

UPGRADE

Enhancing Graduates' Employability Tracking in Moldova

EXPLOITATION AND IMPACT MAXIMIZATION PLAN

Deliverable 5.2

GRADUATES'
EMPLOYABILITY
TRACKING



Co-funded by
the European Union



UPGRADE

ENHANCING GRADUATES' EMPLOYABILITY TRACKING
IN MOLDOVA



EXPLOITATION AND IMPACT MAXIMIZATION PLAN

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1. CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

No	Partner name	Acronym	Country	Role
1	Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova	ASEM	Moldova	Coordinator
2	State University of Moldova	MSU	Moldova	Beneficiary
3	“Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University	UPSC	Moldova	Beneficiary
4	Alecu Russo State University of Balti	USARB	Moldova	Beneficiary
5	Cahul State University	CSU	Moldova	Beneficiary
6	Comrat State University	KDU	Moldova	Beneficiary
7	Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova	MER	Moldova	Beneficiary
8	European Institute for Initiatives, Reforms and Education „ASPIRE”	ASPIRE	Moldova	Beneficiary
9	University of Valencia	UVEG	Spain	Beneficiary
10	Technische Hochschule Deggendorf	THD	Germany	Beneficiary
11	“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia	UAB	Romania	Beneficiary



2. INTRODUCTION AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

This Exploitation and Impact Maximisation Plan presents the planned actions for the use and uptake of UPGRADE results and their impact maximisation. In line with the Grant Agreement, the plan incorporates an exploitation timeline, questionnaires for measuring the satisfaction of target groups (TGs) with project outcomes and outputs, and a structured approach to measuring impact at institutional and national levels. The objective of the Exploitation Plan is to primarily approach the project's exploitation by presenting an initial strategy that is being enforced during the project's lifetime.

Exploitation is associated with the use of the project's results at different levels, during and after the implementation of the project. It is related to the necessary action that will bring visibility to the project in order to involve the target groups, end-users, stakeholders and transfer the results/products into their professionals' scope. Exploitation is mostly related to the idea of convincing the key actors to use the main products of a project. Exploitation is closely associated with the sustainability of the project after its conclusion since exploitation activities should ensure that the results of the project are used by its target groups and possibly are transferred to other contexts (e.g. other countries, other pedagogical areas, other sectors).

The UPGRADE exploitation plan describes the expected results from the project and define its best exploitation. Essentially, the exploitation plan includes the identification of the project's audience and strategic objectives, as well as the project and partner level implementation – exploitation activities and objectives.

Aiming to extend the impact of the UPGRADE project, this plan intends to ensure high visibility of project results among target groups and stakeholders, raise general awareness and use of project results.

Exploitation goals are to:

- ✓ Engage different target groups with information adjusted to their needs.
- ✓ Maximise the impact of the project on stakeholders.
- ✓ Raise general public awareness on UPGRADE project objectives.
- ✓ Engage with policy makers and practitioners in the field of dual higher education.
- ✓ Identify complementary models/tools and explore options for synergies & cooperation.



The Exploitation objectives of UPGRADE project are the following:

1. Identification of target groups and stakeholders.
2. Spreading, as effectively as possible, the project's results among relevant stakeholders on a timely basis.
3. Establishing and maintaining mechanisms for effective exploitation of the project results.

The Exploitation and Impact Maximisation Plan is elaborated in English, published in PDF format, and made available both on the UPGRADE project website and on the Trello coordination platform, ensuring full access for all partners and stakeholders.





3. PROJECT DETAILS

3.1. Strategic objective

UPGRADE is following the overarching aim to enhance monitoring university graduates' employability in Moldova, by Month 36.

3.2. Specific objectives

OBI: To promote monitoring the higher education (HE) graduates' employability and build-up national consensus between the key stakeholders involved in PC, by Month 36;

OB2: To enrich and advance the legislative and normative framework on HE graduates' employability at the national and institutional levels in PC, by Month 30;

OB3: To enhance the human capacity of the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova and MDHEIs to monitor graduates' employability, by Month 30;

OB4: To strengthen the capacity of MDHEIs staff to develop and release graduates' employability surveys, to deliver efficient career guidance services and promote the professional insertion of students and graduates in the labour market, by Month 36

3.3. Total cost of the project

The maximum EU grant contribution: 962.909,00 EUR

3.4. Results

1. Graduates' Employability Country profile / Moldova;
2. Pilot Graduates' Employability tracking survey;
3. National Regulation of monitoring the HE graduates' Employability;
4. Methodological guide for creation and operation of the university centres for career guidance and counselling;
5. National Graduate Tracking portal;
6. University regulations on career guidance;
7. HE Graduates' Employability Report;

3.5. Target Audience

UPGRADE primary scope is to consolidate the interest of MD HE society at the national level and of all stakeholder's area playing the role of a comprehensive development Action Plan and calling on for move. During the life of the project, it is expected to develop and deliver all necessary institutional and national framework on graduates tracking, create infrastructure, transfer competences and knowledge to train administrative staff, based on best EU practice and expertise, pilot graduates tracking survey.



The main target groups (TGs):

TG1: Decision making authorities, namely the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) – UPGRADE will help MER to enhance the legislative framework that would allow to design a common approach on tracking HE graduates' employability, which would facilitate to collecting data from all the MD HEIs and, therefore, have a comprehensive picture of how Moldovan educational system complies with the labour market requirements. Moreover, digital tools that are envisaged to be developed in the project (e-portal for Graduates Employability Tracking), that will be managed by the Ministry, will play the role of bridging the transfer of data, storing the data collected from all MD HEIs and represent a shared resource for the Moldovan educational system stakeholders. The Graduate Employability tracking tools (regulation on graduates' employability tracking, updated methodological guide for career centres, pilot graduates' employability survey, HE graduates' employability report) will facilitate the national reform and structural changes. So, the Ministry of Education will strengthen its capacity to re-design and adapt its existing policies at the national level in order to narrow the gap between the education system and labour market needs;

TG2: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – will benefit of a unified approach regarding the graduates employability tracking, a clear legislative framework that will facilitate collecting and transferring data, will learn from EU universities in this regard, will benefit of a consolidated capacity (both in terms of trained human resources, but also improved career centres infrastructure) to track graduates employability, to improve their career guidance services, to develop tools for enhancing their collaboration with firms (dedicated webpages, partnerships, designed surveys for firms, etc.). All these, will strengthen the capacity of HEIs to improve their curricula and to better prepare their students for the labour market;

TG3: Students and Graduates – will benefit of an improved curriculum oriented towards labour market requirements; will benefit from improved career development services, more choices to find an internship and job, etc, and thus, more prepared better for their future jobs;

TG4: Employers– firms invited to project's activities will have the possibility to increase their cooperation with the decision -making authorities (by contributing with inputs to the design of the graduates' employability survey, national regulation for tracking the graduates' employability, etc.) and HEIs (by giving recommendation for improving the curricula, being more visible among students and graduates, finding easier the best prepared graduates and students, etc.)



TG5: Society at large – The results of UPGRADE project will help school graduates to make informed choices about what university/program to follow (having access to the information via e-portal); will motivate HEIs to become more competitive; students and graduates to find easier jobs and become more prepared for the labour market; firms will benefit of better prepared graduates, etc.





4. IDENTIFICATION OF KEY EXPLOITABLE RESULTS (KER):

A key exploitable result is that which has a commercial or social significance. In UPGRADE, these are not limited to legislative framework, therefore, the consortium will exploit dual higher education models, programs, materials and national legislative framework in place.

Table 1. UPGRADE project Key Exploitable Results strategy:

KER No.	Key Exploitable Result	Impact at national, regional level	Impact Assurance
1	Graduates' Employability Country profile / Moldova;	<u>National Level:</u> Provides policymakers with a comprehensive analysis of graduate employability trends, informing the development of targeted education and labor market policies.	<u>Governmental Bodies:</u> The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) will adopt the Country Profile as a foundational document, integrating its findings into national education strategies and policies. This adoption will be accompanied by its publication on official government platforms, ensuring accessibility and transparency.
		<u>HEIs:</u> Universities will utilize the profile to benchmark their performance against national trends, identifying areas for improvement in curricula and student support services.	
		<u>Regional Level:</u> Enables regional education authorities to identify specific employability challenges and opportunities, facilitating localized interventions to improve graduate outcomes.	<u>Students and Graduates:</u> Access to comprehensive data will empower students to make informed decisions about their education and career paths. <u>Employers:</u> Insights from the profile will help employers understand the competencies of graduates, facilitating better alignment between job requirements and graduate skills.
2	Graduates' Employability tracking survey	<u>National Level:</u> Establishes a standardized methodology for collecting data on graduate employment, aiding in the creation of a national database to	<u>Governmental Bodies:</u> MER will standardize the survey methodology, ensuring consistent data collection across all HEIs. The results will inform policy decisions and be disseminated through official channels.



		monitor trends and inform policy decisions.	<u>HEIs:</u> Universities will implement the survey to gather feedback on graduate outcomes, enabling data-driven improvements in academic programs and services.
		<u>Regional Level:</u> Allows universities and regional bodies to assess the effectiveness of their programs in preparing students for the labour market, leading to curriculum adjustments and enhanced career services.	<u>Students and Graduates:</u> Participation in the survey will provide a platform for graduates to share their employment experiences, influencing future educational offerings.
			<u>Employers:</u> Employers will benefit from aggregated data on graduate employability, aiding in workforce planning and collaboration with educational institutions.
3	National Regulation of monitoring the HE graduates' Employability	<u>National Level:</u> Provides a legal framework mandating the systematic tracking of graduate employment outcomes, ensuring accountability and consistency across higher education institutions.	<u>Governmental Bodies:</u> The regulation will be enacted through official legislative processes, mandating all HEIs to participate in graduate tracking activities. MER will oversee compliance and provide guidance for implementation.
		<u>Regional Level:</u> Empowers regional education authorities to implement and oversee compliance with national standards, promoting uniformity in data collection and reporting practices.	<u>HEIs:</u> Universities will align their internal policies with the national regulation, ensuring systematic tracking of graduate outcomes.
			<u>Students and Graduates:</u> The regulation will guarantee that their employment trajectories are monitored, leading to enhanced support services.
4	Methodological guide for creation and operation of the university centres for career guidance and counselling	<u>National Level:</u> Serves as a blueprint for establishing and enhancing career services across universities, contributing to a cohesive national strategy for student employability support.	<u>Employers:</u> Standardized tracking will facilitate partnerships with HEIs, allowing employers to access a pool of well-prepared graduates.
			<u>Governmental Bodies:</u> MER will distribute the guide to all HEIs, incorporating its recommendations into national quality assurance frameworks. Training sessions will be organized to facilitate its adoption.
			<u>HEIs:</u> Universities will establish or enhance career guidance centres based on the guide, providing tailored support to students.



		<p>Regional Level: Assists individual institutions in developing tailored career guidance programs that address regional labour market needs, fostering stronger university-employer linkages.</p>	<p>Students and Graduates: Access to improved career services will assist in career planning and job placement.</p> <p>Employers: Enhanced career centres will serve as liaison points for employers seeking to recruit graduates, fostering stronger university-employer linkages.</p>
5	National Graduate Tracking portal	<p>National Level: Functions as a centralized platform for aggregating and analyzing graduate employment data, facilitating evidence-based policymaking and resource allocation.</p> <p>Regional Level: Provides regional stakeholders with access to relevant data, enabling targeted interventions to address local employment challenges and improve educational outcomes.</p>	<p>Governmental Bodies: The portal will be developed and maintained by MER, serving as the central repository for graduate employment data. It will be integrated with other national databases to streamline data collection and analysis.</p> <p>HEIs: Universities will input and access data through the portal, enabling real-time monitoring of graduate outcomes.</p> <p>Students and Graduates: The portal will provide a platform for graduates to update their employment status, ensuring accurate data representation.</p> <p>Employers: Employers can utilize the portal to identify potential candidates and understand employment trends, aiding in recruitment strategies.</p>
6	University regulations on career guidance	<p>National Level: Aligns institutional policies with national objectives for graduate employability, ensuring a unified approach to career guidance across the higher education sector.</p> <p>Regional Level: Allows universities to adapt regulations to their specific contexts, promoting flexibility while</p>	<p>Governmental Bodies: MER will provide a framework for career guidance regulations, ensuring alignment with national education and employment strategies. Compliance will be monitored through regular evaluations.</p> <p>HEIs: Universities will develop and implement regulations tailored to their institutional contexts, enhancing the effectiveness of career services and aligning them with regional labour market needs.</p> <p>Students and Graduates: Clear regulations will ensure consistent and quality career guidance services across institutions.</p>



		maintaining adherence to overarching national standards.	Employers: Standardized career guidance practices will facilitate employer engagement with universities, streamlining recruitment processes.
7	HE Graduates` Employability Report	National Level: Offers a comprehensive overview of graduate employment trends, informing national strategies to enhance the alignment between higher education and labour market demands.	Governmental Bodies: The report will be published annually by MER, summarizing national trends in graduate employment and informing policy adjustments. It will be made publicly available to ensure transparency.
		Regional Level: Enables regional analysis of graduate outcomes, supporting the development of targeted programs to address specific employment challenges within different areas.	HEIs: Universities will analyze the report to assess the effectiveness of their programs and identify areas for improvement.
			Students and Graduates: Access to the report will provide insights into employment trends, aiding in career planning.
			Employers: The report will offer valuable data on graduate competencies and employment outcomes, informing hiring strategies.



5. IMPACT OVERVIEW

In order to achieve and ensure maximum impact and high visibility of the project results, short term and long-term impact indicators were identified.

5.1. Short-term impact

Table 2. Overview of short-term impact indicators.

Nr.	Short term impact	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
1	Built national consensus on enhancing graduates' employability in Moldova development in Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision making authorities; - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); - Students and Graduates; - Employers; - Society at large 	One report on EU-best practices produced; number of awareness raising events (study visits, roundtables, workshops), number of mass media publications, social network publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Stakeholder Engagement:</u> Active participation of diverse stakeholders—government bodies, higher education institutions (HEIs), employers, alumni, and students—in national forums and workshops focused on graduate employability. - <u>Policy Development:</u> Inclusion of graduate employability objectives in national education and employment strategies, reflecting a unified vision among stakeholders. - <u>Institutional Reforms:</u> Implementation of standardized career guidance services and employability tracking systems across HEIs, aligning institutional practices with national objectives. - <u>Awareness and Attitudinal Shifts:</u> Increased awareness among students and graduates regarding the importance of employability skills, as evidenced by participation in career development programs.



				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative Initiatives: Establishment of partnerships between HEIs and employers to align curricula with labor market needs, facilitating smoother transitions for graduates into employment.
2	Support for PCUs to have the possibility to increase their cooperation with the decision-making authorities and firms in the context of market needs	Employers	Graduates' employability survey designed released; number of trained staff, Regulation for tracking the graduates' employability adopted, etc.);	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Establishment of Collaborative Agreements:</u> Formal partnerships or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) signed between PCUs, governmental bodies, and industry stakeholders to address labor market demands. - <u>Joint Development of Curricula:</u> Co-created academic programs or course modules developed collaboratively by universities and industry representatives to ensure alignment with current market requirements. - <u>Active Participation in Advisory Boards:</u> Inclusion of industry professionals and policymakers in university advisory committees or boards, contributing to strategic planning and decision-making processes. - <u>Implementation of Internship and Apprenticeship Programs:</u> Launch of structured internship or apprenticeship opportunities facilitated by collaborations between universities and firms, providing students with practical experience. - <u>Organization of Collaborative Events:</u> Jointly hosted workshops, seminars, or conferences by PCUs, government agencies, and industry partners



				focusing on bridging the gap between education and employment.
3	Consolidated capacity HEIs to track graduates' employability, to improve their career guidance services, to develop tools for enhancing their collaboration with firms	- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs);	Number of trained personnel, three (3) visits realized, Six (6) career centres set-up and equipped, Six (6) regulations and action plans adopted, etc.;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Implementation of Graduate Tracking Systems:</u> HEIs have established or upgraded systems to systematically monitor and analyze graduates' employment outcomes, enabling data-driven decision-making. - <u>Enhancement of Career Guidance Services:</u> Universities have expanded and improved career counseling services, offering tailored support to students and alumni in navigating the labor market. - <u>Development of Collaborative Tools with Industry:</u> HEIs have created or adopted platforms and mechanisms that facilitate ongoing collaboration with employers, such as joint workshops, internship programs, and feedback systems. - <u>Curriculum Alignment with Market Needs:</u> Academic programs have been reviewed and adjusted to better align with current labor market demands, incorporating practical skills and competencies valued by employers. - <u>Establishment of Employer Advisory Boards:</u> Universities have formed advisory committees comprising industry representatives to provide insights and guidance on aligning educational offerings with workforce requirements.



4	Set up and enhanced capacities of the University Career Guidance and Orientation Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); - Students and Graduates; 	Six (6) career centres set up and equipped, Six (6) regulations on career guidance and procedure tracking the graduates' employability; Six (6) career dedicated web pages developed and maintained, number of students and graduates that benefited of career centres services, etc;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of Structured Career Programs: Implementation of comprehensive career counselling programs, including workshops, seminars, and individualized guidance sessions tailored to student needs. - Active Collaboration with Industry Partners: Career centres have initiated partnerships with employers and industry stakeholders to facilitate internships, job placements, and real-world exposure for students.
5	Advanced legislative and normative framework on HE graduates' employability at the national and institutional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision making authorities; - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); - Students and Graduates; - Employers; - Society at large 	Legislative documents elaborated and adopted: One (1) regulations on monitoring, One (1) methodological guide, One (1) graduates' employability survey, Six (6) Employability reports, One (1) e-portal;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adoption of National Regulations: The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) has adopted and disseminated national regulations mandating standardized graduate employability tracking across all HEIs, ensuring a cohesive approach to monitoring graduate outcomes. - Integration into Institutional Policies: HEIs have revised their internal policies to align with national directives, embedding graduate employability tracking mechanisms and career guidance services into their institutional frameworks. - Stakeholder Engagement in Policy Development: Active involvement of stakeholders—including government bodies, HEIs, employers, and alumni—in the development and refinement of legislative measures has fostered a collaborative environment conducive to effective implementation.



5.2. Long-term impact

Table 3. Overview of long-term impact indicators

Nr.	Long-term impact	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
1	Increased the well-being of the country through the social, economic and sustainable inclusion of students and graduates in the labor market (firms) for which they will be prepared and bring long-term efficiency	- Society at large	At least 200 students and graduates, candidates for university, civil society, number of firms etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Enhanced Graduate Employability</u>: By aligning higher education curricula with labour market demands, graduates acquire relevant skills, leading to improved employment rates and career satisfaction. - <u>Economic Growth and Productivity</u>: A well-integrated workforce contributes to economic development by increasing productivity and fostering innovation within industries. - <u>Social Inclusion and Equity</u>: Inclusive employment opportunities for all graduates, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, promote social cohesion and reduce inequalities. - <u>Strengthened Public-Private Partnerships</u>: Collaboration between educational institutions and employers ensures continuous feedback loops, enhancing the relevance of academic programs and facilitating smoother transitions into the workforce. - <u>Sustainable Development</u>: Long-term strategies focusing on employability support sustainable development goals by ensuring that economic



				growth is inclusive and benefits all segments of society.
2	Developed tools and methodologies for running as first unique graduates' employability tracking survey in the MD PCUs beneficiary of the action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision making authorities; - Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); - Students and Graduates; - Employers; - Society at large 	At least 12 tools and methodologies for running, graduates' employability tracking survey etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Institutionalization of Graduate Tracking:</u> The adoption of standardized tools and methodologies has led to the establishment of systematic graduate tracking processes within PCUs, ensuring consistent data collection and analysis over time. - <u>Enhanced Policy Formulation:</u> Data derived from the tracking surveys inform national and institutional policies, enabling evidence-based decisions to improve higher education curricula and align them with labour market needs. - <u>Strengthened University-Employer Collaboration:</u> Insights from the surveys facilitate deeper engagement between universities and employers, fostering partnerships that enhance curriculum relevance and graduate employability. - <u>Improved Career Services:</u> The methodologies support the development of targeted career guidance services within universities, assisting students in making informed career choices and improving their transition into the workforce. - <u>Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement:</u> The consistent application of these tools allows for benchmarking across institutions, promoting a culture of continuous improvement in educational offerings and graduate outcomes.
3	Facilitated national reform and structural changes of the Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision making authorities; 	Number of Graduate Employability tracking tools: one (1) regulation on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Integration of Graduate Employability Metrics into Policy Frameworks:</u> The MER has incorporated graduate employability indicators



	<p>by strengthen its capacity to re-design and adapt its existing policies at the national level in order to narrow the gap between the education system and labour market needs</p>		<p>graduates' employability tracking, one (1) updated methodological guide for career centres, one (1) pilot graduates' employability survey, six (6) HE graduates' employability report, etc.;</p>	<p>into national education policies and strategic documents, enabling continuous monitoring and alignment of educational outcomes with labor market demands.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <u>Establishment of Inter-Institutional Collaboration Mechanisms:</u> Formalized partnerships and communication channels have been established between the MER, higher education institutions (HEIs), and industry stakeholders to facilitate ongoing dialogue and collaborative policy development.- <u>Implementation of Data-Driven Decision-Making Processes:</u> The MER utilizes data collected from graduate tracking systems to inform policy revisions and the development of educational programs that meet current and projected labor market needs.- <u>Capacity Building within the Ministry:</u> Targeted training and professional development programs have been conducted for MER staff to enhance their skills in policy analysis, strategic planning, and stakeholder engagement related to education and employment alignment.- <u>Adoption of Adaptive Policy Instruments:</u> The MER has developed and implemented flexible policy instruments that allow for timely adjustments to educational programs and curricula in response to evolving labor market trends and economic shifts.
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6. IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Building on the short-term and long-term impact framework presented in Chapter 5, the present chapter sets out the approach and tools used to measure the impact of the UPGRADE project at institutional and national levels. While Chapter 5 defines what types of changes the project aims to generate and for which target groups, this chapter explains how these changes will be monitored, assessed and documented over time. The impact measurement system is designed to provide evidence on the degree to which the project contributes to the four specific objectives (OB1–OB4) and to capture both direct and indirect effects on the higher education and labour market ecosystems in Moldova.

Impact measurement within UPGRADE is closely aligned with the project objectives. It assesses the extent to which the project promotes monitoring of graduates' employability and builds national consensus between key stakeholders (OB1); enriches and advances the legislative and normative framework on graduates' employability at national and institutional levels (OB2); enhances the human capacity of the Ministry of Education and Research and Moldovan HEIs to monitor employability (OB3); and strengthens the capacity of HEI staff to design surveys, deliver career guidance services and support the professional insertion of students and graduates (OB4). In doing so, the impact measurement system distinguishes between direct impact on primary target groups (MER, HEIs, students and graduates, employers) and indirect impact on broader constituencies such as society at large, prospective students and other institutions.

6.1. Institutional-Level Impact Measurement

At institutional level, impact measurement focuses on how UPGRADE outputs are embedded into the practices, processes and structures of Moldovan higher education institutions. A key indicator is the integration of graduate tracking systems in HEIs, assessed by the existence and functionality of institutional procedures, tools and regulations for systematic data collection on graduate outcomes. This includes the use of the graduate employability survey, the regular production of employability reports and the integration of relevant indicators into institutional quality assurance mechanisms.

Another important dimension is the use of data for quality assurance, curriculum development and career services. Impact will be measured by the extent to which HEIs use graduate tracking data to inform programme reviews, redesign curricula, update course content and improve teaching and learning strategies. Evidence will include references to data use in internal QA reports, programme modification decisions and strategic planning documents. The number and type of career centre services implemented using project tools will also be monitored, capturing activities such as counselling sessions, workshops, employer engagement events and targeted guidance services that have been developed or improved as a result of UPGRADE. Additionally, the use of the national portal at institutional level will be tracked, including frequency of access, types of users and the ways



in which HEIs draw on portal outputs to support institutional decision-making and communication with stakeholders.

6.2. National-Level Impact Measurement

At national level, impact measurement examines how UPGRADE contributes to reforms and systemic changes in the governance of graduates' employability tracking. A central indicator is the adoption of national regulations and methodological guides that formalise the monitoring of graduate outcomes across the higher education system. This includes the elaboration, approval and implementation of national regulations on graduate employability tracking, methodological guides for career centres and standardised survey tools, as already outlined in the impact overview.

The use of the national portal by the Ministry of Education and Research constitutes another key indicator, reflecting the extent to which national authorities rely on project-generated tools to analyse graduates' labour market outcomes and inform policy decisions. The integration of graduates' employability indicators in national policies and strategic documents further demonstrates impact, as it shows that data and methodologies developed through UPGRADE are embedded in the broader policy framework. Finally, impact at national level will also be assessed through the use of project reports and analyses in policy debates, consultations and national strategies, including citations in official documents, references in working groups and the involvement of project experts in national discussions on higher education and employment alignment.

6.3. Direct and Indirect Impact on Target Groups

The impact measurement approach differentiates between direct target groups and indirect target groups, reflecting the layered nature of change processes in graduate employability tracking. Direct target groups include the Ministry of Education and Research, higher education institutions, students and graduates, and employers. For these groups, impact will be measured through changes in awareness, practices, capacities and behaviours: for example, MER's use of data for policy-making, HEIs' adoption of tracking mechanisms, students' and graduates' engagement with career services and surveys, and employers' involvement in partnerships and feedback processes.

Indirect target groups include society at large, prospective students, other higher education institutions not directly involved in the project and broader labour market actors. Impact on these groups is expected to materialise through improved transparency of graduate outcomes, better-informed study choices, strengthened public trust in higher education and more evidence-based dialogue between education and employment sectors. These effects will be captured through qualitative evidence, secondary data and references to UPGRADE outcomes in broader public debates.



6.4. Data Sources and Tools

To ensure a robust and coherent impact measurement system, UPGRADE relies on multiple data sources and tools. These include project surveys (e.g. satisfaction surveys of target groups, graduate employability survey), institutional and national reports, monitoring tools, administrative data collected by HEIs and MECRM, records of events and trainings, and qualitative feedback obtained through interviews, focus groups and consultation meetings. The data will be collected at different points in time, baseline, mid-term, final and, where feasible, post-project, allowing for comparison and assessment of progress.

The detailed impact measurement framework is presented in Annex 3, Institutional Impact Measurement Matrix and ANNEX 4. National Impact Measurement Matrix, which provides a structured overview of indicators, baseline and target values (where applicable), data sources, responsible actors and measurement frequency. Annex 3 and Annex 4 also clarifies the link between specific outputs and impact indicators, ensuring coherence with the short-term and long-term impact tables outlined in Chapter 5. Together, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 form an integrated impact logic for UPGRADE, demonstrating not only what changes are expected, but also how they will be monitored, evidenced and reported throughout and beyond the project lifetime.



7. EXPLOITATION TIMELINE

Exploitation activities within UPGRADE are planned across the entire project lifecycle and continue beyond its completion. The purpose of structuring exploitation actions along a defined timeline is to ensure that knowledge, tools, methodologies and Key Exploitable Results (KERs) generated by the project are progressively adopted, integrated and institutionalised at both institutional and national levels. This phased approach also ensures that exploitation is aligned with the development of project outputs and the maturation of systems that enable sustainable use of graduate tracking tools, regulations and digital solutions.

The timeline presented below outlines how exploitation actions evolve from preparatory work in the early stages of the project, to piloting and testing in mid-term implementation, and finally to consolidation, institutionalisation and continued post-project use by the Ministry of Education and Research (MER), higher education institutions (HEIs), and other stakeholders.

7.1. Phase 1 (M1–M12): Preparation and Design

During this initial phase, exploitation activities focus on defining the framework, tools and stakeholders necessary for long-term uptake of project results. Key actions include:

- **Identification and mapping of stakeholders** at institutional, national and sectoral levels (MER, HEIs, students, graduates, employers, QA bodies).
- **Definition of Key Exploitable Results (KERs)**, including survey tools, graduate tracking methodology, institutional procedures, digital portal components and regulatory frameworks.
- **Development of the exploitation strategy** and internal guidelines for preparing institutions and national authorities for future adoption and integration of results.
- **Collection of baseline information** to support later impact measurement and exploitation decisions.

This phase establishes the foundation for all subsequent exploitation activities.

7.2. Phase 2 (M13–M24): Pilot Exploitation

The second phase focuses on piloting, testing and validating the tools and approaches developed earlier. This stage is essential for demonstrating the usefulness and applicability of UPGRADE results prior to institutionalisation. Key actions include:

- Pilot use of the graduate employability survey across participating HEIs.
- Initial deployment and testing of the national digital portal for graduate tracking.
- Validation activities for the draft national regulations and methodological guides.
- Integration of project outputs into pilot career services activities at HEIs.
- Collection of feedback from target groups (students, graduates, employers, HEI staff, MER) to refine tools and prepare for large-scale adoption.



This phase strengthens stakeholder ownership and prepares institutions and MER for broader implementation.

7.3. Phase 3 (M25–M36): Consolidation and Institutionalisation

In the final project year, exploitation efforts concentrate on formally embedding UPGRADE results into institutional and national systems, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Key actions include:

- Adoption and implementation of national regulations and methodological guidelines on graduate employability tracking.
- Full institutional integration of graduate tracking tools within HEIs (procedures, responsibilities, survey cycles, QA actions).
- Operationalisation of the national digital portal as a recognised tool for policymaking.
- Development and formal integration of career centre services using project-developed tools and models.
- Preparation of sustainability agreements and post-project operational procedures.

This stage ensures stable and continuous use of project results across Moldova's higher education system.

7.4. Post-Project Period (Beyond M36): Sustained Use and Long-Term Impact

Exploitation does not conclude with the end of the project. Beyond Month 36, key actors are expected to continue using, updating and benefitting from UPGRADE results.

Anticipated actions include:

- Periodic national reporting by MER using the national portal and graduate tracking data.
- Continued annual or biannual use of the graduate survey by HEIs.
- Sustained integration of employability indicators into QA processes, curriculum reviews and institutional planning.
- Further development of digital tools and services based on user feedback and emerging national priorities.
- Dissemination of UPGRADE results to other Moldovan HEIs and regional stakeholders interested in adopting similar systems.



7.5. Overview Table: Key Exploitable Results, Timeline, Responsibilities and Actions

Key Exploitable Result (KER)	Timeframe	Responsible Partner(s)	Main Exploitation Actions
KER1: Graduate Employability Survey & Methodology	M1–M36 and post-project	HEIs, MER, WP2/WP3 teams	Pilot, refine, institutionalise survey cycles; use data for QA, curriculum improvement and career guidance.
KER2: National Digital Portal for Graduate Tracking	M12–M36 and post-project	MER, Coordinating Institution, IT team	Pilot deployment, full operationalisation, integration into national reporting and policymaking.
KER3: National Regulations & Methodological Guide	M10–M36	MER, WP3 team	Validation, adoption, implementation across all Moldovan HEIs.
KER4: Institutional Procedures for Graduate Tracking	M13–M36	All HEIs, WP2/WP4	Pilot institutional procedures, formal integration into HEI regulations.
KER5: Career Centres' Enhanced Services	M18–M36 and beyond	HEIs, WP4 team	Implement guidance tools, run employer engagement actions, embed services institutionally.
KER6: Capacity-Building Modules and Training Materials	M6–M30	HEIs, WP4	Continued training, post-project use in professional development programmes.



8. SATISFACTION OF TARGET GROUPS

Assessment of satisfaction among the project's target groups is an essential component of the UPGRADE exploitation and impact maximisation framework. Measuring satisfaction allows the consortium to understand how key actors perceive the usefulness, usability and relevance of the tools, methodologies, guidelines and services developed under the project. These insights help to ensure that project outputs are not only technically sound but also practically applicable and valued by those who are expected to use, implement or benefit from them. Satisfaction measurement therefore contributes directly to strengthening uptake, improving the quality of deliverables and supporting sustainable long-term use of UPGRADE results.

8.1. Target Groups Covered

The satisfaction surveys cover the main groups that interact with or are affected by the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs). Each group provides different perspectives and forms of feedback essential for evaluating the perceived value and expected future use of the project outcomes:

- (a) **TG1: Ministry of Education and Research (MER)** and policymakers, who assess the strategic relevance, policy alignment and usability of national guidelines, regulations and the digital portal.
- (b) **TG2: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):** management, academic staff and administrative personnel, who evaluate the clarity, applicability and operational usefulness of graduate tracking tools, institutional procedures, capacity-building materials and career guidance services.
- (c) **TG3: Students and graduates**, who provide feedback on the clarity of communication, relevance of surveys, value of career support services and the perceived impact of improved institutional practices.
- (d) **TG4: Employers and labour market representatives**, who assess the usefulness of employer-related components such as feedback mechanisms, survey items, cooperation frameworks and career centre services.
- (e) **TG5: other stakeholders and society at large**, including prospective students, external organisations and public actors, may contribute additional qualitative impressions related to transparency, accessibility and public value of graduate tracking data.

8.2. Dimensions Measured Through the Satisfaction Questionnaires

The surveys included in Annex 1 and Annex 2 assess several dimensions that help determine how effectively UPGRADE outputs respond to the needs of target groups and the extent to which they are likely to be adopted and used in the long term. The questionnaires measure, among others:



- Clarity, relevance and quality of the tools, methodologies, training materials and guidelines developed by the project.
- Usefulness for professional practice, decision-making, policy development, teaching, guidance and student support services.
- Usability and user experience, including ease of application of procedures, tools and the digital portal.
- Perceived benefit, such as contribution to better data, improved services, enhanced decision-making or institutional strengthening.
- Intention to continue using the tools beyond the project lifetime and likelihood of recommending them to others.
- Satisfaction with trainings, workshops and support, including clarity of instruction, practical applicability and perceived improvement in participants' skills.
- Suggestions for improvement, enabling continuous refinement and adaptation of tools and approaches.

These elements ensure a comprehensive assessment of both the quality and perceived usefulness of UPGRADE's deliverables.

8.3. Timing and Use of Satisfaction Surveys

The satisfaction surveys are administered at key stages of the project lifecycle to capture evolving perceptions and to support evidence-based refinement of outputs. Surveys will be conducted:

- After piloting activities, including the test implementation of the graduate survey, institutional procedures and the digital portal.
- After training sessions, workshops and capacity-building activities, to assess the effectiveness and usefulness of the training content.
- At mid-term stages, to gather insights that inform adjustments and optimisation of tools and processes.
- At the end of the project, to evaluate the overall perceived impact, sustainability and readiness for continued use.
- During post-project follow-up (where applicable), to assess sustained satisfaction with tools and their longer-term integration.

Feedback collected at each stage is used to adjust tools, strengthen capacity-building efforts, and support effective exploitation.

The detailed questionnaires used to assess satisfaction of target groups are provided in Annex 1: Survey on Satisfaction of Target Groups (TGs) on Project Outcomes & Outputs and Annex 2: Survey on Measuring Impact at Institutional and National Levels. Annexes 1&2 includes the full survey instruments, tailored to each target group, and serves as the operational tool for collecting data on perceived quality, usefulness and expected sustainability of the project's deliverables.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Target Groups Satisfaction Survey

The following questionnaire templates are designed to assess the satisfaction of the project's primary and secondary Target Groups (TGs) with the tools, methodologies, trainings and services developed within the UPGRADE project. The surveys capture perceptions of usefulness, clarity, relevance, usability and expected sustainability of the project's Key Exploitable Results (KERs). Four tailored survey versions are provided:

- ✓ TG1: Ministry of Education and Research (MER) and policymakers
- ✓ TG2: Higher Education Institutions (HEI managers, academic staff, administrative staff)
- ✓ TG3: Students and graduates
- ✓ TG4: Employers and labour market representatives

The surveys may be administered electronically after trainings, piloting stages, institutional activities, and at the end of the project.

SECTION A — Respondent Information

1. Please, select institution you represent:
 - ☐ Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
 - ☐ State University of Moldova
 - ☐ "Ion Creanga" State Pedagogical University
 - ☐ Alecu Russo State University of Balti
 - ☐ Cahul State University
 - ☐ Comrat State University
 - ☐ Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova
 - ☐ European Institute for Initiatives, Reforms and Education „ASPIRE”
 - ☐ University of Valencia
 - ☐ Technische Hochschule Deggendorf
 - ☐ "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia
2. Please, select your role in the project:
 - ☐ Ministry of Education and Research (MER) / policymaker
 - ☐ HEI management
 - ☐ HEI administrative staff (QA, career centre, international relations, etc.)
 - ☐ Academic staff
 - ☐ Student
 - ☐ Graduate
 - ☐ Employer / labour market representative
 - ☐ Other (please specify)



SECTION B — Satisfaction with UPGRADE Tools, Outputs and Activities

3. Please, rate satisfaction with clarity, relevance and usefulness of project outputs:

Project Output	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Not Applicable
Benchmark report on best practices in monitoring HE graduates' employability in the EU (MS5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirements for the Graduates' Employability Survey (MS6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendations to mainstream monitoring HE graduates' employability at national and university level (MS)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduates' Employability Country Profile / Moldova (D2.1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pilot Graduates' Employability Tracking Survey (D2.2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Operational Plan for National Reform on HE Graduates' Employability (MS8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Requirements for procedures for graduates' employability tracking at university level (MS9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concept of the National Platform for Graduates' Employability (MS10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Regulation on Monitoring HE Graduates' Employability (D3.1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Methodological Guide for University Career Guidance and Counselling Centres (D3.2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D3.3 – National Graduate Tracking Portal (D3.2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University Regulations on Career Guidance Centres, including Action Plans (D4.1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
HE Graduates' Employability Report (D4.2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



4. Please rate your satisfaction with the quality, organisation, relevance and usefulness of the following project tasks and activities carried out within UPGRADE. If you did not participate in or benefit from a specific activity, select "Not applicable".

Project Task / Activity	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Not Applicable
Overall project management and communication (T1.1–T1.7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisation of Consortium Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Study Visits to European Partner Institutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experts' Workshop Nr. 1 (P1-ASEM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experts' Workshop Nr. 2 (P3-UPSC)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International Dissemination Campaign (T5.1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Dissemination Campaign (T5.2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Institutional Dissemination Campaign (T5.3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intensive Workshop Nr. 1 (P1-ASEM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intensive Workshop Nr. 2 (P1-ASEM)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the usefulness, availability and practical relevance of UPGRADE project outputs, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The outputs developed by the UPGRADE project (surveys, regulations, guidelines, portal, reports) are useful and relevant for my institution's or organisation's needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The tools and materials provided through the UPGRADE project are easy to access, well-organised and available when needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The UPGRADE deliverables can be practically applied in my daily work, studies or organisational processes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The project outputs have improved my / our capacity to monitor graduates' employability or support career guidance services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I intend to continue using the tools, guidelines or systems developed by the UPGRADE project after its completion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



SECTION C — Satisfaction with Trainings and Support

6. Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the quality, clarity and usefulness of UPGRADE training activities, workshops and support mechanisms, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The trainings, workshops, study visits and expert sessions organised within the UPGRADE project were clear, well-structured and easy to understand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The capacity-building activities provided practical skills and knowledge relevant to my institutional, professional or academic context.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The project team was responsive and supportive when assistance or clarification was needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The content of the UPGRADE trainings and workshops is applicable and useful for my current or future work, studies or organisational responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION D — Perceived Impact

7. Please, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding the perceived institutional, national and personal impact of the UPGRADE project, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The project contributes to improving graduates' employability monitoring in Moldova.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The tools and systems developed by the project support better data-based decision-making at institutional and/or national levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The project strengthens cooperation between HEIs, the Ministry of Education and Research, employers and other stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The project has improved my capacity or the capacity of my institution/organisation in areas related to graduates' employability monitoring or career services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I expect long-term benefits from the graduates' tracking systems, regulations, methodologies or digital tools developed by the UPGRADE project.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



SECTION E — Intention for Future Use

8. Please, indicate your intention to use or recommend the tools, systems and materials developed within the UPGRADE project after its completion.

Statement	Yes	Probably	Not Sure	Probably Not	No	Not Applicable
I intend to continue using the tools developed by the UPGRADE project (survey, guidelines, portal, training materials).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would recommend UPGRADE tools and materials to colleagues or other institutions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My institution/organisation is willing to integrate UPGRADE tools and procedures into its regular practices (e.g., annual surveys, QA processes, career services).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see clear value in maintaining and updating the national graduate tracking systems and digital portal beyond the project lifetime.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The outputs developed by UPGRADE are sustainable and can continue to be used without external assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SECTION F — Open Feedback

9. What are the most useful aspects of UPGRADE for you or your institution/organisation?
(Free text)

10. What improvements would help better adapt the tools or activities to your needs?
(Free text)

11. Any additional comments or suggestions for strengthening institutional or national impact:
(Free text)



ANNEX 2. Survey on Measuring Impact at Institutional and National Levels

This survey is designed to assess the institutional and national/systemic impact of the UPGRADE project (Enhancing Graduates' Employability Tracking in Moldova, No. 101129166), co-funded by the European Union under the Erasmus+ programme.

It measures the extent to which UPGRADE tools, procedures, regulations, trainings, and platforms have influenced policy reform, institutional practices, capacity-building, cooperation mechanisms, and the overall functioning of the graduates' employability monitoring system in Moldova. Findings from this survey will contribute to:

- Evaluating progress toward project objectives (OB1–OB4),
- Measuring impact on direct and indirect target groups,
- Informing future sustainability and exploitation actions.

SECTION A — Respondent Information

1. Please, select institution you represent:

- ☐ Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova
- ☐ State University of Moldova
- ☐ “Ion Creanga” State Pedagogical University
- ☐ Alecu Russo State University of Balti
- ☐ Cahul State University
- ☐ Comrat State University
- ☐ Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Moldova
- ☐ European Institute for Initiatives, Reforms and Education „ASPIRE”
- ☐ University of Valencia
- ☐ Technische Hochschule Deggendorf
- ☐ “1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia

2. Please, select your role in the project:

- ☐ Ministry of Education and Research (MER) / policymaker
- ☐ HEI management
- ☐ HEI administrative staff (QA, career centre, international relations, etc.)
- ☐ Academic staff
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Graduate
- ☐ Employer / labour market representative
- ☐ Other (please specify)



SECTION B — INSTITUTIONAL-LEVEL IMPACT

3. Please rate the following statements regarding impact on institutional frameworks, policies and procedures on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The UPGRADE project contributed to the integration of graduates' employability tracking procedures within my institution.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UPGRADE-supported regulations and guidelines influenced institutional decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The institution adopted or updated internal procedures based on UPGRADE outputs (D3.2, D4.1).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Data generated through the graduates' survey and portal are used for internal reporting and planning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UPGRADE contributed to improving institutional quality assurance and curriculum relevance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Please rate the following statements regarding impact on Career Guidance and Student Services on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The methodological guide and project trainings improved institutional career guidance practices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New or improved services have been introduced as a result of UPGRADE.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student engagement with career services increased due to project activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff capacity for delivering employability support has increased through project workshops.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please rate the following statements regarding impact on Institutional Use of Data and Digital Tools on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The institution actively uses the National Graduate Tracking Portal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The institution uses survey results to inform strategic or operational institutional decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff regularly access and interpret the data generated through UPGRADE tools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



6. Please describe one concrete improvement in your institution resulting from UPGRADE:

(Open text)

7. What are the remaining gaps or needs to further strengthen graduate tracking at institutional level?

(Open text)

SECTION C— NATIONAL-LEVEL IMPACT

8. Please rate the following statements regarding impact on National Policy, Regulation and Governance on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
UPGRADE contributed to national reforms on graduates' employability monitoring.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National Regulation on monitoring HE graduates was used to inform policymaking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UPGRADE strengthened coordination between MER, HEIs, and labour market actors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outputs of the project are reflected in national conversations and policy debates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please rate the following statements regarding impact on National Policy, Regulation and Governance on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
The National Graduate Tracking Portal is functional and used by stakeholders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The portal supports national-level monitoring and reporting needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
UPGRADE contributed to integrating employability indicators in national monitoring frameworks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National stakeholders (HEIs, employers, ministries) engage with the portal results.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Please describe one major national-level improvement enabled by UPGRADE:

(Open text)

11. What further actions are needed to sustain the national graduate tracking system?

(Open text)

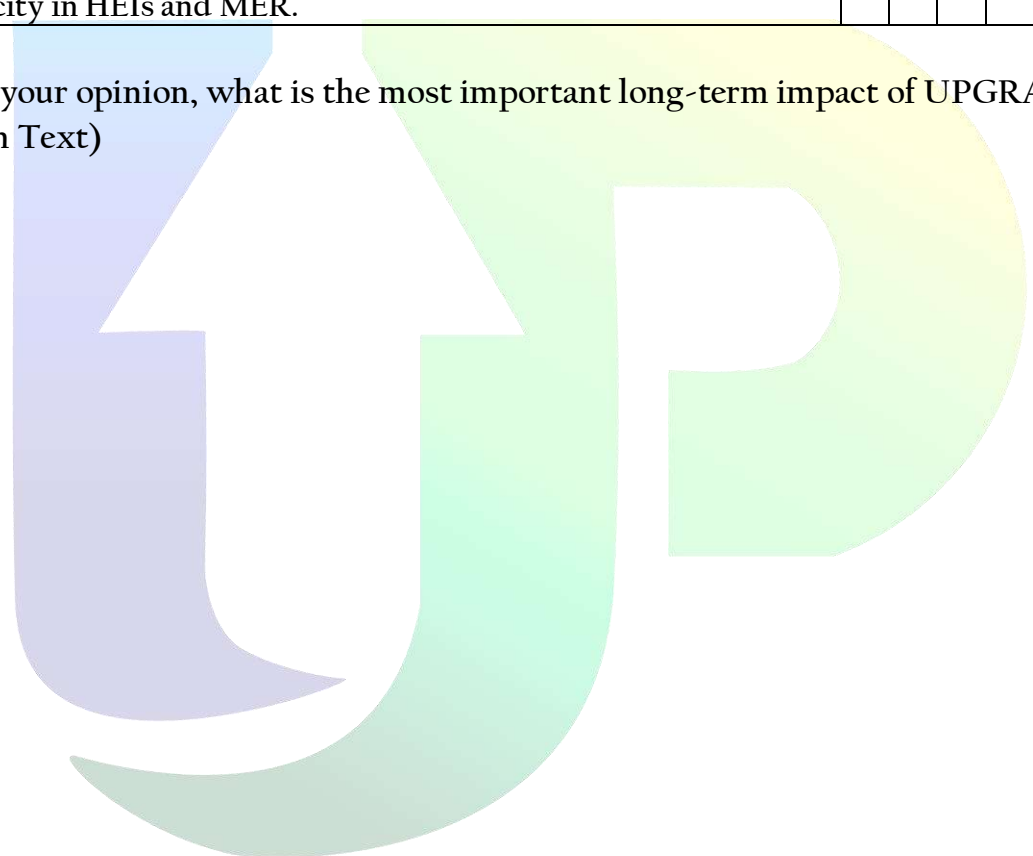


SECTION D - Overall Perceived Impact

12. Please rate the following general impact statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree; N/A = Not applicable:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
UPGRADE significantly improved graduate employability monitoring in Moldova.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The project strengthened cooperation between key stakeholders nationally and institutionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The project contributed to developing sustainable, long-term capacity in HEIs and MER.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. In your opinion, what is the most important long-term impact of UPGRADE?
(Open Text)





ANNEX 3. Institutional Impact Measurement Matrix

Indicator	Baseline (M1)	Target (M36)	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible Institution
Existence of institutional graduate tracking procedures aligned with national regulation	No unified procedures exist	All 6 Moldovan HEIs adopt approved institutional procedures	Institutional regulations; HEI reports	Annual	HEIs; MER (validation)
Implementation of graduate employability survey cycles	No surveys conducted	All HEIs run annual surveys using UPGRADE methodology	Survey reports; portal data	Annual	HEIs
Use of graduate tracking data for QA decisions	Limited or no structured use	QA bodies reference GT data in programme reviews, accreditation files and improvement plans	QA reports; accreditation documentation	Annual	HEIs; QA departments
Integration of graduate tracking results into curriculum revision	No systematic link	Evidence of curriculum revisions informed by GT data in ≥6 HEIs	Senate minutes; curriculum revision notes	Annual	Academic departments
Implementation of services in Career Centres using UPGRADE methodological guide	Career services inconsistent	All HEIs offer structured services based on D3.2 (counselling, workshops, employer engagement)	Career centre annual reports	Biannual	HEIs
Number of students and graduates served by upgraded career centres	Fragmented records	10% annual increase in student/graduates served	HEI career centre logs	Biannual	HEIs
HEI staff trained in graduate tracking and career guidance	Baseline <17 staff across all HEIs	≥30 staff trained and applying knowledge	Training attendance; follow-up surveys	After each training & M36	HEIs; WP4
Use of National Graduate Tracking Portal at institutional level	Portal not yet operational	All HEIs upload data and retrieve dashboards regularly	Portal logs	Quarterly	HEIs; MER
Integration of UPGRADE tools in institutional strategies	No references in strategies	References included in institutional development plans/QA strategies in ≥4 HEIs	Institutional strategies	M24, M36	HEI leadership



ANNEX 4. National Impact Measurement Matrix

Indicator	Baseline (M1)	Target (M36)	Data Source	Frequency	Responsible Institution
Adoption of National Regulation for Monitoring HE Graduates' Employability	No regulation exists	Regulation formally approved and operational	MER legislative record	Once	MER
Adoption and use of National Methodological Guide	No unified methodology	Guide used by all HEIs and integrated into MER guidance	MER circulars; HEI policies	Annual	MER; HEIs
Operationalisation of National Graduates Tracking Portal	Not existing	Functional portal used by all HEIs; national dashboards regularly updated	Portal analytics	Quarterly	MER
Number of HEIs connected to national portal	0	6 HEIs fully integrated	Technical logs	Quarterly	MER; IT team
Frequency of national Graduates Tracking data updates	No updates	At least one full national cycle per year	Portal data	Annual	MER
Use of Graduates Tracking indicators in national policy documents	None referenced	UPGRADE-based indicators cited in at least 1 MER communication	MER documents	Annual	MER
HE Graduates' Employability Report used in policymaking	Not available	Report referenced in MER policy briefs, working groups	MER internal memos	Annual	MER
Stakeholder engagement in national Graduates Tracking system (employers, HEIs, civil society)	Fragmented engagement	Structured coordination groups functioning	Meeting reports	Biannual	MER; Steering Committee
Use of Graduates Tracking results in national debates	No reference	Evidence in public consultations, parliamentary discussions	Policy debate records	Annual	MER