AGREEMENT
between
THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
and
THE SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION
on the first phase of the Project
"Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)"
7F-09960.01

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, representing the Federal Council of the Swiss Confederation, acting through the Swiss Cooperation Office / Representation of the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation to the Republic of Moldova, and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter the Parties), eager to cooperate in the field of parliamentary democracy in the Republic of Moldova have agreed on the following:

Preamble

In an endeavour to strengthen the friendly relations existing between the two Countries,

Understanding that the respect for democratic principles and fundamental human rights – as set out in particular in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – inspires the internal and external policies of the two Parties and constitutes an essential element on an equal footing with the objectives of the present Agreement,

In pursuance and in application of the Agreement between the Government of the Swiss Confederation and the Government of the Republic of Moldova concerning Humanitarian Assistance and Technical Cooperation dated 20 September 2001,

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC (hereafter SDC) and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova agree to ensure the implementation of the present Agreement.

Article 1 Objective

(1) The main purpose of the present Agreement is to ensure the successful implementation of the first phase of the Project "Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)" during the period from 01.04.2025 to 31.03.2029.

(2) The overall goal of the Project is to achieve irreversibly improved parliamentary practices, ensuring parliamentary democracy and resilience, and independence of the institution.

(3) The Project aims at achieving the following outcomes:

a) Improved quality of legislation adopted by the Parliament.

b) More consistent and effective parliamentary oversight.

c) Improved communication between Parliament and citizens.

(4) The Project Implementing Agency is DAI Global Belgium SRL (DAI), with its strategic partner European Project Management (EPM). DAI was mandated by SDC following an open tender selection process to implement the first phase of the Project. To do this, DAI will work through its project Facilitation Unit (FU) with the Legal Status of a branch of a non-resident foreign enterprise *(DAI*

GLOBAL, LLC BETHESDA). The Project will mobilise as much as possible local expertise, but also international expertise, including Swiss.

(5) The Project is part of the Governance and Social Cohesion priority area under the Swiss Cooperation Program for Moldova 2025-2028. It will offer a steady stream of advice and targeted capacity building support to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, pursuing improved governance practices, greater inclusion and enhanced transparency and cohesion. The Project will work with the parliamentary administration, members of Parliament (MPs) and parliamentary standing committees (PSCs) in order to achieve the overall goal mentioned under paragraph (2) and the outcomes mentioned under paragraph (3).

(6) The overall lead of the Project at national level is with the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, while the State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova will play a key role in steering aspects pertaining to collaboration between the Parliament and the Government. The parliamentary administration and selected PSCs will contribute to the steering and will ensure implementation of the Project in their respective fields of work, in accordance with the scope of the Agreement. The Project`s final beneficiary is the Moldovan society as a whole, benefitting from the changes brought by the improved parliamentary practices and from inclusive development interventions.

Article 2 Swiss Contribution

(1) SDC shall contribute with a total maximum of 5'000'000 Swiss Francs (CHF) for the implementation of the Project. Besides the services of DAI, this also includes CHF 400'000 direct support to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, managed by DAI, and CHF 200'000 for the cooperation with the Swiss Parliamentary Services (SPS), managed by SDC. The release of the Swiss funds to DAI will be done based on the Project progress, expenses incurred and actual requirements.

(2) For the implementation of the Project, the Swiss Confederation, through SDC, shall provide:

a) Facilitation of dialogue and cooperation between the Project and the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova;
b) Facilitation of exchanges between the Project, SPS, other relevant SDC-funded projects, and projects funded by other donors – in view of identifying synergies and areas of cooperation, avoiding overlaps, enhancing effectiveness of development cooperation, and raising impact;
c) Facilitation of policy influencing in areas relevant for the Project.

Article 3 Moldovan Contribution

The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova shall undertake the following actions:

a) Lead the reforming and coordination process in the field of parliamentary work, according to the existing policies and laws;
b) Steer the development of the legal/regulatory framework contributing to sustainable changes in the areas of parliamentary democracy;
c) Make sure that the relevant institutional framework remains in place and/or is further improved and that parliamentary bodies develop and maintain a constructive and transparent cooperation with the civil society and citizens;
d) Facilitate the collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, State Chancellery and other relevant authorities at national and local level;
e) Contribute to the dissemination of innovative knowledge products on innovative solutions developed in the frame of the Project;
f) Convene and coordinate meetings of the Steering Committee aimed at providing guidance to the Project and at supervising the correct delivery of the Project related activities, according to the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee, which are part of the present Agreement (Annex B);
g) In cooperation with the State Chancellery, provide support in order to facilitate the necessary visas and permissions required for experts working within the frame of the Project;

h) In cooperation with the State Chancellery, ensure the exemption from payment of taxes, custom duties, fees and other compulsory payments for all the equipment, services, vehicles and materials financed on the grant basis and other facilities as specified in the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Government of Swiss Confederation concerning Humanitarian assistance and Technical Cooperation, the reference to which is made in the Preamble of the present Agreement. The exemption also applies to other institutions subcontracted within the Project, and/or other third-party contribution to the Project activities.

Article 4 Conditions for suspending

(1) Conditions for suspending the Swiss contribution
In case the undertakings by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova according to Article 3 are not met in the timeframe established for completing the tasks, SDC may suspend the Project with immediate effect. If this is the case, SDC may terminate this Agreement by the provision of one month's notice, or other date as SDC may decide as being the most appropriate (this period will not be less than the term established in Article 10).

(2) Conditions for suspending the Moldovan contribution
In case the undertakings by SDC according to Article 2 are not met in the timeframe established for completing the tasks, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova may suspend the Project. If this is the case, the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova may terminate this Agreement by the provision of one month's notice, or other date as the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova may decide as being the most appropriate (this period will not be less than the term established in Article 10).

Article 5 Anti-corruption clause

Within the framework of this Agreement, the Parties shall neither directly nor indirectly propose benefits of any nature whatsoever. They shall not accept any such proposals. Any corrupt or illegal behaviour signifies a substantial breach of the present Agreement and justifies its termination as well as/or the recourse to corrective measures in accordance with applicable legislation.

Article 6 Procurement of goods and services

(1) The procurement of goods and services to be financed out of the proceeds of the Swiss funds shall be conducted in accordance with Swiss procurement procedures and rules. The procured goods shall be directly delivered to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, its Secretariat and related structures in compliance with signed contracts and respective procurement rules.

(2) For the duration of the Project, the goods provided with SDC funds to be used in the Project shall remain at the unrestricted disposal of the Project and shall not be diverted from the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, its Secretariat and related structures without prior written approval of the SDC.

(3) The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, its Secretariat and related structures shall keep an appropriate inventory of the respective goods. The inventory is to be updated on a quarterly basis, with an indication of the status, responsible person and location of each individual object.

(4) If, for any reason, the Project should have to be discontinued, the use of the goods provided with the Swiss contribution shall be decided upon in writing by the Parties.

(5) At the end of the Project, both Parties shall agree in written form on the property and use of the goods provided and not yet handed over during the Project.

(6) The procurement of goods and services to be financed through the direct support to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova shall be conducted in accordance with the national procurement legislation of the Republic of Moldova.

(7) The goods acquired via direct support to the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova will be considered the property of the Parliament and will be registered in its accounting records.

Article 7 Reporting and other implementation procedures

(1) The Parties shall hold regular Steering Committee Meetings (at least twice a year) to monitor and assess the Project implementation, as well as the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the delivered aid. At the end of the Project phase a Final Review Meeting shall review the results achieved by the Project.

(2) The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova shall cooperate with and assist the SDC in the preparation of audits, follow-ups and evaluations of Project impact. The cost of such activities shall be financed from the Swiss funds.

(3) The Parliament of the Republic of Moldova shall provide the SDC with all other information regarding the Project that the SDC may reasonably request and enable Swiss representatives to visit the Project and inspect property, goods, records and documents.

(4) Irrespective of agreed reporting routines, the Parties shall promptly inform each other, if a situation arises that makes the Project unlikely to be carried out as agreed.

Article 8 Distribution of this Agreement

The Parties shall undertake to distribute copies of this Agreement to all authorities and other institutions involved in the Project implementation or that otherwise need to be informed of its content.

Article 9 Annexes

The project description (Annex A) and the Terms of Reference of the Steering Committee for the Project "Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)" (Annex B) form an integral part of this Agreement.

Article 10 Final Provisions

(1) This Agreement enters into force on 04.07.2025 and covers retroactively the period from 01.04.2025 until 31.03.2029. It shall remain valid until both Parties will have fulfilled all their obligations under the provisions of the present Agreement.

(2) Either Party shall have the right to terminate the present Agreement by giving one month written notice of termination.

(3) If events resulting from force majeure (natural disaster, etc.) prevent the execution of the Agreement, either Party may terminate the Agreement with effect from the moment when it becomes impossible to carry it out.

(4) The present Agreement may be amended by the way of exchange of letters at the request of any of the Party to it.

(5) Disputes as to the interpretation or application of the provisions of the present Agreement shall be settled by diplomatic negotiations between the Parties.

The present Agreement is formulated in two original copies, in English and Romanian, both texts being equally authentic. In case of differences of interpretation, the English version of this Agreement shall be of reference.

For the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

G. Beltrani

Guido Beltrani
Director of Cooperation

Place Chișinău

Date 04.07.2025

For the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Igor Grosu
Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova

Place Chișinău

Date 04.07.2025

Annex A

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

"Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova (PADEM)"
Main Phase 1: 01.04.2025 – 31.03.2029 - 4 years

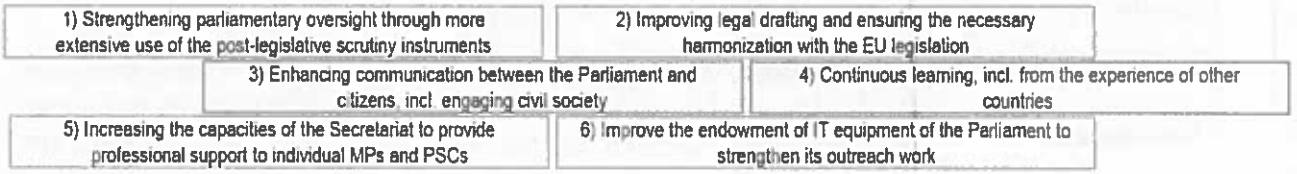
Overall objective:	Improve the performance of the Parliament by a) strengthening parliamentary oversight, b) improving the quality of legislation, and c) enhancing communication between the Parliament and citizens.
Project Components:	Component 1: **Legislative process** Component 2: **Parliamentary oversight** Component 3: **Representation and communication**
Executing Entity:	DAI Global Belgium
Beneficiary:	Parliament of the Republic of Moldova
Total budget:	CHF 5'000'000, including CHF 400'000 direct support to the Moldovan Parliament, and CHF 200'000 for the cooperation with Swiss Parliamentary Services (SPS), managed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

I. CONTEXT AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

Moldova's state of democracy reflects a dynamic yet fragile political landscape. According to Freedom House's 2023 report, the country maintains a competitive electoral environment, with freedoms of assembly, speech, and religion largely upheld. Much of Moldova's recent development has been driven by the aspiration to join the European Union, with 50.38% of citizens supporting EU accession in the 2024 constitutional referendum. This ambition has spurred reforms in key areas such as justice, anti-corruption, public procurement, and improving the ease of doing business. However, this progress has also deepened ideological divides, fuelling political polarisation, shifting alliances, and recurring governance crises that continue to shape the country's power dynamics. As noted in the 2023 World Bank's "Moldova Country Economic Memorandum", persistent challenges in governance remain, including systemic weaknesses in public administration and the judiciary, hindering the consolidation of democratic norms and the rule of law. Additionally, economic vulnerabilities and geopolitical pressures, particularly from Russia, complicate the reform process. Moldova struggles with significant disparities in income, employment opportunities, and energy dependence.

The complexity of social and economic issues has been further compounded by fragmentation of political parties, dubious electoral practices, successive changes to electoral law, and boycotts of the parliament by opposition parties. As a consequence, the performance of Parliament, one of the three main state pillars, has been significantly influenced by all these trends. At the last election in 2021, three parties secured seats in the Parliament: The Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS) with 63 seats, the Electoral Bloc of Communists and Socialists (BECS) with 32 seats, and the Şor Party with 6 seats[1]. The forthcoming parliamentary elections in Moldova, scheduled for 2025, are pivotal, with the potential to redefine the nation's political alignment and policy direction.

Through the PADEM project, Switzerland intends to support the Parliament in further expanding the scope of reform, especially through 6 key areas identified by the Moldovan Parliament Secretariat:



The proposed intervention of the PADEM project is devised around three main thematic areas of support, defined through three components:

Component 1: Legislative process
Component 2: Parliamentary oversight
Component 3: Representation and communication

Across the three components, the project will be working with a series of stakeholders, with the parliament as the main stakeholder of the project. The approach to engage the Parliament and other key stakeholders is presented below.

Members of Parliament (MPs) - There are a total of 101 MPs in the Parliament. Notably, the current Parliament convocation includes a record number of women MPs, with 41 out of 101 members (40.6%), while 55% of MPs were elected for the first time. While this wide renewal of the composition

[1] In June 2023, the Constitutional Court ruled the Şor Party unconstitutional and ordered its immediate dissolution. Following this ruling, the five Şor Party parliament members (except Şor himself) have continued to exercise their mandates as independent MPs without the right to join any other parliamentary factions.

of the Parliament can be a source of new ideas and bring new energy, the lack of experience of MPs can also become a detrimental factor in realising the full strength of the Parliament, due to lack of capacities, as well as lack of political capital to scrutinise decisions and actions of the executive.

Entry points for engagement with MPs



- Identifying "Champions of Change," through PEA, who have the interest, willingness and capacity to adopt and champion the new working practices among their peers
- Placing the MPs in the leading role in design and implementation of activities, helping them to identify and address their own priorities, which can be better accomplished through new working practices and innovative approaches
- Working with both majority and opposition MPs in an impartial approach, to generate trust and create ownership among all MP groups.

Moldovan Parliamentary Secretariat - The parliamentary administration includes approx. 300 staff across 30 offices, secretariats, and departments, providing organisational, technical/research and IT support to the operation of the parliament. Despite its crucial function, the parliamentary administration is understaffed and its staff members are often underqualified for their roles. Parliamentary research service, for example, consists of only five staff members, insufficient for providing quality support to MPs on the wide scope of legislation and oversight functions. With the increased demands of the EU approximation process, this capacity gap will only widen.

Entry points for engagement with parliamentary administration



- Working with parliamentary administration in a participatory and inclusive manner to help identify priorities and sustainable strategies for capacity strengthening
- At the start of the project, concentrating efforts to help parliamentary administration deliver on their existing tasks more efficiently, to reduce burden before introducing new tasks/working processes
- Facilitating improved cooperation and establishing more efficient working modalities between administration and the MPs.

Parliamentary Standing Committees (PSCs) - PSCs are working bodies of the parliament. They are constituted by MPs representing all political parties, and each PSC is responsible for a particular thematic sector. There are currently 11 Parliamentary Standing Committees, with one MP being allowed to only participate in one PSC. The PSCs have a key role in legislative drafting (incl. pre-legislative scrutiny) and oversight. The PSCs can have subcommittees, special committees, and committees of inquiry. While the PSCs have a wide array of functions and possibilities to influence legal drafting and parliamentary oversight, their capacities, both in terms of knowledge/skills and relevant tools and support services, are still underdeveloped.

Entry points for engagement with PSCs



- Facilitating cooperation and building trust between government and opposition members in the PSCs to strengthen PSC cohesion.
- Incentivising the selected PSCs to identify and formulate their own visions for change, including priority policy areas, short and long-term objectives, and define their change path, as basis for project support
- Using a co-design and inclusive approach, to formulate tailored support strategies to each PSC, based on their change paths.
- Showing proof of concept through pilot actions, as a foundation for wider upscaling.
- Using Change Champions to promote success stories and uptake of new ideas among other PSCs.

Other project stakeholders

Government of Moldova	The Government is a key indirect stakeholder for the project, as it plays a crucial role in preparation and submission of draft legislation to parliament, as well as being an object of the parliament's oversight function. Understanding the power dynamics between the Government and the Parliament is essential for the project to be able to mobilise support and create ownership of the reforms brought about by the project. Regularly implementing Political Economy Analyses (PEAs) and ongoing facilitation will be the key elements of the project's approach in navigating these power balances.
Independent oversight agencies	Independent oversight agencies are an essential partner of the project, especially for component 2 activities. The project team will facilitate cooperation and stronger networks between the parliament and ombudsman, the audit institution and the competition council (among others) to create effective mechanisms for using their research/reports to strengthen parliaments oversight function.

Civil society and citizens	Transparency of the parliamentary work and openness toward the civil society and the citizens are key requirements for a truly democratic government. Under component 3 of the project, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) will be the key stakeholder, whose inputs and suggestions will be sought to find most suitable solutions for better communication between the parliament and citizens. Some of the key CSOs operating in the sector include the Promo-LEX Association, Expert Group and others.
Political parties	Political parties play a critical role in shaping the parliamentary life. As a rule, all MPs are members of one of the political parties and are often bound to follow the party lines on different policy and legislative issues and wider parliamentary work. The political economy of party connections between majority MPs and the executive Government needs to be taken into account in all project actions relating to pre-legislative scrutiny and parliamentary oversight.
Media	The role of the media in creating awareness and shaping public opinion on the work and role of the parliament must not be underestimated. Effective communication and media relations from the side of the project and support to the Parliament in its PR functions are important elements that the project must consider throughout its implementation.
Swiss Parliamentary Services (SPS)	SPS have committed to support implementation of the PADEM project through bilateral cooperation in several areas. PADEM project includes CHF 200'000 for the cooperation with SPS, managed by SDC. The project's Facilitation Unit (FU) will coordinate closely with SPS from the start of the implementation and will ensure SPS' engagement throughout the project duration.
Other development projects	Other development partners are also supporting the reforms in the Moldovan parliament. Most notably, this includes the new EU twinning project "Strengthening the Capacities of the Moldovan Parliament and its role in the EU Accession Process". The project is aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of the Parliament of Moldova in the context of EU approximation, incl. on improving EU-related legislative functions, oversight capacities, as well as improved mechanisms for interaction of Parliament with citizens. The FU will ensure close coordination and cooperation with the twinning project to design mutually reinforcing actions. Furthermore, it is proposed to establish a Parliamentary Support Group as a coordination mechanism to facilitate exchange with all relevant donor-supported interventions.

The project objectives are aligned with the thematic priorities of the Swiss Cooperation Programme for Moldova, specifically the Governance and Social Cohesion priority thematic area, and with SDC's governance priority to support representative, effective and accountable parliaments. The project will build on the already existing thematic cooperation between Swiss funded initiatives in Moldova and a number of PSCs. Support will be complemented by the cooperation with Swiss Parliamentary Services, who will be engaged from the start of the project to improve collaboration and knowledge transfer between the two Parliaments.

II. PROJECT SCOPE AND STRATEGY

The PADEM Project is well-positioned to address Moldova's parliamentary challenges by adopting a transformative approach, seeking to tackle structural issues, such as limited legislative scrutiny and cross-party collaboration. The PADEM project will work through a multi-dimensional approach to:

- Build capacities of the Parliament in terms of knowledge and skills in legislative process, parliamentary oversight and representation and communication, including knowledge from other national parliaments through training, coaching, mentoring and peer-exchange
- Provide targeted technical support to pilot and upscale actions
- Promote the culture of change and facilitate uptake of new approaches
- Promote and facilitate cohesion and dialogue within the parliament, especially cross-party collaboration, to strengthen the parliament as an institution

The Project **Theory of Change**

- **If** practical and applicable support is provided to key groups of parliamentary stakeholders which combine capacity-building, procedural reform, modern equipment and new working practices, complemented by facilitation support to promote the culture of change (through working with Change Champions)
- **Then** the project can create small spaces for good practices, developing new techniques, building policy expertise, fostering cross-party co-operation, and promoting transparency and civic engagement in decision-making, while also empowering the Change Champions to promote uptake of new practices and facilitate change management
- **Because** improved skills, rules and practices based on aligned incentives, and integrated techniques, promoted from within the parliament structures by motivated and empowered Change Champions, create mutual benefits for different bodies within the Parliament in fulfilling their legislative, oversight and representative functions

The figure below presents an overview of expected outcomes and impact of the project, based on the Theory of Change and the proposed project intervention structure:



The project is implemented by the Facilitation Unit, which will coordinate the implementation of all activities. Delivery modality of PADEM is based on the following:

- **Participatory identification of needs** and **co-design of support actions** with the Parliament
- Based on co-designed actions, **development of Terms of Reference (ToRs) and selection of qualified service providers** to deliver technical support
- **Coordination and supervision of service provider delivery** and **facilitation of the learning process** from technical support activities with the Parliament
- **Evaluation of pilot actions** and **co-design of scale-up plans** with the Parliament

- **Facilitation and change management support** to the Parliament throughout the process, promoting behavioural change and uptake of new practices (incl. through "Change Champions")

Below, is a set of guiding principles that underpin the approach to executing the described delivery modality:

Contextualisation	Innovation	Working approach (putting staekholders in the driver seat)
Key principles of implementation	Key principles of implementation	Key principles of implementation
Understanding political economy and power dynamics to facilitate transformative change	High-quality and innovative service delivery	Stakeholder-driven implementation
Adaptive management	Innovation for impact	Impartiality
Inclusiveness and conflict-sensitive approach		Close cooperation with SDC, SPS and other development partners

- **Understanding political economy and power dynamics to facilitate transformative change** – Understanding the motivation and incentives of the key actors and the political and power dynamics within the Parliament and between parliament and other stakeholders is key to introducing long-term transformative change that is led by the stakeholders. Systematically implementing **political economy analysis (PEA)** will allow to analyse interests, ideas, values and incentives driving the behaviour of the stakeholders and enabling to **identify the most effective entry points for the project** across all three components, engaging the right people in the right way. Behavioural change is crucial for long term sustainability and ensuring that new techniques and processes are adopted by the beneficiaries. Building on PEA, the project will facilitate behavioural change by **identifying and working with "Change Champions"**, early adopters of change, who will help to generate interest and commitment to the change processes with their peers.

- **Adaptive management** – The project will continuously review and adjust activities to meet needs and capitalise on opportunities to create impact. Using a strong Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework with clear feedback loops, the project will evaluate lessons learned and adapt its approach as needed. Adaptive management is key in a project that uses pilot interventions, where learning from each pilot is crucial for scaling or modifying actions. By starting with pilots, the project will demonstrate the value and feasibility of new approaches, encouraging adoption by beneficiaries. This approach also helps us assess the effectiveness and efficiency of actions, enabling timely scaling or abandonment of strategies for better resource use and impact. Adaptive management will also include a robust risk management framework.

- **Inclusiveness and conflict sensitive approach** – All activities under the PADEM project will be guided by the principles of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Leave No One Behind, and Conflict Sensitive Program Management. The project will actively promote gender equality and inclusion. Additionally, the project will adopt a conflict-sensitive approach, especially given the divisions and internal conflicts in Moldova, worsened by the Russian war in Ukraine and external influences. The project will work to facilitate dialogue and strengthen cohesion throughout its interventions.

- **High quality and innovative service delivery** – Quality of technical expertise is crucial for this project, allowing access to the most up-to-date and innovative knowledge and skills and ensuring knowledge transfer from the most advanced parliaments on the European continent. The project will provide access to a wide network of technical experts, specialised organisations, as well as institutional expertise of other European Parliaments. It will ensure that technical activities are entrusted to the most qualified partners who can introduce new

techniques and technologies and innovative approaches. The Facilitation Unit will closely monitor and ensure quality of the technical support delivered to the Moldovan Parliament.

- **Innovation for impact** – The project will deliver innovative solutions that maximise impact with limited resources. This includes incorporating digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and new methods for delivering technical assistance. The project will work with DAI's Centre for Digital Acceleration to introduce advanced digital technologies for project implementation and draw on parliamentary experience of other European Parliaments to enhance parliamentary functions with technology and AI.
- **Stakeholder driven implementation** – The intervention places the Parliament, as its main stakeholder, at the heart of project implementation. The project team acts as the Facilitation Unit, coordinating and co-designing activities with the Moldovan Parliament. Inclusive co-design process is key to building ownership and supporting the change process. By empowering Change Champions within the Parliament, the project will aim to facilitate the drive for reforms from within. Change Champions will promote innovative approaches, gain peer support, and spread best practices. This ensures the sustainability of the project by creating a network of committed MPs and staff.
- **Impartiality** - The long-term engagement of the project will require impartial trust-building measures and inclusiveness of all political tendencies during the implementation (abiding by the rule of law, human rights, etc.). A key part of the impartiality principle is the commitment to creating the spirit of cooperation and dialogue across the political spectrum. As an impartial actor, the project will be well placed to mediate conflicts and facilitate cooperation, strengthening networks between MPs across party lines, and contributing to enhanced coherence and strength of the Parliament as an institution.
- **Close cooperation with SDC, SPS and other development partners** –The project will regularly consult with the SDC on strategic issues. Additionally, the project will work closely with the SPS to plan and deliver relevant actions.

Furthermore, the PADEM project will be operating in complementarity with other relevant donor interventions (incl. EU Twinning Project, European Parliament's Support to the Parliament of Moldova, UN/Women and UNDP Supporting Women MPs Caucus in Parliament). It will establish regular communication and coordination mechanisms to leverage synergies and avoid overlaps. It is proposed to organise and maintain a **Parliamentary support coordination group**, as a coordination mechanism for projects, donors and Parliament's management.

III. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

Component 1: Legislative drafting

The main objectives of the project under component 1 will be to empower the MPs and parliamentary services to take a more active role in legislative drafting, in line with the existing legal framework (and any new changes brought by the new Rules of Procedure when adopted). This will be achieved through the three activities described below:

Activity 1.1 Design and delivery of professional development packages – Comprehensive professional development packages with practical guides will be prepared to enhance the capacities of MPs and parliament staff and help them to gain improved knowledge and skills on all aspects of their work. With parliamentary elections scheduled during the first year of Project implementation, a key initiative will be working with parliamentary staff to develop an *Induction Training Program for newly elected MPs,* aiming to assist legislators increase their knowledge and skills in the performance of their parliamentary duties. The current Handbook for MPs, as part of the welcome package, will be further revised and updated. Expert courses on specific policy areas will be delivered, with timing and

content designed to also support implementation of pilot actions with the PSCs. These courses will include training on key areas such as legislative and policy analysis, pre-legislative scrutiny, and conducting research. The training on parliamentary oversight will be integrated into the professional development packages and delivered in the part of the same work package.

To maximise impact and ensure a tailored approach, the project will conduct a **detailed capacity needs assessment of the Parliament** and, based on the findings, prepare the ToR for a specialised training provider to prepare and deliver the full professional development packages, incl.: 1) Induction training for newly selected MPs, 2) updated handbook for MPs and 3) expert courses on specific policy areas.

Activity 1.2 Piloting new approaches with PSCs on pre-legislative scrutiny and legislative drafting – The key support activity under component 1 will be to **work with 2-3 selected PSCs** to help them **pilot pre-legislative scrutiny processes for non-contentious bills**, and support step-by-step adoption of new processes, through Change Champions. The project will work with the senior parliamentary management to identify the most suitable PSCs for piloting actions. The initiative will support committees in taking evidence, consulting stakeholders and general public, and recommending amendments to draft legislation before it is formally presented to Parliament.

A **co-design process will be facilitated**, where the **selected PSCs will take leadership in defining the bills or policies for pre-legislative scrutiny piloting**, according to their internal workplans and priorities and formulate **piloting plans**. The project will guide the PSCs on the pre-legislative process and tools, ensuring that the needs for technical and capacity building support are well defined, and adequate resources are allocated for support actions. The piloting plans will indicatively include: 1) Organisational support to PSCs in terms of organising their workload, establishing new techniques, and improving the quality of legislative analysis; 2) Capacity building support (incl. training, on-the-job support and mentoring); 3) Technical and organisational support in planning and delivery of pilot actions (this could include for example, developing a Manual/Standard Operating Procedure on the organisation of public hearings and consultations); 4) peer learning from European parliamentarians.

Based on the pilot plans, the team will develop **ToRs for selection of service providers** to deliver technical and capacity building support. The project will **supervise and monitor delivery of technical support by qualified international service providers** and **facilitate the learning process and adoption of new practices among PSC staff**. Upon completion of first pilots, the project will help to prepare lessons learnt reports and a **scale-up plan for the pilot actions**.

Activity 1.3 Support to strengthening professional research capacities of the Parliament and enhancing cooperation of Parliament with independent oversight agencies - The project will engage a specialised contractor to assess the extent to which Parliament's research service functions as an effective research provider to the legislature and **develop a comprehensive roadmap for its improvement**, ensuring a robust and efficient legislative process. This will include close collaboration with the Parliamentary Research Department to bolster its capabilities in providing timely and relevant data. In addition, the service provider will evaluate how Moldova's independent regulatory and oversight institutions exercise their roles and responsibilities, as well as their interaction with Parliament. The assessment will identify strategies to enhance the independence and accountability of these institutions and **recommend initiatives for Parliament to improve its engagement and collaboration with them**. Trainings for MPs and parliamentary staff on the topics of improving the parliamentary research service will be delivered.

Component 2: Parliamentary oversight

The project will provide capacity building support for oversight and post-legislative scrutiny, strengthen support systems for financial oversight and support cross-party engagement. Similar to the component 1, the project will work with Change Champions identified within the Parliament.

Activity 2.1 Support the establishment and operationalisation of a Post-Legislative Scrutiny Office – The FU will design the ToRs and engage a qualified service provider to help the FU and the Parliament to take the initial steps toward establishing a Post-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) Office within the Parliament (in collaboration with SPS). This process will begin with a thorough **scoping and needs assessment** to identify the resources, skills, and infrastructure required for the effective functioning of this Office. Engaging closely with parliamentary leadership, committee chairs, and staff, the project will work to define clear mandates and areas of focus for the Office, ensuring alignment with the broader objectives of parliamentary oversight and accountability. To build the necessary capacity and frameworks, the service provider will deliver targeted workshops and training sessions drawing on the expertise of SPS. This will include the creation of reporting templates and mechanisms for following up on findings, ensuring that the outputs of the Office are actionable and impactful.

Activity 2.2 Design and implement pilot actions on post-legislative scrutiny – The project will work with selected PSCs to operationalise the cooperation with the PLS Office and pilot innovative actions on post-legislative scrutiny. This will be done by employing a similar approach to activity 1.2 (selection of indicatively 3 PSCs, co-design and engagement of a service provider). The service provider will deliver support to selected PSCs, including through technical advice, organisational support, and on-the-job assistance. The FU will supervise delivery of services, facilitate learning and uptake of new practices, and facilitate the development of a **scale-up plan**.

Activity 2.3 Support relevant parliamentary services to conceptualise and develop an effective system to track and monitor all requests that are sent to the government – Building on the examples of similar systems from parliaments of European states, the project will mobilise expertise to work with the relevant parliamentary services to develop a **concept for the system to track and monitor all requests that are sent to the government**, which will then be **operationalised through engagement of relevant IT services**. The selected service provider will also deliver **training to the staff** on use of the system and develop relevant **user manuals**. Upon the launch of the system, the project team will provide ongoing advisory support to monitor the use of the system and facilitate its uptake among all relevant parliamentary staff.

Activity 2.4 Support conceptualisation, feasibility assessment and operationalisation of a Budget Oversight Office – The project will examine the successful examples of similar units from European states and prepare an **options paper** with recommendations on most suitable options for Moldovan context and capacities. This will be the basis for launching a **co-design process** with the Parliament, identifying the desired responsibilities and structure of the Budget Oversight Office and preparing the **ToRs for a feasibility study on establishment of the Office**. The project team will discuss the findings with the Parliament and provide technical advice on further actions. In case it is agreed to proceed with establishment of the Office, the FU will support the process. This could include **engagement of a specialised consultant to assist with all tasks related to establishing the Office,** as well as **procurement of needed IT equipment** for its functioning. The FU will be responsible for co-design of the **Budget Oversight Office establishment roadmap**, engagement and supervision of the service provider.

Activity 2.5 Support cross-party engagement through the caucuses and cross-party groupings – Cross-party engagement is crucial for strengthening Parliament's oversight role and reducing political divisions that often lead to one-sided decision-making. The project will encourage this engagement through initiatives like promoting women's political empowerment. The project will start by consulting with women MPs to assess interest and raise awareness about initiatives such as gender auditing, gender-sensitive budgeting, and gender policy analysis. The project will identify potential Change Champions among women MPs who can lead informal caucus groups to kick-start these efforts and support pilot initiatives. Based on the lessons learned from these initiatives, the project may support MPs in revising formal parliamentary processes to integrate these mechanisms.

The project may also facilitate the re-establishment of a Global Organisation of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC) chapter, to create a platform for MPs to engage with international anti-corruption efforts, share experiences, and adopt proven strategies for combating corruption.

Component 3: Representation and communication

Component 3 is dedicated to improving the transparency of the Parliament's work and enhancing communication with the citizens and civil society. This will be done through two interconnected workstreams – introducing initiatives to improve communication with the citizens, as well as improving the IT infrastructure of the Parliament and enhancing use of digital technologies and AI.

Activity 3.1 Improving Parliament's ability to engage with the public: The project will play a critical role in facilitating the development of the **Parliament Communication and Outreach Strategy**, aiming to improve Parliament's ability to engage with the public and revise existing structures/procedures to increase overall effectiveness. The project will support the implementation of this strategy by offering **professional development and training for MPs and staff**, equipping them with the skills to foster a more transparent, inclusive, and evidence-driven legislative process.

The project will work to enhance the capacity of the Information and Visitors` Centre of the Parliament. Actions to strengthen the Centre's capacity will be informed by a **participatory needs assessment conducted with its staff** during the project's first stage. Based on the assessment, potential support may include upgrading the Centre with digital displays, interactive kiosks, multilingual resources, and educational content about parliamentary functions.

Activity 3.2 Support the parliament to introduce digital technologies and AI to enhance transparency – The project will engage **IT consultants** to assess the current IT infrastructure, level of readiness for the use of advanced IT solutions and AI and will prepare the **digital readiness assessment report** with recommendations for improvement of IT infrastructure. Special attention will be placed on proposing solutions to the issue of lack of access to the source code for the e-Parliament information system. On the basis of this report, the project will work closely with the Parliament's staff to agree on and support implementation of actions to enhance the use of digital technologies. The project will develop an action-oriented **Digital transformation roadmap for the Parliament**, which will, after approval, guide the further activities of the project in this regard. Support could include **engagement of digital transformation consultancies** to develop and implement innovative digital solutions, as well as **procurement of IT equipment**.

IV. ORGANISATION SET-UP

The implementing partner DAI will establish a Facilitation Unit for the delivery of the project, which will be responsible for the overall coordination of the project, co-design of activities together with the Parliament and engagement and supervision of the service providers. DAI is responsible for the overall contract management and coordination with SDC. The activities implemented by the Swiss Parliamentary Services will be managed directly by the SDC – and not by DAI.

The **Team Leader** of the FU will be responsible for management of the FU, coordination of project activities, facilitation of change management process within the Parliament, coordination of service providers, establishing and maintaining collaboration with other projects, as well as liaison with SDC and SPS.

Component leaders will be responsible for management of the three components of the project, under supervision of the Team Leader. They will:

- Lead participatory needs analysis and co-design process with the parliament staff and MPs to design technical support activities.
- Prepare ToRs and lead engagement and supervision of service providers.
- Facilitate the learning process from technical activities and defining scale-up plans.
- Facilitate change management and uptake of best practices, working with Change Champions.

Facilitation skills of the FU will play a key role in ensuring the project achieves its objectives.

The FU team will be supported by **DAI's technical backstoppers** and **short-term consultants** with specialised expertise in key cross-cutting subject areas that will facilitate efficient set-up and implementation of the project.

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Steering Committee of the Project
"Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova" (PADEM)

The Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation SDC finances the Project "Strengthening Parliamentary Democracy in Moldova" (PADEM). The main stakeholders developed the project's goals and outcomes in close consultation. These Terms of Reference are developed to initiate the set-up of the Project's Steering Committee (SC) in order to provide good governance of the project.

1. Overall Purpose of the Steering Committee:

The purpose of the SC is to constructively oversee and guide the planning, implementation, reporting and assessment of the PADEM project.

2. Composition of the Steering Committee:

The SC is composed of:

- One representative of the Swiss Cooperation Office (SCO) in Moldova (co-chair);
- One representative of the leadership of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (co-chair);
- One representative of the Secretariat of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (serves as co-chair in the absence of the aforementioned member).

The membership of the SC can be enlarged at a later stage by including representatives of selected parliamentary standing committees.

The State Chancellery will delegate one representative to the SC meetings with the role of observer (i.e., with no voting rights). Stakeholders who are related to the PADEM project or are partners in SDC's country programme may also attend the SC meetings as observers.

Representatives of parliamentary standing committees and NGOs can be invited to the SC as observers at the request of either of the co-chairs. Other relevant stakeholders can be invited to the SC meetings as observers or contributors at the request of either of the co-chairs.

3. Frequency of Meetings:

The SC shall have at least two ordinary meetings per year. Either of the co-chairs of the SC can call additional ad-hoc meetings - including in online format - should sufficient justification arise.

4. Organisation of Steering Committee Meetings:

The SC meeting is co-chaired by the representative of the leadership of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (in his/her absence by the representative of the Secretariat of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova) and by the representative of the SCO Moldova. The Facilitation Unit (FU) of the PADEM project performs secretarial duties. In this role, the FU shall: 1) organize the meetings – including drafting the agenda, sending out the invitations and related documents at least two weeks before the meetings; 2) take minutes during the meeting; 3) draft and send out the minutes of the meeting.

5. The main functions of the Steering Committee are as follows:

- Endorse the Yearly Plan of Operations (YPO).
- Endorse project progress reports in accordance with YPO.

- Provide overall orientation about the policy and institutional environment of the PADEM project.
- Provide advisory support to the FU in its responsibilities to implement the PADEM project.
- Monitor the implementation of the PADEM project if it is on track achieving its objectives.
- Act as a liaison and network between represented entities and organisations and the project and assure a good information flow between the PADEM project and stakeholders.

SC members are invited to contact the FU of the PADEM project any time with their legitimate enquiries and suggestions. The FU of the PADEM project will seek active dialogue with SC members whenever opportune.

6. Decisions of the Steering Committee:

In order to take decisions, at least 2/3 of the members of the SC have to be present. As a rule, decisions are taken by consensus.

When additional ad-hoc meetings are called, the format of silent endorsement can be applied for taking decisions. Relevant documents for decision shall be distributed to all members of the SC and shall be considered endorsed when no member of the SC expresses their objection in an ad-hoc meeting or in written form within a period of 5 working days.