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## **EU PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA (DevRAM)**

### **Increasing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector through integration to domestic and global value chains, in particular in the soya sector**

#### **PRESS RELEASE CLOSING EVENT DevRAM Part I**

Today, 30 June 2021, the project EU funded project “DevRAM Part I - Increasing the competitiveness of the agri-food sector through integration to domestic and global value chains, in particular in the soya sector” held its *Closing Event*.

The project, funded by the European Union, was implemented during April 2018 – August 2021 by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), with the consortium partners Donau Soja Association from Austria and Pro Didactica Educational Center, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research of the Republic of Moldova.

A broad overview of the main activities, achievements and impacts of the project was presented during the *Closing Event*. Stakeholders and beneficiaries shared their experiences and lessons learned, the implications for their future activities, opportunities for cooperation and matchmaking between stakeholders thereby the project sustainability. The *event*, organised on the soya demonstration field of the Research Institute of Field Crops “Selectia” from Bălți, was attended by representatives of the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova, the Austrian Embassy in the Republic of Moldova and the Austrian Development Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Research Institutes, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, soya value chain actors, agri-food VET schools, development partners, etc. They were invited to taste Moldovan non-GMO soya products, participate in taking lab non-GMO tests on soya leaves as well as involved in a series of interactive activities.

Mr. Mihail Machidon, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, who attended the event, referred to the importance of the project in the process of modernizing the agricultural sector in the Republic of Moldova and aligning it with European standards in order to facilitate the access of Moldovan producers to international markets. The multi-faceted support of the project, provided to the producers, research institutes, VET, certification bodies and exporters will undoubtedly have a notable impact on Moldova’s soya sector and value chain.

Stella Avallone, Austrian Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova, mentioned that Austria and Moldova are closely linked through a variety of activities, in the field of economy, the security sector, social affairs, education and culture. Development cooperation is focusing on labor-oriented and inclusive education, on environment, water and climate change, as well as on governance, rule of law and peacebuilding. Between 1997 and 2019 Austria’s projects in these fields totaled around 58 million Euros and Austria will continue its support for Moldova in the next period.

Mr. Gintautas Baranauskas, Deputy Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to the Republic of Moldova, underlined that investing in the development of rural areas in the Republic of Moldova is a key priority

for the European Union, in particular by providing opportunities to accelerate economic growth through support to the business, research and education sectors.

For more information, please contact Donau Soja Moldova team at [malai@donausoja.org](mailto:malai@donausoja.org) or tel.079536418

### **Background information:**

In the last three and a half years, with the support of European Union via the *DevRAM Part I project*, Moldovan Research institutions participated in 8 international R&D or AKIS<sup>1</sup> events and benefitted from modern equipment, enhancing their capacities to supply the market with new soya cultivars and more efficient production techniques. 13 Moldovan soya producers and one trader (Prograin Organic Moldova) were certified according to the Donau Soya Standard and one Moldovan soya processing company (Angromix77) was certified according to the standard „Non-GMO produced” making the first local certified soya products available to Moldovan consumers. In addition, the Republic of Moldova has managed to access a new European market destination, by exporting organic soya to Spain.

The Moldovan biosafety regulatory framework was assessed and the National Action Plan for the Development of Soya Production was developed and integrated into the National Agriculture Development Strategy. Moldovan agricultural R&D institutions signed three cooperation agreements with their counterparts from Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania. The project activities also resulted in 19 soya demo fields being organized and 3 study visits for Moldovan producers. 30 best practices dissemination events and 12 public workshops for farmers, producers and policy makers were organised, over 738 people trained, 4000 kg of soya donated and two manuals on soya cultivation published. It should be also mentioned that five companies and research institutes received new equipment. Farmers, researchers, line Ministries and VET schools attended national and international exhibitions, fairs and study visits.

The agricultural technical vocational education institutions strengthened their organizational capacity, trained the managers and teachers to be better prepare to respond to the market needs and liaising schools with the business community.

7 VET institutions were direct beneficiaries of the project, with extended impact on all agri-food 12 VET schools in Moldova. The following main results can be listed: elaboration and validation of 8 occupational standards and 8 qualification standards, of the curricula “Quality standards in the agri-food field” and “Organic agriculture”; about 600 participations of managerial and teaching staff in continuous training programs; endowment with equipment of 2 continuous training sections (the Centre of Excellence in Horticulture and Agricultural Technologies from Taul and the Centre of Excellence in Viticulture and Vinification from Stauceni) and of 7 practical training rooms; developing and launching adult continuing education programs; creation of 7 virtual tours and 11 web pages of agri-food VET institutions; trained 51 young farmers in business plan development and granted 5 business start-ups; participation of over 200 students and teachers in national and international exhibitions, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> R&D or AKIS – research and development or Agricultural knowledge and innovation systems