

<https://doi.org/10.52326/csd2024.21>

## CASE STUDY OF MOLDOVA AND GEORGIA ON NATIONALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INDICATORS

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**Abstract.** The Republic of Moldova (Moldova) and Georgia are signatories to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and both have as a strategic objective the accession to the European Union. These commitments involve complex internal and external actions that require monitoring. The research analyzed the specifics of the nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) according to the priorities of the countries and their integration into the national strategic framework, the degree of availability of indicators, the progress in sustainability for different SDGs and their impact on the development of the countries. The information base served national and UNO reports on the SDG monitoring and implementation process. The research results reveal that Moldova has identified a higher number of SDG indicators (337) compared to Georgia (202) and the availability of indicators for Moldova is higher than for Georgia, respectively 80% and 46.5%. Strategic policies integrate the SDGs according to the priorities of the countries.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable development, national SDG indicators, Green growth*

**Jel code:** *F13, F15, Q01, O24, O19*

### Introduction

With the signing of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Governments of the UN signatory states committed to implementing the principles of sustainable development in their countries. In practical terms, this means that development strategies, country policies and development objectives, as a function of the priorities and specifics of each country, are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, financial resources are also allocated based on sustainability principles. From this point of view, the monitoring of the SDG implementation process becomes relevant for each country, both for evaluating the countries' development path and for ensuring a comparison between countries of the level of performance in terms of sustainability.

For this purpose, in March 2017, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), created by the UN Statistics Committee (session 46), developed The global indicator framework for Sustainable Development Goals. The global indicator framework was later adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 and is contained in the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313). According to the Resolution, the indicator framework will be refined annually and reviewed comprehensively by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in March 2020 and its fifty-sixth session, to be held in 2025. The global indicator framework will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels, which will be developed by Member States. The last revision of the ODD indicators took place at the 55th session in February/March 2024.

Initially the list of global SDG indicators consisted of 241 indicators, of which 230 indicators were unique, and 9 indicators were found in the list 2 or 3 times. According to the last revision, the list of global SDG indicators counts 248 indicators, of which 231 are unique. The SDG indicators are formulated emerging from the SDGs and aim to report globally comparable indicators in space and time. On the other hand, global indicators are meant to alert governments to the most pressing problems and the need to prioritize actions at national and regional levels, including through development assistance [7].

Each state has engaged in a process of nationalizing the SDG indicators, integrating them into the national strategic framework and creating a system for reporting and evaluating progress in achieving each specific objective and target, relevant for the country.

The Republic of Moldova and Georgia are former soviet republics that, since declaring independence, have been going through similar processes to build statehood based on democratic principles. Both states have a history of cooperation with the European Union and have as a strategic objective, provided for by the constitution, integration into the European Union and the irreversibility of the European path. Moldova is at a more advanced stage in this process, being in the process of negotiating accession to the EU.

The European integration process is a complex one, which requires an effort to adjust the governance of the countries according to European principles, including that based on sustainability. To this end, the process of monitoring the progress of SDG implementation is important.

In this research, we aim to analyze the degree of nationalization of the SDG indicators in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia and to identify to what extent the information gaps for reporting sustainability performance progress over time have been filled. At the same time, it was evaluated the progress of the countries in terms of implementing the SDGs.

### **Research methods**

The research method consists in the analysis of the national reports of the Republic of Moldova and Georgia regarding the consultation process regarding the adaptation of the monitoring and evaluation indicators of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, with the aim of identifying what was the initial coverage of the SDG indicators with indicators from national information system. The progress of national information systems capable of providing sufficient information for monitoring the evolution and ensuring comparability between states of the progress in implementing the SDGs was studied.

In order to assess the current progress of each country, the comparative analysis of the SDG implementation in each country was carried out. For this purpose, country reports and UNO reports on SDG implementation served as informational support. The analytical assessment of the current state of the countries allows highlighting the specifics of the countries, the emphases placed or the chances avoided in their development policies and the identification of opportunities that would contribute to a sustainable development.

### **Mapping of SDG indicators in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia**

After signing the 2030 Agenda, each country identified relevant SDGs and monitoring indicators, based on the national context and priorities [1].

For the Republic of Moldova, out of the total of 241 global indicators initially approved, 70 indicators were determined to be irrelevant and 171 relevant indicators, respectively. In the mapping process, 17 more narrative (qualitative) indicators were added and 37 indicators were additionally identified as necessary for the evaluation and monitoring process of the nationalized targets, thus the total being 226 indicators. Of the total number of national indicators, half are fully available and the other half are missing. The most indicators for reporting progress on the implementation of the SDGs have been established for SDG16 and SDG3, followed by SDGs 4, 8, 5 and 1. The highest degree of availability of indicators was for targets under SDGs 3, 4, 9, 10 and 12 (see Table 1). For the other objectives, about half of the indicators were missing, a fact that imposed certain limits in reporting the degree of SDG implementation [2, 6]. According to the latest review, out of the 248 SDG indicators, 337 are considered relevant, of which approx. 80% (271) are available and approx. 20% (66) are missing [7].

Georgia started the SDG nationalization process in 2015 and the Administration of the Government of Georgia was designated as a coordinating entity. At the initial stage, the Government created technical working groups which identified the goals, targets and indicators which were relevant for the country context. Eventually, the Georgian Government adopted all 17 goals, 95 targets and 215 indicators and developed a national roadmap which serves as the primary document explaining the nationalized indicators along with relevant implementing and responsible bodies [9].

According to the 2024 annual report, Georgia adjusted 94 (46,5%) indicators out of 202 identified for monitoring SDG implementation.

**Table 1. Availability of national SDG indicators in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia according to the last revision, March 2024**

SDG	Total		Available		Lack	
	Moldova	Georgia	Moldova	Georgia	Moldova	Georgia
SDG1	29	12	22	6	7	6
SDG2	15	13	12	6	3	7
SDG3	32	34	30	13	2	21
SDG4	27	19	26	11	1	8
SDG5	21	17	15	7	6	10
SDG6	17	3	15	3	2	0
SDG7	9	5	8	3	1	2
SDG8	22	15	16	9	6	6
SDG9	22	7	17	5	5	2
SDG10	15	8	13	5	2	3
SDG11	25	3	13	2	12	1
SDG12	17	1	11	1	6	0
SDG13	10	2	9	1	1	1
SDG14	5	3	2	2	3	1
SDG15	15	6	13	5	2	1
SDG16	34	48	27	12	7	36
SDG17	22	5	22	3	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>108</b>

Source: Authors elaboration, using data from [3, 8, 10, 14].

In Moldova the most indicators for monitoring are allocated for SDG 16, 3, 1, 4 and 11, between 34-25 indicators, thus showing the government's interest in monitoring processes related to peace and justice, social aspects, such as good health and well-being, poverty and quality education, and sustainable cities and communities. For some SDGs with the increase in the number of relevant indicators the number of unavailable indicators has also increased, such as SDG 11, 12 and 14. The most indicators for which data are missing are SDG 11, 16, 1, 12, 8, 5 and 9, between 12-5 missing indicators and at the same time the SDGs for which the number of missing indicators has been reduced are SDG 16, 3, 4, 17 and 6, between 15-5 new indicators reported in the monitoring process.

According to [3], the highest levels of indicator reporting are recorded for SDG 4 "Quality education" - 86%, SDG 3 "Health and well-being" - 76%, SDG 1 "No poverty" - 75% and SDG 10 "Reduced inequalities" – 73%. The lowest reporting rates are found in the case of SDG 14 "Life under water" - 30%, SDG 2 "Zero hunger" - 34%, SDG 11 "Sustainable cities and communities" and SDG 13 "Climate action" - 50%. The average degree of reporting for all indicators is 65%.

In Georgia, the most monitoring indicators are allocated for SDG 3 and 16, respectively 34 and 48 indicators, but more than half of them are not yet available. For SDG 1, 2, 8, 5 and 4, between 12-19 indicators have been identified for monitoring, for which the degree of availability is low.

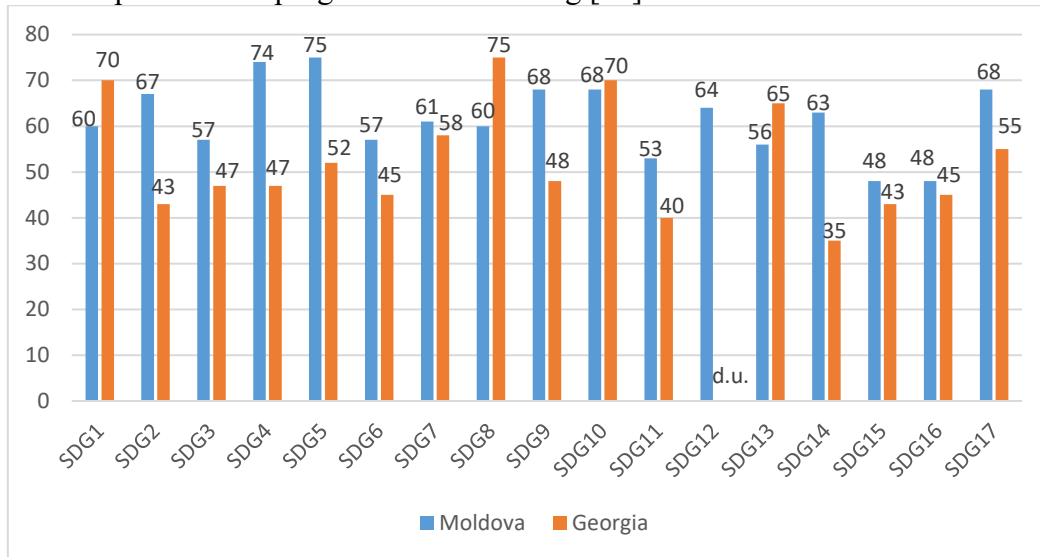
#### **Progress in implementing the SDGs in the Republic of Moldova and Georgia**

The SDG indicators are a tool for planning and implementing countries' development strategies, for which target values are identified and are included in relevant policy documents such as the national development strategy, sectoral strategies, programs, action plans or government decisions. Achieving the implementation targets of the ODD indicators depends on several factors, among which we could highlight: the implementation of new laws or the modification of existing ones to allow the implementation of sustainable solutions or policies; allocating financial resources to support sustainable actions; the performance of state institutions in influencing the implementation of the SDGs; the help of international partners in the governance of sustainable development; the social perspectives and cultural values educated and promoted in society that form attitudes for the implementation of sustainability; the attractive economic and investment climate can facilitate the

implementation of sustainable solutions; the exceptional factors conditioned by climate change, natural disasters, world pandemics or armed conflicts.

According to the country reports in Moldova, the best scores were recorded for SDG5 "Gender equality" – 75% out of 100% and SDG 4 "Quality education" – 74%, and the worst for SDG 15 "Life on Earth" – 48% and SDG 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” – 48% [3].

In Georgia, according to the country profile based on UNO data, the best scores were recorded for ODD8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth" -75%, SDG1 "No Poverty" -70% and SDG10 "Reduced Inequalities" -70%. The weakest progress was achieved for SDG14 "Life below water" -35% and SDG11 "Sustainable cities and communities" -40%, and for SDG12 "Responsible consumption and production" progress data is missing [14].



**Figure 1. Progress on SDG implementation by 2021/2022, %**

Source: [3, 14]

**Integrating the SDGs into the country policies of the Republic of Moldova**

The action plan of the Government of the Republic of Moldova aims to modernize localities, increase citizens' security, contribute to increasing incomes and create well-paid jobs. This plan is structured in 20 government actions, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals [5].

The main objective of the Government of the Republic of Moldova is judicial reform, the fight against corruption and deoligarchization. The implementation of SDG16 will be achieved through the confiscation of illegally acquired assets, the promotion of honest and professional prosecutors and judges, accessible services for the diaspora, the elimination of corruption from state institutions and the accession to the European Union by 2030.

The situation remains tense in the country, caused by a military conflict in the neighborhood and strained relations with Russia. Actions are planned to secure the country's borders and modernize the national army. Under these conditions, the Government pursued energy diversification, and currently purchases gas only from Europe for domestic consumption. However, gas supplied by Gazprom to the Transnistrian region remains the main source of electricity. Also, Moldova is connected to the energy networks of the neighboring countries, Ukraine and Romania. The government promotes actions to install new capacities for generating electricity from renewable sources and for storing energy from renewable sources, as well as the energy efficiency of public buildings with a social purpose and residential blocks (SDG 7, 13). The Republic of Moldova aims to increase the share of energy from renewable sources in gross final consumption from 23.8% in 2019 to 27% in 2030 and to increase the volume of investments in the energy efficiency sector from 0.03% of GDP in 2018 to 0, 5% in 2030.

Moldova's economy in 2023 registered a very modest growth, remaining strongly affected by energy imports and their high prices. The gross domestic product (GDP) increased by only 0.7%. Low external demand has led to a decline in exports, however the European Union market remains a

fairly important one, with export growth of 4.3% in 2023. A third of exports is represented by agricultural production with low added value. Domestic consumption is also falling, as a result of migration and low wages, which has led to a reduction in imports. Remittances remain important for the country's economy (12% in GDP), but have registered a decrease of 4.5% in 2023 [4]. SDG1 indicators indicate for the year 2022 a slight increase in the poverty level. The government has launched a number of legislative initiatives to reduce the poverty rate, including the introduction of an Energy Vulnerability Reduction Fund, the establishment of a national minimum wage, changes to the rules for establishing and paying social assistance, including the incorporation of more disadvantaged families into the assistance program social, and by increasing the minimum guaranteed income level, and adjusting the conditions for granting aid for the cold period of the year. The evolution of the employment indicator between 2018 and 2022 was uneven, but showed a decrease in the unemployment rate to 3.1% in 2022.

However, the Republic of Moldova still has a potential for economic growth, which must be directed towards reducing poverty and mitigating social inequalities. Measures to increase productivity and innovation in sectors with increased added value are a priority. In the action plan, the Government foresees the support of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by creating a fund that gives SMEs access to competitive bank loans to support enterprises, with an emphasis on modernization and technology, the revision of the conditions and criteria for accessing subsidies by farmers small and medium-sized enterprises, reducing red tape for entrepreneurs and expanding the types of product categories approved to be exported to the EU (SDG 8, 10, 1, 2). Promoting sustainable tourism is a central objective for creating jobs and promoting local culture and products. The government is taking actions to improve tourism infrastructure and local capacity to manage and promote tourism. At the moment, the share of tourism in GDP is a modest 0.6% (the target for 2025 is 1%) and the share of employees in tourism activities in total employees has decreased.

The country's infrastructure will be improved through the modernization of cities and villages (SDG 11, 12), the rehabilitation of roads and bridges (SDG 9, 8), the digitalization of public services (SDG 9, 16) and the construction of regional water supply projects (SDG6).

At the same time, the country's economic development must ensure a good synergy between economic growth (SDG8) and climate action (SDG13), restoration, expansion and conservation of forest areas and forest vegetation (SDG 15, 12). In the period 2010-2019, the volume of natural resources extracted per person, from 6 tons to 9 tons, and the consumption of natural resources per person, from 6.2 tons to 8.9 tons, increased constantly. In the period 2019-2021 the annual average of waste from production and consumption decreased, while the waste of fruits and vegetables increased in 2022 [3]. However, other factors such as resource efficiency, environmental protection and sustainable development strategies must also be taken into account. The government pays significant attention to the integration of the green economy into national policies by supporting the greening of small and medium-sized enterprises, by rational consumption of resources, by reducing food waste, by sustainable management of waste and chemicals, by recycling waste and by promoting green public procurement.

The afforestation areas have a decreasing trend. In the period 2017-2021, no efforts were made to afforest and restore degraded lands. The national program for the extension and rehabilitation of forests for the period 2023-2032 proposes concrete actions for the extension and rehabilitation of forests, including through afforestation and reforestation, with the aim of improving the condition and quality of terrestrial ecosystems. Thus, until 2030, the following will be promoted: the implementation of the sustainable management of all types of forests, the carrying out of silvotechnical works, the restoration of degraded forests and the significant increase in afforestation and reforestation, the fight against desertification, the restoration of degraded lands through the implementation of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) mechanism.

The social aspect is focused on ensuring a modern and quality medical infrastructure by equipping and renovating existing hospitals (SDG3), reviewing and reforming social assistance benefits to increase participation in the labor market and improving the system of training and professional development of human resources in education (SDGs 1, 5, 4, 10).

Most of the health indicators register satisfactory overall progress, but their level still remains below the European average. It is important to continue efforts to ensure the quality of health services, access to safe, effective and affordable basic medicines and vaccines for all; ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, information and education; increasing and streamlining the financing of the health system and recruitment, development, training and retention of medical personnel; equipping medical institutions with modern equipment for diagnosis, treatment and intensive therapy; and strengthening capacity for early warning, reduction and management of national health risks.

The rate of inclusion in formal education of 6-year-old children is over 100%, the rate of access to tertiary education is increasing, in 2020-2021 it increased by 5.06%. In contrast, the participation rate of young people and adults in formal and non-formal education throughout life continued to decrease. At the moment, the indicator "Share of young people and adults with ICT skills" is not monitored. It aims for more than 80% of the population to have basic digital skills and for at least 16% of university graduates to come from science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics (STEAM) fields. In the process of implementing the curricular reform, the education plans put a special emphasis on priorities such as education for sustainable development, and the optional subjects addressed topics related to the environment and sustainability. The development strategy "EDUCATION 2030" integrates the objectives and targets of the SDG aimed at the development of inclusive education and proposes the modernization of the infrastructure of educational institutions, so that they meet the needs of children, girls and boys and people with disabilities and provide a safe, non-violent educational environment and inclusive for all. There is a steady increase in the value of external financial assistance for scholarships, indicating an increased involvement of external sources in supporting education and academic development.

The Republic of Moldova is making an effort to identify the most rational ways out of the crisis and economic growth. Even if there are still reservations in many chapters, the effort made was appreciated because the EU decided to open accession negotiations with the Republic of Moldova, recognizing the fulfillment of six of the nine necessary stages. The referendum to amend the constitution to include the desire of Moldovan citizens to join the European Union (EU) and the presidential elections in the fall of 2024 have strengthened the citizens' commitment to follow the European path of development.

#### **Integrating the SDGs into the country policies of the Georgia**

In Georgia several key SDGs have made a significant impact in Georgia in 2021-2025. Basically, four priority directions were identified, which proved to be important for the development. Their implementation has facilitated economic growth, strengthened social protection mechanisms, and advanced climate adaptation strategies, collectively contributing to the nation's sustainable development trajectory [15].

1. SDG1 „No Poverty”: Georgia has demonstrated significant progress in poverty alleviation through the implementation of comprehensive social welfare programs, particularly aimed at its most vulnerable populations. These initiatives have contributed to the mitigation of extreme poverty, establishing a crucial safety net for low-income households and thus bolstering macroeconomic stability.
2. SDG8 „Decent Work and Economic Growth”: Considerable advancements have been made in fostering inclusive economic growth and expanding employment opportunities across various sectors. Reforms targeting labor markets, job creation, and enhancements in working conditions have been pivotal in driving sustainable economic growth. This approach has ensured more equitable access to employment, benefiting a broader spectrum of the population and promoting long-term economic resilience.
3. SDG10 „Reduced Inequalities”: Efforts to diminish socio-economic disparities have been central to Georgia's development strategy, focusing on reducing income inequality and enhancing equitable access to essential services and employment opportunities. Policies promoting inclusive growth have been instrumental in increasing socio-economic mobility, thereby contributing to more balanced and equitable economic development.

4. SDG13 „Climate Action”: The adverse effects of climate change, including frequent natural disasters such as floods and droughts, have posed significant challenges to Georgia’s economy. The strategic framework underscores the critical need for climate mitigation and a shift towards a low-carbon economy. Climate adaptation projects, alongside increased investments in renewable energy, aim to enhance energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. This shift towards green financing is anticipated to underpin economic resilience and support sustainable, long-term growth.

Other goals that have also made substantial contributions to Georgia’s socio-economic landscape are SDG 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 16, and 17.

SDG3 „Good Health and Well-being” - the introduction of a universal healthcare program has led to notable improvements in public health and living standards. Despite the effective management of the COVID-19 pandemic, systemic issues continue to challenge the healthcare sector. Enhanced financial allocations have expanded service access, particularly benefiting vulnerable demographic groups. SDG4 „Quality Education” - educational reforms have focused on enhancing the quality and accessibility of education, with an emphasis on skill development and youth employment. Although access to education has increased, there remain significant challenges in ensuring high-quality education, particularly in rural areas where educational disparities persist. SDG5 „Gender Equality” - the document highlights concerted efforts to advance gender equality and safeguard the rights of women. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing gender disparities, especially in employment. Although measures have been taken to address gender-based violence, systemic obstacles continue to hinder the full economic and political participation of women. SDG6 „Clean Water and Sanitation” - access to clean water and adequate sanitation remains a critical issue, especially in Georgia’s rural areas. Despite improvements in water infrastructure, substantial investments are still required to address ongoing deficits and ensure sustainable water resource management. SDG7 „Affordable and Clean Energy” - achieving energy independence and advancing clean energy development are strategic priorities for Georgia. The country has seen a marked increase in investments in renewable energy projects, including hydropower and solar energy, supporting its transition towards a more sustainable and diversified energy portfolio. SDG11 „Sustainable Cities and Communities” - the rapid urbanization process in Georgia presents formidable challenges in city management and infrastructure development. While public transport systems and urban infrastructure have seen improvements, the ongoing pace of urbanization continues to place significant pressure on existing resources. SDG16 „Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions” - institutional reforms have focused on strengthening the legal and judicial framework. Anti-corruption initiatives and increased transparency have enhanced institutional integrity, yet significant challenges remain in upholding the rule of law and safeguarding human rights. SDG17 „Partnerships for the Goals” - Georgia’s economic progress is closely linked to its international partnerships, particularly its collaboration with the European Union. Engagement with international organizations has played a pivotal role in strengthening the economy and facilitating the implementation of various social and development projects.

The implementation of these SDGs has fostered significant advancements across health, education, gender equality, energy, urban development, and international cooperation, collectively propelling the country toward a more integrated and sustainable growth path. [11]

In Georgia, local self-governance is fully operational across 64 municipalities, positioning these local authorities as crucial stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Their involvement is vital for accurately identifying local needs and ensuring that these priorities are incorporated into national strategies. Since Georgia’s Voluntary National Review in 2020, conducted amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the country has faced considerable socio-economic challenges. The initial economic shock caused by the pandemic was severe, leading to a contraction of 6.3% in real GDP in 2020. However, the subsequent years saw a strong recovery, with double-digit economic growth recorded in 2021 (10.6%) and 2022 (11.0%), followed by robust growth in 2023. Despite persistent geopolitical instability in the region, Georgia managed to uphold macroeconomic stability and implement key reforms aimed at sustainable, inclusive economic development. From 2020 to 2023, the economy exhibited an average growth rate

of 5.7%, with the post-pandemic period (2021-2023) showing a higher average growth of 9.7%. The growth trend continued into 2024, with an 8.4% increase in real GDP in the first quarter alone.

The geopolitical landscape of 2022, shaped by Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, presented additional challenges for Georgia's economy. The conflict exacerbated supply chain disruptions, led to sharp increases in commodity prices, and prompted businesses to withdraw from affected markets. Consequently, Georgia had to adapt quickly, developing alternative trade routes to mitigate these disruptions. The initial pandemic-induced contraction of 6.3% in GDP was followed by a rapid economic rebound, with growth rates of 10.6% and 11.0% in 2021 and 2022, respectively. The momentum was maintained in 2023, with a GDP growth rate of 7.5%, and a strong start to 2024, where growth reached 8.4% in the first quarter. These figures significantly exceed the sustainable development target of 5% (SDG8.1.1).

The composition of Georgia's economy has remained relatively stable since 2020. According to 2023 data, the largest contributor to GDP is the wholesale and retail trade sector, accounting for 15.6% of GDP. Other significant sectors include real estate activities (10.2%), manufacturing (9.5%), construction (7.9%), and agriculture (6.9%). Although the economy displays a high degree of sectoral diversification, challenges remain in enhancing productivity and increasing the share of high-value-added activities. The tourism sector, which was heavily impacted by the pandemic, has shown strong signs of recovery, with revenues from tourism in 2022 and 2023 surpassing pre-pandemic levels. The direct contribution of the tourism sector to GDP rose to 7.1%, approaching the target of 7.9% set for 2025 (SDG8.9.1). The country's strategic focus on green development, sustainable industrialization, and energy sector reforms reflects its commitment to aligning more closely with EU standards and advancing long-term economic resilience [12].

For Georgia, the SDGs offer a strategic framework to tackle economic vulnerabilities, enhance infrastructure, and attract foreign investments, particularly in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. However, achieving these outcomes necessitates coordinated policy action, enhanced fiscal management, and strengthened international partnerships. The next few years are crucial for translating the SDG agenda into concrete economic gains, positioning Georgia on a path towards sustainable and inclusive growth by 2030 [13].

### Conclusions

Both countries have made substantial efforts to adapt global SDGs to their national contexts, aligning their strategic frameworks with sustainable development principles. However, significant gaps in data availability, institutional capacity, and financial resources persist, affecting the ability to comprehensively monitor and implement the SDGs. For Moldova, addressing socio-economic inequalities and enhancing energy diversification are crucial, while Georgia must focus on building local governance capacities and expanding green initiatives.

The findings underscore the importance of continued international collaboration, targeted policy reforms, and resource mobilization to advance sustainable development. As both nations aim to align more closely with European standards, their experiences offer valuable insights into the dynamics of SDG nationalization in transitional economies. Further research and regular monitoring are essential to bridge existing gaps and ensure a more inclusive and resilient approach to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

**Acknowledgements:** The research is funded by: 1.) National institutional research project, subprogramme: Research on Ensuring Sustainable Development and Increasing the Competitiveness of the Republic of Moldova in the European Context, no. 020408, Technical University of Moldova; 2.) Erasmus+ Program, the Jean Monnet Chair Action „Fostering European Union Leadership and Management for Sustainable Development in the context of European Integration”, EUleadSD, no.101126990.

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