

## MOLDOVA

### MCC Learning from

### **“MOLDOVA TRANSITION TO HIGH-VALUE AGRICULTURE PROJECT EVALUATION: INTERIM FINDINGS”**

**MATHEMATICA POLICY RESEARCH, October 2018**

MCC has identified the following programmatic and evaluation lessons based on the Moldova Transition to High-Value Agriculture Project Evaluation: Interim Findings.

#### PROGRAMMATIC LESSONS

- *Post compact support to the Water Users Associations was critical.* The evaluation describes how various organizations stepped in after the compact closed to provide support to the new Water User Associations (WUAs). There were delays in construction which meant that the WUAs had little if any experience managing the irrigation systems when the compact closed. The evaluation states that without this support, some of the WUAs may have failed. MCC could have planned post compact support for the WUAs from the beginning.
- *The project could have been designed to better serve farmers with small plots of land.* The interim evaluation shows that farmers with medium or large areas of land are benefiting the most from the project at this time. Land consolidation has been slow and has been a barrier to increased irrigation because it limits efficiencies in irrigation and the ability to use the large-capacity pumps. Instead of rebuilding old Soviet irrigation systems designed to irrigate large areas of land, MCC could have designed the irrigation systems to better serve the existing situation in Moldova, where many farmers have small plots of land and are hesitant to cooperate. MCC could have focused some project resources on facilitating small farm cooperation or land consolidation to increase the use of the rehabilitated irrigation systems.

#### EVALUATION LESSONS

- *An interim evaluation was useful to adjust the final evaluation design.* As a result of the interim evaluation, a few changes are being made to the overall evaluation design to make it more cost-effective. The interim evaluation used qualitative and administrative data to review results two years after the project. Since the interim evaluation found that levels of irrigation were clearly lower than expected, a large interim quantitative survey was cancelled. The knowledge gained by the quantitative survey would not have warranted the cost. In addition, learning that irrigation levels were partially low due to weather (rainy years), solidified the importance of collecting information on multiple agricultural years for the final evaluation.