My colleagues and I are conducting an evaluation of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) funded by USAID.

USAID contracted us to conduct mid-line assessment of MCP performance. We will assess the degree to which the implementation of the project has been successful, and the extent to which it has contributed to development of the targeted sectors of economy in the country. The responses gathered in the interviews will be used to inform USAID’s decisions on this and related programs.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. However, a summary results based on key informant interviews will be shared with USAID officials.

During the interview, if we come to any question you do not wish to answer, just let me know and I will go on to the next question; or you can stop the interview at any time. However, we hope that you will participate in this interview since your views are important.

At this time, do you have any questions about the survey?

May I begin the interview now?

Signature of Interviewer: ______________________ Date: ______________________
Question 1
Would you consider yourself familiar with Moldova Competitiveness Project Activities? How are you involved with the MCP support provided to your company? (Skip where answer is obvious, e.g. project staff).

Question 2
To what extent would you say MCP enhanced the capacities of your company? Please provide examples related to the program(-s) in which your company participated.

Question 3
What activities were you involved in? Do you think they were effective in supporting your company and your industry? We invite both positive and critical comments.

Probe to identify the most effective activities if a company participated in several of them.

Question 4
In your opinion, what were the MOST successful activities that MCP implemented in your industry? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three most successful).

What were the LEAST successful ones? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three least successful).

Probe to identify up to three activities in each category. Which ones should be continued, which changed, and which discontinued? Please identify any changes you think should be made.

Probe for industry specific MCP activities from the attached list

Question 5
Are you a member of the industry association? Which?

If YES: In your opinion, how effective and useful is the industry association in your industry?

Probe for the relevant industry associations from the attached industry-specific list

If NO: Do you plan to become a member? Why?

If you have knowledge about industry associations can you tell, how effective and useful is the industry association in your industry?

Probe for the relevant industry associations from the attached industry-specific list

Question 6
In your opinion, what types of activities from the association are demanded the most by the members?

Probe for the following:

1. Advocacy to the government on regulatory, tax, or other reforms
2. Organizing industry-wide events and promotions.
3. Developing/Supporting common industry brand, promoting industry overseas
4. Organizing education/continuous training to the industry members on new technology, labor force development (including coordination with educational system), international marketing

**Question 7**

Are you paying any industry association fees? Which fees do you pay?

Are you willing to support industry associations financially in the future?

Do you think other companies in the sector are ready for it? *Probe what types of companies are ready and their share. Acceptable payment amount.*

**Question 8**

What are your expectations about development of your company in the next five years?

What are the major factors that would stimulate or hinder your development?

_Probe for access to international markets, lack of investment funding, need to improve quality of the project/production processes/ final products, access to the labor force or other resources, competition from other sectors of economy inside Moldova or from other countries, legal and regulatory environment_

**Question 9**

In your opinion, is your industry competitive?

What are the current factors influencing the development of your industry as a whole?

_Probe for industry strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Probe for specific examples in the industry_

**Question 10**

In your opinion, what should be done in the next five years in order to support the development of your industry?

**Question 11**

Would you like provide additional insights regarding MCP? Or could you recommend us who to speak with about the future and the problems of the industry?
Key Informant Interview Questionnaire

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USAID contracted us to conduct mid-line assessment of MCP performance. We will assess the degree to which the implementation of the project has been successful, and the extent to which it has contributed to the development of the targeted sectors of the economy in the country. The responses gathered in the interviews will be used to inform USAID’s decisions on this and related programs.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. However, a summary results based on key informant interviews will be shared with USAID officials.

During the interview, if we come to any question you do not wish to answer, just let me know and I will go on to the next question; or you can stop the interview at any time. However, we hope that you will participate in this interview since your views are important.

At this time, do you have any questions about the survey?

May I begin the interview now?

Signature of Interviewer: ______________________    Date: ________________________
Question 1
Would you consider yourself familiar with Moldova Competitiveness Project Activities? How are you involved with the MCP support provided to your organization/association? (Skip where answer is obvious, e.g. project staff).

Question 2
To what extent would you say that MCP enhanced the capacities of your organization/association? Please provide examples related to your own organization.

Question 3
Could you provide a brief assessment of the MCP effectiveness based on your individual experience, and your observations (for example direct or indirect benefits from resources, workshops or trainings received)?
We invite both positive and critical comments.

Prove for the their assessment of MCP actions to achieve results of activities in which the respondent took part; then prove for their assessment of the strategies the project took to achieve higher-level results (Objective 1: Increased productivity and quality: (better workforce and adopted innovation); Objective 2 – Expanded market linkages; Objective 3- Improved sector-enabling environment and increased local capacity).

Question 4
In your opinion, what were the MOST successful activities that MCP implemented in your industry? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three most successful).

What were the LEAST successful ones? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three least successful).

Probe to identify up to three activities in each category. Which ones should be continued, which changed, and which discontinued? Please identify any changes you think should be made.

Question 5
In your opinion, what type of assistance provided by MCP was the MOST beneficial to your member firms? (Even if the project was not the MOST effective and efficient in delivering the assistance).

What type of assistance provided by MCP was the LEAST beneficial?

Probe to identify types of assistance in each category (MOST and LEAST beneficial). Which ones should be continued, which changed, and which discontinued? Please identify any changes you think should be made.

Probe for specific reasons.

Question 6
What is the role of your association in the dialogue process with the government? How did the project support you in this role?
Question 7
In your opinion, are there any observable changes in your industry that can be directly attributed to the MCP activities?

Probe for other possible explanations of the same changes or projects/activities that target the same result.

Question 8
To your mind whether the project was successful or not? To what degree successful or not? Why?

If YES: In your opinion, what factors contributed to the success of the project?
If NO: In your opinion, were there any factors that have positively influenced the project?

Clarify that you are looking for factors that are objective, i.e. independent of the project itself. Ask to describe the impact of these factors and the project’s response.

To ALL: In your opinion, what factors have hindered the success of the project?

Clarify that you are looking for factors that are objective, i.e. independent of the project itself. Ask to describe the impact of these factors and the project’s response.

Question 9
In your opinion, what is the current state of development of your industry?

Probe for industry strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Probe for specific examples in the industry

Question 10
In your opinion, what should be done in the next five years in order to support the development of your industry?

Probe a topic international trade bodies (If the association is a member of any? Whether it is important or not to be a member? What are positive aspects of participation? If not, a member what hinders?)

Question 11
What is your opinion about sustainability of your organization in the next 5 years? Would a decrease in USAID funding significantly impact the activities of your organization? How?

Probe for what share of the funding from USAID, and in particular MCP is in the organization’s budget. Ask to see some documents (annual reports to the board, etc.) if available.

Probe for expected number of association members and membership fees.

Probe for set plan of activities of the association, and how the association ensures its relevance for the members.
**Question 12**

In your opinion, what type of activities from the associations are **MOST** demanded by the members?

_Probe for the following:_

1. Advocacy to the government on regulatory, tax, or other reforms
2. Organizing industry-wide events and promotions.
3. Developing/Supporting common industry brand, promoting industry overseas
4. Organizing education/continuous training to the industry members on new technology, labor force development (including interaction with educational system), international marketing

**Question 13**

Would you like to provide any additional insights regarding MCP?
## Key Informant Interview Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY INFORMANT NAME(S)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KEY INFORMANT TITLE AND AFFILIATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEWER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATE/LOCATION**

**TIME**

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello. My name is ________________. My colleagues and I are conducting an evaluation of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) funded by USAID.

USAID contracted us to conduct mid-line assessment of MCP performance. We will assess the degree to which the implementation of the project has been successful, and the extent to which it has contributed to the development of the targeted sectors of the economy in the country. The responses gathered in the interviews will be used to inform USAID’s decisions on this and related programs.

Participation in this interview is voluntary. The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. However, a summary results based on key informant interviews will be shared with USAID officials.

During the interview, if we come to any question you do not wish to answer, just let me know and I will go on to the next question; or you can stop the interview at any time. However, we hope that you will participate in this interview since your views are important.

At this time, do you have any questions about the survey?

May I begin the interview now?

Signature of Interviewer: ______________________    Date: ________________________
Question 1
Please describe your qualifications as the industry expert and describe any industry specific research and analysis that you have done in the last five years?

Probe for the specific industry for which this expert is identified.
Ask to share the research/documents, if possible?

Question 2
In your opinion, is your industry competitive? What are the current factors influencing the development of the industry as whole?

Probe for industry strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Probe for specific examples in the industry

Question 3
In your opinion, what should be done in the next five years in order to support the development of your industry?

Probe a topic international trade bodies (Whether membership in international trade bodies increases the integration of the Moldova industry into the global value chain? Whether it is important or not for industry associations to be a member of such bodies? What are positive aspects of participation? What hinders associations to become members?)

Question 4
What role do the industry association play in the development of the industry?
In your opinion, what should the industry association do to be relevant?

Probe for the following:
1. Advocacy to the government on regulatory, tax, or other reforms
2. Organizing industry-wide events and promotions.
3. Developing/Supporting common industry brand, promoting industry overseas
4. Organizing education/continuous training to the industry members on new technology, labor force development (including interaction with educational system), international marketing

Question 5
Would you consider yourself familiar with the Moldova Competitiveness Project activities? How are you involved with MCP? (Skip where answer is obvious e.g. project staff)

Question 6
In your opinion, what activities of the MCP are relevant to the industry’s development and effectiveness?

Question 7
In your opinion, what were the MOST successful activities that MCP implemented in your industry? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three most successful).
What were the LEAST successful ones? Why? (If a respondent names more than three activities, ask him to define the three least successful).
Probe to identify up to three activities in each category. Which ones should be continued, which changed, and which discontinued? Please identify any changes you think should be made.

Probe for industry-specific MCP activities from the attached list

Question 8

Would you like to provide any additional insights regarding MCP? Or could you recommend us someone to speak with about the future and problems of the industry?
ANNEX C5. FGD PROTOCOL

Moldova Competitiveness Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Focus Group Protocol: Representatives of Industry Organizations and Direct Project Beneficiaries

INTRODUCTION MESSAGE:

Hello. My name is _________________ and I’m part of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) evaluation team. MCP is a USAID-funded project.

DevTech Systems is the company conducting the evaluation. DevTech is an international development company located in Washington, DC which specializes in Project Monitoring and Evaluation.

I would like to introduce my colleagues from the evaluation team, Moderator ____________, Observer ____________, Translator ____________.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine if the MCP project activities have achieved the desired results during 2015 through 2019 time to assess the industries that were supported in a broader context—also covering 2005 through 2019 interventions by USAID funded projects.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this focus group discussion. This will be a two-hour discussion covering the following topics:

- Current state of the industry regarding sustainability and readiness for self-reliance.
- Industry organizations and their role in development of their clusters.
- Experience of your organization and industry representatives participating in MCP project, including your motivation to join the project and expectations, interaction with its representatives. Positive aspects and drawbacks in cooperation with the project.
- Results of participation in the project for your organization, industry as a whole and its representatives at the national level.
- Your expectations for future cooperation.

I will guide the discussion by introducing new questions from time to time.

Your views are important to us. They will help to provide a better understanding of your MCP experience and changes that lead to improvement.

We will be writing your comments on paper and using a tape recorder to record your voices. The information collected will be used to inform the MCP future activities. Your responses will also be used to help USAID and the United States Government to assess its progress in the supported industries and to decide on future support in the competitiveness sectors.

Participation in this focus group is voluntary. All the information heard and recorded here today will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shown to the MCP representatives. However, MCP and USAID officials will receive a summary of the information.

During the discussion, you are encouraged to share your thoughts during the discussion as you see fit. If there are questions that you don’t want to answer or feel uncomfortable sharing with the group, then feel
free to remain silent. You can leave at any time. However, we hope that you will participate in this interview since your views are very important to us.

At this time, does anyone have any questions? Do we have your permission to begin the discussion?

Let us begin.

Signature of Moderator: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Signature of Observer #1: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Signature of Observer #2: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Signature of Assistant: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Signature of Translator: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Focus Group Discussion date: _____/_____/_______

Moderator: ______________________

Observer: ______________________

Venue: ______________________

Time started: ________________ Time ended: ________________

Language used: ______________________

Number of participants: Male ________ Female ____________

Estimated Age Group:

Focus Group Discussion Category (Popular Opinion Leader or Community):

Focus Group Discussion type (Industry Organizations or Beneficiaries): ______________________

Industry Representatives: Wine ______ Tourism ________ Light ________ ICT ________
ANNEX C6. FGD QUESTIONS GUIDE – INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Moldova Competitiveness Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Representatives of Industry Organizations
Focus Group Guiding Questions

INTRODUCTION:

1. Please tell us which business association you represent, briefly describe its activity and your position in the organization and your experience in this industry.
2. What do you know about MCP project? How and why did your organization join the project?
3. Please describe in general your experience with MCP. What was the role of your organization in it? What were the positive aspects in cooperation? Were there any drawbacks to be improved?
4. What were your expectations regarding participation in the MCP project? Did MCP meet your expectations? Why yes or no?
5. In which MCP’s activities did you participate? Which activities were helpful for your organization, the industry and in what way?
6. What regulatory changes were introduced during the last three years? How did they influence your organization, industry, SMEs? Did MCP contribute to those changes? In what way?
7. Did MCP change your role and functions in the industry? In what way and how?
8. In which MCP’s activities did SMEs belonging to your industry participate? What was the feedback from their side? Which activities were helpful for them and in what way?
9. Can you name any positive changes SMEs experienced as a result of participation in MCP? What led to those changes? Will these changes sustain in future and why? What factors define whether SME benefits from participation in MCP or doesn’t?
10. What changes might you expect in the mid-term and long-term?
11. MSG: Now I would like you to contemplate about changes on industry level over the last three years. Please write down all changes that will come to you mind. After that ask respondents to define three most important from their lists and rank them.
12. MSG: Afterwards discuss all the changes: Please briefly describe the change? Its positive and negative aspects? Whom it influenced? Check all the participants and whether MCP contributed to it and in what way?
13. MSG: What are the three most significant of those you discussed by the group? Why?
14. Can you name any challenges/barriers that hindered MCP’s implementation and success for your organization, for the industry, and for SMEs?
15. Do you have experience interacting with any government bodies? Which bodies are key to the industry? Did you observe any changes in activity of these government bodies during the last three years? How did those changes influence your organization, and the industry? Did MCP contribute to those changes? How?
16. Are there any other projects providing development assistance to your industry or other sectors in Moldova? What organizations? Are there any practices that MCP should borrow from them

FINALIZING DISCUSSION:

17. Can you name any other aspects of MCP that you think are important but were not mentioned during our discussion? Do you have any expectations from MCP until it finalizes, or the next
USAID competitive project? Which activities should be prioritized and why? Which should be stopped and why?
Moldova Competitiveness Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Direct Project Beneficiaries (Winemaking Industry)

Focus Group Guiding Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell us which company or organization you represent, briefly describe its business and your position in the organization and your experience in this industry.

2. What do you know about MCP project? In which MCP’s activities did you participate? Which activities were helpful and in which way? (Probe the following activities if respondents do not mention spontaneously: Wine of Moldova, Wine of Moldova Academy, Best Grapes, FlaveDor, Terroir, Small Winemakers Mentorship Program, PQUP - Product Quality Upgrading Program, Export Coaching Program, Sommelier & Wine-Friendly, Wine Vernissage, National Wine Day, Wine of Moldova 2030)

3. Can you name any positive changes in your organization as a result of participation in MCP? (Probe: learning new knowledge and train new skills, increasing local market share, gaining new markets, improving products and services quality, implementing new management practices, improving attractiveness on labor market, establishing new partnerships, declining unemployment rates and improving livelihoods in your community etc.) What led to those changes? Any definite MCP activity in which you participated or beyond it (for example support of regulatory changes, support of industry organizations) contributed to it?

4. Now we would like to use little game to identify the most significant changes in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three changes in the industry you personally observed and consider most important.
   b. Moderator will write list of all changes on the wall.
   c. Using three types of the sticky notes - green for 1, yellow for 2, and red for 3 – please indicate which of the changes you consider most important in the industry (each participant does not have to stick to the changes he/she identified)
   d. Based on the results on the wall, lets briefly discuss why the highest ranted changes are the most important.
   e. What are the positive and negative aspects of these changes? Whom it influenced? Check all the participants and whether MCP contributed to it and in what way?

5. Do you know what specific business associations are working in your industry? (Probe: ONVV - National Office of Vine & Wine, ASW - Association of Small Winemakers, "PGI Producer Associations: Codru, Valul lui Traian, Stefan Voda", Divin) What is their role in the industry? Do they cope with their functions? Why? What is their influence on the industry? Is your company a member of any business associations? If YES What is your experience with them?

6. Now we would like to use a little game to identify the value of the business associations and their expected role in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three tasks that you would like your industry association to be doing. You can formulate general tasks (advocating for reducing regulatory barriers) or more specific (advocating for 7% tax instead of current 15%).
   b. Moderator will write list of all task on the wall.
   c. Think about annual contribution (in USD) you think would be fair, and you will be willing to make to an industry organization (as organization annual fee). Write this number on three sticky notes of different colors.
d. Please take your sticky notes and put them next to the industry association task you would like your industry association to support. Please use green note for your first choice of the task, yellow for second, and red for third. You may choose not to support any tasks or support only one or two tasks. In this case, please set your remaining notes in the “Resources” box in the wall.

e. Based on the results on the wall, lets briefly discuss if current associations fulfill these tasks, and if there is a need to have other organizations to support the industry?

7. Can you name any challenges/barriers that hindered MCP’s implementation and success for your organization and for the industry?

8. Did you observe any changes in activity of such government bodies as Moldova Investment and Export Promotion Organization (MIEPO), Moldova Investment Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment during the last three years? How those changes influence your organization, the industry? Did the MCP contribute to those changes and in what way?

FINALIZING DISCUSSION

9. Can you name any other aspects of MCP that you think are important but were not mentioned during our discussion? Do you have any expectations from the MCP until it finalizes, or the next USAID competitive project? Which activities should be prioritized and why? Which should be stopped and why?
ANNEX C8. FGD QUESTIONS GUIDE – TOURISM INDUSTRY

Moldova Competitiveness Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Direct Project Beneficiaries (Tourism Industry)
Focus Group Guiding Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell us which company or organization you represent, briefly describe its business and your position in the organization and your experience in this industry.

2. What do you know about MCP project? In which MCP's activities did you participate? Which activities were helpful and in which way? (Probe the following activities if respondents do not mention spontaneously: Tree of Life, Startup Tourism Moldova Programs, Hospitality+, WINE-UP Wine Tourism Accelerator, Inbound Startup, Go Regional, National Wine Trail, Tree of Life events calendar, BeOurGuest campaign(s), DescOPERA festival, Rethinking Tourism Moldova, Orhei Vechi, ANTRIM Incoming Forum)

3. Can you name any positive changes in your organization as a result of participation in MCP? (Probe: learning new knowledge and train new skills, increasing local market share, improving products and services quality, implementing new management practices, improving attractiveness on labor market, establishing new partnerships, declining unemployment rates and improving livelihoods in your community etc.) What led to those changes? Any definite MCP activity in which you participated or beyond it (for example support of regulatory changes, support of industry organizations) contributed to it?

4. Now we would like to use a little game to identify the most significant changes in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three changes in the industry you personally observed and consider most important.
   b. Moderator will write list of all changes on the wall.
   c. Using three types of the sticky notes - green for 1, yellow for 2, and red for 3 – please indicate which of the changes you consider most important in the industry (each participant does not have to stick to the changes he/she identified)
   d. Based on the results on the wall, lets briefly discuss why the highest ranted changes are the most important.
   e. What are the positive and negative aspects of these changes? Whom it influenced? Check all the participants and whether MCP contributed to it and in what way?

5. Do you know what specific business associations are working in your industry? (Probe: ANTRIM - Inbound Tourism Association, Tourism Guides Association) What is their role in the industry? Do they cope with their functions? Why? What is their influence on the industry? Is your company a member of any business associations? If YES What is your experience with them?

6. Now we would like to use little game to identify the value of the business associations and their expected role in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three tasks that you would like your industry association to be doing. You can formulate general tasks (advocating for reducing regulatory barriers) or more specific (advocating for 7% tax instead of current 15%).
   b. Moderator will write list of all task on the wall.
   c. Think about annual contribution (in USD) you think would be fair, and you will be willing to make to an industry organization (as organization annual fee). Write this number on three sticky notes of different colors.
d. Please take your sticky notes and put them next to the industry association task you would like your industry association to support. Please use green note for your first choice of the task, yellow for second, and red for third. You may choose not to support any tasks or support only one or two tasks. In this case, please set your remaining notes in the “Resources” box in the wall.

e. Based on the results on the wall, let’s briefly discuss if current associations fulfil these tasks, and if there is a need to have other organizations to support the industry?

7. Can you name any challenges/barriers that hindered MCP’s implementation and success? For your organization and for the industry?

8. Did you observe any changes in activity of such government bodies as Moldova Investment Agency/MIEPO, Ministry of Education, Culture, & Research, Ministry of Economy & Infrastructure during the last three years? How those changes influence your organization, the industry? Did MCP contribute to those changes and in what way?

FINALIZING DISCUSSION

9. Can you name any other aspects of the MCP that you think are important but were not mentioned during our discussion? Do you have any expectations from the MCP if it continues? Which activities should be prioritized and why? Which should be stopped and why?
Moldova Competitiveness Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Direct Project Beneficiaries (Light Industry)

Focus Group Guiding Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell us which company or organization you represent, briefly describe its business and your position in the organization and your experience in this industry.

2. What do you know about MCP project? In which MCP’s activities did you participate? Which activities were helpful and in which way? (Probe the following activities if respondents do not mention spontaneously: DININIMA Moldova brands, SMART Factory, Flying Designers, Z Young Designers competition, Fashion Accelerator, Fashion Leadership Program, Market Icebreaker, ZIPhouse Academy, Window Display competition, Fashion Photography competition, Moldova In Fashion Conference, Moldova Fashion Days, Fashion Soirée)

3. Can you name any positive changes in your organization as a result of participation in MCP? (Probe: learning new knowledge and train new skills, increasing local market share, increasing traditional international market share, gaining new markets, improving products and services quality, implementing new management practices, improving attractiveness on labor market, establishing new partnerships, declining unemployment rates and improving livelihoods in your community etc.) What led to those changes? Any definite MCP activity in which you participated or beyond it (for example support of regulatory changes, support of industry organizations) contributed to it?

4. Now we would like to use little game to identify the most significant changes in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three changes in the industry you personally observed and consider most important.
   b. Moderator will write list of all changes on the wall.
   c. Using three types of the sticky notes - green for 1, yellow for 2, and red for 3 – please indicate which of the changes you consider most important in the industry (each participant does not have to stick to the changes he/she identified)
   d. Based on the results on the wall, lets briefly discuss why the highest ranked changes are the most important.
   e. What are the positive and negative aspects of these changes? Whom it influenced? Check all the participants and whether MCP contributed to it and in what way?

5. Do you know what specific business associations are working in your industry? (Probe: APIUS - Light Industry Association) What is their role in the industry? Do they cope with their functions? Why? What is their influence on the industry? Is your company a member of any business associations? If YES What is your experience with them?

6. Now we would like to use a little game to identify the value of the business associations and their expected role in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three tasks that you would like your industry association to be doing. You can formulate general tasks (advocating for reducing regulatory barriers) or more specific (advocating for 7% tax instead of current 15%).
   b. Moderator will write list of all task on the wall.
c. Think about annual contribution (in USD) you think would be fair, and you will be willing to make to an industry organization (as organization annual fee). Write this number on three sticky notes of different colors.

d. Please take your sticky notes and put them next to the industry association task you would like your industry association to support. Please use green note for your first choice of the task, yellow for second, and red for third. You may choose not to support any tasks or support only one or two tasks. In this case, please set your remaining notes in the “Resources” box in the wall.

e. Based on the results on the wall, lets briefly discuss if current associations fulfil these tasks, and if there is a need to have other organizations to support the industry?

7. Did you observe any changes in activity of such government bodies as Moldova Investment Agency/MIEPO, Ministry of Education, Culture, & Research, Ministry of Economy & Infrastructure during the last three years? How those changes influence your organization, the industry? Did MCP contribute to those changes and in what way?

FINALIZING DISCUSSION

8. Can you name any other aspects of MCP that you think are important but were not mentioned during our discussion? Do you have any expectations from MCP until it finalizes, or the next USAID competitive project? Which activities should be prioritized and why? Which should be stopped and why?
ANNEX C 10. FGD QUESTIONS GUIDE – ICT INDUSTRY

Moldova Competitiveness Project Mid-Term Evaluation

Direct Project Beneficiaries (ICT, Creative, Precision Engineering Industry)

Focus Group Guiding Questions

INTRODUCTION

1. Please tell us which company or organization you represent, and briefly describe its business, your position, and your experience in this industry.

2. What do you know about MCP project? In which MCP’s activities did you participate? Which activities were helpful and in which way? (Probe the following activities if respondents do not mention spontaneously: STEAM programs, Educational Robotics, First Lego League competition(s), Future Classroom, Coder Dojo, GirlsGoIT, STEM Discovery Week, Moldova Virtual IT Park, IT Visa)

3. Can you name any positive changes in your organization as a result of participation in MCP? (Probe: learning new knowledge and train new skills, increasing incomes, increasing local market share, gaining new markets, improving products and services quality, implementing new management practices, improving attractiveness on labor market, establishing new partnerships, declining unemployment rates and improving livelihoods in your community etc.) What led to those changes? Any definite MCP activity in which you participated or beyond it (for example support of regulatory changes, support of industry organizations) contributed to it?

4. Now we would like to use a little game to identify the most significant changes in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three changes in the industry you personally observed and consider most important.
   b. Moderator will write list of all changes on the wall.
   c. Using three types of the sticky notes - green for 1, yellow for 2, and red for 3 – please indicate which of the changes you consider most important in the industry (each participant does not have to stick to the changes he/she identified)
   d. Based on the results on the wall, lets briefly discuss why the highest ranked changes are the most important.
   e. What are the positive and negative aspects of these changes? Whom it influenced? Check all the participants and whether MCP contributed to it and in what way?

5. Do you know what specific business associations are working in your industry? (Probe: ATIC - ICT Business Association, COR - Creative Businesses Association, APIP - Patronal Association of Industrial Manufactures) What is their role in the industry? Do they cope with their functions? Why? What is their influence on the industry? Is your company a member of any business associations? If YES What is your experience with them?

6. Now we would like to use little game to identify the value of the business associations and their expected role in your industry:
   a. On the provided paper, can you please write three tasks that you would like your industry association to be doing. You can formulate general tasks (advocating for reducing regulatory barriers) or more specific (advocating for 7% tax instead of current 15%).
   b. Moderator will write list of all task on the wall.
   c. Think about the annual contribution (in USD) you think would be fair, and you will be willing to make to an industry organization (as organization annual fee). Write this number on three sticky notes of different colors.

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d. Please take your sticky notes and put them next to the industry association task you would like your industry association to support. Please use green note for your first choice of the task, yellow for second, and red for third. You may choose not to support any tasks or support only one or two tasks. In this case, please set your remaining notes in the “Resources” box in the wall.

e. Based on the results on the wall, let’s briefly discuss if current associations fulfill these tasks, and if there is a need to have other organizations to support the industry?

7. Can you name any challenges/barriers that hindered MCP’s implementation and success? For your organization, for the industry?

8. Did you observe any changes in activity of such government bodies as Moldova Investment Agency/MIEPO, Ministry of Education, Culture, & Research, Ministry of Economy & Infrastructure during the last three years? How those changes influence your organization, the industry? Did MCP contribute to those changes and in what way?

**FINALIZING DISCUSSION**

9. Can you name any other aspects of MCP that you think are important but were not mentioned during our discussion? Do you have any expectations from MCP until it finalizes, or the next USAID competitive project? Which activities should be prioritized and why? Which should be stopped and why?
ANNEX C11. BENEFICIARY SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Beneficiary of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP), Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) funded by USAID provided us your name as a key contact person in your organization. USAID has contracted DevTech to conduct a mid-term assessment of MCP performance. DevTech is an international development company located in Washington, DC which specializes in project monitoring and evaluation. Your experience interacting with MCP and views are important to us. We will assess the degree to which the implementation of the project has been successful, and the extent to which it has contributed to the development of the targeted sectors of the economy in the country. Responses gathered in interviews such as this will be used to inform USAID decisions on this and related programs. Participation in this survey is voluntary. The questionnaire does not collect your name, and your responses will be kept confidential. MCP and USAID representatives will see the results of the survey in an aggregated format, and the individual answers will not be shared with them in any form that allows identification of an individual. There are general rules for this survey: - we urge you to provide answers to all the questions (especially those marked with red *); - in some questions you may provide only one answer in other multiple answers are possible; - several questions ask you to write down a text or a figure (for example, year); - if you select option “Other”, please specify what do you mean; - for block questions (for example, question 8) you have to select one answer in each row. The survey will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. We kindly request you to submit your responses by October 10, 2019. If you have any questions or technical difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact Silvia Morgoci - smorgoci@devtechsys.com or by phone +373 691 55 669. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the "Next" button below. Thank you for your help participating in this survey. DevTech team

1. Please identify the size of your company by number of employees:
   1. Micro - under 10 employees
   2. Small – between 10 and 50 employees
   3. Medium – between 50 and 250 employees
   4. Big – over 250 employees

2. What year was your company established?

3. What is the MAIN industry your company doing business in?
   1. Information and Communication Technologies
   2. Light Manufacturing Industry
   3. Tourism
   4. Winegrowing and wine production
   5. Other __________________

4. If your company is doing business related to other industries, please specify them. (You may select more than one).
   1. No business related to other industries
   2. Information and Communication Technologies
   3. Light Manufacturing Industry
   4. Tourism
   5. Winegrowing and wine production
   6. Other (please specify) __________________

5. Please select all locations where your company has business units or production facilities: (You may select more than one).
   1. Anenii Noi District
   2. Basarabeasca District
   3. Briceni District
   4. Cahul District
   5. Cantemir District
   6. Călărași District
7. Căușeni District
8. Cimișlia District
9. Criuleni District
10. Dondușeni District
11. Drochia District
12. Dubăsari District
13. Edineț District
14. Fălești District
15. Florești District
16. Glodeni District
17. Hîncești District
18. Ialoveni District
19. Leova District
20. Nisporeni District
21. Ocnița District
22. Orhei District
23. Rezina District
24. Rîșcani District
25. Singerei District
26. Soroca District
27. Strășeni District
28. Șoldănești District
29. Ștefan Vodă District
30. Taraclia District
31. Telenești District
32. Ungheni District
33. Chișinău Municipality
34. Bălți Municipality
35. Bender Municipality
36. Gagauzia ATU
37. Transnistria ATU
38. Other ______

6. Please identify your position in the company
1. Owner
2. Top level manager
3. Middle level manager or specialist
4. Other ________________

7. What is your total work experience with this company? Write down whole years

8. Did your company or its employees participate in any activities of the Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) funded by USAID? For each type of activity that you participated, please indicate how relevant it was to your company’s business. (Please select your answer: Not relevant, somewhat relevant, very relevant, or Game-changing by placing a checkmark next to your answer. Provide one answer for each activity listed in the table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Not relevant</th>
<th>Somewhat relevant</th>
<th>Very relevant</th>
<th>Game-changing</th>
<th>Did not participate</th>
<th>Do not have answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct assistance by an advisor</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshops, seminars, and other discussion events</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human resource development, including offline and online trainings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring and on-the-job coaching at your company</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study tours or exchanges</td>
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<td>Management certifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industry networking events, including abroad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic industry promotion events, festivals, competitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>International industry promotion events, festivals, competitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality improvement, including support to quality certification, provision of equipment or new business processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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</table>

9. ANSWER THIS QUESTION, IF YOU MARKED OTHER ACTIVITY IN PREVIOUS QUESTION Please specify other types of activity in which you participated

10. How did participation in MCP activities have an effect on your business? (Please characterize the effect on aspects of your business by MCP activities. Please select your answer: Totally negative, somewhat negative, neither negative nor positive, somewhat positive, or Completely positive or mark Not Applicable, if a certain aspect does not relate to your organization (e.g. you don’t have export). Provide one answer for each aspect listed in the table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totally negative</th>
<th>Somewhat negative</th>
<th>Neither negative nor positive</th>
<th>Somewhat positive</th>
<th>Completely positive</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of products/services</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position on local market</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio of products/services</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>Management practices</td>
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<td>Human potential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with government bodies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with local authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with industry association (s)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. ANSWER THIS QUESTION, IF YOU MARKED OTHER ASPECT OF YOUR BUSINESS IN PREVIOUS QUESTION Please specify other aspects of your business which were affected by MCP activities.

12. Do you think the MCP activities had an effect on your MAIN industry? Can you characterize this effect? (Please select your answer: Totally negative, somewhat negative, neither negative nor positive, somewhat positive, completely positive. Provide one answer for each aspect listed in the table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Totally negative</th>
<th>Somewhat negative</th>
<th>Neither negative nor positive</th>
<th>Somewhat positive</th>
<th>Completely positive</th>
<th>Do not have answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to domestic markets</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to international markets</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint actions by industry actors/companies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regulatory environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition of Moldova brands internationally</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of qualified labor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Availability of resources</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government policies for the industry</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of the industry inside the country</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social protection and fair treatment of employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry in general</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Could you please describe how your company/business changed during the period of August 2015 through August 2019? If your company was created during this period, please compare the year of creation to the August 2019 (Please select your answer: significantly decreased, slightly decreased, did not change, slightly increased, significantly increased, or mark Not relevant if a certain aspect does not relate to your organization (e.g. you don’t have export). Provide one answer for each aspect listed in the table).
14. ANSWER THIS QUESTION, IF YOU MARKED OTHER ASPECT OF YOUR BUSINESS IN PREVIOUS QUESTION. Please specify aspects of your company/business which changed during the period of August 2015 through August 2019.

15. Could you please describe your expectations for various aspects of the company/business for the next five years? (Please select your answer: significantly decrease, slightly decrease, will not change, slightly increase, significantly increased, or mark Not relevant if a certain aspect does not relate to your business (e.g. you don’t have export). Provide one answer for each aspect listed in the table).
16. What hinders your business development? Please select up to five obstacles which have the strongest effect on your business? MULTIPLE ANSWERS
   1. High competition
   2. Regulation policy
   3. High taxes
   4. Lack of employees with required skills
   5. Corruption
   6. Poor infrastructure (electricity, water, internet access)
   7. No access to financial resources (credits, investments)
   8. Low purchasing power of population
   9. Political instability
   10. Outdated technologies/equipment
   11. Outdated quality standards
   12. No obstacles
   13. Other (please specify) ________________

17. What is the total number of grants that your company has received from MCP to date?
   1. 1 grant
   2. 2 grants
   3. 3 grants
   4. 4 grants and more
   5. Did not receive grants

18. When did you receive MCP grants? MULTIPLE ANSWERS
   1. 2015
   2. 2016
   3. 2017
   4. 2018
   5. 2019
   6. Other ________

19. What is the status of those grants? MULTIPLE ANSWERS
   1. Closed
   2. Being implemented
   3. Other (please specify) ________________

20. Please describe any achievements of your company that you attribute to MCP grants:

21. Grant Application and Selection Process: (Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree (strongly disagree, tend to disagree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to agree, or strongly agree) with the following statements about MCP grant selection process. Provide one answer in each row. NOTE: if you received multiple grants from MCP, please base your answers on the most recent experience).
22. Grant Implementation: (Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) with the following statements about MCP grant implementation. Provide one answer in each row. NOTE: if you received multiple grants from MCP, please base your answers on the most recent experience).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organization received full information regarding the intended goals of the grant opportunity.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organization received full information regarding the requirements of the grant and eligibility of an applicant.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The goals of the MCP grant are aligned with the goals of my organization.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organization received full information about the application process.</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCP staff guided my organization through the application process.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organization received timely information about changes in the application process/deadlines.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organization had a clear understanding about the selection criteria for this grant.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>The selection process took as long as was specified in the call for proposals.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. Grant Monitoring and Evaluation: (Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) with the following statements about Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting during MCP grant implementation. Provide one answer in each row. NOTE: if you received multiple grants from MCP, please base your answers on the most recent experience).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My organization received full information regarding all aspects of financial management of the grant.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP provided the grant payments on time.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization received from MCP all technical support stated in the grant agreement.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCP staff/experts provided full technical support.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP staff regularly communicated with my organization.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My organization felt comfortable approaching MCP staff if a problem with grant implementation arose.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP staff are/were responsive to requests from my organization.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel that my organization was treated fairly during the implementation process.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>My organization is included in MCP organized events to share experiences and lessons learned.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>---</td>
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<tr>
<td>There are clear requirements for monitoring and evaluation of an MCP grant including reporting indicators and the data collection process.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There are clear requirements for programmatic and financial reporting against an MCP grant agreement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP staff provided a full explanation of monitoring, evaluation, and reporting requirements at the start of the grant.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP asked my organization to report on financial indicators for the grant on a regular, defined basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP clearly explained the performance indicators and the data collection process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP staff reached out to my organization to verify reported information indicator data during the grant implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCP staff conducted site visit(s) during the grant implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A formal evaluation was part of the grant agreement signed with MCP.</td>
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</table>

24. Are you a member of any industry association? Please rate the effectiveness of the associations which you are a member in achieving the results that you are interested in. (Please select your answer: Totally ineffective, somewhat ineffective, neither ineffective nor effective, somewhat effective, very effective). Please select “Know, but not a member” for any associations what you recognize, but not a member of (for example, because there are four different industries. Please select “Do not know it” if you never heard about this association). Provide one answer for each association listed in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Totally ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Neither ineffective nor effective</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>Know, but not a member</th>
<th>Do not know it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONVV - National Office of Vine &amp; Wine</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASW - Association of Small Winemakers</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;PGI Producer Associations: Codru, Valul lui Traian, Stefan Voda&quot; Wine School NGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANTRIM - Inbound Tourism Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourism Guides Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATIC - ICT Business Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>COR - Creative Businesses Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>APIP - Patronal Association of Industrial Manufactures</td>
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<tr>
<td>APIUS - Light Industry Association</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## ANNEX D1. LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Thomson</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Welker</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergiu Botezatu</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Amberg, Thomas Alveteg, Oxana Paierele</td>
<td>Swedish Embassy</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doina Nistor</td>
<td>MCP Project Team/Chemonics</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana Grigoriev</td>
<td>MCP Project Team/Chemonics</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruxanda Cheibas</td>
<td>MCP Project Team/Chemonics</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana Lazar</td>
<td>MCP Project Team/Chemonics</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Georghita, Svetlana Dimitrioglo</td>
<td>MCP Project Team/Chemonics</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergiu Rabii</td>
<td>MCP Project Team/Chemonics</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>MCP Insiders / Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gheorghe Aprentin</td>
<td>ONVV - National Office of Vine &amp; Wine</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>Government Beneficiaries/Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizaveta Breahna</td>
<td>ONVV - National Office of Vine &amp; Wine</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>Government Beneficiaries/Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Prisacaru</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Culture</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Government Beneficiaries/Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valeriu Cibotari</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>Government Beneficiaries/Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodica Verbeniuc</td>
<td>MIEPO/MIA</td>
<td>Chisinau</td>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>Government Beneficiaries/Partners</td>
</tr>
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# ANNEX E. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Oleksandr Rohozynsky, Team Lead

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

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<th>Oleksandr Rohozynsky</th>
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<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
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If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or so significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience within an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects or organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature

Date 07/19/2019
### Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Robert Alexandriysky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Mr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>DevTech Systems Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td>Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</td>
<td>IDIQ No. AID-OAA-I-15-00018/Task Order No. 72011719F00004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova Moldova Competitiveness Project Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose. | Yes | No |

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct or is significant enough to bias the evaluations.
3. Indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous versions of the project.
4. Current or previous employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>R. Alexandriysky</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>12.11.2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pol Klein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Independent Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td>Team Leader  Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</td>
<td>MCP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:
- Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:
  1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
  2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
  3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
  4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
  5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
  6. Presumed or actual bias toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

**Signature**

**Date**

23 July 2019
Martine Bakker, International Expert-Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Martine Bakker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>DevTech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td>Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant through indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or tenure employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or enterprises of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

Signature:

Date: July 22, 2019
# Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Lorraine Hartman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
<td>Yes □ No ■</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Personalized ideas to individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Lorraine Hartman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>07.25.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Andriy Kashyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>DevTech Systems, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td>□ Team Leader   ■ Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</td>
<td>AID-OAA-I-15-00018</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova Mid-term MCP Performance Evaluation and Sector Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
<td>□ Yes ■ No</td>
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</table>

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant through indirect interest, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant through indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>07.21.2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Diana Russu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Ms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>DevTech Systems, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td>Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT AGREEMENT NO. DEVTECH-IGA-RUSSU-2019-000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td>USAID/Moldova Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
<td>Yes No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

Real or potential conflicts of interest may include but are not limited to:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcomes of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or现任 employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>(Diana Russu)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>July 25, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Igor Cojocaru, Local Team Member ICT

#### Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Name</strong></th>
<th>Igor Cojocaru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Dr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Information Society Development Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Position?</strong></td>
<td>[ ] Team Leader [ ] Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</strong></td>
<td>DEVTECH-ICA-COJOCARU-2019-061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</strong></td>
<td>Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP), Chemonics International, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</strong></td>
<td>[ ] Yes [ ] No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:**

- Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:
  1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s), being evaluated for the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated;
  2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant through indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation;
  3. Current or previous director or significant (though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project;
  4. Current or previous work experience or teaching appointment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated;
  5. Current or previous employment with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated;
  6. Preference or bias toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular project or organization being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

**Signature**

**Date** 25 July 2019
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sergiu Porcescu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>DevTech Systems, Inc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Position?</td>
<td>☐ Team Leader ☑ Team member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)</td>
<td>MCP.3085.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td>Moldova Competitiveness Project (MCP) Implementer: Chemonics International, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☑ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members

If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct or significant through indirect interest in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant through indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.
6. Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>25/07/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Silvia Morgoci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Local Team Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID Project(s) Evaluated (include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose</td>
<td>Yes  No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than the for which it was furnished.

Signature: Silvia Morgoci
Date: 29-01-2023
**Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for USAID Evaluation Team Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Natalia Ciubarov</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Short-term Administrative/Logistic Role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluation Position?**
- ☐ Team Leader
- ☑ Team member

**Evaluation Award Number (contract or other instrument)**

**USAID Project(s) Evaluated (Include project name(s), Implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)**

- Moldova Competitiveness Project

**I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.**
- ☐ Yes
- ☑ No

**If you answered above, I disclose the following facts:**

1. Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose projects(s) are being evaluated.
2. Financial interest that is direct, or is significant through indirect means, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.
3. Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.
4. Current or previous employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose projects(s) are being evaluated.
5. Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose projects(s) are being evaluated.
6. Involvement with individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.

**I certify that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.**

**Signature**

[Signature]

**Date**

August 14, 2019
The evaluation team comprised the following:

**INTERNATIONAL TEAM LEADER**
Oleksandr Rohozynsky, PhD.

Dr. Oleksandr Rohozynsky brings over two decades of experience in economic analysis and evaluation studies, designing surveys, including collecting primary data using various data collection methodologies. He has extensive management experience, including management of evaluation services IDIQs for DoS and USAID, leading development of organizational M&E policies, managing project-level M&E teams, and designing and managing evaluations for DoS and USAID projects. He is the Director of DoS TIP Office Evaluation BPA, providing technical direction and oversight to the Task Order implementation teams. As the dTS IDIQ Manager for the DoS M&E IDIQ, he gained experience working with different bureaus and offices at FA, as well as F and BP. He led the design of responses of over twenty TOs, served as home office project director for over ten TOs, and was team lead for three evaluations for DoS. For the evaluation of DoS grants for Information Communication Technology to civil society organizations in Central Europe and CIS. Dr. Rohozynsky developed design and lead implementation of this evaluation, which was one of the first task orders under the DoS M&E IDIQ. Dr. Rohozynsky has conducted statistical analyses of healthcare, education, civil society and other individual-, household-, and firm-level data in the US, Asia, Africa, and Former Soviet Union; used state of the art techniques for quasi-experimental designs for evaluations of over ten DoS and USAID projects, including difference of differences, propensity score matching, regression discontinuity design, and survival analysis; provided lectures and trainings on policy evaluation of programs in the Ukraine, Belarus, Kenya, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and developed M&E systems for USG agencies and projects.

**INTERNATIONAL EXPERT, TEXTILES/LIGHT MANUFACTURING EXPERT**
Robert Alexandriysky

Mr. Alexandriysky has over 20 years of experience in the textile/garment industry. With proven expertise in garment value chain analysis, textile sourcing, market linkages, workforce development and building sector associations, Mr. Alexandriysky has contributed to large, measurable increases in textile exports worldwide. Mr. Alexandriysky was the president of the Bulgarian Association of Apparel and Textile Producers and Exporters, which he co-founded 20 years ago with support from USAID. During his tenure, he recruited 120 new member companies and led the sector to double textile exports from 1998-2004. He created the Kosovo Apparel Marketing Association and introduced the Kosovar industry to international textile trade organizations in Albania, Macedonia and Bulgaria. As an award-winning volunteer expert with the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) on a SME program in Tunisia, Mr. Alexandriysky advised 21 Tunisian textiles firms and trained 20 local SMEs, consultants, and government officials on industry best practices for sales, product development, and establishing sustainable market linkages. He facilitated market linkages by connecting IESC-targeted stakeholders with contacts at successful European national apparel associations, thereby opening a new textile export stream from Tunisia to Europe. Her later moved to China to be a Senior Lecturer at the Raffles Design Institute, where he built the capacity of emerging industry professions by designing and teaching courses in fashion marketing, market research, sales, buying, and virtual merchandising. Mr. Alexandriysky continues providing expert advisory services to emerging SMEs as an independent consultant. He most recently traveled to Ghana where he improved the quality of handcrafted textile products, expanded markets, and increased sales and production. Mr. Alexandriysky has a master’s in finance.
INTERNATIONAL EXPERT, ICT EXPERT
Pol Klein

Mr. Pol Klein has served at the forefront of growth and innovation for over 25 years in more than 20 countries worldwide. He has pioneered innovative entrepreneurship programs—the flagship of which was the Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Program (STEP) in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova—that outperformed the western norms for innovation and business success. Mr. Klein served as Vice Consul at the UK Trade & Investment in charge of international SME trade development. Mr. Klein led high technology trade development services and worked with numerous industry clusters such as rubber, chemicals, and transportation, and a network of business support providers. He conducted competitiveness and marketing training and education to over 75 SMEs, as well as to large corporations such as British Telecom. Mr. Klein developed cluster policy and executed industry initiatives in coordination with associations, venture capital firms, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. In Antigua & Barbuda and Dominica, Mr. Klein led the USAID Caribbean Open Trade Support (COTS) Doing Business component where he managed a private sector development team. In Mauritius he served as a sector economist on a USAID project and assessed the island country’s capacity to increase the number and size of enterprises in ICT, IT enabled services (ITES), and Business Process Management (BPM). In Romania, Mr. Klein coordinated an enterprise competitiveness assessment and cross sector analysis for a USAID program in tourism, furniture, glassware and ceramics, textiles and ICT. In Armenia, Siberia and Azerbaijan he advised the Enterprise Incubator Foundation, Siberian Wood Processor’s Association, and the Azerbaijan Entrepreneurs Confederation on business incubation, cluster development, and association building. The programs were supported by USAID, UNDP, World Bank, TACIS, and Eurasia Foundation. Mr. Klein holds a Master's in International Economics from Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERT, TOURISM EXPERT
Martine Bakker

Ms. Martine Bakker is a tourism development expert and researcher with over 20 years of extensive international experience in tourism-driven inclusive and sustainable development. Her consultancy work has included the design, implementation, and monitoring of tourism development projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, South America, the South Pacific and Eastern Europe. Ms. Bakker is currently a consultant for the World Bank and a George Washington University research fellow. She conducted a similar assignment on a four-year, $22 million World Bank tourism project in Macedonia, for which Ms. Bakker prepared a development plan and provided technical assistance in statistics and destination management for Macedonian beneficiaries. She has also worked and collaborated on projects supported by the Caribbean Development Bank, UNWTO, UNIFEM, and others. Ms. Bakker was a researcher and analyst for Mintel International Group during which time she conducted country-level tourism market analyses for more than 16 countries worldwide. She also authored and produced more than 25 specialized tourism reports which included analyses of industry statistics, case studies and stakeholder interviews. Selected reports include The Global Luxury and Tailor-made Holiday Market; Honeymoon Travel in the United States; and The Global Market for Volunteer Tourism. Ms. Bakker was an adjunct assistant professor at New York University where she taught undergraduate and graduate courses in tourism development. She was born and raised in the Netherlands, lived and worked in the Caribbean and is currently residing in Amsterdam after living in the US for sixteen years. Ms. Bakker is pursuing a Ph.D. in tourism development at Wageningen University in the Netherlands.
INTERNATIONAL EXPERT, WINE EXPERT
Lorraine Hartman

Ms. Lorraine Hartman is a food and wine industry expert with more than 25 years of experience consulting to private sector enterprises and USAID and USDA projects in Eastern Europe, Southern Africa, New Zealand, and the Middle East. Her dynamic skillset includes M&E, SME assessments, agribusiness, import and export development, sales, marketing, brand promotion, gender inclusion, public private partnerships and market/export readiness assessment and training. Ms. Hartman has conducted many similar assignments over the course of her career as the Founder and Principal Consultant of the Catalyst Group, a women/veteran-owned small business that has provided innovative sales, marketing, and distribution solutions to international clients, including USAID projects, since 1997. On the USAID/Africa Fast Track Trade Program, Ms. Hartman supported a large South African market assessment of the marketing, sales, and product quality of selected wine SMEs to identify new export markets. The program ultimately empowered South African SMEs to bolster their wine exports by creating direct market linkages to markets in the United States. Ms. Hartman was the chief of party. She previously supported the wine industry in Moldova through a STTA volunteer assignment with CNFA on the Farmer-to-Farmer project. Ms. Hartman established the Culinary & Wine Education Center in California and she developed a successful sales and marketing program for Sonoma-based wineries. Ms. Hartman is pursuing a Master of Science in international development.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION SPECIALIST
Andriy Kashyn

Mr. Andriy Kashyn is an M&E specialist native to Ukraine with ten years of experience in research studies, monitoring activities, and evaluations of national and international projects. Throughout his career as a research manager, he has gained expertise in designing surveys and data collection tools, developing quantitative and qualitative evaluation plans, implementing monitoring strategies, and conducting FGDs and KIIs. He brings experience in conducting evaluations in relevant fields to the Moldova Competitiveness Project including ICT. Mr. Kashyn worked for over 11 years at the Kiev International Institute of Sociology as a Research Fellow and Project Coordinator where he led multiple projects. For example, as a Data Quality Auditor, he was part of a team of assessors that conducted data quality assessments for several USAID-funded projects in Ukraine under the USAID MEASURE project. This included evaluating data collection tools being used by the projects, assessing the quality and reliability of collected data, and offering support to project staff for improving their data collection procedures. He was also the Research Manager for a European Training Foundation analysis of the ICT and Telecommunications sector in Ukraine and was the Monitoring Team Lead conducting monitoring activities for World Food Program Emergency Operations in Ukraine. He is proficient in using statistical software including SPSS, OCA; MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint); and ArcGIS. He is fluent in Ukrainian, English, and Russian, and earned a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

LOCAL TEAM MEMBER- TOURISM
Diana Russu

Ms. Diana Russu is an economist with 25 years of experience specializing in small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development and policy analysis in Moldova and understanding the cross-section between SME development, economic stability, and tourism. Working in positions of increasing responsibility at the Chamber of Commerce and Ministries of Economy, Communications, and Transports in Moldova, Ms. Russu has spent her career analyzing and supporting the health of businesses around the country. She
brings a strong understanding of the foundation of the Moldovan tourism sector through her work promoting SME development through policies, programs, and entrepreneurial education. As the Deputy Director of the SME Development Policies and Domestic Trade Direction of the Ministry of Economy, she was responsible for developing policy documents, programs, and legal frameworks for SME support. She monitored cooperation with international organizations to attract technical assistance to the SME sector in Moldova. Ms. Russu also has experience in conducting evaluations of donor programs in Moldova through her role as Senior Consultant in the Policies Analysis, Monitoring, and Evaluation Department of the Ministry of Transport. Ms. Russu was part of the monitoring and evaluation team and developed analytical reports on the impact of donor programs and policy changes in the transport sector. She brings additional expertise in migration and gender analysis and has contributed as an individual expert to the Smart Specialization Platform pilot project in Moldova since 2017. Smart Specialization (S3) is an initiative and platform to help partner countries within the European Union to identify economic competitive advantages and exploit the country’s innovation potential. Ms. Russu is a native speaker in Romanian, fluent in Russian, and advanced in English.

LOCAL TEAM MEMBER - ICT
Igor Cojorcaru

Mr. Igor Cojorcaru is an expert in engineering and information and communication technology (ICT) who has worked in the Moldova ICT sector for over 20 years. He is highly knowledgeable of IT process systems, information security, open access data, e-Government, and e-Infrastructure development. Dr. Cojocaru has been trained as an information security management system auditor and received a certificate from USAID in E-Government initiatives. He is an evaluator for various clients in Moldova including the Agency for Research and Development, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research, the Akademos Scientific Journal, and the International Conference for Central and East European eDemocracy and eGovernment. Dr. Cojocaru also conducts audits of information security management systems ISO 27001 for RINA SIMTEX and has carried out eight extensive audits in Moldova and Romania since 2015. He is a senior lecturer at two universities in Moldova, delivering courses on ICT use in research, IT project management, information security, and computer architecture, among others. Additionally, Dr. Cojocaru is an active committee member and representative of the Republic of Moldova on the HORIZON2020 ICT Committee, where he analyzes and promotes national initiatives for open science and innovation. Through his position as Director of the Information Society Development Institute, he is connected to wide network of ICT professionals in Moldova and supervises key research initiatives by the Institute on e-Infrastructure development and e-Government. Dr. Cojocaru earned his PhD in Informatics from the Academy of Economic Studies and a Master of Arts in Networks, Digital Communications, and Management. He is a native speaker in Romanian and speaks proficiently in English and Russian.

LOCAL TEAM MEMBER - WINE AND LIGHT MANUFACTURING
Sergiu Porcescu

Mr. Sergiu Porcescu is a member of the task force dealing with the implementation of the smart specialization approach in Moldova (a place-based approach characterized by the identification of strategic areas for intervention based both on the analysis of the strengths and potential of the economy and on an Entrepreneurial Discovery Process with wide stakeholder involvement). He was involved in the analysis and mapping of Moldova’s economic and innovational potential. As a result, four specialization domains were identified for Moldova, namely wine production and agrifood, ICT, energy, and biomedicine. Mr. Porcescu was involved in the development of mobile applications dedicated to Moldovan exporters of Moldovan wines, mobile payments, e-health, e-culture, intelligent transport systems. In his previous
position, he promoted Moldovan tourism and economy through the participation of Moldovan businesses within European technology and innovation networks and initiatives, facilitating access of Moldovans to EU reference labs and knowledge centers including those dedicated to the digital economy/tourism, wine quality, and food safety. He has extensive knowledge about the most relevant stakeholders in the areas of winemaking, tourism, and economic growth, both in the public and private sectors.

**LOCAL TEAM MEMBER**

**Silvia Morgoci, M.D.**

Dr. Silvia Morgoci has more than 10 years of professional experience in evaluation consulting for international donors in Moldova. She has worked independently and as part of a larger international team implementing evaluations and brings essential knowledge of the local Moldovan context, culture, and language. She possesses strong knowledge of program cycle management and is fully versed in evaluation methodologies and data collection tool development. As the local evaluation consultant on a Danish-funded project studying constituency, membership, and internal governance of civil society organizations in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, Dr. Morgoci contributed to the development of evaluation tools, conducted KII and FGDs, and assisted in the final multi-country report. As the local evaluation expert on a Soros Foundation project, she conducted an evaluation of central public administration reform. On a World Bank-funded social assistance project, Dr. Morgoci served as the M&E coordinator and developed the project’s monitoring systems, including indicators, and led quantitative and qualitative data collection. Dr. Morgoci has a medical degree, a Masters degree in law, economics, and management, and completed the International Program for Development Evaluation Training in Canada in 2014. She is a native Romanian speaker and is fluent in English and Russian.

**LOCAL TEAM MEMBER**

**Natalia Ciubarov**

Ms. Natalia Ciubarov has served as a communications coordinator and specialist for six years for UNDP and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, prior to which she has worked as a news reporter and journalist for four years. As a communications coordinator for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, she worked on national campaigns on Moldova’s healthcare system by designing the communication materials, writing the success stories, coordinating with the media, and organized the logistics for events. Most recently she has served as a communications consultant, translating materials into Romanian from English, arranging logistics for UNDP and providing analytical support to Moldovan law enforcement legislation and policy. Natalia has a Master in Social Economy and Social Projects Management at Free International University of Moldova.