



World Food Programme

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

WFP Moldova

Country Brief July 2023



Operational Context

The onset of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022 has led to the displacement of millions of people both in and outside of Ukraine. Since then, more than 875,000 Ukrainians crossed into the Republic of Moldova, of whom 106,317 still remain as per [UNHCR](#). In response, the Government of Moldova, with the support of international and local entities, has stepped up and provided life-saving support to those people, fleeing the conflict.

Moldova is one of the countries most affected by the war in Ukraine, not only because of its physical proximity but also because of its inherent vulnerabilities as a small, landlocked economy with close linkages to both Ukraine and Russia. The influx of refugees to Moldova has resulted in additional fiscal costs, squeezing resources for long-term development priorities. The large wave of refugees has also created a challenging socioeconomic environment in the medium term, especially if many migrants remain but fail to find employment opportunities.

Heavy reliance on imports to meet food and energy needs has left Moldova vulnerable to disruptions in the supply of food, energy, and commodity imports from Ukraine and Russia. Additionally, Moldova continues to substantially rely on natural gas imported from Russia for powering its energy needs. Import disruptions are expected to further increase price pressures, in turn eroding the competitiveness of firms and household incomes, especially for the poor.

WFP has been present in Moldova since March 2022 to deliver life-saving assistance to more than 3,000 refugees and 6,000 vulnerable Moldovan households hosting refugees. In September 2022, WFP Moldova launched its Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) 2022-2023, followed by a Budget Revision that was approved in July 2023 for extending the duration until February 2024. The T-ICSP focused on assisting the Government of Moldova in supporting refugee and host communities, while strengthening the country's local social protection systems and capacities.

Population: **2.6 million**

Income Level:
upper-middle- income

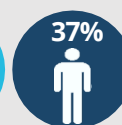
2021 Human Development
Index: **80 out of 191**

Inequality Index:
0.205, ranking it 51 out of 170



In Numbers

18,296 people assisted
in July 2023



USD 1.6 m cash-based transfers made

USD 14.7 m six-months (August 2023-January 2024) net funding requirements

Operational Updates

- WFP continues to provide three hot meals per day to refugees residing in Refugee Accommodation Centres (RAC) in Moldova. **In July, 3,003 refugees in 47 RACs received support** through WFP's cooperating partners. Where government-approved kitchen facilities are available, WFP provides commodity vouchers worth 100 Moldovan Leu (MDL) per person (approximately USD 5) per day for the RAC managers to purchase food to cook on-site (**381 refugees assisted**). When cooking facilities are not available, local caterers are contracted to provide the meals (**2,622 refugees assisted**), thereby helping the economy in communities.
- To mitigate the socio-economic impact of the Ukraine conflict and promote social cohesion between refugees and Moldovan host communities, **14,763 refugee hosting households have been financially assisted** in July with a total transfer of USD 1.2 million under a pilot project using 'Posta Moldovei', the governmental cash-distribution service provider. 3900 MDL (USD 217) per household is provided for families hosting 1-4 refugees and 4800 MDL (USD 268) for families hosting five or more.
- Working with the same governmental service provider is an important component of **WFP's capacity-strengthening efforts** in relation to the existing social protection system. This new partnership has allowed WFP to have comprehensive geographical coverage, provide home delivery, have 24/7 access to distribution reports and prompt provision of proof of payments.
- In parallel, **530 refugees** at the border received snacks in support of their food needs while transiting to Romania or finding their accommodation in Moldova.
- Within the **cash assurance framework for social protection**, in July, upon the government's request, WFP Moldova collaborated with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) to undertake a cash assurance assessment. The objective of this work is to determine opportunities to strengthen and optimize the provision of targeted social assistance to the most vulnerable Moldovans in line with the Ministry's reform agenda. The assessment will enable WFP to provide technical assistance to strengthen overall monitoring and accountability systems. WFP is undertaking a digital readiness assessment exercise to support the Ministry's transition to digital reform commitment under the reform agenda.

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Photo: Svetlana Sorokina (35) and her daughter, Alina Sorokina (9), Ukrainian refugees hosted in a Moldovan household in the city of Orhei.
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WFP Country Strategy

Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (September 2022 – February 2024)	
Total Requirements (USD)	Total Received (USD)
86 m	51 m
2023 Requirements (USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) (August–January 2023)
36 m	14.7 m
Strategic Result 1: Access to food	
Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations in Moldova can meet their food and other essential needs throughout the year. Focus area: Crisis response	
Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide emergency cash and voucher transfers to crisis-affected populations	
Strategic Result 2: Capacity strengthening	
Strategic Outcome 2: The Government of Moldova has enhanced social protection and food security capacities and systems to support vulnerable populations by 2023. Focus area: Resilience	
Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide technical assistance to the Government to enhance shock-responsive social protection and food security systems and capacities	
Strategic Result 3: Enhance Global Partnership	
Strategic Outcome 3: Humanitarian and Development partners benefit from services provided to support vulnerable populations in Moldova throughout the year. Focus area: Crisis Response	
Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide on-demand services to partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">On 25 July, the monthly food security partners working group meeting was held that aimed to harmonize assistance and improve the delivery and management of cash-based transfers As lead agency, WFP continues to coordinate its cash and voucher assistance under the cash and livelihoods working group which includes cooperating partners and private sector partners.Building on WFP's successes in strengthening social food services in Moldova, WFP has taken significant steps to ensure that eligible vulnerable beneficiaries have access to high-quality services by conducting a thorough review of all service components and recommending to the government ways to raise minimum quality standards and to expand intersystem connections, particularly those related to food and education, with the assistance of WFP and partners.On July 13, WFP Moldova welcomed the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) mission in Chişinău to discuss main challenges while also understanding the future needs (feeding into ECHO Humanitarian Implementation Plan -HIP- 2024). This mission is part of a series of ECHO missions, as an ECHO monitoring mission is planned for August and this July mission followed the field visit of the local representative earlier this year. ECHO has expressed its appreciation for the work done by WFP in partnership with the MLSP and other partners.	

- In July 2024, a **budget revision was approved to (i) extend the duration of the T-ICSP by six months until February 2024** to better align with the regional refugee response plan for Ukraine (January–December 2023), and to increase the number of beneficiaries under strategic by approximately 30,000, as WFP expands the provision of food assistance to meet the immediate food needs of refugees arriving to the Republic of Moldova; and (iii) increase the overall T-ICSP budget by USD 26.2 million.

Monitoring and evaluation

- WFP conducted **monthly spot checks for July** in RACs to assess hot meals activity implementation and collect beneficiary feedback. Overall, refugees are satisfied with the meals provided and the transition to reusable dishes. RACs that offer catering services adapted their menus to better reflect beneficiary preferences and reflect summer seasonality. Consultations were conducted with the Moldovan nutrition focal point regarding the proposed changes.
- WFP continued to strengthen its **Community Feedback Mechanism** (CFM). In July 2023, 1,236 calls were answered, and 772 cases were created. Case closure rate was 95%. Feedbacks mainly concerned requests for information (66%) and complaints (25%). Eligibility criteria, verification processes, and record absences were the most common complaints.

Finding comfort through a meal

Varvara Lozan (right-side photo), 71 years old and based in Chisinau, is the cook at a WFP-supported Refugee Accommodation Center. With an extensive 50-year background in cooking and nutrition, Varvara's skills were valued back in the Soviet era, when she won several nutrition contests. These skills are still highly valued today as she marks five decades of service within the same canteen's walls where she currently serves.



Despite her retiree status, Varvara remains dedicated to her role. Her commitment to her team and her sense of responsibility in feeding Ukrainian refugees are strong reasons that keep retirement off the table. She stated that as long as she can continue providing comfort through her meals to those in need, she will gladly continue her work.

Donors

European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Republic of Korea, Romania, Total Energies Foundation