

ADULT LEARNING IN MOLDOVA

Factsheet

This report has been prepared for the European Training Foundation by Vera Chilari, with the contribution of Maria Carmo Gomes. ETF's Siria Taurelli steered the elaboration process and reviewed the draft report.

Manuscript completed in March 2026.

The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of the ETF and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU institutions.

© European Training Foundation, 2026



Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 international (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated. For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not owned by the European Training Foundation, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Deed - Attribution 4.0 International - Creative Commons

When citing this report, please use the following wording:

European Training Foundation (2026), *Adult Learning in Moldova*, Turin

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	3
----------	---

INTRODUCTION	5
--------------	---

CHAPTER I: ADULT LEARNING STRATEGIES AND POLICIES	8
Strategies	8
Legal framework	9
Adult learning policies	10
National performance against key EU targets on adult learning	12
Conclusions	14

CHAPTER II: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND GOVERNANCE OF ADULT LEARNING	16
Institutional arrangements	16
Adult learning governance model	17
Funding of adult learning	19
Monitoring and quality assurance	20
Conclusions	21

CHAPTER III: ADULT LEARNING PROVISION	23
Adult learning types and programmes	23
Support measures and services to adult learners	24
Conclusions	25

CONCLUSIONS	27
-------------	----

ANNEX I – ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING QUESTIONS	28
------------------------------------------------------	----

ANNEX II – LIST OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	31
------------------------------------------	----

ANNEX III – ADULT LEARNING PROVIDERS	32
--------------------------------------	----

ANNEX IV – INSTITUTIONAL ROLES OVER QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR ADULT LEARNING	33
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

ANNEX V – INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND ROLES IN ADULT LEARNING	35
------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

ANNEX VI – TYPES AND KEY ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES	36
----------------------------------------------------	----

ANNEX VII – SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR ADULT LEARNING	37
ANNEX VIII – VET IN MOLDOVA	38
ACRONYMS	39
REFERENCES	41

INTRODUCTION

This factsheet was developed in 2025 by the European Training Foundation (ETF) as part of a mapping exercise of adult learning (AL) in the following EU candidate countries and potential candidate: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine.

This paper focuses on AL as a sector of growing importance, given ongoing societal and economic transformations and the increasing demand for monitoring and reporting on reforms aimed at upskilling, reskilling and overall human capital development.

Adult learning is understood to be an important part of Lifelong Learning¹ (LLL). It includes formal (i.e. linked to formal qualifications) and non-formal learning (mainly in companies but also in other learning environments), including upskilling and reskilling activities, and learning aimed at developing a wide spectrum of skills².

As per the Education Code of the Republic of Moldova³ (No 152 dated 17 July 2014), AL is recognised within the national education system framework (Articles 123, 124, 125, 126). While the Code outlines principles of LLL and equitable access to education for all age groups, more specific implementation for adults is guided by a dedicated regulatory act. The Government Decision (GD) No 222 adopted on 26 March 2024⁴ established the Regulation on AL, elaborating the modalities and institutional mechanisms for the delivery of AL. Adult learning in Moldova aims to enable adults to acquire and enhance competencies, especially professional and key skills for personal development, employability and active, socially responsible citizenship, consistent with principles of LLL. Adult learning in Moldova is delivered by means of: (i) formal education: structured programmes within recognised institutions, including general, vocational and professional qualifications adapted for adult learners, institutionalised and accredited frameworks; (ii) non-formal education: organised learning opportunities beyond formal structures, such as certified short courses, vocational upskilling, digital literacy training and cultural or civic education; (iii) informal learning, which is acknowledged in broader policy aims which make reference to lifelong education, but which is beyond the scope of this mapping exercise. Therefore, for the purposes of this report, the term ‘adult learning’ refers exclusively to what is officially recognised in Moldova as formal and non-formal adult education.

For the development of this factsheet, information was systematically collected by means of both desk research and field work, which was concluded in September 2025. The analysis is organised around the analytical framework and guiding questions presented in [Annex I](#). Individual interviews were carried between the months of July to September 2025 with representatives of relevant institutions – key actors and stakeholders in AL, including formal and non-formal AL providers, such as the Centre of Excellence in Services and Food Processing, National Confederation of Employers, National Employment Agency (ANOFM), ÎCS ‘Premier Energy Distribution’ SA and DVV International Moldova⁵. The list of interviewees is enclosed as [Annex II](#). This report has been validated by the LLL Service of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, the Directorate for Employment Policies and Labour Migration Regulation and the Demographic Policy Service.

The information presented in this document reflects on and offers insights into three important dimensions of AL: **1. Adult learning strategies and policies; 2. Legal/institutional arrangements**

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

¹ Cedefop’s glossary defines lifelong learning as ‘any learning activity undertaken throughout life in a formal, non-formal or informal setting, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and qualifications for personal, social or professional reasons’ [lifelong learning | CEDEFOP](#)

² Skills are understood in a broad sense, encompassing skills, knowledge and competences for life, well beyond the skills needed for the labour market.

⁴ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110112&lang=ro.

⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=142707&lang=ro.

⁶ [Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association \(Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband\)](#).

and governance; and, 3. Types and forms of formal and non-formal provision, and it will serve as a basis for ETF and stakeholders involved to identify priority areas for possible future actions or policy advice.

This factsheet presents key factual elements about AL considering the three dimensions mentioned above.

Country context

Key socio-economic and demographic trends

The population of the Republic of Moldova continues to decline due to low fertility and sustained outward migration. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) the 2024 Population and Housing Census registered a usually resident population of 2.409 million, of which 46.4% lived in urban areas and 53.6% in rural areas. The population structure reveals marked differences in terms of ageing: 23.7% of people are above working age, 55.7% are of working age and only 20.5% are below working age. Almost 30% of residents live in Chişinău, reinforcing territorial imbalances in access to education, services and labour opportunities (NBS, 2025a).

Key country insights⁶

Demographics: According to the 2024 Population and Housing Census, the Republic of Moldova had 2.409 million residents. Of these, 23.7% were above working age, while 30% resided in the Chişinău municipality, reflecting strong demographic concentration in the capital. The data confirm ongoing population ageing and depopulation trends driven by migration and declining fertility.

Labour market: In 2024, the labour market recorded a moderate level of employment and a relatively low unemployment rate (International Labour Organization (ILO) definition). Among the population aged 20–64⁷, the labour force participation rate stood at 59.1%, reflecting the size of the economically active population in this age group. The employment rate was 56.8%, indicating limited utilisation of the labour force potential. At the same time, the unemployment rate was 3.9%⁸ (NBS, 2025b).

Youth and vulnerability: In 2024 the rate of young people Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) aged 15–29 years was 20.3%. Within this age group, women accounted for the majority of the NEET population, and significant gender disparities persisted, with young women more likely than young men to be NEET⁹ (NBS, 2025c). Socio-economic vulnerabilities remain significant. In 2024, the at-risk-of-poverty rate (relative poverty)¹⁰ stood at 21.5% among the population of the Republic of Moldova (NBS, 2025d). This indicator provides an internationally comparable framework for assessing the risk of poverty and social exclusion in the country, with significantly higher rates in rural areas¹¹. In the labour market, the employment-to-population ratio (15+) was 39.1% in Q1 2025, with unemployment at 2.8% and economic inactivity at 57.2% (NBS, 2025e).

Digitalisation and education: In 2023, 80.2% of individuals in Moldova were internet users, according to World Bank/ITU data. However, a 2025 UN-ILO-ITU assessment highlighted low levels of digital skills,

⁶ Data of relevance for this section was gathered from the following sources: (i) UNFPA Moldova – Second set of data results of the 2024 Population and Housing Census: Demographic, migration and household characteristics (2024), moldova.unfpa.org, Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova. (ii) National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) – Employment and unemployment in the Republic of Moldova, Q1 2025 (2025), statistica.gov.md. (iii) National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) – Youth NEET in the Republic of Moldova for the fourth quarter of 2024 (2025), statistica.gov.md. (iv) Expert-Grup – Raportul de Stare a Țării 2024 (2024), expert-grup.org. (v) World Bank / ITU – Individuals using the Internet (% of population) (2023), fred.stlouisfed.org/series/ITNETUSERP2MDA. (vi) UN Moldova / ILO / ITU – Report assessing adults' digital skills in rural areas paves the way for more inclusive policies (2025), moldova.un.org. (vii) UNFPA Moldova and NBS – Population and Housing Census 2024 (urban-rural distribution), and NBS Poverty Statistics – Poverty in the Republic of Moldova 2024, statistica.gov.md.

⁷ A substantial proportion is made up of old-age and disability pensioners, while the remaining share comprises individuals temporarily employed abroad and resident persons who are not active in the domestic labour market, many of whom are oriented towards labour migration.

⁸ The annual analysis of these indicators provides a more representative picture of labour market performance, avoiding seasonal distortions associated with periods of reduced economic activity.

⁹ https://statistica.gov.md/index.php/ro/tinerii-neet-in-trimestrul-i-2024-9430_61321.html.

¹⁰ Relative poverty refers to the share of the population whose income is below 60% of the national median income and includes all sources of income, including government benefits.

¹¹ https://statistica.gov.md/en/statistic_indicator_details/58.

confidence and access among adults in rural areas, underscoring the need for targeted capacity development. Despite comparatively high internet coverage, digital skills are uneven, especially in rural areas. An ILO-ITU assessment in 2025 showed that rural adults (45–65 years of age) predominantly use mobile phones for basic tasks, with barriers such as low confidence, limited device access and lack of trust in e-services (United Nations Moldova, 2025).

Urbanisation and territorial disparities: the urban population share was 46.4% in 2024, with Chişinău municipality accounting for about 30% of all residents. Persistent rural-urban inequalities continue to shape education, employment and poverty outcomes, with rural poverty nearly twice as high as in urban areas.

CHAPTER I: ADULT LEARNING STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

This Chapter offers insight into the main policy objectives and their alignment with EU goals and initiatives, national strategic and policy priorities, as well as the main indicators and targets to be achieved and how they compare against EU targets.

Strategies

Overview on relevant strategic documents

Adult learning in Moldova is now embedded in a national strategic framework centred on the Education Development Strategy 2030, which the Government approved in 2023. Education 2030 treats LLL as a cross-cutting dimension of the education system; it aims to improve access to continuing and non-formal education for adults, strengthen Vocational Education and Training (VET) pathways for learners of all ages, and mainstream digital and green skills across programmes. The Education Development Strategy 2030 is aligned with Moldova's broader national development agenda 'European Moldova 2030', and with international commitments on skills and LLL. In this policy environment, MER and partner ministries (notably the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation), ANOFM, local authorities and social partners jointly steer reforms in order to widen AL pathways and better match training with labour-market needs.

Education Development Strategy 2030

The Education Development Strategy 2030 (GD No 114/2023¹²) is the central education strategy for Moldova. It establishes a system-wide vision to ensure quality, inclusive and LLL for all ages by 2030. Its objectives address early childhood, general education, VET, higher education and LLL.

The main pillar relevant to AL is the increasing of access to continuing and non-formal learning opportunities, to be achieved through the diversification of learning providers and delivery formats. Flexible learning pathways are promoted to reach adults, particularly targeting equal access for rural residents and vulnerable groups.

A second major component is the modernisation of VET, including Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET) and short upskilling, reskilling courses for adults. The Strategy encourages the integration of work-based learning, dual education and stronger employer engagement to enhance practical skills acquisition and employability.

Thirdly, the strategy highlights the importance of digital and green skills development across the population, preparing learners for a rapidly changing, technology-driven and sustainable economy. This includes embedding transversal competences related to digital literacy, environmental awareness and sustainability in curricula at all levels.

Fourthly, the strategy prioritises the recognition and validation of prior learning, enabling adults to obtain formal recognition for knowledge and skills acquired through work experience or informal education.

The Education Development Strategy 2030 also seeks to strengthen coordination between employment services and AL offers, linking training provision to upskilling and reskilling pathways aligned with labour market demands.

¹² https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136600&lang=ro.

By 2030, Moldova aims to achieve:

- a 10% increase in AL providers;
- a 20% expansion of adult training programmes;
- full availability of retraining pathways for adults across key fields, including education;
- the establishment of validation and certification services covering at least 60% of national demand; and,
- the development of three new digital skills training programmes for adults.

These measures underscore the government's commitment to building a more flexible, demand-driven and inclusive LLL system linked to labour-market transitions and employability.

Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2030

The Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2030¹³ identifies digital inclusion and skills development as priorities that intersect with LLL policies. It supports the expansion of digital literacy programmes, e-services and infrastructure that are essential for AL particularly in remote and rural areas. The strategy commits to embedding digital skills development across public policy and education-related initiatives.

National Employment Programme 2022–2026

The National Employment Programme 2022–2026¹⁴ explicitly recognises LLL and reskilling as tools to improve employability and reduce labour-market exclusion. It identifies measures targeted at unemployed and inactive adults, youth at risk and older workers, and calls for closer integration between employment services and training offers. Monitoring of labour market effects is provided through the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and national employment indicators (ANOFM; NBS 2025), ([Ministerul Muncii și Protecției Sociale](#), [Moldova National Statistics Bureau](#)).

Reform Agenda under the Growth Plan 2025–2027

The Reform Agenda under the Growth Plan 2025–2027 of the Republic of Moldova approved under (GD No 251/2025) is the official reform package tied to Moldova's Growth Plan 2025–2027, and it lays out 56 reforms, as well as 153 concrete measures organised along seven strategic pillars. The document frames Moldova's path toward European integration, competitiveness and inclusive development, with a financial envelope of €1.9 billion from EU contingent on implementation of the reforms. Among the seven pillars, the 'capital social' pillar explicitly includes reform of the education system, workforce development, skills and social inclusion.

Although it does not always refer to 'adult learning' explicitly, the agenda's commitments in education, skills, infrastructure and connectivity implicitly open space for AL, LLL and reskilling. For instance, the agenda envisions expanded digital infrastructure (broadband, connectivity), modernisation of educational infrastructure, alignment of education and labour markets and inclusive access to training across regions. These measures point toward enhanced non-formal, continuing and flexible education for adults, especially in under-served areas. To ensure accountability, the agenda includes a robust monitoring-reporting-evaluation regime, with semi-annual and annual reports submitted to the European Commission, public disclosure of progress, and institutional coordination via a Reform Coordination Council chaired by the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation. Through this institutional setup, the Agenda could support the tracking of AL relevant indicators (e.g. participation rates in continuing education, regional coverage, upskilling) and tie reform implementation to disbursement of EU financial support.

Legal framework

Adult learning in Moldova is grounded in the *Education Code (Law No 152/2014)*, which defines LLL as part of the national education system and provides the basis for second-chance education, adult

¹³ https://mded.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/STD_EN.pdf.

¹⁴ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134612&lang=ro.

VET and continuing training. Building on this, the *Regulation on Adult Education (GD No 222/2024¹⁵)* provides a unified framework for adult general and vocational education, establishes responsibilities of central and local authorities, defines programme accreditation, and creates the legal basis for validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNFIL). Pending steps include full operationalisation of VNFIL procedures, sustainable financing mechanisms for non-formal providers, and improved monitoring of adult participation and outcomes.

Overview of relevant legal framework

Education Code of the Republic of Moldova

The *Education Code of the Republic of Moldova (Law No 152/2014¹⁶)* provides the principal legal foundation for AL and LLL in the country, framing education as a continuous process accessible to individuals of all ages. According to Article 3(1), the Code guarantees the *right to education throughout life*, while Article 9(1)(g) explicitly includes LLL among the guiding principles of the national education system.

Articles 13 and 135–138 establish AL as an integral component of the system, defining its forms and objectives, including *second-chance education*, *continuing vocational training (CVET)*, *professional retraining*, and *non-formal and informal learning*. The code emphasises flexibility in learning pathways, allowing adults to combine education with employment and personal commitments. Furthermore, Article 138(3) mandates the creation of mechanisms for the *recognition, validation, and certification of competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning*, to enable the recognition of learning occurred in different settings over time. MER is designated as the main coordinating authority (Article 11), responsible for policy development, quality assurance and alignment with labour market needs.

Overall, the education code positions AL as a cornerstone of the country's education and employment policy, promoting inclusion, employability, and adaptability in line with European LLL principles and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Adult learning policies

The AL framework of the Republic of Moldova is grounded in a coherent set of laws and strategies, governmental decisions, ministerial orders that define priorities, responsibilities and instruments for LLL. The Education Code (Law No 152/2014) provides the legal foundation, integrating AL and LLL into the national education system and establishing the basis for the recognition of prior learning (VNFIL). Building on this, GD No 222/2024 introduced a unified regulatory framework for adult and continuing vocational education, clarifying provider responsibilities, accreditation procedures and validation mechanisms for non-formal and informal learning. To this framework are added the recent provisions of the following Orders of the Ministry of Education and Research:

- MER Order No 1834/2025 approving the Methodology for the Development of General Education and Adult Vocational Training Programmes within Lifelong Learning.
- MER Order No 962/2025 approving the Practical Guide for the Development and Implementation of Micro-credential Programmes.
- MER Order No 572/2025 approving the Methodology for the Requalification of Teaching Staff and the Validation of Professional Competences for Appointment to Teaching Positions in Early Childhood, Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Education.
- MER Order No 192/2025 approving the Model of the Professional Competence Certificate by National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level, issued upon completion of Adult Vocational Training Programmes.

¹⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=142707&lang=ro.

¹⁶ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110112&lang=ro.

The policy priorities in AL focus on four areas, as shown below:

Expanding access and diversity of provision (non-formal, modular and flexible formats)

Moldova's AL system aims to broaden participation by increasing the availability of non-formal, modular and flexible learning options. The *Education Code (Law No 152/2014)* embeds LLL within the national education system, while *GD No 222/2024* and *MER orders* provides a unified framework that enables a wide range of accredited providers to deliver adult and continuing VET programmes. These reforms support broader access, including for adults in rural areas and vulnerable groups.

Labour-market relevance (linking AL to employment and active labour market measures)

A core policy priority is aligning AL with labour-market needs and active labour market measures. The regulatory framework introduced by *GD No 222/2024* clarifies the role of adult training providers and promotes stronger coordination with employment services. This aims to ensure that upskilling and reskilling pathways directly support employability, career transitions and workforce adaptability.

Validation and permeability (further implementation and expansion of VNFIL and linking validated learning to NQF levels)

The *Education Code* establishes the legal basis for VNFIL and *GD No 222/2024* operationalises validation processes for non-formal and informal competences and *MER orders No 885/2022, No 1066/2023, and No 1021/2023* regulates the certification of competences acquired in non-formal and informal learning contexts at NQF Levels 3–6. By strengthening VNFIL mechanisms and linking validated outcomes to NQF, Moldova seeks to improve permeability between learning pathways and create clearer routes for adults to obtain formal qualifications.

Digital and green skills (scaling digital literacy and green competences across AL offers)

In line with national development priorities, AL policies promote the integration of digital literacy and green competences across training programmes. The regulatory updates encourage providers to embed emerging skills linked to digitalisation and the green transition, supporting adults to adapt to technological change and to the evolving requirements of a low-carbon economy.

These priorities are embedded in the *Education Development Strategy 2030 (GD No 114/2023)*, the *Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2030* and the *Reform Agenda under the Growth Plan 2025–2027 (GD No 251/2025)*, which together align AL with national growth and EU integration objectives.

Regarding implementation status, while the core legislative instruments are already in force, their operationalisation remains uneven across different areas of the system. *GD 222/2024* and *MER policy acts*, including the *Order No 8/2024 on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teaching staff*, are operational and are being used to register, authorise and quality-assure many adult programmes. Pilots and early deployments of micro-credentials/micro-qualifications and modular short-cycle programmes have been launched on a project basis at provider-level, and recent regulatory adjustments explicitly create legal space for short, stackable credentials that can be aligned to NQF units. At the same time, some by-laws and operational procedures (notably complete national VNFIL operational procedures, financing rules for non-formal providers and consistent NQF mapping for micro-qualifications) remain work in progress. All partial qualification programmes (micro-credentials) are aligned with the NQF.

All certificates issued for authorised/accredited programmes are digitised and centrally issued by the Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Education (CTICE), a structure of MEC.

Building on this framework, several recent reforms have accelerated the uptake of AL in Moldova. In 2025, the government approved measures to facilitate accreditation and recognition of continuing

education and training courses, simplifying administrative steps for providers and reducing bureaucratic burden and time-to-market for labour-oriented short courses. This development complements donor-supported pilots which test micro-credential models and sectoral CPD schemes.

Meanwhile, MER Orders and MER guidance on VNFIL have advanced methodologies for portfolio assessment, assessment centres and assessor training, though full nationwide roll-out and employer recognition of VNFIL certificates still require scaling and stronger incentives for employer uptake.

At the same time, despite legal alignment, practical gaps slow the potentially positive impact. Sustainable financing for non-formal provision is largely absent, national targets and systematic monitoring of adult participation (25–64) are not yet established, and employer recognition of short non-formal certificates remains inconsistent. These operational bottlenecks limit the speed at which policy intent translates into measurable increases in adult participation, upskilling and labour-market outcomes.

To track progress towards the goals of expanding access, strengthening recognition and enhancing labour-market relevance set by the recent legislative and administrative reforms, data should be collected and indicators monitored, including: number and share of accredited CVET and micro-qualification programmes and their alignment with NQF/EQF levels, roll-out and regional coverage of VNFIL services with issued certificates, adult participation rates (ages 25–64) across formal, non-formal and informal learning, and employer uptake and recruitment outcomes linked to VNFIL and micro-credentials.

National performance against key EU targets on adult learning

This section describes the EU-wide education and skills targets, which are designed to emphasise quality, inclusion and excellence in learning, and the state of play in Moldova taking into account these targets when data allow.

Participation of adults in learning

EU target	National target
At least 47% of adults aged 25–64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2025.	There is no data available to adequately compare to this EU target.
At least 60% of adults aged 25–64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months, by 2030.	There is no publicly available figure for the percentage of all adults (25–64) participating in learning.

Source: Author

Moldova currently monitors the participation rate in continuing vocational training for employees at enterprises with 10+ staff. The participation rate was 20.8% in 2023 and rose to 21.6% in 2024 (Moldova National Statistics Office). This indicator only refers to CVET, and it does not therefore adequately compare to EU targets of adult participation in all types of learning. To enable comparison, data collection in Moldova should expand to include all AL activities (formal, non-formal, informal) across the entire 25–64 age group and set corresponding national participation targets.

The above-mentioned rate of participation in CVET shows, however, that enhancing AL opportunities in Moldova and align with EU benchmarks may require continued efforts.

Underachievement in basic/digital skills and top performance in basic skills

EU target	State of play in Moldova
The share of underachievement in literacy, mathematics, science and digital skills should be less than 15%, whereas the share of top performance in literacy, mathematics and science should be at least 15%, by 2030.	<p>According to PISA¹⁷ baseline indicators reported in the Education Development Strategy 2030, between 49.7% and 57.8% of Moldovan students perform below minimum proficiency (Level 2) in Reading, Mathematics and Science – significantly above the EU benchmark of 15% for underachievement (source: Education Development Strategy 2030).</p> <p>Top performance – around 1 % of top performers — well below the EU objective of 15 %. (source – Pisa 2022).</p>

Source: Author

Underperformance – the proportion of students under Level 2 is high in all assessed domains, close to 50–56%, a serious gap compared to the EU’s target of less than 15 %.

High performers – only about 1% of Moldovan students reach PISA’s top levels in literacy, mathematics and science, far from the 15% EU benchmark.

Digital skills – there is no available data specifically for digital skills proficiency at the national level for Moldova.

STEM in VET

EU target	State of play in Moldova
The share of students enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields in initial medium-level VET should be at least 45%, with at least 1 out of every 4 students female, by 2030.	No publicly available data was found for the specific share of students enrolled in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields in Moldova’s VET.

Source: Author

STEM in higher education

EU target	State of play in Moldova
The share of students enrolled in STEM fields in third-level education be at least 32%, with at least 2 out of 5 students female, by 2030.	<p>1.9987% of graduates in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (2019). No comprehensive data for wider STEM fields.</p> <p>Workforce data suggests only 27–32% female representation in STEM professions, indicative of a gender gap in the tertiary STEM pipeline. No direct data.</p>

Source: Author

Moldova lags behind the 32% STEM enrolment goal, with less than 2% of tertiary graduates in core STEM fields. Female participation also falls short of the 40% benchmark, though field-specific and gender-disaggregated statistics are not available.

The gaps in data collection hinder the ability to track STEM enrolment, evaluate gender disparities and align training offers with labour-market needs. Strengthening data systems, particularly for AL participation by field, level and gender, is necessary for evidence-based decision-making and for enabling the monitoring of the indicators set by the Union of Skills also in Moldova.

Data available so far point to the importance of implementing targeted policies, such as scholarships, outreach and awareness campaigns to increase overall and female participation in STEM.

¹⁷ Programme for International Student Assessment.

ICT PhD programmes

EU target	State of play in Moldova
The share of students enrolled in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) PhD programmes should be at least 5%, with at least 1 out of every 3 students female, by 2030.	No public data available on this indicator (no information on discipline-specific distribution).

Besides adult participation in CVET (21.6% in 2024), national data collection shows gaps that impede to compare performance with the EU-level LLL and Union of Skills targets. PISA results show significant underachievement (55–57%) and almost no top performers (~1%), while STEM enrolment rates, especially for women, are far below EU goals, with limited data to monitor progress. To align with EU ambitions, Moldova needs stronger data collection, clear national benchmarks, and targeted policies to expand AL, boost basic skills and increase female participation in STEM and ICT.

Conclusions

Strengths

- Moldova has established a comprehensive legal and strategic framework for AL and LLL. The Education Code (Law No 152/2014), Regulation on Adult Education (GD No 222/2024), and the Education Development Strategy 2030 (GD No 114/2023) provide a solid foundation for AL, integrating it as a cross-cutting dimension of the education system and promoting inclusion, flexible pathways, VNFIL and alignment with labour market needs.
- The Reform Agenda under the Growth Plan 2025–2027 (GD No 251/2025) further strengthens this framework, linking AL-relevant reforms to EU financial assistance and creating institutional mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, fostering greater accountability.
- Digitalisation initiatives under national strategies, including digital literacy programmes and expansion of e-services, represent a positive innovation that could enhance accessibility and participation in AL, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Challenges

- Despite the comprehensive strategic and legal framework, implementation remains limited. Key pending steps include secondary legislation, accreditation procedures and quality assurance mechanisms for non-formal AL, operationalising the VNFIL system, establishing sustainable financing mechanisms for non-formal and continuing education providers and improving monitoring of adult participation and learning outcomes.
- National adult participation rate in CVET was 21.6% in 2024. This indicator is not fully comparable with the EU indicator, which is broader because based on participation in all LLL modalities. The current data collection on AL in Moldova does not allow comparison with the full set of LLL and AL indicators being used at EU level. Expanding data collection across the diverse forms of AL would be needed to enable monitoring and assessment in line with European frameworks.
- Alignment with EU and PISA targets is incomplete, particularly in areas such as STEM and ICT enrolment, gender balance in training and digital skills.

State of play

- The national strategies and legislation show that AL **is a recognised priority**, with clear objectives: expanding LLL, facilitating flexible retraining and upskilling, and enabling inclusion. Social partners, NGOs and civil-society actors increasingly call for full implementation and accessibility of AL across regions. Assessment – strategy and legal framework are **fully aligned**.
- The legal framework is well adapted to national strategic goals. However, secondary legislation and regulations for non-formal AL, as well as mechanisms to address regional inequalities, remain underdeveloped. Thus, while the law is aligned, practical implementation is **partially aligned** with regional needs and equity provisions.

- **Adult learning policy remains fragmented**, while formal AL, especially in CVET, is regulated, non-formal and informal education are not yet systematically supported or regulated, especially at local authority level.
- Data availability, key indicators for monitoring progress remains very limited. For example, the most recent participation rate in CVET among adults is recorded at 21.6% (2024). However, this covers only vocational AL, data do not reflect full LLL participation across all modalities (non-formal, informal, upskilling), nor do they reflect learning outcomes, equity, or regional coverage. As a result, data availability, monitoring and evaluation remain **insufficient/weak**.
- **Benchmarking capability with EU standards is not possible at this stage**. Because data are partial and limited, comparing Moldova's AL performance with EU benchmarks (e.g., from NEAAL 2030 or the Union of Skills 2030 initiative) is **currently not feasible**. The strategic and legal alignment is stronger than the data-driven evidence.

CHAPTER II: INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND GOVERNANCE OF ADULT LEARNING

This Chapter analyses and presents the division of roles and responsibilities among institutions in charge as well as the main features of the model of governance in place for AL sub-sector.

Institutional arrangements

Moldova's AL system operates within a centralised governance model, coordinated primarily by MER, with significant contributions from other ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social partners and private sector stakeholders.

Roles and responsibilities in adult learning

MER sets the regulatory and strategic framework for AL in Moldova. The Education Strategy 2030 does not establish or reference a dedicated coordinating body for AL, and no such mechanism is mentioned in the governance or implementation sections, indicating that coordination is carried out by means of existing ministerial structures rather than a specialised entity.

Cross-ministerial collaboration plays an important role in the implementation of AL policies. MER works with Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP), Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation of the Republic of Moldova (MEDD) and other relevant ministries to ensure AL programmes align with national development goals and labour market needs.

The implementation of AL in Moldova relies on multi-stakeholder collaboration. At local level, responsibility for implementation lies with local public authorities, which may collaborate with local NGOs, social partners and community-based organisations, to expand access to AL and deliver AL tailored to local contexts. This cooperation typically involves joint community outreach, sharing existing facilities (such as libraries, cultural centres or NGO learning spaces) and coordinating local initiatives tailored to community needs, rather than formal procurement arrangements. Since legislative and regulatory mechanisms for local authorities to support non-formal AL remain limited, their contribution is largely based on facilitating access, hosting activities, and partnering with civil society actors to deliver programmes close to learners' place of residence.

Quality assurance across AL and continuing education is insured by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC), which monitors programme quality and compliance with national standards through evaluations and accreditation processes as required by the national quality assurance framework.

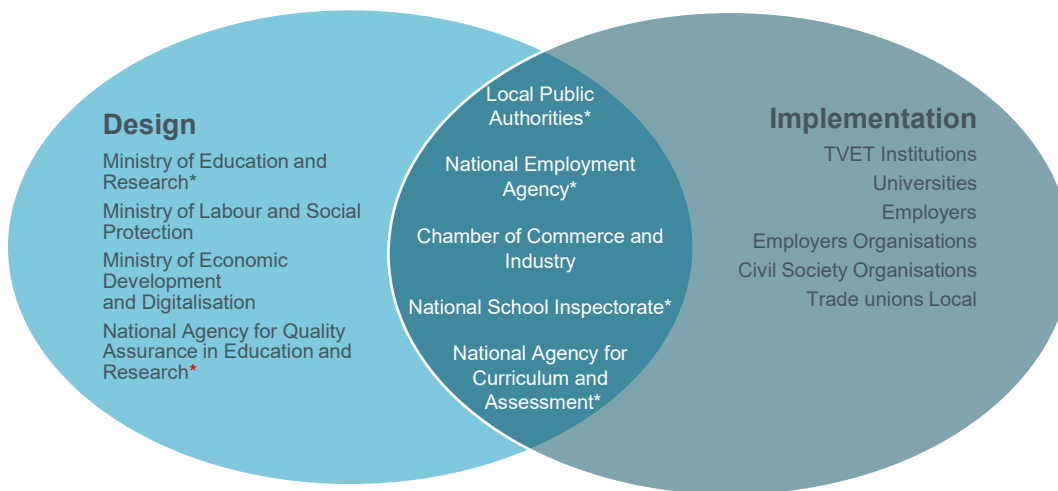
The School Inspectorate, the National Agency for Curriculum and Evaluation and local public authorities have complementary roles in monitoring, professional supervision, curriculum evaluation and skills validation.

At the implementation level, adult education providers, NGOs, employers and social partners contribute to quality assurance through internal mechanisms and by complying with national quality assurance procedures.

The private sector through Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), trade unions, sectoral committees and individual companies also contribute by offering feedback on occupational needs and participating in curricula/programme development and delivery and occasionally provide training venues or instructors, in turn helping to strengthen the labour market relevance of AL provision.

The diagram in Figure 1 offers an insight into the responsibilities of each of the institutions involved as defined by the adopted legal framework.

Figure 1: Institutional governance and providers in the adult learning and skills ecosystem (Adapted from ETF guidance, 2025 and national documents information)



* Monitoring & Evaluation

Adult learning governance model

Moldova's AL system is centrally overseen by MER, which has a focus on adults' formal education and training. The Ministry is responsible for policy formulation, regulation, management of the NQF, curriculum development and accreditation oversight for AL programmes. Quality assurance is ensured by ANACEC, which evaluates providers and programmes.

Other ministries, particularly MLSP, MEDD and line ministries contribute to the development of vocational and professional training aligned with labour market needs, through the development of occupational standards, the offer of short-term courses as part of active labour market policies (ALMP) and more in general support to non-formal learning. Local public authorities implement AL programmes locally, while NGOs, trade unions, sectoral committees, and companies support delivery, provide expertise and ensure relevance to the labour market. Decision-making is largely hierarchical, with MER setting strategic direction, ANACEC ensuring compliance and other actors participating in consultations and programme design.

Intra-sectoral cooperation and coordination

Although AL in Moldova involves multiple actors, cooperation across sectors remains only partially formalised. Coordination between ministries, such as MER, MLSP, MEDD and other relevant line ministries and bodies, to align AL policies with national development and labour market priorities, takes place mainly through existing administrative channels, working groups created for broader education reforms, and ad hoc consultations when policies or regulatory updates require inter-ministerial agreement. There is no permanent technical group or institutionalised body dedicated specifically to AL, which means that collaboration occurs on a needs-driven and largely informal basis, rather than through a structured mechanism.

Contributions from sectoral committees, trade unions and CCI are generally provided through consultative processes linked to qualifications development, occupational standards, inputs on occupation and skills needs and programme relevance. Therefore, these consultations are of technical nature, while a standing platform to gather policy-related inputs is currently missing. At local level, cooperation between local authorities and community organisations is similarly project based, relying

on shared facilities, outreach initiatives and joint community-level activities, rather than contractual or formalised partnerships.

Overall, inter-sectoral coordination exists, but it is fragmented and dependent on individual initiatives, without a dedicated governance structure to ensure continuity or systematic joint planning.

For more information on Institutional arrangements, governance and roles in adult learning in Moldova see [Annex V](#).

Providers of formal and non-formal adult learning

Moldova's AL landscape encompasses a diverse array of formal, non-formal and informal education providers. The network comprises public institutions, private entities, NGOs and community-based organisations, collectively contributing to LLL and skill development for adults.

Formal education providers

Formal AL in Moldova is primarily delivered through accredited institutions, including the following:

- VET Institutions offer structured programmes leading to recognised qualifications.
- universities provide continuing education and professional development courses for adults.
- public and private, authorised training centres deliver accredited training programmes in various fields.

Non-formal education providers

Non-formal AL is facilitated by a range of organisations, including civil society organisations (CSOs): These entities offer community-based learning opportunities, often focusing on social inclusion, personal development and civic engagement.

Municipal centres, for instance: the Municipal Centre for AL and Education (CMIEA) in Chişinău provides accessible learning opportunities for adults, aiming to enhance personal development and community engagement.

Cultural and community centres organise workshops, seminars and courses that cater to the educational needs of adults in various communities.

The Third Age University is an initiative of MLSP inaugurated on a small scale in 2024, where seniors benefit from expanded educational and social opportunities, free of charge. Due to high demand, the Third Age University extended the offer of courses in three locations namely Chişinău, Bălţi and Cahul in 2025.

For more information on adult learning providers, see [Annex III](#).

Informal learning

Informal learning occurs through daily activities and experiences, such as, workplace learning – on-the-job training and skill acquisition within the country and abroad, self-directed learning – independent study and personal development activities, community engagement – participation in local events, volunteering and peer learning.

Intentional or unintentional informal learning is widely spread, hence very relevant for people's development whether job-related or not. Due to its importance, informal learning and its acknowledgment offer a great potential to motivate adult people and reward their learning. Efforts are underway to validate and certify competencies acquired through these means on the part of MER. A framework for VNFIL aiming to enhance the recognition of skills gained outside formal education settings is in place, although the popularisation of VNFIL is not attained. To this end, instruments such as a strong and long-term information campaign and cost cap would be worth considering.

Funding of adult learning

In Moldova, AL is primarily funded through a combination of state and local government budgets, external project financing and private contributions.

The legal and regulatory framework governing these funding sources includes the, as well as various national and international cooperation agreements. *Education Code (Law No 152/2014 as subsequently amended)*, *Labour Code (Law No 154/2003, as subsequently amended, Law No 105/2018, GD No 114/2023 and GD No 222/2024)*.

The financing of AL in Moldova is derived from several key sources:

- **state budget** (Central Government) – AL programmes are financed from the central state budget, which allocates funds for various educational initiatives, including AL.
- **local budgets** (Municipal and Local Authorities) – Local public administration authorities are responsible for planning and allocating funding for AL programmes that address specific local development needs. These programmes are financed from local budgets and may include AL centres and community-based learning initiatives.
- **external project funding** – Moldova receives external financial support for AL through international cooperation agreements and donor-funded projects. These projects are often implemented in collaboration with international organisations and aim to enhance the quality and accessibility of AL opportunities.
- **private contributions** – Individuals and legal entities may contribute to AL through tuition fees, donations, sponsorships and other legal sources. These contributions supplement public funding and support the sustainability of AL programmes.
- **employer contributions** – Employers may finance AL programmes for their employees¹⁸, particularly in the context of vocational training and professional development. This funding is often aimed at enhancing workforce skills and improving employability.

Since the national budget does not show AL as a separate item, specific data on the share of gross domestic product (GDP)¹⁹ allocated to AL in Moldova is not available. The overall public spending on education was as high as 6.25% of GDP in 2023 covering all levels of education, however without a separate breakdown for AL. This lack of detailed financial reporting hinders the ability to plan and to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of AL financing.

The actual allocation to AL depends on national priorities, donor contributions and the financial capacity of local authorities. The reliance on external project funding and private contributions raises concerns about the long-term sustainability of AL programmes. Ensuring consistent and adequate funding is essential for the continuity of AL initiatives, to increase participation of adult people and ensure greater equality of access.

While the legal and regulatory framework supports diverse funding sources, coordination structures to systematically align these resources with national priorities and local needs are not yet established. A summary of sources of funding for AL in Moldova is enclosed in [Annex VII](#).

This overview provides a snapshot of the current funding landscape for AL in Moldova. For a more detailed analysis, including specific financial figures and trends, further research and data collection would be necessary.

¹⁸ Labour Code No 154/2003, Article 213(3): Vocational training conditions, modalities and duration, the rights and obligations of the parties, and related financial allocations (minimum 2% of the enterprise payroll) are established through collective labour agreements or collective agreements.

¹⁹ https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Moldova/Education_spending/; (theglobaleconomy.com).

Monitoring and quality assurance

Institutional roles and responsibilities

MER is the central policymaker and the primary authority for implementing and monitoring the education code and government decisions that govern AL and VNFIL. The ANACEC under MER carries out external evaluation, accreditation and promotes quality culture across VET, higher and continuing education, including AL.

Provider accreditation, programme approval and professional supervision apply to the entire network of AL programme providers, including public AL centres, VET institutions, NGOs, private providers, companies, universities. Eurydice and MER documentation list provider types and the new 2024 regulation.

The National School Inspectorate scrutinises educational institutions according to inspection plans and Ministry orders, covering inspection of implementation and professional supervision.

The NQF department and the National Qualifications Register are responsible for standards, recognition and the technical side of VNFIL (validation, registers, procedures). Pilot reports and EU reviews describe MER leadership in VNFIL pilots.

For more information on institutional roles over quality assurance for adult learning see [Annex IV](#).

Continuous professional development of adult learning practitioners

AL practitioners in Moldova include teaching staff involved in continuing education, trainers engaged in non-formal and workplace-based programmes and VNFIL practitioners (counsellors, advisors and assessors). These roles exist across public VET institutions, university continuing education units, authorised private providers and NGOs, in line with the *Education Code (Law No 152/2014)*, which defines staff competence requirements and establishes the basis for quality assurance in education.

The regulatory framework governing CPD is defined through MER regulations and ministerial orders. *MER Order No 8/2024* sets the current rules for CPD in general education, while *MER Orders No 309 and No 310 (25.03.2021)* regulate the establishment and operation of VNFIL centres and the preparation of validation staff. ANACEC ensures external quality assurance for education providers, including those offering adult and continuing education, through evaluation and accreditation procedures aligned with the national quality assurance framework.

Minimum qualification requirements depend on provider type. Teaching staff seconded from formal VET institutions follow the qualification standards set in the Education Code. Trainers in non-formal AL are expected to demonstrate relevant occupational competence and in some cases training in adult pedagogy/andragogy. VNFIL assessors and counsellors must complete specific training in competence-based assessment and guidance, as required by MER regulations establishing validation centres.

CPD provision is delivered by teacher training universities, recognised CPD institutes, authorised national providers and development partners. CPD content typically focuses on adult-centred pedagogy, competence-based assessment, digital competences and training for VNFIL practitioners in line with national qualification standards. Moldova's VNFIL pilots emphasise formal preparation of assessors and counsellors before they undertake validation functions.

Quality assurance of staff competence combines national quality assurance requirements applied by ANACEC and internal institutional processes, including supervision by TVET institution/centre methodologists and validation centre coordinators. External evaluations carried out through the national quality assurance system further inform CPD needs and help align practitioner competences with national standards.

Conclusions

Strengths

- Clear leadership of MER in policy development, regulation, curriculum design and accreditation.
- Well-defined quality assurance mechanisms through ANACEC, ensuring compliance with national standards.
- Inter-ministerial collaboration, notably with MLSP and MEDD, aligning AL with employment and economic policies.
- Active role of local authorities, CSOs and social partners in delivering non-formal programmes and ensuring accessibility in communities.
- Private sector engagement, particularly through the CCI, trade unions and companies, providing relevance to labour market needs.

Challenges

- The approach to centralise decision-making on MER reduces flexibility for providers and local initiatives.
- Adult learning monitoring and quality assurance face constraints such as a tradition that overemphasises audit versus learning and concentration of functions within MER versus limited allocation of staff members to LLL services.
- Financing of AL and resource allocation depends on government priorities within the overall education sector, which might change on a yearly basis, given that AL is not identified by a separate item in the budget.
- Adult learning funding also relies on support from external short-term donors, which undermines sustainability.
- The current data collection system does not allow monitoring AL participation, quality and outcomes.
- Few opportunities for CPD and professionalisation of adult educators and VNFIL practitioners.
- Weak recognition of non-formal and informal learning due to a gap between the approved frameworks and their implementation.
- Despite the active involvement of local authorities in supporting community-level AL initiatives, the provision remains uneven across the country, with rural areas less served by providers, limited programme offers, and lower institutional capacity for organising or hosting AL activities.
- The limited engagement from employers and non-state actors in recognising and valuing AL outcomes constrains the effectiveness of AL in addressing labour market needs.

State of play

- Adult learning is centrally governed by MER, which oversees legislation, approves providers, and integrates AL within national strategies. Implementation is decentralised: local authorities, civil -society organisations and private training providers are responsible for delivering AL and training programmes. The national quality-assurance body ANACEC ensures external evaluation and accreditation of formal and continuing education institutions and courses.
- Currently, there is no dedicated national body formally tasked with coordinating AL. Coordination relies on informal cooperation within MER structures and between stakeholders, and expert assessments point to the absence of a consolidated intersectoral framework. As a result, governance remains insufficiently institutionalised and coordination mechanisms are weak.
- Financing of AL comes from a mix of sources: state budget allocations, individual and employer fees, contributions from professional associations, donations, sponsorships and external project funding. While public funding exists (especially for priority groups like unemployed individuals, persons with disabilities, civil servants), much of AL remains dependent on project-based or fee-based financing. There is no evidence of a systemic public-private funding mechanism such as levy-based training funds, tax incentives for employers, or employer-based compulsory contributions for AL at nationwide scale. As a result, the funding model can be judged as only moderately adequate, given the limited reach and sustainability.
- Stakeholders involved in AL governance include local public authorities, civil-society organisations, private training providers and some employer associations, but participation remains limited, especially by private-sector employers and trade unions. Thus, stakeholder participation is somehow diverse, but not sufficiently broad or systematic, especially in terms of consistent labour-market representation through employers or trade unions.

- Policymaking and regulation are centralised under MER, but delivery is decentralised, shared among various public, private and non-state providers. Because there is no dedicated coordinating body, implementation remains fragmented, local and non-formal providers often lack systematic support.
- The 2024 Regulation represents a significant milestone in formalising AL across general and vocational pathways. While Moldova has established a legal and policy framework for VNFIL, its operational implementation and broader mechanisms for recognition and portability remain limited. Non-formal and informal learning is not yet fully integrated into NQF-based certification processes, and the absence of consolidated institutional structures supporting recognition outside formal vocational education continues to hinder progress. Overall, the integration of AL outcomes into the NQF is partially achieved, but substantial advancements are still required.
- Quality assurance for formal and continuing VET provision is overseen by ANACEC, which applies standards aligned with European and international practices. However, non-formal and informal AL is only loosely regulated, with no unified accreditation system or consistent oversight, leaving many providers outside quality-assurance mechanisms. Monitoring and data collection are also limited, particularly regarding participation, learning outcomes, regional equity and inclusion. Stakeholders have recommended establishing a dedicated institution to strengthen evidence-based governance. Overall, monitoring and quality assurance are only partially covered, well-developed for formal VET programmes but insufficient for non-formal and informal adult learning.

CHAPTER III: ADULT LEARNING PROVISION

This last chapter describes the existing programmes and types of provision of AL, including information on any related support services in place for adult learners to access and participate in LLL opportunities.

Adult learning types and programmes

Municipal and third age adult learning and non-formal personal / professional development programmes

The Municipal Centre for Adult Learning and Education (CMIEA) in Chişinău, opened in April 2023, provides one of the country's most active models of municipal non-formal AL. Operated by the Chişinău Municipality in partnership with DVV International, the centre offers over 50 short free courses in personal, professional and civic development, ranging from basic English and digital skills to CV writing and healthy living. Its programmes target a wide spectrum of adults, including unemployed individuals, professionals seeking new competences and older learners.

Certificates issued are non-formal and not linked to NQF/EQF levels. Since opening, the centre has registered more than 5 000 course graduates and 935 participations in its thematic 'Interest Club' sessions, indicating high demand for accessible community-based learning opportunities.

MLSP has launched the Third Age University in 2024 to provide short, popular education courses to seniors of any age, free of charge. The pilot initiative has attracted a high number of requests to participate, as a result MLSP started Third Age University courses in three cities, namely Chişinău, Bălţi and Cahul, in 2025.

Continuing training/CPD for VET Teachers

These programmes provide multi-month professional development for VET teachers, helping them update subject knowledge and apply modern, learner-centred pedagogies. Training focuses on life-skills content and health and social education topics, including modules such as Decisions for a healthy lifestyle, 'Education for Sustainable Development (EDD)'²⁰, so as to ensure VET teaching remains relevant to learners' needs and societal priorities. Courses are delivered alongside regular teaching duties by two ANACEC-accredited Centres of Excellence, the Light Industry Centre in Chişinău and the Centre of Excellence in Services and Food Processing in Bălţi, in partnership with UNFPA, the Austrian Development Agency and MER. Teachers receive accredited CPD certificates recognised nationally.

Re-entry pathways / second-chance AL

Under the 2024 Regulation on Adult Education, adult learning formally allows for 'second chance' learning, i.e. adults who interrupted their previous education may re-enter the system to complete general education or acquire professional qualifications. Adult learning programmes can be offered in formal, non-formal or informal settings, and delivered full-time, part-time or via distance learning, providing flexible pathways for re-entry into education or labour market reskilling. However, in practice, most programmes focus on vocational training and employability. Provision of general-education completion for adults remains limited and not strongly institutionalised, non-formal AL opportunities are concentrated in urban centres, resulting in unequal access, particularly in rural areas or among disadvantaged populations.

²⁰ In 2025, a new continuous professional training programme for TVET teachers was institutionalised at the Technical University of Moldova, through the initiative and support of the ILO project 'Skills for an Environmentally Sustainable Development in Moldova,' in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research.

Micro-credentials / short-term upskilling/reskilling initiatives

Short learning modules and micro-credential courses offer adults flexible and accessible opportunities to acquire or update specific competences in a short timeframe. They respond to labour-market needs by focusing on practical digital, technical and professional skills that support employability and adaptability, including in the context of green and digital transitions. These programmes are delivered by a range of public and private training providers and target both employed and unemployed adults, jobseekers and workers needing rapid upskilling or reskilling. Learners receive short-course certificates or micro-credentials, which may be aligned with NQF requirements, though many do not lead directly to full formal qualifications.

MER is encouraging VET institutions, including the 12 Centres of Excellence that have a sectoral specialisation, to increase upskilling and reskilling provision through agreements with companies and local authorities. MLSP is managing ALMP that also offer short courses aimed at upskilling and reskilling of unemployed people. To this end, providers need to be accredited by the MER.

Language learning for national minorities / social inclusion

State-supported Romanian language courses provide adults from national minority groups, public sector employees and refugees with opportunities to improve proficiency in the state language and support their social and professional integration. Offered both in person and online, these courses aim to strengthen inclusion, facilitate access to public services and improve communication in workplaces and communities. Training is organised by MER through designated institutions or contracted providers and is often free for beneficiaries. Participants receive certificates indicating their achieved level of linguistic competence; these constitute language certificates rather than formal education qualifications.

For more information on types and key AL programmes in Moldova see [Annex VI](#) and [Annex VIII](#) on VET in Moldova.

Adult learning in Moldova is diverse but largely non-formal, focusing on short life, civic or professional skills rather than full qualifications. Policy frameworks support AL through its inclusion in the education code (enabling funding and recognition), CPD for teachers via VET policy (life skills, EDD, health and behaviour change), and the gradual introduction of micro-credentials to address labour market needs. While non-formal programmes in Chişinău have reached several thousand adults, overall participation remains low, especially outside urban areas. Most courses do not lead to recognised qualifications or clear NQF/EQF placement, and information on certification, duration and age eligibility (usually 18+) is often inconsistent. Evidence on the labour market recognition of such certificates remains limited.

There is limited publicly available data on whether these short/non-formal courses map to NQF levels or how widely their certificates are recognised by employers.

Support measures and services to adult learners

Information and outreach services

Adult learners can access information on opportunities through public (VET and higher education institutions) and private providers, ANOFM, municipal centres (e.g. CIMEA) and project-based platforms supported by DVV International, ILO and UN agencies.

Outreach is more effectively done at territorial level, via local employment offices, municipal AL centres, NGOs and community campaigns.

VNFIL

Moldova has introduced the VNFIL framework. Adults can have prior learning and work experience assessed and validated against national occupational standards, potentially leading to partial or full

certification at NQF/EQF levels. Validation services are gradually being scaled up through accredited providers and Centres of Excellence.

Active labour market programmes and services

Adult learning opportunities delivered through ANOFM under MLSP include a mix of vocational training, retraining and short practical courses designed to support jobseekers and adults seeking new skills. ANOFM also organises on-the-job training and traineeships to ease entry or re-entry into employment, alongside subsidised employment and self-employment measures, including small start-up grants. Upskilling and reskilling programmes are increasingly implemented in cooperation with VET institutions to reflect labour-market needs. These services are financed through the state budget and complemented by support from development partners such as ILO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), which in 2019 financed the piloting of an active measure.

Career guidance and counselling services

Employment offices provide career guidance and counselling to unemployed and job-seeking adults, including assessment of skills, job-matching and referral to training opportunities.

VET institutions host career guidance services for students and adult learners returning to education.

Lifelong guidance platforms are supported by donor-funded projects, promoting personalised counselling, digital tools and information on career pathways.

Guidance is available for choosing VET specialisations or reskilling pathways, identifying labour market opportunities and vacancies, supporting disadvantaged groups (long-term unemployed, youth NEET, returning migrants and refugees).

Moldova has developed a foundational, yet evolving system of AL and support services delivered through VET and higher education institutions, ANOFM, municipal centres, NGOs and donor-led initiatives. The system offers diverse formal, non-formal and emerging modular programmes aimed at reskilling, upskilling and personal development, though participation remains limited and uneven, particularly in rural areas. Ongoing efforts to strengthen VNFIL, expand micro-credentials, and align training with labour market needs are critical to building a more inclusive, responsive and sustainable AL system that promotes lifelong employability and social cohesion.

Conclusions

Strengths

- Diversification of provision: municipal AL centres, NGO-led courses, CPD for teachers, Romanian language programmes for minorities/refugees, micro-credentials and green skills initiatives.
- Integration of AL supply with labour market policies through ANOFM training, reskilling programmes and entrepreneurship support.
- Introduction of VNFIL, offering pathways for adults to gain certification of competences.
- Growing international and donor support, driving innovation in micro-credentials, green/digital skills and outreach.

Challenges

- Predominance of non-formal provision, much of which is not mapped to NQF/EQF and has limited recognition by employers.
- Limited data and monitoring of enrolments, completion and outcomes, restricting evidence-based policymaking.

- Fragmented service delivery, with overlapping responsibilities across ministries, ANOFM, VET institutions and NGOs, resulting in weak coordination, inconsistent quality standards, inefficient use of resources and confusion for beneficiaries, ultimately reducing the effectiveness of training services and their impact on the labour market.
- Validation (VNFIL) still at pilot stage, with limited scale and reach.

State of play

- Adult learning in Moldova includes formal, non-formal and informal programmes. Formal provision (general education, VET and CVET) is explicitly regulated under the 2024 Regulation on Adult Education (GD No 222/2024). Non-formal and informal AL offers include community courses, short vocational modules, life-skills and civic education, language courses, etc. Target groups range from jobseekers to working adults in need of upskilling or reskilling, adults who interrupted their education (for second-chance education), retirees, socially vulnerable populations and adults seeking personal or civic development. Municipal and NGO-led centres aim to reach vulnerable groups and those excluded from formal education. Thus, **AL provision partially matches the needs of different adult learner groups**. The system offers flexibility and a variety of pathways, but significant barriers remain for rural populations, people needing full general-education completion and socially disadvantaged adults.
- Current providers include public institutions (VET schools, Centres of Excellence), municipal AL centres (e.g., the Municipal Centre for Adult Learning and Education — CMIEA in Chişinău), NGOs and private training providers. There are meaningful differences between formal and non-formal provision. Formal AL (VET or CVET) tends to have accreditation, structured programmes and links to qualifications/NQF; non-formal AL tends to be more flexible, shorter and oriented towards employability, personal development, or civic competences. Non-formal programmes are often attractive to many adults due to flexibility, lower costs, shorter duration and lower entry barriers, more suitable for working adults or people with other responsibilities. However, for those needing full qualification or general-education completion, the limited availability of formal second-chance programmes is dissatisfactory. In summary, the provision outside major urban centres remains limited, many non-formal offers lack sustainability, second-chance general education and full qualification pathways are insufficiently available, and most non-formal programmes are unconnected to the NQF. Overall, the **attractiveness of AL programmes is moderate**, good for certain groups (urban adults, those seeking modular training), but not universally accessible or inclusive.
- The regulatory framework guarantees access to AL without discrimination (age, origin, gender, etc.) under the 2024 Regulation. Non-formal and informal learning opportunities, such as those provided by municipal centres and NGOs, improve inclusion for adults not served by formal programmes, including disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. However, provision remains largely urban-centred, resulting in inequitable access for rural areas and remote populations. Many non-formal programmes depend on project funding, limiting their sustainability and geographic coverage. On **diversity and inclusion, AL provision is somewhat inclusive**, but equality of access is limited by geographic, socio-economic and institutional constraints.
- Thus, despite a legal and policy foundation for diverse AL pathways, actual AL provision remains uneven, fragmented and insufficient to meet the full range of adult learners' needs. Flexibility and availability of non-formal and modular training are strengths, but gaps in access, recognition, sustainability and coverage mean the system is not yet fully inclusive or equitable.

CONCLUSIONS

Dimension I: Strategic and legal framework

Moldova has built a coherent strategic and legal foundation for AL through the Education Code (2014), the Education Development Strategy 2030 and the 2024 Regulation on Adult Education. These instruments embed AL within a LLL perspective, introduce the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and promote continuing education, second-chance pathways and digital and green competences. The country's alignment with EU priorities, such as the European Skills Agenda, Upskilling Pathways and NQF/EQF convergence, is visible. However, in some areas implementation lags behind the legal and policy frameworks; on the one hand, secondary legislation is pending, for example with regard to the operationalisation of VNFIL, and on the other, national quantitative targets are yet to be set and monitored.

The current data collection system does not allow comparison with the targets under the EU policy on AL. Available statistics, in fact, are covering only specific AL groups or programmes. As a result, evidence-based policymaking and strategic alignment with EU benchmarks are not fully achieved at this stage.

Dimension II: Governance and institutional arrangements

The governance of AL is centralised under MER, with ANACEC ensuring quality assurance. The MLSP is in charge of ALMP including short-term training courses, which are subject to MER and ANACEC quality assurance. MEDD is in charge of digital development including a skills dimension. The ANOFM and local authorities are contributing to implementation. Social partners, NGOs and private actors are active in AL, often through donor-supported initiatives, and have driven many recent innovations, including VNFIL pilots and digital skills programmes.

The centralised governance approach is missing the support of a coordination platform in which other actors are represented, the respective roles acknowledged and responsibilities shared. As a result, a silos approach tends to persist across institutions, and coordination through existing channels often leads to overlaps in roles and uneven implementation. Accreditation procedures for non-formal AL are affected by insufficient human resource allocation, while the professionalisation of adult educators, particularly VNFIL practitioners, is still at an early stage. Funding for AL is often short-term and largely project-based, which undermines sustainability. A more systematic monitoring of AL participation and policy outcomes would enable progress tracking and adjustments when needed.

Dimension III: Provision of AL

Moldova has developed an increasingly diverse AL offer across formal VET, university continuing education, and a wide range of non-formal municipal, NGO and community-based programmes. Pilot initiatives, micro-credentials, digital and green skills, Romanian language programmes for minorities and refugees, illustrate promising innovation. VNFIL offers a pathway for recognising prior learning, though coverage remains limited.

Overall participation in AL remains low, with pronounced urban-rural disparities and barriers for older adults, women and vulnerable groups. Provision is dominated by short non-formal courses, many of which are not yet aligned with NQF/EQF or formally recognised by employers.

ANNEX I – ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

Chapters	Guiding questions [1]	Sources/ methods
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country context (governmental and administration features over education and training affairs, main legal frameworks, placement of AL sub-sector within the wider education and training system) Specific elements related to the country political situation, constitutional arrangements, territorial/regional autonomies and jurisdiction over education sector Presentation of the country paper structure and objectives 		Desk review
<p>Chapter 1. Adult learning Strategies and Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AL national and regional strategies (existing, past and present, or under preparation and expectations on their adoption) – approach to AL (broad, narrow), main strategic objectives, results obtained to date and targets to be achieved, comparative analysis with EU policy priorities alignment, existing legal framework; level of priority attributed to AL, plans for reforms or large-scale programmes) AL national policies (overview of the main policy objectives, national and regional policy measures implemented or under implementation, target-population, equity and inclusiveness gaps identified, sources of funding, stakeholders' participation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms) National targets vs EU targets (analysis of five key indicators and targets by 2030 at national level, plus indicators related to AL from Growth Plans/National Reform Agendas). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main priorities of existing AL national/regional strategies? Where do they intend to bring AL in the country? Currently, is AL a priority, does the government intend to advance AL, do social partners and/or other non-state actors advocate for progress in AL? 2. Is the legal framework adjusted to the national/regional strategies and policy objectives? Do they correspond to specific needs of regions? Is there a mismatch between the different levels of policy definition (fully aligned /partially aligned/not aligned at all)? 3. What is the level of fragmentation of AL policies within the wider education and training system of the country (highly fragmented/fragmented/not fragmented much)? 4. What are the main indicators in use and related targets for AL sector (e.g., participation rates, skill levels, employment outcomes)? 5. Where relevant and possible, compare with EU policy objectives, as well as benchmarking indicators and other national targets? (fully matched/partially matched/ not matched at all) 	Desk-review Interviews Data analysis
<p>Chapter 2. Adult learning Institutional arrangements and Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional arrangements (responsible institutions at national and regional levels, roles and responsibilities, coordination bodies, type of providers (public/private/others), coverage of the territory and gaps in the AL supply and demand, participation of employers and other players from the world of work, funding sources and financing models). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which institutions are responsible for the coordination and implementation of AL policies, and how are roles and responsibilities divided among ministries, agencies and other relevant actors? Which coordination mechanisms are in place (e.g. AL council, Inter-ministerial committee on AL, Economic and Social Council, etc.) and what are their roles i.e. advisory, consultative, decision-making? 2. What are the main sources of funding of AL provision? Are there public-private partnerships related to AL funding, e.g. Training Funds, Tax 	Desk-review Interviews

Chapters	Guiding questions [1]	Sources/ methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adult learning governance models (key features of the governance model, i.e. centralised/decentralised, participative, co-decision (diversity of actors, autonomy of the providers), supervision and coordination processes, relation to NQFs). ▪ Monitoring and Quality Assurance, data collection and analysis on AL, including evaluation. 	<p>exemptions, Levies, etc? Are the financing model and the funding sources sufficient and adequate (very adequate/moderately adequate/not adequate at all)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Which stakeholders (for example employers, trade unions, civil society, learners) are involved in the planning, design, implementation and monitoring of AL initiatives and to what extent there is a wide participation of relevant players in the different areas of AL governance (high diversity of stakeholders/somehow diverse/not diverse at all)? 4. How well coordinated is the management of AL policies implementation as per the country's institutional arrangements? Are they corresponding to the adopted legal frameworks and do they correspond to a more centralised or decentralised model (very centralised/to a certain extent centralised/decentralised)? 5. How far the recognition, portability and integration of AL outcomes/qualifications are integrated in/linked to national qualification frameworks/national qualification systems (fully integrated/to a certain extent/not integrated at all)? 6. What mechanisms (at national/regional/ at provider level) are in place to ensure the quality of AL provision? How is the monitoring of results implemented and what type of programmes is covered? How is the quality of trainers/facilitators ensured? (fully covered/to a certain extent/not covered at all) 	
<p>Chapter 3. Adult learning provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adult learning programmes (main existing formal and non-formal programmes, complementary services such as outreach, coaching, career guidance and validation of skills including the broader range of learners, objectives and relation to upskilling and reskilling initiatives, types of provision, recent initiatives in the AL domain for specific target groups, skills acquisition). ▪ Adult learning provision (Size of the provision, number of enrolled learners, completion of the programmes). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What types of AL programmes are currently available (formal and non-formal), and what are their primary objectives and target groups? To what extent does the AL provision match the needs of different groups of adult learners and address the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion (fully matches/partially matches/ not matches at all)? 2. Which are the current providers of AL and are there significant differences between formal and non-formal provision? How attractive are the existing programs (formal and non-formal)? Are there significant gaps in AL provision (highly attractive / moderately attractive / not attractive at all)? 	<p>Desk-review Interviews Statistical data analysis</p>
<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main findings ▪ Main successes, what is working well, as well as challenges identified at each level (chapters 1, 2, 3) ▪ Specificities of AL findings, perspectives in AL, source of policy learning ▪ One to a maximum of three conclusions to be highlighted. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the main findings in each of the three dimensions. 2. What indicates progress (a new law under preparation, more funding for AL, government calling non-state actors to mobilise and contribute to AL, very successful programmes, etc.)? 3. What remains as a (old) challenge, or what are the emerging challenges? 4. Do the findings in 1, 2 and 3 support the study assumption that AL is recognised as a priority and 	<p>Expert's own analysis, based on key qualitative and quantitative information collected through desk research and interviews</p>

Chapters	Guiding questions [1]	Sources/ methods
	<p>there is progress?</p> <p>5. What are the sources of 'policy learning' (sources of inspiration: neighbours, EU countries, international practices, etc.)</p>	

[1] These guiding questions were used as a checklist for authors to use while drafting the different sections of the reports, in particular in the 'Conclusions' section of each Chapter, i.e. 'State of play' section.

ANNEX II – LIST OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Institution/organisation	Interviewee
Centre of Excellence in Services and Food Processing	Director
National Confederation of Employers	Executive Director
National Employment Agency (ANOFM)	Director
ÎCS 'Premier Energy Distribution' SA	Director, Resource Department
DVV International	Director Regional Director

Source: Author

ANNEX III – ADULT LEARNING PROVIDERS

CSO/Organisation/Initiative	Main activities related to AL / non-formal education	Notes and region
DVV International Moldova ²¹	Leading CSO in AE sector; supporting ALE centres, developing AE projects, advocacy, capacity building for non-formal education and working with local authorities to expand access.	National, with focus also in Chişinău and some rural outreach
Municipal Centre for Adult Learning and Education, Chişinău (CMIEA ²²)	Offers free/non-formal courses to adults (languages, digital skills, professional and civic skills, etc.), particularly for vulnerable groups. Supported by DVV, city hall. Over 6,000 direct beneficiaries in its first two years.	Chişinău (capital city)
Pro Didactica	Civil society organisation involved in policy advocacy; developing training programmes (for example in digital pedagogy, green skills) under ALE, awareness raising, contributing to EAEA country reports.	National level
East Europe Foundation ²³ (EEF)	Works on social entrepreneurship, community development, vulnerable groups; while not exclusively AL, some of its projects include capacity building, skills training, digital solutions, non-formal education elements.	National / rural regions included
HEKS/EPER Moldova	Offers grants to CSOs to promote employment, skills development, social cohesion, especially among refugees and host communities; includes flexible non-formal learning / training components in these grants.	Various regions, especially host-refugee communities etc.
ANTEM ²⁴ (National Association of European Trainers of Moldova)	Provides language training (for national minorities and foreigners), trainer training, develops materials; one of its roles is helping with integration, bilingual education, especially for adult learners in minority contexts.	National, 30 urban and rural regions
FED Moldova ²⁵ (Foundation for Education and Development - Moldova)	Works in education, youth, development; provides awareness, training programmes, research; focuses on civil society strengthening, improving quality of life through AE components among its educational programmes.	
AICE ²⁶ (Academy for Innovation and Change through Education)	Non-profit focusing on innovative educational programmes, LLL, teacher/student networks, digital technology integration, civic engagement, gender equality.	
PBN ²⁷ (Pro-Business Nord)	Offers training, consulting, social programme support for NGOs, SME sector and individuals; provides capacity development in adult/continuing education and non-formal learning environments.	
APSCF ²⁸ (Alliance of NGOs active in the field of Social Protection of Children and Family)	Although more focused on children/family and inclusive education, policy advocacy work here also contributes indirectly to AL (through inclusive education, rights, community awareness).	

²¹ <https://www.dvv-international.org.ua/moldova/profile>.

²² <https://www.chisinau.md/>.

²³ <https://eef.md/en/tenders-and-contests/477>; (eef.md), (eef.md).

²⁴ <https://antem.org/despre-noi/>.

²⁵ <https://fed.md/>.

²⁶ <https://aice.md/>; (aice.md).

²⁷ <https://pbn.org.md/en/>.

²⁸ <https://aliantacf.md/en/projects/2020/09/04/civil-society-for-the-right-to-education-for-all-children-in-moldova/>; (aliantacf.md).

ANNEX IV – INSTITUTIONAL ROLES OVER QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR ADULT LEARNING

Institution	Monitoring of implementation of Education Code and relevant regulations	Monitoring of remedial education and advisory/mentoring/professional supervision	Professional supervision / oversight of non-formal AE	Inspection supervision and quality oversight over AE and VNFIL providers
Ministry of Education and Research	Primary responsibility for national-level implementation, issuing orders, policy, legal framework and strategic oversight of the Education Code (incl. AE regulation GD 222/2024). Leads NQF/VNFIL policy and national pilots.	Sets national guidance and methodologies for remedial education, funds/coordinates national programmes and issues methodological notes for advisory/mentoring interventions. Monitors implementation via reports from subordinate bodies.	Defines national rules for non-formal provision; approves regulations and quality mechanisms for continuing education. Coordinates national registers and policy for non-formal provision.	Responsibilities exercised through delegated bodies (inspection services, LLL service, ANACEC, NQF dept). MER receives monitoring reports and issues corrective policy measures.
National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research (ANACEC)	Contributes to national QA policy implementation in vocational, higher and continuing education by external evaluation and accreditation frameworks.	Provides standards and external evaluation tools which apply to institutions engaged in remedial and in-service training; may advise on mentoring / instructional quality practices.	Carries out external evaluation/accreditation of continuing education providers and programmes where its mandate covers continuing education. Promotes QA culture and guidelines.	Undertakes external evaluation and accreditation processes (institution/programme level) that serve as formal quality oversight (complementing inspection).
Inspectorate (Regional / National school inspectorate / Inspection service under MER)	Implement inspection plans and verify legal compliance of educational institutions with the Education Code and Ministry orders (inspections, monitoring visits).	Conducts direct professional supervision of teachers and institutions, monitors remedial education implementation on the ground (mentoring, advice), and compiles inspection findings to MER.	May inspect and supervise non-formal activities delivered by public institutions and some accredited providers; scope depends on provider type and delegation.	Carries out inspection visits, prepares reports and can recommend measures for non-compliant providers; complements ANACEC accreditation.
National Agency for Curriculum and Assessment ²⁹	Responsible for curriculum and evaluation methodologies; ensures implementation of approved curricula and monitoring related to curricular changes (applicable when AL uses national programmes).	Develops evaluation instruments and guidance for remedial interventions; supports methodological capacity for advisory/mentoring practice.	Provides curricula / evaluation guidance used by non-formal adult programmes when aligned with national standards and examinations.	Indirect: supplies evaluation frameworks used by inspectors and accreditation bodies for oversight.

²⁹ <https://ance.gov.md/>.

Institution	Monitoring of implementation of Education Code and relevant regulations	Monitoring of remedial education and advisory/mentoring/professional supervision	Professional supervision / oversight of non-formal AE	Inspection supervision and quality oversight over AE and VNFIL providers
NQF Department / Registry of National Qualifications available on the SIME (Education Management Information System) platform	Technical custodians of the NQF, registration of qualifications and procedures for VNFIL; ensure the Education Code's provisions on validation are operational.	Define procedures and quality criteria for VNFIL and ensure that validation pathways for remedial learning meet NQF standards.	Develop technical rules and assessment criteria for VNFIL; maintain registers of standards and approved VNFIL providers.	Provide the technical basis and registers used by ANACEC and inspectors to check that providers and VNFIL procedures comply with national qualifications rules.
Local public authorities and Adult Learning Centres / VET Institutions (providers)	Implement national rules locally; must respect provisions of the Education Code and any Ministry/ANACEC/Inspectorate decisions.	Provide remedial/advisory/mentoring services, conduct internal professional supervision of staff and report to inspectorates and Ministry as required.	Deliver non-formal AL; responsible for internal QA, learner assessment and for participating in NQF/VNFIL procedures if offering validation.	Subject to inspection and accreditation; must be registered/accredited where required and comply with NQF/VNFIL technical rules.
NGOs, private providers, employers, sectoral/social partners	Participate in implementation (delivery, pilot projects, outreach); contribute to policy consultations.	Often provide mentoring, workplace-based remedial training and guidance; can be involved in professional supervision partnerships.	Deliver non-formal offers and can act as VNFIL assessment partners where recognised; must follow national validation protocols when involved in VNFIL.	May be subject to programme-level QA requirements; their role in oversight is usually contractual or regulated via accreditation/recognition mechanisms.

Source: Author

ANNEX V – INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, GOVERNANCE AND ROLES IN ADULT LEARNING

Dimension	Main institutions / actors	Roles and responsibilities
Policy and strategic direction	MER (lead for LLL and qualifications), with policy input from MLSP	Develops national AL/LLL policy, sets regulatory framework and standards (including the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)). Coordinates design of AL programmes and their alignment with formal qualifications.
Coordination and institutional governance	Inter-ministerial coordination (MER + MLSP + MEDD + Ministry of Agriculture + other line ministries + Ministry of Finance where relevant), sectoral working groups and specific project steering committees (donor- / project-led).	Coordinate cross-sectoral issues (education, employment, social protection). Chair or host national working groups for VET/AL reforms and donor-supported initiatives; supervise implementation of AL policies and reforms.
Funding and delivery for unemployed / active labour measures	ANOFM, Ministry of Finance,	Administers vouchers/grants and funds for vocational training of unemployed, organises career guidance via ANOFM territorial offices, and co-finances some AL measures (voucher schemes, monthly training grants for the unemployed).
Quality assurance, qualifications and standards	ANACEC; NQF (MER led).	External evaluation and accreditation of institutions and programmes (including CVET, micro-qualifications). Establishes quality culture, aligns NQF with EQF and defines learning outcomes/levels.
Provider registration, reporting and legal obligations	All AE/ professional training providers (public and private VET institutions, universities, AE Centres, private training companies, NGOs, workplace trainers) regulated by MER requirements.	Providers must notify MER before starting adult/professional training activities and submit activity reports periodically. Deliver formal and non-formal AL programmes, validation of prior learning (where applicable), outreach to adults.
Network of providers – public and specialised centres	VET institutions including Centres of Excellence, higher education institutions, municipal AL centres, private training providers, NGOs (DVV International, Prodidactica, AED, local CSOs), CCI, companies providing workplace training.	Deliver training across levels (short courses, retraining, qualifications). Centres of Excellence pilot innovations and improved equipment/teaching methods; CCI and employers support dual VET, company-based training and in-company mentor training.
Career guidance, outreach and AL support services	ANOFM (territorial career guidance offices), municipal services, NGOs, guidance networks (Euroguidance30 linkages).	Provide counselling and information to adults, support re-training and labour market insertion, run outreach and referral to training providers.
Social partners and inclusion actors	Employers' organisations, trade unions, local authorities, NGOs (including organisations working with disadvantaged groups), international partners (ETF, ILO, UN, EU, bilateral donors).	Identify skills demand, co-design programmes, support apprenticeship / dual approaches, promote inclusive access of disadvantaged adults (women, rural populations, persons with disabilities, refugees).
Monitoring, data and reporting	MER, ANACEC, ANOFM, national statistics / sector monitoring units, donor project monitoring units.	Monitor AL participation, programme outcomes, qualifications issued, feed results into policy adjustments and funding decisions.

Source: Author

³⁰ <https://euroguidance.eu/guidance-system-in-moldova>

ANNEX VI – TYPES AND KEY ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES

AL type / programme	Target group(s)	Key features / purpose	Link to policy or ALMPs etc.
Professional training / retraining / upskilling / reskilling via the ANOFM and VET institutions	Unemployed adults, people seeking to change jobs or re-enter labour market	Short-term vocational courses (several months) to provide national certificates; job placement support often included.	Linked to ALMPs; supports labour market integration.
Micro-credentials / short courses	Adults needing specific, flexible skills (e.g. digital, green skills)	Short duration, more flexible / modular content; designed for upskilling or re-orientation.	Recently promoted via projects (e.g. ILO, UN projects) to adapt to changing labour demands.
Non-formal adult learning courses via providers (NGOs, municipal AL centres, etc.)	Various adults: unemployed, those working but wanting to improve competencies, retirees, etc.	Courses in foreign languages, accounting, photography, public speaking, digital literacy, life skills. Usually, non-certified or low-level certification.	
Life skills / civic / health / social inclusion programmes	Often youth or marginalised adult groups; also, older adults	Programmes to build life skills, healthy lifestyles, social inclusion, digital inclusion, active ageing. For example, 'Decisions for a Healthy Lifestyle' course in VET; 'Active Ageing and Digital Inclusion Platform.'	Supported and promoted by UNFPA-Moldova
Green skills / sustainable transition training	Adults and workers, including informal workers, for emerging sectors	Development of curricula and programmes for green jobs (renewable energy sector) to align with national / international climate goals.	Supported and promoted by ILO
CPD for educators / VET / teachers	Teachers in VET and other education staff, including AE practitioners	Accredited training, updating pedagogical / digital skills / life skills teaching capacity, especially for new courses like healthy lifestyle, etc.	Supported and promoted by UNFPA-Moldova

ANNEX VII – SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR ADULT LEARNING

Source of funding	Description	Legal/Regulatory basis
State budget	Central government allocations for AE programmes.	Education Code (Law No 152/2014), Labour Code (Law No 154/2003, Article 123(3)), Law 105/2018, Government Decision No 222/2024
Local budgets	Funding from municipal and local authorities for community-based AL initiatives.	Government Decision No 222/2024
External project funding	Financial support from international organisations and donors for specific AE projects.	International cooperation agreements, donor-funded projects
Private contributions	Tuition fees, donations and sponsorships from individuals and legal entities.	Education Code (Law No 152/2014), Government Decision No 222/2024
Employer contributions	Funding from employers for employee training and professional development programmes.	Labour Code (Law No 154/2003, Article 123(3)), typically based on employer-employee agreements and labour market needs.

Source: Author

ANNEX VIII – VET IN MOLDOVA

VET programme (type)	Type of qualification / certification awarded	NQF / EQF level ³¹	Duration (years)	Main provider(s)	From age
Secondary initial VET, upper secondary VET	Vocational Certificate enabling entry to labour market and access to post-secondary VET	NQF level 3	2–3 years depending on trade	VET schools, Centres of Excellence	15–16+ (after lower secondary / gymnasium).
Post-secondary VET	vocational diploma/ professional qualification (specialised technician)	NQF levels 4	2-4 years (varies by specialisation).	VET colleges, Centres of Excellence	16+/18+ (after lower secondary / gymnasium/ secondary VET or baccalaureate/ high school)
Post-secondary non-tertiary VET	vocational diploma / professional qualification (specialised technician)	NQF level 5	2-3 years (programme dependent)	VET colleges, Centres of Excellence, specialised institutions	18+ (entry after upper secondary / vocational secondary/ baccalaureate/ high school)
Continuous VET / Continuing professional education (CVET) for adults' short courses, upskilling modules	Certificates of completion; sometimes accredited CPD certificates; can lead to partial/full qualifications if validated	Formal and non-formal; some programmes are aligned to NQF levels	Weeks to months (short courses) or modular accumulation towards formal qual.	Public VET provider CPD units, private training centres, employers, NGOs, ANOFM	18+ (adults)
Dual VET	VET Certificate/ VET diploma	NQF 3/4/5 (depending on programme)	2–3 years typically (workplace + school).	VET schools in partnership with enterprises (companies host apprentices).	15–18+ depending on entry route
VNFIL leading to certification	Recognition decisions / certificates that can give full or partial credit towards an NQF qualification; formal qualifications issued when validation meets NQF standards	NQF levels 3–5 depending on competence	Process length varies (assessment, portfolio, testing); weeks–months	Validation centres	18+ (adults)
Micro-credentials and short modular programmes (emerging practice)	Micro-credential certificate; sometimes stackable towards NQF-recognised units	Typically, below full NQF level	Days to months (short modular)	Public and private providers, donor projects (ILO, EU, UN), VET institutions, universities	18+ (adults/workers)

³¹ NQF aligned with EQF 1:1

ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AL	Adult learning
ALMP	Active labour market policies
ANACEC	National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research
ANOFM	National Employment Agency of the Republic of Moldova
CCI	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CPD	Continuing professional development
CSOs	Civil society organisations
CVET	Continuous vocational education and training
DVV International	Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband)
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GD	Government decision
GDP	Gross domestic product
ICT	Information and communication technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
LLL	Lifelong learning
MEDD	Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation of the Republic of Moldova
MER	Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova

MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova
NEET	Not in education, employment, or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational education and training
VNFIL	Validation of non-formal and informal learning

REFERENCES

- ANACEC (National Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Research) (2024). *Mandate, strategy and quality assurance for continuing education*, Chişinău. Available at: <https://anacec.md>.
- Cedefop / ETF (2021). *Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) Regulation, Orders No 309 and 310/2021*, Thessaloniki.
- ETF / EU / National Partners (2023–2024). *Project reports and awareness activities on adult learning and VET in Moldova (2023–2024)*. ETF, Turin. Available at: <https://countryreport.eaea.org>.
- European Commission (2020). *European Skills Agenda for Sustainable Competitiveness, Social Fairness and Resilience*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- Eurydice (European Commission / EACEA) (2024–2025). *Legislation and ongoing reforms — Republic of Moldova (Education 2030; adult education)*, Brussels. Last accessed 2025 at: <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu>.
- Expert-Grup (2024). *Raportul de Stare a Țării 2024*, Chişinău. Available at: <https://expert-grup.org>.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova (2003). Labour Code No 154/2003. Chişinău. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=142356&lang=ro.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova (2014). *Education Code of the Republic of Moldova, Law No 152/2014*. Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova. Chişinău. Available at: https://edu.gov.md/sites/default/files/education_code_final_version.pdf.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova (2018). Law No 105/2018 on the Promotion of Employment and Unemployment Insurance. Chişinău. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=135224&lang=ro.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova (2023). *Government Decision No 114/2023 regarding the approval of the Education Development Strategy 2030 and its implementation programme*. Chişinău. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=136600&lang=ro.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova (2024). *Government Decision No 222/2024 regarding the approval of the Regulation on Adult Education*. Chişinău. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=142707&lang=ro.
- Government of the Republic of Moldova (2025). *Government Decision No 251/2025 approving the Reform Agenda under the Growth Plan 2025–2027 of the Republic of Moldova*. Chişinău. Available at: https://gov.md/sites/default/files/media/documents/sedinte-de-guvern/2025-05/NU-251-MDED-2025_0.pdf.
- Ministry of Digitalisation (Republic of Moldova) (2023). *Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2030*. Government of the Republic of Moldova. Chişinău. Available at: <https://mded.gov.md/transparency/digital-transformation-strategy-2023-2030/>.
- Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2022). *Order No 885/2022 – Regulation on the Certification of Professional Competences Corresponding to NQF Levels 3, 4 and 5 Acquired in Non-formal and Informal Learning Contexts*. Chişinău: MER. Available at: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=142707&lang=ro.
- Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2023). *Order No 1066/2023 — Practical Guide on the Certification of Professional Competences Corresponding to NQF Levels 3, 4 and 5 Acquired in Non-formal and Informal Learning Contexts*. Chişinău : MER. Available at : <https://mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/1066.pdf>.
- Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2023). *Order No 1021/2023 — Regulation on the Certification of Professional Competences Corresponding to NQF Level 6 Acquired in Non-formal and Informal Learning Contexts*. Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2024). Order No 8/2024 — Regulation on Continuous Professional Development for Teaching Staff. MER, Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2024–2025). *Acts and Ordinances related to adult learning, validation and CPD*. MER, Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2025). *Order No 1834/2025 — Methodology for the Development of General Education and Adult Vocational Education and Training Programmes within Lifelong Learning*. MER, Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2025). *Order No 962/2025 — Practical Guide for the Development and Implementation of Micro-credential Programmes*. MER, Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2025). *Order No 572/2025 — Methodology on the Requalification of Teaching Staff and the Validation of Professional Competences for Appointment to Teaching Positions in Early Childhood, Primary, Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary Education*. MER, Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova (MER) (2025). *Order No 222/2024 — Model of the Professional Competence Certificate by NQF Levels, Issued upon Completion of Adult Vocational Training Programmes*. MER, Chişinău. Available at: <https://mecc.gov.md>.

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) (2022). *National Employment Programme 2022–2026*. MLSP, Chişinău. Available at: <https://social.gov.md/en/communication/press-news/increasing-womens-employment-and-expanding-the-employment-rate-of-people-with-disabilities-priorities-of-the-national-employment-programme-2022-2026/>.

National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) (2025a). *Final results of the 2024 Population and Housing Census*. NBS, Chişinău. Available at: https://statistica.gov.md/en/final-results-of-the-2024-population-and-housing-census-geographical-10121_61953.html.

National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) (2025b). *Labour Force Survey: Q1 2025 results*. NBS, Chişinău. Available at: https://statistica.gov.md/index.php/en/labour-force-employment-and-unemployment-in-2025-9430_62388.html.

National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) (2025c). *Youth NEET in the Republic of Moldova, Q4 2024*. NBS, Chişinău. Available at: https://statistica.gov.md/en/youth-neet-in-the-republic-of-moldova-for-the-fourth-quarter-of-2024-9430_61705.html.

National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) (2025d). *Poverty and Inequality – Key Indicators 2024*. Available at: https://statistica.gov.md/en/statistic_indicator_details/58.

National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS) (2025e). *Employment and Unemployment in the Republic of Moldova, Q1 2025*. NBS, Chişinău. Available at: https://s.statistica.gov.md/en/statistic_indicator_details/1.

UNDP and NBS (2024). *Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty in the Republic of Moldova in 2022 (Analytical Report)*. NBS and UNDP, Chişinău. Available at: https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-11/mpi-statist_en.pdf.

UNFPA Moldova (2024). *Second set of data results of the 2024 Population and Housing Census: Demographic, migration and household characteristics*. UNFPA, Chişinău. Available at: HY

United Nations Moldova (2025). *Report assessing adults' digital skills in rural areas paves way for more inclusive policies*. UN Moldova, Chişinău. Available at: HY