



DCFTA

EuropeAid/137988/DH/SER/MD

ÎN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

Acordul de Liber Schimb cu Uniunea Europeană

## SUMMARY OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED SEPTEMBER 2017 – AUGUST 2019

### INCEPTION PHASE

During the Inception Phase, the Project's Technical Assistance Team (TAT) was mobilised, a Project office established, meetings organised with beneficiaries and development partners, a preliminary analysis of the current situation regarding AA/DCFTA implementation was undertaken, communication channels established with the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, other beneficiaries and partners and steps taken to establish the Project Steering Committee.

The main tasks related to preparation and submission of the Project's **Inception Report**, which included a comprehensive **Communications Strategy and Communications Plan** for implementation of activities.

### COMPONENT 1: FULL PARTICIPATION

#### Activity 1.0 Organising Opening Ceremony

The Project organised a high-visibility Opening Ceremony held in the Radisson Hotel, Chisinau on 07 November 2017. It included speeches by the EU Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia Malmström and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Economy and Infrastructure Octavian Calmâc and a working session. The event was attended by 200 participants and received significant media and online coverage (Task 1.0.)

#### Activity 1.1 Developing and Using Web portal and Social Media

Following discussions with representatives of the EU Delegation, it was decided that the online gateway for EU support to the business sector in the Republic of Moldova should be the EU4Business portal. Solutions were prepared and agreed with the EU4Business Secretariat to prepare a new web platform within the EU4Business Republic of Moldova country page ([www.eu4business.md/dcfta](http://www.eu4business.md/dcfta)) bringing together all the information and materials produced by the Project, its beneficiaries and partners relating to AA/DCFTA and incorporating relevant content from the previous [www.dcfta.md](http://www.dcfta.md) website.

The web platform includes specific sections of information for businesses, media and information for the general public, a calendar of events/deadlines, answers to FAQs and an electronic library with all the publications, infographics and videos produced under the Project and from partners. All content is in Romanian and Russian and key information also in English.



EU4Business

Vizibilitate și comunicare pentru acțiunile referitoare la implementarea Acordului de Asociere/Zona de Liber Schimb Aprofundat și Cuprinzător (AA/DCFTA) în cadrul programelor de asistență finanțate de UE



Guvernul Republicii Moldova  
Ministerul Economiei și  
Infrastructurii

The design and structure of the web platform were presented to and discussed with beneficiaries and partners at both the DCFTA Communications Working Group (02 March 2018) and the 1st Partnership and Co-operation Workshop (23 March 2018) before being finalised and approved by the EU Delegation. After an intense period of testing and evaluation, the new web platform was publicly launched at the start of the first National Public Awareness-raising Campaign on 08 November 2018. Following analysis of website statistics, the number of visitors to the eu4business/dcfta web platform during the period November 2018-15 July 2019 was 90,130 people (73.36% visitors from the Republic of Moldova, 26.64% from other countries, mainly EU). Following online campaigns to promote the web platform, the number of the visitors who saw at least once content uploaded to the web platform was 95% higher than planned (10,557,331 versus 5,390,000).

The Project also received approval from the EU Delegation and agreed with the EU4Business Secretariat to develop **EU4Business Moldova social media channels** on the most popular platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Odnoklassniki) which were publicly launched at the same time as the web platform. The Republic of Moldova is the only EU4Business country where such social media channels have been established and they have been highly successful in reaching and engaging wide audiences through postings, infographics, videos, photos and online promotion. During Nov 2018-July 2019, 1,845 followers were recorded, whereas at least 312,440 users saw at least once content on Facebook.

**Lessons learned:** an attractive, well-designed web platform with a broad range of practical and easy-to-understand information in different formats (written, infographics, videos) and in both Romanian and Russian was essential for reaching wide and diverse audiences, as was establishment of an active promotion through EU4Business Moldova social media channels. It is important that these well-established online channels are maintained and updated beyond the life of the Project.

### **Activity 1.2 Creating and Using an “Online News Bureau”**

The DCFTA “**Online News Bureau**” is a component within the web platform established in co-ordination with the Beneficiary and the EU Delegation. 38 news stories and interviews have so far been prepared by professional journalists in Romanian and Russian and 13 video success stories have been produced to illustrate the benefits of DCFTA and steps taken by businesses exporting to the EU.

### **Activity 1.3 Organising Partnership and Cooperation Workshops**

**4 Partnership and Co-operation Workshops** were organised to inform beneficiaries and partners about Project activities, collect feedback and achieve synergy and collaboration in implementing Project activities.

The 1st Partnership and Co-operation Workshop (23 March 2018) was held to present the results of the qualitative research with businesses (Activity 2.1), validate findings regarding businesses’ needs for services and support and agree responses to those needs through the online platform and “Info Business: Ask the Expert” regional bus tours and seminars (Activity 2.2).

The 2nd Partnership and Co-operation Workshop (17 July 2018) presented the results of the 1st phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert”, including an analysis of the Frequently Asked Questions raised by businesses and agreed on a structured approach to preparing written and video answers to those questions (Activity 2.5).

The 3rd Partnership and Co-operation Workshop (24 January 2019) presented and discussed plans for the 2nd phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert”, initial plans for the third phase and agreed the inputs of specific institutions in developing these plans and the third National Public Awareness-raising Campaign (Activity 3.1).

The 4th Partnership and Co-operation Workshop (25 June 2019) presented the information and materials regarding DCFTA available on the online platform, an updated analysis of FAQs raised by businesses and discussed how these can be utilised to promote the help and services available to businesses from stakeholders. It also agreed on the potential for ongoing collaboration organised under the EU-funded Quality Infrastructure Project.

**Lessons learned:** regular communication and discussions with a broad range of stakeholders - not just Project beneficiaries, but other institutions involved in different aspects of DCFTA implementation, business associations and other EU- and donor-funded projects - was essential both for ensuring their active involvement in Project activities (including regional “Info Business: Ask the Expert” tours) but also ensuring that the Project had a comprehensive overview of all support available and that messages concerning DCFTA implementation were coherently and consistently communicated.

One of the most important outcomes of the four Partnership and Co-operation Workshops was consolidation of a group of professionals who accepted to continue as members of the P&C workshop/actions within the context of the EU-funded Project “Support to Quality Infrastructure in the DCFTA Context” (QI Project). As the QI Project will undertake management of the web platform eu4business.md/dcfta, as co-ordinated with the EU Delegation Project Managers of the two projects, questions from companies will be collected through a link on the web platform and forwarded to P&C members to provide answers and relevant advice. The benefit to companies will be direct and provide quick access to technical information, and the benefit to P&C members will be a greater understanding of what type of information companies need.

#### **Activity 1.4 Organising Study Visit and International Networking Conference**

The original proposal had been to organise two International Networking Conferences related to AA/DCFTA implementation. Following feedback from the Beneficiary, it was agreed with the EU Delegation that a study visit to a country which has successfully implemented free trade agreements and economic reforms should replace one of the proposed conferences.

After considering a number of options, it was agreed with the Beneficiary and EU Delegation that a training programme including a study visit to Estonia would best meet the intended objectives. A **Training Programme, including a Study Visit to Estonia**, was therefore organised during the period 07 April-25 May 2019, including a study visit to a wide range of national and regional organisations in Estonia involved in economic development and business support (07-13 April 2019) pre-briefing and debriefing seminars and a 3-day training programme for study visit participants and other beneficiaries to build their capacity to assist businesses to become more competitive and increase exports

An **International Networking Conference** was organised as part of the Closing Ceremony of the Project (04 July 2019, Activity CP5) with international experts providing an analysis of the first 5 years of DCFTA implementation in the three countries which have DCFTA agreements with the EU (Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia).

## **COMPONENT 2: FULL IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Activity 2.1 Establishing and promoting a mechanism to provide information to assist business**

A **national opinion survey** (1,800 respondents, January-February 2018) was conducted to assess the level of awareness and perceptions of AA/DCFTA of the public at large and also specific target groups/regions (including Gagauzia). The results were presented to and discussed with beneficiaries and representatives of the EU Delegation on 14 June 2018, based on which plans and content for 3 National Public Awareness-raising Campaigns (Activity 3.1) were formulated.

3 focus groups (including one for the population of Transnistria) were organised in April 2019 to assess information needs and test content for the 3rd National Public Awareness-raising Campaign.

In-depth **qualitative research** was carried out with businesses and opinion-formers (January-March 2018, 8 regional focus groups and 35 in-depth interviews) to identify businesses’ needs for information and support relating to DCFTA and what they need to do to take advantage of opportunities under DCFTA. The results were discussed with the EU Delegation, beneficiaries and other stakeholders including business and producers’ associations and were used to create the portfolio of information, help services and mechanisms to assist businesses within the online portal and the 3 phases of “Info Business: Ask the Expert” regional tours and seminars (Activity 2.1).3 key clusters

of subjects regarding DCFTA were identified: 1) steps and support available to increase competitiveness (addressing businesses operating in the local market); 2) opportunities for export and increasing export capacity of businesses (addressing potential exporters and exporters); 3) requirements to meet EU quality standards (addressing all categories of businesses).

**Lessons learned:** before planning and implementing public awareness-raising campaigns, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the perception and attitudes of both the overall population and specific target groups concerning the subjects to be communicated and their specific information needs. This was also the case in relation to the business community: the qualitative research results provided essential information for developing the “Info Business: Ask the Expert” concept and tailoring training and information according to

An **inventory of AA/DCFTA programmes and projects** was undertaken and relevant projects invited to co-operate in communicating the assistance they offer to businesses. Assistance and help services available were identified, both within projects funded by the EU and other international donors, state institutions and business organisations to develop a portfolio of help services for businesses in relation to DCFTA requirements, benefits and opportunities.

**3 Thematic Working Groups** were established, involving experts from relevant beneficiaries and partners: 1) Improving competitiveness and steps for exporting; 2) Agriculture and food sector requirements; and 3) Technical barriers to trade and standards/certification requirements. The purpose of each Working Group was to agree the specific information and training needs to be addressed, the inputs required from experts and institutions, develop and agree the programme for each phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert” regional tours and training seminars, plus supporting printed and online materials. These plans were validated with all beneficiaries and partners at Partnership and Co-operation Workshops (Activity 1.3) before submission to the EU Delegation for approval.

The information collected during the activities above were packaged into: i) practical guides in Romanian and Russian on DCFTA provisions and help services for business; ii) presentations/training materials for events iii) video tutorials on very practical aspects iv) Video answers to Frequently Asked Questions, Advice/“how to” factsheets/Brochures based on the information needs collected during the regional events organised under the One Stop Shop (“Info Business: Ask the Expert” bus tours).

**A mobile platform** was created under the Project – **Info Business: Ask the Expert** to provide services, advice and training to businesses in order to increase the level of understanding and enable participation in AA/DCFTA.

The **1st phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert”** bus tour and regional seminars (May-July 2018) was tested in 2 locations (Anenii Noi and Ialoveni) and then implemented in a further 9 cities (Orhei, Bălți, Edineț, Soroca, Hîncești, Ungheni, Comrat, Ștefan Vodă, Cahul). The focus was on increasing businesses’ level of information and knowledge regarding opportunities and challenges in the DCFTA context, steps to improve competitiveness and increase export capacity.

The **2nd phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert”** (February-March 2019) included 10 regional training courses (Chisinau, Orhei, Edineț, Cahul, Soroca, Hîncești, Ungheni, Bălți, Tighina and Comrat) for agricultural and food producers on food safety, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

The **3rd phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert”** (April-June 2019) included 6 regional training courses (Chisinau, Rezina, Ceadâr-Lunga, Briceni, Bălți and Căușeni) and informed businesses how to overcome technical barriers to trade and standards/certification requirements for specific sectors and products.

In parallel with regional events, the Project developed and distributed at events, via partners and online **7 practical Mini Guides for businesses** (Guide to DCFTA for businesses, Steps to Improve Competitiveness, Exporting to EU, Customs Requirements, Sources of Financial Assistance, Food Safety and Sanitary/Phytosanitary Standards, Rules of Origin) and produced **3 online video tutorials** on practical steps to take and support available for trading with the EU.

The Project identified businesses throughout the country already taking advantage of opportunities under DCFTA as **“local heroes”** for campaigns and to inspire other businesses to follow their example.

Other events for businesses included the first 3 **“Export Morning”** seminars (April-June 2019) with the Agency for Investment Promotion on opportunities in specific EU markets (Romania, Poland, Bulgaria) and a seminar for **businesses in Transnistria** (09 October 2018) on opportunities and requirements for trading with the EU.

**Lessons learned:** the **“Info Business: Ask the Expert”** regional tours and training seminars, based on in-depth research of businesses’ needs and supported by online and printed materials, were well attended and well appreciated by businesses. The reasons were twofold: 1) Information provided was practical, well explained and tailored to the needs of businesses in specific sectors; and 2) businesses could address specific questions and receive concrete responses from a range of experts who participated in these tours.

Ongoing evaluations conducted following events, as well as the list of the Frequently Asked Questions collected during implementation, revealed the continuous need of the companies for support in the area of strengthening skills, increasing competitiveness and consolidating capacities (especially in the rural areas) in order to be able to take advantage of the DCFTA opportunities. The experience of the Project in these events confirms that communication support under the form of direct meetings with businesses is an effective tool not only to promote reform policies at AA/DCFTA level, but also to collect concrete information and feedback which could further help in the formulation of support programmes and in the process of the regulations and trade policies formulation.

#### **Activity 2.2 Co-ordinating information flow and capacity-building of beneficiaries’ communications**

A **DCFTA Communications Working Group** was created including communication specialists from Project beneficiaries, other agencies involved in DCFTA implementation, business associations, relevant EU- and other donor-funded projects. A meeting of the Working Group was held on 02 March 2018 which discussed the involvement of partners in Project communication activities and the most effective means of ensuring co-ordinated and cohesive communication and messages related to AA/DCFTA implementation. It was agreed that the most effective tool for this was creation of a **DCFTA communicators’ Facebook Group**, which has functioned effectively throughout Project implementation, with new members added as required.

Feedback from beneficiaries and members of the Communications Working Group revealed that the priority in improving communications relating to AA/DCFTA was online communication. The Project therefore organised a **two-day training course** for beneficiaries on **online marketing and social media skills** (13-14 June 2019).

#### **Activity 2.3. Managing delivery of information**

Collaborations were developed with business support organisations, stakeholders of the Project among the institutions involved in the DCFTA implementation, EU-funded projects and programmes in order to ensure an effective management of the information delivery to businesses. This involved: information and mobilisation of local producers and business organisations about the regional events organised under Info Business: Ask the Expert tours, distribution of the informative materials produced under the Project: guides, brochures, leaflets; collecting questions and suggestions addressed by businesses during the regional events under the **“Info Business: Ask the Expert”** tours, partnering for answering the Frequently Asked Questions collected during the events, workshops, seminars and trainings for businesses; collaboration for increasing the visibility of the Project’s activities in the social media other online channels.

#### **Activity 2.4. Conducting periodic evaluations**

**Evaluation questionnaires** assessing content, format and impact were distributed and collected after each event during the 3 phases of **“Info Business: Ask the Expert”** and after all other training courses for beneficiaries and businesses organised by the Project. Results were analysed and utilised to modify and where necessary improve the structure and content of future courses. Results were also used in deciding topics and content for online and printed materials such as Mini Guides and video tutorials.

At the start of the 1st phase of “Info Business: Ask the Expert”, two **pilot events** were organised in May 2018 (Anenii Noi and Ialoveni) and the structure and content for future events was slightly amended based on feedback received from businesses.

### **Activity 2.5 Developing responses to Frequently Asked Questions**

By analysing questions addressed by businesses to experts during “Info Business: Ask the Expert” tours, the Project identified **Frequently Asked Questions** related to DCFTA. The questions were analysed and structured by experts from the European Business Association and then discussed with relevant partners to prepare answers to each specific question.

In addition to written answers published on the online portal, **25 short videos** were produced to answer businesses’ FAQs, which were published on the online platform and widely disseminated through websites and social media channels of the Project and partners.

**Lessons learned:** many institutions and projects develop lists of Frequently Asked Questions with standard answers, but the usefulness of these depends on them meeting the actual information needs of questioners such as businesses. It was therefore important to record and analyse all the questions addressed by businesses during “Info Business: Ask the Expert” events and liaise with the relevant institutions to produce specific answers to these questions in both written and highly effective video formats.

## **COMPONENT 3: PUBLIC AWARENESS-RAISING PROGRAMME**

### **Activity 3.1 Organising three communications campaigns**

Based on the results of the national opinion survey (Activity 2.1), **3 National Public Awareness-raising Campaigns** were developed and implemented explaining the difference DCFTA is already making to the economy and to people’s lives and further benefits from full implementation.

The first two campaigns (November 2018-March 2019): **“Created in Moldova, Appreciated Worldwide”** were based on an analysis of the impact of 4 years of DCFTA implementation undertaken by the think tank Expert-Grup and raised awareness of the economic impact of 4 years of DCFTA, showcasing Moldovan products which are already valued internationally and which through DCFTA have increased opportunities to reach new markets in the European Union and beyond.

A communications agency (Prior Media) was selected through a transparent tender process according to EU rules to assist in preparing and implementing the first two National Public Awareness-raising Campaigns communicating the results and impact of 4 years of DCFTA implementation in the Republic of Moldova, the first campaign covering the whole population and the second campaign addressing more sceptical groups such as the Russian-speaking population and regions like Gagauzia and including the message “What if there was no DCFTA?”

The **1st National Public Awareness-raising Campaign** was launched on 08 November 2018 in the TRACOM business centre, with speeches by the EU Ambassador and senior Government representatives, presentation of the analysis by Expert-Grup of results of 4 years of DCFTA implementation, a film of business success stories facilitated by DCFTA, panel discussions involving businesses, business associations and presentations by EU-funded projects, performances of contemporary/traditional Moldovan music and dance and an exhibition of Moldovan products exported to the EU. The event was attended by 180 participants and achieved widespread media and online coverage.

The **2nd National Public Awareness-raising Campaign** including the theme “What if there was no DCFTA?”) was launched in Comrat, Gagauzia on 19 December 2018; using selected communications tools and channels for reaching more sceptical and less well-informed groups and regions, online, printed, video and media materials were used to showcase the practical benefits from DCFTA for communities and the economy.

While the first two campaigns had focussed on the economic benefits and opportunities from DCFTA, the **3rd National Public Awareness-raising Campaign** (May-July 2019): **“In the European Union, in the Republic of Moldova: Towards the Same Quality, Safety, Choice”** delivered the message that citizens of the Republic of Moldova deserve the same quality and safety standards as the consumers in the European Union. It demonstrated how DCFTA is already and will continue to contribute to improving the quality, safety and choice of products and services available to Moldovan consumers.

A communications agency (Prior Media) was selected through a transparent tender process according to EU rules to assist in preparing and implementing the campaign, which was launched in the Stag clothing factory in Chisinau on 30 May 2019 with speeches by the EU Ambassador and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure; presentation of results from the national opinion survey and focus groups concerning Moldovans’ views on quality of products and improvements since the start of DCFTA; a film with concrete examples of improvements in quality of Moldovan products; presentation by the Quality Infrastructure project of EU support to raise quality and meet international standards; and panel discussions, led by ODIMM and the Agency for Investment Promotion, with businesses which have received their support to raise quality and export.

All 3 campaigns included launch events and exhibitions; innovative information and promotional materials; tastings and giveaways of products “Created in Moldova, Appreciated Worldwide”; video stories and billboards with “local heroes” from throughout the Republic of Moldova; social media campaigns including “Facebook Live” events; articles for newspapers and news portals; TV spots on national and regional TV channels; TV and radio talkshows; and events for businesses. All materials have been produced in Romanian and Russian.

**Lessons learned:** public awareness-raising campaigns about complicated legal or economic agreements need to be explained in easy-to-understand terms, with strong examples (“success stories”) and human interest (“local heroes”) with which target groups can connect. The “Created in Moldova, Appreciated Worldwide” brand was warmly welcomed by the EU Delegation, beneficiaries and partners. The web data analysis under the Project showed that the most visited webpages of the EU4Business.md/DCFTA platform are those related to success stories. This strategy can be utilised for ongoing communications concerning both the increased exports and raising of quality standards being achieved under DCFTA achieved with EU financial support.

## **Impressive results of the Public Awareness-raising Campaigns in the Republic of Moldova:**

### **Public Awareness Campaign 1 and 2**

- Reach in of the DCFTA’s TV spots among the target audience (in % and numbers) according to AGB research company: 67% of the population have seen video spots at least once, over 50% have seen the spots at least three times; reach: over 1.7 million.
- OOH (out-of-home) large billboards in 10 targeted regional towns/villages for one month in central locations reaching local audiences; more than 916,000 people were reached by the OOH campaign
- EU4Business Moldova accounts have been created on all popular social media channels and gain daily reach (over 1,000 in three months); Facebook LIVE! on weekly basis became a useful resource of practical information for local businesses; more than 2,031,000 people have been reached online (by online video, articles and banners)
- Success stories and information on the achievements of DCFTA have been published on the most popular web portals in Moldova.
- EU4Business booth and promotional materials at MOLDEXPO’s “Fabricat in Moldova” trade fair, 30 January – 03 February 2019. The branded booth was located right near the entrance, so that EU4Business obtained 100% visibility.

### **Public Awareness Campaign 3**

- More than 26,000 people were reached through events (Conference, EU Days, promotions in regions)
- More than 877,000 people watched videos on regional TV stations;
- More than 342,000 people were reached by OOH (billboards);
- More than 208,000 people watched TV talk shows and listened to radio talk shows;
- More than 46,000 readers were reached through printed press;
- More than 1,397,000 people were reached online (by online video, articles, banners, social media, etc).

#### **Activity 3.2 Producing and disseminating 15 video spots**

13 video spots were produced for the 3 National Public Awareness-raising Campaigns (Activity 3.1), plus 13 video “success stories” by the Online News Bureau (Activity 1.2), 3 video tutorials for business (Activity 2.1), 1 video on ODIMM’s support services for businesses (Activity 2.2) and 1 video for the Closing Ceremony/International Conference (Activities CP5/1.4).

In addition, 25 short videos responding to businesses’ Frequently Asked Questions were produced (Activity 2.5.).

#### **Activity 3.3 Organising 40 training sessions/workshops/visibility events**

A total of 56 training sessions/workshops/visibility events were organised by the Project including training seminars for businesses during the 3 phases of “Info Business: Ask the Expert” (27 events), training courses for beneficiaries and business support organisations, launch events and small-scale events during 3 National Public Awareness-raising Campaigns, Partnership and Co-operation Workshops, high-visibility stands at “Fabricat in Moldova” and Europe Day events, Opening Ceremony and Closing Ceremony/International Conference on 5 years of DCFTA Implementation.

#### **Other activities during implementation of the project included:**

- Presentation of Project’s information and services for business and distribution of guides at the openings of 3 EU-funded business hubs in Gagauzia (Vulcanesti, 09 November 2018, Comrat, 12 November 2018, Ceadr-Lunga 15 November 2018) (Activity 2.1);
- The Project supported ODIMM in publishing a series of promotional and informational materials regarding services offered by ODIMM to businesses to increase their competitiveness (Activity 2.1.).
- The Project presented information opportunities for businesses at an event organised by the Agency for Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance on 25 October 2018; (Activity 2.2)
- Ongoing collaboration with other EU-funded programmes/projects, including Quality Infrastructure, Fruit Garden of Moldova, ENPARD, EU4Business Credit Line, EUBAM, RBISC and TAG projects in Gagauzia (Activities 2.1 and 2.2);
- Collaboration with the ENPARD Project in production of 2 video tutorials, including success stories, showcasing steps to take by companies in agri-food sector to comply with sanitary and phytosanitary requirements for export to the EU (Activities 2.1 and 2.2);
- Collaboration with CID NATO (Centre of Information and Documentation regarding NATO in the Republic of Moldova) for distribution of materials under the Public Awareness Campaigns 1 and 2 within a series of workshops on “Promotion of European and Euro-Atlantic Values in the Rural Areas of Moldova through the intermediary of local opinion leaders” (33 events, 24 locations, 850 attendees);
- Presentation of the DCFTA communication and information products and platforms on the occasion of the Annual Forum of the Economic Diplomacy on July 18 2019 (Activity 2.1.)

Additionally, after the first year of implementation, the Project was subject to a **Results-Oriented Monitoring Evaluation** (22-30 November 2018). The ROM Evaluation reported very positive results of the Project and appreciated the activities carried out by the TAT to date.



## CONCLUDING PHASE

The Project's **Closing Ceremony** (Activity CP5) at the Select Filarmonica events centre in Chisinau on 04 July 2019 was combined with an **International Conference** (Activity 1.4) on "5 Years of DCFTA Implementation: Regional Perspectives and Steps Forward". This included presentations of a comparative study of DCFTA's economic impact in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia by Berlin Economics; a study based on monitoring of DCFTA implementation in the Republic of Moldova commissioned by the Project from Expert-Grup think tank; and perspectives on implementation from the Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting, Ukraine. The event was attended by 105 participants and received substantial media and online coverage.

During the Concluding Phase, the Project has also prepared a Closure Plan detailing the steps to be taken to ensure efficient closure of the Project (Activity CP1), is ensuring capitalisation and sharing of knowledge gained during Project implementation on the portal [capacity4dev.eu](http://capacity4dev.eu) (Activity CP2); is establishing a Project archive of both printed and electronic materials (Activity CP3).

Instead of immediate transfer of IT tools to the Beneficiary (Activity CP4), it has been agreed with the EU-funded Quality Infrastructure Project and approved by the EU Delegation that the QI Project will take over maintenance of the [www.eu4business.md/dcfta](http://www.eu4business.md/dcfta) web platform and EU4Business Moldova social media channels for the remainder of its implementation period (until August 2020).

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

The Project prepared and submitted a draft **Inception Report** in October 2017, which was presented to and discussed by an **Inception Report Review Workshop** of beneficiaries and partners on 31 October 2017, presented to and discussed by the Project Steering Committee (02 November 2017), then revised and approved by the EU Delegation in December 2017.

The Project prepared and submitted 6-monthly **Progress Reports** in March 2018, September 2018 and March 2019 which were all presented to and discussed with meetings of the Project Steering Committee and then approved by the EU Delegation.

The Project has drafted a **Final Report** (July 2019), which was presented to and discussed by the Project Steering Committee on 08 August 2019, and then submitted for approval to the EU Delegation.

Five meetings of the **Project Steering Committee** have been organised: meetings on 02 November 2017, 21 March 2018, 28 September 2018, 15 March 2019 and 08 August 2019.