

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE PATHWAYS

for Regional Development and Improved
Administrative Capacity for EU Cohesion Policy
Adoption in Ukraine and Moldova

Project Context

- ▶ Ukraine and Moldova became EU candidate countries in 2024.
- ▶ Both countries need to strengthen administrative capacity for EU-like funding instruments.
- ▶ Moldova and Ukraine need support in the implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in order to align to EU standards and prepare for accession.
- ▶ A critical gap remains in cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova themselves. Unlike their established partnerships with EU Member States through various Interreg programmes, direct cooperation between Ukrainian and Moldovan regions along their shared border lacks a dedicated framework to facilitate joint initiatives.

Project Overview

- The EUroBRIDGE_UA_MD project is a joint initiative of the Municipal Center for Development of Entrepreneurship (MCDE) and the Odessa Region Development Agency(Ukraine), with the participation of Romanian partner Hygia Consult (Cluj).
- The project is funded by the European Union through the **Support to Ukraine and Moldova Border Regions program.**

Project Overview

EU Programme within which the project is funded:

ERDF Technical Assistance (ERDFTA-2024-SUPPORTUMBR)

- The project will run for 4 years (2025–2029), with a total budget of €1,999,678.06, of which €942,001.25 is allocated to the municipality of Chişinău through the MCDE.
- The project began on October 1, 2025.
- On October 28, the first event to launch the project took place in Odessa, organized by our partners, the Odessa Regional Development Agency.

Overall Goal

- Enhance cross-border cooperation and strengthen the administrative and institutional capacity of local authorities, civil society, and SMEs.
- This project is a model of cross-border cooperation between two candidate countries for accession to the European Union—the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine—and aims to strengthen the administrative capacities of local public authorities, SMEs, and civil society organizations.

Specific Objectives

- **G01: Strengthen institutional and administrative capacity for cross-border cooperation.**
- **G02: Promote sustainable socio-economic development in border regions.**
- **G03: Foster cross-border collaboration and european integration.**

Key Actions

- Implementation of a grant program for cross-border cooperation projects between communities, institutions, clusters, and SMEs in the Republic of Moldova and eligible regions of Ukraine (Odesa, Chernivtsi, Khmelnytsky and Vinnytsya).
- Establish a Steering Committee for project selection and monitoring.
- Build administrative capacity through training and study visits.
- Launch the HELPDESK - Assistance Center for applicants.
- Create a web-base application platform for the calls.
- Provide financial support to small cross-border projects.
- Facilitate networking and partnership events.

Budget Details

Total Budget: €1,999,678.06 (100% EU funded)

Breakdown by Partner:

- RDA Odesa (Coordinator, Ukraine): €945,771.93
- MCDE (Moldova): €942,001.25
- HYGIA SRL (Romania): €111,904.88

Prefinancing: 40%, €799,871.22 (Initial)

Open Calls Overview

Within the project there will be 2 open calls to implement:

- €1.5 million of the total budget of nearly €2 million are allocated to the implementation of the two cross-border funding programs.
- The project will finance joint mini-projects, with grants ranging from €10,000 to €50,000, dedicated to strengthening economic and institutional cooperation between the two countries, and will include a joint training program for local administrations, business hubs, clusters, and civil society organizations.
- The 2 open calls will provide support to public and private entities, in collaborative projects **of at least 2 entities** (from Ukraine and Moldova).

The two Open Calls Within the Project

- **IMPACT NETWORKS:** Support clusters, EDIHs, RDAs (8 projects, €50.000,00 each).
- **CAPACITY & INNOVATION:** Support SMEs and public authorities (110 projects, €10.000,00 each).
- Estimated period of calls for proposals: summer 2026.
- During the pre-launch period, we will create a **Moldovan-Ukrainian Steering Committee** through a public call for applications, approve the **Funding Guide** with annexes (in Romanian and Ukrainian, and set up a **web-based application platform**.

IMPACT NETWORKS CALL

- The allocated budget for the projects is 400,000 EUR, distributed among different types of beneficiaries. The expected number of projects is 8 in total.
- **CLUSTERS:** Allocated a budget of 200,000 EUR, with an expectation of funding 4 projects.
- **EUROPEAN DIGITAL INNOVATION HUBS (EDIHS):** Allocated a budget of 100,000 EUR, supporting 2 projects.
- **DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL:** Also allocated 100,000 EUR, funding 2 projects.

CAPACITY & INNOVATION CALL

- The projects are dedicated to provide financial support to SMEs and/or public authorities in improving their management and/or business operations, as well as increasing their capacity of providing products and/or services to the Single Market.
- The allocated budget for the projects is 1,100,000 EUR. This call will have two stages. The expected number of projects is 110 in total.
- **1st cut-off CAPACITY & INNOVATION - THEME 1:** Addressing common challenges across the border regions, such as environmental issues, economic development, or social cohesion, internationalization, digitalization, staff exchanges, trainings;
- **2nd cut-off CAPACITY & INNOVATION - THEME 2: addressing Article 5 Common provisions regulation (CPR) of the Cohesion Policy Regulatory Framework, with cooperation projects targeting:** a more competitive and smarter Europe by promoting innovative and smart economic transformation and regional ICT connectivity; a greener, low-carbon transitioning towards a net zero carbon economy and resilient Europe by promoting clean and fair energy transition, green and blue investment, the circular economy, climate change mitigation and adaptation, risk prevention and management, and sustainable urban mobility, a more connected Europe by enhancing mobility.

Impact and Expected Results

- **Short-term:**
 - ✓ Increased knowledge and administrative capacity of local actors.
 - ✓ Stronger collaboration between institutions and SMEs in border regions.
- **Medium-term:**
 - ✓ Improved project management and EU readiness.
 - ✓ 118 cross-border subprojects funded and implemented.
- **Long-term:**
 - ✓ Sustainable cooperation ecosystems between Ukraine, Moldova, and EU regions.
 - ✓ Progress toward **EU Cohesion Policy integration and accession readiness.**

Partners and Roles

- **Regional Development Agency of Odesa Region:** Overall management, Steering Committee management, coordination and monitoring. RDA of Odesa Region is responsible for the Steering Committee setup.
- **Municipal Center for Development of Entrepreneurship.** MCDE plays a supporting role such as Steering Committee & Capacity Building, Both Open Calls Launching & Networking activities.
- **HYGIA:** Technical expertise, training resources, and access to regional cooperation networks. Hygia leads tasks related to training and experience exchange.

Communication & Dissemination

- Develop Communication & Dissemination Plan.
- Create visual identity, a web-platform, and promotional materials.
- Organize kick-off meetings, networking events and final conference.
- Ensure EU visibility and broad stakeholder engagement.

Sustainability & Continuation

- Establish a long-term POOL OF EXPERTS for mentoring and implementing of other EU or non-EU joint programs between partners in the project regions.
- Link results with Interreg NEXT, Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, and Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).
- Above all, this project is, in our opinion, a first step towards new large-scale cross-border projects between our countries, and our institutions will demonstrate over the next four years that they have the administrative and institutional capacity to face future programs.

Conclusions

- EUroBRIDGE_UA_MD will build lasting cross-border governance structures in these 2 countries.
- Enhance institutional capacity of Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and EU accession readiness.
- Create sustainable partnerships and innovation ecosystems between communities.



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