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GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

2024 - 2029

**Elaborated and implemented by the
Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) “Viitorul”**

**Approved by the Executive Director,
Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) “Viitorul”**

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**December 2023
Chisinau, Republic of Moldova**

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1. Background

In 2023, there is a lack of advancement in gender equality in Moldova. Despite previous years showing progress in ensuring gender equality in socio-economic and political aspects, a minor setback is observed in 2023. The average level of equality between women and men, assessed across six strategic areas, is now at 61 points, marking a decrease of 1 point compared to the preceding year.

In 2023, there has been regression in four out of six analyzed areas regarding the promotion of gender equality. Specifically, there is a decline in equality scores for the domains of politics, access to resources, health, as well as perceptions and stereotypes. Over the past two years, significant changes have occurred in political positions, leading to the termination of mandates for several deputies.

Regarding access to resources, the disparity in income between women and men remains substantial, standing at a significant 13.6%. Concurrently, the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a heightened inequality in earnings from non-agricultural individual activities between women and men.

In 2021, Moldova secured a position of 28th out of 156 countries on the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index, with a score of 0.77 points. This represents a noteworthy improvement of 0.55 points compared to the 2006 assessment.

Moldova has officially endorsed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Concurrently, there is an ongoing effort to progressively revise laws and policies with the goal of eliminating key obstacles hindering women's engagement in the workforce.

The foundational structure for fundamental rights is extensively established, and the government has firmly committed to fulfilling its international human rights obligations. Notably, significant strides have been taken to implement the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Specifically, the government has reinforced the mandates of the Equality Council and the People's Advocate, and initiatives have been adopted to enhance gender equality and support for the Roma community. However, individuals belonging to minorities, those with disabilities, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ) individuals, and the Roma community, encounter persistent discrimination, particularly in the labor market.

Furthermore, conditions within prisons surpass their intended capacity, necessitating improvement. Challenges such as overcrowding, inadequate access to medical care, and a lack of reporting or investigation into potential mistreatment and violence remain largely unaddressed.

Despite advancements, gender disparities endure, and societal norms and stereotypes related to gender continue to exert influence. Women involved in politics and female candidates experience smear campaigns, hate, and sexist rhetoric during electoral campaigns. The labor market still witnesses an underrepresentation of women, attributed to the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deeply ingrained stereotypes. Women belonging to vulnerable groups, such as Roma women, women with disabilities, and rural women, face even lower rates of employment in the job market, primarily due to intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion.

2. The experience of the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) “Viitorul” in this field

The IDIS “Viitorul” was established in June 1993 in Moldova. Positioned as a not-for-profit, public-benefit organization, IDIS is a liberal think tank, which is not affiliated to the government or to any political party. We see our mission to contribute to the growth of independent thinking environment in Moldova and in other emerging democracies; to assist the creation of a modern, viable and open market-economy, to assist the expansion of the civil society in which the citizens act together to express their own interests, to exchange information and to strive for mutual goals and influence government. We cooperate with different organizations as well as government institutions when this corresponds to our values and goals. We have forged several linkages between the academic and policy-making environments, generating policy analysis and recommendations for various areas of public interest, creating and disseminating of the best practices, good governance, and economic analysis. It has acquired several memberships in professional associations, such as EPIN (Economic Policy Institutes Network) and PASOS (Policy Association of the Open Society Network).

We believe in the moral argument of liberal democracy, free markets and peaceful cooperation as an incentive for long-lasting transformation in the South East Europe. Only through liberal democracy and free market can Moldova and other countries of the region achieve dignified, peaceful and prosperous life. Regional cooperation with similar think tanks from Moldova, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and other countries of the EU and South Eastern Europe is crucial for achieving these goals.

We undertake professional research, but also broad public discussion at different levels, and public awareness campaigns. Our societies should learn how to face their problems and look for their adequate remedies; rather than follow paths defined by others, or display a reactive approach. Please see below some examples of IDIS activities related to the gender field:

Gender equality and advancement of women: The Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul", in partnership with the Lithuanian Embassy in the Republic of Moldova, implemented in 2019 the initiative to promote women's success stories in the economic and social field at the national level "Regional Development through Equal Involvement". The project aimed to support regional development by encouraging women's social and economic activities and mainstreaming gender equality in local communities of the Republic of Moldova. The project consisted in identifying, promoting, and appreciating women's success stories in the economic and social fields, in order to make visible the achievements of women in all regions of the Republic of Moldova by ensuring equal rights and opportunities for all. The project, which has publicized women's remarkable experiences and achievements, stimulating motivation to produce innovation and change in the community, will give participating women public recognition for their economic and social successes.

In this regard, businesswomen, successful businesswomen, and those who have brought change to the community through their example and leadership involvement were honored for their expertise at a national ceremony. Women entrepreneurs and leaders from the development regions of the Republic of Moldova participated in two sections of the competition with 53 success stories: 1. Female Entrepreneurship; 2. Community Leadership. Ten grand prizes and eight mentions were awarded at the Women's Success Stories Award Ceremony. The participants received trophies and diplomas. All the women's success stories can also be found in the [Women's Success Stories Anthology](#).

The project also held open days, posters promoting women's success stories online, and other actions aimed at helping to ensure women's genuine and equal participation in the country's regional development.

Prevention of violence against girls and women: More than 700 people participated in activities to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women and girls in the innovative pilot project "A better future for young people in educational institutions, youth centers, and organizations" (implemented in 2021/2022). The target group consisted of pupils / students, young women / young men, aged 18-35, including teachers / professors, facilitators / facilitators, psychologists / psychologists, from 18 educational institutions, youth centers, and organizations from different districts of the Republic of Moldova.

The project carried out at the initiative of UN Women Moldova and implemented by IDIS with financial support from Sweden, aimed to use state-of-the-art virtual reality (VR) technologies. The pilot project consisted of round tables and discussions on the phenomenon of gender-based violence with experts from IDIS "Viitorul". VR glasses were tested during the activities and the people who were trained in this test experienced an artificial environment simulating reality. The exercise aimed to improve young men and women's knowledge about the difference between sexual harassment and flirting, about the consequences of harassment and to lead to the creation of healthier attitudes of boys and men towards girls and women. The ultimate goal was to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls and eradicate gender-based violence.

To strengthen the skills of a group of up to 30 active women leaders from underrepresented groups (Romani women, women representing ethnic minorities, women with disabilities, etc.) to advocate and to promote gender equal, financed by UN Women

Tasks:

- Preparatory work, including: dissemination of the call for applications and information regarding existing situation in the women from underrepresented groups in politics and decision-making area and on the importance of their participation in decision-making and as advocates for gender equality
- Design and delivery of 3 training sessions (2-day long) on different topics for up to 30 active women leaders from underrepresented groups, as well as to carry out in the last (second) day of training sessions informative visits to key institutions for the same groups of participants in order to facilitate the dialogue between women from underrepresented groups and duty-bearers aimed to raise the issues met by women and to find solutions for solving, also to create relationships for further collaborations.

Raising public awareness on gender balance in the political and business sectors, financed by UNDP with the following Quantitative results:

- 1 policy brief of 12-15 pages elaborated, layout, disseminated (in Romanian)
- 1 policy brief of 12-15 pages elaborated, layout, disseminated (in Russian)
- At least 5 recommendations included in the policy brief
- 600 IDIS subscribers will receive the policy brief by e-mail
- 5 Free Europe shows organized
- 2 public debates with the representatives of the Central, Local Public Administration, NGOs in the field, the Platform for gender equality, donors, mass media, etc. organizer
- 30 people involved in the 2 public debates

- 1 brainstorming organized takes 2 public debates
- At least 5 issues collected in each of the 2 public debates, analyzed and sent to all decision makers concerned.
- 1 public presentation of the policy brief made with about 30 participants
- 5 press releases prepared and distributed to the over 600 IDIS contacts
- 5 press releases placed on the institutional site of IDIS www.viitorul.org, which usually has 500 unique visitors per day
- 10 newsletters (newsletters) developed and disseminated to the over 600 IDIS contacts
- 10 newsletters (newsletters) placed on the institutional site of IDIS www.viitorul.org, which usually has 500 unique visitors per day
- At least 10 success stories of women in the political and economic spheres, as well as serious violations of gender discrimination in the social and economic policy identified

3. Introduction about GEP

The Gender Equality Plan has been developed to identify specific solutions for ensuring gender equality by IDIS “Viitorul”.

The GEP is aimed at ensuring gender equality and providing employees, experts and affiliates experts/partners with equal opportunities and equal treatment.

The GEP begins with a diagnosis of the challenges facing the IDIS “Viitorul” in terms of gender equality. This diagnosis covers the issue of gender equality in the following areas:

1. Organization management;
2. Employment structure;
3. Project management staff;
4. Experts.

In relation to the challenges identified, objectives and actions have been formulated, the implementation of which should lead to the consolidation of good practices and the elimination of barriers to gender equality.

The most important objectives serving to ensure gender equality include:

1. Improving the gender ratio in the management of the IDIS “Viitorul”;
2. Improving the gender ratio in the employment structure;
3. Identifying and eliminating barriers to gender equality;
4. Building the image of the IDIS “Viitorul” as a place that guarantees gender equality.

4. Our vision

Our strategy on gender equality originates from our actions and work over more than 30 years on quality in the workplace and revolves around our objective.

This Gender Equality Plan spells out the organization’s plan to achieve this goal, its scope and the strategic objectives we want to achieve over the next five years. It is intended to be a living document that will be updated regularly to accommodate new actions and developments.

The promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities has been an important topic for IDIS “Viitorul” since the beginning, guaranteeing a gender balance both at the organisational level and within the activities promoted.

Indeed, gender considerations are crucial both to IDIS “Viitorul”’s vision and to the achievement of its mission. We consider equality to be ‘part of the day job’ and an essential part of building a fair and sustainable future for the social economy.

We must expand our focus on workplace flexibility and be more innovative in how we overcome the barriers that gender diverse individuals face. This equality plan acknowledges that “gender equality is about non- discrimination and the protection of fundamental human rights”.

IDIS “Viitorul” takes a leading role in recognizing and valuing the diversity of its staff based on language, cultural background, gender, age, religion, geographical region, sexual orientation, functional disability and socio-economic situation.

This may be explained by the fact that the cooperative model offers a favourable environment for all workers, in particular women, enabling them to work and be very present at work, but also by the fact that social economy and social entrepreneurship are often promoted as models for tackling inequality and promoting social inclusion and cohesion [1-3].

For many years now, IDIS “Viitorul” has been very committed to the fight against gender-based violence. Together with the members of its network and in partnership with other important European players, IDIS “Viitorul” regularly promotes project initiatives to promote and preserve the physical, emotional health, safety and well-being of employees.

IDIS “Viitorul” is dedicated to making an additional effort to achieve a gender-equal company culture, by taking the measures necessary to develop working conditions and a culture in which female, as well as male workers, feel they are welcome, have job satisfaction and experience the organisation as a caring and fair employer.

Despite the long-lasting engagement on this topic, organizational data and consultation with members and staff show that actions to empower women and arrive at a clearer definition of inclusive workplace culture are still needed.

This gender equality plan suggests the development of specific interventions for areas in need of more practical and strategic approaches, in order to ensure the empowerment of gender diverse individuals as a step towards gender equality.

Vision

The primary vision of this GEP is to serve as a tool and framework for enhancing gender equality in the workplace and to enable the integration of gender into organizational practices. IDIS “Viitorul” aims to proactively hold itself up as an example to promote organizational changes in other organizations / institutions.

5. Accountability and Responsibility

1 Ratification
The GEP is ratified at the executive level (board of directors and president) and the equality officer is responsible for ensuring that it is communicated to all staff members
2 Communication
The equality officer has the further responsibility to ensure that employees are aware of the gender equality plan and to initiate corrective action when discrimination is observed or reported.
3 Monitoring
All the while they are on duty, the equality officer has the responsibility to monitor the situation and keep the plan regularly updated to accommodate new actions and developments
4 Data collection
The equality officer is expected to collect data disaggregated by sex and other relevant variables, and to review and reflect on the gender aspects of the respective areas of work. Such action will help ensure the integration of gender considerations in all of IDIS “Viitorul”’s work in different fields.

6. Objectives and actions

Based on the challenges arising from the diagnosis, the following objectives and actions have been formulated.

The most important objectives serving to ensure gender equality include:

1. Improving the gender ratio in the management of the IDIS “Viitorul”;
2. Improving the gender ratio in the employment structure;
3. Identifying and eliminating barriers to gender equality;
4. Building the image of the IDIS “Viitorul” as a place that guarantees gender equality.

I. Improving the gender ratio in the organization management

Achievement of the objective will contribute to increasing the participation of the underrepresented gender group in leadership.

Action 1	Promoting balanced gender representation in the management structure
Measure:	Providing information and promotional campaigns highlighting the importance and value of a balanced gender ratios among managerial staff and at decision-making positions
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS “Viitorul” staff
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 2	Provision of training related to gender balance and equality topics
Measure:	Number of training sessions held to raise awareness of gender equality, equal rights and diversity issues
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers

Target group:	IDIS staff
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

II Improving the gender ratio in the employment structure

Achievement of the objective should ensure gender diversity among staff.

Action 1	Quality analysis of recruitment processes considering gender balance
Measure:	Development of reports concerning analysis of the recruitment process
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 2	Creating standards and guidelines on gender balance in employment
Measure:	Development and formal implementation of standards and guidelines to ensure gender balance and non-discrimination in employment
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 3	Increasing superiors' awareness of the gender ratios in the employment structure of the units managed by them
Measure:	Conducting periodic analyses and preparing relevant reports in the area of human resources at the level of unit management
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

III Identifying and eliminating barriers to gender equality

Achievement of the objective serves to create working conditions conducive to gender balance

Action 1	Diagnosis and regular review of working conditions considering all aspects affecting job satisfaction
Measure:	Implementation of a regular system for employee satisfaction measurement and analysis that takes into account working conditions (including salary)
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 2	Establishment of work-life balance rules
Measure:	Development and formal implementation of work policies and standards fostering work-life balance
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 3	Implementation of modern HR management concepts to support gender balance in promotions
Measure:	Development and formal implementation of career paths, competency models, employee development programmes, and employee periodic evaluation
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

IV. Building the image of the IDIS “Viitorul” as a place that guarantees gender equality

Achievement of the objective is supposed to present the IDIS “Viitorul” as an organization that cares about gender equality and equal rights.

Action 1	Developing awareness of employee rights related to gender equality issues
Measure:	Provision of training to expand awareness on solutions for convenient working conditions
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 2	Promoting projects concerning gender equality issues
Measure:	Number of implemented projects in the scope of gender equality
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

Action 3	Provision of support for individuals experiencing gender discrimination
Measure:	Development and implementation of support for gender balance, including an Anti-Discrimination Procedure
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments

Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)
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Action 4	Developing contacts and interacting with other organizations in Moldova and abroad to promote support for equality and diversity. Exchange of experience and sharing of good practice
Measure:	Participation in projects and national and international conferences on gender equality aspects
Entities responsible:	Board, Human Resources Department, targeted project managers
Target group:	IDIS departments
Implementation period:	2024–2029 (the entire validity period of the document)

IDIS will periodically monitor the process and the progress will be regularly followed through the assessment. Findings from the monitoring exercise will allow to adjust and to improve interventions, so that their results can be optimized.

7. References:

- European Commission. *The European Charter for Researchers*, https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/brochures/am509774cee_en_e4.pdf
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