



Support to Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Field of Green Economy

Context

In the period since 2020, Republic of Moldova (RM) faced a triple crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic, agricultural drought and extreme increase of energy prices, resulting in a GDP decline by 7%. On top of that, the Ukraine invasion in spring 2022 also has a major influence on the country's economic growth. According to a recent study, RM is nevertheless on a slow path of recovery based on strong consumption and a rebound of exports, with GDP forecasts being adjusted upwards and ranging up to 3%.

Poverty continues to be an issue in the country oscillating in the period 2019-2020 between 10.7% and 10.8%. Thereby, Moldova continues to remain one of the poorest countries in Europe. Young people aged 15-34 recorded an unemployment rate of 5,1% in 2020.

The relatively low level of youth unemployment is complementary to an extremely high level of the inactive youth population, representing a share of 61,7% of the number of people aged 15 and over. For example, the rate of NEET youth (aged 15-34) of the total inactive population amounted to 30,4% in 2021.

The number of international companies intending to invest in RM is scarce, despite low wages and tax incentives. A substantial barrier to investments is the low productivity originating in a lack of qualified workforce according to labour market needs. This, in its turn, leads to companies encountering difficulties in filling existing vacancies with local qualified workforce. The mismatch between labour market demand on one side and the skills supply on the other is still considerable. Lack of relevant skills prevents young people to access gainful employment, prompting many Moldovan citizens to seek employment abroad.

The process of reforming VET with a view to a better orientation towards the labour market demand, has been initiated by the Moldovan Government already in 2014. The reform provides for a wider involvement of private sector stakeholders in shaping and governing VET.

In January 2018, the Government adopted a decision regulating the organization of initial dual VET in the RM. This creates a binding normative basis for dual VET, with clearly defined apprenticeship relations as well as mandates of state, companies and representative bodies of the economic sector. However, governance structures for public-private cooperation in dual VET are still not sufficiently consolidated. Key stakeholders involved in dual

VET do not possess sufficient human resources (HR) and institutional capacities to host permanent social dialogue platforms. This led to the need for adopting an improved legal framework to regulate dual VET, which more comprehensively defines rights and responsibilities of dual partners and other competent bodies.

Basic information

Time frame: 01/2019 – 12/2022

Commissioning parties:

- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) with a volume of EUR 6 million;
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), with a co-financing volume of EUR 3,1 million;

Implementation partner: Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) of the Republic of Moldova

Further partners: Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI); VET providers; individual private and public economic operators; Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry.

Moreover, the orientation towards ecological and sustainability aspects in dual VET are currently of low relevance.

Both state and private stakeholders expressed interest for further consolidating dual VET in Moldova. The adoption of the dual VET regulatory framework as well as the sustainable increase of apprenticeships confirm such interest.

Objective

The system of demand-oriented dual VET for the promotion of ecological, economic, and social development in Moldova is strengthened.

Approach

The project supports the Ministry of Education and Research, as well as several private sector actors, social partners and VET providers, in identifying common approaches to improve the framework for dual VET. The

project provides advisory services and support in the form of advisory and capacity strengthening measures.

Key areas of intervention include:

1. Strengthening the capacities of the public, private and civil society stakeholders to acknowledge and carry out their roles within the dual VET system in Moldova, as defined through the improved and consolidated institutional and normative framework.
2. Support dual partners to conceptualize and elaborate state-of-the-art demand-oriented dual programmes while consolidating social dialogue and cooperation mechanisms.
3. Human Capacity Development (HCD) measures for strengthening HR and institutional capacities of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of Moldova as both competent body for dual VET and a service provider for companies involved in dual VET or expressing interest in dual VET participation.
4. Measures to enhance dual VET offers in order to correspond to the quantitative and qualitative requirements of the labour market. State and private actors are being strengthened through advisory and HCD measures to agree on a common quality approach and enhance that based on learning experience.
5. Create the basis for the development of initial training programmes offered by VET institutions focusing on green occupations and green skills to help the business environment to make the transition to the circular economy contributing to the fulfilment of the commitments assumed by the Republic of Moldova in this field. In collaboration with the relevant stakeholders from the private sector, social partners and educational institutions to initiate different activities focused on promoting ecological principles, integration green skills in training curricula, development of new green occupations, greening VET institutions etc.
6. Implementation of a holistic concept to enhance enrolment of young people into dual VET programmes, as well as their transition into employment upon completion of training.
7. Dissemination and promotion of dual VET with a green orientation by means of image and media campaigns. The establishment of regional support structures will ensure

outreach to target groups in remote areas, including disadvantaged groups of the population.

8. Support in the field of digitalization of the educational process by harnessing potential of digital technologies for teaching and learning and to develop digital skills in order to enhance the responsiveness of the dual VET system to crisis situations such as pandemics.

Results

The current project builds on the intervention “Structural Reform in VET”, implemented from 2015 to 2018. The impact of the previous intervention was the transfer of several responsibilities related to VET from the state authorities to the private sector, represented by both dual partner companies and the CCI. Moreover, dual VET was mainstreamed into the existing VET system, as a viable alternative to the traditional, school-based VET.

The intervention supports government stakeholders and social partners to define and fulfil their mandates in shaping the framework for demand-oriented dual VET following good practices established in traditional dual systems throughout Europe and adjusted to local conditions.

The Law No. 110 on Dual VET was adopted on April 21, 2022 and aims at the detailed and comprehensive regulation of dual education as an alternative form of organization of vocational education and training. The Law also provides for financial incentives for companies involved in dual VET

The role of private enterprises in driving dual VET has been strengthened. With project support, around 280 companies and public institutions are involved in dual VET initiatives, currently providing up to 1200 apprenticeship places yearly and subsequent employment chances to apprentices. The employability of young men and women is improved. According to a recent survey, the employment rate of dual VET graduates remains consistent at 65%, considerably higher than the 49% recorded between graduates of traditional VET system. In the period 2016-2021 a total number of 5300 students graduated dual VET programs.

Additionally, the project lays a special focus on promoting trades and specialties in the field of green economy, therefore key actors are supported and consulted in developing a concept of promoting green jobs and specialties through dual VET.

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