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Spraw Zagranicznych



polska pomoc

"Evaluation of selected initiatives under the Polish development cooperation programme implemented through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2014, including selected activities of the Solidarity Fund PL carried out as part of tasks commissioned by the Minister of Foreign Affairs under the International Cooperation Act and programmes and projects for Moldova"

Component II

Final Report

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Index of abbreviations

MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Foundation	Fundacja Solidarności Międzynarodowej (Solidarity Fund PL)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
DDC	Department of Development Cooperation (of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
IDI	In-depth interview
CAWI	Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing
IMF	International Monetary Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
PAUCI	Polish - Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI
Information Centre	Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova (located in Ialoveni)
ACSA	National Agency for Rural Development in Moldova
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

As a member of the European Union, the OECD and the United Nations, Poland is engaged in development cooperation for developing countries. It is based on collaboration with partners from less developed countries and is aimed at closing the development gap by improving the quality of life in those countries. Polish development cooperation is coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to the applicable guidelines, and to what has already become a common practice in Poland, tasks financed from public funds should be subject to evaluation. Its aim is to check if the measures implemented have been correctly planned, if they respond to the beneficiaries' needs, if they are sustainable, if the funds have been spent effectively, and enables to identify factors that are conducive to or inhibit the implementation of programmes and projects.

The main objective of the study was to formulate conclusions concerning the factors that have the greatest impact on the effectiveness of Polish development assistance, and to present recommendations for measures to be taken in the years ahead. The evaluation concerned projects implemented in 2012-14 in Moldova, including measures carried out by public administration, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local or regional authorities (LRAs), as well projects implemented under the Small Grants scheme and as part of the Foundation's own activities.

The evaluation criteria based on which the measures were evaluated included: relevance, utility, sustainability, efficiency and effectiveness.

The research methodology assumed that qualitative techniques would be mainly used, including desk research, in-depth interviews with project coordinators, local partners, participants, experts, interviews with the MFA representatives, as well as case studies, the opening workshop and panel of experts. A SWOT analysis was also carried out as well as benchmarking of solutions adopted in other EU member states, and the Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) was employed as a supplementary technique.

The results of the evaluation are presented in a final report as a response to the different survey questions. A synthetic overview of the main conclusions and recommendations is presented below.

Projects implemented by Polish public administration institutions form a large and significant group, especially in light of the transformation processes taking place in Moldova. The initiatives are considered to be in line with the policy of reforms which Moldova has embarked upon with a view to forging closer ties with the European Union. A large part of the projects were also aligned with the activities undertaken by other countries (e.g. Germany or Sweden), the European Commission or international organisations (including the UNDP and IMF). The purpose of those initiatives was mainly to enhance the skills of the representatives of the institutions which are in the course of changes related to the adjustment of Moldavian law to the EU system. The support has been assessed as relevant and useful, and the effects of the projects indirectly influenced the undertaken reforms, which was in line with the project

assumptions. However, in planning further support for administration, it is worth putting an emphasis on the development of specific effects, e.g. on the development of individual pieces of legislation or the implementation of the existing ones at the local government level, with less focus on improving the skills of the institution's staff. Continuation of activities is also recommended to support entrepreneurship in rural areas, e.g. through cooperation with ACSA. The area that should be dealt with more firmly with the use of Polish assistance, in accordance with the expectations of the Moldavians themselves, is fighting corruption.

Analysing the issue of utility, it is believed to have been best achieved under projects related to the priority "Agriculture and development of rural areas". In the case of many projects, e.g. those related to security and border management, as well as activities concerning the development of administration at the central and local government levels, their utility is ultimately strongly connected with reforms undertaken in the sphere of politics and it does not depend entirely on project measures.

Synergy, defined as the correlation of effects of two or more projects, in consequence of which their effects are greater than the sum of effects achieved individually, occurred relatively rarely under the initiatives analysed in the course of this evaluation. The activities which showed it best (and which should be treated as best practices) were those undertaken by the "East" Foundation under the project titled "Water waste eco-cleaning systems for environmental protection in rural areas of Moldova" and by the Town of Bielsk Podlaski under the project titled "Construction of a sanitary sewerage system in the village of Oniscani."

The Polish projects were characterised by relatively high relevance, defined as linking project objectives with final beneficiaries' needs. Other positive features include the need to ensure the participation of a Moldavian organisation or institution and partner-like attitude of Polish organisations to knowledge and experience transfer.

The research shows that the outputs and results generated thanks to Polish assistance projects are widely used. This applies mainly to the projects under which the purchase, construction or modernisation of installations, equipment and facilities was subsidised. However, also in the case of "soft" projects carried out for the administration, the people participating in study visits, workshops, lectures, etc., continue to benefit from the knowledge and skills gained.

The projects under which the continuation of effects can best be seen are the activities related to the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas. These are mainly projects by Białystok-based organisations (the East Foundation and the Prince Konstanty Ostrogski Foundation), which were intended not only to improve the skills of beneficiaries or to promote solutions stimulating entrepreneurship, but also to equip model farms with ready-to-use facilities.

However, the degree of Polish firms' involvement in business activities associated with Polish aid is insufficient, although there are some exceptions. Again, examples include the projects promoting the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, under which Polish technology is often used as well as hardware and equipment purchased from Polish firms. Therefore, it is recommended to further increase the involvement of business, e.g. through promotional

activities carried out by the mission in Kishinev, as well as activities implemented through the Information Centre.

Polish aid is visible mainly in two areas: in the process of supporting reforms undertaken as part of Moldova's quest for EU membership and in support provided to rural areas. These directions should be continued, drawing on the experience gained, mainly because, as the respondents agree, Poland is not and, in near future, will not be able to compete with countries or institutions undertaking large infrastructural projects: financing road construction or extensive sewerage systems, providing large volumes of equipment to schools or hospitals.

The inability to implement multi-annual projects has proved to be an insurmountable barrier so far. This results mainly from the conditions of financing Polish aid (from the budget reserve), but it is an issue that needs to be resolved. Both the representatives of the institutions involved in the implementation of development assistance and applicants consider this an issue to address in order to achieve the intended effects. What provides a partial solution is the possibility of implementing modular (two-year) projects, but it is believed to be more of an ad-hoc than systemic method. It is recommended that the implementation period of modular projects should be gradually extended – to three years in the first stage.

Consideration should be given to terminating projects supporting democratisation in Moldova. They were found to have achieved a moderate degree of utility, which is attributable to the fact that they have only local coverage, are not integrated into a uniform area, and therefore their visibility among beneficiaries is minimal. This is largely due to the small scale of the activities, with effects of such measures becoming noticeable only in the long term.

The research also evaluated projects carried out under the Small Grants system. They were found to be relevant, useful, effective and sustainable in their present design and scope. However, what remains a problem is their low efficiency, as they fall within the objectives of the Polish development policy only to a small extent. These are usually small projects which involve the repair or upgrading of a public utility building/structure or the purchase of equipment. Given the assumptions and scope adopted by the applicant, the results of the projects satisfy the beneficiaries' needs, are sustainable and effective, yet in the evaluators' opinion they are insufficiently integrated with other projects implemented with the use of Polish aid in Moldova. By the way, it is worth noting that in the common opinion staffing shortages at the Embassy (which prevent the employee's from focusing on development tasks) hinder cooperation with project promoters and beneficiaries of Polish aid.

In the course of the research, it was found that the relations between the MFA acting as a funder and the beneficiaries need improvement. This is due mainly to institutional considerations and regulations concerning e.g. avoiding the conflict of interests or other provisions relevant to grant competitions. Nevertheless, greater emphasis should be put on building partner-like relations, including providing feedback with a view to improving the implemented projects. Therefore, it is suggested that competition procedures be separated from project sponsorship or that open meetings be held with the participation of project developers from one country/region/support area.

A project whose effects have been analysed particularly thoroughly was the establishment and operation of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Ialoveni. The evaluators rated highly the activities of the centre, in particular in the recent period, when it acquired external sources of funding. It is worth noting that the Centre has been gradually expanding its operations in a manner relevant to the needs. The recognisability of the Centre is furthered by the USAID-financed regranting project.

Non-governmental organisations play an important role in the implementation of Polish development assistance in Moldova. It was found, however, that despite the existence of many entities implementing projects in that country, and despite the fact that several organisations have developed in the recent years, which have been executing increasingly large projects in a very efficient and effective way, the potential of the Polish third sector operating in Moldova is still unsatisfactory. What is regarded as a problem, but also as an opportunity that is yet to be taken advantage of, is that applications for foreign funding are very rare. The award of an external grant could help to multiply the effects of Polish aid.

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective of the study

The main objective of the study was to formulate conclusions about the factors that have the greatest impact on the effectiveness of Polish development assistance, and to present recommendations for measures to be taken in the years ahead.

The objective of the evaluation research was to determine the key factors affecting the effectiveness of Polish development cooperation and to define the main directions of development of Polish assistance measures on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to formulate conclusions and recommendations for the process of planning short- and medium-term Polish assistance, including the common programming of assistance within the European Union. In a broader context, the results of the evaluation study, can contribute to improving the quality of public policies in Poland, in particular foreign policy.

The evaluation study has produced recommendations concerning future programmes and projects that will be implemented under annual plans formulated on the basis of the 2016-2020 Multiannual Programme for Development Cooperation. They will make it possible, among other things, increase the impact of Polish aid, to strengthen the positive image of Poland as a country actively supporting sustainable development in the world and a valuable partner with stable development prospects, and to support decision-making processes with regard to issues related to development cooperation financed with MFA funds, including decisions concerning the scale of Poland's participation in joint EU programming.

Based on the assumptions, the entire evaluation process was divided into two components:

- Component I – concerning projects implemented through the Solidarity Fund PL under the task commissioned by the MFA, Support for Democracy. The evaluation covered projects implemented in 2012-14 in Georgia, Ukraine and Tunisia.
- Component II – concerning projects implemented in 2012-14 in Moldova, including measures carried out by public administration, NGOs and local or regional authorities, as well projects implemented under the Small Grants scheme and as part of the Foundation's own activities.

1.2 Object and scope of the study

The study under Component II, which is described in this report, concerned projects conducted as part of Polish aid for Moldova in 2012-2014. The study covered:

1) Selected projects carried out for Moldova under the "*Polish development assistance*" grant competitions. In 2012, the *Development Cooperation Plan* provided for the implementation of projects under 3 priorities:

1. *Public security and border management,*
2. *Regional development and decentralisation,*
3. *Development of rural areas.*

In 2013 and 2014, 3 priorities were also implemented:

1. *Public security and border management,*
2. *Regional development and strengthening of public administration and of local government capacities,*
3. *Agriculture and development of rural areas.*

The priorities were implemented by Polish public administration units (19 projects), NGOs (14 projects) or by LRAs (5 projects).

- Assistance provided to Moldova in 2012, 2013 and 2014 under the Small Grants scheme, i.e. through the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kishinev (22 projects).
- The Foundation's projects carried out indirectly, concerning democratisation and human rights (7 projects) and directly (Establishment and running of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova).

1.3 Evaluation criteria

The study was carried out based on five principal criteria:

- **Relevance** defined as reference to beneficiaries' key problems. Checking if the project has contributed to resolving beneficiaries' real problems.
- **Sustainability** defined as a measurable impact of project results on the target group after the formal completion of the project. Checking if the changes/impact of project results will be maintained in a long term.
- **Efficiency** defined as justification for the outlays on development cooperation by the outputs and results generated. Checking how project resources were converted into direct outputs.
- **Effectiveness** defined as the extent to which Polish development cooperation attains its objectives. Checking to what extent projects have contributed to the achievement of specific and general objectives.
- **Utility** defined as making use of the effects produced by an intervention (both planned and unplanned), assessed by benchmarking those effects against beneficiaries' real needs. Checking if and how projects have contributed to satisfying the needs of target groups, and if positive or negative side effects have appeared.

1.4 Survey questions

In the course of evaluation of selected initiatives, answers were given to the following survey questions:

1. To what extent and which activities implemented under the projects were most important to supporting the reforms undertaken in Moldova?

2. Which activities had the greatest impact on the improvement of the situation of project beneficiaries and which activities contributed most to the improvement of the situation of partner organisations participating (formally and informally) in the implementation of projects, and why was this the case?
3. Does synergy arise between projects in a given area or for a given group of stakeholders? If so, which activities and which aspects are involved?
4. Did Polish projects stand out among activities of other Polish or foreign donors, and were they especially useful to beneficiaries? If so, which ones and in what aspects was this the case?
5. Do beneficiaries use the outputs developed as a result of project activities (including personnel training, provision of equipment)? If so, how do they use them?
6. Do beneficiaries continue or multiply activities initiated by the Polish development assistance programme? If so, which ones do so most often and how?
7. Which activities under the Polish development assistance programme have contributed most to the visibility of the best Polish experience and the dissemination of the image of Poland as a valuable partner with stable growth prospects?
8. Did the projects implemented respond to the beneficiaries' real needs? Have the results of the activities carried out contributed to solving their problems? If so, to what extent?
9. What factors (internal and external) contribute to the improvement of effectiveness of projects implemented in Moldova? Which projects achieve the highest effectiveness? What determines this?

1.5 Methodology

Component II of the evaluation research focused on assessing projects implemented for Moldova by NGOs, LRAs and administration units, as well as under the Small Grants scheme involving Polish foreign missions which conduct development projects on their own or in collaboration with local partners. Projects carried out by the Foundation in 2012-2014, including the project, "Establishment and running of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova," were also evaluated.

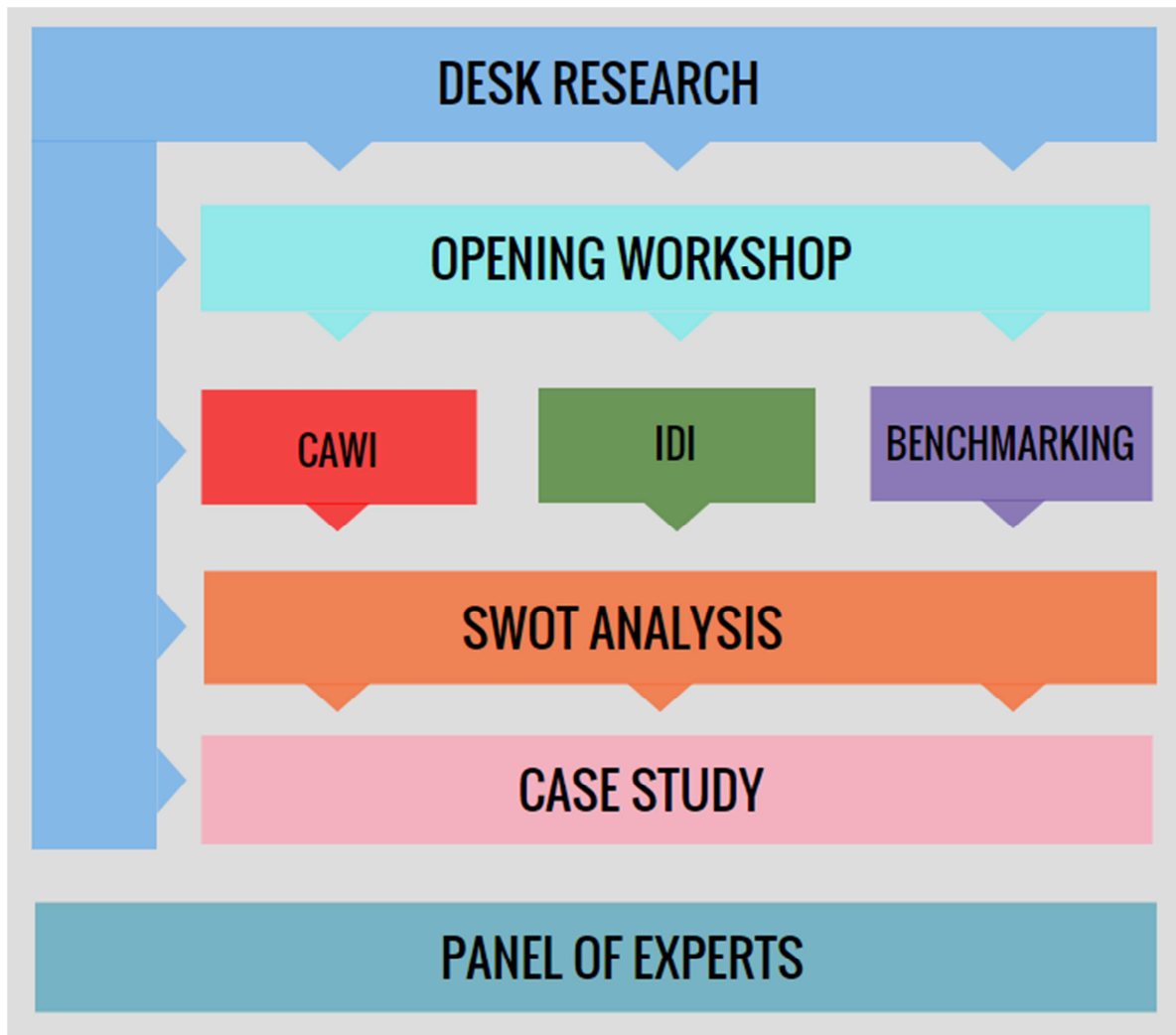
Research methods and techniques

The following research and analytical techniques were applied under Component II:

- Desk research analysis
- Opening workshop
- Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI)
- In-depth interview (IDI)
- Panel of experts
- SWOT/ TOWS analysis

- Case studies
- Benchmarking

The graph below shows all the techniques applied together with the chronology of their use.



Source: In-house

The application of each of the above techniques is described in detail below. Some of them are presented in detail in the previous chapter describing Component I. Therefore, only the issues specific to Component II are presented below.

Desk research

As in the case of Component I, the desk research has been carried out in three main areas:

1. Analysis of documents, including:
 - 1A. Project proposals concerning all the 67 projects implemented in Moldova, which were delivered by the Awarding Authority.

- 1B. Project implementation reports – as in the case of applications for co-financing, 70¹ reports provided by the Awarding Authority will be analysed.
- 1C. Documents concerning the programming of Polish development assistance (as for Component I).
2. Analysis of data and media materials, including:
- 2A. Statistical data on Polish development assistance (ODA),
- 2B. Information available on the MFA and the Foundation's websites, the www.polskapomoc.gov.pl portal, and on websites of the relevant Polish diplomatic missions,
- 2C. Information and promotional materials on Polish development assistance, as well as articles, news, press releases, radio and television programmes.
3. An analysis of outputs resulting from the implementation of projects, including brochures, post-conference materials, manuals, etc.
4. Analyses, studies, reports and forecasts concerning the social and economic situation of Moldova and media materials (including the Internet, press, radio, TV).

Opening workshop

The opening workshop is a qualitative research technique reminiscent of a focus group, but focused to a greater extent on coordination of conclusions and developing a common position. The participants, who have stronger links to the discussed subject than in the case of a focus group play the role of experts because of the position they hold. In advance (i.e. a week before the scheduled meeting) they received a list of topics to be discussed, which enabled them to prepare their position and furnish the evaluators with any source materials needed. In the course of a moderated discussion, all issues relevant to the evaluation process were dealt with. In particular, it was analysed how the participants perceived the MFA as an institution responsible for the management of development policy in Moldova, how they assessed the plans for development cooperation in their country in the coming years, and on what basis (analysis, diagnosis, expert opinion, etc.) the decision was taken to apply for funds, who was designated as final beneficiaries, etc.

The meeting was held without representatives of the MFA or the Foundation present. This made it possible to provide a setting for the participants to express their opinions in a relatively unconstrained and frank manner. The participants of the meeting included representatives of project promoters representing the central government (e.g. Polish Financial Supervision

¹ In the case of the project: The establishment and operation of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova, no proposals were submitted. Three reports will be analysed for successive years, submitted by the Foundation and the MFA in connection with the implementation of grant projects. This accounts for the difference in the number of the proposals and reports analysed.

Authority, Ministry of Internal Affairs), and regional government (regional assemblies), as well as a representative of the Centre for Eastern Studies.

Computer-Assisted Web Interview (CAWI)

As part quantitative research – as in the case of Component I – a survey was held based on questionnaires distributed by email among the project participants. A request was sent to all project promoters for addresses of the participants, to whom an invitation to respond to the questionnaire was then circulated.

The questionnaire was completed by 195 respondents.

In-depth interview (IDI)

The research technique that will enable the subject matter under study to be explored as profoundly as possible uses individual in-depth interviews with selected project promoters and individuals involved in projects. In the case of Component II, the research was planned so as to involve a relatively large research sample. For each of the projects the mentioned below, at least 5 in-depth interviews were carried out. In selecting the projects, the evaluators were guided by the following rules:

- differentiate projects in terms of their duration to the maximum extent possible,
- as far as possible, select projects implemented by different institutions,
- ensure the proportion of projects implemented by administration institutions, NGOs and LRAs, as well as the Polish Embassy and by the Foundation.

In total, 90 in-depth interviews were conducted with persons involved in the implementation projects in Moldova, as well as interviews with representatives of the Foundation and the MFA.

Panel of experts

A meeting of experts was held in the final stage of the research. Its objective was to present and discuss conclusions formulated by a team of evaluators with key participants of the process of implementing Polish development assistance. Those taking part in the panel included the Deputy Director of the MFA DDC, the President of the Foundation and a representative of Grupa Zagranica. The panellists' observations and their suggestions relating to individual proposals have been taken into account in this report.

SWOT/ TOWS analysis

As in the case of Component I, regarding the support provided to Moldova, an analysis was carried out which showed the strengths and weaknesses of the measures implemented, as well as the related opportunities and threats.

Case studies

With regard to Component II, a total of 7 case studies were carried out, including:

- two concerning the implementation of measures related to the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova
- one each for projects implemented for Moldova by the administration, non-governmental organisations, local governments, the diplomatic mission, and as part of the Foundation's own activities.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking carried out under Component II is aimed at comparing the objectives, the method of implementing measures, fund allocations and the scope of support provided to Moldova by four EU member states. Owing to the use of benchmarking, good practices were identified which are currently used in other countries and which can be transferred to the Polish development assistance environment.

2. Description of the projects

In Moldova, the evaluation covered 70 projects, including 19 conducted by the administration, 5 by local governments, 21 by NGOs (including 7 financed by the Foundation), 22 Small Grants managed by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, and 4 projects conducted as the Foundation's own activities. In Component II, the majority of the beneficiaries had previously implemented projects together with the Foundation or the MFA.

Among the projects run by the government administration, 7 out of 19 projects were conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and in 2013 as many as 3 out of 5 projects. In 2013, the diversification of beneficiaries was greater.

During those 3 years, local and regional authorities implemented only 5 projects, including as many as 3 conducted by the Pomeranian Regional Assembly.

Non-governmental organisations in Moldova carried out projects mainly in two areas. The first one concerned agriculture and rural areas, including projects related to the development of entrepreneurship, agricultural cooperative movement, agricultural extension, as well as the development of alternative energy sources and promotion of environmentally-friendly solutions in farms. The second area concerned broad-based support for LRAs, including the strengthening of their capacity through training and competence-building related to the acquisition of external funds.

Small Grants are managed by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kishinev and involve the improvement of infrastructure in different areas of the country.

Out of the seven activities conducted by the Foundation and NGOs, as many as 5 were conducted in 2014. In 2013 and 2012, one project per year was conducted, including a 2013

project which was continued in 2014. The projects were aimed mainly at supporting the development of democracy.

The Foundation's own activities involved the running of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova whose task was to provide local and regional institutions with information on the possibility of applying for grants, improving the competence of local government employees dealing with development of proposals, and thus increasing the effectiveness of identification, preparation and assessment of projects concerning regional and local development.

3. Conclusions concerning individual survey questions

3.1. To what extent and which activities implemented under the projects were most important to supporting the reforms undertaken in Moldova?

The identification of the impact of the Polish projects supporting reforms in Moldova directly concerns projects implemented by the Polish administration, and indirectly other projects.

The administration's projects supported mainly activities related to:

- strategic planning and regional development,
- supporting public security by strengthening the Fire Service, the Police, the Border Guard, as well as veterinary and phytosanitary services,
- supporting oversight of the financial market,
- creating appropriate conditions to attract foreign investments,
- developing agricultural market institutions.

Each of the above-mentioned areas has undergone significant changes in recent years. Each of the projects implemented by Polish institutions was aligned with Moldova's reform policy aimed to bring the country closer to the European Union. A large part of the projects were also aligned with the activities undertaken by other countries (e.g. Germany or Sweden), by the European Commission or by international organisations (UNDP and IMF). Answering the question about activities that contribute most to supporting reforms, it should be considered to what extent the impact of Polish projects was a key factor and to what extent it was merely auxiliary to a number of other activities undertaken by countries of institutions.

With regard to projects concerning strategic planning and regional development (see the box on the right), the relevance and utility of those activities were highly regarded. Thanks to expert missions and study visits, representatives of the Moldavian administration involved in the strategy development process could actually improve their skills. Nevertheless, the projects concerning that area were aimed at supporting the process of creating strategic documents and they did not directly support work on, for instance, an update of the regional development strategy for the years 2012-15.

In 2012 and 2013, **the Ministry of Regional Development** implemented a project whose main objective was to streamline the process of preparing strategic documents and regional development projects in the Moldavian public administration in the context of challenges and development trends emerging in Moldova. The direct objective was to develop procedures and tools related to preparations for the implementation and evaluation of regional development projects. Training was held in Poland under the project on the rules of functioning and implementation system of the development policy, and expert meetings were held in Moldova.

The Polish Financial Supervision Authority carried out the two-year project **"Supporting and improving the financial market of the Republic of Moldova"**. The main objective was to identify gaps in the institutional and legal infrastructure of Moldova and to present recommendations for required changes in supervision over the capital and banking market, and to provide support to Moldova in creating secure legal solutions and an appropriate institutional framework.

A similar situation was witnessed in the case of projects aimed at strengthening oversight of the financial market (see the box on the left). The aim of those initiatives was to improve the competences of the financial supervision sector and it must be admitted that the planned effects were attained, although the implementation of the project did not

seem to have had a direct effect on the final shape of the regulations which are adopted through negotiations e.g. with the IMF or which arise from the ongoing process of approximating Moldavian law to UE legislation in connection with the adoption of the Association Treaty.

This also applies to projects associated with the creation of suitable conditions for attracting investors (see the box on the right). Moldavians draw on our experiences, but conditions for attracting more foreign investment will actually be created by amendments to the tax law, the company and labour law, as well as the parallel process of combatting corruption and increasing the transparency of the public sector.

"Support to public administration in Moldova in preparing for the implementation of projects supporting the increase in competitiveness and development capacity of regions" is a project organised by the **Ministry of Infrastructure and Development**. The project concerned support in preparing the implementation of regional development instruments and projects of a horizontal nature, driving the competitiveness of regions and strengthening their capacity.

It is also worth stressing that the objective of those projects was not to develop legal acts to be later adopted and implemented by the Moldavian side. Subject to this reservation, the above projects are well aligned with the direction of the reforms and produce the planned effects, but they should not be expected to decide about the future shape of reforms. This observation is significant, as one of the respondents suggested that many administration employees are already sufficiently trained, and therefore the projects carried out by the Polish administration should now move to the next state which is assistance in implementing specific legislation. This would probably require greater involvement on the part of Polish applicants and participation in multilateral projects (e.g. involving other countries or representatives of the EC, IMF, etc.).

Projects supporting different services associated with public security were of greater significance. These are often areas in which the involvement of international institutions is relatively weaker, so the impact of individual Polish projects on the final reform process is proportionately greater. This concerns, in particular, the activities related to safeguarding of chemicals, veterinary supervision, and support for phytosanitary services. Projects supporting border services and the police are also successful and are considered useful, but the final design of regulations largely depends on the EU policy vis a vis Moldova.

The impact of projects implemented in the area of agriculture development, which have an indirect impact on the transition process in Moldova is also assessed as significant. This concerns

not only the activities taken up by the administration, but also by Polish local governments and NGOs. The impact is related to a relatively large number of projects implemented in the area of agriculture development and to the actual change that has taken place as their result. This concerns mainly entrepreneurship in rural areas, support to producer groups and agricultural cooperatives.

The Pomeranian Regional Assembly and the Pomeranian Agricultural Consulting Centre in Gdańsk, Stare Pole Branch

implemented four projects during the period under review, concerning the strengthening of the capacity of local governments and NGOs to effectively absorb EU funds.

The activities concern mainly projects implemented by the Pomeranian Regional Assembly and the Żuławy Branch of the Scientific-Technical Association of Agricultural Engineers and Technicians based in Stare Pole (see the box on the left), as well as the "East" Foundation and the Prince Konstanty Ostrogski Foundation (see the description of case studies, Appendix 1). For all those projects, the key factor is the long-standing experience of cooperation both with the Moldavian Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, and with the National Agency for Rural Development in Moldova (ACSA).

To sum up the observations described above, it should be noted that the purpose of the projects implemented by the Polish administration was mainly to enhance the competence of the representatives of the institutions which are undergoing reforms related to the approximation of Moldavian law to the EU system. The support is assessed as having been relevant and useful, and the effects of the projects indirectly influenced the reforms underway, which was in line with the project assumptions. For this reason, the support for the Moldavian administration should be continued. Nevertheless, it is considered advisable at the moment to ensure that projects are less concerned with improving employee skills and more with implementing specific reforms. An optimum solution would be to participate in a group of representatives of countries (with support from EC experts) that will help the Moldavian side to implement individual pieces of legislation related to the fulfilment of requirements arising under the EU Association Agreement. The potential of Polish ministries participating in Polish aid initiatives is such that they can participate in or even lead such groups. In the case of areas where law has already been modified, there is a need to support the Moldavian administration in its implementation. This concerns e.g. the implementation of general regulations at the local government level.

At this point, a twinning project funded by the ENPI (*European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument*) now realised in Moldova by the Polish Financial Supervision Authority is worth mentioning. The implementation of the project is an example of how to apply previous experience of measures financed under Polish aid programmes and to follow up on what has already been achieved by acquiring funds from external sources.

In planning further activities in the area of administration support, it is worth drawing mainly on existing experience, i.e. focusing on participation in implementing solutions in the field of regional policy, financial supervision, support for uniformed services, management of hazardous substances and attracting foreign investment. Continuation of activities is also recommended concerning support for entrepreneurship in rural areas, e.g. through cooperation with ACSA.

A subject-matter area that has yet to be addressed by Polish aid programmes in Moldova is that of anti-corruption measures. Both the opinions of experts analysing the situation in the country

and lessons learned from discussions conducted in the course of evaluation lead to the conclusion that corruption is a significant barrier to further reforms the aim of which is to bring Moldova closer to the European Union. In this area, it is worth transferring the Polish experience related to anti-corruption measures, with the involvement of e.g. the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau. As a result of the project, an appropriate institution would be created and legal acts would be developed addressing that area.

3.2 Which activities had the greatest impact on the improvement of the situation of project beneficiaries and which activities contributed the most to the improvement of the situation of partner organisations participating (formally and informally) in the implementation of projects, and why?

The above research question applies directly to the issue of utility, i.e. the most important criterion in this evaluation. The answer to the question of whether measures taken as part of public intervention improve the recipients' situation is key to any ex-post evaluation process. The criterion is linked to other criteria, but it should be borne in mind that even a high rating in terms of relevance or sustainability does not guarantee that their utility will be equally high. It should also be kept in mind that utility of projects is affected by very many external factors. In the case of projects implemented in Moldova, the political and administrative environment is of key significance to the assessment of this criterion.

As regards the issue of utility, it is believed to be best achieved under the projects related to the Priority, *Agriculture and development of rural areas*, which does not mean that other projects do not achieve a satisfactory level in terms of this criterion. Nevertheless, in the case of projects related to security and border management, as well as activities concerning administration development at the central and local government levels, utility is strongly linked to reforms undertaken in the field of politics. In the opinion of the coordinators and partners themselves, Polish projects show good practices, indicate the direction in which further changes should proceed, or involve thorough training of a group of participants who can later provide training to other officials. It must not be forgotten, however, that whether and in what form a given reform will be implemented hinges not so much on the project itself as on the decision of the Moldavian authorities.

The project **Civic monitoring of campaign finances in Moldova during the parliamentary elections** was carried out by the Stefan Batory Foundation. The monitoring was supplementary to a civic mission conducted by the Promo-LEX Association to monitor the progress of the elections. A study visit was held for the Moldavian experts, during which the participants familiarised themselves with the Polish experience in the monitoring of campaign finances. The monitoring was accompanied by promotional and advocacy activities.

The issue of utility is assessed somewhat differently in the case of projects implemented by the Foundation, related to supporting the democratisation process. Thanks to their nature, the assessment of their utility largely depends on the current situation of the final recipients. An example can be a project addressed to local journalists whose needs were strongly related to the implementation of a media privatisation act. This was also the case with the monitoring of the

election campaign financing mechanism in 2014 (see the box on the left). In the case of those projects, utility is rated high, because the measures were implemented in direct response to current problems.

In the case of other projects, which do not arise from the needs of the current situation but are aligned with the transformation process, utility largely depends on factors at the macro level. Thus, for example, the utility of the School European Clubs (see the box on the right), a relevant and effective measure, will depend on the development of the process of Moldova's integration with the EU. In the case of the largest (two-year) project concerning the civic activation of youth in the Dubasari region, the question of whether the effects will be taken advantage

of by the participants depends mainly on how the political situation will unfold in Transnistria. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the latter project was an outcome of an initiative of youth organisations that contacted the Information Centre in Ialoveni with a request for information on how to apply for Polish funding.

The project "**Polish experience for journalists in Northern Moldova**" was undertaken by the **East European Democratic Centre Association**. The objective of the project was to support local media publishers: those already privatised - in improving their competitiveness, and the state-owned ones - in taking decisions on privatisation and transformation into independent media drawing on the Polish and Ukrainian experience in this respect. 2 seminars were held under the project for editors and a round table with the participation of Polish and Ukrainian media experts and editors.

The **TERRA HUMANA** Foundation carried out a project as a result of which model School European Clubs (SECs) were established in six secondary schools in six regions of northern Moldova. They obtained appropriate tools for taking up activities for the benefit of their school and the local community and to promote the SEC activities in other schools. Young people from all the SECs met at a training and integration camp where they had an opportunity, in an out-of-school natural environment, to attend 4-day practical workshops dealing with a comprehensive range of issues related to activity in the European Club and personal development. In addition, 20 active participants came to Poland and Ukraine on study visits to see how the Clubs operate under different political conditions and to establish contacts with the Clubs and organisations promoting integration with the EU.

Consideration should be given to termination of projects supporting democratisation in Moldova. The project recipients themselves suggested there was currently no strong need to participate in soft projects such as those carried out through the Foundation. Instead, the existing democratic mechanisms should be used to pursue tasks falling in line with the reforms. Despite the fact that the 2012-14 democratisation projects achieved their objectives, it should be noted that the support affects only limited areas and its scale is too small to drive the development of democracy in Moldova in a significant manner. While the option of launching ad hoc projects supporting democracy, e.g. through the Foundation's calls for proposals, what should remain a priority for its activities in Moldova is a continued support for the Information Centre.

In the course of the research, it was found out that while the vast majority of the projects were relevant in terms of the needs of the final beneficiaries, fewer can be considered as fully useful. Given the reservation made before concerning projects implemented for the administration and arising from external conditions, this situation was found to be rooted in internal factors within projects.

The main cause of the situation where the execution of a project fails to yield effects that satisfy the recipients' needs is where the project ends prematurely, which is strongly related to the criterion of sustainability. Development assistance measures are expected to lead to a situation where institutions on the recipient's side are able to continue on their own or ensure the sustainability of results. The Polish projects have not always been successful in achieving that. Sometimes the project activities include knowledge transfer, teaching practical skills and even the implementation of model activities, and then the project ends. What proves to be a significant barrier from the point of view of the project recipients is that some projects do not envisage providing the recipients with tools with which they could continue the projects on their own so as to enable them to maintain the results and hence render the projects more sustainable. This barrier again touches upon the issue of one-year project timeframes, as in the case of the projects implemented as a result of a competition none of them were modular, although the competition procedures made it possible to apply for such projects. While some projects do not have to be multi-annual, and others are continued in subsequent years, there are, however, projects whose utility cannot be assessed positively because their implementation ended too early. The lack of that continuation is visible especially in the case of democratisation projects undertaken by the Foundation. In this case, as in the case of Component I, a timespan of more than 1 year should be allowed for effects to emerge in terms of utility. Nevertheless, in general, the utility of projects is assessed well, but steps should be taken to improve it.

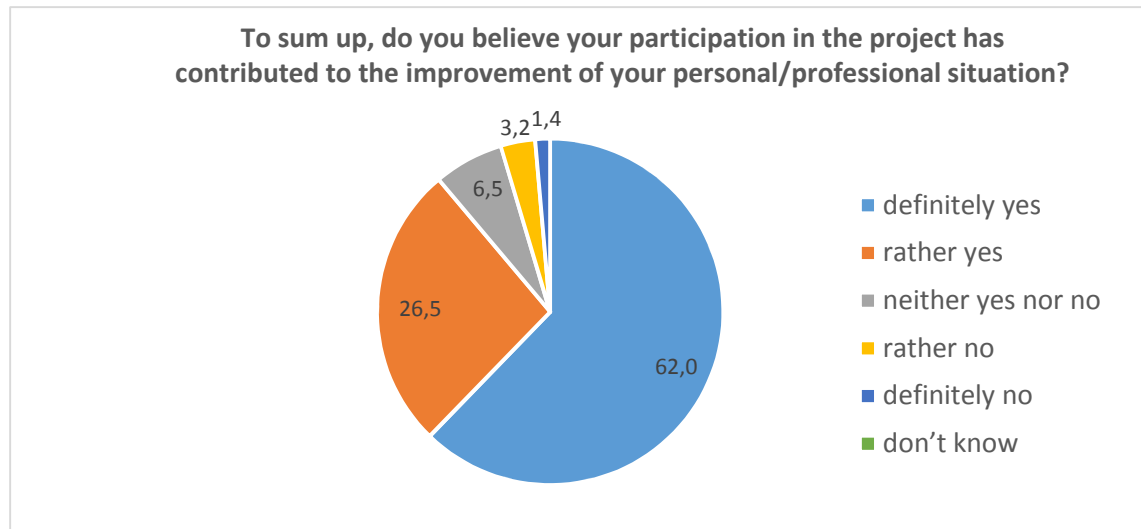
With reference to the above, another important factor that affects utility is having a project that provides recipients with appropriate tools that will enable them to make a practical use of the project results. An example of good practices in this respect are mainly projects implemented under the priority "Agriculture and development of rural areas," especially those of an infrastructural nature, e.g. related to the construction of a sewerage system or a sewage treatment plant. Also highly ranked in terms of utility are projects under which, in addition to gaining theoretical and practical knowledge, the recipients were provided with equipment allowing them to use the knowledge in practice, which was the case under the projects supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas.

The evaluation led to an observation that utility was linked to the level at which projects were implemented. In the case of measures addressed to public administration, where, as mentioned before, utility depends largely on external factors, it is more difficult to ensure that results satisfy the needs of the recipients. However, in principle, the more locally a project is implemented, the higher its utility. This accounts for the high utility of projects carried out under the Small Grants scheme by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland. As mentioned, projects implemented in small communities in rural areas are useful.

The opinions collected in the course of in-depth interviews correspond with quantitative data. The chart below shows that nearly 89% of the respondents believe that participation in a project

has contributed to the improvement of their professional or personal situation, and only 5% are of a different opinion.

Chart 1. Assessment of the improvement of personal/professional situation of project participants



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

Examining the utility of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova was a separate object of analysis. It should be pointed out that the assessment of utility of the institution has changed over the years. The Centre was established as a unit supporting local governments in applying for EU funds and then in implementing projects. Owing to external factors, in particular the previous lack of such funds addressed to local governments, the Centre actually modified the profile of its activity. In addition to its original role as a centre offering information on grant application opportunities, matching partners, building competence in project development and supporting the application process, the Centre started a regranting activity by launching a Micro Grant competition addressed to local authorities. Owing to that initiative, co-financed by the USAID, the Centre is currently better fulfilling its original role and has contributed to an increase of interest among the recipients of the assistance offered. In the evaluators' opinion, this has substantially affected the improvement of the utility of the Centre.

3.3 Does synergy exist between projects in a given area or a given group of stakeholders? If so, which activities and which aspects are involved?

Synergy is defined as the correlation of results of two or more projects, as a consequence of which their effects are greater than the sum of effects achieved individually. In the case of development assistance synergy is important, because any strengthening of project effects is a positive development with the limited funding available. .

Synergy very rarely occurred in the projects that were analysed for the purposes of this evaluation. Projects carried out by the same applicant in successive years are not considered synergic although their results are interrelated. However, they should be considered as a continuation of previous projects.

The activities where synergy occurred beyond any doubt were the projects undertaken by the "East" Foundation, titled "Water waste eco-cleaning systems for environmental protection in rural areas of Moldova" and by the Town of Bielsk Podlaski under the project titled "Construction of a sanitary sewerage system in the village of Oniscani" in 2014. Thanks to cooperation of Bielsk Podlaski with the Oniscani commune, a sewerage network was provided in the village, which was connected to the sewerage treatment plant constructed under the "East" Foundation project. The parallel implementation of both projects made it possible to effectively solve the problem of liquid waste in the village. The projects are described more extensively in the case studies.

Synergy also occurred in a project that implemented measures in connection with the establishment and running of the Information Centre in Laloveni.

Synergy is also evident between Polish projects and those implemented by other countries. This applies mainly to the administration area, including projects related to strategic planning, which is also supported by German and Swedish development assistance projects. Another example of synergy are projects by the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs aimed at strengthening the border guard and by the EUBAM mission operated by the European Commission.

Apart from the examples described above, synergy occurs in a less direct context. This applies e.g. to projects whose Moldavian partner is the National Agency for Rural Development in Moldova (ACSA). In this case synergy arises from the fact that representatives of the Moldavian partner, participating in various projects concerning the development of rural areas acquire complementary skills which they can later transfer to the Moldavian beneficiaries of their assistance. Examples of such activities include projects supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas, implemented by the Prince Konstanty Ostrogski Foundation and the Pomeranian Regional Assembly.

3.4 Did Polish projects stand out among activities of other Polish or foreign donors, and were they especially useful to the beneficiaries? If so, which ones and in what aspects were they different?

The question of distinguishing features specific to projects executed within the framework of Polish assistance carries special significance for the general assessment of the Polish development policy. It is important to identify strengths and good practices among those features, which can be taken advantage of by copying them in the future. In a similar fashion, specific negative features can be eliminated e.g. by copying effective solutions applied by other countries. Information acquired through in-depth interviews, in particular those conducted in Moldova, and a developed benchmark, which as a separate analysis is included in Appendix 1 to this Report, provided the basis for formulating an answer to this survey question.

The first of the identified differentiators is that projects dating back to the years covered by this evaluation were characterised by relatively **high relevance** defined as linking project objectives with the needs of the final beneficiaries. The issue is described in detail in subsection 2.2.8. In the subjective perception of the Moldavian assistance recipients, the relevance of Polish projects

is comparable to that of projects of partners from other Central and Eastern European countries, especially Czech projects. It is emphasised that post-Communist countries attach greater emphasis to how funds earmarked for development assistance are spent. The difference is especially visible when compared with projects financed by Western European and North American countries.

Both the coordinators and Moldavian partners as well as project recipients emphasised that the need to ensure the **participation of a Moldavian organisation or institution** was a strong advantage of Polish projects. Currently – after several years' experience – Polish applicants have developed an extensive network of contacts among Moldavian organisations, thanks to which the requirement to find a partner, put forward at the competition stage, is not a significant barrier in making the decision to apply. What is more, Moldavian organisations often come up with the idea to apply for projects in successive competitions and present their proposals to Polish entities. It is a factor that again affects relevance, as applicants from Poland create proposals with a significant input from the Moldavian side. The need to enter into partnerships emerges also in the case of other donor countries, but it is emphasised that in the case of Polish projects the cooperation is exceptionally efficient, which additionally strengthens the effectiveness of the projects.

Another issue of great importance that makes Polish projects stand out is the widespread opinion about Polish organisations' positive attitude towards **the way knowledge and experience are transferred**. Moldavians are clearly appreciative of the fact that Poland has quite recently gone through a systemic transformation, is a former member of the "Eastern bloc", and has embarked on a path of sustainable economic development. This opinion is similar to projects evaluated under Component I, i.e. it is emphasised that the current situation of Moldova resembles Poland's situation 20 years ago. Poles have completed the process of association with and accession to the European Union, with a simultaneous transformation of the local and regional government sector, modernisation of agriculture, development of entrepreneurship, etc. The Polish experience, and consequently Polish projects are perceived as authentic, because they were implemented in Poland quite recently. In the opinion of the Moldovans themselves, it is a quality which projects from Western European countries or the US do not have, despite their many other advantages.

Compared with Western European or North American donor countries, Polish aid projects in Moldova are characterised by **rather small budgets**. This issue is certainly a drawback of the Polish projects, but Moldavians themselves are aware of the smaller financial capabilities of Polish applicants. In consequence, it is noted that Moldavian experts or subcontractors hired under projects can expect lower remuneration than when they participate in projects carried out by Western European countries or the US. This poses a potential rather than a real threat, as only one person pointed this out in our evaluation. This risk concerns difficulties in finding adequately qualified and experienced Moldavian experts who participate in projects implemented by Western countries for higher remuneration. One of our interlocutors summed up the present situation as follows:

"The are some people [Moldavian experts] who treat participation in our projects as a sort of voluntary work. I mean, they earn something, but not as much as they would under

other projects. They work here because they can see effects, and elsewhere they work to make good money."

At this point, it should be emphasised that the MFA does not set an upper limit for project budgets. Representatives of the Ministry are even of the opinion that in the case of some competition proposals individual budget items are planned too low, which, as the experts of appraisal boards themselves believe may cause difficulties at the implementation stage. Thus it is not true what some organisations claim, namely that underestimating budgets lead to a better assessment of proposals.

In connection with the issue of finance, it was analysed how Polish Aid was ranked among other countries in terms of effectiveness defined as the financial cost to benefit ratio. It is a common opinion expressed by both project coordinators and partners, but also by MFA representatives and project participants that **effectiveness is higher** than in the case of projects implemented by Western countries, and similar to that for the Central and Eastern European countries. This arises from the above-mentioned low budgets and the observation described in Section 2.2.9 that under Polish projects the legitimacy of each cost is analysed and it is a common practice to look for savings wherever possible.

The issue of utility is analysed in this section only with reference to other countries providing development assistance in Moldova, while other aspects are dealt with in Sections 3.1 and 3.2. Compared with the activities of other countries, Polish projects achieve an **average rating in terms of utility**. According to what has been written before, projects are assessed as relevant, which in itself has a positive effect on their utility, which is not to say that even if activities are planned in a relevant way, they will really improve the recipients' situation.

In the case of projects run by Polish administration institutions, **utility** ranks high, though achieving it depends on further administrative and political decisions. Individual projects could become fully useful when the Moldavian side takes further steps e.g. to implement reforms related to the subject matter of the project. Nevertheless, in this case utility – whether actual or potential – ranks high and its level is similar to that of projects conducted by other countries, involving support for the public administration sector.

Also in the case of projects conducted by Polish LRAs and NGOs, utility at the individual project level is assessed to be similar to that of other countries. At this point, however, the issue of the one-year project comes up, which usually has a negative effect on improving utility. Other countries, undertaking longer-term projects, equip recipients with tools that can be used at later stages of implementation of project results. Polish applicants often continue their projects in successive years, thanks to which the results are actually utilised, but the artificial division of projects into separate annual projects disrupts their efficient implementation.

What constitutes an important and distinctive project within the framework of Polish aid in Moldova is the activity of the Information Centre for Local Authorities. An assessment of the Centre is provided in further subsections.

Among the features that distinguish Polish aid in a negative way is the inability to implement multiannual projects. In subsequent chapters its decisive impact on the utility and sustainability of projects was presented.

3.5 Do beneficiaries use the outputs developed as a result of project activities (including personnel training, provision of equipment)? If so, how do they use them?

Posing a research question referring directly to the use of outputs produced in the course of projects is relevant in combination with the assessment of the criterion of project sustainability. In the course of interviews and surveys among project recipients, questions were asked concerning the future destination of equipment, but also the future destination of the staff trained during the projects.

The conclusions show that the outputs and results generated thanks to Polish assistance projects are widely used. In the case of projects for which such activities were envisaged, the systems, equipment and hardware financed operate and are actually used. Field research has shown that, in line with assumptions, the outputs still carry Polish aid label as the source of financing.

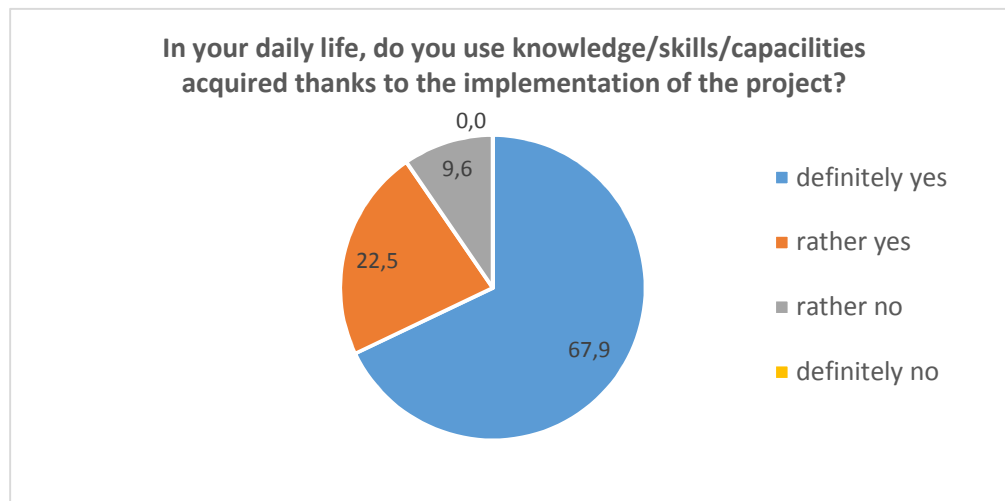
However, in the case of "soft" projects carried out for the administration, the study involved an analysis of whether the people participating in study visits, workshops, lectures, etc., continued to benefit from the knowledge gained.

The Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI organised three projects to improve skills relating to applying for EU and domestic funds. Their objective was to assist in the creation of a reform of the system of local finances aimed at introducing task-based budgeting system in local governments (2012); the transfer of Polish know-how regarding the absorption of EU funds (2013), as well as assistance in teaching how to effectively appropriate EU funds (2014).

The effects of projects improving skills related to applying for EU, domestic or other donors' funds are noteworthy. The activities of the Information Centre or activities carried out under the PAUCI Foundation project (see the box on the left) and Pomeranian Agricultural Consulting Centre included training and workshops on writing project proposals. Importantly, some of the projects developed within the framework of the Information Centre workshops and of the organisation's initiatives were financed out of the funds of Polish aid, the RITA programme or cross-border programmes. Therefore, it is a measurable effect of activities undertaken in this area.

The chart below drawn up on the basis of the questionnaire survey shows that more than 90% of the respondents have been using skills they learned during the project in their everyday life or at work. This very high percentage testifies to the high utility of projects.

Chart 2. Assessment of the use of knowledge/skills/opportunities gained during project implementation.



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

To sum up, the survey concluded that outputs and results generated directly by the projects are used according to the assumptions. This applies to both the equipment, the purchased hardware and the infrastructure, as well as to soft results.

3.6 Do beneficiaries continue or multiply activities initiated by the Polish development assistance programme? If so, which ones do they continue or multiply most often and how?

The reply to the above research question is strongly related to the issue discussed in Section 2.2.2. From the point of view of the effectiveness and sustainability of Polish aid projects, it is important to determine whether after the completion of the project Moldavians are able to continue all or selected activities and whether they are able to produce similar positive effects.

In the case of projects addressed to public administration, the results of projects are continued. This arises from the very nature of the subject matter. A large majority of Polish projects are aligned with a longer process of reform of a particular administration area. Projects respond to specific problems of the institution concerned which benefits this way from support rendered by relevant Polish institutions. Therefore, at the start of the project, there is already a basis for project implementation, and Polish project promoters enter, in a way, the reform process or system improvement.

Given the nature of the projects implemented for the administration, it is also no surprise that the activities are continued after the completion of the project. The services of the ministry concerned continue improving their knowledge and skills although, as already stated, the full utilisation of the results depends on political decisions. Therefore, it is believed that project results are continued while this results from the nature of administration and necessity rather than special creation of structures specifically involved in the activity.

The most visible is the continuation of the effects of projects implemented in rural areas.. The implementation of the majority of projects has caused Moldavians to continue activities initiated in the course of the project. This concerns mainly projects related to the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas, the implementation of new solutions related to sanitary infrastructure, the sewerage system, or solutions improving energy efficiency. Outputs generated in the course of the projects – equipment, machines, as well as utilities and buildings constructed are treated as innovations or new technological solutions, and they are viewed by Moldavians as necessary and suitable for further use and copying. A recipient of a project addressed to farmers admitted:

"Many [participants] imagined they would be shown some super innovations from the West. Meanwhile, simple solutions were demonstrated, which proved easy to introduce and improved their farms' performance a lot".

The projects under which the continuation of effects is most visible are the activities related to the development of entrepreneurship in rural areas. These are mainly the projects of the Białystok-based organisations (the East Foundation and the Prince Konstanty Ostrogski Foundation), which only improved the competence of recipients or promoted solutions stimulating entrepreneurship, but also equipped model farms with ready-to-use facilities, such as plastic tunnels, farm produce cold stores, etc.

Also projects related to the development of entrepreneurship have produced a multiplication effect, i.e. further copying of results arising from the implementation of project activities. In the case of farms at which agricultural production innovations were introduced, except in a few of them, those solutions continue to exist and, what is more, they are introduced at other farms. The best example is that of the plastic tunnels already mentioned, which produce effects leading to a significant increase in farm income. A coordinator says:

"We wrote the first business plan, according to which we should make 15k [thousand dollars] on three tunnels a year working 6 hours a day for 9 months a year. I cautiously entered 11k. The first family applied and when it turned out they made 17k euros, the neighbours quickly noticed it and now we already have 147 plastic tunnels in the village."

Projects related to the development of entrepreneurship provided for a significant increase in income in the farms that introduced the new solution, as well as an increase of employment in local communities. Those effects have been achieved, but in some situations the local market has been saturated to such an extent that entrepreneurs introducing innovative solutions no longer have a guarantee of profit. Nevertheless, this is a situation where the forces of free market come into play.

The positive effects include local stop of emigration, or at least the creation of conditions under which people began to consider remaining in the country. Mass emigration, in particular from rural areas, is a real problem in Moldova, which, as experts believe, effectively impedes the country's development.

What does pose a problem is the local lack of technologies in the case of such projects. Thus it is a sphere for where Polish manufacturers could develop their business. Among other significant

conclusions arising from this evaluation is an observation that Poland does not translate the positive results of the development assistance it provides into boosting the presence of Polish firms on the Moldavian market. This subject is almost by-passed in the Polish development policy and it is considered a departure from the idea of aid provided to developing countries. Meanwhile, the benchmarking exercise carried out shows that other European countries openly treat their development policy as a starting point for purely commercial activities. During one of the interviews, we heard this opinion:

"Poland provides funds for projects like the development of apiculture. In Moldova, the shortage of suitable equipment, e.g., centrifuges, is a problem for the industry. When the project ends successfully and apiculture develops, bee-keepers will have to buy the devices somewhere. So why should they buy them from German or French suppliers, if they could buy them from Poles?"

Another interviewee said that Poles did not think of development assistance in terms of potential business benefits, as they are afraid of being accused of deviating from the idea of disinterested aid to less developed countries. He adds:

"Everyone [i.e. other countries] promote their business this way, only we cannot do this. And if it's a win-win situation, then what's the problem?"

It is assessed that the degree of Polish firms' involvement in business activities associated with Polish aid is insufficient, although there are some exceptions. For example, the projects of the "East" Foundation and the Prince Ostrogski Foundation, which often use Polish technology and hardware and equipment bought from Polish companies. Therefore, it is recommended to further increase the involvement of business, e.g. through promotional activities carried out by the Kishinev mission, as well as activities implemented through the Information Centre.

To sum up the answer to the above research question, it should be noted that projects conducted within the framework of Polish aid are usually followed up. The most important factors that affect this state of affairs include the strong involvement of Moldavian partners who are not able to finance at least in part the continuation of the results after the projects have been carried out. In the case of infrastructural projects, continuation also depends on local governments. The issue of relevance and utility of project activities is also of key importance here. In a situation where outputs are generated under the project which satisfy recipients' needs, there is a much stronger motivation on the part of Moldavian institutions to ensure financing of the outputs or to disseminate them.

3.7 Which activities under the Polish development assistance programme have contributed most to the visibility of the best Polish experience and the dissemination of the image of Poland as a valuable partner with stable growth prospects?

Polish Aid has been noticed clearly in Moldova in the public administration sector and in the agricultural sector.

In the first area, Poland has substantially engaged in the process of supporting reforms undertaken as part of Moldova's quest for EU membership. Poland is viewed as one of the countries that transfer their experience to the Moldavian administration in a friendly and effective way, suggesting solutions that have proved successful in our country. Support concerning projects aimed at uniformed service (the Police, the Border Guard, the Fire Service) as well as veterinary and phytosanitary services is particularly visible. Under the projects, a relatively large group of participants was trained, who then cascaded the knowledge.

The second area in which Poland is currently playing a significant role as a partner is the support addressed to rural areas. The visibility of Poland in this field is connected both with projects targeted at the administration and with the activities of Polish LRAs and NGOs. The projects of special importance include those concerning the development of innovative techniques of agricultural production, creation of cooperative initiatives, and the provision of sanitary infrastructure and sewerage utilities in rural areas.

Polish aid is also visible owing to the establishment of the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova in Ialoveni. This is attributable to at least two factors. Firstly, in 2012, when the Centre was set up, the fact was given appropriate publicity. The opening of the Centre was marked by the attendance of the President of the Republic of Poland, then on an official visit to Moldova, with a conference featuring the Presidents of Poland and Moldova, which was extensively covered by the media. It was emphasised that Poland had been cooperating with the Americans on the project and wanted to share its transformation experience this way with Moldova, a less developed country.

Secondly, it seems that after two years of activity, the Centre has developed its operating model and its own concept of going forward. What has contributed to publicity among local governments was the launch of its regranting operation, i.e. holding competitions for small grants for local government, financed by USAID. Owing to this project the Centre became an institution that actually supports the development of local initiatives, as previously – which is not to say such initiatives are less important – it was associated mainly with promotional, information and training activities. Therefore, it is worth developing the Centre, which has a chance of becoming a permanent feature of the system of Polish aid in Moldova and which is an initiative with a large, albeit still insufficiently exploited promotional potential. The question of the location of the Centre remains to be considered – its current location outside Kishinev, resulting from cooperation with the Moldavian ministries, on the one hand, falls within the scope of support provided to local governments but, on the other hand, practice shows that the Centre's lawyers have most of their meetings in Kishinev anyway. Therefore, it would be optimal to locate the Centre in the capital, provided that its offices continue to be let by Moldavian administration units.

Definitely less visible are the effects of projects implemented by the Foundation to support democratisation processes. What can be seen as an exception is a two-year project titled "Dniester, Youth and Democracy" (see the box on the right) which was delivered locally, had relatively high budgets owing to its extensive scope and due to relatively high interest from the media. There are two reasons for the low visibility of the measures.

"Dniester, Youth and Democracy" was a project organised in 2013 and 2014 by Educational Society for Malopolska. The project focused mainly on the development of local democracy in the Dubasari and Ialoveni regions. A School for Young Leaders, workshops for young local leaders, a study visit and workshops in Poland were organised thanks to the project.

Firstly, the effects of scale have no chance to arise in the case of those measures, because there are very few such projects (seven, with only one annually in 2012 and 2013). Secondly, clear results of such projects are not visible because they concern a change in awareness, acquisition of skills which may produce the assumed effect only in a long term.

To sum up, it should be noted that Polish aid is visible in the two areas described above. The interviewees agree that Poland is not and, in near future, will not be able to compete with countries or institutions undertaking large infrastructural projects: financing road construction or extensive sewerage systems, providing large volumes of equipment to schools or hospitals. The high effectiveness of those projects is noticed, but only locally.

However, it is necessary to take advantage of our speciality in the future. In particular, Poland is perceived as a country that has recently undergone transformation and is now willing to share its experience. Importantly, the knowledge transfer process is not perceived as subjective preaching or suggesting off-the-shelf solutions. Moldavians appreciate the fact that Poles demonstrate both their good and bad experience. This is a clear advantage compared with the Western countries. Therefore, projects that are consistent with transformation reforms should be continued. The area in which Poland has built a strong brand is the development of rural areas.

3.8 Did the projects fulfil the beneficiaries' actual needs? Have the results of the activities carried out contributed to solving their problems? If so, to what extent?

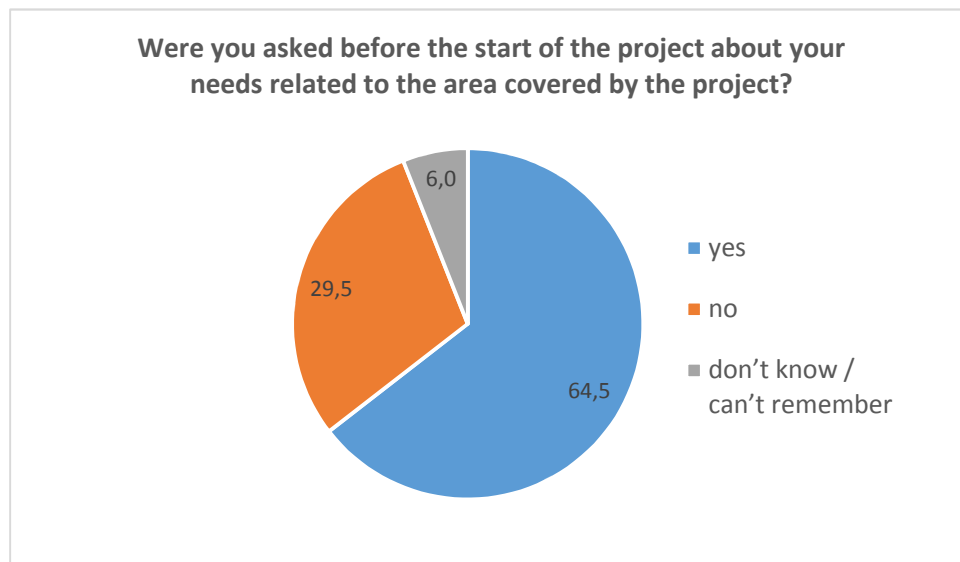
The above question is related to an assessment of mainly two criteria: relevance and utility. A part of the reply to the question is provided in Sub-section 3.2.

In each case, relevance is affected most by a diagnosis of the needs of the recipients of project results. In the case of the projects under study, a diagnosis basically relies on two sources: the information collected from the partner and experience of previous projects. Only occasionally is a diagnosis carried out in its full sense, i.e. including an analysis of the legal situation, a survey among support recipients, and an analysis of the results achieved through the implementation of previous projects. It should be pointed out, however, that in the opinions of both coordinators and partners and recipients, such in-depth and comprehensive activities are not necessary at the diagnosis stage. Polish projects are believed to be relevant, which is connected mainly with a good understanding of the situation on the ground. It is worth emphasising the role of

competition procedures, which are considered effective, as they make it possible to eliminate projects whose activities are irrelevant.

The partners and project recipients who have participated in the questionnaire survey confirm that the project assumptions have been consulted with them. The first chart shows that almost 2/3 of the respondents believe they have been asked about the needs related to the proposed project.

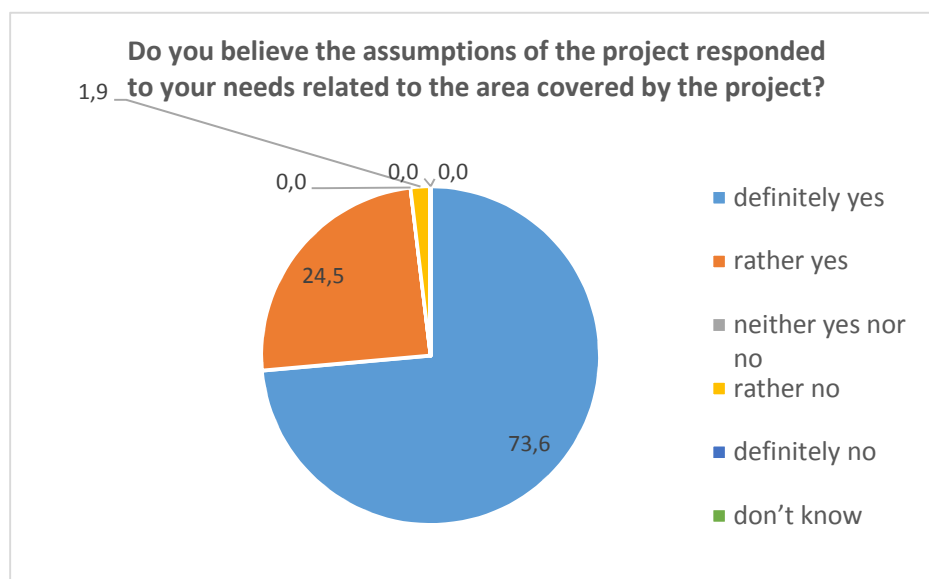
Chart 3. Assessment of a survey of recipients' needs



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

An even higher percentage (almost all respondents, 3/4 of them definitely) believe the projects were relevant, i.e. they responded to the recipients' needs.

Chart 4. Assessment of the relevance of projects



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

Therefore, Polish projects were found to be exceptionally relevant and their relevance is due to a very good understanding of the situation in Moldova. This is a consequence of Poland's extensive experience in implementing projects in that country and the close cooperation with partners as early as at the proposal preparation stage. Project coordinators agree that, when carrying out a project in a given year, they already have a project concept thought-out and preliminarily agreed for the next year.

In analysing relevance, reference must be made to the dilemma which stemmed directly from a statement by one of the respondents as regards supporting entrepreneurship:

"There's a conflict going on all the time because according to the Millennium Development Goals we should help the poorest. On the other hand, if we want to introduce innovations, to boost scale and effects, we must have partners who are more experienced and with more funds." But they are not the poorest people".

It must be made clear that such activities – while they are addressed directly to leaders in a way – affect entire communities and influence their development as a whole, including people who need aid the most.

Small Grants, a programme implemented through the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Kishinev, is a unique area of development assistance. Its implementation is the result of cooperation between local institutions or organisations and the Polish diplomatic mission. A highly important role is played in the process by the Embassy staff, including the Ambassador himself, who personally disseminates information on the support available or receives signals and proposals relating to specific needs. Thus, by nature, these are projects under which the diagnosis of needs is carried out in direct contact with future recipients. Therefore, it would be most unfortunate if the projects failed to achieve high relevance, which is luckily not the case with the projects implemented through the Embassy. The problem that emerges in evaluating Small Grants is that they are aligned with the overall Polish aid system only to a small extent. As already mentioned, these are small, ad hoc projects which, while building a positive image of the Polish mission, achieve only local effects. Therefore, Small Grants should be redefined so as to ensure that they are linked closer to the priorities of Polish aid for Moldova.

An analysis of Small Grants shows that these are highly relevant and useful projects. The scheme achieves high effectiveness in the case of Moldova.

The only reservation is that the Embassy is short of staff who could devote more time to writing aid applications and to monitoring project progress. It is also worth noting that the projects are noticed by recipients, and that Poland is perceived as a country that supports the needs of local communities. However, this is not sufficiently reflected in information and promotion activities, although these projects could generate a lot of media interest and a positive message (renovation of schools, kindergartens, and senior homes, construction of a playground, etc.) could easily be built around them. Again, the reason is the lack of time of the Embassy staff. Therefore, it is recommended that the Kishinev mission be strengthened by seconding a person whose sole competence will be to coordinate development cooperation on the spot, including close cooperation with the Information Centre.

In the course of the evaluation, the influence of the competition procedure on the relevance of the activities undertaken was examined, i.e. whether the way in which projects are selected ensures that the projects implemented respond to recipients' needs. The survey has shown that this procedure does not cause any difficulties in selecting projects that are relevant to those needs. This results mainly from the fact that organisations and institutions submitting proposals under competitions usually have considerable experience in implementing projects in Moldova, they keep in touch with Moldavian NGO or institutional partners, and monitor the situation in the country on an ongoing basis. This makes the proposed activities well suited to the current needs, both at the level of institutions preparing to implement reforms and at the local community level. This conclusion is not contrary to the recommendation suggested by the evaluators, to at least consider the commissioning of selected tasks under a different procedure, i.e. public procurement. Such an arrangement will make it possible to implement projects whose objectives and schedule would be agreed among MFA experts, and then referred for implementation by a selected institution that submits the best offer. It must be kept in mind that tender requirements should include relevant requirements concerning institutional and personal experience. This arrangement will ensure that the measures implemented will be more in line with the development policy adopted.

3.9 What factors (internal and external) contribute to the improvement of effectiveness of projects implemented in Moldova? Which projects were the most effective? What determines this?

As already mentioned, effectiveness is defined as the ratio of the inputs (time, money, human effort) to the outputs achieved. It was also mentioned in the subsection above that the effectiveness of Polish aid projects in Moldova is relatively high.

Factors that contribute to high effectiveness include limited financial resources for which applicants apply. As one respondent put it:

"We all know how projects are made. You make many assumptions, expect a lot, and then the money runs out. There's enthusiasm when application are written, sometimes based on wishful thinking that thing will be done at no cost. And then, to compete the project, you have to tighten your belt. (...) it goes without saying that the first to be cut are the coordinator's costs, then administrative costs, and finally everything is done somehow."

The above comment, and many others as well, show how Polish projects achieve high effectiveness. With limited budgets, savings are sought and care is taken to spend each zloty as effectively as possible. Aid recipients value Polish projects because they know that the Poles participating in the projects do not earmark high remuneration for themselves, and in spite of this undertake activities in Moldova.

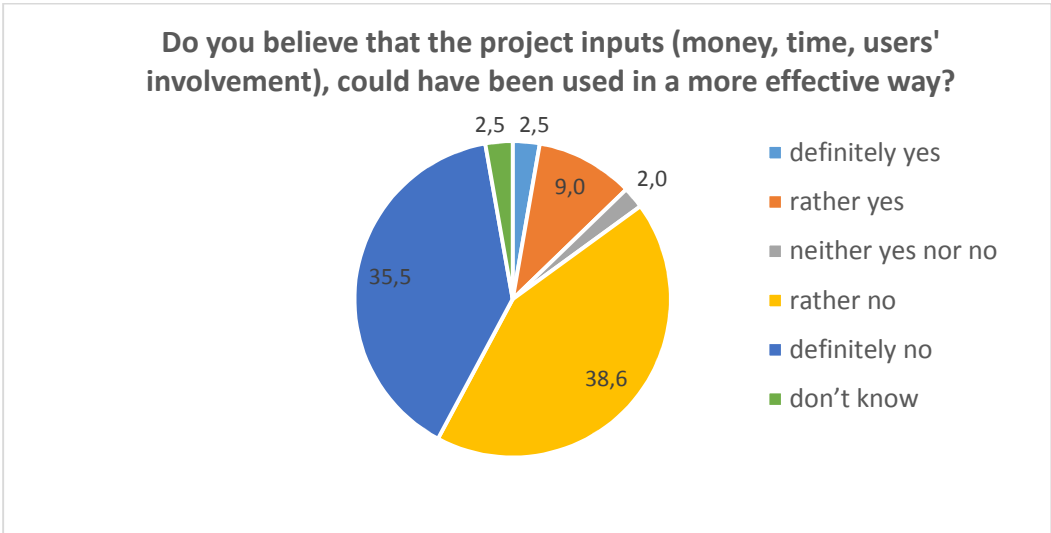
What also contributes to high effectiveness is the competition procedure which implies tight competition among the applicants. In assessing proposals, cost effectiveness is taken into account in addition to relevance, efficiency and sustainability. Therefore, projects that provide for relatively many activities and results at relatively low cost have the biggest chance of

receiving funding. Such a situation may give rise to concerns, but owing to the extensive experience of the experts on competition boards, it seems impossible for funding to be granted to projects which provide for a volume of activities and expected results which are unrealistic given the limited budget. It is worth noting that there were opinions interviews from coordinators themselves, that initially they had underestimated the cost of individual activities and had to make reallocations in the budget or looked for savings by buying lower-quality or less equipment. It is worth stressing at this point that the MFA is considered flexible as regards budgetary reallocations. The opinion is different as regards looking for savings at the expense of quality – applicants are meticulously held accountable for the direct outputs and results.

High effectiveness is also strongly connected with the high commitment of partners discussed previously. Contribution (financial, in-kind, personal) from Moldavian institutions is important here. In some cases, this leads to a situation where even small funds from the Polish side, with a relatively high own contribution from the Moldavian side, generate high effects. This generates an effect which is desirable from the Polish point of view, as the projects are promoted as co-financed by Polish aid. Such a favourable situation results from good cooperation between the Polish organisations and the Moldavian partners. It is also necessary to make sure that the Moldavian side has a good experience related to Polish projects and can see clear effects of previous activities. Therefore, it is most important that projects should be promoted in the competition procedure under which the partner's own contribution is sufficiently high.

The opinions expressed during interviews were confronted with data obtained from the questionnaire survey. A vast majority of the respondents were of the opinion that funds had been used in an appropriate way (74.1% overall, of whom 35.5% definitely). 11.5% of the participants of the project were of a different opinion. The latter, when asked for reasons, mostly suggested that more funds should be earmarked for the continuation of projects, i.e. that participants should be provided with the necessary equipment after the first stage involving knowledge transfer (training, study visits, etc.). Others pointed out that more funds should be donated to Moldavian institutions, which is not a solution recommended by the evaluators.

Chart 5. Assessment of the effectiveness of project inputs



Source: CAWI survey among project participants.

Summing up this survey question, it must be said that Polish projects are effective, which is in a way necessitated by low project budgets. Coordinators would like to be able to pay more to experts, earmark more funds for administration costs, buy the best equipment, but financial constraints of Polish aid are widely known. But this is not to say that the constraints are a barrier to the implementation of projects. In spite of budget-related difficulties, coordinators do implement and achieve the assumed results. This is certainly connected with the skills of the individual persons, but also with the ability to engage the institutions concerned in the process of implementing projects on the Moldavian side. Thus, project coordinators are regarded by evaluators as a strength of Polish Aid.

4. Conclusions

- What remains a basic barrier in implementing Polish assistance is the inability to finance multi-annual projects. All actors involved in activities in Moldova are aware of this problem. What seems to be a solution is the introduction of the possibility to apply for two-year (modular) projects, but the problem still exists (Sect. 3.2, p. 16).
- The Polish administration's projects significantly support the reforms undertaken in Moldova. In the majority of areas, the activities are auxiliary to projects coordinated by international institutions. However, projects supporting phytosanitary and veterinary services and agriculture reforms significantly translate into the final shape of change (Sect. 3.1, p. 13).
- There is a clear need to support the Moldavian administration in combating corruption. Currently, there are no such measures in the Polish administration's projects (Sect. 3.1, p. 14).
- The administration support projects have achieved the objectives assumed. Currently, the Moldavian partners show greater interest in support for law-making and adjusting Moldavian legislation to the UE law and standards (which results from the commitments under the *Association Treaty with the EU*), and in implementing the legal acts already modified. Less emphasis should be put on improving civil servants' qualifications (Sect. 3.1, pp. 13/14).
- Having regard to the above conclusion, the Polish administration should continue its support for regional policy, financial supervision, and for attracting foreign investments. What is also a distinct Polish specialty is the support provided for rural areas, with synergies generated between administration projects and activities of NGOs in supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas and modernisation of agriculture. Support for combating corruption should become a new area of support (Sect. 3.1).
- The highest degree of utility is achieved by projects which contain an investment component, including the co-financing of equipment, tools or modernisation of agricultural production facilities. This also applies to purely infrastructural projects, e.g. the construction of a sewerage system or a sewage treatment plant (Sect. 3.2).
- Projects supporting democratisation are characterised by a moderate degree of utility, which results mainly from the relatively small needs reported by representatives of Moldavian recipients of support related to this area. Supporting democracy in Moldova is limited to local efforts which are not integrated into a uniform area and is hardly visible among beneficiaries, which is largely attributable to the small scale of the initiatives and to the fact that effects of such activities are visible only in the long run (3.2, p. 16).
- From the point of view of the evaluation criteria, projects implemented under the Small Grant scheme are relevant (respond to needs), useful, effective (favourable cost-benefit ratio) and sustainable. However, what remains a problem is their low efficiency, as they fall within the objectives of the Polish development policy only to a small extent. These are usually small projects which involve the repair or upgrading of a public utility

building/structure or the purchase of equipment. Given the assumptions and scope adopted by the applicant, the results of the projects satisfy the recipients' needs, are sustainable and effective, yet in the evaluators' opinion they are insufficiently combined with other projects implemented with the use of Polish assistance funding in Moldova (Sect. 3.8, p. 31).

- Contacts with the Embassy staff are assessed positively, but in the common opinion staffing shortages at the mission hinder cooperation with project promoters and beneficiaries of Polish assistance. Therefore, it is suggested that one person should be employed at the mission whose responsibilities would involve exclusively or (at least) mainly development assistance projects (Sect. 3.8, p. 31).
- Synergy between effects of individual projects occurs relatively rarely and it concerns either selected infrastructural projects or projects supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas. At the administration project level, synergy occurs between projects implemented by Polish ministries and by foreign or international institutions (Sect. 3.3, p. 18).
- Polish assistance is aligned with the support provided to Moldova by other countries or by international organisations. Polish projects are characterised by a relatively strong emphasis on supporting rural areas (development of entrepreneurship, demonstrating good practices, investment projects) and involvement in measures providing support at the central administration level (Sect. 3.4).
- Polish projects are considered effective, both in terms of the commitment of funds, time and human resources. Economical management of funds is widespread. Despite relatively small budgets it is possible to achieve assumed outcomes, and the multiplication effect is achieved in selected situations (Sect. 3.9, p. 33).
- Polish assistance is considered relevant. This is due to the strong cooperation with local organisations, the need to find a partner and the local nature of the projects (Sect. 3.4, p. 19).
- Polish projects are appreciated by Moldovans despite relatively small financial outlays and the small scale of the projects. The willingness to share both good and bad experiences of the recent transition is especially appreciated. Also appreciated is the coordinator's and experts' commitment (Sect. 3.4, p. 20).
- Outputs and results produced in the course of implementation of projects are widely used in keeping with the assumptions. This also applies to competences acquired in the course of soft projects (Sect. 3.5, p. 22).
- Projects implemented by NGOs and local governments stand out in terms of sustainability. In the case of soft projects implemented by the administration and by the Foundation, sustainability depends on external factors, including the continuation of reforms started (Sect. 3.2, p. 15).

- Compared with other countries, the measures implemented within the framework of Polish assistance insufficiently translate into business cooperation between Polish firms and the Moldavian partners (Sect. 3.6, p. 26).
- Polish assistance is visible in particular in the support provided to administration and in the rural development area. Locally, Small Grant projects are visible. The Foundation's projects implemented in Moldova are not much visible owing to their scale and local character (Sect. 3.7, pp. 27-28).
- A high rating was assigned to the activities of the Information Centre for Local Authorities which has been gradually expanding its operations in a manner relevant to the needs. The recognisability of the Centre is furthered by the USAID-financed sub-granting project (Sect. 3.7, p. 27).
- The financial settlement of projects is still considered difficult and burdensome to beneficiaries, but they have managed to get used to the MFA's requirements. However, the applicants lack feedback on content-related reports, including constructive criticism of the measures taken. From the point of view of the MFA commissioning projects, the correct accounting for projects and neutrality of the employees involved in the evaluation of proposals and in the subsequent management of projects remains a key issue. Moreover, the MFA's representatives mention difficulties with contacting which are attributable to the applicants (e.g. avoiding contact, lack of up-to-date information on implementation progress or on the need to make adjustments, etc.).
- The potential of Polish organisations operating in Moldova is still not satisfactory. They do not apply for foreign funding. Many of them rely in their operations on just one person engaged in assistance for Moldova, which shows that no appropriate structure has evolved and testifies to low level of professionalism of institutions.

5. Recommendation table

No.	Recommendation content	Implementation method	Rationale	Recommendation addressee
1.	Solutions must be introduced that will enable multi-annual projects to be undertaken.	Possible system solutions should be sought. A change of project financing out of the budget reserve towards direct financing from the MFA budget. The possibility of applying for three-year (modular) projects should be considered.	The non-availability financing for multi-annual projects makes applicants unable to plan long-term support in the field the project refers to. Ensuring longer-term financing would make it possible to undertake larger projects providing relatively greater effects. This would also make it possible to build the potential of NGOs implementing projects in Moldova. Two-year (modular) projects produce a bigger effect, therefore, drawing on this experience, an effort should be made to introduce three-year projects.	DDC
2.	In the case of projects implemented in support of the administration, greater focus should be placed on supporting the implementation of individual reforms, and smaller on improving the competence of administration employees.	3-4 areas annually should be selected at the inter-ministerial level (Polish and Moldavian partners) in which the implementation of projects by the administration will see the highest demand. The projects should concern selected reforms/regulatory changes and be conducted in cooperation with the European Commission or other donors. Those activities may draw on the experience acquired in connection with Poland's participation in the Joint Programming effort.	Project recipients on the Moldavian side benefit from the competences acquired, and a large group of civil servants is now seen to have emerged, whose knowledge and skills have improved owing, among other things, to the implementation of Polish projects. What poses a problem is that the result insufficiently translates into real reforms. However, there is a high need for assistance in law-making and its further implementation.	DDC, Applicants
3.	It is recommended that the activities carried out in 2012-14, which produced the best outcomes, should be continued. These are	In a competition procedure, projects should be favoured which provide for tied financing, i.e. in addition to the transfer of knowledge,	Due to extensive needs and limited funds available under Polish assistance, projects should be continued which are found to be the most effective.	DDC

	mainly activities supporting entrepreneurship in agricultural areas and environmentally-friendly technology projects.	e.g. training combined with equipment, construction of installations/ purchase of machines, etc., which translates into more sustainable results.	The financing of equipment enables the recipients to directly utilise the knowledge acquired under projects.	
	Partner mutual relations should be built between the DDC and the applicants. Content-based exchange of opinions with project coordinators should be increased. It is necessary to increase the scope of feedback addressed to applicants.	<p>The DDC is expected to ensure that content-based exchange of opinions with project coordinators will be intensified, both in the course of projects and soon after their completion.</p> <p>Applicants should inform the DDC about their activities more frequently. The provisions of grant agreements concerning mutual communication should be performed to a greater extent.</p> <p>The introduction of a practice is proposed where, after the completion of project implementation, a meeting will be organised of the DDC representatives with project coordinators, at which results, effects and barriers will be discussed.</p> <p>The solution of the problem would also be possible by separating competition procedures from project sponsorship or holding open meetings with the participation of project developers from one country/region/support area.</p>	<p>The prevailing opinion among the applicants is that the MFA places a disproportionate emphasis on financial issues of project implementation, disregarding the content-related aspects.</p> <p>In addition, the prevailing opinion is that a barrier exists between the DDC and the NGO sector implementing projects.</p>	DDC / Project promoters
5.	Consideration should be given to the commissioning by the MFA of a part of development assistance tasks under the public procurement procedure.	In the case of tasks whose execution is justified from the point of view of Polish development assistance and whose execution can be specified in detail by the MFA, the public procurement procedure can be applied.	The introduction of tendering procedures will make it possible to select measures than have been planned by the MFA, in situations where their implementation is considered particularly important. Such a procedure should be used in situations where individual measures must be implemented ad hoc, and applying the traditional grant competition rules	DDC

			would impede or delay their implementation.	
6.	The time between the competition decision and the signing of grant agreements should be aimed to be reduced.	Time limits should be prescribed within which the organisations that have been granted financing should send in data for agreements and sign them. The MFA should also aim to reduce the document circulation periods.	The consequence of delaying the signing of agreements is a shortening of the project implementation periods to several months. This makes it more difficult to implement all the proposed project measures.	DDC/ Project promoters
7.	Efforts should be made to increase the potential of Polish organisations operating in Moldova	It is necessary to go back to the idea of co-financing own contributions under projects financed with funds other than the Polish national budget, which would be used to establish partnerships, diagnose needs and prepare applications for foreign competitions.	Increasing the potential of Polish organisations will enable them to seek foreign funding. This will make it possible to achieve a multiplication of the outcomes of projects implemented under Polish assistance programmes.	DDC
8.	Efforts should be made towards greater involvement of Embassies in the implementation of development policy measures.	A situation should be aimed at where the Embassy official holding the position of development cooperation officer is focused on development tasks, which should lead to a better day-to-day contact with project promoters and partners. It is worth continuing the Small Grant system while putting an emphasis on the alignment of those project with the main priorities of Polish assistance in Moldova.	The role of Embassies is key to the effective implementation of projects. These are MFA representatives available locally who can support beneficiaries and partners, can monitor the implementation of projects and are able to be involved in the networking process to a greater extent. The continuation of Small Grants makes it possible to implement projects which are relevant and useful.	MFA
9.	Further support for the Information Centre for Local Authorities is recommended.	The regranting activities of the Centre should be continued. It is desirable to acquire additional funds that will be used to continue the Micro Grant competitions. Cooperation of the Centre with the Embassy should be tightened.	The Information Centre is a facility which is already recognisable among local governments and non-governmental organisations. The activities of the Centre are found to be relevant and effective. Given that assistance for Moldova will be developed, the Centre has an opportunity to become a strong component of Polish assistance for the country.	DDC/ Foundation
10.	Measures must be taken aimed at engaging Polish business in development projects.	The concentration of assistance on supporting selected economic issues and	Enhancing the significance of the economic aspect of development cooperation and the economisation of	Project promoters/

		development of a system of incentives for the participation of Polish firms in assistance activities	Polish assistance	MFA
11.	Information and promotional activities must definitely be improved, concerning both the Polish development policy and individual projects.	It is suggested that more funds should be earmarked for educational activities. It is advisable to hold cyclic debates on the Polish development assistance, to which representatives of various media would be invited. The message communicated must be diversified depending on the medium.	The subject of Polish assistance seems to be marginalised in the public debate, including the debate on foreign policy. The fact that Poland helps developing countries, including Moldova, is not sufficiently visible to the general public.	DDC/ Foundation
12.	Consideration should be given to termination of democracy support projects in Moldova.	It should be assumed that any projects related to democratisation will be implemented as the Foundation's own activities in close consultation with the MFA, and only in the case of explicit demand from the Moldavian side. This way, projects can be undertaken in synergy with measures launched by the administration. This applies e.g. to projects supporting civic dialogue.	An analysis of the project offer so far shows a moderate interest from NGOs in this subject matter of assistance. The interviews also show a moderate demand for such support from beneficiaries. What may affect this situation is the fact that supporting democracy in Moldova has been a spot exercise so far; it has not constituted a uniform area and consequently is hardly visible among recipients. This is largely attributable to the small scale of the activities and to the fact that effects are visible only in the long run.	Foundation/ MFA
13.	Efforts must be made to increase the scale of projects both in terms of the implementation timeframes and the scope of activities.	A greater use should be made of the modular project mode. Larger projects should be applied for, providing mainly for the purchase of equipment, construction of installations, etc.	The one-year financing perspective is a problem that has been identified, bringing the implementation period of projects to about half a year. The MFA approves two-year projects in the modular project format, but they are practically not applied for under calls for proposals concerning Moldova.	MFA/ Project promoters

