16 NOVEMBER 2026 • ACADEMY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES OF MOLDOVA • ONE-DAY CONFERENCE

2026 CONFERENCE CONCEPT NOTE & RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

CENTRAL QUESTION OF THE 2026 EDITION

How can the services sector become a stronger driver of competitiveness, economic growth and Moldova's integration into the EU Single Market by 2030?

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization of the Republic of Moldova, through its Entrepreneurship Development Policy Directorate, in partnership with the National Institute for Economic Research of the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova, invites researchers, academics, independent experts, representatives of research organisations, think tanks, international organisations and development partners to present relevant research findings and analytical contributions at the Moldova Entrepreneurship & SME Policy Conference 2026.

The Conference is designed as a platform for dialogue between research and the public policy-making process, bringing research findings closer to public authorities, the business community and development partners.

WHY DO WE ORGANIZE THIS CONFERENCE?

The National Economic Development Strategy 2030 (NEDS 2030) projects for the Republic of Moldova a resilient, green and digitized economy, in which the services sector, together with industrial development, will play an important role in the structural transformation of the economy.

The NEDS 2030 sets as a fundamental objective the strengthening of a services sector capable of capitalizing on existing resources and contributing to economic development and human capital. At the same time, the Strategy aims to expand and diversify value-added services for export and to further integrate the Moldovan economy into the EU Single Market.
In this context, the 2026 edition of the Conference aims to contribute to a better understanding of the conditions under which the services sector can become one of the engines of competitiveness of the Republic of Moldova's economy.

The accelerated pace of Moldova's economic transformation and European integration increases the need for a broad and continuously evolving body of data, evidence, research findings and ideas to inform economic policymaking. Relevant knowledge is continuously generated through cooperation between public authorities, universities, research organisations, international organisations, think tanks and independent experts.
The Conference aims to bring this knowledge into a common space for dialogue and to connect it more systematically with economic policymaking and decision-making processes.

This event is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

WHAT KIND OF CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

We do not ask participants to develop public policies instead of public authorities, nor to turn their research into administrative documents.
We are interested, first of all, in research results and accumulated knowledge.
Research that has already been completed or is at a sufficiently advanced stage, and whose results can contribute to the understanding of the central question of the Conference, is welcome.
It is not necessary that the research has been developed specifically for the Conference. One of the objectives of the initiative is precisely to identify the relevant knowledge that already exists and to bring it into dialogue with public authorities/institutions and other actors interested in the development of the economy of the Republic of Moldova.

DIMENSIONS OF ADDRESSING THE CENTRAL QUESTION OF THE CONFERENCE

To enable multidimensional examination of the theme of the 2026 edition, contributions can address the services sector and business development from perspectives such as:

- the structure, productivity and potential of the services sector;
- entrepreneurship, emergence, survival and scaling of enterprises;
- the institutional environment, regulation and functioning of the market;
- human capital, skills and inclusive entrepreneurship;
- access to finance and investment;
- innovation, research and knowledge transfer;
- standards, quality and European integration;
- green transition, circular economy and sustainability;
- internationalization and integration into European and global value chains;
- digitalization of businesses and the use of advanced technologies.

These perspectives constitute an SME Policy Architecture used for the multidimensional organization of knowledge within the Conference. They are not restrictive categories and do not imply that a contribution must fall exclusively into one dimension.
The authors are encouraged to pursue the question that their research can clarify, and the organizers will subsequently ensure that the contributions are framed in the overall architecture of the Conference.

RESEARCH AGENDA 2026 AND INDICATIVE CONFERENCE ARCHITECTURE

The Research Agenda 2026 sets out the key questions around which the Conference seeks to mobilise relevant research findings and knowledge. The thematic dimensions below also provide an indicative architecture for structuring the Conference, while the final programme and thematic sessions will be shaped by the relevance, quality and complementarity of the contributions selected through the open call. Authors are not expected to address all questions; one well-supported result is sufficient.

A — Structure and potential of the service economy

1. *In which service activities does the Republic of Moldova already have, or could it develop, sustainable competitive advantages by 2030, and what factors drive these advantages?*

2. *What explains the differences in productivity, value added, wages, survival and scalability between the different categories of businesses in the services sector?*

3. *What conditions allow for the emergence and development of knowledge-intensive and high-value-added services and what prevents companies from moving towards such activities?*

It is particularly interesting to identify specific service activities with existing or emerging competitive potential and examine the factors underlying such competitiveness, including human capital, specialization, costs, access to markets, digitalization, innovation, infrastructure, regulatory conditions, international networks and other relevant determinants.

B — Entrepreneurship, market entry and business development

4. *What factors explain the emergence, survival, growth and scaling of service enterprises in the Republic of Moldova?*

Also of interest are the differences between micro, small, medium and large enterprises, between regions of the country, between newly created and mature firms, and between enterprises with local and foreign capital.

C	**Institutional, regulatory environment and market functioning**

5. *What elements of the institutional and regulatory environment facilitate or limit the development of the services market and competition between providers?*

6. *How does the approach to the regulatory framework and the EU Single Market influence the behavior, investments, business models and competitiveness of service providers in the Republic of Moldova?*

Research can analyse, among other things, market entry and exit, authorisation, licensing, compliance costs, interaction with public authorities, competition, regulatory predictability and the functioning of public services for businesses.

D	**Human capital and skills**

7. *What skills will be needed for the services economy in the Republic of Moldova by 2030 and to what extent does the current supply of skills respond to this transformation?*

8. *How do migration, diaspora, international mobility and the ability to attract and retain talent influence the development of the services sector?*

In this perspective, the education system, vocational training, managerial and entrepreneurial skills, digital skills, regional and gender differences, as well as the adaptation of companies to the labour shortage can be analysed.

E	**Access to finance and investment**

9. *How are service companies financed and to what extent does the current financial market structure meet the needs of companies increasingly based on knowledge, human capital and intangible assets?*

Research on bank and non-bank financing, venture capital, investments, leasing, factoring, public support instruments and other forms of financing is relevant.

F	**Innovation, research and knowledge transfer**

10. *What determines the ability of service companies to innovate and how is research, technology and knowledge transformed into new services, more productive processes or competitive business models?*

11. *To what extent does the current environment in the Republic of Moldova enable the transfer to market and economic valorisation of ideas, knowledge, technologies and research results generated by universities and research organisations, and what factors facilitate or constrain this process?*

Studies on collaboration between companies and universities, research organisations, start-ups, clusters and other components of the innovation ecosystem are encouraged.

G	**Digital transformation**

12. *How does digitalization and the use of advanced technologies change the productivity, cost structure, customer access and internationalization capacity of service providers?*

Analyses that distinguish between the mere adoption of technologies and the measurable economic effects of the digital transformation are encouraged.

H	**Green, circular transition and sustainability**

13. *How is the green and circular transition transforming the demand for services, business models and entrepreneurial opportunities in the Republic of Moldova?*

Both research on the costs of adaptation and compliance, as well as on the emergence of new services, markets and business models generated by the green transition, energy efficiency, circular economy and ESG requirements are relevant.

I	**Business Development Services and Support Ecosystem**

14. *What external development services do enterprises need to become more productive, innovative and competitive, and to what extent does the Moldovan market offer these services?*

This question includes consulting, mentoring, management, digitalization, marketing, export, innovation, certification, energy efficiency, finance and other services aimed at business development.

J	**Internationalization and integration into value chains**

15. *What explains the export performance of service companies and what differentiates companies that manage to enter and maintain themselves in foreign markets?*

16. *How do service companies participate in European and global value chains and under what conditions can they move towards higher value-added activities?*

The Agenda remains open to relevant evidence beyond these questions. Research results that identify relevant problems, phenomena or explanations that the organizers did not anticipate are welcome, if they contribute to the understanding of the 2026 edition.

SUBMISSION FORMAT

The conference focuses on the result of the research, not on the presentation of the manuscript.
We therefore propose that the presentation be built around four questions:

01 What phenomenon, problem or process have you analyzed/researched?

02 What did you find?

03 What evidence supports the conclusions?

04 What do we understand better thanks to this analysis/research?

Methodology and literature are important, but in the presentation they should be presented only to the extent necessary to understand and appreciate the robustness of the results.
Authors may highlight, where research allows, implications or issues that may be of interest to businesses, academia or policymakers. However, the formulation of public policy recommendations is not a condition for participation.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The selected contributions for the 2026 edition of the Conference will be presented and discussed before an audience consisting mainly of civil servants, decision-makers from public authorities/institutions responsible for developing and implementing economic policies.
Subsequently, MDED and other relevant public authorities will be able to use this knowledge base in the analysis and development of public policies, as well as in identifying topics that require further research.
Thus, over time, the Conference aims to contribute to the development of a recurring evidence to policy mechanism through which relevant research findings and analytical knowledge can be more systematically connected with public policymaking and decision-making processes. Within this mechanism, research retains its independence, while responsibility for interpreting evidence and translating relevant knowledge into public policy decisions and interventions remains with the competent public authorities.

REGISTRATION AND EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Participation in the Conference is free of charge. Anyone wishing to attend, or to present a contribution, is invited to complete the online registration form. Selected contributors will be contacted by the organisers with further information on the format and timing of their presentations.
Contributions may be submitted and presented in English or Romanian, and interpretation will be provided throughout the Conference.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE
25 October 2026

CONTACT
Victoria Iordachi
E-mail:
ccaea.ince@gmail.com
iordachi.victoria@ase.md
Tel.: +373 790 68 169

REGISTRATION FORM
Register here