

**REFORM**

**on improving the National Employment Agency’s services for 2023-2026**

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# **1. GENERAL CONTEXT**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Employment Service Convention (C88), 1948, ratified by the Republic of Moldova in 1996, the National Employment Agency (NEA) aims to match labour supply and demand by providing labour market information, employment counselling, career guidance, management of active and passive labour market measures.

The NEA organizational and geographical structure ensures that basic employment services and access to the rights provided by Law No 105/2018 on Employment and Unemployment Benefits are available across the country (in all 32 districts) through the Territorial Employment Offices (TEOs).

In 2018, a new employment policy framework was launched (Law No 105/2018 on Employment and Unemployment Benefits) which amended the NEA mandate, its functional organisation at both central and local levels, the performance monitoring system, the service delivery model, the structure and organisation of active and passive labour market measures.

**NEA, via TEOs, provides the following services and measures:**

**Labour market information:** territorial offices provide employers and jobseekers with information on:

1. labour supply and demand registered at the National Agency;
2. employment services and measures;
3. requirements to access employment services and measures;
4. qualifications and skills of jobseekers registered at TEOs;
5. job vacancies registered at NEA and employment requirements;
6. job search methods;
7. employment situation and trends on the labour market.

**Career guidance** aims to support jobseekers in identifying educational and professional opportunities and includes:

1. information on professions and labour market peculiarities;
2. self-awareness;
3. advice on personal marketing tools;
4. advice on career decisions.

**Labour intermediation** refers to mediation provided by TEOs for potential employees and employers to meet their demands and to establish employment relationships by:

1. publishing and posting information on job vacancies and employment requirements, and organising job fairs;
2. preselecting candidates according to job requirements and their education, skills, experience and interests;
3. online intermediation which aims to match job applications and vacancies through information technology.

**Preliminary layoff services** are provided to people who were notified about the company’s liquidation and reduction in the number of staff members, and consist of:

1. available information on legal provisions regarding unemployment benefits, employment services and active measures, and their provisions; registered job vacancies;
2. job search training;
3. professional training opportunities.

**Professional rehabilitation of people with disabilities** to restore, recover or compensate for their work capacity;

**Assisted employment of people with disabilities:** individual employment counselling and support for people with disabilities.

**Training:** These programmes include professional development training and retraining based on market demand that are conducted by public and private training providers according to the employment standards. They also include in-service training delivered by enterprises on individual-contract basis, including NEA, training providers and companies.

**Professional internship:** the unemployed registered at NEA without work experience complete a 4-month professional internship (in a private or public enterprise, non-profit organisation or public administration authority) to improve their employment prospects.

**Job subsidies:** There are available subsidies for recruiting people from vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, older unemployed, victims of domestic violence or human trafficking, former detainees and people with substance abuse issues). The subsidies allow companies to provide a minimum monthly wage in the country for six months under the obligation to keep the person employed for further twelve months.

**Adjust/create jobs for people with disabilities:** Enterprises hiring people with disabilities can receive up to 10 monthly average wages per economy for each created/adjusted job (which must be kept for at least three years). Estimated costs supported by the company for adjusting the workplace for workers with disabilities are subsidised by 50% or 75%.

**Self-employment support** provides counselling and start-up guidance, as well as a grant to cover a part of the costs for starting a business (80% of the estimated costs for starting a business, but not exceeding an amount equal to 20 monthly average wages for the previous year).

**Local initiative projects:** Under these projects, applicant enterprises and entrepreneurs receive a grant to cover a part of the costs for expanding their businesses, under the condition that it will create at least one new job for a registered unemployed person. Employers are entitled to receive a grant equal to 65% of the estimated costs for expanding the business (but not exceeding 20 monthly average wages per economy).

**Mobility incentives** are available for the unemployed who accept job offers outside their place of residence (a subsidy equal to an monthly average wage for accepting a job offer minimum 30 kilometres away from home).

**Certified knowledge gained in formal and non-formal education contexts:** NEA covers the costs for knowledge certification within excellence centres.

**Entitlement to unemployment benefits**: Unemployment benefit is 50% of the person's income earned during the last 12 months, but not exceeding the average monthly wage per economy for the previous year if the person lost their job due to the enterprise’s liquidation/closure and it amounts to 40% in other circumstances. The allowance depends on the length of service and ranges from five months (if the contribution period is up to five months) to nine months for workers whose contribution period is minimum 15 years. About 4.000 unemployed are provided with unemployed benefits every year.

**Services for employers** include online job mediation that matches key characteristics of the job vacancy with the characteristics of the registered unemployed person; a preferred list of potential candidates for the jobs; job interviews organised at the NEA’s office or the employer's premises.

**The document uses the following key notions:**

* **Unemployed** is a jobseeker who meets all of the following criteria: i) a person of at least 16 years old and up to the retirement age limit; ii) able for work; iii) does not have a job; iv) is not in full-time education; v) is actively seeking work both individually and through TEOs and is available to start work; vi) is registered as an unemployed person with TEO.
* **Jobseeker** – a person who takes concrete actions to find a job by their own means or with the help of NEA or another employment service provider.

# **2. THE NEED FOR REFORM**

The NEA reform is a priority envisioned on the Government's agenda and strategic planning documents. The Government’s work programme ”Prosperous, Secure, European Moldova”[[1]](#footnote-1), approved by Parliament Decision No 28 of 16 February 2023 on Labour and Social Protection includes a number of activities concerning NEA:

* Promote the employment of working-age inactive people and the unemployed registered with NEA, people with disabilities and other categories of the unemployed by strengthening the NEA capacities; implement the professional training voucher system; boost investment and simplify the employment programmes;
* Social aid reform to improve social assistance efforts;
* Apply a new performance management system in all subordinate institutions, increase transparency, and ensure full digitalisation for increasing efficiency and reducing social benefit fraud.

At the same time, the 2022-2026 National Employment Programme and its implementation[[2]](#footnote-2) Action Plan include a separate specific objective to strengthen the NEA institutional capacities, streamline its funding and digitize employment services and measures, as well as to increase funding for the active measures policy by 2026.

# **3. SYSTEM ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE REFORM**

**Statistical and sociological data highlight the challenges and the imbalance between the labour market supply and demand.** According to the 2022 NEA survey[[3]](#footnote-3), 17% of business entities reported a workforce shortage in the last 12 months. The main reasons included a lack of qualified and experienced staff (mentioned by 71% of business entities who reported a workforce shortage), a low number of applicants (60%) and failure to provide the needed wage (16%), especially in the context of 30.2% inflation. On the other hand, the NEA data show that on average only 1 out of 4 registered job vacancies are filled by the unemployed, while about 80% of the unemployed are unskilled and require professional training to be integrated into the labour market.

**The labour market in the Republic of Moldova shows a moderate unemployment rate, while the labour force participation rate is one of the lowest in Europe**. In 2021, the labour force participation rate of the population aged 15+ was 41.1% (36.4% for females and 46.5% for males), showing a downward trend compared to 2014 (43.3%) and considerably below the EU level (56.8% for the population aged 15+).

NEA identified its main activity constraints based on the following research: i) Rapid assessment of the functional organisation of the National Employment Agency of the Republic of Moldova, conducted by ILO in the spring of 2022; ii) The National Employment Agency efficiency assessment survey conducted by ‘CBS - Research’ on a sample of 708 beneficiaries in early 2023. The survey results were analysed by the Expert-Grup; iii) Analysis of the TEOs performance on integrating the unemployed compared to the development level of regions. It was carried out by the Expert-Grup in early 2023. Other statistical data and evidence were also analysed.. The main identified problems and their supporting evidence are listed below.

**The NEA beneficiary base is overloaded with people whose main objective is other than finding a job.** A question included in the above-mentioned survey referred to the motivation of the unemployed to register at NEA. Even though 3 out of 4 respondents mentioned that they are motivated to find a job, it is not clear whether this is a priority or not, given that it was a multiple choice question. The data shows that a significant number of NEA beneficiaries are motivated to receive social aid (20%), to register for health insurance coverage (14.3%) or to benefit from unemployment benefits (11.7%), apart from finding a job. This phenomenon is also confirmed by the official statistics. For example, the administrative data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection show that about 21.8% of the registered unemployed benefited from social aid in 2022. This situation imposes a bureaucratic burden on NEA employees, which does not help achieve the employment objectives. At the same time, this burden limits the employees’ ability to devote more time to beneficiaries and activities that can help improve the labour market intermediation.

**Figure 1: Why the unemployed go to NEA (multiple answer question)**



*Source: The results of the NEA Efficiency Assessment Survey, ‘CBS - Research’, January 2023*

**The unemployed generally take a passive approach to finding a job.** The survey data show that only 2.9 employers were contracted to employ the NEA beneficiaries. One in three respondents did not make any efforts to become employed (did not contact any employers) and one in four respondents contacted 1-2 employers. The unemployed with higher education and from urban areas are 2.2 and 2 times, respectively, more active in job searching compared to those from rural areas with incomplete secondary education or no education. One in two respondents (48%) who had at least one interaction with employers in the last period reported that they identified and contacted the employers without NEA assistance. On the other hand, one in five respondents contacted employers thanks to NEA's help in particular, while 30% of respondents were assisted by NEA to identify and contact the employers. Thus, the unemployed lack diversified employment approaches and explore online job-searching methods on a limited basis. The NEA beneficiaries frequently look for knowledge and NEA’s service during the employment process.

**Childcare and mobility continue to be major constraints to making better use of available jobs** The survey figures show that the unemployed most often are not able to work due to a lack of jobs (20.8%), low wages (17.7%) and healthcare issues (17.7%). The other significant reasons are the following: they have small children and cannot work at the moment (11%), they have small children and need a reduced or flexible work schedule (7.1%), there is a lack of transport to commute to another community (7.3%) and due to old age (6.1%). The overall unemployment issues are generated by the labour supply (childcare, lack of transport, age, healthcare, education, experience) rather than by the labour demand (lack of jobs, low wages). Therefore many of these problems could be addressed through better implementation of labour market policies or by developing new targeted policies. Note that 26.9% of women with small children cannot get employed due to childcare responsibilities, while 1 out of 9 unemployed cannot find a job due to the lack of transport for commuting (11.2%). In particular, the rural unemployed from less densely populated districts encounter work mobility issues.

**NEA has limited visibility among potential beneficiaries.** The National Employment Agency seems to have limited visibility among potential beneficiaries. According to sociological data, most NEA beneficiaries found out about the agency from other people – either relatives and friends (48%) or various state officials (28%). At the same time, the advertisements shared on the NEA website, social media, radio, TV or other media outlets attract a low number of beneficiaries (3-4%). Beneficiaries’ low digital skills might be also the reason for this because 80% of the unemployed are unqualified. The NEA assessment, conducted by ILO in 2022, shows that although the agency's organisational chart foresees Communication and Public Relations services, the agency has no assigned staff for this due to low wages (the net salary earned by a communication specialist is MDL 5,500) and high discrepancy compared to similar positions in the private sector. Given situation is a barrier to attracting additional potential beneficiaries.

**Table 1: How the unemployed found out about NEA (multiple responses)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Source** | **%** |  | **Source** | **%** |
| Relatives / friends | 47.9% |   | Radio / TV | 3.5% |
| Representatives of the Mayor’s office, district officials  | 18.1% |   | NEA website and social networks | 3.0% |
| Social worker / family doctor | 10.0% |   | An event where NEA specialists presented the services | 1.4% |
| They know about NEA for a long time | 7.3% |   | Other  | 1.8% |
| Previous workplace | 4.7% |   | I don’t know/ won’t answer | 6.9% |
| Social media (Facebook, odnoklassniki.ru etc.) | 3.8% |   |   |   |

*Source: The results of the NEA Efficiency Assessment Survey, ‘CBS - Research’, January 2023*

**NEA has a low online presence in labour market intermediation**. The survey conducted with NEA beneficiaries shows that 1 out of 3 unemployed (35.7%) were informed by NEA how to access the job search site: www.angajat.md. At the same time, 33.3% of respondents consider the content of the www.angajat.md website to be less useful compared to other information provided by NEA. The factual data also show that NEA is less involved in online work intermediation given the scale of the phenomenon. For example, on January 24th, 2023, www.rabota.md and www.delucru.md specialised websites provided 8,118 and 6,013 job vacancies in Chisinau municipality, while the NEA specialised portal www.angajat.md had 321 job vacancies available across the whole country. In addition to promotion and visibility issues, a low number of jobs available on angajat.md is due to the lack of connection with the NEA Jobless information system that includes the jobs announced by employers. In 2022, the NEA Jobless system registered 32,109 job vacancies across the country, an increase of 11.7% (+3,369 job vacancies) compared to 2021.

**NEA faces some constraints linked to the implementation of the active measures policy**.The state budget allocated for employment services and active measures increased from MDL 29.9 million in 2019 to MDL 40.7 million in 2022. The budget allocated to employment services and active labour market programmes accounting for 0.03% of the Gross Domestic Product is five times lower than the average GDP across the countries of South-East Europe. In 2022, NEA used about 65% of the state budget allocated for active measures (excludes the budget funded from International Labour Organization). NEA has received budget support for labour market active measures from the International Labour Organization for the last 4 years.

Most of the state budget for labour market active measures were spent on training programmes (85% of total expenditure) and work mobility grants (13.9% of total expenditure). NEA budget expenditures for active labour market measures was 14.9% more in 2022 relative to 2021. The NEA Assessment, conducted by ILO in 2022, highlights that the Agency is currently lacking the organisational structure, human and technical resources needed to achieve the employment objectives set by the Government of Moldova. Its limited-service quantity and quality are affected by the lack of human resources needed to manage operations, automate processes and streamline procedures. NEA expanded its portfolio of active labour market programmes which is currently in compliance with the countries of Southeast Europe. However, it provided limited attention to additional organisational, technical and managerial requirements for implementing the new measures (limited administrative capacity and limited time to develop the processes for implementing/adjusting the new measures, to develop ministerial procedures, to draft the NEA internal processes, to adjust the ICT platform, to train the staff). As a result, a reduced number of beneficiaries are provided with active measures (less than 3% of the total registered people).

It was noted that beneficiaries lack information and do not understand the importance and usefulness of the active measures, which influences their demand. The survey data show that 1 out of 3 respondents (32.5%) benefited from at least one active employment measure. At the same time, the results by type of measure generally show a much higher share than the actual data. This suggests that a big share of respondents misunderstood the question and referred to other types of active employment measures. Their overall understanding of the opportunities offered by NEA through active employment measures is basic or limited. The other 2/3 of respondents had to mention the reasons why they did not benefit from any of the active employment measures. These can be divided into 3 categories: (i) 1 out of 3 respondents (32.2%) complained about the lack of information concerning such opportunities, (ii) 3 out of 10 respondents (29.9%) did not need such services, while (iii) the third category refers to subjective and personal reasons such as: lack of time (10%), personal issues (7.3%), health and age (4.2%).

**Figure 2: Why the respondents did not benefit from active employment measures (multiple answer)**



*Source: The results of the NEA Efficiency Assessment Survey, ‘CBS - Research’, January 2023*

**The NEA Territorial Employment Offices do not meet the standards of modern employment services.** Apart from Chisinau and Soroca TEOs, the territorial employment offices do not meet the standards of modern employment services (lack of access for people with disabilities, rented offices that cannot undergo capital repairs, used furniture, lack of working conditions for the unemployed and employers, such as self-service points, information sessions for employers, front and back offices, lack of transport units to visit employers and level I LPAs). Only 5 NEA territorial offices provide physical access for people with mobility impairments.The survey data also highlight the need for interventions because the low quality of services and the lack of access ramps lead to a lower level of satisfaction.

**The current management structure fails to meet the efficiency requirements and the needs of the territorial employment offices and their clients due to several reasons.** The NEA Assessment, conducted by ILO in 2022, found out that the core management divisions are not structured into separate units and do not have clear responsibilities. Although different in-house duties can be assigned to the employees, modern performance management systems within employment organisations require different organisational units that are in charge of: (i) services targeting the unemployed (registration, counselling, guidance and job placement); (ii) services targeting employers (specific services); (iii) management of active labour market programmes and (iv) management of passive labour market schemes. Similar issues are encountered at the Migration Department which deals with various responsibilities such as managing bilateral migration agreements, supervising the work and services of private employment agencies, returning migrants and foreign workers, dealing with refugees and asylum seekers. Each of these duties requires different expertise and involves different work tasks that need to be reflected in organisational structures.

**The NEA efficiency is significantly limited due to reduced digitalisation and communication deficiencies between institutions in ensuring the data interoperability**. The ICT platform that manages the information generated by the Agency's work was gradually developed and new functions were added over time. This platform addressed the agency’s needs when there were limited active measures (only training and public activities) and monitoring and reporting requirements. While new active measures were introduced – including procedure and process progressive adjustment – the ICT platform exposed its limitations and is currently unable to adapt to new requirements quickly and efficiently. The NEA specialists require improved digital skills. On the other hand, the registration and compliance procedure for passive schemes could be simplified if NEA registering operators had access to various public administrative databases (NSIH, Tax Office and Land Registration Authority). NEA has negotiated the data exchange for some time, but the process should be improved to reduce the time spent on administrative tasks.

**Very low wages lead to increased staff shortage and turnover, which limits the capacity and coherence of measure implementation**. The NEA turnover rate was about 18%, caused by low wages. The average net salary of an employment specialist working for NEA and TEOs is MDL 5,000 – 6,000.

**Performance benchmarks are based on quantitative indicators and less on qualitative indicators**. The NEA services are provided under an Annual Action Plan. The Annual Action Plan defines the objectives, performance indicators and targets to be achieved by the Agency (management by objectives). According to the NEA Assessment, conducted by ILO in 2022, the indicators and targets of the NEA Annual Action Plan are in compliance with ILO recommendations since 2018. The plan is currently focusing on employment services and programmes (e.g. people receiving job placement services, people undergoing professional training, etc.). This set of indicators are very complex, as they are disaggregated by sex, age group, education level, individual disadvantage. However, the NEA ICT platform does not allow to collect and aggregate data, as it does not include interconnected modules to collect and manage data on individuals, notified job vacancies, services, programmes and costs (accompanied by information extracted from the budget and accounting system). Much of this data is collected manually. Taking into consideration the complexity of the organisational reform, the employees at the local level lack appropriate training for using the new performance management system. NEA also encounters difficulties to develop quality action plans at the local level. Since the performance management system is new, NEA paid little attention to what incentives the system can generate (i.e., focus on quantitative targets over quality ones).

**The TEOs performance indicators shall match the potential of the supervised regions**. Early this year, Expert-Grup assessed the performance of TEOs in integrating the unemployed according to the development level of the regions. It highlighted that the socio-economic potential of the regions has a significant impact on the performance of TEOs. It was possible to compare these two aspects by calculating the Job Placement Index based on socio-economic indicators (number of employees per working age population, population density, number of enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants, investment in fixed assets per capita, level of economic diversity of the region and average wage per district) and the NEA Performance Index by relating the number of integrated unemployed to some indicators that made the data comparable (employed people per 10,000 working age inhabitants, employed people per NEA employee, employed people per registered job vacancies.

The comparison shows that NEA has a greater importance for the labour market intermediation across less developed regions and decreases its importance across districts and municipalities with a higher level of development. For example, only Anenii Noi TEO (7th rank) is included in the TOP 10 districts according to the Job Placement Index. At the same time, top 5 TEOs according to the Job Placement Index rank at least 12 positions lower.

For a better overview of the TEOs relative performance compared to the job placement potential of the regions they cover, they have been grouped into 4 numerically equal categories. Thus, the deviation from the median for both the NEA Index and the Job Placement Index was calculated for each district. As a result, the following 4 categories were used to classify the NEA territorial offices:

1. NEA territorial offices outperforming the average NEA Index and Job Placement Index
2. NEA territorial offices underperforming the average NEA Index, while the Job Placement Index is above the average
3. NEA territorial offices underperforming the average NEA Index and Job Placement Index
4. NEA territorial offices outperforming the average NEA Index, while the Job Placement Index is below the average

The district ranking following the above mentioned exercise is presented below.

**Table 2. District ranking –** NEA Index vs. Job Placement Index by deviation from median

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| **Quadrant I.** NEA territorial offices outperforming the average NEA Index and Job Placement Index | **Quadrant II.** NEA territorial offices underperforming the average NEA Index, while the Job Placement Index is above the average |
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| **Deviation of indexes from median** |
|  | **NEA** | **Job placement index** | **Difference** |
| Basarabeasca | 2.66 | 0.71 | 1.95 |
| Drochia | 2.58 | 0.00 | 2.58 |
| Anenii Noi | 2.12 | 0.95 | 1.17 |
| Cimișlia | 1.76 | 0.58 | 1.18 |
| Dubasari | 1.31 | 0.10 | 1.21 |
| Taraclia | 1.07 | 0.17 | 0.89 |
| Soroca | 0.25 | 1.01 | -0.76 |
| Hîncești | 0.20 | 0.12 | 0.08 |
| Orhei | 0.03 | 1.53 | -1.50 |

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| **Deviation of indexes from median** |
|  | **NEA** | **Job placement index** | **Difference** |
| Cahul | -0.15 | 1.10 | -1.25 |
| ATU Gagauzia | -0.16 | 1.88 | -2.04 |
| Ialoveni | -0.25 | 1.44 | -1.70 |
| Rezina | -0.40 | 1.23 | -1.63 |
| Criuleni | -0.67 | 0.47 | -1.14 |
| Edinet | -0.71 | 0.36 | -1.08 |
| Ungheni | -1.24 | 0.88 | -2.13 |
| Straseni | -1.85 | 1.19 | -3.04 |

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| **Quadrant III.** NEA territorial offices underperforming the average NEA Index and Job Placement Index | **Quadrant IV.** NEA territorial offices outperforming the average NEA Index, while the Job Placement Index is below the average |
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| **Deviation of indexes from median** |
|  | **NEA** | **Job placement index** | **Difference** |
| Nisporeni | -0.37 | -0.25 | -0.12 |
| Ocnita | -0.69 | -0.95 | 0.27 |
| Sângerei | -1.27 | -0.97 | -0.31 |
| Râșcani | -1.28 | -0.27 | -1.02 |
| Florești | -1.39 | -0.43 | -0.96 |
| Leova | -1.68 | -0.81 | -0.87 |
| Călărași | -2.47 | -0.18 | -2.29 |
| Fălești | -2.50 | -0.91 | -1.59 |

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| **Deviation of indexes from median** |
|  | **NEA** | **Job placement index** | **Difference** |
| Căușeni | 2.12 | -0.29 | 2.40 |
| Dondușeni | 2.01 | -0.66 | 2.67 |
| Glodeni | 1.09 | -0.93 | 2.02 |
| Telenești | 0.28 | -0.76 | 1.04 |
| Șoldănești | 0.18 | -0.57 | 0.75 |
| Cantemir | 0.18 | -0.92 | 1.10 |
| Ștefan-Vodă | 0.07 | -0.48 | 0.55 |
| Briceni | 0.00 | -0.40 | 0.40 |

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# **4. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE REFORM**

**General Objective –** more jobseekers/unemployed and employers find a needed job/workforce faster through NEA.

**Specific objective 1:** **Thea NEA’s services and measures better targets different categories of people.**

**Medium-term results**:

* The NEA registration procedure (registration for employment/registration as unemployed) is simplified and accessible;
* NEA efficiently implements labour market integration (activation) programmes for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits.
* NEA implements improved procedures for profiling and identifying the unemployed with the aim to engage them in employment services and measures.

To achieve the medium-term results, NEA will establish new options for jobseekers to register online, without visiting TEOs in person. It will also increase the access to Unified Centers for the Provision of Public Services (CUPS) services for the unemployed and jobseekers. It will also review the rights and obligations of the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits in order to motivate them to get integrated more quickly into the labour market. NEA will also revise the profiling procedure and the procedure for planning individual labour market transition. At the same time, NEA will provide district profiling to TEOs to improve the package of services and active measures for the unemployed and employers. The profiling will help develop and implement activation strategies for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits.

**Specific objective 2: NEA provides more qualitative employment services and measures, adjusted to the individual needs of different categories of people.**

**Medium-term results:**

* NEA provides upgraded services adjusted to labour market demand
* NEA provides more inclusive services and measures, adjusted to people with disabilities, parents with children, NEET young people;
* NEA plans medium-term (3 years) labour market interventions through services and active measures.

To achieve the results, i) NEA will improve the reliability of its services and will update the information concerning the labour market; it will introduce high-quality customised counselling to provide services to clients who are least integrated into the labour market (people with disabilities, parents with children, NEET young people, long-term unemployed); iii) it will establish self-service points in all TEOs; iv) NEA will expand access to its services across Level I communities; v) it will develop and integrate online counselling tools (write a CV, a motivation letter, prepare for an interview, soft skills required by employers); vi) it will introduce a plan to manage the portfolio of active labour market programmes per district, based on developed profiles; vii) it will establish partnerships on the local labour market (schools, LPAs, Youth Centres, Support Centres for victims of human trafficking, domestic violence, trade unions, employers’ associations, etc.).

**Specific objective 3: NEA provides more qualitative services, adjusted to the needs of employers.**

**Medium-term results:**

* NEA applies a proactive approach towards employers who notify about their job vacancies.
* Improved communication between NEA and employers

To achieve these results, NEA will improve the utility of www.angajat.md so it could store job vacancies provided by employers in a simplified way; it will expand consulting services for employers; it will promote partnerships between TEOs and employers at the local level.

**Specific objective 4: NEA institutional performance increased.**

**Medium-term results**:

* NEA applies performance management strategies;
* NEA has sufficient financial, human and technological resources to manage active measures programmes.

To achieve these results: the NEA planning method will be reviewed; in-service development programmes for employees will be conducted to increase the quality of services provided and to comply with future performance management practices; measures will be implemented to reduce the staff turnover; the allocated budget will be increased to manage services and active measures; TEOs will be upgraded and endowed with transport units; the action plans of TEOs will be amended; quality/efficiency assessment of employment services/measures will be carried out; the NEA organisational structure will be reviewed to increase the number of employees for a better implementation of programmes and services.

# **5. THEORY OF CHANGE**

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| **Impact** | **More jobseekers/unemployed and employers find a needed job/workforce faster through NEA** |
| Results (2026) | **1.** NEA **increases** the number of its beneficiaries and its services and active measures **better targets** the unemployed and jobseekers.  | **2.** NEAprovides **more relevant** and **inclusive** employment services and active measures for the unemployed and jobseekers. | **3.** NEA provides **a number of quality** services to employers.  | **4.** NEA and TEOs institutional performance **increased significantly**.  |
| Short-term results (2024-2025) | 1.1. NEA applies much simpler and faster processes for registering the unemployed  | 1.2. NEA implements an adjusted labour market activation procedure for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits. | 1.3. NEA implements improved procedures for profiling and identifying the unemployed with the aim to engage them in employment services and measures. | 2.1. NEA digitises services and active measures for the unemployed and jobseekers. | 2.2. NEA implements adapted services and active measures for people with disabilities, parents with small children and NEET young people.  | 2.3. NEA implements a new cycle for managing and planning services and active measures.  | 3.1. NEA applies a proactive approach towards employers who notify about their job vacancies. | 3.2. NEA introduces a new package of services and measures for employers.  | 4.1. NEA applies a more effective performance management model.  | 4.2. NEA has sufficient financial, human and technological resources to manage active measures programmes |
| Interventions20232024 | **1.1.1.** Adjust NEA internal procedures to implement new options for jobseekers to register online individually, including with the help of social workers or librarians, without visiting TEOs in person.**1.1.2.** Implement self-service modules in all TEOs.**1.2.1.** Adjust the legal framework to review the rights and obligations of the unemployed who receive unemployment benefits (medical insurance, proof of active job search, submitted documents).**1.2.2.** Develop and implement an activation procedure for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits. **1.2.3.** Ensure inter-system data links between the NEA information system and other relevant institutions’ information systems.**1.3.1.** Develop a profiling, identification and outreach procedure for jobseekers and the unemployed at the district level. **1.3.2.** Adjust the institutional mandate of the Labour Market Observatory aiming to develop district labour market profiles. **1.3.3.** Develop and implement outreach plans for jobseekers and the unemployed at the district level (part of the Workforce Activation Plan at the district level). **1.3.4.** Support programme for TEOs to implement outreach plans. | **2.1.1.** Develop and implement a plan for streamlining and digitalising active employment services and measures. **2.1.2.** Develop a procedure for impact and quality assessment of services and active measures. **2.1.3.** Make available the position of a quality assurance specialist for employment services. **2.2.1.** Conduct an audit and develop an accessibility plan for TEOs premises. **2.2.2.** Establish engagement agreements with professional training service providers. **2.2.3.** Develop and implement active measures for parents with small children. **2.3.1.** Develop 3-year district Workforce Activation Plans based on district labour market profiles. | **3.1.1.** Review the functionality of angajat.md to enable the website to store job vacancies in a simplified way.**3.2.1.** Establish an Employer Cooperation Department within NEA.**3.2.2.** Develop a package of services and employment support measures for employers (support for assessing the job tasks and improving the content of job announcements, customised screening and pre-selection of candidates, advice on compliance with legal requirements, subsidies for employers to open nurseries within the company premises).**3.2.3.** Develop and implement *the partnership strategy* with employers at the district level (as part of the Workforce Activation Plan at the district level) based on district labour market profiles.  | **4.1.1.** Develop results-based management procedures within NEA; review and improve NEA annual plan and how performance evaluations are conducted**4.1.2.** Establish a Performance Management Department within NEA. **4.1.3.** Implement the performance *dashboard* of TEOs. **4.1.4.** Review, implement and monitor NEA action plan for improving the institutional management of TEOs**4.2.1.** Develop human resources development procedures within NEA**4.2.2.** Restructure the NEA Human Resources Department. **4.2.3.** Develop, implement and monitor the NEA Employee Skill Development Programme. **4.2.4.** Prepare the NEA development budget and the 2023-2026 NEA partnership strategy. **4.2.5**. Establish the Logistics and Public Procurement Service, the External Assistance Section.  |

# **6. THE 2023-2026 ACTION PLAN FOR ACHIEVING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Specific objective** | **Actions**  | **Outcome indicators** | **Need** | **Period** | **Owner** | **Partners** |
| **Specific objective 1: NEA increases the number of its beneficiaries and its services and active measures better targets the unemployed and jobseekers.** |
| 1.1 | NEA applies much simpler and faster processes for registering the unemployed. | 1.1.1. Adjust NEA internal procedures to implement new options for jobseekers to register online individually, including with the help of social workers or librarians, without visiting TEOs in person.1.1.2. Implement self-service modules in all TEOs. | Amended internal procedures500 librarians, 1000 social workers and 30 CUPS specialists trained on online registration of jobseekers. 35 territorial subdivisions equipped with 105 computers and 70 landlines, desks, chairs for the unemployed to provide self-service. | Expert to amend internal procedures, training for NEA staff, social workers, librarians, CUPS specialistsTechnical endowment and arrangement of self-service and information facility for the unemployed | 2023 – 2024 | MLSPNEA | TBD |
| 1.2 | NEA implements an adjusted labour market activation procedure for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits. | 1.2.1. Adjust the legal framework to review the rights and obligations of the unemployed who receive unemployment benefits (medical insurance, proof of active job search, submitted documents).1.2.2. Develop and implement an activation procedure for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits. 1.2.3. Ensure inter-system data links between the NEA information system and other relevant institutions’ information systems.1.2.4 Exemption from payments to the Social Insurance Budget when employing an unemployed person who receives social aid for a period of time. | Submitted and approved amendments to Law No 105/2018, Government Decision No 1276/2018, Government Decision No 1167/2008 and Law No 1585/1998Developed procedureTrained specialists on implementing the procedure | Expertise to conduct an assessment to activate the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits, adjust the regulatory framework concerning payment exemption to the Social Insurance Budget when hiring the unemployed who receive social aidEnsure the links between the NEA IS and other institutions  | Sem. II 20232023 – 2025 | MLSPNEA | TBD |
| 1.3 | NEA implements improved procedures for profiling and identifying the unemployed with the aim to engage them in employment services and measures. | 1.3.1. Review the profiling, identification and outreach procedure for jobseekers and the unemployed at the district level. 1.3.2. Adjust the institutional mandate of the Labour Market Observatory aiming to develop district labour market profiles. 1.3.3. Develop and implement outreach plans for jobseekers and the unemployed at the district level (part of the Workforce Activation Plan at the district level). 1.3.4. Support programme for TEOs to implement outreach plans. | Developed procedureAdjusted job descriptions of Labour Market Observatory specialistsTrained NEA specialists to apply the new profiling, identification and outreach procedures Observatory specialists trained to use existing statistical data to create district profilesPurchased equipment for mobile teams (26 cars, 35 laptops)  | Expert on updating the procedure and adjusting the mandate of the Labour Market Observatory, training and a developed support programme Purchased equipment | Sem. II 2023 | MLSPNEA | TBD |
| **Specific objective 2: NEA provides more relevant and inclusive employment services and active measures for the unemployed and jobseekers.** |
| 2.1 | NEA digitises services and active measures for the unemployed and jobseekers. | 2.1.1. Develop and implement a plan for streamlining and digitalising active employment services and measures. 2.1.2. Develop a procedure for impact and quality assessment of services and active measures. 2.1.3. Make available the position of a quality assurance specialist for employment services. 2.1.4 Develop the NEA information system  | Plan developed Developed procedureGovernment Decision No 990 and amended job descriptionNEA information system developedPurchased needed hardware and software | Expertise to develop the procedure and job description Purchased equipment | 2023 – 2024  | NEAMLSP | World BankOther partners – TBD  |
| 2.2 | NEA implements adapted services and active measures for people with disabilities, parents with young children and NEET young people. | 2.2.1. Conduct an audit and develop an accessibility plan for TEOs premises. 2.2.2 Implement the accessibility plan2.2.3. Establish engagement agreements with professional training service providers. 2.2.4. Develop and implement active measures for parents with small children.2.2.5 Conduct an audit and develop an accessibility plan of the professional training service providers2.2.6 Implement the accessibility plan (curriculum, physical access) of the professional training service providers2.2.7 Review the mobility allowance for the unemployed2.2.8 Establish tax deductions for road transportation patent holders/transport companies from rural areas | Conducted audit and implemented planAccessible TEOs for people with disabilitiesConducted audits of professional training providersDeveloped activation strategyAmended Law No 105/2018 and Government Decision No 1276/2018 Adjusted regulatory framework on tax deductions | Technical expertise for the audit and plan Achieved accessibility of TEOs Technical expertise to develop and implement individual customised counselling, adjust the legal framework on rural road transport, test individual plans and coach their implementation  | Sem. I – II 20232023-2026 | MLSP, NEA, Ministry of Finance,MIRD | ILOMotivatia NGOOther partners – TBD  |
| 2.3 | NEA plans medium-term (3 years)labour market interventions using services and active measures  | 2.3.1. Develop a three-year district Workforce Activation Plans based on district labour market profiles. | Developed action plans | Technical expertise | Sem. II 2023 | MLSPNEA | TBD |
| 2.4 | NEA implements professional training vouchers for formal and non-formal education | 2.4.1 Develop the legal framework needed to establish short training courses (non-formal education).2.4.2 Develop the voucher platform for professional training (formal and non-formal education). | Adjusted regulatory frameworkProvide support for formal and non-formal education providers to participate in the voucher schemeDeveloped platform | Technical expertise IT services for developing the platform  | Sem. II 20232024 | MLSPNEA | TBD |
| **Specific objective 3. NEA provides a number of quality services to employers.**  |
| 3.1 | NEA applies a proactive approach towards employers who notify about their job vacancies. | 3.1.1. Review the functionality of employee.md to enable the website to store job vacancies in a simplified way.  | Achieved connection between NEA informational system and angajat.mdUpgraded features of angajat.md | IT services to ensure the connections | 20232024 | NEAMLSPNEA | TBD |
| 3.2 | NEA introduces a new package of services and measures for employers. | 3.2.1. Establish an Employer Cooperation Department within NEA.3.2.2. Develop a package of services and employment support measures for employers (support for assessing the job tasks and improving the content of job announcements, customised screening and pre-selection of candidates, advice on compliance with legal requirements, subsidies for employers to arrange the workplace, subsidies for employers to open nurseries within the company premises, budget increase for active measures targeting employers, people with disabilities and young people).3.2.3. Develop and implement the partnership strategy with employers at the district level (as part of the Workforce Activation Plan at the district level) based on district labour market profiles. | Amended Government Decision No. 990 Developed package and specialist guideDeveloped strategyEstablished partnerships between NEA and employers | Expertise for developing the strategy and the service package. Amend Government Decision No 1276/2018 and Law No 105/2018 | 2023 – 2024 | NEAMLSP | TBD |
| **Specific objective 4: NEA institutional performance increased significantly.** |
| 4.1 | NEA applies a more effective performance management model.  | 4.1.1. Develop results-based management procedures within NEA.4.1.2. Establish a Performance Management Department within NEA. 4.1.3. Implement the performance dashboard of TEOs. 4.1.4. Develop, implement and monitor the strategies for improving the institutional management of TEOs. | Developed procedure Established department Created dashboardDeveloped strategy for underperforming TEOs | Expert team to develop results-based management procedures and strategies, create the dashboard, test the procedures and strategies for improving the institutional management, provide coaching  | Sem. II 20232024 | MLSPNEA | ILOWorld BankOther partners – TBD  |
| 4.2 | NEA has sufficient financial, human and technological resources to manage active measures programmes | 4.2.1. Develop human resources development procedures within NEA. 4.2.2. Restructure the NEA Human Resources Department. 4.2.3. Develop, implement and monitor the NEA Employee Skill Development Programme. 4.2.4. Prepare the NEA development budget and the 2023-2026 NEA partnership strategy. 4.2.5. Establish the Logistics and Public Procurement Service4.2.6. Set up a department on external assistance and EU projects implementation4.2.7. Review individual duties and objectives of the Internal Audit Service for fraud prevention and reduction | Implemented proceduresRevised Government Dicision No. 990/2018 and the regulation on the organisation of NEARestructured Human Resources DepartmentImplemented programme Established Logistics and Public Procurement ServiceInternational Relations, External Assistance and EU Project Implementation Department establishedJob descriptions and individual objectives of the Internal Audit Service revised \*Upgraded employment services endowed with premises for conducting information sessions for jobseekers and employers (30 offices)  | Expert team to develop human resources development procedures, skills development programme, development budget and partnership, HR coaching \*It does not cover the costs for upgrading employment service premises for conducting activities for jobseekers and employers.  | Sem. II 2023 | MLSPNEA | TBD |

# **7. OPERATIONAL RESULTS FRAMEWORK**

| **No** | **Indicators** | **Baseline** | **2023** | **2024** | **2025** | **2026** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **General objective 1: NEA increases the number of its beneficiaries and its services and active measures better targets the unemployed and jobseekers.** |
| 1.1 | Number of registered unemployed at NEA | 35,000 unemployed (2022), 37,000 unemployed (2021) | 28,600 | 34,000 | 37,000 | 40,000 |
| 1.2 | Employment rate  | The employment rate of the unemployed registered at NEA was 23.5% in 2022; 23.6% in 2021; 18.2% in 2020; 36% in 2019.  | 28% | 33% | 38% | 40% |
| 1.3 | Number of outreach plans per districts implemented by the Labour Market Observatory | NEA is currently not responsible for developing outreach plans | 10 | 20 | 30 | 35 |
| 1.4 | Number of TEOs to apply the activation strategy of inactive population, including the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefits | The first attempt to activate the beneficiaries of social aid (gradually reducing the amount of social aid for beneficiaries who are inactive) shall enter into force on 1 April  | 6 | 14 | 24 | 35 |
| 1.5 | Number of identified unemployed, in addition to those who applied individually to NEA, and integrated into the labour market  | NEA is currently not responsible for identifying the unemployed, but only for registering those who have applied | 2,000 | 2,800 | 3,800 | 5,000 |
| 1.6 | The NEA information system is interoperable with the information systems of other institutions | The NEA is currently connected to the informational system of the National Social Insurance Authority, the Population Register, the informational system of the Ministry of Education since 1999 | Connection to the informational system of the National Council for Disability Determination and Work Capacity | Connection to Fiscal State Service, State Labour Inspectorate informational systems | Connection to Center for Information and Communication Technologies in Education informational system | Connection to National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research informational system |
| 1.7 | Number of TEOs equipped with self-service points | There are 2 self-service points in Chisinau and Cahul | 10 | 10 | 13 | 35 |
| **General objective 2: NEA provides more relevant and inclusive employment services and active measures for the unemployed and jobseekers** |
| 2.1 | Number of digital services and active measures | Current digital services:- registration as unemployed- registration for employment- pre-registration for provided services - labour intermediation (angajat.md) |   |   |   | All services and active measures are digital |
| 2.2 | Number of TEOs accessible for people with disabilities  | 5 TEOs are currently accessible for people with disabilities | 5 | 5 | 5 | 35 |
| 2.3 | NEET young people – beneficiaries of services and active measures provided by NEA  | Around 500 NEETs benefited from a customised employment approach in 2022 (funded by ILO) | 550 | 605 | 660 | 730 |
| 2.4 | Number of people with disabilities involved in employment measures and services | Around 1,896 people with disabilities were involved in employment measures and services in 2022 | 2,000 | 2,200 | 2,400 | 2,600 |
| 2.5 | Number of parents – potential beneficiaries of NEA services – who are looking after children | Parents with children:no record of beneficiaries of services and active measures by the following criterion: ‘having family responsibilities’ | 50 | 60 | 70 | 100 |
| 2.6 | Number of displaced persons from Ukraine provided with employment services and active measures  | 270 in 2022 | 150 | 500 | 750 | 1000 |
| 2.7 | Number of professional training service providers whose training programmes are accessible to unemployed people with disabilities (curriculum, physical access) | Professional training service providers are not currently meeting the needs of people with disabilities | 0 | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| 2.8 | Number of professional training service providers | 2022 – 22 providers 2023 – NEA introduced the voucher mechanism | 12 | 22  | 25 | 30 |
| 2.9 | Number of non-formal professional training service providers | N/A | N/A | 5 | 10 | 15 |
| 2.10 | Number of unemployed, including displaced persons from Ukraine who received professional training | 1,500 unemployed attended professional training courses200 displaced persons from Ukraine benefited from professional training | 1,200 | 1,500 | 1,800 | 2,100 |
| **General objective 3: NEA provides a number of quality services to employers.**  |
| 3.1 | Number of job vacancies notified by employers/identified by NEA employees | NEA identified 32,109 job vacancies in 2022About 4,000 job vacancies were posted on angajat.md in the last 3 years | 36,000 | 40,000 | 44,000 | 48,000 |
| 3.2 | Number of people from NEA management responsible for coordinating the work with employers | These duties are currently carried out by an employee of the Employment Policy Implementation Department | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.3 | Number of employers provided with NEA consulting services (support for assessing the job tasks and improving the content of job announcements, customised screening and pre-selection of candidates, advice on compliance with legal requirements) | The service package for employers includes the following:- Selection of workforce;- Workforce training (courses, professional internships, in-service training);- Job subsidies | 5,000 | 5,500 | 6,000 | 6,500 |
| 3.4 | Number of strategies for cooperating with employers at the district level (part of the Workforce Activation Plan at the district level) | There aren’t such partnerships at the moment | 10 | 20 | 30 | 35 |
| 3.5 | Number of employers receiving subsidies for opening nurseries within the company premises | There is no subsidy mechanism for opening nurseries within the company premises | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 |
| **Specific objective 4: NEA institutional performance increased significantly.** |
| 4.1 | Level of budget execution allocated to NEA | NEA fails to ensure effective results-based management and only 65% of the NEA budget is executed  | 80% | 90% | 100% | 100% |
| 4.2 | Number of TEOs provided with performance dashboards | There isn’t such tool at the moment  | 0 | 5 | 35 | 35 |

# **9. BUDGET AND INVESTMENT NEEDS**

The objectives shall be achieved using both the state budget means and external funds.

The state budget is not currently covering the implementation of the planned actions. It should be noted that the state budget only shall cover the costs for the active measures policy – the budget programme 9008. Some proposals were submitted to the 2024-2026 MTBF to increase the budget allocated for the active measures policy with MDL 31.3 million for 3 years, in addition to MDL 34.2 million allocated for 2023. At the same time, the state budget resources shall cover the expenses for increasing the salary brackets.

The remaining financial means shall be sourced from the recently launched ILO SECO project and the project funded by the EU Delegation in Moldova to support NEA and SLI, including from UNHCR financial support and the Swiss-UNDP project ‘Resilient and inclusive markets in Moldova’. Some actions aimed to develop a new NEA IS shall be implemented on behalf of the ongoing project ‘Higher Education in Moldova’, funded by the World Bank.

**Table 3:** Budget by Objectives

*\*The total cost of the technical expertise is indicated in the Technical Expertise Total.*

|  | **Objectives / Activities** | **Costs, EUR** | **Period** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Specific objective 1: NEA increases the number of its beneficiaries and its services and active measures better targets the unemployed and jobseekers.** | **830,000** |  |
| 1.1 | Technical expertise for amending internal proceduresTechnical endowment and suitable conditions for self-service (computer technology, phones, furniture, air-conditioning/heating) | 150,000 | Sem. II 2023Technical endowment 2023-2026 |
| 1.2 | Technical expertise for developing an activation strategy for the unemployed who receive social aid and unemployment benefitsEnsure the links between the NEA IS and other institutions  | 80,000 | 2023-2024 |
| 1.3 | Develop outreach plans for jobseekers and the unemployed at the district level (part of the Workforce Activation Plan at the district level); support programme for TEOs to implement outreach plans; adjust the mandate of the Labour Market Observatory, trainingsSet up mobile teams in each district (cars, computer technology, phones for mobile team members, printers) | 600,000 | 2023-2026 |
|   | **Specific objective 2: NEA provides more relevant and inclusive employment services and active measures for the unemployed and jobseekers** | **3,430,000** |  |
| 2.1-2.2 | Technical expertise for the audit and accessibility plan for TEOs premises, developing the procedure for impact and quality assessment of services and active measures, developing the job description of the quality assurance specialist for employment services, developing and implementing customised counselling, coaching for NEA specialists Accessibility cost for TEOs – EUR 1,000,000 Curriculum accessibility, physical access of professional training providers – EUR 1,000,000  | 2,000,000 | 2023-2026 |
| 2.3 | Develop 3-year district Workforce Activation Plans based on district labour market profiles; test them; provide support for their implementation | 30,000  | Sem. II 2023 |
| 2.4 | Develop the methodology for integrating non-formal education courses and coordinate it with MER and ANACECSupport to formal and non-formal education providers to implement formal and non-formal education vouchersDevelop the voucher platform for professional training (formal and non-formal education)Increase the budget for active measures targeting people with disabilities, young people, older people and displaced people from Ukraine | 100,0001,300,000 | 2023-2024 |
|   | **Specific objective 3: NEA provides a number of quality services to employers** | **1,470,000** |  |
| 3.1 | Ensure the connection between the NEA information system and angajat.mdUpgraded features of angajat.md | 70,000 | 2023-2024 |
| 3.2 | Expertise for developing the service package and partnership strategy with employers at the district levelInclude an active measure of subsidies for employers for providing amenities at the workplaceInclude an active measure of subsidies for employers for opening nurseries Trainings | 1,400,000  | 2023 – 2024 |
|   | **Specific objective 4: NEA institutional performance increased significantly.** | **100,000** |  |
| 4.1 | Technical expertise and support for developing results-based management procedures, developing the strategies for improving the institutional management of the underperforming TEOs and support for their implementation, testing the procedures, coaching for NEA staff | 100,000  | 2023-2025 |
| 4.2 | Technical expertise – develop human resources development procedures, skills development programme, development budget and partnership, test the procedures and the programme, coaching for NEA staff |   | Sem. II 2023 |
|  | **Expert team (technical expertise, counselling, coaching for NEA and the Ministry) for 2 years** | **400,000** | 2023-2025 |
|   | **TOTAL**  | **6,000,000** | 2023-2026 |

1. <https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/program_de_guv-final_ro.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\_id=134612&lang=ro](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134612&amp;amp;lang=ro) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.anofm.md/view_document?nid=19888> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)