

# ESTABLISHING REGIONAL BUSINESS INFORMATION AND SUPPORT CENTRE FOR THE GAGAUZIA REGION, MOLDOVA

## *Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Pioneer Project*



## PROJECT FACTSHEET

### The project in a nutshell

**Timeframe:** 2018-2020

**Budget:** EUR 516,172 (EU contribution - EUR 428,172)

**Partners:** the Executive Committee of Gagauzia, the International Agency for Source Country Information (IASCI) office in Moldova (NEXUS)

**Geographic coverage:** the Gagauzia region (especially the Comrat, Ceadîr-Lunga and Vulcăneşti districts)

**Target groups:** Groups of entrepreneurs supported by the Regional Business Information and Support Centre (RBISC), the local business community, local public administrations (LPAs) from the Gagauzia region

## CONTEXT



Gagauzia is an autonomous region in southern Moldova, established as such by the “Law on the Special Legal Status of Gagauzia” of December 1994. Its surface area is 1,848 km<sup>2</sup> or 5.5% of the country. The region’s 161,900 inhabitants (59.2% of whom live in rural areas) live in the 3 districts of Comrat, Ceadîr-Lunga and Vulcăneşti. Gagauzia has two municipalities, one town (Comrat, its administrative centre) and 23 villages and communes.

The Governor (*Başkan*) is the highest-ranking official in Gagauzia. The Gagauz people are unique in that they combine the linguistic identity, traditions and customs of the Turkish world with the Christian religion. The region’s main economic sectors are agriculture, food and drinks (wine, canned fruits and vegetables) and manufacturing (textiles and footwear). The Economic and Social Development Strategy of Gagauzia for 2017-2022 acknowledges the importance of local economic development and includes provisions to increase the competitiveness of local businesses and SMEs.

## PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The Project’s main goal is to improve the quality of life of Gagauzia’s citizens by creating jobs, reducing migration and encouraging the region’s overall economic development. The Project will aim to achieve the following **objectives**:

- 1) Develop a Business Support Centre for the Gagauzia region;
- 2) Establish a Business Support Network at the local level and consolidate the role of local public administrations as active business facilitators;
- 3) Improve the quality of services, introduce innovations and ensure the better adaptation of the local business community to new markets.

## PROJECT ACTIONS

The Project will develop a sustainable **Business Support Network** of regional business advisory and support platforms. This Network will include two main elements: a *Regional Business Information and Support Centre*



(RBISC), and three local *walk-in hubs*. The Centre will function in 5 main directions: regulatory and institutional frameworks, human capital development, access to finance, external positioning and marketing.

The RBISC will advise and support local businesses in Gagauzia at every stage of their operations—especially through informational and accountancy support, business development and marketing advice. In partnership with the local authorities and diaspora experts, the RBISC team will also initiate a public campaign and develop a client-oriented *communication toolkit* in order to engage with local business representatives in Gagauzia.

#### The Project's actions include:

1. A regional *business and crowdsourcing consultancy guide* will be developed and presented to entrepreneurs, returning migrants and decision-makers through interactive training sessions and workshops;
2. **Three** walk-in hubs will be set up (in Comrat, Ceadâr-Lunga and Vulcănești) to offer different services such as business advice, start-up acceleration, vocational training and knowledge-sharing events;
3. Local entrepreneurs will have better access to crowd-based financial instruments such as *crowdfunding* and *crowd-lending*;
4. An **'Adopt a Farmer'** initiative will be developed in order to link small and medium agricultural producers with their national and diaspora customers via innovative financial tools;
5. A *public internship programme* will be launched for young entrepreneurs, recent graduates and unemployed residents in order to promote local businesses as career opportunities in the Gagauzia region.

## ESTIMATED RESULTS

- **Three** walk-in hubs will be set up in Comrat, Ceadâr-Lunga and Vulcănești (total population is 65,900 inhabitants);
- **Two** groups of direct beneficiaries will receive service support from the RBISC.

#### In terms of outcomes:

- *Local communities* will actively participate in decision-making processes and the development of their community, as well as in integrating the needs of women and men, including the most vulnerable;
- *Local authorities* will be encouraged to implement their local economic development plans in close co-operation with the local business community through the establishment of a business support service;
- *Local entrepreneurs* will receive demand-driven assistance, and a regional entrepreneurial culture will progress in the Gagauzia region.

The pioneer project “Establishing Regional Business Information and Support Centre for the Gagauzia Region” is being implemented in Moldova as part of the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) Initiative. The M4EG Initiative began to operate in January 2017 within the Eastern Partnership framework. Its overall goal is to help mayors and municipalities in Eastern Partnership countries to become active facilitators for economic growth and job creation at local levels. For more information, please visit [www.m4eg.eu](http://www.m4eg.eu).



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