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ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CO	Country Office
CSAG	Civil Society Advisory Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRF	Development Results Framework
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
EU AA	EU Association Agreement
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
FPI	Flagship Programme Initiative
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GE	Gender Equality
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
HQ	Headquarters
HR	Human Rights
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
ICT	Information Communication Technology
JISB	Joint Information and Services Bureau
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MP	Member of Parliament
NPB	National Planning and Budgeting
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
RBM	Results-Based Management
RO	Regional Office
SSI	Semi-Structured Interviews

TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNPF	UN Partnership Framework
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UN WOMEN	UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women)
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WPP	Women's Political Participation
WPS	Women Peace and Security

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) is a systematic assessment of the contributions made by UN Women Moldova to development results with respect to gender equality at the country level.

The UN Women portfolio responds to three core mandates, which include normative, operation and coordination work. The CPE focuses on their individual and combined success in advancing gender equality in the countries covered by the CO. It uses the Strategic Note 2014-2017 as the main point of reference.

The primary intended users of this evaluation are: CO, Regional ECA Office, and UN Women HQ. The secondary intended users of the evaluation are the Gender Equality Mechanism of the Republic of Moldova, the Civil Society Advisory Group, other CSOs, local and central public authorities, the UN system in Moldova, and interested donors.

The period covered by the evaluation is 2014-2016. All activities included in the Strategic Note 2014-2017 are considered. The evaluation applies the four OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability). The evaluation does not consider impact (as defined by UNEG) as it is considered too premature to assess this.

The Republic of Moldova has made positive legislative steps to address gender inequality, including through laws, policies, as well as public institutions and media. The national legislation stipulates the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all fields. The principle of equality is guaranteed through a series of organic and ordinary laws, which confirms that the state gives special attention to the achievement of the assumed commitments, adhering to international treaties on human rights.

Currently there is a state institutional mechanism in the country functional in the field of gender equality (the Government Committee for Equality between women and men, the Division for Gender Equality and Violence Prevention Policies, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, Gender Focal Points, Gender Councils in some ministries and other central public administration authorities), which is a positive indicator in the process of democratization. The Government's political will to promote gender equality was stipulated in the National Programme on Gender Equality 2010-2015.

The low information of the population about gender equality, their rights, and the possibilities to claim their exercise remains a serious problems. The active involvement of mass-media in educating the society in the spirit of gender equality, the elimination of sexism from language and advertising etc. are necessary.

The Strategic Note is linked to the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Moldova's UNPF/UNDAF for 2013-2017, the National Program on Gender Equality for 2010-2015, CEDAW Concluding Observations from 2013, the relevant recommendations from the UPR and other existing key policies and strategies of the Republic of Moldova. The CO Strategic Note supports the following Goals contained in UN Women's Strategic Plan 2014-2017:

- SG1: Women's leadership and political participation;
- SG2: Women's economic empowerment;
- SG3: Ending violence against women.

The evaluation uses a theory-based cluster design. The performance of the county portfolio is assessed according to the theory of change stated in the Strategic Note 2016-2017. To achieve sufficient depth, the evaluation clustered programming, coordination, and policy activities of the Country Office and focused on the thematic area of Ending Violence Against Women.

The evaluation involved a desk-based portfolio analysis that includes a synthesis of secondary results data for the Development Results Framework and the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework of the Country Office. This covered all activities undertaken by the Country Office. The portfolio analysis was triangulated through a mixed methods approach that involved:

1. Desk review of additional documentary evidence;
2. Consultation with all main stake holding groups using interviews; and
3. Independent observation of development effectiveness.

In total, the evaluation consulted with 75 people, including 57 women and 18 men.

Relevance

UN Women Moldova designed a Strategic Note that was strongly aligned with national policy priorities on gender equality included in the National Strategy “Moldova 2020” and National Program on Gender Equality for 2010-2015, as well as with Universal Sustainable Development Goals, data on the state of gender equality, international human rights observations, and its comparative advantage in the UN system. Its mid-term revision of the Strategic Note framework kept it relevant within a changing context. Consequently, UN Women Moldova is well placed to reframe some or all of its thematic interventions as Flagship Programme Initiatives centred around a multi-stakeholder partnership.

UN Women has established important entry points for further advancing the policy framework, especially ratification of the Istanbul Convention. At the same time, a strong case is emerging to shift the focus of UN Women’s work from the legal framework – which is now well developed – and to give greater emphasis on the capabilities of rights holders and institutions to recognize, respect, protect and advance their obligations to women’s human rights.

At the institutional level, UN Women has the potential to substantively advance gender mainstreaming through the lens of EU Association Agreement, although this requires additional capacity in key national institutions, particularly the State Chancellery. At the local level, UN Women can build on the social and physical capital that it has established through programmes, such as the JISBs, gender-sensitive mayors, public forums, relationships with the security sector, and civil society outreach. At the community level, in particular, there is a strong case for linking up interventions in practical ways to support rights holders to successfully navigate and emerge from challenging life scenarios.

Effectiveness

UN Women Moldova has made strong progress towards intended results; and exceeded these in some key areas. Law 71, Joint Information and Services Bureaus, and national capacity for gender statistics all stand out in this regard. This success has been driven by a highly committed and proactive staff, developing appropriate strategic partnerships (including joint programmes), and continuous refinement of the Country Office’s theories of change.

Based on these experiences, in addition to emerging evidence from innovation studies, UN Women Moldova can consolidate and extend its strategic positioning to maintain momentum behind efforts to build the women’s movement in Moldova. In particular, UN Women can more intentionally strengthen its capacity and practice to outflank resistance through better information and organization, nurture a standing-army of citizen gender champions, and better integrate capacity development of institutions

and individuals. Support to civil society is a key future priority for the UN system in Moldova, and UN Women is well positioned to contribute to this.

The next big challenge for GEEW in Moldova is move beyond the legal infrastructure and to tackle negative socio-cultural perceptions and low confidence in institutions. UN Women has established relevant and effective strategic partnerships to do this, including with the media. However, given the scale of the challenge it is unlikely to make significant progress without continued investment in advocacy and communications capacity, science-driven decision making to test assumptions about media messages and channels, or further empowering civil society networks to lead the movement.

Delegation of authority, the presence of international staff, successful fundraising, normative capacity, and collaborative behaviors have placed UN Women in a strong position within the UN system in Moldova. The UN Partnership Framework and related documents are gender mainstreamed, and the UN has established a strong foundation in data and statistics with significant potential for this to strengthen future strategic effectiveness. UN Women's continued success relies on it staying at the centre of the UN system, continuing its close working relationship with UNDP, ILO, and UNAIDS, and further strengthening joint programming with UNFPA and OHCHR.

Efficiency

UN Women Moldova's exploration of the innovation approach is pioneering new approaches to working – both programmatically and organizationally – and this will provide valuable evidence for the rest of the organization. As such, organizational performance should be understood within this context, although the long-term partnership with Sweden is an early indicator of the potential of this approach. Such long-term support to the strategic note promises to contribute significantly to UN Women's continued effectiveness, and promotes efficiency by allowing investments to be made on the most strategic basis (rather than according to short-term project objectives).

In line with corporate developments, UN Women Moldova has established a functional and useful Results Based Management system and critical operations capacity. Preserving and maximizing this capability requires the innovation approach to be used inwards as well as outwards: find practical ways of enabling operations colleagues to support innovative programming whilst maintaining existing corporate systems, standards and discipline. UN Women Moldova has managed its full range of resources strategically and with great effect, although there is scope for more sophisticated risk management given the regional and national context of uncertainty.

Programmatically, the next strategic note can strengthen efficiency through establishing concrete and mutually reinforcing links between thematic interventions, particularly at the community level. Building on existing links with Milab, eGov and technology providers will key to innovating in this space – especially linking data services work with ability to do rapid social research and prototyping of interventions. Overall, innovation is UN Women Moldova's key comparative advantage for the next strategic note, but needs to be applied intentionally and with care.

Sustainability

UN Women Moldova has made critical progress across a broad front of issues to advance GEEW. In several cases the evaluation observed that an increasing need is emerging to shift more attention to protecting, entrenching and sustaining these gains. In particular, at the central level there is a need to normalize gains in the legal framework and to maintain a coalition of support as resistance to implementation emerges.

At the local level there is a case to focus UN Women's innovation approach on a clearly defined set of life scenarios or excluded groups and to seek sustained change in these aspects. Whilst this implies

reducing coverage of other issues, selecting the most challenging problems to work on can build momentum for broader spillover effects.

With regard to UN Women itself, national ownership of the next strategic note can be deepened through using new processes of co-creation, and applying innovation to strengthen the voice and reach of the Gender Equality Mechanism in Moldova. Organisationally, the Country Office will need to find ways to maintain the level of energy and creativity it is currently demonstrating, including strengthening communications between programme and operations teams, establishing a transition strategy for the leadership team, and allowing roles to be taken over by national partners whenever feasible.

Human Rights

UN Women Moldova is a strong and committed practitioner of the Human Rights Based Approach within a UNCT that is seen as a principal flagbearer of human rights in Moldova. The strategic note was systematically aligned with international human rights norms and standards, and all UN Women’s programmes have exemplified inclusion and participation.

Looking forward, scope remains for future UN Women programming to more comprehensively reach the most excluded groups, especially members of the LGBT community, HIV+ community, people with mental health difficulties, and women living on the Left Bank. There is also a case for UN Women to be make greater use of open calls and outreach to local CSOs in its partnership and funding decision-making as it scales up work in EVAW.

Recommendations

The following 15 recommendations have been proposed by the evaluation team based on the findings, and are subject to refinement through dialogue with the reference group. All of these recommendations are targeted at the Country Office Management Team, although most will require collaboration with other stakeholders.

Table 1: Recommendations grouped by evaluation criteria and urgency (5 stars – extremely urgent, 1 star – less urgent)

Criteria	Recommendation	Urgency
Relevance	1. The Country Office should apply the skills and processes that it has learned for co-design to the process of formulating the strategic note so as to strengthen national ownership, particularly among the Gender Equality Mechanism, State Chancellery, CSAG and UNCT.	★★★★★
	2. Future programming in each of the impact areas, and/or flagships, would benefit from being brought together at each level of intervention (macro, meso, micro) to address common ‘life-scenarios’ for rights holders and duty bearers in an integrated approach. At the community level, UN Women should target some of the most excluded groups to demonstrate the possibility for change even in the most difficult circumstances.	★★★
	3. Expand working relations with the policy teams in State Chancellery, leverage UN Women’s role as convener of the Gender Donor Group, and strengthen partnerships with the EU and World Bank to advance gender mainstreaming (including GRB) in the Public Administration Reform process.	★★★

	<p>4. Apply lessons from WiP and CSAG to nurture a WEE network and ecosystem of private sector gender champions, including women social entrepreneurs, private businesses committed to the WEPs, social financing intermediaries, and business development services. Leverage this community to advocate for structural reforms to the economy to tackle barriers to decent work for women and marginalized groups.</p>	★★
	<p>5. Prototype community-level approaches to connecting prevention and response services for GBV to economic empowerment, leadership support, and education systems by building on the legacy of JISBs and the potential of eGovernance. Use the opportunities that this prototyping creates to generate structured demand for graduates of GirlsGoIT and other women programmers.</p>	★★★
Effectiveness	<p>6. Convene a virtual media lab to apply innovation and action research techniques to influencing popular discourse and attitudes among selected target groups; especially groups that may not access mainstream media, such as rural areas and young people.</p>	★
	<p>7. Consolidate the central theory of change for the next strategic note around movement building and organisational outflanking: prioritize the establishment of capabilities that enable UN Women and gender advocates to access, analyze and use more relevant data more quickly to support tactical decision making. Work with gender focal persons from agencies such as the Military Academy to bring different types of knowledge and experience into the social change space.</p>	★★★★
	<p>8. Renew and revitalize coordination mechanisms, in particular the Gender Theme Group and the Gender Donor Coordination Group. Given the relatively small community of actors in Moldova, consider integrating multiple groups (including GTG, donors and CSAG) into a single Extended Gender Theme Group based on the positive experience of countries such as Tajikistan.</p>	★★
	<p>9. Continue to build on the legacy of Joint Programmes with UNDP and other entities (JILDP, WiP, Statistics) using the opportunity of the Swedish grant to initiate collaboration in new spaces such as EVAW (with UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, and UNODC).</p>	★★★
Efficiency	<p>10. Apply the innovation approach to UN Women Moldova's own internal systems, processes and relationships. Identify, acknowledge and address the unique dynamics of UN Women Moldova's approach, and ensure that all staff roles share equitably in the demands and benefits of innovation. Document the lessons and evidence from this process to present to UN Women HQ in support of recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operations procedures.</p>	★★★★
	<p>11. Continue to strengthen UN Women's independent communications capacity in addition to cooperation with the UN system capacity</p>	★★★★

	<p>under Delivering as One. Study the international experiences of Global Citizen, One, More United, and political groups in building a ‘standing army’ of citizen activists that can be engaged in support of specific campaigns and actions. Focus UN Women’s communications campaigns around a few key messages – such as HeForShe and 16 Days of Action – to avoid dilution and confusion.</p>	
	<p>12. Combine the social and political capital of UN Women’s previous support to data and statistics, eGov and GRB into a single flagship positioned as the backbone of the strategic note. Provide targeted support to join-the-dots between administrative data, national reporting on the SDGs, enhanced service provision and gender responsive budgeting in local authorities, and generation of evidence for policy advocacy. Connect with the global flagship on data and statistics to open up new funding streams, building on evidence of UN Moldova’s existing commitment to innovation.</p>	<p>★★★</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>13. Apply UN Women’s innovation approach to strengthening to structure and agency of the Gender Equality Mechanism. Establish a facility within the Gender Equality Mechanism, or elsewhere, for ex ante gender assessment of policies, strategies and regulations. Explore means to incentivize integration of recommendations from these assessments, through either reference to the legal framework or tools such as a gender equality seal.</p>	<p>★</p>
	<p>14. Continue and strengthen work with Civil Society and Public Authorities on self-led gender mainstreaming. Use the strategic note to lay out UN Women’s long-term vision for the gender equality movement in Moldova, including the relationship between CSAG, the Gender Equality Platform, other civil society platforms and CALM.</p>	<p>★★</p>
	<p>15. Fully apply UN Women’s new corporate risk management system, paying particular attention to the unique aspects of UN Women Moldova’s innovation approach – especially a strategy for future transition of the Country Office leadership.</p>	<p>★★★★</p>

1) BACKGROUND

This Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) is a systematic assessment of the contributions made by UN Women Moldova to development results with respect to gender equality at the country level.

The UN Women portfolio responds to three core mandates, which include normative, operation and coordination work. The CPE focuses on their individual and combined success in advancing gender equality in the countries covered by the CO. It uses the Strategic Note 2014-2017 as the main point of reference.

Purpose

This CPE is being primarily commissioned by the Country Office (CO) as a formative (forward-looking) evaluation to support the CO and national stakeholders' strategic learning and decision-making for the next Strategic Note, 2018-2022. The evaluation is expected to have a secondary summative (backwards looking) perspective, to support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience.

It is a priority for UN Women that the CPE will be gender-responsive, and will actively support the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment. The key principles for gender-responsive evaluation at UN Women are: 1) National ownership and leadership; 2) UN system coordination and coherence regarding gender equality and the empowerment of women; 3) Innovation; 4) Fair power relations and empowerment; 5) Participation and inclusion; 6) Independence and impartiality; 7) Transparency; 8) Quality and credibility; 9) Intentionality and use of evaluation; and 10) Ethics.

The primary intended users of this evaluation are: CO, Regional ECA Office, and UN Women HQ. The secondary intended users of the evaluation are the Gender Equality Mechanism of the Republic of Moldova, the Civil Society Advisory Group, and the UN system in Moldova.

Primary intended uses of this evaluation are:

- a. Learning and improved decision-making to support the development of the next Strategic Note 2018-2022;
- b. Accountability for the development effectiveness of the CO Strategic Note 2014-2017 in terms of UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment;
- c. Capacity development and mobilisation of national stakeholders to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Objectives

The evaluation has specific objectives:

1. Assess the relevance of UN Women contribution to the intervention at national levels and alignment with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment;
2. Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the Strategic Note;
3. Support the UN Women CO to improve its strategic positioning to better support the achievement of sustained gender equality and women's empowerment;

4. Analyse how human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the design and implementation of the Strategic Note;
5. Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovation that supports gender equality and human rights;
6. Provide insights into the extent to which the UN Women CO has realized synergies between its three mandates (normative, coordination and operations);
7. Provide actionable recommendations with respect to the development of the next UN Women CO Strategic Note.

Scope

The period covered by the evaluation is 2014-2016. All activities included in the Strategic Note 2014-2017 are considered.

The CPE focuses on all activities undertaken by the CO under the Strategic Note, including general support to normative policy and UN coordination. Programme work is considered based on the thematic areas established by the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

The evaluation applies the four OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability). The evaluation does not consider impact (as defined by UNEG) as it is considered too premature to assess this.

2) CONTEXT

Overview of Moldova 2014-2017

Moldova is a low middle income country in transition. Although poverty has steadily declined throughout the last decade, concerns about its inclusiveness and economic sustainability remain. Potential opportunities related to European Union integration create an environment conducive to modernization and positive change.

The transition process to market economy, worsened by the global economic crisis has led to the decrease of the socio-economic development indicators. Despite of the trends of poverty reduction, the average disposable income per family member covers only 92% of the subsistence minimum. The exodus of working age population outside the country in search of better paid jobs, has a direct impact on demographic security of the population.

Although unemployment is a challenge for both women and men, women face specific barriers in the labour market. These include discriminatory practices such as significant payment gap disparities. Women in Moldova earn less than men and in 2013 women's average salary represented 88.96%, out of the average salary of a man. National data reveals women are employed in lower-paid jobs and in the most "feminized" sectors of the economy which include public administration, education, health and social assistance (71.44%), and trade, hotels and restaurants (59.65%).

Women also have unequal access to state funded programs on business and entrepreneurship development. The nationwide share of women entrepreneurs is only 27.5% and significantly lower in rural areas (14.9%). This leaves Romani women and women with disabilities often excluded from the formal labour market.

Widespread poverty and the lack of job opportunities has caused many Moldovans to look for employment outside the country, which resulted in an increase in migration. There are an estimated 600,000 Moldovans residing abroad, and roughly 340,000 migrants are thought to still have families in Moldova, causing far-reaching consequences for families and children left behind.

According to the data of Bureau for Diaspora Relations, 58% of women migrants expressed their interest to return to their places of origin, villages and communities. At the same time, it is observed that women migrants who intend to return are not informed about the opportunities that exist in their localities, including employment and entrepreneurship as well as child care opportunities.

According to the National study “Violence against Women in the Family”, carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics and commissioned by the UN in Moldova in 2011, 63% of women experienced some type of violence (psychological, physical or sexual) from husbands/partners in their lifetimes, and one in ten women mentioned that she experienced economic violence at least once in her lifetime. Rural women, elderly women and those separated or divorced reported the highest prevalence rate of multiple forms of violence.

Over the past few years Moldova has experienced a few political crises which caused more instability and mistrust of the population in public authorities. In 2013, the Prime Minister Vlad Filat was dismissed by motion of censure of the Parliament. Subsequently, 2014 parliamentary elections brought political instability as three pro-European parties failed to form a coalition for a majority government. There were 5 Prime Ministers (including 3 interim ones) in this period. A large corruption scandal related to three biggest banks of Moldova, which were involved in financial transactions that led to the disappearance of 1 billion dollars (equivalent to 15% of the Gross Domestic Product of Moldova). As a result, long-term and massive protests took place in 2015. All these ended up with the election in 2016 of a new President and some public questioning the Association Agreement with the EU.

Progress on women’s human rights

The Republic of Moldova has made positive legislative steps to address gender inequality, including through laws, policies, as well as public institutions and media. The national legislation stipulates the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all fields. The principle of equality is guaranteed through a series of organic and ordinary laws, which confirms that the state gives special attention to the achievement of the assumed commitments, adhering to international treaties on human rights.

Currently there is a state institutional mechanism in the country functional in the field of gender equality (the Government Committee for Equality between women and men, the Division for Gender Equality and Violence Prevention Policies, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, Gender Focal Points, Gender Councils in some ministries and other central public administration authorities), which is a positive indicator in the process of democratization. The Government's political will to promote gender equality was stipulated in the National Programme on Gender Equality 2010-2015.

The low information of the population about gender equality, their rights, and the possibilities to claim their exercise remains a serious problems. The active involvement of mass-media in educating the society in the spirit of gender equality, the elimination of sexism from language and advertising etc. are necessary.

Policy framework

The Strategic Note is linked to the UN Women Global Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Moldova’s UNPF/UNDAF for 2013-2017, the National Program on Gender Equality for 2010-2015, CEDAW Concluding Observations from 2013, the relevant recommendations from the UPR and other existing key

policies and strategies of the Republic of Moldova. The CO Strategic Note supports the following Goals contained in UN Women’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017:

- SG1: Women’s leadership and political participation;
- SG2: Women’s economic empowerment;
- SG3: Ending violence against women.

UN Women’s mandate (GA resolution 64/289) is to lead, coordinate and promote accountability of the UN system to deliver on gender equality and the empowerment of women with the primary objective of enhancing country-level coherence, ensuring coordinated interventions and securing positive impacts on the lives of women and girls, including those living in rural areas.

The Strategic Note is grounded in the standards, principles and obligations of the Convention to Eliminate all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Concluding Observations of the Commission on the Status of Women, SCR 1325, Millennium Development Goals, and Committee and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Recommendations (2011), CEDAW Concluding Observations on the combined 4th and 5th periodic reports, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) CAHVIO.

A stakeholder analysis was undertaken by the Country Office, this is presented in the annexes.

3) STRATEGIC NOTE

The work of UN Women Moldova is focused on responding to its three core mandates.

1. Normative: support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the General Assembly, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms;
2. Operational: to help Member States to implement international standards and to forge effective partnerships with civil society; and
3. Coordination: entails both work to promote the accountability of the United Nations system on gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW), including regular monitoring of system-wide progress, and more broadly mobilizing and convening key stakeholders to ensure greater coherence and gender mainstreaming across the UN.

Table 2: The implementation status of these Country Portfolio Interventions

Completed	Ongoing
Enhance Women’s Economic Empowerment in communities on both banks of Nistru River in the Republic of Moldova.	Enhancing Women’s Political Representation through improved capacity and enhanced support in Moldova (“Women in politics”) WIP (2014-2017.)
Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILDLP).	Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe and the Republic of Moldova, Phase II” regional project (2013 -2016).
Women’s Economic Empowerment through increasing employability in Moldova (WEE).	Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ (WMWs) labour and human rights: Engaging with international, national human rights mechanisms to enhance accountability.

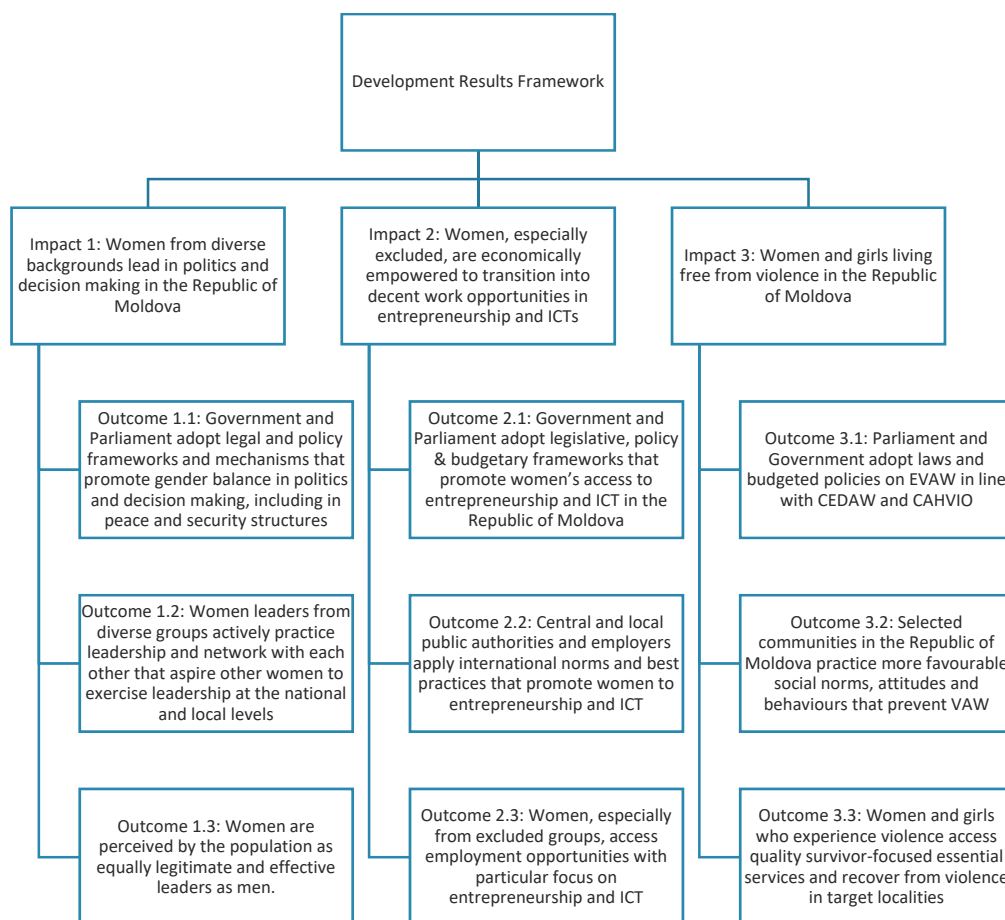
Results Framework

The development results framework for the Strategic Note was revised in 2015 following a comprehensive mid term review that focused on three impact areas. This revised DRF is used as the basis of this Country Portfolio Evaluation.

Table 3: Impact areas covered by different phases of the strategic note

Impact areas covered	# Outcomes 2014-2015	# Outcomes 2016-2017
Impact 1 Women lead and participate in decision making at all levels	1	3
Impact 2 Women, especially the poorest and most excluded, are economically empowered and benefit from development	2	3
Impact 3 Women and girls live a life free from violence	2	3
Impact 4 Peace and security and humanitarian action are shaped by women leadership and participation	1	-
Impact 5 Governance and national planning fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments and priorities	2	-

Figure 1: Development Results Framework (revised version, 2015)



4) DESIGN

Evaluation principles

The evaluation uses a theory-based cluster design. The performance of the county portfolio is assessed according to the theory of change stated in the Strategic Note 2016-2017. To achieve sufficient depth, the evaluation clustered programming, coordination, and policy activities of the Country Office and focused on the thematic area of Ending Violence Against Women.

The evaluation sought to reconstruct implicit theories of change using a participatory process during the Inception Workshop. These were captured in 'rich-picture' notes by the evaluation team.

The evaluation involved a desk-based portfolio analysis that includes a synthesis of secondary results data for the Development Results Framework and the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework of the Country Office. This covered all activities undertaken by the Country Office. The portfolio analysis was triangulated through a mixed methods approach that involved:

4. Desk review of additional documentary evidence;
5. Consultation with all main stake holding groups using interviews; and
6. Independent observation of development effectiveness.

The evaluation applied a gender responsive approach to assessing the contribution of UN Women to development effectiveness. It sought to identify groups excluded from the current portfolio. The following data analysis tools were applied:

- Realist synthesis of results data and evidence;
- Qualitative analysis of relationships with boundary partners;
- Contribution analysis to assess the effectiveness of UN Women's country portfolio.

In total, the evaluation consulted with 75 people, including 57 women and 18 men.

Table 4: Evaluation participants

Stakeholder	Women	Men	Total
UN Women	8	2	10
UN system	13	5	18
Development partner	1		1
Police	1	4	5
EVAW NGOs	8	2	10
Civil Society representatives	17	5	22
Parliamentarians	2		2
Government	7		7

Ethics

UN Women has developed a UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form for evaluators that was signed as part of the contracting process, and is based on the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct. The evaluation followed UNEG guidelines for ethical conduct: 1) Respect for dignity and diversity; 2) Right to self-determination; 3) Fair representation; 4) Compliance with codes for vulnerable groups (e.g., ethics of research involving young children or vulnerable groups); 5) Redress; 6) Confidentiality; and 7) Avoidance of harm.

Limitations

There is limited data to support the representativeness of findings, so they are more likely to correctly represent what the issues are rather than the relative importance of different issues compared to each other. Given the purpose of the evaluation and the constraints of the quantitative indicators (and data) in the strategic note, this is preferable to uncertainty over whether the relevant issues have been identified and explained.

The evaluation does not quantify change over time. As a result, it is unable to provide UN Women with a calculation of return on investment. However, it is able to identify where UN Women has contributed to apparent changes, and thus to identify the most promising strategic positioning and compare this to current spending patterns.

The evaluation achieved a certain level of participation, but was constrained by time. As a result, the findings of the evaluation must still be subject to negotiation between UN Women and national stakeholders – especially representatives of rights holders.

5) FINDINGS

Relevance



UN Women’s Strategic Note 2014-2017 is well aligned with the UN Women Strategic Plan, Flagship Programmes, and SDGs

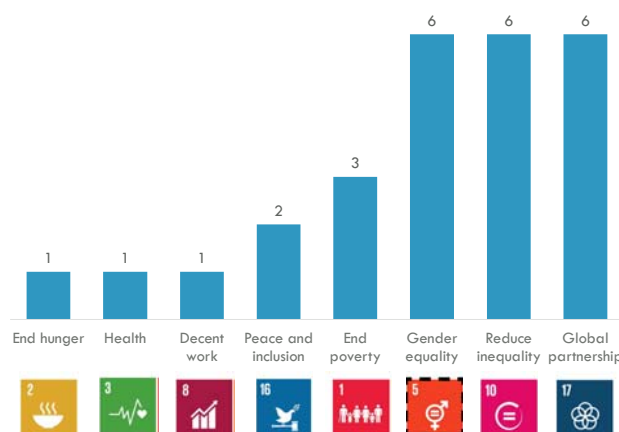
The Strategic Note, as revised in 2015, is now fully aligned with UN Women’s Flagship Programme Initiatives, and – by implication – designed to contribute to the SDGs at the national and global level. Analysis of this alignment suggests that the portfolio is most strongly focused around

gender equality (Goal 5), reducing inequality (Goal 10) and global partnership (Goal 17). Ending poverty (Goal 1) is a secondary focus, with specific aspects of the portfolio seeking to contribute to ending hunger (Goal 2) ensuring health (Goal 3), decent work (Goal 8), and peace and inclusion (Goal 16).

Table 5: Alignment between the revised UN Women Moldova Strategic Note and international frameworks

UN Women Moldova	Flagship alignment	SDG alignment
Political Empowerment	Women’s Leadership in Politics	5, 10, 16, 17
	Women’s Engagement in Peace, Security and Recovery (emerging)	1, 2, 5, 10, 16, 17
Economic Empowerment	Equal Opportunities for Women Entrepreneurs	1, 5, 8, 10, 17
Ending Violence	Prevention and Access to Essential Services	3, 5, 10, 16, 17
Cross cutting	Gender Statistics for SDGs Localization	5, 10, 17
	Transformative Financing for GEWE	1, 5, 10, 17

Figure 2: Potential contribution of UN Women Moldova flagship programmes to SDGs



The Strategic Note was designed to align with and accelerate implementation of relevant national and international policy commitments

The Strategic Note (2014-2017) was systematically designed to respond to, and advance, national gender equality laws and the implementation of international human rights frameworks through implementation of both concluding observations and agreed positions. It was also designed to align to the national MDG indicators, and UN Women supported the participation of women’s groups in the Post-2015 consultations. Following a Mid Term Review, the Strategic Note was updated to reflect significant changes, especially: the 2030 Agenda; Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention); and Reports of the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014) and the Senior Expert on Human Rights in the Transnistria (2013).

Table 6: Human rights instruments and bodies referenced in the design of the Strategic Note

National frameworks	Charter-based bodies	Treaty bodies
Law on Preventing and Combating Family Violence (2008), Law on Equality (2012), Draft law package 180 on Temporary Special Measures,, paternity leave and other provisions, National Programme on Gender Equality (NPGE) and its associated National Action Plans (NAP) for 2010-2015	Universal Periodic Review (2011), Special Rapporteur (SR) on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (2013), Working Group (WG) on Discrimination against Women in Law and in Practice (2013), SR on Freedom of Religion and Beliefs (2012), SR on Torture (2009), SR on Persons with Disabilities (2015)	Human Rights Committee for the Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) (2009), Committee for the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) (2011), CEDAW Committee (2013), Committee for the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (2011), Committee for the Convention against Torture (CAT) (2009), Committee for the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC (2009), and the Committee for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (submitted 2013)

Since the National Plan on ensuring Gender Equality for 2010-2015 was signed, internal and external development contexts are seen to have experienced significant changes. These changes are reflected in multiple reviews of UN Women’s (Strategic Note MTR), the UN’s (UNPF Review and Evaluation), and the Government’s (NPGE 2017 drafting process) approach to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment. There is a greater context of uncertainty in 2017 than during the drafting of the previous Strategic Note in 2013.

Despite this uncertainty, the EU Association Agreement and accession process remain important political factors in the Republic of Moldova. Additional drivers for change at the national level are the development of a national response to the Sustainable Development Goals. Looking forward, gender mainstreaming within both processes are a key entry point for the UN system. The draft UN Common Country Assessment (2016) identifies seven opportunities for the UN system to help advance the national framework.

Table 7: Forward looking assessment of UN Women's current positioning and the 2016 Common Country Assessment

Common Country Assessment 2016	Current UN Women positioning
Removing remaining drawbacks in the Legal and Policy Framework, including eligibility criteria for legal aid, revising the gender quota law, blocking the access of aggressors to victims, and gender-responsive budgeting.	Feasible (with UNDP, CSAG and the Gender Platform)
Supporting public accountability mechanisms for gender equality.	Good relationship with MLSPF, but Gender Equality Mechanism faces key challenges
Improved menu and outreach of services for gender-based violence, and financial and entrepreneurship services for women.	Feasible (with UNDP and UNFPA)
Institutional development of the Equality Council, ex-ante and ex-post impact assessment of laws and policies, and mechanisms for efficient monitoring.	New area
Empowerment of rights-holders through educated demand, leadership, building skills of the current elected women, and mutual support networks of women political and feminist organizations.	Strong on elected representatives (with UNDP), and mutual support (with CSAG and Gender Platform). Emerging capacity on working with rights-holders (through positive deviance and CSAG)
Public information and education on the value and effort of reproductive work, and challenging stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes.	Potential area (building on media work), but innovation needed
Sharing of successful female leadership models and facilitating learning.	Strong

UN Women is well placed to support the Government and European Union in mainstreaming gender through the lens of the Association Agreement

In 2014 the Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Moldova, of the other part was signed, ratified by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova and by the European Parliament.

The Association Agreement establishes a new legal framework for the advancement of relations between Moldova and the EU towards a higher quality level – political association and economic integration with the EU.

Chapter 4, Article 32 focuses on equal opportunities, aiming at enhancing gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, as well as combating discrimination on all grounds. It gives particular focus to employment of mothers with children of 0-3 years, promoting information about gender equality, including ethnic minorities, and ratifying the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The entrance into force of AA/DCFTA opens up opportunities for the greater integration of women in the labour market and provides for rise in benefits in agricultural and service sectors of the economy. At the same time, women are more exposed to risks given smaller businesses and less formalized and therefore few opportunities for credits.

Looking forward, UN Women Moldova, in cooperation with the Embassy of Sweden, is well placed to support gender mainstreaming of the accession process. However, this requires specific additional arrangements that are not yet in place. One example to explore is the establishment of gender equality facilities in Albania and Serbia to enhance national capacity to mainstream gender in national policy processes and EU programmes.

UN Women has established important entry points to support the next round of responses to international human rights instruments

The Universal Periodic Review (2016) for Republic of Moldova provides a useful-forward looking perspective on the relevance of UN Women’s positioning vis-à-vis emerging priorities and challenges for human rights.

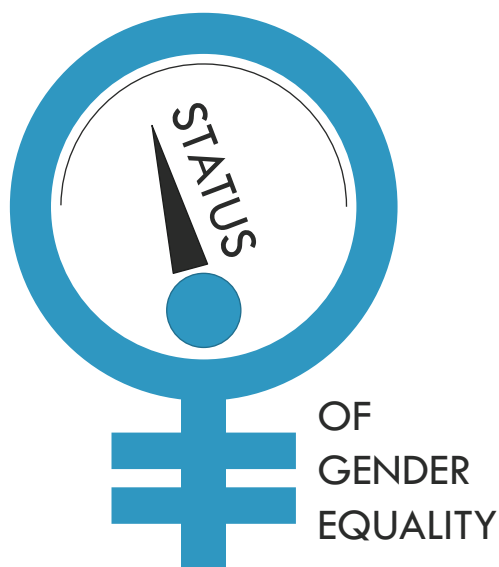
Given an increasing emphasis within the UN Moldova strategy around ending violence against women, the European Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011), will represent an important tool for the future Strategic Note. The Convention firmly indicates as a principle – violence against women is a violation of human rights, identifying violence against women and girls as a symptom of gender inequality, setting new and specific goals for Government.

Moldova received over 200 UPR recommendations submitted by the UN Human Rights Council, out of which 175 have been accepted. Recommendations related to women’s rights rank highly among those, with a total of 26 recommendations dedicated primarily to combating domestic violence and violence against women as well as the broader recommendations on gender equality and women’s political participation.

Table 8: Current UN Women positioning on themes raised in the Universal Periodic Review (2016)

Recommendations	Theme	Current UN Women positioning
6.8-6.13	Ratify the Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)	Needs substantial new mobilization, but possible through WiP
6.16, 6.99-6.102	Strengthen the provisions and enforcement of the Criminal Code on gender-based violence	Initial entry point with police, but needs substantial new mobilization
6.40	Continue to implement Strategy on Gender Equality 2016-2020	GEM needs strengthening
6.46-6.55	Take effective measures to promote gender equality, including implementation and effective application of legislation to eliminate discrimination against women, in order to mitigate the structural disadvantages	Implementation of legislation needs renewed focus
6.56-6.59	Combat stereotypes and gender discrimination throughout the educational system	Needs new partnerships, especially with UNICEF
6.63	Professional training and adopt guidelines for improving the conduct of police, prosecution, and courts	Initial work started, provides entry point. Work with OHCHR
6.67	Combating discriminatory practices towards minorities, in particular the Roma community	Feasible to pick up through the local level development work

6.68-6.73	Effective actuation of public authorities to protect the LGBT community from discrimination	Needs substantial mobilization, CSAG is entry point
6.85	Eliminate patriarchal and discriminatory stereotypes	Long-term
6.85-6.98, 6.116-6.117	End violence against women, including prevention and care in domestic violence and trafficking	Initial work started, needs substantial mobilization and new partnerships, especially with UNFPA
6.132-6.133	Support the work of civil society	Good entry point with CSAG and gender platform
6.145-6.146	Advance participation of women in decision-making	Strong positioning
7.3-7.9	Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	Needs additional mobilization
7.17-7.21	Amend the Law on Equality to include sexual orientation and gender identity	Major challenge, entry point with CSAG



Systematic consultation with stakeholders has enabled UN Women to align its priority interventions with the status of gender equality in Moldova

Since the 2014 Strategic Note was developed, women and children have better police protection and are able to access multi-disciplinary services throughout the country, (8 shelters are partially supported by the State budget). Due to the efforts of the central and local public authorities, as well as partly thanks to the work of UN Women, UNDP and other partners, coordinated services platforms are now fully functional in 22 districts. At least 30% of all small and medium development projects run by the Government now reach out to women and are closely monitored. Civil society organizations are increasingly active in advocating jointly for greater gender equality and

human rights in the country, including through their joint platforms.

Women from excluded groups, such as Romani women, women with HIV, migrant women, women with disabilities and others have actively started to position themselves in economic, social and political life. Women living with HIV now started to open their faces publically, thus making a huge step towards HIV awareness among the population.

UN Women and UNDP, through the Women in Politics programme, supported major advances in the ensuring the representation of women through Temporary Special Measures. Despite this progress, women's representation in politics and at the decision-making level continues to face barriers from party politics. Parliamentary elections in November 2014 and local elections in June 2015 have not improved

substantially women representation in the elective position. Women make only 23% in the current Parliament.

Women are also underrepresented at the local level, and women from particular groups, such as Romani women, women with disabilities and others, are virtually excluded from representation in public life. For the 2015 local elections, women representation in party lists was higher and there is evidence of much better electability of women as they are closer to the voter. According to the Central Electoral Commission data, women make 15.2% of presidents of rayons, 20.6% of mayors, 18.5% of rayon councils, and 30% of commune councils. Where women are elected opinion polls demonstrate a higher degree of citizens' trust towards women in rayon councils, government and the Parliament.

Persistence of patriarchal attitudes is reflected in the educational choices and employment options of women and girls. Although unemployment is a challenge for both women and men, women face specific barriers in the labour market including significant pay disparities (89% in 2013). National data reveals women are employed in lower-paid jobs and in the most "feminized" sectors of the economy which include public administration, education, health and social assistance (71.44%), and trade, hotels and restaurants (59.65%). The nationwide share of women entrepreneurs is only 27.5% and significantly lower in rural areas (14.9%).

Widespread poverty and the lack of job opportunities has caused many Moldovans to look for employment outside the country. There are an estimated 600,000 Moldovans residing abroad, and roughly 340,000 migrants are thought to still have families in Moldova. 58% of women migrants expressed their interest to return to their places of origin, villages and communities. At the same time, it is observed that women migrants who intend to return are not informed about the opportunities that exist in their localities, including employment and entrepreneurship as well as child care opportunities.

According to the National study "Violence against Women in the Family", carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics and commissioned by the UN in Moldova in 2011, 63% of women experienced some type of violence (psychological, physical or sexual) from husbands/partners in their lifetimes, and one in ten women mentioned that she experienced economic violence at least once in her lifetime. Rural women, elderly women and those separated or divorced reported the highest prevalence rate of multiple forms of violence.

Table 9: Key HDI data for Moldova

Human Development Index (UNDP)	Moldova (2014)
Gender Development Index (GDI)	1.003
Gender Inequality Index (GII)	0.248
Human Development Index (HDI), female	0.694
Human Development Index (HDI), male	0.692
Inequality adjusted HDI	0.618

UN Women's Strategic Note (2014) and revised Strategic Note (2015) were both based on substantial consultations with multiple stakeholders (government, UN, civil society, academia, development partners), in addition to careful study of the available evidence and treaty body recommendations. The initial Strategic Note sought to cover five of the UN Women Strategic Plan (2014-2017) impact areas: 1) women's political participation, 2) women's economic empowerment, 3) ending violence against women, 4) women peace and security, and 5) national planning and budgeting. Since 2016, the focus has been narrowed down to the first three of these impact areas through the finalization of joint confidence building measures in Transnistria and the Regional GRB Project Phase 2.

Table 10: Mapping UN Women interventions to Strategic Plan impact areas

	WPP	WEE	EVAW	WPS	NPB
Enhancing Women’s Political Representation through improved capacity and enhanced support in Moldova (“Women in politics”) WIP (2014-2017).	✓				
Women’s Economic Empowerment through increasing employability in Moldova (WEE) 2009-2014.		✓			
Enhance Women’s Economic Empowerment in communities on both banks of Nistru River in the Republic of Moldova 2013-2014.		✓		✓	
Joint Integrated Local Development Programme (JILD).		✓			✓
Promoting and Protecting Women Migrant Workers’ (WMWs) labour and human rights: Engaging with international, national human rights mechanisms to enhance accountability.		✓			
Promoting Gender Responsive Policies in South East Europe and the Republic of Moldova, Phase II” regional project (2013 - 2016).	✓		✓		✓
Innovating for EVAW initiatives 2016.			✓		

The systematic and participatory consultation processes used in the Strategic Note were successful in ensuring that UN Women Moldova positioned its portfolio interventions at the intersection of the problem analysis, national opportunities, and the organization’s comparative advantages. Despite these efforts at consultation and outreach, part of the feminist community in Moldova persists in publicly critiquing UN Women’s strategy on social media – for example, over the extent to which the current projects reach the most vulnerable women, or enforce the already-privileged position of certain women by supporting them to become elected representatives. Nevertheless, the overall strategic directions being pursued by UN Women are largely seen, on balance, to be in the most relevant areas.

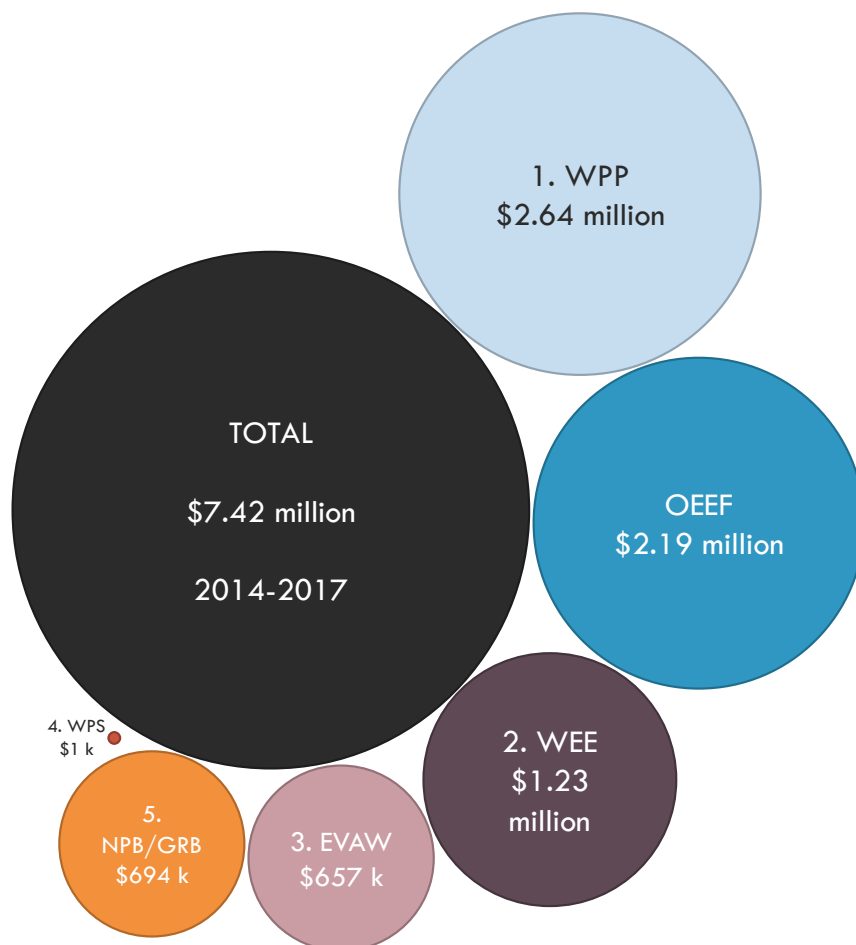
Whilst the most relevant areas of work have been assured through inclusive consultation, the allocation of resources between these areas does not directly reflect the situation analysis. Instead, it reflects a combination of opportunities and theories of change. The most significant proportions of the budget have been allocated to Women’s Political Participation and Women’s Economic Empowerment. To some extent, these reflect the interest of donors and the opportunity to work through joint programmes with UNDP. However, they also reflect a consistent pattern in UN Women Moldova’s theories of change – that a dominant impact area (first WEE, and later WPP) would act as a strategic gateway for work in the other areas.

Figure 3: Strategic Note alignment in the context of Moldova

Strategic Note
2014-2017

This arrangement of focal areas and secondary areas has supported integration across UN Women’s portfolio and helped to maximize resources. However, it is also reflected in the much greater progress made in WPP and WEE than in ERAW, WPS or GRB. Whilst the overall approach makes sense, therefore, it is worth recalling the size of the challenge facing GEEW in Moldova, which the UNPF Evaluation (2016) identified as one of the three weakest performers from the MDG indicators.

Figure 4: Budget allocation across the Strategic Note 2014-2017



The evaluation identified several forward-looking opportunities to further align the scale and scope of UN Women’s portfolio to the situation of women in Moldova (see table below). The opportunity to expand the use of positive deviance is particularly relevant to UN Women addressing the human rights of the most discriminated-against social groups in Moldova. This includes in core areas of UN Women’s portfolio such as EVAW: the situations of survivors of domestic violence are often ignored by their community, neighbours, state institutions and law enforcement agencies. As will be discussed below, popular perceptions and stereotypes are a critical barrier to advancing women’s human rights in Moldova, and there is almost no empirical evidence of what it takes to successfully overcome this.

Table 11: Forward-looking opportunities to further align the scale and scope of UN Women’s portfolio to the situation of women in Moldova

Area	Principal opportunity
WPP	To protect and build on the advances made in Law 71 – building unstoppable political and popular momentum behind the implementation of gender equality legislation.
WEE	To build on the work with JISBs and eGov to connect with EVAW and women’s leadership at the community level; to mobilise women in business and political leaders as a force to drive structural change in the economy at the national level.
EVAW	To build political momentum behind the Istanbul Convention, and realize EVAW in concrete ways through deep integration with community-level WPP and WEE interventions.
WPS	To bring the combined innovations of WPP, WEE and EVAW to a community-level learning site on the Left Bank; and to continue to innovate with the military under other thematic areas.
NPB	To avoid the loss of the advances made in GRB by integrating GRB activities with WPP (including with parliament and local authorities), WEE (including with universities and local authorities), and national data and statistics programming.
Cross-cutting	To look at addressing drivers of discrimination and inequality at all levels of the education system with UNICEF and UNESCO.
Prioritization process	To prioritise the allocation of resources based on the Country Office’s use of positive deviance (supporting more of what works) to address the most difficult challenges in gender equality, even where these are outside of UN Women’s current capabilities or the easiest opportunities for change.

UN Women has embarked on necessary exploration of addressing stereotypes in the media, but can bring a more rigorous and science-based approach to this work

The UNDAF Evaluation (2016) reports that Moldova has “media pluralism, but its political polarization is very high”. There is some progress in this area, although a Code of Ethics is not shared broadly by all journalists, and editorial independence is not secured. Media is seen as a core driver of gender stereotypes by key informants for this evaluation.

In response, UN Women has supported over 30 print and on-line media to go through on-the-job coaching and to sign up to non-discriminatory, gender sensitive media production principles. This has recently been expanded to cover audio-visual media. The UNDAF evaluation (2016) reports that “according to API (Association for Independent Press), media is more able now to report on the sensitive issues of child rights and women and on gender equality.”

There is a strong body of evidence supporting the case for addressing public knowledge about human rights and perceptions of different social groups. Recent perception studies in 2015 and 2016 have found extremely low levels of popular information about human rights, especially in rural areas where 60% of people feel uninformed. This is combined with an apparent lack of interest among the general population to know their rights. Schools and public institutions are seen to be the main sources of information about rights.

The evaluation noted several implicit and untested assumptions around the discussion on the media and addressing stereotypes. Further work in this area will thus require better empirical data, especially on the following areas: 1) the degree to which the mainstream media is reflecting versus leading popular opinion, 2) the media consumption of different audiences, especially rural women and men, and young women and men, 3) the messages that most resonate with different audiences. Current approaches appear to be Chisinau-biased and based more on a theoretical liberal ideal of how the media should work; and less on an objective science-based examination of what media channels and messages are the most effective.



HUMAN RIGHTS BASED APPROACH

UN Women Moldova is a strong and committed practitioner of the Human Rights Based Approach

The UNPF evaluation (2016) found that, overall, the “UN is associated by Moldovan politicians, civil servants, CSOs, ordinary people, international development partners with human rights.” Within this context, UN Women, working with the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG), organizes the country’s largest advocacy event for women’s rights – public forums in which a diverse set of representative women’s groups meet with political parties and parliamentarians. Over the course of the Strategic Note, UN Women has increased the number of tools that its staff are familiar with, including empowerment based approaches such as co-creation and positive deviance.

Both the national Gender Equality Mechanism and women’s civil society are facing their own capacity, coordination and political struggles. Within this context, UN Women’s approach to consultation has been targeted and intentional – with a view to supporting longer-term participation. Having a realistic shared vision for the roles and capacity of both institutions would be beneficial to all parties, and could be facilitated as part of UN Women’s ‘movement-building’ strategy.

Through CSAG, identified champions, projects (such as GRB) and public forums, UN Women also seeks to reach out of the capital and to ensure inclusion and participation in its own strategic decision making processes. Despite the reach outside of Chisinau that these partnerships give the Country Office (for example, in integrating strategic note consultations in ongoing activities) and the availability of two drivers, current resourcing is insufficient to establish the deep field presence in rural areas needed for UN Women’s strategic capabilities to go beyond policy advice.

Whilst participation, empowerment, and non-discrimination have been central tenets of UN Women Moldova’s approach, some activists have expressed the view that UN Women appears to favour certain CSOs in its allocation of resources and selection of strategic partnerships. The evaluation does not find concrete evidence to support this critique, but does find that there is scope for greater engagement and dialogue with all parts of the feminist community. In a structurally under-resourced space, such as gender equality, resource allocation concerns are common; and this experience is not unique to Moldova. Ideas to address these issues are discussed later, under Efficiency and Sustainability; but the evaluation notes that they are perspectives that the Country Office is already listening carefully to and seeking to address through a series of planned activities.

A gap that UN Women has not yet had the opportunity to address relates to the UN system commitment to environmental sustainability. The UNPF evaluation (2016) finds that “the environment area did not benefit from an organised inter-agency theme group, such as that for human rights and gender equality,

and there is a rather low level of understanding among UN agencies of the meaning of the environmental sustainability.”

It is the view of this evaluation that better addressing environmental sustainability in the future Strategic Note is critical for three reasons:

1. The UN system is committed to mainstreaming environmental sustainability just as it is gender equality. Since UN Women is the champion for mainstreaming gender equality, and expects other entities to implement their responsibilities, it should also lead by example in mainstreaming areas that are championed by other entities.
2. The view that environmental sustainability is not relevant to gender equality is incorrect. Changing macroeconomic patterns, including through increasing women’s control of consumption decisions, can have major demand-side effects with environmental implications. Furthermore, women leaders and women entrepreneurs can both be champions of a transition to a green economy.
3. The UNPF Evaluation (2016) notes that the UN system failed to achieve mutually reinforcing synergies between gender equality, environmental sustainability, and other issues. These would be better enabled through mainstreaming of environmental sustainability in UN Women’s work.

UN Women is highly aware of the need to include the marginalized groups, but there is scope for greater reach to the most excluded groups in the next strategic note

UN Women Moldova has addressed the principle of inclusion from two perspectives: the overall framing of its approach and specific disaggregation within its interventions. In pursuit of a more authentic elaboration of a human rights based approach, the Country Office has systematically sought – over the period of the Strategic Note – to increase the level of co-creation with, and participation of, rights holders.

Looking forward, UN Women Moldova is already seeking to advance this concept a stage further, by transitioning its own involvement to a facilitating ‘layer’ in which Moldovan women and men are the principal agents of change working with and for women. The long-term unearmarked contribution of Sweden to UN Women Moldova is a major factor in enabling the possibility of extending the human rights based approach in this way.

Figure 5: Phases of UN Women Moldova's strategic approach to GEEW



At a programmatic level, UN Women has targeted specific groups through the lens of its two major thematic entry points: political participation and economic empowerment. As noted in the UNPF evaluation (2016) this disaggregation is consistent with the whole UN system “tendency to consider gender-sensitive programming from the perspectives of women only, addressing less the areas where males are disadvantaged (e.g. dropping-out in secondary schools, men’s health issues, etc.)... [and] left aside or only marginally addressed the needs of several groups whose human rights are repeatedly violated (notably the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender - LGBT, religious minorities, illegal migrants), although they have been figuring in the definition of vulnerable groups in the UNPF.”

Table 12: Targeting of specific groups in the Strategic Note 2014-2017

WPP	WEE
Women in politics, women in business, women in peace and security sector, Romani women, women with disabilities, rural women.	Romani women, women with disabilities, young women, women with many children, rural women, women with or affected by HIV, victims of violence and trafficking, women migrants, women in Transnistria and Gagauzia regions, elderly women, and others

The UN CCA (2016) identifies five groups and communities whose rights are most adversely affected from the gender perspective implied by SDG 5:

1. “women and children, including girls, under risk or victims of abuse, violence (including sexual), trafficking and forced labour;
2. rural women, on excessive burden of unpaid work; on participation in elective positions and executive managerial positions; on domestic violence;
3. pregnant women, mothers of children with disabilities, young women, regarding recruitment for employment
4. young Roma facing barriers in getting access to sexual and reproductive health
5. communities with little access to credits and services for setting up and running a business”

This evaluation finds that, overall, for some of the most excluded groups UN Women is currently appropriately positioned and for others there is scope for improvement in the next Strategic Note. Looking forward, there is also a case for more explicit elaboration of intersectional identities, particularly between combinations of rural and migratory identities with other social identities (particularly since there are lower levels of tolerance reported in rural areas).

Table 13: UN Women Moldova’s current positioning regarding the most excluded groups

Social group	UN Women’s current positioning
LGBT community	<p>Lowest level of social tolerance levelled against LGBT group, with right to physical and mental integrity most violated.</p> <p>Representatives included in CSAG – need to continue strengthening relationship and solidarity with the women’s movement to address discriminatory public attitudes and grow diversity of personal networks.</p>
HIV+ community	<p>Second most stigmatized social group, experiencing inconsistent and discriminatory practices from health institutions as well as neighbours.</p> <p>Representatives included in CSAG – need to continue strengthening relationship and solidarity with the women’s movement to address discriminatory public and professional attitudes.</p>
Ethnic minorities	<p>Most reserved attitude towards an ethnic minority is towards Roma, experiencing mostly negative (although some positive) stereotypes. Greatest social tolerance is towards Russian-language speakers.</p> <p>Existing UN Women projects are inclusive – JISBs, GirlsGoIT, etc. No substantive change need.</p>

Transnistria	Previous experience in security zone and on confidence building. Not best positioned to address de jure rights (related to international recognition of authorities, freedom of movementw, etc) of people living on the Left Bank, but could address de facto realization of rights at community level – particularly in partnership with UNDP.
People with physical and mental disabilities	<p>Representatives of people with different abilities included in CSAG, and UN Women staff member is only wheelchair user in the UN system. Need consider how communications work can help to address public perceptions associated with pity.</p> <p>Rights of people with psycho-social difficulties are the least observed, experiencing rejection from the population based on fear. This group is not explicitly addressed by UN Women, and doing so would demonstrate working with the most vulnerable.</p>
Detainees and ex-detainees	A group excluded by society that UN Women is not working with. UNODC working on gender in prisons, with scope for UN Women to support.
Men and boys	<p>Existing UN Women projects are inclusive of men and boys – JISBs, GRB training, etc. Other UN entities best placed to addressed areas where men and boys disadvantaged, particularly UNICEF and WHO.</p> <p>UN Women can continue to enhance inclusion of men and boys as champions, and explicitly address rights violations of men and boys where they intersect with marginalized gender identities.</p>

Effectiveness



In most areas of its interventions, UN Women Moldova has made strong progress towards intended results; and exceeded these in some key areas

UN Women Moldova, through its strategic partnerships and UN coordination, is contributing to achievements beyond the expectations of its major

stakeholders. Particular highlights of the Country Office's contributions to achievements in GEEW within the strategic note are:

1. Supporting legal development and advocacy which led to securing temporary special measures and the organic Law 71 package of changes to the legal framework for gender equality.
2. Nurturing multiple levels and lines for political and social dialogue between groups, including public forums, parliamentary caucus, CSO platforms, networks, and social media exchange.
3. Initiating a national network of 22 Joint Information and Services Bureau now funded by the State.
4. Empowering gender mainstreaming within the UN Partnership Framework, and boosting the visibility of GEEW and UN Women.
5. Supporting national statistical capacity on gender to EuroStat standards.

Evaluations of UN Women's work conclude that interventions have generally been successful, particularly with regard to: 1) policy dialogue and supporting evidence based and inclusive policy making processes, 2) inclusive processes of municipal planning and service delivery, 3) cooperation between civil society and local governments, and 4) strengthening mechanisms for citizen participation. In general, sustainability of these achievements was found to be higher at the local level, although frequent institutional changes was seen to reduce the benefits of capacity building.

"The project addressed important gaps in the evidence base for existing and new policy frameworks, as well as capacity development needs of partners from government, civil society and business sector. The project also addressed the needs of right holders: most vulnerable groups, through empowering them to take more active part in community life." (JILD Evaluation, 2016)

As discussed later, UN Women's contribution has been amplified by its strategic partnerships and UN coordination, especially with UNDP. It also faces challenges in meeting some of the ambitions for the strategic note, such as: 1) supporting the national Gender Equality Mechanism to renew, fund and implement a new National Programme for Gender Equality – at draft stage, but was initially planned for 2016; 2) entrenching and implementing the legal framework for gender equality, including accountability for gender mainstreaming in sector and local-authority strategies, and 3) securing a well-financed national programme for women's economic empowerment.

Of particular note for UN Women moving forward is the observation in the UNPF Evaluation (2016) that the national function for ex-ante impact assessment on gender equality and human rights of policies and laws as well as the proposal of special measures for adoption regarding specific vulnerable groups is underdeveloped. Transitioning focus from response to human rights violations, to a proactive preventive anti-discrimination approach, is consequently likely to be a key tenet of effective programming in the future.

Table 14: Highlights of UN Women Moldova's contributions through the Strategic Note 2014-2017

Impact area	Highlights of contributions
Political participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 laws were reviewed in order to align national laws and by-laws in the area of migration, labour and trafficking with CEDAW provisions and recommendations (specifically General Recommendation no.26) • 20 laws were reviewed in the context of TSM reflection in the national laws. The package was submitted for adoption and a part of them (TSM) passed the adoption of the national Parliament. • Election of the Roma women in local office is a significant achievement considering that Roma women in Moldova have been virtually excluded from representation in public life, and their involvement in decision-making remains below international benchmarks. The two elected Romani women are serving as role models for other Romani women, and have been active in development of local initiatives that benefit women and children in their communities. • 98 women (out of a total 1000 who received training and individual coaching with the support of UN Women before the elections) were elected as mayors and local councillors (8 women mayors and 90 local councillors). • Advocacy efforts to promote women's leadership and political participation have been driven by the Gender Equality Platform established in July 2015 under the WiP Programme • Increased capacities and networking of women leaders at the local level (political clubs in five districts have served over 600 women, pioneering mentorship program for women local councilors led to community initiatives on good governance and development; women mayors improved their knowledge from peer learning). • Dissemination of over 340 success stories about women leaders in print, on-line and audiovisual media.
Economic empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1200 women benefited from capacity building initiatives aiming to increased their capacity in economic empowerment and political activism • Returned women migrants from all over the country have created their own platform to meet and interact and have organized themselves in a dialogue with public authorities to discuss issues concerning their specific needs and demanding the fulfillment of their human and labor rights, but also their contribution to the country's development and prosperity • 17 women from 15 rural communities started-up 12 new and extended 5 existing businesses, with over 60 new jobs created at the local level. • Under the MoU signed with the Organization for SME development (ODIMM) a proposal for a state programme on women' entrepreneurship was co-created with women in business developed and is being advocated with the Ministry of Economy for state approval and funding. • Women in ICT Forum was organized as part of the ICT Week in November 2015 and 2016 with the support of UN Women and gathered Government institutions, business leaders, investors, NGOs and policy makers based in Moldova. • The 2016 4E Strategy (Education, Entrepreneurship, Employment and Equality) was the first time the ICT Summit made a specific point about the importance of growing the next generation of women and girls in ICT and offered the space for girls to speak about their own experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 200 new companies have signed up to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP) • More than 100 girls, including Romani girls, girls with disabilities, girls who experienced violence and girls who are left behind by their migrant parents, benefited from GirlsGoIT initiative as one of the promising employment and self-employment opportunities. This successful initiative has been replicated in Africa and Europe and UN Women's implementing partner, the non-governmental organization TEKEDU, received the 2016 Google Rise Award for supporting young women through technology.
Ending violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft legal initiative to ratify CAHVIO was initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family which was endorsed by the office of the President of the Republic of Moldova. • A number of Joint actions have been undertaken by UN agencies to improve availability and quality of multi-disciplinary EAW services which are survivor focused • Two survivors of violence have broken the silence and made their stories public during the final event of the 16 days campaign organized with the support of UN Women in the district of Ialoveni, where 144 mayors from 11 districts have made their own commitments to EAW in their localities. A total of 400 advocacy initiatives and campaigns on EAW were organized between 25 November and 10 December 2015 in over 200 localities of Moldova. • In 2016, UN Women has started new tested survivor-focused approach to EAW led to changing perceptions of survivors by the authorities, media and other women. During six months of implementing this approach it has resulted in over 1000 women in various communities of Moldova taking the first, critical step of seeking support services in order to get out of the vicious circle of intimate partner violence. This represents a ten-fold increase as compared to the numbers prior to implementing the new approach in the targeted localities • The first national strategy to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women was co-created with survivors of violence with the support and facilitation of UN Women.
Peace and security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Defence lead the gender audit within the security sector as a result of capacity support provided by UN Women • First efforts to build capacities of women on mediation and negotiation
Planning and budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Bureau of Statistics has developed a dedicated page with gender sensitive data "Gender Pulse", including data on women's economic empowerment • Methodological framework for measuring entrepreneurship activities from gender perspective was developed • Vulnerable groups in 21 rural communities implemented over 61 local projects with own resources and resources from local budget and other donors. More than 300 women participated in local decision making in 6 communities.

Unexpected outcomes have been largely positive, but also reflect some important considerations for the next strategic note

Adopting an ‘innovation approach’ is indicative of acknowledging, and expecting, higher levels of uncertainty in potential outcomes, and this is likely to manifest itself in the next strategic note. Overall, the unexpected outcomes identified by the evaluation for this Strategic Note period are positive – and illustrative of a Country Office that has been open and responsive to emerging information about problems or challenges.

Whilst some of the major outcomes were planned for, the speed at which they were eventually achieved was unprecedented and, therefore, not fully expected. The passing of temporary special measures stand out in this regard. Other unexpected positive institutional outcomes are in the pipeline: for example, the possibility of the eGovernance platform to open up administrative data to allow national statistical reporting on the SDGs.

Changes in circumstances have also delivered unexpected outcomes. For example, whilst the central adoption of GRB stalled, the re-emphasis on local-level GRB has helped to identify and nurture a whole group of mayors who are now open to pursuing additional GEEW activities, for example in relation to EVAW. The exploratory work on identifying positive deviance in EVAW has already helped to focus UN Women’s planning conversations more firmly around prevention (rather than just response).

Successes also create challenges of their own. The evaluation process identified four unexpected effects from the Strategic Note that will need to be addressed or mitigated in the future:

1. Perception surveys (2015, 2016) suggest that many people reveal skeptical or hostile attitudes to equality laws. The perception that such laws are a condition for getting closer to the EU (a relationship that the UNPF Evaluation suggests is strengthened) leads to formal acceptance, but informal cultural resistance. Laws are being popularly framed as being about minorities, rather than about all Moldovans. This is contributing to an invisible barrier to implementation.
2. The convening and support of platforms also creates an opportunity for exclusion and for an ‘elite’ group of CSOs to emerge with privileged access to power brokers. The evaluation already heard evidence of such dynamics in relation to one of the national platforms. Preventing exclusion, whilst maintaining strategic focus and discipline will be an ongoing challenge regarding movement-building.
3. The success of passing temporary special measures after two decades of trying has been a wake-up call for traditionalists, who may have taken the patriarchy for granted. Resistance so far has been unorganized and ineffective, but continued success in advancing GEEW is also likely to provoke better organized and more virulent opposition. This can already be seen in other countries in the wider region.
4. Advances in the GEEW agenda have been made despite the weaknesses in the structural positioning and resources allocated to the national gender equality mechanism (GEM). Whilst it is important to build up other actors and sources of influence, this does not address the essential challenges faced by the GEM which will need to be successfully tackled at some point if national sustainability is to be achieved.

Moldova has an enabling legal infrastructure, but progress on GEEW is hindered by socio-cultural perceptions and low confidence in institutions

At the socio-cultural level, perception studies (2015, 2016) report that human rights are not upheld in Moldova on a systematic basis, but that popular demand for increased attention to particular rights does not match with the rights that are most violated. The strongest demand from the population are the right to health, right to social protection, right to education, and right to decent work. Only 11% of survey respondents (2015) assert that the rights to equality, non-discrimination, and physical and mental integrity need enhancing. This creates political incentives to prioritize advances in more ‘visible’ rights, such as through health services, pensions and schools.

This spread between status and popular demand is grounded in a consistently high level of intolerance to marginalized groups across the whole population (2016). This appears to be exacerbated by the level of living and social-economic status of people – with better educated and more urban populations expressing greater social tolerance. Apart from changing these drivers, the studies also suggest that social tolerance towards some marginalized groups can be increased substantively with personal contact and including representatives of these groups in people’s social circle. This latter factor could be a key lever for UN Women, especially if the office can continue to expand its reach to rural areas both directly and through CSAG.

Through the document analysis and primary data collection, the evaluation has also identified other enabling and hindering factors facing UN Women as it moves forward to the next strategic note.

Table 15: Key enabling and hindering factors identified by the evaluation

Enabling factors	Hindering factors
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regulatory framework has improved, especially through Law 71 (2016), EVAW legislative package (2016), Roma Rights Action Plan 2016-2020, and Special measures for persons with disabilities (2015) 2. Expanding eGov suite of services and single-window centres 3. UN system in Moldova committed to Delivering as One, strong focus on human rights based approaches, and support for innovation in data and statistics 4. UN Women is the 5th largest UN entity in Moldova, and has voice in UNCT 5. Mayors and local government responsiveness to GRB, with regional support from ADA 6. Long-term, flexible funding and political support from Sweden, including feminist foreign policy 7. Growing inclusiveness, connectedness and activism of CSAG 8. EU Acquis 9. Central national statistical capacity in gender 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited inter-human levels of confidence or population confidence in institutions 2. Capacity of state institutions to promote and effectively protect human rights is weak 3. Low positioning, capacity and budget of the state gender equality mechanism 4. Sectoral policies and programmes have yet to systematically incorporate human rights, gender equality and inclusiveness in their design and implementation 5. Acceptance of discrimination and violence as a result of public stereotypes and beliefs 6. Material dependence on aggressors and the fear of more intense abuses 7. Underdevelopment of specialized services, especially in the rural communities 8. Insufficient knowledge about rights and services 9. Political instability at the central level 10. Party political systems and incentives 11. Low capacities of the NGOs and poor cooperation among them

THEORIES OF CHANGE

UN Women Moldova has progressively developed the depth and quality of its Theories of Change. Some of these remain implicit, and will be more effective if they are more intentionally pursued

Over the course of the strategic note period, the Country Office has pursued a series of theories of change, each manifested in revisions to the strategic note.





Phase 1: 2014-2015. A technically-orientated theory of change that sought to use WEE as an entry point to advance broad work on the other thematic areas prioritized by UN Women. Assumed political momentum behind GEEW.


Phase 2: 2015-2016. A more process-orientated theory of change that sought to convene and build political alliances behind key issues to overcome bottlenecks in advance the GEEW agenda. Maintained momentum at the local level when it was present.

Phase 3: 2016-2017. A design-orientated theory of change based on a fundamental interrogation of assumptions and amplifying the conditions that have previously led to positive outcomes at all levels.

Throughout these phases, the evaluation finds some common strategic assumptions and approaches that have characterized UN Women’s success. In the whole, these are structural theories of change that emphasize the role of institutions, and give less visibility to the role of individuals (a common trait of the UN system, and a pattern that is now changing in UN Women Moldova).

Table 16: Principle theories of change in use by UN Women, and implications for the future

Theory of change	Description	Current use	Implications for the future
 <p>Punctuated equilibrium</p>	Change happens in occasional big leaps, typically through a major shift in policy	This theory underpins the work that has been done on Law 71, advocating GRB at the central level, and the effort building up around the Istanbul Convention.	In addition to looking forward, the gender equality community needs to build the firewall around existing gains to protect and implement these policies.
 <p>Organisational outflanking</p>	Change happens when you out-maneuver opposing forces and narratives.	Typified through the Women in Politics success in mobilizing cross-party support for Law 71, and public forums.	Continuous advances need to be made in informational and organizational capacity, including changing advocacy tactics in unpredictable patterns, to stay ahead of patriarchal and traditionalist responses to the GEEW movement. UN Women could learn more about its own strategic options through its partnership with the military college.
 <p>Advocacy coalitions</p>	Change happens when multiple groups combine around a common issue and voice	Reflected in work to enhance the inclusiveness and capacity of CSAG, e.g. around the 16 Days of Action.	Communications-approaches, such as Global Citizen (globalcitizen.org), have had success by building-up a ‘standing army’ of activists using social media, rather than building new alliances around each new cause.
 <p>Service provision</p>	Change happens when citizens have access to information and services.	The core of UN Women’s approach in WEE, and a major assumption in ERAW and GRB.	The potential of eGov and Milab is only just beginning, and UN Women’s stake in these mean that it is well positioned to advocate for inclusion. This approach can also be extended across internal and external borders, including

			supporting returnee migrants to invest productively in rural areas.
Individual agency 	Change happens when individuals are empowered within the system.	UN Women is shifting to a greater focus on individual agency through its focus on positive deviation – working with self-defined champions of causes.	At some point, UN Women will need to transition to leadership of design-centred approaches to the Gender Equality Mechanism; and continue to use its moral authority to address the structural power dynamics in which individual champions can express agency.



UN Women has established relevant and effective Strategic Partnerships

UN Women Moldova has developed a broad, relevant and evolving base of strategic partnerships. The evaluation identified at least 50 strategic partners. In many cases, the Country Office has sought to develop synergies across thematic areas, with partners being engaged to support advances on multiple fronts. For example, the GRB Regional Project (implemented through the Joint Integrated Local Development Project, focused on WEE) supported the Women’s Law Centre to undertake a costing exercise on domestic violence that was used to by the Women in Politics joint programme (focused on WPP) and is a basis for moving forward in EVAW.

The UN Women Corporate Evaluation of Strategic Partnerships (2016) sets out a framework of defining characteristics and enabling factors to define strategic partnerships. Qualitative assessment of the partnerships from interviews conducted during the country portfolio evaluation, GRB evaluation case study, and WEE evaluation case study (in addition to secondary data from other evaluations) indicate that the Country Office has generally established intentional, relevant, and strategic relations.

These have manifested in significant successes, including: 1) (under the previous SN) institutionalisation of the Joint Information and Services Bureaus, 2) the passing of the organic Law 71, 3) Securing long-term unearmarked resources for the Strategic Note until 2020, and, 4) encouraging progressive self-led strengthening of the national women’s movement. The main challenge that the evaluation observed was to balance the objectives of UN Women to implement its own agenda with the need to allow partners to develop capacity or areas of work according to their own priorities.

Table 17: Current state of UN Women Moldova's Strategic Partnerships

Defining characteristics / enabling factors	Current status for UN Women Moldova	
Mutual benefits and complementarity	High	Both the Country Office and UN Women’s partners have grown their strategic footprints and voice through carefully selected partnership priorities.
Multipliers and innovation	High	The Country Office has actively encouraged and facilitated partners to innovate, and then spread this innovation through its platforms and networks.

Collective knowledge and experience	Medium / High	Knowledge is spread through publications, a dedicated communications specialist, public forums, and platforms such as CSAG. Increasing use of electronic (including a website) and social media can support this further, especially to rural areas.
Accelerate achievements of common objectives	High	UN Women’s recent partnerships have achieved unexpected successes. Most notably, the passing of Law 71, including temporary special measures, succeeded in overturning 20 years of failed attempts.
Responsiveness and leadership	High	UN Women’s CO leadership is seen as committed, knowledgeable, flexible, and supportive by all partners. In general terms, UN Women is ahead of most agencies in terms of authentic leadership (practicing its espoused values).
Shared long term vision and commitment	Medium	<p>The strategic context of Moldova is one of uncertainty, and within this there has not been a strong unified vision among the women’s movement, although this is now beginning to cohere.</p> <p>The Country Office only received full delegation of authority in 2014, which – combined with the PCA modality of most partnerships – has limited long-term partnership commitments. UN Women’s recent adoption of an innovation approach has also introduced an intentional period of uncertainty.</p> <p>The 2018-2022 Strategic Note therefore offers scope for longer-term visioning and commitment; but will also require an approach to selecting partners of greater transparency than has been necessary to date.</p>
Inclusiveness, transparency, trust and mutual accountability	Medium	<p>By the end of the Strategic Note period, UN Women has achieved a high level of diversity in its range of partners. However, the Country Office has also faced some critique over the inclusiveness and transparency of the selection of partners, especially where resourcing is involved.</p> <p>Whilst there is no evidence of impropriety, there is a substantive overlap between partners (for example, CSAG representatives and implementing partners). In a context of an increasing availability of potential partners (especially outside of Chisinau) and capacity of the Country Office, there is an opportunity and a need to visibly expand the reach and meritocracy of UN Women’s partnership-selection processes. There is also a case to consider national implementation modalities.</p> <p>Whilst UN Women’s current PCA does not support mutual accountability in results reporting, there is strong potential for UN Women Moldova to innovate in this area, starting with co-creation of the next strategic note.</p>

The evaluation identified four emerging trends in strategic partnerships that can be amplified during the forthcoming strategic note:

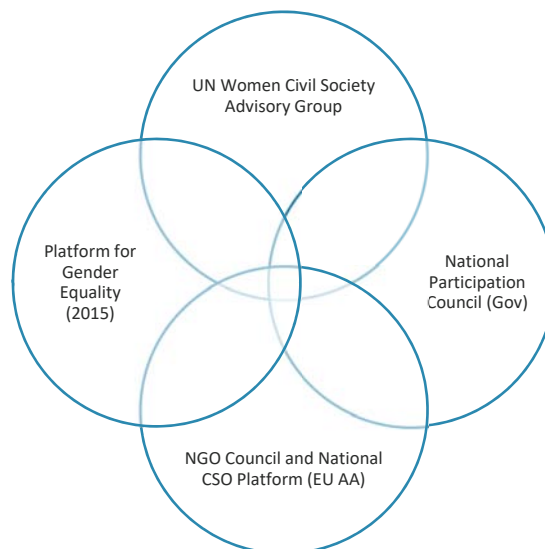
1. Strengthening the partnerships with men and boys as champions of gender equality through the HeForShe campaign across the country.
2. Strengthening the partnerships with private and public enterprises as champions of gender equality through uptake and reporting on the Women’s Empowerment Principles.
3. Expanding use of the ‘prototyping/innovation’ type partnerships currently being piloted in regard to EVAW with Artemida, Casa Marioarei, Initiativa Pozitiva, PromoLex, and Asociatia Psihologilor Tighina.
4. Building on the work around JISBs, GRB and WiP at the local level to strengthen networks of men and women mayors, district and local counselors to actively advance an integrated GEEW agenda.

Support to civil society is a key future priority for the UN system in Moldova, and UN Women is well positioned to contribute to this

“The conditions for the functioning of civil society and media are generally permissive but not enabling. Fiscal and tax conditions are cumbersome and are not adapted for the needs of their development. The operational regulatory framework stipulates the conditions for accessing public information and overseeing the degree of Government transparency in decision-making. Prosecution resulted from civil society actions is rare, except in the Transnistrian region.” (UNPF Evaluation, 2016)

Despite these challenges, civil society in Moldova is continuing to develop and to transition from basic service provision to complex advocacy and decision-making activities, most visibly at the local level, as well as active networking at the national level. There are four major platforms relating to UN Women’s work, including the Civil Society Advisory Group of 14 CSOs convened by the Country Office.

Figure 6: Main platforms for CSOs relating to gender equality



The “Platform for Gender Equality” was established in 2015 by 22 NGOs and experts, and made a substantive contribution to the passing for Law 71. The Platform includes major NGOs specialised in gender equality and human rights, such as the Women’s Political Club 50/50, Centre Partnership for Development, Gender Centre, Promo-Lex, CReDO, Feminist Initiative Group, Youth Resource Centre Tineri si Liberi, and Association Women’s Entrepreneurs from Moldova. The major challenges faced by the Platform include: the low profile of gender and women’s rights issues in national and local policies, the centralization of party control in the male-dominated party leadership and gender stereotypes and patriarchal approaches in the Moldovan society.

With some overlap of members, UN Women’s Civil Society Group is, nevertheless, complementary to the Gender Equality Platform since it currently has a more diverse and inclusive membership. CSAG currently meets monthly and uses a committee-type structure to convene working groups around a greater range of topics than would otherwise be feasible. The evaluation observed that UN Women is facilitating the CSAG to be self-organising and to build solidarity and cooperation across representatives from different social groups and causes. This is part of a strategic vision of inclusive movement building.

Whilst the CSAG in Moldova is relevant to UN Women’s global strategy for civil society partnership (2016), the evaluation observed three areas that could benefit in the future from greater focus and facilitation from the Country Office:

1. The current CSAG is largely inward-looking and focused on building understanding, relationships and alliances between members. It is not yet systematically playing a strategic advisory role for UN Women itself.
2. The selection process for CSAG, and the overlap between CSAG and implementing partners (receiving funding) needs to be carefully examined with a view to transparency, openness, and geographic (as well as thematic) representation. UN Women will never please all of its critics, and the CSAG needs to fulfil its core purpose and mandate; but consulting, documenting and publishing decisions can contribute to diffusing concerns. Beyond the regular meetings of CSAG, there is an option to convene open public forums from time-to-time to discuss the state of the women’s movement and UN Women’s role and contribution in this regard.
3. With a view to movement building, there is a case for elaborating a longer term vision for the relationship between CSAG and the Gender Platform, with a view to strengthening national capacity, solidarity, and voice.



UN Women is a proactive and influential member of the UN system in Moldova, especially through its normative role and joint programmes

UN Women is the fifth largest member, by budget, of the UN Country Team (UNCT); holds the Chair of Operations Management Team of the UN; leads the Donors Coordination group on Gender, and UN Gender Theme Group (GTG); is chairing SDG /M&E group of the UN in Moldova; will chair one of the four forthcoming UN Partnership Framework pillars; is member of the Government/Donors Board on 1. Decentralization, 2. Transnistria, 3. Elections, 4. Social Protection, and 5. Statistics; and is lead agency of the Women in Politics joint programme.

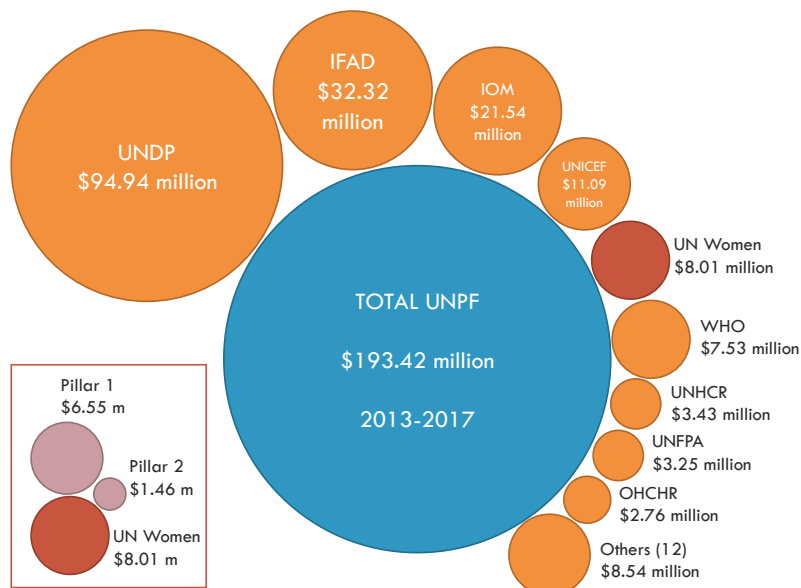
In addition, UN Women supports gender mainstreaming across the UN system through the Gender Theme Group, inputs into the UNPF development process, training and awareness building, and participation in joint programming. The Country Office is a signatory to the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (Feb 2014), and maintains close coordination and partnerships with ILO, UNDP, OHCHR, UNFPA, UNODC, UNAIDS, UNICEF and IOM. **The Common Country Assessment (2016) concludes that GEEW is one of the main areas of comparative advantage of the UN in Moldova.**

UN Women’s comparative advantage within the UN system is seen to be its strategic partnerships with institutions, and its strengthening of the normative capacity of the UN system. It is also seen as being at the leading edge of the UN’s emerging challenges in Moldova: going beyond the legal framework to support implementation; increasing grassroots presence alongside civil society; and cultivating public awareness of, and demand for, human rights.

Having the fifth largest budget and an international representative has given the Country Office significant voice within the Country Team. Generally, it has used this voice carefully and intentionally, being an active participant in half of the joint programmes that have run in Moldova, and being viewed as a proactive supporter of Delivering as One. The multi-dimensional partnership between UN Women

and UNDP is seen to be a particularly powerful precedent in terms of combining mandate and a strong ‘ground-game’, in addition to driving innovation.

Figure 7: UN Women is the fifth largest UN entity by budget in Moldova



UN coordination in Moldova is not without its challenges. The resource constraints of the context – with few donors present in countries – lead to competitiveness between entities, some joint programme partnerships are nominal rather than substantive, and key delivering as one mechanisms (such as multi-donor funds) are not designed for the scale of financing that frames the Moldovan experience.

The UN Women Country Office has demonstrated considerable discipline for only signing up to joint programmes where it has a substantive role (and budget) and that are central to delivering the strategic note. This is sometimes challenging for entities with lower resources who are looking to UN Women for support in their advancing their objectives through the provision of technical expertise, political support, or financing.

All UN entities have a gender focal person, although the size of most offices is very small – with some entities having a single representative. Gender expertise thus varies considerably across the entities. In general, UN Women has sought to maintain gender mainstreaming as the responsibility of each UN entities and resisted calls to act as internal consultants. Gender mainstreaming has been supported through UNPF thematic groups, the Gender Theme Group, and the gender scorecard exercise (2015).

“The rankings gathered through the Scorecard ... reveals that comparing with other the countries, the UNCT Moldova got higher scores for such areas as planning, partnerships, capacities, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, quality control and accountability processes, whilst for programming and decision-making processes there are room for improvements. At the same time, even if at global level UNCT Moldova have been assessed higher for budgeting area ... there is more room for enhancement in the budgeting domain, especially in terms of allocation of financial resources for gender mainstreaming specific activities.” (Gender Scorecard, 2015)

Overall, the Common Country Assessment (2016) identifies that “Gender equality is an area where UN has comparative advantage, as highlighted by the results of the survey and feedback from interviews

and round tables with key informants.” UN Women has contributed to this. Whilst acknowledging this success, the evaluation also observed opportunities for future strengthening. These include:

1. Most UN gender focal persons are underequipped to undertake full gender mainstreaming, and the size of UN offices in Moldova is highly unlikely to expand. At a minimum, this raises a case for the provision of specific gender expertise to directly support mainstreaming in each resident agency; potentially through placement of a gender expert in the Resident Coordinator’s Office.
2. The GTG supports synergies between entities, but is not currently self-sustaining. There is a case to advocate for a greater role and responsibility for GTG in the next UNPF, which would increase the incentive for agencies to participate. There is also a case for rotating co-leadership of the GTG to enhance ownership, and/or expansion of the GTG to include civil society representatives (as has been practiced in countries such as Tajikistan) to increase the wider usefulness of the group.
3. The commitment to a multi-dimensional and sustained partnership between UN Women and UNDP has helped advance the GEEW agenda in some critical spaces. The evaluation observed opportunities to extend this relationship around confidence-building in Transnistria; and to seek similar long-term relationships around GBV (with UNFPA), public awareness and education (with UNICEF), migration (with IOM), and the normative infrastructure (with OHCHR).

The UN Partnership Framework and related documents are gender mainstreamed, with scope to build better links to other cross-cutting commitments

The United Nations-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework/UNDAF (UNPF) 2013-2017 builds on Moldova’s national strategies and international commitments to define three areas of UN cooperation: 1) democratic governance, justice, equality and human rights; 2) human development and social inclusion; and 3) environment, climate change and disaster risk management. The framework is aligned with the global reform effort of the UN development system - “Delivering as One”.

UN Women has supported the Resident Coordinator’s Office in ensuring that the mid term review (2014), final evaluation (2016), and common country assessment (2016) have thoroughly mainstreamed gender equality, as well as addressing it explicitly in the final reports.

The UNPF final evaluation (2016) found that “The UNPF 2013-2017 in Moldova has been designed on the basis of five programming principles: HRBA, Gender equality, Environmental sustainability, Capacity development, and RBM ...In fulfilling human rights and achieving gender equality, both mainstreamed and targeted interventions were used as key strategies for UNPF implementation.”

Whilst the analytical lens of the UNPF was human rights, and the process of developing the UNPF was participatory, the final evaluation found that insufficient linkages were formed across the frameworks principles, such as ‘environment-poverty, environment-gender, and environment-migration’. It was also found that “some vulnerable groups whose rights are repeatedly violated were left out or only marginally addressed.” (UNPF Evaluation, 2016).

Recommendations made to the UN system also reflect on the considerations of individual entities. In the case of UN Women, the coordination mandate makes this particularly relevant. In most cases, UN Women is currently well positioned to support the proposed advances to the next generation of the UNPF. The three areas where additional focus from the Country Office may be valuable are: 1) mainstreaming environmental sustainability principles, 2) risk mitigation and management strategy, and 3) improving monitoring and evaluability.

Table 18: Strengths and forward-looking priorities for the UN system in Moldova

Strengths of UN system (to build on)	Priorities for UN system
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building • Good level of disaggregation of indicators in the UNPF Results Matrix, in particular by gender, age, urban/rural, region. • Contribution to the development and improvement of the legal and policy advocacy agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disaggregation by disability, ethnicity and migration • Mainstreaming gender equality and human rights as well as climate change and disaster risk management into the national, sectoral and local policies and plans • Links to EU association agenda and Sustainable Development Goals • A strong strategic focus on priority areas where the UN Moldova has the capacity and the comparative advantage to produce the biggest difference • Engage more inclusively and effectively with citizens and CSOs • Ensure an integrated approach towards migration



UN Women has established a strong foundation in data and statistics, with significant potential for this to strengthen its future strategic effectiveness

Throughout the Strategic Note period, UN Women has supported national statistical capacity and innovative use of data. In most cases, it has done so jointly with other UN entities, particularly UNDP. Looking forward, it is also party to a joint UNCT innovation proposal to UNDG for innovative use of technologies in the UNPF consultation and evidence-gathering process.

Specific contributions of UN Women have been made through the UN Joint Statistics Project developing the capacity of the National Bureau of Statistics to improve the quality and coordination around data; and the e-Government Center of Moldova and MiLab (Innovation Lab) for civic engagement and design of public services using design thinking. UN Women has supported enhanced national data in relation to: population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality; education and child protection; and evidence-based participatory migration policy making.

This legacy means that UN Women is strongly positioned to support further innovations in data gathering, analysis, communication and use. The evaluation observed significant opportunities to integrate operational statistics from ministries – through the eGov platform – into national statistics to provide local-level data for gender responsive budgeting, improving provision of services, and agile programming to support the achievement of the SDGs. Given the current strategy of UN Women to organizationally-outflank political resistance to GEEW, and to support women and girls in ICT, extending UN Women’s current work on national statistics to include big data (sourced from both the administration and citizens) could make a major contribution to entrenching its comparative advantage (and thus contribute to its wider objectives).



UN Women’s investment in advocacy and communications capacity is necessary and timely

UN Women Moldova is in the process of a significant increase in its in-house communications capacity and channels. During the first phase of the Strategic Note, the Country Office leveraged the communications capacity of joint programmes – such as JILDIP – and continues to do so now with WiP. It also used the

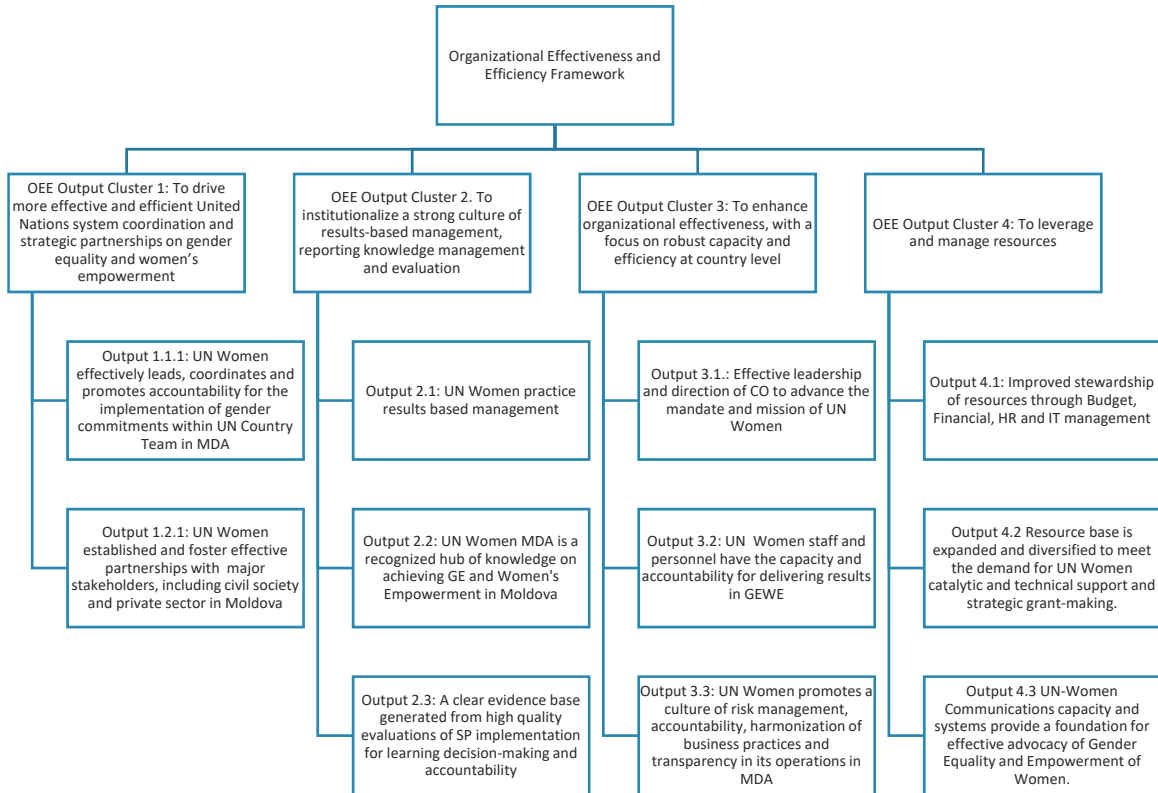
opportunities from regional programmes (and evaluations) to share experiences with other field offices and UN Women HQ. There is a strong commitment to communications within the current OEEF, including a Communications Strategy, new website, greater use of ICT, and continued participation in UN joint communications. The evaluation finds this to be highly relevant, especially taking note of the proposed theories of change for the net strategic note (see above).

To date, advocacy has been undertaken bilaterally (through strategic partnerships) and multilaterally (for example, through convening public forums). UN Women’s results suggest that this approach has largely been successful, and there is no reason to suggest that this will change. In the near term, the evaluation observed two main considerations for refining UN Women’s current work on advocacy in relation to the emerging body of work on EVAW:

1. To advocate for work to align the multitude of institutional rules and regulations that affect the implementation of domestic violence legislation – for example, regulations that ensure the police can enter a house without a warrant where GBV is suspected, and revision of the certification standards for women’s shelters to allow more voluntary shelters to join the official referral system.
2. To revisit assumptions about the relationship between the media and public attitudes towards GBV and discrimination: to apply science-based approaches and behavioral economics to rapidly prototype and improve both messages and channels of communication (particularly in rural areas).

Efficiency

Figure 8: OEEF for Moldova 2016-2017



UN Women Moldova is pioneering new approaches to working, and will provide vital evidence for the rest of the organization

UN Women Moldova is pioneering a new way of working. This is manifested in the work environment – a space that embraces open, creativity and fun – and the tools of work, including human-centred design and innovation approaches. Regardless of whether this is good or bad, effective or ineffective, it makes the Country Office an important prototype for UN Women, and programmatically it has already proven to be successful.

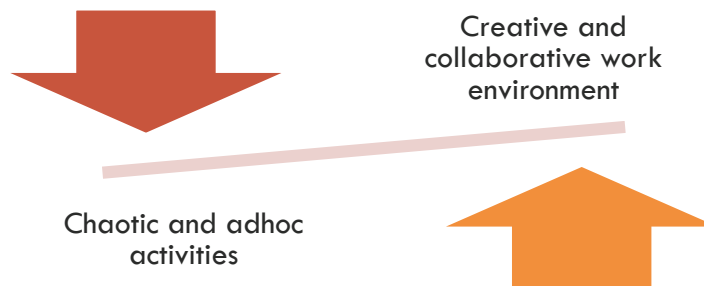
“UN Women is more than a working environment, it is a life and working environment. Working for UN Moldova makes you feel proud about what you do, how you do, and with whom you do your job. It is not just a job you do, it is an life long journey you embark with UN Women to make women’s and men’s lives better.” (UN Women Staff Member)

On the whole, UN Women Moldova staff report being highly motivated, passionate, and proud about what they do. The evaluation observed that this tone is set, encouraged and demonstrated by the management team. The country office is a busy and collaborative work environment; although some staff

report that the balance is sometimes struck too far in the direction of creativity and interaction, with insufficient space for focus and reflection.

The benefit of UN Women Moldova’s approach to working is evident in the energy and success of its programming and partnerships. However, it also has implications that the management are learning how to address, and which can be further improved. At the root of most of these issues are the effects that programmatic agility and responsiveness have in an organizational context that is still framed by traditional systems and structures.

Figure 9: Organisational forces created by the innovation approach



The evaluation undertook an open letter exercise with UN Women staff, a tool that was developed to support organization development. Analysis of the submissions reveals a predominant pattern in which programmatically-orientated staff experience freedom, creativity, and enhanced motivation from the innovation approaches being used in Moldova. In contrast, operations-orientated staff experience anxiety, stress, and frustration at having to deal with unpredictable, unplanned, and rushed tasks. Whilst programming is improving, operations are struggling to keep-up the standards required by the organization. At present, the cost of innovation is being largely borne by operations colleagues, and this is not fully being recognized or mitigated in the Country Office.

Sustaining an innovation approach requires this imbalance is recognized, reduced and redistributed. The evaluation identified the following opportunities to do this in the future:

1. To apply the innovation approach internally into how the Country Office works and how particular tasks are accomplished. For example, procurement processes need to be better synchronized and advised ahead of time without losing responsiveness.
2. To enhance the familiarity of programme staff with operations systems, rules and timeframes to build empathy and communication between colleagues.
3. To acknowledge the unusual contribution being demanded and contribution being made by operations colleagues, including through non-monetary contributions (such as training and professional development opportunities).
4. To automatically switch-off access to work email for all staff except the senior management during evenings and weekends.
5. To document and lobby within UN Women for marginal gains in efficiency through specific changes to operations processes.
6. To create quiet space within the office for focused and individual work.
7. To create more frequent opportunities for all members of staff to work at the field level and interact with partners.

Critical operations capacity has been established since full delegation of authority, and needs continuous development during the next SN

Operations colleagues report that UN Women’s corporate systems have improved substantively over the course of the strategic note, and that clear methods and procedures now exist for most operations.

Consequently, the evaluation did not identify any specific examples of where organizational protocols can be enhanced.

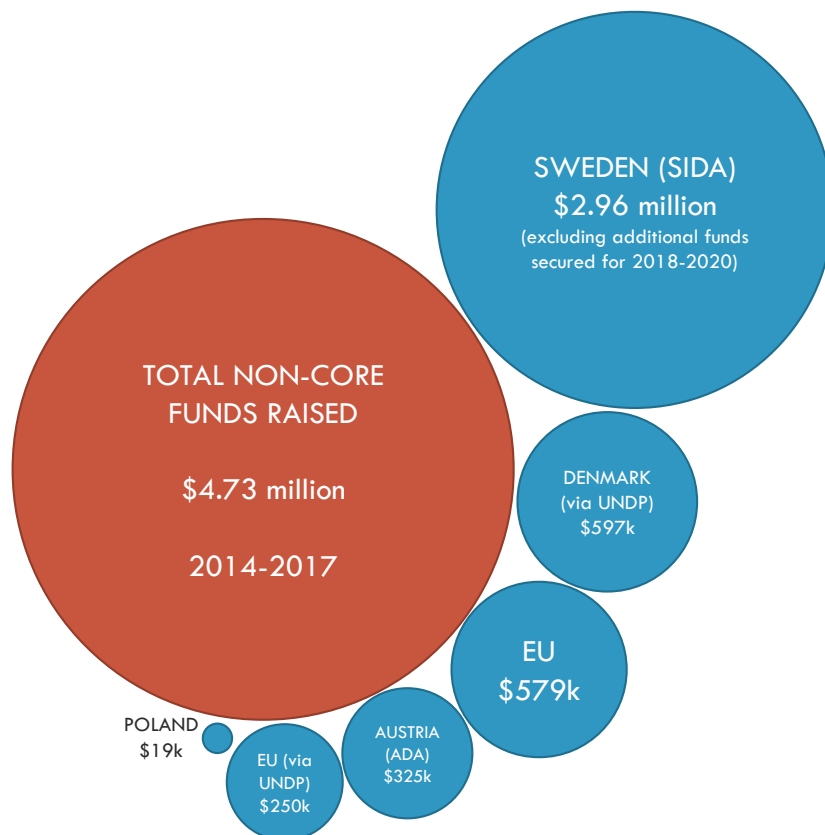
The main opportunities for improvement are in relation to the application of operational requirements. Chief among these is supporting programme staff to provide more comprehensive specifications to the procurement process. This is seen as necessary to guaranteeing the integrity of procurement decision-making, ensuring accountability for performance, and addressing any appearance of lack of transparency or favouritism.

UN Women Moldova’s recent success with fundraising a long-term support to the strategic note will contribute significantly to its future effectiveness

Despite a challenging financing context, UN Women Moldova has been highly successful in mobilizing resources, culminating in securing direct support to the Strategic Note from Sweden until 2020. Moldova will be the first country to implement the new strategic template for support between Sida and Un Women. The fundraising success of the country office has been built on the following factors:

1. Nurturing long term strategic relationships and continuously delivering results
2. Timely, comprehensive reporting
3. Strong comparative advantage for strategic interventions grounded in nationally-driven reform
4. Joint programmes with UN system
5. Innovation approach and making strategic investments in advance
6. Strongly committed, analytical and hard-working team
7. Support to coordination.

Figure 10: Non-core funds raised 2014-2017



The potential spaces for growth that were identified by the evaluation process were:

1. Developing a presence in major areas of growth, such as in the development of industrial clusters
2. Encouraging collaboration and cross-over between experts and CSOs that have a tendency to align with either the UN system or OSCE
3. Calling the gender donors committee more frequently and working with Sweden to leverage additional funds through this forum
4. Build on the JISBs to connect with regional support for MSMEs and micro grant schemes.

STRATEGIC COHERENCE

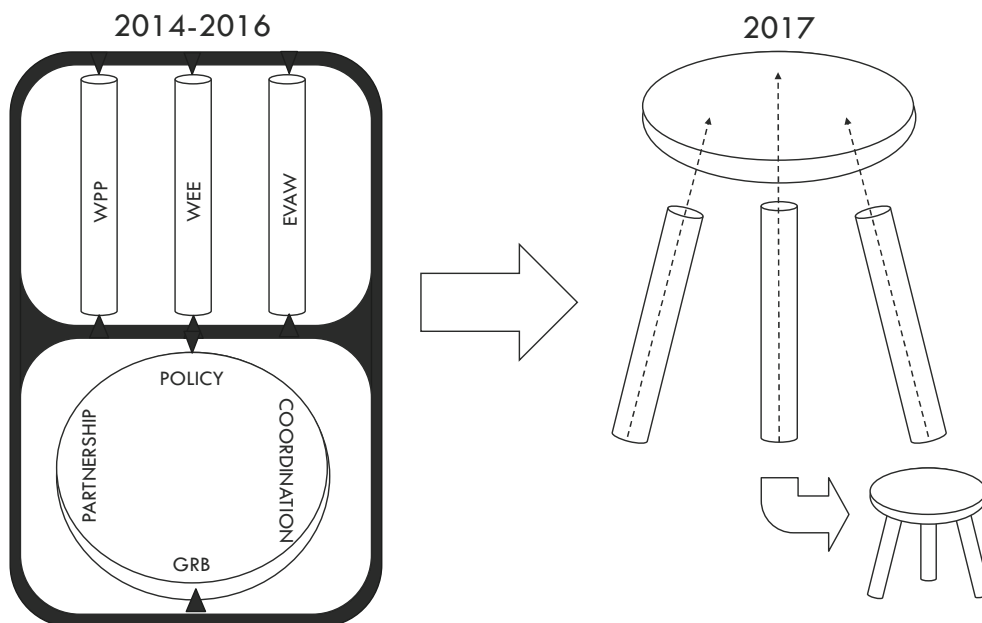
UN Women Moldova has long established thematic coherence between its interventions, with strong potential to build concrete links between these through place-based and life-scenario targeting

The evaluation found that the strategic note, including the revised version, has sought to develop strong thematic linkages between the areas of intervention. These make the process of developing concrete links between different projects and initiatives easier to realize in the future. As of yet, the potential of these links has not been fully realized, but the Country Office is rapidly heading in such a direction.

Overall, the strategic situation of the portfolio can be characterized as a ‘three-legged’ stool (see figure below). The initial phases of the Strategic Note have focused on building the components for this stool; including consolidating around three thematic pillars (WPP, WEE, EVAW), each of which is being established at the macro, meso and micro. Finally, the ‘chapeau’ for these pillars is the integrated effort to develop the legal framework, strategic partnerships, UN coordination, and gender-responsive budgeting.

The current state of the strategic note is indicative of assembling all of these components into the final product – a three legged stool which is an inherently stable design. From this perspective, the future strategic note will be well positioned to channel the institutional framework down into the lives of women and men through each of the thematic pillars. Some of these pillars continue to evolve (such as in EVAW), whilst others build on strong local-level legacy (such as WEE).

Figure 11: Analogy of the phases of strategic coherence within UN Women’s portfolio 2014-2016



Whilst this is pleasing image, from a programmatic perspective, the evaluation notes that it contains several risks and areas for improvement. For example, there is the lost opportunity of the thematic pillars being physically separate; and there is the risk that if one ‘leg’ fails then the whole strategy becomes unstable. Whilst risking taking the analogy too far, the image of a stool can help illustrate potential augmentations to the current strategy that would further strengthen the coherence of UN Women’s future work.

The clearest area to enhance coherence relates to drawing concrete links between the different thematic pillars at all levels, macro, meso and micro. At the meso (institutional) and micro (community) level these links will be easier if UN Women transitions to place-based (focusing on a particular space, community or vulnerable group) and life-scenario (focusing on a particular scenario encountered by target groups) programming to provide concentrated and integrated support. Learning from the experience of the JISBs and Milab, this can be designed to be both practically and politically scalable. Examples raised during the evaluation process are highlighted in the table below.

Table 19: Examples of potential concrete links between different thematic interventions at the meso and micro level

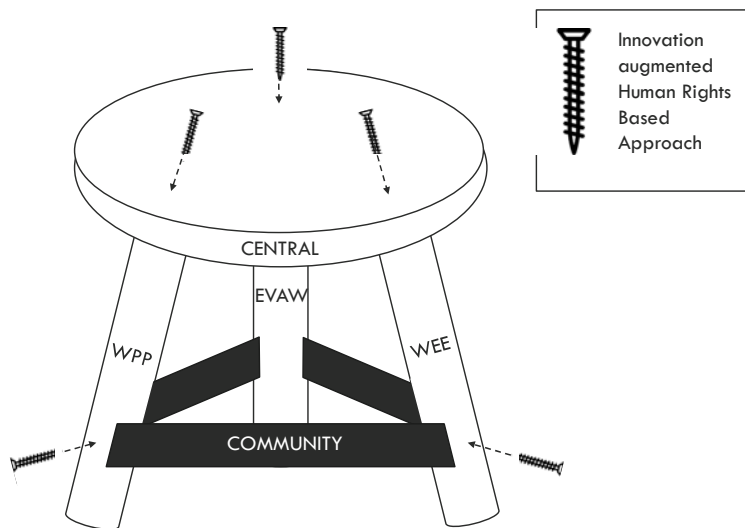
Meso	Micro
Link eGovernment, NSB, and local administrations to use administrative data for statistical purposes (SDG reporting) and to enhance planning and budgeting.	Link ODIMM and JISBs to shelters to support entrepreneurship opportunities for survivors
Work with partners, including ODIMM, to create structured demand for women programmers coming out of GirlsGoIT	Link JISBs, tech providers, schools, and financial institutions to enable girls to build up small independent savings funds to leave in case of a violent relationship

Establishing these concrete links further requires three distinct features to be adopted by UN Women’s strategic approach:

1. Developing a stronger field presence (either directly through National UNVs or indirectly through CSOs or national implementation).
2. High levels of discipline in focusing on interventions which advance ‘wicked’ problems¹ and create irreversible change through synergies (rather than broad-based iterative progress across a wide range of issues). Thematic spaces become defined by the needs of the communities being served, with UN Women reducing or graduating out of support to other aspects.
3. Ensuring that the thread of human rights based approach runs throughout all interventions by augmenting – rather than displacing – it with innovation techniques (see below section on innovation), including the development of advanced data and statistical capacity.

¹ Complex multidimensional problems with no ‘right’ answer, requiring conversation and negotiation to move forward

Figure 12: Reinforcing thematic coherence in the next Strategic Note



The evaluation observed the following potential targeting criteria for place-based programming:

1. Building on the legacy of social and institutional capital in JISBs to enhance coverage.
2. Rural areas where gendered division of labour is more visible and social tolerance is lower.
3. Concentrations of the hard-to-reach groups, especially people with mental disabilities, Roma, people living on the Left Bank, the LGBT community, and the HIV+ community.
4. Areas where mayors and local authorities are actively supporting GEEW.
5. Areas where UNDP is working on confidence building and local development.
6. Areas with the conditions to demonstrate developmental opportunities through relations with the diaspora.



Innovation is UN Women Moldova’s key comparative advantage for the next strategic note, but needs to be applied intentionally and with care

UN Women’s comparative advantages have been identified elsewhere in this report, including in terms of normative strengthening of the UN system, gender expertise and strategic partnerships. However, the Country Office’s defining characteristic is also its seminal advantage looking forward: mastering the ‘innovation approach’.

Innovation thinking, closely associated with human-centred design and systems approaches, reframes the approach to advancing change in complex spaces. Rather than building up interventions based on established theory and meeting gaps, innovation identifies

positive examples of where change has emerged and seeks to identify and amplify the conditions that led to successful outcomes. Avoiding a one-size-fits-all or expert-led approach, innovation involves co-creation, rapid prototyping and iterative changes to interventions. It embraces experiences that reveal what doesn’t work as a contribution to learning under the mantra of ‘fail-fast’.

Overall, there is a strong potential for alignment between innovation and feminist approaches (see table below); and all of the evidence seen by the evaluation indicates that the Country Office is using its work on innovation to amplify UN Women’s commitment to human rights based approach. Indeed, evidence of enhanced effectiveness is already emerging in terms of amendments to EVAW legislation and a movement of women champions for life free of violence.

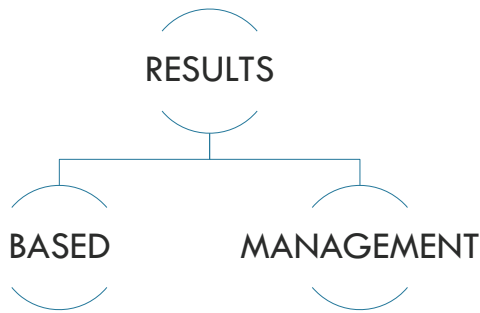
At the same time, the evaluation has identified six potential challenges for the Country Office to consider as it approaches the integration of an innovation approach more substantively within the strategic note (some of these have been highlighted in other sections of the report):

1. Continuous iteration and improvement at the operational and tactical level needs to be guided by clear, focused, and disciplined strategy. Continuous change at the strategic level is likely to create confusion. Co-creating the vision for the next strategic note is the opportunity to set-down the strategy for the next five years.
2. The Country Office has already embarked on a process of focusing on areas in which it can seek to achieve sustained and irreversible progress (by reducing the impact areas to WPP, WEE and EVAW). This can approach can be continued within each of these impact areas. There is also a strong case to reduce the emphasis on new legislation, and work to entrench, normalize and protect existing gains.
3. The Country Office will need to continue to learn how to balance an office environment that supports creativity and interaction, with one that enables focus and reflection. Contemporary research from the business sector indicates that that allowing high levels of personalization of spaces by staff is associated with innovation.
4. Innovation needs to be applied inwards to mitigate the cost of responsiveness and flexibility currently being borne by operations staff, who still need to use UN Women’s corporate systems.
5. The nature of design-led approaches needs to be fully understood, including its weaknesses from a feminist perspective. These are not fully understood by most design practitioners since there is currently low levels of intersection between the fields of (mostly white, male) design and women’s human rights. UN Women will need to moderate the interface between these areas of practice.

In summary, therefore, the evaluation finds that the innovation approach is a critical comparative advantage for UN Women Moldova; but that it also carries a new set of risks and considerations that need to be fully explored, understood, and managed by the Country Office.

Table 20: Alignment between human-centred design values and empowerment approaches

Human-centred design	Feminist/empowerment approaches
Multidisciplinary skills and perspectives	Multiple ways of knowing / standpoints
Integrate people, tasks and context	Inclusion and non-discrimination
Real world research and user-centred evaluation	Knowledge serves a purpose
Include total user experience	Systemic and structural
Maintain ongoing engagement	Participation
Make user-centred design iterative	Value is contingent and filtered



In line with corporate developments, UN Women Moldova has established a functional and useful Results Based Management system

During the strategic note, UN Women at the corporate level has strengthened its comprehensive results monitoring system, as a consequence of which UN Women Moldova has detailed annual reports on all of its performance indicators for 2014, 2015 and 2016. UN Women is also reported by its major donor to always be responsive in providing up-to-date monitoring

information.

The evaluation observed that UN Women is using data from its results based management system to pose questions for the innovation approach, for example why certain changes are harder to achieve in reality than theory suggests they should be. This is an important feedback loop, although there is scope for greater integration of the insights from this process with systemic knowledge management and communications capacities being developed by the office.

The main challenges to results based management are those facing many other entities and offices:

1. A reliance on partner data, with limited verification due to constraints on UN Women’s field presence
2. A gap in long-term impact data from single, combined of joint interventions
3. Low use of, capacity to use, or access to sources of alternative and big data (such as social media, administrative data, user data) to track changes and inform strategy

Risk management has scope to become more sophisticated in the next strategic note

In 2015, the revised strategic note identified ‘insufficient financial resources for country programme implementation’ as the highest risk, with a number of other associated risks, such as lost momentum, missed targets, and loss of trust. The Country Office successfully mitigated this risk.

Given the turbulent national and regional context, however, a more comprehensive approach to assessing and managing risks might be expected. For example, the innovation approach is itself a new (and therefore risk-bearing) strategy for UN Women; the future political priorities of the EU are uncertain, as are its relationships with surrounding nations and other regional powers; traditionalist, conservative and patriarchal voices have recaptured policy platforms in the region; and the position and priorities of the Government of Moldova within the future context of uncertainty are also unknown.

Within this context, a future note would be expected to consider more advanced approaches to risk management, such as scenario planning or identifying triggers that would lead to a review of strategy and tactics.

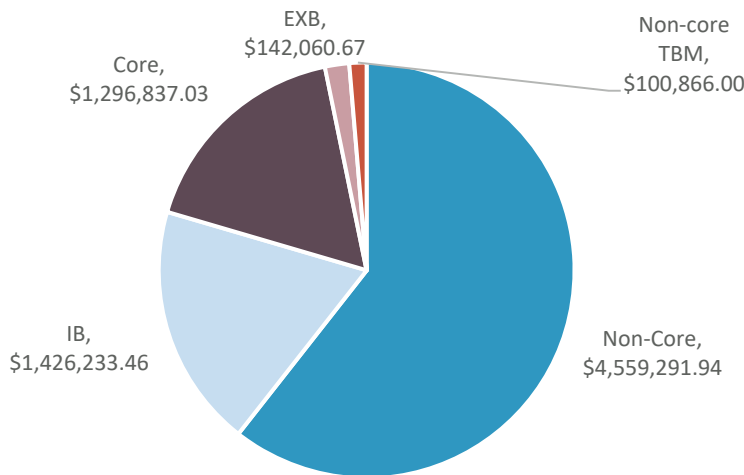


UN Women Moldova has managed its full range of resources strategically and with great effect

The Country Office will have managed at total of over \$7.5 million through the strategic note 2014-2017. The bulk of this (61%) is made up of non-core resources through fundraising, the Institutional Budget is 19%, core funding is 17% and the remainder (3%) is extra budgetary or to-be-mobilized. Core funds are allocated on a strategic basis to priority areas where UN Women does not have funded programmatic coverage. These

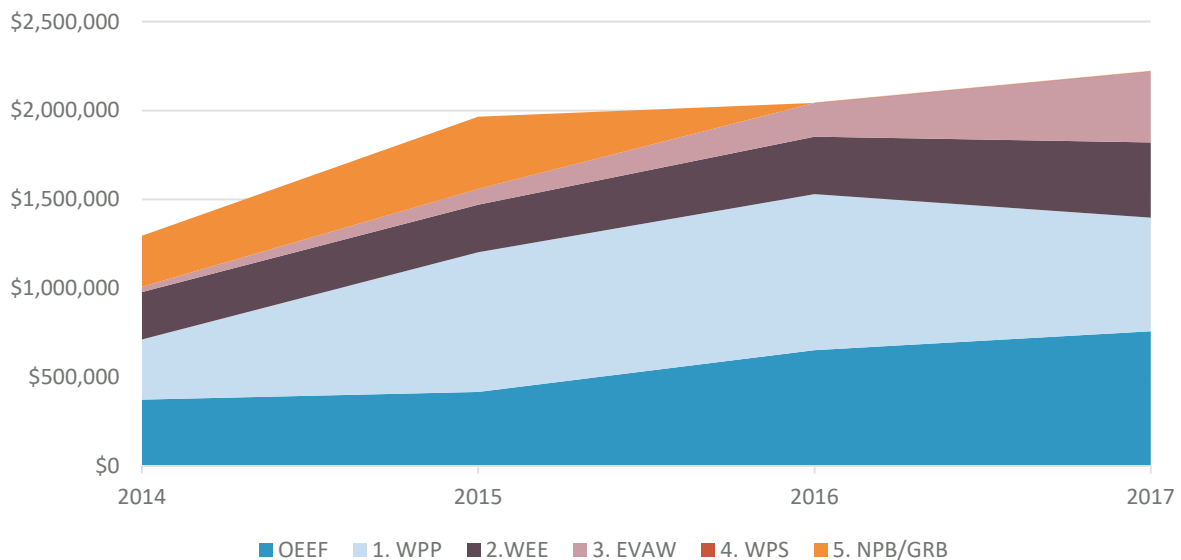
have been used to support the areas of EAW, WEE, and governance and national planning and budgeting. Core funds also cover the requirements of organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

Figure 13: Distribution of budgets across the SN



Analysis of the budget reveals a slow-but-steady increase in annual spending plans, with concurrent increase in the provision for organizational effectiveness and efficiency. A larger increase took place 2014-2015 alongside full delegation of authority to the Country Office. Budgeting for WPP has been highest in most years, budgeting for WEE has remained consistent across the strategy, whilst budgeting for EVAW has increased each year and displaced allocation for national planning and budgeting. All of these trends are consistent with the theories of change elaborated in the original and revised strategic notes.

Figure 14: Allocation of budgets to impact areas over time



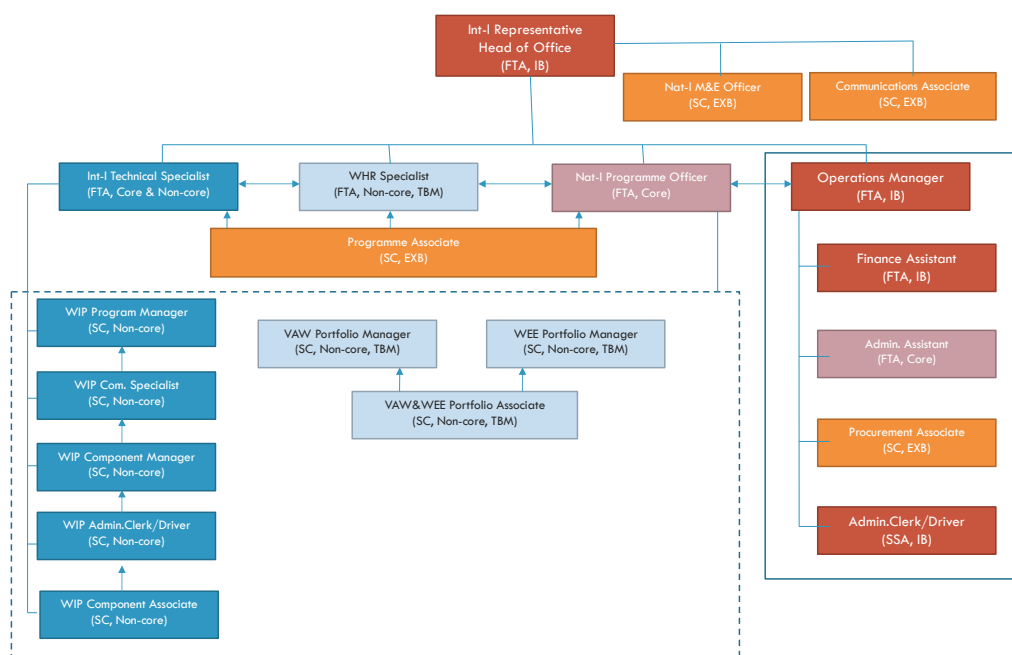
In terms of Human Resources, the number of people available to the Country Office has varied depending on the programmes that are active. For example, the Women in Politics programme adds a team of five to UN Women (Program Manager, Component manager, Communications specialist, Program Associate, Driver). Previous programmes providing additional human resources have included JILD/GRB, the WEE programme, and women migrant workers.

Despite these variations, the core capacity of the Country Office has grown, including provision of 12 staff in 2017 (including an international Head of Office and international technical specialist). Provision has been made for a dedicated Women’s Human Rights specialist, and the CO has dedicated national staff covering M&E and communications. Together, the complete Country Office team has strong coverage of the required capabilities and is well balanced once all positioned are filled.

The main areas identified during the evaluation for strengthening UN Women Moldova are, therefore, in the application of this structure. These include:

- Strengthening communication between programme and operations teams to give more advance notice on planned procurement and activities.
- Placing boundaries around urgency created by responsive programming, mitigating uncertainty and anxiety for staff whose roles and personality-types are not an easy fit with agile approaches.
- Ensuring that all members of staff can speak openly and honestly about concerns with implications of approaches.
- Expanding the presence of UN Women in the field.

Figure 15: Organogram of UN Women Moldova 2017



Sustainability

OWNERSHIP

There is strong national consensus with UN Women's strategic note, but true ownership can be strengthened through new processes of co-creation

The evaluation observed strong consensus with, and appreciation of, the UN Women Strategic Note among all stakeholders; although a sense of ownership was only fully observed among UN Women staff themselves, the donor, and the coordination apparatus of the UN system. This is indicative of a high level of consultation and relevance to the context, but not necessarily co-creation (or co-selection of priorities). The corporate process of developing UN Women's strategic note is consistent with this observation: the final note is shared with the Gender Equality Mechanism, but is not cosigned by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family. Nor is it officially required to be endorsed by the CSAG.

There are three aspects to ownership that the Country Office is currently seeking to advance during preparations that are already underway for the next phase of the Strategic Note development. Each of these is found to be highly relevant and necessary based on the evidence reviewed in the evaluation:

1. Developing the content and priorities of the next strategic note through a process of co-design with key constituents, so that the final product – even if not co-signed – has been developed jointly by the gender equality community in Moldova.
2. Consolidating support and national ownership of the gains in the legal framework for gender equality among non-traditional partners such as the Ministry of Defence, to entrench and protect this against resistance.
3. Scoping the means to provide a service for ex ante gender assessment of policies so as to allow the national infrastructure to identify and address barriers to gender equality before they are instigated in the policy and regulatory framework.

At the local-level, the evaluation (and previous evaluations) found important clusters of support for GEEW among mayoralities and local authorities that have participated in local development and GRB activities. Similarly, there is strong ownership of the objectives for GEEW among central government participants in programme activities. However, as indicated by the UNPF Evaluation (2016), turnover of staff creates a challenge in both of these domains.

Partly in response to this challenge, UN Women (and UNDP), through Women in Politics, is steadily supporting the build-up a cohort of elected representatives with a stake in advancing the GEEW and the networks to act on this. It has also worked with the Academy of Economic Studies to secure gender responsive budgeting as a mandatory course in two masters programmes that are frequently taken by entrants to the civil service (an approach that can be extended to the Academy of Public Administration under future interventions). Both of these approaches are relevant to supporting long-term ownership, but also require ongoing support in the medium-term.

Areas where sustainability is already more assured include the integration of gender into national statistics, the joint information and services bureaus, and the formal-and-informal relationships established between civil society organisations. These experiences can be supplemented and built on in future work. The evaluation identified three key opportunities for replicating UN Women's support to national ownership:

1. Enhancing the presence of gender mainstreaming champions and visibility in State Chancellery, especially among policy advisors and during the budget process.
2. Building private sector networks around the WEPs.

3. Innovating with UNFPA on long-term sustainable financing to prevent, detect and respond to domestic violence.

Strengthening the Gender Equality Mechanism in Moldova is a critical space for innovative new thinking

The institutional mechanism for ensuring the gender equality has been continuously strengthened over the last years through trainings and technical assistance. It consists of the following institutions:

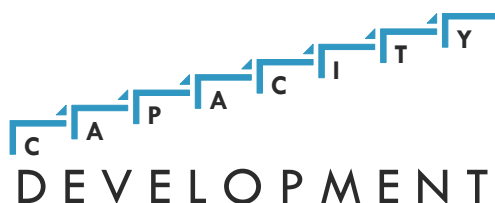
1. Directorate for ensuring Gender Equality and Violence Prevention Policies (MoLSPF). Responsible for equality between women and men, preventing and combatting domestic violence and trafficking, and coordination in the field of gender.
2. Gender focal points at the level of central public administration.
3. Gender councils in some line ministries.
4. Governmental Commission for Gender Equality which is developing a platform for dialogue between the state institutions, development partners and CSOs. (CCA, 2016)

The UN common country assessment (2016) identifies the following challenges facing the gender equality mechanism:

- Poor accountability level of public agencies/institutions for gender equality.
- Low capacity to understand and formulate adequate policies by making use of the potential of gender equality.
- Poor monitoring system and levers to make the public institutions responsible for the realisation of gender equality.
- Insufficient staff of the MoLSPF's Directorate.

Furthermore, this evaluation observed that the Gender Equality Mechanism faces the structural challenge of being far from the centres of bureaucratic and political power, reducing its voice and leverage over other parts of the state apparatus. This is a common feature of GEMs around the world, and within the region. To help address this challenge, Albania, Serbia and other countries are cooperating with the EU and UN Women to establish temporary gender equality facilities at key locations in the government to lead gender mainstreaming within the EU accession process. A similar model, located in the State Chancellery, could be a relevant direction for Moldova.

Within the existing system, there remains scope for innovation and alternative approaches, especially on means to better prepare, connect and support gender focal persons in the line ministries. So far, UN Women remains the champion of the innovation approach for GEEW. Over the course of the next strategic note, however, it will become increasingly important for ways and means to be found, learning from the experience with Milab, to embed the understanding, capacity and leadership of innovation more broadly within the national infrastructure.



UN capacity development approaches can evolve further; a process in which UN Women is already a leader

Capacity development is a major pillar of most interventions by the UN system in Moldova and is on high demand from national stakeholders, especially the government. Much of UN Women's portfolio has included capacity development – including trainings, learning-by-doing and workshops – but it has generally

included these as part of a wider set of interventions geared around convening, networking, communication, and campaigns. According to the UNPF Evaluation (2016), this is a relevant and necessary approach in the context of Moldova.

“The development of the national capacity has been at the core and the most preferred option for many support interventions. Strengthening or developing new institutional capacities of duty-bearers (Government, other public authorities, Parliament, oversight bodies, social partners, political partners, etc.) to protect, promote and fulfil human rights as well as to monitor and report on ratified international standards stayed at the heart of many UNPF activities ... the UNPF appears to have been excessively focused on strengthening the institutions and structures, and less on people in their individuality and diversity.” (UNPF Evaluation, 2016)

Many of the positive examples of capacity development mentioned in the UNPF (2016) evaluation are associated with UN Women. These include: rights-sensitive media reporting; local finance management and participatory decision-making; management of public services with the participation of community members; encouraging women’s participation in voting; better governance and sustainable development opportunities; and increasing access to quality services.

This evaluation found that UN Women has provided important capacity development opportunities for its strategic partners, such as enabling the Women’s Law Centre to undertake the first comprehensive costing exercise of domestic violence in Moldova, or TEKEDU to expand the number of girls participating in its GirlsGoIT programme. To some extent, it is likely that the success of these efforts is driving demand from other parts of civil society to greater access to UN Women; and from the Government at central and local levels to cope with high staff turnover, new responsibilities related to the implementation of the Association Agreement, and implementation of results-based management.

In considering its capacity building strategy for the next strategic note, the evaluation identified four areas that would benefit from additional consideration and strengthening:

1. Ensuring that formal, structured, capacity assessments are undertaken as part of the preparation and partnering processes of all UN Women interventions, including joint programmes, with a focus on unlocking the value of existing assets and building synergies.
2. Increasing rights-holders’ capacity to understand and claim their rights.
3. Allowing partners to develop capacity in accordance with their own mission and vision, and avoid negative incentives to transform them inadvertently into service providers to the UN.
4. Assessing and establishing the ground work to transition to national implementation modalities for selected interventions.

Securing organizational sustainability requires unique considerations in the context of the innovation approach be pursued by UN Women Moldova

UN Women Moldova has created an energetic and exciting working environment that is actively addressing many of the sustainability challenges associated with international development: for example, through the adoption of co-design approaches, local innovation, and movement-building. New approaches, however, also introduce new challenges. UN Women Moldova has adopted some aspects of ‘start-up’ culture: continuous iteration, rapid problem-solving, and co-creation. Start-up culture carries with it known risks to sustainability. Looking forward, the evaluation identified the following considerations for organizational sustainability in the next strategic note:

1. Avoiding strategic diffusion, keeping innovation focused on the key objectives of the strategic note
2. Avoiding burnout of staff and partners – maintaining energy and creativity over long periods of time
3. Negotiating the transition from ‘everything is possible’ to a ‘core value proposition’
4. Systematising innovation approaches to make them scalable, without suffocating creativity with new layers of systems and processes
5. Avoiding founder-syndrome through continuous transition of leadership to new generations
6. Maintaining the innovation culture and approach when recruitment decisions about new leaders in a hierarchical structure are made outside of the Country Office

7. Ensuring that opportunities for staff capacity development include those with responsibilities that are not at the 'cutting-edge' of innovation, such as administrative and operations staff.

Explicitly addressing these sustainability considerations for UN Women itself will help to ensure the considerable success and potential that has been demonstrated in Moldova can be continued throughout Strategic Note 2018-2022.

6) CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions have been derived from the evaluation findings based on the criteria set out in the evaluation matrix.

Relevance

UN Women Moldova designed a Strategic Note that was strongly aligned with national policy priorities, data on the state of gender equality, international human rights observations, and its comparative advantage in the UN system. Its mid-term revision of the Strategic Note framework kept it relevant within a changing context. Consequently, UN Women Moldova is well placed to reframe some or all of its thematic interventions as Flagship Programme Initiatives centred around a multi-stakeholder partnership.

UN Women has established important entry points for further advancing the policy framework, especially ratification of the Istanbul Convention. At the same time, a strong case is emerging to shift the focus of UN Women's work from the legal framework – which is now well developed – and to give greater emphasis on the capabilities of rights holders and institutions to recognize, respect, protect and advance their obligations to women's human rights.

At the institutional level, UN Women has the potential to substantively advance gender mainstreaming through the lens of EU Association Agreement, although this requires additional capacity in key national institutions, particularly the State Chancellery. At the local level, UN Women can build on the social and physical capital that it has established through programmes, such as the JISBs, gender-sensitive mayors, public forums, relationships with the security services, and civil society outreach. At the community level, in particular, there is a strong case for linking up interventions in practical ways to support rights holders to successfully navigate and emerge from challenging life scenarios.

Effectiveness

UN Women Moldova has made strong progress towards intended results; and exceeded these in some key areas. Law 71, Joint Information and Services Bureaus, and national capacity for gender statistics all stand out in this regard. This success has been driven by a highly committed and proactive staff, developing appropriate strategic partnerships (including joint programmes), and continuous refinement of the Country Office's theories of change.

Based on these experiences, in addition to emerging evidence from innovation studies, UN Women Moldova can consolidate and extend its strategic positioning to maintain momentum behind efforts to build the women's movement in Moldova. In particular, UN Women can more intentionally strengthen its capacity and practice to outflank resistance through better information and organization, nurture a standing-army of citizen gender champions, and better integrate capacity development of institutions and individuals. Support to civil society is a key future priority for the UN system in Moldova, and UN Women is well positioned to contribute to this.

The next big challenge for GEEW in Moldova is move beyond the legal infrastructure and to tackle negative socio-cultural perceptions and low confidence in institutions. UN Women has established relevant and effective strategic partnerships to do this, including with the media. However, given the scale of the challenge it is unlikely to make significant progress without continued investment in advocacy and communications capacity, science-driven decision making to test assumptions about media messages and channels, or further empowering civil society networks to lead the movement.

Delegation of authority, the presence of international staff, successful fundraising, normative capacity, and collaborative behaviors have placed UN Women in a strong position within the UN system in Moldova. The UN Partnership Framework and related documents are gender mainstreamed, and the UN has established a strong foundation in data and statistics with significant potential for this to strengthen future strategic effectiveness. UN Women's continued success relies on it staying at the centre of the UN system, continuing its close working relationship with UNDP, and further strengthening joint programming with UNFPA and OHCHR.

Efficiency

UN Women Moldova's exploration of the innovation approach is pioneering new approaches to working – both programmatically and organizationally – and this will provide valuable evidence for the rest of the organization. As such, organizational performance should be understood within this context, although the long-term partnership with Sweden is an early indicator of the potential of this approach. Such long-term support to the strategic note promises to contribute significantly to UN Women's continued effectiveness, and promotes efficiency by allowing investments to be made on the most strategic basis (rather than according to short-term project objectives).

In line with corporate developments, UN Women Moldova has established a functional and useful Results Based Management system and critical operations capacity. Preserving and maximizing this capability requires the innovation approach to be used inwards as well as outwards: find practical ways of enabling operations colleagues to support innovative programming whilst maintaining existing corporate systems, standards and discipline. UN Women Moldova has managed its full range of resources strategically and with great effect, although there is scope for more sophisticated risk management given the regional and national context of uncertainty.

Programmatically, the next strategic note can strengthen efficiency through establishing concrete and mutually reinforcing links between thematic interventions, particularly at the community level. Building on existing links with Milab, eGov and technology providers will key to innovating in this space – especially linking data services work with ability to do rapid social research and prototyping of interventions. Overall, innovation is UN Women Moldova's key comparative advantage for the next strategic note, but needs to be applied intentionally and with care.

Sustainability

UN Women Moldova has made critical progress across a broad front of issues to advance GEEW. In several cases the evaluation observed that an increasing need is emerging to shift more attention to protecting, entrenching and sustaining these gains. In particular, at the central level there is a need to normalize gains in the legal framework and to maintain a coalition of support as resistance to implementation emerges.

At the local level there is a case to focus UN Women's innovation approach on a clearly defined set of life scenarios or excluded groups and to seek sustained change in these aspects. Whilst this implies reducing coverage of other issues, selecting the most challenging problems to work on can build momentum for broader spillover effects.

With regard to UN Women itself, national ownership of the next strategic note can be deepened through using new processes of co-creation, and applying innovation to strengthen the voice and reach of the Gender Equality Mechanism in Moldova. Organisationally, the Country Office will need to find ways to maintain the level of energy and creativity it is currently demonstrating, including strengthening communications between programme and operations teams, establishing a transition strategy for the leadership team, and allowing roles to be taken over by national partners whenever feasible.

Human Rights

UN Women Moldova is a strong and committed practitioner of the Human Rights Based Approach within a UNCT that is seen as a principal flagbearer of human rights in Moldova. The strategic note was systematically aligned with international human rights norms and standards, the Country Office is recruiting a women's human rights specialist, and all UN Women's programmes have exemplified inclusion and participation.

Looking forward, scope remains for future UN Women programming to more comprehensively reach the most excluded groups, especially members of the LGBT community, HIV+ community, people with mental health difficulties, and women living on the Left Bank. There is also a case of UN Women to be more open and transparent with its partnership and funding decision-making as it scales up work in EVAW.

7) RECOMMENDATIONS

The following 15 recommendations have been proposed by the evaluation team based on the findings, and are subject to refinement through dialogue with the reference group. All of these recommendations are targeted at the Country Office Management Team, although most will require collaboration with other stakeholders.

Table 20: Recommendations grouped by evaluation criteria and urgency (5 stars – extremely urgent, 1 star – less urgent)

Criteria	Recommendation	Urgency
Relevance	16. The Country Office should apply the skills and processes that it has learned for co-design to the process of formulating the strategic note so as to strengthen national ownership, particularly among the Gender Equality Mechanism, State Chancellery, CSAG and UNCT.	★★★★★
	17. Future programming in each of the impact areas, and/or flagships, would benefit from being brought together at each level of intervention (macro, meso, micro) to address common 'life-scenarios' for rights holders and duty bearers in an integrated approach. At the community level, UN Women should target some of the most excluded groups to demonstrate the possibility for change even in the most difficult circumstances.	★★★★
	18. Expand working relations with the policy teams in State Chancellery, leverage UN Women's role as convener of the Gender Donor Group, and strengthen partnerships with the EU and World Bank to advance gender mainstreaming (including GRB) in the Public Administration Reform process.	★★★★
	19. Apply lessons from WiP and CSAG to nurture a WEE network and ecosystem of private sector gender champions, including women social entrepreneurs, private businesses committed to the WEPs, social financing intermediaries, and business development services. Leverage this community to advocate for structural reforms to the economy to tackle barriers to decent work for women and marginalized groups.	★★★
	20. Prototype community-level approaches to connecting prevention and response services for GBV to economic empowerment, leadership support, and education systems by building on the legacy of JISBs and the potential of eGovernance. Use the opportunities that this prototyping creates to generate structured demand for graduates of GirlsGoIT and other women programmers.	★★★★
Effectiveness	21. Convene a virtual media lab to apply innovation and action research techniques to influencing popular discourse and attitudes among selected target groups; especially groups that	★

	<p>may not access mainstream media, such as rural areas and young people.</p>	
	<p>22. Consolidate the central theory of change for the next strategic note around movement building and organisational outflanking: prioritize the establishment of capabilities that enable UN Women and gender advocates to access, analyze and use more relevant data more quickly to support tactical decision making. Work with gender focal persons from agencies such as the Military Academy to bring different types of knowledge and experience into the social change space.</p>	★★★★
	<p>23. Renew and revitalize coordination mechanisms, in particular the Gender Theme Group and the Gender Donor Coordination Group. Given the relatively small community of actors in Moldova, consider integrating multiple groups (including GTG, donors and CSAG) into a single Extended Gender Theme Group based on the positive experience of countries such as Tajikistan.</p>	★★
	<p>24. Continue to build on the legacy of Joint Programmes with UNDP and other entities (JILD, WiP, Statistics) using the opportunity of the Swedish grant to initiate collaboration in new spaces such as EAW (with UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM, and UNODC).</p>	★★★
Efficiency	<p>25. Apply the innovation approach to UN Women Moldova’s own internal systems, processes and relationships. Identify, acknowledge and address the unique dynamics of UN Women Moldova’s approach, and ensure that all staff roles share equitably in the demands and benefits of innovation. Document the lessons and evidence from this process to present to UN Women HQ in support of recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of operations procedures.</p>	★★★★
	<p>26. Continue to strengthen UN Women’s independent communications capacity in addition to cooperation with the UN system capacity under Delivering as One. Study the international experiences of Global Citizen, One, More United, and political groups in building a ‘standing army’ of citizen activists that can be engaged in support of specific campaigns and actions. Focus UN Women’s communications campaigns around a few key messages – such as HeForShe and 16 Days of Action – to avoid dilution and confusion.</p>	★★★
	<p>27. Combine the social and political capital of UN Women’s previous support to data and statistics, eGov and GRB into a single flagship positioned as the backbone of the strategic note. Provide targeted support to join-the-dots between administrative data, national reporting on the SDGs, enhanced service provision and gender responsive budgeting in local authorities, and generation of evidence for policy advocacy. Connect with the global flagship on data and statistics to open up new funding streams, building on evidence of UN Moldova’s existing commitment to innovation.</p>	★★★