



## FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

### 2022 – Revised Template

Period covered: 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

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## 1. Basic Project Data

### General Information

<b>Region:</b>	Europe
<b>Country (ies):</b>	Republic of Moldova
<b>Project Title:</b>	Enabling a policy environment for integrated natural resources management and implementation of an integrated approach to achieve land degradation neutrality in Moldova
<b>FAO Project Symbol:</b>	GCP/MOL/006/GFF
<b>GEF ID:</b>	GEF 10222
<b>GEF Focal Area(s):</b>	Land Degradation
<b>Project Executing Partners:</b>	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry
<b>Project Duration (years):</b>	1 June 2020 – 31 May 2023
<b>Project coordinates:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>FAO Moldova, 47.030201, 28.834922</i></li> <li>- <i>Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, 47.02871893844586, 28.837249854202565</i></li> <li>- <i>Ministry of Environment, 47.029784, 28.826572</i></li> <li>- <i>Environmental Agency, 47.032072, 28.847244</i></li> <li>- <i>State Forestry Agency “Moldsilva”, 47.01981760902583, 28.83995363226604</i></li> <li>- <i>Moldsilva Orhei Forestry Enterprise, 47.33165486923487, 28.805907569307077</i></li> <li>- <i>Moldsilva Rezina Forestry Enterprise, 47.73180558735962, 28.853947166871535</i></li> <li>- <i>State Hydrometeorological Service, 46.97306751236575, 28.849529015346462</i></li> <li>- <i>The Forest Research and Management Institute (ICAS) 47.045418729098884, 28.77853874801585</i></li> <li>- <i>State Agricultural University of Moldova, 47.0612350219414, 28.810019878799356</i></li> <li>- <i>The Institute of Pedology, Agro-chemistry and Soil Protection “N. Dimo (IPASP) 47.00205437731532, 28.776935077947304</i></li> <li>- <i>Institute of Ecology and Geography, 46.998541, 28.817411</i></li> <li>- <i>Institute for Plant Protection and Ecological Agriculture, 46.971464, 28.891005</i></li> <li>- <i>“Soil – Data Centre” of IPASP 47.02622454405503, 28.837856188519368</i></li> <li>- <i>The Institute of Crop Production “Selectia” 47.763398891051615, 27.896332773528396</i></li> <li>- <i>National Bureau of Statistics of Republic of Moldova, 46.990564, 28.821409</i></li> <li>- <i>Agency for Land Relations and Cadaster of the Republic of Moldova, 47.031152, 28.827916</i></li> <li>- <i>Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture, 47.02871893844586, 28.837249854202565</i></li> <li>- <i>NGO Eco-Contact, 47.018844, 28.829621</i></li> </ul>

- *The National Agency for Rural Development* 47.03016029260347, 28.82066720426312
- *Public Association "National Soil Science Society" (NSSS)* 46.984396908077024, 28.816537213441798
- *NGO BIOS* 47.04576825465433, 28.856811667444507
- *NGO Ecostrategii* 47.00205437731532, 28.776935077947304
- *Gender Centru* 47.01875939984776, 28.82343813751868
- *National Farmers Federation of Moldova* 47.02973149843593, 28.824027305892457
- *Water Users Associations for Irrigation (WUAIs) Lopatna* - 47.49515269352775, 29.052247011608;
- *Water Users Associations for Irrigation (WUAIs) Jorile*, 47.47334511836586, 29.093068243138013
- *Agro TV Moldova* 47.020862549512906, 28.834602629331908
- *Agrobusiness.md news portal* 47.06146051731757, 28.87135178330451
- *District Councils as District-level Public Authorities: Orhei* - 47.37831795547137, 28.825282712147956; *Rezina* - 47.74966403253838, 28.96155942915866; *Soldanesti* - 47.80596445000274, 28.789483137638612
- *NGO "Agroinfo Service Orhei" (from Orhei)* 47.37831795547137, 28.825282712147956
- *NGO "Nistru Agri Consult" (from Rezina)* 47.74966403253838, 28.96155942915866

*Pilot localities (Orhei district):*

- *Ivancea*, 47.295034, 28.840227
- *Trebujeni*, 47.316962, 28.966435
- *Pohornoceni*, 47.375438, 28.885192
- *Piatra*, 47.364035, 28.899645
- *Susleni*, 47.413863, 28.985874
- *Viscauti*, 47.435227, 29.072698
- *Jora de Mijloc*, 47.470580, 29.095390
- *Bulaiesti*, 47.476444, 28.978602
- *Berezlogi*, 47.436533, 28.938031
- *Bolohan*, 47.430399, 28.873421
- *Step-Soci*, 47.453861, 28.792074
- *Zorile*, 47.457931, 28.740148
- *Biesti*, 47.513198, 28.864603
- *Mirzesti*, 47.494702, 29.001873
- *Pohrebeni*, 47.556663, 28.899577
- *Chiperceni*, 47.521980, 28.839068
- *Cucuruzeni*, 47.489665, 28.726820
- *Crihana*, 47.522830, 28.721091
- *Podgoreni*, 47.561309, 28.778536
- *Zahoreni*, 47.583852, 28.733590

*Pilot localities (Rezina district):*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Otac, 47.591085, 28.827867</li> <li>- Cuizauca, 47.612484, 28.813448</li> <li>- Busauca, 47.593444, 28.789651</li> <li>- Ghiduleni, 47.612353, 28.738153</li> <li>- Pereni, 47.657012, 28.773912</li> <li>- Cogalniceni, 47.637055, 28.819778</li> <li>- Trefesti, 47.677364, 28.803792</li> <li>- Gordinesti, 47.694654, 28.797569</li> <li>- Pripiceni-Razesti, 47.687967, 28.758860</li> <li>- Ignatei, 47.680585, 28.655691</li> <li>- Peciste, 47.715534, 28.708852</li> </ul> <p><u>Pilot localities (Soldanesti district):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Raspopeni, 47.747921, 28.621101</li> </ul>
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### Project Dates

<b>GEF CEO Endorsement Date:</b>	29 August 2019
<b>Project Implementation Start Date/EOD :</b>	1 June 2020
<b>Project Implementation End Date/NTE<sup>1</sup>:</b>	31 May 2023
<b>Revised project implementation end date (if approved) <sup>2</sup></b>	N/A

### Funding

<b>GEF Grant Amount (USD):</b>	1,666,895
<b>Total Co-financing amount as included in GEF CEO Endorsement Request/ProDoc<sup>3</sup>:</b>	5,038,000
<b>Total GEF grant disbursement as of June 30, 2022 (USD)<sup>4</sup>:</b>	350,625
<b>Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2022<sup>5</sup></b>	155,000 <b>NOTE: Source - National Agency for Payment and Intervention in Agriculture.</b> A budget of approximately 3 million MDL (circa 155 thousand USD) is available for farmers as subsidy fund for application of soil-friendly agricultural and land management practices.

<sup>1</sup> As per FPMIS

<sup>2</sup> If NTE extension has been requested and approved by the FAO-GEF CU.

<sup>3</sup> This is the total amount of co-financing as included in the CEO document/Project Document.

<sup>4</sup> For DEX projects, the GEF Coordination Unit will confirm the final amount with the Finance Division in HQ. For OPIM projects, the disbursement amount should be provided by Execution Partners.

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to the section 12 of this report where updated co-financing estimates are requested and indicate the total co-financing amount materialized.

**M&E Milestones**

<b>Date of Most Recent Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:</b>	16 June 2022
<b>Expected Mid-term Review date<sup>6</sup>:</b>	December 2022
<b>Actual Mid-term review date (when it is done):</b>	TBD
<b>Expected Terminal Evaluation Date<sup>7</sup>:</b>	TBD
<b>Tracking tools/Core indicators updated before MTR or TE stage (provide as Annex)</b>	<i>YES (Annex B)</i>

**Overall ratings**

<b>Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):</b>	<i>S</i>
<b>Overall implementation progress rating:</b>	<i>S</i>
<b>Overall risk rating:</b>	<i>M</i>

**ESS risk classification**

<b>Current ESS Risk classification:</b>	Moderate risk (unchanged)
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**Status**

<b>Implementation Status (1<sup>st</sup> PIR, 2<sup>nd</sup> PIR, etc. Final PIR):</b>	First PIR
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**Project Contacts**

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Name, Title, Division/Institution</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
<b>Project Manager / Coordinator</b>	Mihail Ojog, Project Coordinator, FAO Moldova	<a href="mailto:mihail.ojog@fao.org">mihail.ojog@fao.org</a>
<b>Budget Holder</b>	Raimund Jehle, Regional Program Leader, FAO REU	<a href="mailto:raimund.jehle@fao.org">raimund.jehle@fao.org</a>
<b>Lead Technical Officer</b>	Tania Santivanez, Regional Agricultural Officer, FAO REU	<a href="mailto:tania.santivanez@fao.org">tania.santivanez@fao.org</a>

<sup>6</sup> The Mid-Term Review (MTR) should take place after the 2<sup>nd</sup> PIR, around half-point between EOD and NTE. The MTR report in English should be submitted to the GEF Secretariat within 4 years of the CEO Endorsement date.

<sup>7</sup> The Terminal Evaluation date should be discussed with OED 6 months before the project's NTE date.

<b>GEF Funding Liaison Officer</b>	Hernan Gonzalez, Technical Officer, FAO OCB	<a href="mailto:hernan.gonzalez@fao.org">hernan.gonzalez@fao.org</a>
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## 2. Progress towards Achieving Project Objective(s) (Development Objective)

*(All inputs in this section should be cumulative from project start, not annual)*

Please indicate the project's main progress towards achieving its objective(s) and the cumulative level of achievement of each outcome since the start of project implementation.

Project or Development Objective	Outcomes	Outcome indicators <sup>8</sup>	Baseline	Mid-term Target <sup>9</sup>	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress <sup>10</sup> since project start Level at 30 June 2022	Progress rating <sup>11</sup>
	<b>Outcome 1.1 Enhanced capacity in INRM planning and implementation to achieve LDN</b>	LDN principles integrated into strategic land-use planning processes National institutions collaborating on the LDN planning processes	LDN is not integrated into any process  No national institutions collaborating on the LDN planning processes	LDN integrated into at least one strategic planning process  2 national institutions collaborating on the LDN planning processes	LDN integrated into at least 3 strategic planning processes  3 national institutions collaborating on the LDN planning processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of situation of LDN in Moldova vis-à-vis the UNCCD commitments conducted</li> <li>- Preliminary listing of policies and legislative documents including LDN conducted</li> <li>- To better coordinate project interventions, communication was initiated with other FAO projects, but</li> </ul>	S

<sup>8</sup> This is taken from the approved results framework of the project.

<sup>9</sup> Some indicators may not identify mid-term targets at the design stage (refer to approved results framework) therefore this column should only be filled when relevant.

<sup>10</sup> Please report on results obtained in terms of Global Environmental Benefits and Socio-economic Co-benefits as well.

<sup>11</sup> Use GEF Secretariat required six-point scale system: **Highly Satisfactory (HS)**, **Satisfactory (S)**, **Moderately Satisfactory (MS)**, **Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)**, **Unsatisfactory (U)**, and **Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)**.

					<p>also development partnership with UNDP, USAID and government agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LDN principles are integrated in 2 draft strategic documents: National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2022-2027 and the National Agricultural Extension Program, as well as the Agricultural Subsidy System as a separate support measure</li> <li>- 11 national institutions are collaborating on LDN planning process</li> </ul>	
<p>Output 1.1.1.: Inter-sectoral expert group at national and local level to support the implementation of the UNCCD and LDN established and strengthened</p>	<p>Inter-sectoral expert group at national level established and functional</p> <p>Number of trainee from MARDE, IPASP and Moldsilva</p> <p>% of female and male officers assisting to the trainings</p>	<p>No Inter-sectoral expert group at national level exists</p> <p>0</p>	<p>3 meetings of the group</p>	<p>6 meetings of the group</p> <p>At least 15 trainees</p> <p>50% Women 50% Men</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Previously existing UNCCD Working Group at inter-ministerial and inter-institutional level identified. The Group's mandate and responsibilities were developed. A Regulation of the Groups' functioning was developed and approved at Government level.</li> <li>- List of entities, guiding principles</li> </ul>	<p>HS</p>



					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>and institutionalization approach for the Group’s revival developed</li> <li>- Inter-sectoral Group established and institutionalized at Government level</li> <li>- 3 meetings of the Working Group held</li> <li>- 1 extensive training event organized, 40 participants trainees attended of which, 30% women</li> </ul>	
<p>Output 1.1.2.: Natural and anthropic factors affecting soil fertility in the selected LDN pilot area assessed and mapped</p>	<p>Assessment of the natural and anthropic factors affecting soil fertility in the selected LDN pilot area</p> <p>Soil map of the selected LDN pilot area</p>	<p>No assessment has been conducted</p> <p>Old soil map available</p>	<p>Assessment has been conducted</p>	<p>Soil map has been updated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current state of LDN in Moldova preliminarily assessed in terms of legislation, methodologies, available data, technical and institutional capacities</li> <li>- Old soil maps identified and assessed in terms of relevance, scale, level of detail, information and utility. Currently under update:</li> <li>- Assessment and mapping of Land Cover, Land Productivity</li> </ul>	<p>S</p>

					<p>Potential and Soil Carbon Content in progress, headed by the Soil Research Institute (IPASP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training conducted on basic GIS instruments and algorithms to collect LDN baseline data using satellite imagery, Artificial Intelligence and machine learning hands on consulting in received by IPASP</li> <li>- Delivered training modules: "Mapping and visual aspect of GIS data on ArcGIS Desktop" and "Geospatial analysis on ArcMap. Working in ArcGIS Pro". Tutorials and technical documentation elaborated.</li> <li>- Monitoring and reviewing the process of collecting initial data for Land Use / Land Cover.</li> <li>- Technical consultancy provided to implement AI/machine learning</li> </ul>
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					<p>methods to derive initial Land Use/Land Cover GIS dataset for the project area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fine-tuned the model and Artificial Intelligence/machine learning processes.</li> <li>- Assisted in elaboration of QA/QC web instruments on IPAPS GIS Platform</li> <li>- Other trainings are still ongoing to ensure technical support for IPASP capacity building in using the new methodology</li> </ul>	
<p>Output 1.1.3.: Monitoring system of soil quality in project pilot area implemented</p>	<p>Agreed monitoring approach/indicators of soil quality</p>	<p>Outdated soil map available</p>	<p>Monitoring approach of soil quality agreed</p>	<p>Monitoring approach of soil quality agreed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing National Programs and Governmental level interventions in soil quality monitoring preliminarily assessed</li> <li>- Old soil maps partially identified</li> <li>- Draft approach to LDN indicators data collection under development</li> <li>- Soil Monitoring Approach and Methodology elaborated and approved internally</li> </ul>	<p>S</p>

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- with IPASP scientific council.</li> <li>- To validate the Approach and new Methodology, the project and IPASP conducted a “Seminar on Land Degradation Neutrality principles and the new methodology for collecting LDN indicators data for the project area” with participation of representatives of research institutions.</li> <li>- Soil Monitoring Methodology under piloting in Output 1.1.2.</li> </ul>	
<p>Output 1.1.4.: Strategic plan on land degradation neutrality of the pilot area developed</p>	<p>Strategic plan (stakeholder roles, timeline) on land degradation neutrality of the pilot area</p>	<p>No such plan exists</p>	<p>1 draft strategic plan in the pilot area</p>	<p>1 final strategic plan in the pilot area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local level situation regarding strategic plans in project pilot area assessed</li> <li>- Baseline information collected and under validation.</li> <li>- Content of Draft Strategic Plan on land degradation under elaboration with support of national and international expertise</li> </ul>	<p>S</p>

<p><b>Outcome 1.2 Strengthened policy and legal framework for INRM and LDN</b></p>	<p>Policy and legal frameworks with integrated INRM and LDN principles</p>	<p>LDN is not integrated into any framework</p>	<p>LDN integrated into at least one policy/legal document</p>	<p>LDN integrated into at least 3 policy/legal documents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy and frameworks pertinent to the domain of soils and INRM identified and assessed</li> <li>- LDN is integrated in 2 strategic documents and the Agricultural Subsidy System as a separate support measure</li> <li>- Continuous support provided to stakeholders in identifying entry points in policies, strategic documents and frameworks under development to incorporate LDN</li> </ul>	<p>S</p>
<p>Output 1.2.1: Legal framework including regulatory mechanisms, economic and financial incentives for SLM, CA and LDN analyzed and strengthened</p>	<p>New and/or revised legislation/regulations for SLM, CA and LDN</p>	<p>Existing legislation does not provide the incentives for SLM, CA and LDN</p>	<p>Gap analysis of relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks</p>	<p>Revised/new legislation/regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gap analysis of legislation and regulatory frameworks and policies conducted.</li> <li>- Analytic Report with recommendations for improvements on 16 policy/legal documents elaborated</li> <li>- A permanent communication channel for</li> </ul>	<p>S</p>

					presentation of findings and continuous development established	
Output 1.2.2.: An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force implemented	An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force	An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force does not exist	An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force established	An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mapping of existing groups conducted to avoid duplication.</li> <li>- Such an entity does not exist, however multiple ministerial groups with similar mandates identified as active.</li> <li>- The project is looking into merging with one of the existing groups to avoid duplication of efforts.</li> </ul>	S
Output 1.2.3.: Cost/benefit analysis to inform decision making process elaborated	Cost/benefit analysis	Cost/benefit analysis has not been conducted	Cost/benefit analysis is conducted	Cost/benefit analysis is conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current legal framework and existing legal provisions scouted for present instruments to support cost-benefit analysis</li> <li>- An existing national methodology on cost-benefit analysis identified within the State Chancellery of Moldova.</li> <li>- The project conducted a gap analysis and prepares</li> </ul>	S

					recommendations for practical application.	
<b>Outcome 2.1 Improved land management in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova</b>	Area with improved land management	0	30,000	92,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This indicator is covering the entire pilot area and will be a combined cumulative result of the Output 1.1.4. and the 32 Community Plans to Achieve LDN.</li> <li>- As part of the mapping exercise, Land Cover and Land Use maps were elaborated for the entire 92000 ha, which is part of the contribution to improved land management.</li> <li>- Land Productivity Potential and SOC maps are in process of elaboration for 92000 ha.</li> <li>- The latter information is contributing to the current elaboration of the Approach to Strategic Planning for LDN in the Pilot Area.</li> </ul>	MS
Output 2.1.1.: Participatory land-use planning in the	Area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-	No area covered	Half area of agro-landscape land covered by	All area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The nature and content of the Participatory Land</li> </ul>	S

<p>agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova developed</p>	<p>specific plans in Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts</p>		<p>landscape-specific plans in Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts</p>	<p>specific plans in Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts</p>	<p>Use Plans are under elaboration and consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The participatory consultation process is under design in preparation for incoming data to support decision making.</li> <li>- The specific plans will be elaborated based on the Strategy (result of Output 1.1.4), which is currently dependant on the LDN indicators and maps that will inform the content and strategic approach to achieve LDN in the pilot area</li> </ul>	
<p>Output 2.1.2.: Innovative sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry practices and approaches implemented in the project areas</p>	<p>ha with demonstrations of best practices and approaches</p>	<p>No area covered</p>	<p>3,000</p>	<p>10,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of CSA Practices in Moldova under constant update.</li> <li>- Over 400 sites with demonstration potential for CSA and Green Ag identified and introduced in the CSA List and Map of CSA practices.</li> <li>- Selection of potential demo plots conducted.</li> </ul>	<p>S</p>



					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working Group established within Moldsilva to spearhead and guide project implementation from technical perspective.</li> <li>- Needs assessment for supporting existing Moldsilva tree and plant nurseries conducted in Orhei and Rezina.</li> <li>- 6 Farmer Field Schools established within 100 ha of land.</li> <li>- A work-plan is in place for FFS events to started, while the area is planned to be increased inside the FFS, as well as outside, as more farmers in the pilot area will adapt practices and contribute to the result of this output.</li> <li>- 2 collaboration agreements, in Orhei and Rezina, are under signature for the organization and administration of the FFS events.</li> </ul>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quantitative and qualitative M&amp;E approach to adaption of CSA practices as a result of project implementation developed.</li> </ul>	
<p>Outcome 2.2 Gender equality strategy mainstreamed in in the Project pilot area</p>	<p>Gender mainstreamed in all project activities and gender equality specific interventions implemented in the Project pilot area</p>	<p>Gender equality interventions not implemented in the Project pilot area</p>	<p>Gender mainstreamed in all implemented activities, and gender equality interventions implemented in the Project 1 pilot area</p>	<p>Gender mainstreamed in all implemented activities, and gender equality interventions implemented in the total pilot area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gender assessment of project documents, plans and budgets conducted.</li> <li>- Internal Gender Mainstreaming Plan elaborated.</li> <li>- Gender is mainstreamed in all project activities and plans according to the internal Gender Mainstreaming Plan.</li> <li>- More substantial gender equality interventions are planned and prepared for subsequent stages of project implementation.</li> </ul>	S
<p>Output 2.2.1.: Sustainable livelihood strategies for women's empowerment</p>	<p>Gender Action Plan</p>	<p>No such plan exists</p>	<p>Gender Action Plan for the project area</p>	<p>Gender Action Plan for the project area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The nature and content of the Gender Action Plan for the pilot area under elaboration.</li> <li>- Gender, Social and Economic Assessment of the</li> </ul>	S

developed and implemented					pilot area was conducted to inform the approach to the Gender Action Plan at local level.	
Output 2.2.2.: Gender-sensitive climate resilient practices to enhance land productivity implemented	Area with demonstrations of best practices and approaches	0 covered	3,000	10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The implementation of this Output is in preparations for the next reporting period.</li> <li>- Drafts of documents and collaborations agreements prepared and under consultation.</li> </ul>	S
<b>Outcome 3.1. Monitoring and dissemination of lessons learned to support scaling up of LDN to the national level</b>	<p>M&amp;E system is in place</p> <p>Lessons learned and disseminated</p>	No system in place	Implementation of project based on adaptive results based-management	Project delivers expected results and shares lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project M&amp;E System in place.</li> <li>- Grievance Mechanism elaborated.</li> <li>- Adaptive management is continuously applied.</li> <li>- Lessons learned are accumulated and prepared for distribution.</li> </ul>	S
Output 3.1.1.: Project results monitored and evaluated	Annual, semestral and Final evaluation reports	0	PIRs and PPRs submitted	Final evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PIRs and PPRs submitted on time.</li> </ul>	S
Output 3.1.2.: Recommendations for enhancing CSA and shelterbelt management in	Recommendations for CSA and shelterbelt management	0	2 Experience sharing notes	3 experience sharing notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommendations are in process of elaboration, as the Assessment of</li> </ul>	S

Moldova developed and disseminated					Shelterbelts is ongoing. - Nature, content and design of experience sharing, notes and relevant publications and brochures under conceptualization.	
<b>Outcome 3.2: Enhanced capacity in scaling up LDN to the national level</b>	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	No monitoring approaches have been tested in Moldova that will provide the baseline	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	- The elaboration of the LDN Monitoring System is ongoing. - Elements of the System conceptualized in different project activities. - A modality of combining the elements into one informative and user-friendly structure is under development.	S
3.2.1 Prototype for LDN database and monitoring system established and operative	Online database on LDN Monitoring system on LDN	No LDN database and monitoring systems exists	Online database on LDN tested Monitoring system on LDN tested	Online database on LDN set up Monitoring system on LDN set up	- Existing National Programs and Governmental level interventions in soil quality monitoring preliminarily assessed - Current possibilities of integration with existing platforms in under evaluation from the technical and conceptual points of view	S

					- The Online Database will be prepared for testing, once all data is in place and quality assurance conducted.	
3.2.2 Experiences on LDN shared and exchanged	Experience sharing notes	0	5 Experience sharing notes	10 experience sharing notes	- First recommendations are in process of elaboration, as the LDN indicators collection is ongoing. - Nature, content and design of experience sharing, notes and relevant publications and brochures under conceptualization.	S

**Action Plan to address MS, MU, U and HU ratings**

Outcome	Action(s) to be taken	By whom?	By when?
<b>Outcome 2.1 Improved land management in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional support from international consultants is summoned to facilitate the implementation of the methodology and data collection for LDN indicators</li> <li>- Additional support will be provided to the IPASP to supplement data collection and processing capacities by more targeted supervision and ongoing capacity building. The support will be focused on the LU/LC data that is essentially the fundament for overlaying the other LDN indicators.</li> </ul>	FAO, PCU, implementing partners	by January 2023

### 3. Implementation Progress (IP)

*(Please indicate progress achieved during this FY as per the Implementation Plan/Annual Workplan)*

Outcomes and Outputs <sup>12</sup>	Indicators (as per the Logical Framework)	Annual Target (as per the annual Work Plan)	Main achievements <sup>13</sup> (please avoid repeating results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance <sup>14</sup> in delivering outputs
<b>Outcome 1.1 Enhanced capacity in INRM planning and implementation to achieve LDN</b>	LDN principles integrated into strategic land-use planning processes  National institutions collaborating on the LDN planning processes	LDN integrated into at least one strategic planning process  2 national institutions collaborating on the LDN planning processes	LDN is integrated in 2 draft strategic documents and the Agricultural Subsidy System as a separate support measure  11 national institutions are collaborating on LDN planning process	Project implementation is on track with major indicator targets. Certain targets are already exceeded. Some targets are not fully on track, which was caused by lack of institutional capacities of counterparts and stakeholders, which had to be compensated by additional technical support and guidance on behalf of the project.
<b>Output 1.1.1.</b> Inter-sectoral expert group at national and local level to support the implementation of the UNCCD and LDN established and strengthened	Inter-sectoral expert group at national level established and functional  Number of trainees from MARDE, IPASP and Moldsilva	3 meetings of the group	Inter-sectoral Group established and capacitated at Government level  Regulation and functional framework elaborated and support to UNCCD WG  3 meetings of the Working Group held	The indicators were achieved and exceeded. However, additional support will be required for longer time periods to secure sustainability of project interventions and insure a higher level of ownership of institutions over the UNCCD processes. The project is also expected to provide continuous support to UNCCD WG in

<sup>12</sup> Outputs as described in the project Logframe or in any approved project revision.

<sup>13</sup> Please use the same unit of measurement of the project indicators as per the approved Implementation Plan or Annual Workplan. Please be concise (max one or two short sentence with main achievements)

<sup>14</sup> Variance refers to the difference between the expected and actual progress at the time of reporting.

	% of female and male officers assisting to the trainings		1 extensive training event organized  40 participants, of which 22 technical officers  30% women / 70 % men	preparation of the Country Report due mid-2023. The project and the UNCCD WG will continue with training the members and technical officers, including a larger number of specialists per institution to compensate the ongoing personnel exodus in governmental, academic and research sector.
<b>Output 1.1.2.</b> Natural and anthropic factors affecting soil fertility in the selected LDN pilot area assessed and mapped	Assessment of the natural and anthropic factors affecting soil fertility in the selected LDN pilot area  Soil map of the selected LDN pilot area	Assessment has been conducted	Assessment in progress, headed by the IPASP "N.Dimo" Soil Research Institute  Old soil maps are available and under update for the pilot area	The indicator is not yet fully achieved, as the national academic research institutions in the domain of soils are operating on outdated methodological approaches. The project implemented adaptive management to respond to current realities and gather national and international expertise to elaborate a new, modern and cost-effective methodology to be implemented by IPASP in collecting LDN indicators. Old maps were identified. These are currently refined for the pilot area in terms of level of detail, quality of information, including using Artificial intelligence, triangulation and validation at field level. The mentioned approach required more substantial amount of support; thus, a longer time period is needed to secure quality and effectiveness, as well as final approval of the methodology at government level.
<b>Output 1.1.3.</b> Monitoring system of soil quality in project pilot area implemented	Agreed monitoring approach/indicators of soil quality	Monitoring approach of soil quality agreed	Pilot Soil Monitoring Approach elaborated and approved in scientific gathering. Implemented in Output 1.1.2. and currently piloted	Due to the outdated methodologies applied by IPASP, as the institute mandated with soil monitoring, the project had to involve substantial



			to demonstrate effectiveness and efficiency.	additional efforts to elaborate new methodology and approve it within IPASP academic council, as well as through additional consultations involving multiple research institutions. The methodology was endorsed and is currently in process of practical application for piloting purposes. As a result of multiple additional processes, more time is required for realization of the tasks. However, after piloting and refining, the methodology will be approved at government level and replace the old Methodology for Soil Quality Monitoring at National Level.
<b>Output 1.1.4.</b> Strategic plan on land degradation neutrality of the pilot area developed	Strategic plan (stakeholder roles, timeline) on land degradation neutrality of the pilot area	1 draft strategic plan in the pilot area	Draft Strategic Plan on land degradation will be elaborated based on the results of the Output 1.1.2., which are expected by end 2022.	Due to the interdependency of Output 1.1.4 to the results of Outputs 1.1.2 and 1.1.3, namely the reliance of the strategy on the determination of actual LDN state in the pilot area, the draft strategic plan is currently under conceptualization. However, discussions are ongoing with national and international experts on the structure and approach of the strategy in preparation for availability of data to inform objective decision making.
<b>Outcome 1.2</b> <b>Strengthened policy and legal framework for INRM and LDN</b>	Policy and legal frameworks with integrated INRM and LDN principles	LDN integrated into at least one policy/legal document	LDN is integrated in 2 draft strategic documents and the Agricultural Subsidy System as a separate support measure	There is positive variance towards achieving the Outcome indicator. FAO has conducted an exhaustive evaluation of past and acting legislation, policies and frameworks and provided the Ministry of Agriculture with a 40-page gap analysis report including

				recommendation as well. In parallel, 2 government strategies have been adjusted to incorporate LDN, while the Agricultural Subsidy Agency was supported in implementing and promoting a separate support measure to encourage achieving LDN at grassroots level. However, additional support is required by stakeholders, and the project will continue to contribute to this outcome adapting to the changing context and appearance of new policies, regulations and frameworks.
<b>Output 1.2.1</b> Legal framework including regulatory mechanisms, economic and financial incentives for SLM, CA and LDN analyzed and strengthened	New and/or revised legislation/regulations for SLM, CA and LDN	Gap analysis of relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks	Gap analysis of legislation and regulatory frameworks and policies conducted. Report with recommendations for improvements on 16 policy/legal documents elaborated and submitted to MAFI for consideration	FAO finalized the implementation of this Output. Although the target has been achieved, FAO will continue supporting the stakeholders to secure sustainability and enable informed decision making to support achieving LDN.
<b>Output 1.2.2</b> An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force implemented	An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force	An inter-ministerial and an inter-governmental task force established	Such an entity does not exist, however multiple ministerial groups with similar mandates are active. The project will look into merging with one of the existing groups to avoid duplication of efforts.	Discussions were held with project stakeholders to determine the roles and responsibilities of this group in the current context. Stakeholders mentioned that there is no need to create a separate entity for the roles established for this group in the Project Document. It was decided to integrate and promote LDN within an existing, or across multiple Working Group(s)/Task Force(s) currently acting in the domains of agriculture, environment and climate change. Stakeholders and the project team are currently

				reviewing mandates of existing groups to identify the most suitable one for promoting LDN.
<b>Output 1.2.3</b> Cost/benefit analysis to inform decision making process elaborated	Cost/benefit analysis	Cost/benefit analysis is conducted	Such an instrument was identified within the State Chancellery of Moldova. The project is conducting a gap analysis and will provide recommendations to its application.	The Output is in slight delay, as more efforts and time than expected are necessary to research the policy and legal frameworks, improving existing instruments and integration of cost-benefit analysis in a practical manner.
<b>Outcome 2.1 Improved land management in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova</b>	Area with improved land management	30,000	This indicator is covering the entire pilot area and will be the combined result of the Output 1.1.4. and the 32 Community Plans to Achieve LDN. The latter will be elaborated based on ongoing assessment and mapping of the pilot area.	The indicator cannot be divided into half-way targets, as the Strategy and participatory land use plans at local level will achieve the target of 92 thousand ha all at one time.
<b>Output 2.1.1.</b> Participatory land-use planning in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova developed	Area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-specific plans in Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts	Half area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-specific plans in Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts	The specific plans will be elaborated based on the Strategy (result of Output 1.1.4).	The practical implementation of the Output will commence, once the results of the Outcomes 1.1.2., 1.1.3. and 1.1.4., as participatory land-use plans to achieve LDN at local level are directly dependent on data derived from the mapping exercises and per-village narrative reports currently under elaboration by IPASP and ICAS.
<b>Output 2.1.2.</b> Innovative sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry practices and approaches implemented in the project areas	ha with demonstrations of best practices and approaches	3,000	100 ha. This is the area of the existing 6 Farmer Field Schools. Once FFS are in place, more farmers in the pilot area will adapt the practices and contribute to the result of this output.	COVID and in-person meeting restrictions have slowed down the implementation of fieldwork under this Output. 6 FFS were established with demo areas covering approximately 100 ha. The areas will expand over the land proprietary to the FFS hosts, as well as the lands of the visitors and participants to the FFS events.

				Innovative demo plots are expected to also encompass the shelterbelts rehabilitation under this Output, which will commence, once the ongoing Assessment of Shelterbelts activity is finalized, locations are selected, legal documents prepared and shelterbelt rehab fieldwork is completed. More time was necessary to effectively launch the activities under this Output, due to substantial technical assistance required for the elaboration of a new methodology on shelterbelt assessment and combination of classic approaches with innovative GIS instruments.
<b>Outcome 2.2 Gender equality strategy mainstreamed in in the Project pilot area</b>	Gender mainstreamed in all project activities and gender equality specific interventions implemented in the Project pilot area	Gender mainstreamed in all implemented activities, and gender equality interventions implemented in the Project 1 pilot area	Gender is mainstreamed in all project activities and plans according to the internal Gender Mainstreaming Plan. More substantial gender equality interventions are planned for further stages of project implementation.	A gender mainstreaming plan was prepared for all project activities. The gender plan is a continuously adapted document and permanently reflects ongoing adaptive management and changing context. A gender and socio-economic assessment of all 32 villages in the pilot area was conducted and is currently under validation. More grassroot level gender activities will be implemented to actual needs and context of target groups, including women, youth and vulnerable groups.
Output 2.2.1.: Sustainable livelihood strategies for women's empowerment	Gender Action Plan	Gender Action Plan for the project area	A Gender, Social and Economic Assessment of the pilot area was conducted. The Gender Action Plan will be elaborated in the next reporting period, before local	Gender and Socio-Economic Assessment conducted. Gender Action Plan for Project implementation prepared. Gender Action plan for the pilot area is

developed and implemented			interventions on gender equality and social aspects.	under conceptualization and preparation for launching in the next project phase, based on the latter mentioned deliverables.
Output 2.2.2.: Gender-sensitive climate resilient practices to enhance land productivity implemented	Area with demonstrations of best practices and approaches	3,000	The implementation of this Output is in preparations for the next reporting period. Drafts of documents and collaborations are prepared.	This activity is also dependent on the mapping of the pilot area, as well as selection of sites, beneficiaries and trainees have to be based on the local social, economic and agro-environmental contexts and peculiarities.
<b>Outcome 3.1. Monitoring and dissemination of lessons learned to support scaling up of LDN to the national level</b>	M&E system is in place  Lessons learned and disseminated	Implementation of project based on adaptive results based-management	Project M&E System in place. Grievance Mechanism elaborated. Adaptive management is effectively implemented. Lessons learned are accumulated.	The indicators are on track and results are in place.
Output 3.1.1.: Project results monitored and evaluated	Annual, semestral and Final evaluation reports	PIRs and PPRs submitted	PIRs and PPRs are submitted on time.	No deviations are noted.
Output 3.1.2.: Recommendations for enhancing CSA and shelterbelt management in Moldova developed and disseminated	Recommendations for CSA and shelterbelt management	2 Experience sharing notes	Recommendations are in process of elaboration, as the Assessment of Shelterbelts is ongoing. Experience sharing notes and relevant publications and brochures will be elaborated in the next reporting period.	Recommendations are under development, as project activities are implemented and lessons learnt are accumulated. Guides, publications and recommendations are in process of preparation, as the project progresses with implementation of activities. Currently, implementation of activities in Component 2 are in a stage where elaboration of result-based recommendations are premature. In Component 1, the current Methodology developed for the collection of LDN indicators will be recommended for inclusion as part of the National Methodology

				on Soil Monitoring. At the same time, recommendations were provided for the improvement of 16 policies, strategies and legal instruments.
<b>Outcome 3.2: Enhanced capacity in scaling up LDN to the national level</b>	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	The elaboration of the LDN Monitoring System is ongoing. Elements of the System are conceptualized in different project activities. Once all activities are finalized, the elements will be combined in one System.	Different parts of the M&E System are in various stages of elaboration. The next phase will be the interconnection of the elements into one System. However, delays are expected as the System is directly connected to the ongoing activities in Component 1 and the subsequent piloting and institutionalization.
3.2.1 Prototype for LDN database and monitoring system established and operative	Online database on LDN Monitoring system on LDN	Online database on LDN tested Monitoring system on LDN tested	The structure, content and specifications of the Database are under work as Assessments and Mapping are conducted. The Online Database will be prepared for testing once all data is in place and quality assurance is warranted.	The online database will most probably be based on the open-source, especially Google Maps freeware and functionalities. Its initial structure was determined and is prepared for consultations with profile institutions. The final structure and functionality of the database will be determined based on the final data that are now collected under Outputs 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4.
3.2.2 Experiences on LDN shared and exchanged	Experience sharing notes	5 Experience sharing notes	Experience sharing notes will be elaborated once project technical Outputs related to data collection progress further in implementation. For the time being, the Project elaborated the Project Brochure and the Guidline on the New Methodology for collecting LDN Indicators. Experience exchange	Targeted experience sharing notes have not been produced. However, a previously absent experience sharing network has been established through an institutional collaboration bridge between IPASP, Moldsilva's ICAS, and the National Institute of Geography. The network now works on LDN mapping and mainstreaming, and is prepared to

			networks are created as part of the project with the aim to involve more stakeholders and academia in LDN related decision making.	subsequently claiming ownership over the LDN experience sharing process after the end of the project. The Outcome can be considered on track with expected progress, given the challenges and overall context.
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## 4. Summary on Progress and Ratings

**Please provide a summary paragraph on progress, challenges and outcome of project implementation consistent with the information reported in sections 2 and 3 of the PIR.**

During the reporting period, the project has progressed significantly in all components. Baselines, institutional and capacity assessment were conducted and the current implementation was appraised.

The UNCCD WG was established from scratch, and considerable support was provided to its creation and elaboration of operational documents. The group consists of representatives of 11 institutions and is growing with a permanent nominal list of 27 members, of which over 40 per cent is women. A training needs assessment and a range of training courses have already been conducted. Nevertheless, extensive continuous support is still required to enhance members' abilities, ownership and ensure sustainability as the UNCCD reporting is being moved to end till 2023.

Due to lack of modern and cost-efficient data collection instruments, the project supported IPASP "N. Dimo" is elaborating a new methodology for collecting and mapping LDN indicators and is currently supervising its implementation in the pilot area. Highly regarded by the academic and research institute representatives, the methodology is expected to further lay ground for a new national methodology on soil quality monitoring. The implementation of the methodology is critical for the success of the project, thus additional time and efforts are deployed to conduct the piloting exercise. Parts of the Methodology are also used by ICAS to assess the state of shelterbelts in the pilot area and prepare local maps and tailor capacity building, while the institutes have signed a first ever collaboration agreement on exchange of data.

An extensive analysis was conducted on the policy, legal and regulatory frameworks directly or indirectly tangential with the principle of LDN. 16 policies, and frameworks have been screened and recommendation were provided for their improvement. Additionally, the project has contributed to the elaboration of the draft National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2022-2027 and the draft National Program on Agricultural Extension to incorporate and create a sustainable application of legal provisions in support of achieving LDN. The Subsidy System has been also supported in promoting the adoption of new subsidy measures for land users to apply soil-friendly practices and in preparing awareness raising materials.

The list of CSA practices in Moldova is constantly monitored and updated, while all 32 pilots benefited from a thorough assessment on gender and socio-economic situation with the purpose to prepare targeted and tailored approaches towards gender-equality and youth empowerment within the project. Six (6) agricultural production sites are identified to host Farmer Field Schools through which the project will demonstrate various CSA practices in partnership with 2 local NGOs.

As part of the raising awareness activities the Project team elaborated learning and promotion materials as well as conducted an open lecture dedicated to World Day of Soils for school children. The topics covered the importance of soil resources, prevention of land degradation and the value of LDN. This practice will be extended to farmer organizations and groups, individual farmers, vulnerable groups, women, young women entrepreneurs and school children in the pilot regions to mainstream LDN across the entire rural population.

During the reporting period, the Project Steering Committee meeting took place with the aim to discuss the latest results and approve the Annual Work Plan for the next implementation phase. The stakeholders were happy to contribute with their ideas and suggestions to the progresses of the project and approved the next steps provided in the work plan. At the same time, the members of the PSC have acknowledged the implementation challenges and recommended the Project to solicit a no-cost extension and continue building on the current accomplishments.



Thus, the project's development objectives, character and nature of outputs and outcomes remained unmodified versus the Project Document. LDN remains a new principle for the Government of Moldova, its decision makers, research environment, local public authorities and land users and operators. The need to approach LDN as a novelty, prompted the Project to concentrate efforts on a range of unexpected challenges, especially related to: the lack of current methodologies; absence of modern data collection instruments; the need to create new collaborations and information exchange networks; and the need to provide extensive capacity building to institutions responsible for promotion of LDN-related measures. A set of external factors have also influenced on the implementation timelines: elections; the changing political environment, management and staff of key stakeholders; COVID and restrictions; as well as the ongoing war in Ukraine and its socio-economic consequences for the region. These all had a cumulative effect on the project's implementation. Although adaptive management measures secured that project objectives and outcomes are on track, and expected results are qualitatively attained, the timelines were off the initially established schedule. That is why the project might have to require a no-cost extension to account for the past, current and expected challenges and risks, while aiming at securing sustainability and attaining all expected goals.

### ***Development Objective (DO) Ratings, Implementation Progress (IP) Ratings and Overall Assessment***

Please note that the overall DO and IP ratings should be substantiated by evidence and progress reported in the Section 2 and Section 3 of the PIR. For DO, the ratings and comments should reflect the overall progress of project results.

	<b>FY2022 Development Objective rating<sup>15</sup></b>	<b>FY2022 Implementation Progress rating<sup>16</sup></b>	<b>Comments/reasons<sup>17</sup> justifying the ratings for FY2022 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period</b>
<b>Project Manager / Coordinator</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>The project has significantly progressed since the previous PIR. Results and path towards Development Objectives are on track with initial expectations. The current delays in some of the outputs are caused by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemics on the on-site project activities as well as frequent changes in the Government administration which slowed down capacity building activities of the public administration and relevant national stakeholders. In this respect, to compensate for the time required to effectively overcome the challenges and risks mentioned in various sections of this report, the project might have to consider revising objectivity of current timelines and request a no-cost extension.</i>
<b>Budget Holder</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>The project achieved its objectives for the reported period and the resources were managed efficiently for contributing to the projects outcomes and outputs.</i>
<b>Lead Technical Officer<sup>18</sup></b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>Significant progress has been made so far by the project, despite barriers and complications caused by COVID and other exogenous factors. The project is on track to accomplishing its goals and targets.</i>
<b>FAO-GEF Funding Liaison Officer</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<i>Despite the novelty of the LDN approach for the Government of Moldova, and various challenges that the project had to overcome (COVID-19 restrictions, Ukraine war, elections), adaptive management measures have secured that project objectives and outcomes are on track, and expected results are qualitatively attained.</i>

<sup>15</sup> **Development Objectives Rating** – A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

<sup>16</sup> **Implementation Progress Rating** – A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project's components and activities is in compliance with the projects approved implementation plan. For more information on ratings and definitions, please refer to Annex 1.

<sup>17</sup> Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence

<sup>18</sup> The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

## 5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

*Under the responsibility of the LTO (PMU to draft)*

Please describe the progress made complying with the approved ESM plan. Note that only projects with **moderate** or **high** Environmental and Social Risk, approved from June 2015 should have submitted an ESM plan/table at CEO endorsement. This does not apply to **low** risk projects. Add new ESS risks if any risks have emerged during this FY.

Social & Environmental Risk Impacts identified at CEO Endorsement	Expected mitigation measures	Actions taken during this FY	Remaining measures to be taken	Responsibility
<b>ESS 1: Natural Resource Management</b>				
<b>ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats</b>				
<b>ESS 3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</b>				
<b>Importing or transfer of seeds and/or planting materials for cultivation</b>	<p>The Project Coordination Unit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid undermining local seed &amp; planting material production and supply systems through the use of seed voucher schemes, for instance</li> <li>• Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers</li> <li>• Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases</li> </ul>	<p>The project did not yet start the activities that might involve this risk. The project team has secured a collaboration with the National Field Crop Research Institute “Selectia”, the National Institute “Porumbeni” and the National Forestry Agency “Moldsilva” to contribute to the</p>	<p>The remaining measures are going to correspond to the initial set of expected measures of mitigation, while the implementation team will remain alert to new possible risks and report back in timely manner. One of the risks is the disruption in supply chains caused by the war in Ukraine, so the Project will seek domestic producers to compensate and apply other adaptive management choices.</p>	PMU, FAOR, LTO

	<p>according to agreed norms. In case of importing seed or planting material it will arrive with a valid phytosanitary certificate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources team (AGPMG) to provide technical specifications for all procurement of seeds and planting materials.</li> <li>• Request clearance from AGPMC is required for chemical treatment of seeds and planting materials</li> <li>• Clarify that the seed or planting material can be legally used in the country to which it is being imported</li> <li>• Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers’ rights to PGRFA and over associated traditional knowledge are respected in the access to PGRFA and the sharing of the benefits accruing from their use. This is part of FAO Environmental and Social Safeguards.</li> </ul>	<p>implementation of agriculture and forestry related activities where seeds and planting material is involved. As a result of consultation with profile institutions and experts, the best varieties of plants and seeds for shelterbelts are local varieties. As a result of a preliminary assessment, quality planting/seeding material will be available domestically.</p>		
<b>ESS 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</b>				
<b>ESS 5: Pest and Pesticide Management</b>				

<b>ESS 6: Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement</b>				
<b>ESS 7: Decent Work</b>				
<b>ESS 8: Gender Equality</b>				
<b>ESS 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage</b>				
<b>New ESS risks that have emerged during this FY</b>				

In case the project did not include an ESM Plan at CEO endorsement stage, please indicate if the initial Environmental and Social (ESS) Risk classification is still valid; if not, what is the new classification and explain.

<b>Initial ESS Risk classification</b> (At project submission)	<b>Current ESS risk classification</b> Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid <sup>19</sup> . If not, what is the new classification and explain.
Moderate risk	The ESR classification is still valid with no changes foreseen.

<b><i>Please report if any grievance was received as per FAO and GEF ESS policies. If yes, please indicate how it is being/has been addressed.</i></b>
No grievance was received thus far in project implementation.

<sup>19</sup> **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification has changed, the ESM Unit should be contacted and an updated Social and Environmental Management Plan addressing new risks should be prepared.

## 6. Risks

The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified in the course of project implementation (including COVID-19 related risks). The last column should be used to provide additional details concerning manifestation of the risk in the project, as relevant.

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
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<sup>20</sup> Risk ratings means a rating of accesses the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale: Low, Moderate, Substantial or High. For more information on ratings and definitions please refer to Annex 1.

1	Importing or transfer of seeds and/or planting materials for cultivation	Moderate risk	N	<p>The Project Coordination Unit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid undermining local seed &amp; planting material production and supply systems through the use of seed voucher schemes, for instance</li> <li>• Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers</li> <li>• Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are free from pests and diseases according to agreed norms. In case of importing seed or planting material it will arrive with a valid phytosanitary certificate</li> <li>• Request FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources team (AGPMG) to provide technical specifications for all procurement of seeds and planting materials.</li> <li>• Request clearance from AGPMC is required for chemical treatment of seeds and planting materials</li> <li>• Clarify that the seed or planting material can be legally used in the country to which it is being imported</li> <li>• Ensure, according to applicable national laws and/or regulations, that farmers' rights to PGRFA and over associated traditional knowledge are</li> </ul>	<p>The project team has secured a collaboration with the National Field Crop Research Institute "Selectia", the National Institute "Porumbeni" and the National Forestry Agency "MoldSilva" to contribute to the implementation of agro-forestry related activities. At the same time, the Project has preliminarily identified areas of support to Moldsilva to enhance the productivity of the entity's district forestry enterprises producing shelterbelt material.</p>	
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	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
				respected in the access to PGRFA and the sharing of the benefits accruing from their use. This is part of FAO Environmental and Social Safeguards.		

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
2	Political environment is unstable and presidential, parliamentary and local elections will take place over the course of project implementation	Moderate risk	N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project will refrain from significantly visible local level interventions at the times of electoral campaigns to avoid any political implications and unwanted associations, as well as to eliminate all risks of project activities being used by political figures and local authorities as credits for their electoral campaigns</li> <li>FAO and the project team will secure continuous information and knowledge transfer related to the project to secure the empowerment of newly appointed points of contact and stakeholders as a result of changes after electoral results.</li> <li>FAO and the project team will at all costs avoid interfering in electoral and political events and will remain apolitical and impartial, providing support and continuous capacity building to officially elected persons and representatives of institutions</li> </ul>	The Project was able to successfully avoid any political implications and continued to support officially appointed points of contact at central and institutions levels. Work at local level regarding stakeholder engagement, data collection on LDN and GIS were postponed until after the parliamentary elections were officially concluded and electoral events at local level are worn-out. The next round of local elections will take place in 2023, and the project will adapt to those accordingly, however a slight impact to implementation timeframes will take place.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
3	COVID-19 to slow down project progress towards reaching implementation targets	Moderate risk	N	The project timeline and short-term targets will be permanently adjusted to reflect the impacts of COVID. The adjustments will be discussed with the Project Steering Committee. FAO and the project team will apply consulted adaptive management principles to navigate the limitations imposed by the pandemics and the unknown post-pandemic environment.	Thus far, the project has successfully applied on-line communication platforms to transfer all information exchanges, meetings, discussions and consultations. Fortunately, at the reporting time, most of the restrictions to in-person meetings are gradually lifted, so local level interventions planning can be resumed keeping in mind official safety recommendations and FAO guidelines	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
4	Lack of close cooperation between key institutional stakeholders, such as MARDE and MoldSilva	High risk	Y	This risk will be mitigated under Component 1 of the project that will strengthen the intersectoral coordination mechanism to enhance cooperation on LDN including the establishment of an inter-ministerial TF.	This risk did call for additional and targeted support for securing institutional cooperation in achieving LDN. Although more time was required for successfully engaging all institutions, the objectives of the Project are being achieved, even beyond initial expectations. The number of institutions involved in promoting and achieving LDN is constantly growing with more entities at central and local level joining the project initiative.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
5	Unclear responsibilities of institutions at national and local level	High risk	Y	Component 1 of the project will provide support to improve institutional structures and legislation for INRM, including roles and responsibilities at national institutions and local public authorities. This also involves facilitation of a multi-level, multi-stakeholder process. And the component 2 of the project will enhance the inter-ministerial collaboration on the ground strengthening the collaboration and clarifying responsibilities.	This risk is interrelated with the risk mentioned above and a combination of these two did hinder project progress time-wise as additional efforts were required to establish institutional responsibilities and support institutions in taking ownership over their mandates. This is an ongoing exercise, and even though timelines were expanded, attaining the initial objectives are on track and beyond.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
6	Low technical capacity in operationalizing LDN at national and local level halting the project's progress	Moderate risk	Y	Capacity development in LDN, CSA and shelterbelt management in the project pilot area will be provided under Components 1 and 2, which will mitigate this risk. Component 3 will, in addition, provide capacity building to replication the LDN experience in other areas and to scale it up to national level.	This risk has not shown any impacts on project implementation thus far and activities are ongoing without hindrances related to low technical capacity of operationalizing LDN at national and local level. The project is in constant communication with local level representative and there is openness to operationalizing LDN from all levels.	
7	Lack of political support to LDN, CSA and shelterbelt management	Low	Y	Political support is high in the Republic of Moldova to shift to environmentally sustainable natural resources management practices, which is demonstrated by policy reform processes initiated both in the agriculture and forest sector with support from EU, FAO, etc. This project will provide an opportunity to further integrate global environmental considerations and to demonstrate good practices in the field	Political support has been present and all stakeholders directly or tangentially involved in LDN are open and supportive. Despite the support, the ongoing flow of personnel at all levels did cause slight hindrance in implementation and required additional efforts in onboarding new delegates and decision makers.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
8	Natural changes in agro-ecological zones due to gradual changes in climate and extreme weather events	High	Y	INRM practices to be demonstrated and scaled up by the project are proven to enhance resilience to climate change, such as CSA, and multi-purpose agroforestry/shelterbelt management.	The project has not encountered this particular risk thus far. The mitigation actions foreseen will be applied and in case of risk materialization, adaptive management procedures will be used and reported.	
9	Lack of commitment of local stakeholders at the village and community level to adopt CSA and sustainable shelterbelts practices	Moderate	Y	The implementation phase will be undertaken through community-based participatory approaches that address local cultural, socio-economic and ecological concerns. The project will provide incentives to farmers to engage in various activities that target LDN and CSA, at both the capacity building, awareness, and implementation level	The project has not encountered this risk in the current implementation phases. The project has been implemented in a consultative and participatory manner and this will be continually applied to mitigate the risk.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
10	Limited gender-sensitive or socially inclusive project implementation, leading to increased inequalities and lack of sustainability or results	Moderate	Y	Gender mainstreaming and social inclusion training is envisaged for the project team and implementing partners during the project inception, and training for national partners and other stakeholders is envisaged during project implementation in order to raise awareness and ensure gender-sensitive and socially inclusive implementation. The project will also count with gender and social inclusion expertise, and with a gender mainstreaming action plan	The Project has collected exhaustive sets of data regarding the gender, social and economic situation at community level in all 32 mayoralties of the pilot area. Gender and socially inclusive activities will be tailored to local needs and context to implement informed and data-driven decisions on the nature and character of capacity building activities for mainstreaming gender and social inclusion.	



	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
11	The geo-political situation in the region and the war in Ukraine are diverting stakeholders' attention from LDN matters, while farmers at local level neglect LDN in favour of increasing productivity ignoring the environmental impact	High	N	The Project will work at local level to increase awareness of farmers and Local Public Authorities on CSA, LDN and INRM, showcasing examples and building knowledge. The Project will promote cost-effective agricultural practices and combinations of CSA practices to expand the knowledge of farmers and LPS on the availability of profitable, but yet environmentally friendly agricultural approaches.	Initially, it was sought that educational and demo activities based on general understanding of CSA will be persuasive enough to secure a transition to INRM and achieving LDN. At this point, the Project is revising its approach and will include additional training and capacity building elements focused on business management, profitability margin analysis, risk monitoring and other financial instruments to combine those with the most profitable combinations of CSA practices and decrease the risk of farmers irrationally exploiting natural resources in pursue of short-term profits.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating <sup>20</sup>	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
12	Changes are occurring to legislation establishing the process of shelterbelt plantation, including eligible areas, the sets of documents and legal processes to initiate plantation of shelterbelts	High	N	The project will monitor all the legal changes pertaining to the process of shelterbelt plantation and will make sure project activities are carried out according to the acting legislation. When deemed possible, the project will support stakeholders in formulating policy and legislation proposals that will enable a more effective approach to promote plantation of shelterbelts.	The project is continuously monitoring the legislation changes related to plantation of shelterbelts. So far, the modifications to legislation have slightly complicated the plantation process and the requirements land owners are bound to follow. Unless subsequent changes are not applied, the project will have to abide to the existing legislation, adapt and revise the implementation schedule and approach to the activities related to shelterbelt plantation.	

**Project overall risk rating (Low, Moderate, Substantial or High):**

FY2021 rating	FY2022 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2022 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
Medium	Medium	The nature and incidence of risks identified during project formulation has generally remained unchanged. Mitigation measures are in place and successfully implemented to avoid negative impact on development objectives. Certain risks have hindered project implementation timelines, as substantial efforts were required to

		<p>enhance stakeholder engagement, develop methodologies, create and institutionalize new working groups. The impact of COVID has had an effect on project implementation timelines due to inability to efficiently communicate at local level given the incapacity to travel and hold in-person meetings – which is essential for successful building of collaborations in the rural environment. The newly identified risk related to the war in Ukraine and rising prices for inputs and goods might have additional impact on implementation timelines, however given the mitigation measures in place, it is foreseen to reach the development objectives beyond initial expectations.</p>
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**7. Follow-up on Mid-term review or supervision mission (only for projects that have conducted an MTR)**

If the project had an MTR or a supervision mission, please report on how the recommendations were implemented during this fiscal year as indicated in the Management Response or in the supervision mission report.

MTR or supervision mission recommendations	Measures implemented <u>during this Fiscal Year</u>
Recommendation 1:	
Recommendation 2:	
Recommendation 3:	
Recommendation 4:	

Has the project developed an Exit Strategy? If yes, please describe	
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## 8. Minor project amendments

Minor amendments are changes to the project design or implementation that do not have significant impact on the project objectives or scope, or an increase of the GEF project financing up to 5% as described in Annex 9 of the GEF Project and Program Cycle Policy Guidelines<sup>21</sup>. Please describe any minor changes that the project has made under the relevant category or categories. And, provide supporting documents as an annex to this report if available.

Category of change	Provide a description of the change	Indicate the timing of the change	Approved by
Results framework	N/A		
Components and cost	N/A		
Institutional and implementation arrangements	N/A		
Financial management	N/A		
Implementation schedule	Due to the cumulative effect of challenges mentioned in the previous PIR, including changes in Government; election period; COVID outbreak; additional technical support required to implement new methodologies; changing legislation with regard to plantation of shelterbelts: and the start of the war in Ukraine – the project will require a no-cost extension of circa 12 months to effectively attain all expected development objectives.	after PIR2, tentatively December 2022	
Executing Entity	The executing entity at project start was	August 2021	

<sup>21</sup> Source: <https://www.thegef.org/council-meeting-documents/guidelines-project-and-program-cycle-policy-2020-update>

	the MADRE. Subsequently the Ministry was divided in two separate entities – MAFI and MM. These are now both part of the PSC.		
Executing Entity Category	N/A		
Minor project objective change	N/A		
Safeguards	N/A		
Risk analysis	N/A		
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%	N/A		
Co-financing	N/A		
Location of project activity	N/A		
Other	N/A		

## 9. Stakeholders' Engagement

Please report on progress and results and challenges on stakeholder engagement (based on the description of the Stakeholder engagement plan) included at CEO Endorsement/Approval during this reporting period.

Stakeholder name	Role in project execution	Progress and results on Stakeholders' Engagement	Challenges on stakeholder engagement
<b><i>Government Institutions</i></b>			
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry	Key stakeholder, Chairman of the PSC, Implementation partner	Stakeholder engagement conducted effectively. Focal point established and trained. Support to project implementation granted. Continuous communication and reporting ongoing. Project interventions consulted with stakeholder.	Challenges occurred when Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment was divided into 2 separate ministries – Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and Ministry of Environment. Focal points changed, staff changed, decision

			makers have all changed. The project has undergone an onboarding exercise for the focal point for the fifth time since inception. Currently, the Ministry is supportive and engaged in project implementation highly regarding the project objectives and results. Currently MAIA is the chair organization of the PSC.
Ministry of Environment	Key stakeholder, member of PSC, implementation partner	Stakeholder engagement conducted effectively. Focal point established and trained. Support to project implementation granted. Continuous communication and reportion ongoing. Project interventions consulted with stakeholder.	Challenges occurred when MADRE has been divided back to 2 separate ministries. Focal points changed, staff changed, decision makers have all changed. After onboarding activities, the Ministry became informed and involved in project implementation, including as part of the PSC.
State Hydrometeorological Service	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Communication on weekly basis. Focal point established and trained. The stakeholder supports project implementation and provides guidance. The project supports the stakeholder with the organization and activities of the UNCCD Working Group	Initial reluctance to participating in the LDN reporting process was visible, but as project engagement activities were implemented, SHS became a reliable and supportive implementation partner.
State Forestry Agency "Moldsilva"	Key stakeholder, member of PSC, implementation partner	Communication on weekly basis. Focal point established and trained. The stakeholder supports project implementation and provides guidance.	No communication or engagement challenges were encountered, aside from the change of contact people and management at the beginning of the

			reporting period, which required additional meetings and discussions to onboard the new decision makers.
Moldsilva Orhei Forestry Enterprise	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Participated in the evaluation at local level. Selected one of prospect beneficiaries for project support. Will support project implementation with regards to rehabilitation of shelterbelts. Focal point through Moldsilva.	No communication of engagement challenges were encountered. The enterprise is open to collaboration and contribution to project activities.
Moldsilva Rezina Forestry Enterprise	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Participated in the evaluation at local level. Selected one of prospect beneficiaries for project support. Will support project implementation with regards to rehabilitation of shelterbelts. Focal point through Moldsilva.	No communication of engagement challenges were encountered. The enterprise is open to collaboration and contribution to project activities.
District Council Administration of Orhei	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Local Public Authority of Level 2. The District council is a supported for project implementation and a consultative body mainly through its Agriculture and Land Relation and Cadaster Departments with regard to acting as entry points at local level.	No particular challenges were encountered with regard to collaboration at district and local level, since the COVID related restraints were lifted and field visits and in-person meeting could be resumed.
LPA Ivancea	Implementation partner, beneficiary	At Mayoralty level, the project keeps contact with the Mayor and the Cadastral Engineer. Collaborations started during Local Inception Workshops and additional visits. Local interest has been raised towards the project goals, objectives and activities. LPA is currently involved in data collection for LDN Indicators and Shelterbelt Assessment.	No particular challenges occurred during engagement. As is with most LPAs, they are occupied with social and economic matters and additional efforts are usually required to maintain LPA's high level of participation. Currently the project is in touch with LPAs through District Councils, local focal
LPA Trebujeni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Pohorniceni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Piatra	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Susleni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Viscauti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Jora de Mijloc	Implementation partner, beneficiary		



LPA Bulaiesti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		points and the project team.
LPA Berezloghi	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Bolohan	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Step-Soci	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Zorile	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Biesti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Mirzesti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Pohrebeni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Chiperceni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Cucuruzeni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Crihana	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Podgoreni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Zahoreni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
District Council Administration of Rezina	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Otac	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Local Public Authority of Level 2. The District council is a supported for project implementation and a consultative body mainly through its Agriculture and Land Relation and Cadaster Departments with regard to acting as entry points at local level.	No particular challenges occurred during engagement. As is with most LPAs, they are occupied with social and economic matters and additional efforts are usually required to maintain LPA's high level of participation. Currently the project is in touch with LPAs through District Councils, local focal points and the project team.
LPA Cuizauca	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Busauca	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Ghiduleni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Pereni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Cogalniceni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Trefesti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Gordinesti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		

LPA Pripiceni-Razesti	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Ignatei	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Peciste	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
LPA Raspopeni	Implementation partner, beneficiary		
<b>Non-Government organizations (NGOs)</b>			
Public Association “National Soil Science Society”	Stakeholder, member of PSC, implementation partner	The project is in contact with the representative of the Association and expertise from the entity is provided to the project as contribution to project success.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO BIOS	Implementation partner	One of the participates to the elaboration of the Project document, the NGO was one of the first entities to engage in supporting project implementation with expertise and advice.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO Ecostrategii	Implementation partner	The NGO is a consultative body for the project along with other NGO-sector organization. The NGO is expected to have a more pronounced role in project implementation when activities at local level start unfolding.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Gender Centru	Implementation partner	The NGO is a consultative body for the project along with other NGO-sector organization. The NGO is expected to have a more pronounced role in project implementation when activities at local level start unfolding.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
National Farmers Federation of Moldova	Stakeholder, PSC member, implementation partner	The NGO is a consultative body for the project along with other NGO-sector organization. The NGO is expected to have a more pronounced role in project implementation when	No engagement challenges were encountered.

		activities at local level start unfolding. As a member of the PSC, the organization will provide a vision to project implementation from the perspective of farmers.	
Water Users Association in Lopatna (Orhei)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	The organization is a local association of water users. Within the project, they will take part as both implementing partners, but also beneficiaries of trainings and capacity building. More active involvement in project implementation is expected as soon as local level activities are launched.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Water Users Association in Jorile (Orhei)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	The organization is a local association of water users. Within the project, they will take part as both implementing partners, but also beneficiaries of trainings and capacity building. More active involvement in project implementation is expected as soon as local level activities are launched.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
National Agency of Rural Development (NGO ACSA)	Implementation partner	ACSA is a leading organization in the domain of agriculture and rural development. Contacts are maintained on weekly basis and expertise and advice shared are used in project implementation at central and local level.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO "Agroinfo service Orhei"	Implementation partner	Earlier part of the extension network as consultancy and advisory service provider, the NGO proved a useful and helpful resource at local level. Initially the NGO was a focal and entry point at district level supporting the project in the inception phase. Currently, the	No engagement challenges were encountered.

		experience of the NGO will be harnessed to implement FFS and other training activities at local level.	
NGO “Nistru Agri Consult” (Rezina)	Implementation partner	Earlier part of the extension network as consultancy and advisory service provider, the NGO proved a useful and helpful resource at local level. Initially the NGO was a focal and entry point at district level supporting the project in the inception phase. Currently, the experience of the NGO will be harnessed to implement FFS and other training activities at local level.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
<b>Private sector entities</b>			
Agro TV Moldova	Implementation partner	The organization is sought to become a communication partner for project implementation. Thus far, the entity is aware of the project and will be summoned to contribute to project implementation as local level activities unfold.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Agrobusiness.md	Implementation partner		
<b>Others[1]</b>			
Forestry Research and Management Institute (ICAS)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	The Research institution was directly reached by the project and has joined most of the project initiatives so far. It became a member of the UNCCD WG, the LDN data collection methodology piloting and is also the implementation partner for the shelterbelt assessment. The project supported the ICAS by elaborating the data	No engagement challenges were encountered.

[1] They can include, among others, community-based organizations (CBOs), Indigenous Peoples organizations, women’s groups, private sector companies, farmers, universities, research institutions, and all major groups as identified, for example, in Agenda 21 of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and many times again since then.

		collection methodology and will continue increasing its capacities in various project activities.	
Institute of Pedology, Agro-chemistry and Soil Protection “Nicolae Dimo” (IPASP)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Since collection of LDN indicators is one of the core project activities which is the basis for all other project interventions, one of the first research institutions reached out by the project was IPASP. Numerous meetings and conversations were required to onboard the institution. Once it became a project partner, a joint assessment of institutional and technical capacities was conducted. As a result, a new GIS-based methodology was elaborated and IPASP is currently piloting in by collecting LDN indicators in the pilot area. IPASP is also a member of all project groups and initiatives, including the UNCCD WG.	The institute consists of mostly elderly specialists, is under-equipped and operates on outdated methodologies. It was complicated to change behavior and orientation towards novelties, but with numerous conversations, the project succeeded and IPASP is now a reliable implementation partner and beneficiary of project support.
Soil Data Center of IPASP	Implementation partner, beneficiary	As part of the IPASP, the SDC is responsible of data collection and digital information management. With project support, SDC participated in the elaboration of new LDN data collection methodology and is currently an active participant to project LDN data collection and pilot activities, as well as a contributor to the UNCCD WG	
Institute of Crop Production “Selectia”	Implementation partner	The Institute was summoned to participate in different project working groups and is being used as a consultative body for various project activities, especially those related to plant production,	No engagement challenges were encountered.

		shelterbelt management and will be further involved in FFS activities and elaboration of technical publications on CSA and INRM.	
Moldova State Agricultural University	Implementation partner	The University was open to collaboration and has been supporting the project since inception. The University is part of the LDN methodology validation and piloting group. Further on, the University students will participate in field data collection and joint events will be conducted to promote LDN with students.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
<b><i>New stakeholders identified/engaged</i></b>			
Institute of Ecology and Geography	Implementation partner, beneficiary	During the validation of the LDN methodology implemented by IPASP, the project gathered a group of reputable representatives of scientific institutions to seek their expertise and refine the approach to data collection. IGE was one of these institutions. Several meetings and discussions were held until openness to collaboration was reached. Currently, the institute is a reliable implementation partner, incusing as part of the UNCCD and other working groups.	No engagement challenges were encountered. The Institute's management and staff were open to any collaborations and will further be involved in a number of project activities at local level, following the LDN data collection and validation.
NGO "Ecocontact"	Implementation partner	Part of the UNCCD Working Group, the NGO was delegated by the Ministry of Environment and UNCCD Office to serve as technical support to the group and as a fiduciary entity for distribution of the funds from UNCCD to participating entities. The project is in permanent contact with the NGO liaison point.	No challenges were encountered in engagement and implication of the NGO in project activities.

Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre of Moldova	Implementation partner	Data provider, partner and member of the UNCCD Working Group. Is set to share data and contribute to LDN indicator collection and reporting. Focal point through SHS.	The Agency is rather closed to openly sharing their data. The project is continuing engagement activities and harness on the responsibilities of the Agency taken as part of the UNCCD WG.
Environmental Agency	Implementation partner	Part of UNCCD Working Group. Present at all events and trainings organized by SHS and the Project. Provides valuable input in project implementation with regard to LDN indicators. Focal point through SHS.	The Agency is part of the UNCCD Working Group. Some types of data are available with the Agency alone, but they need more capacity building to understand how to process the data into the necessary form.
National Bureau of Statistics	Implementation partner	Data provider for the Gender and Socio-Economic Assessment at local level. Will be further involved in project implementation in the UNCCD Working Group and other working groups to bring added value on the statistical perspective. NBS will also be one of the data suppliers for the LDN Database to bring social and economic context to LDN indicators and reporting.	No particular challenges were encountered so far. However, it is expected at some point, the NBS will have to share information that is provided against pay, which will be solicited free of charge through letters from other stakeholders and implementation partners.
Institute for Plant Protection and Ecologic Agriculture	Implementation partner	The Institute was summoned to participate in different project working groups and is so far part of the activities related to validation of the LDN data collection. The Institute's experience will further be used at local level during FFS and other capacity building events.	No engagement challenges were encountered.

## 10. Gender Mainstreaming

Information on Progress on Gender-responsive measures as documented at CEO Endorsement/Approval in the gender action plan or equivalent (when applicable) <u>during this reporting period.</u>		
Category	Yes/No	Briefly describe progress and results achieved during this reporting period
Gender analysis or an equivalent socio-economic assessment made at formulation or during execution stages.	Yes	<p>A comprehensive Gender and Socio-Economic Assessment was carried out by the project to enhance objectivity of interventions at local level and target vulnerable groups following a data-driven approach. The Assessment covers all 32 pilot mayoralties and gathered data on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Population number: male/female/youth</li> <li>- Number of households</li> <li>- Total area of locality</li> <li>- Road network</li> <li>- Transportation routes (weekly)</li> <li>- Access to water distribution network</li> <li>- Access to natural gas distribution</li> <li>- Representatives of vulnerable groups: unemployed, social allowance beneficiaries, child support beneficiaries, households with 3 children or more, etc.</li> <li>- Social infrastructure availability</li> <li>- Number of households animals</li> <li>- Total agricultural area: extensive crops, orchards, pastures, irrigated land, eroded land, etc.</li> <li>- Water areas (water bodies)</li> <li>- Number of land owners</li> <li>- Number of agricultural entities: corporate, LLC and peasant farms</li> <li>- Nominal lists of land operators and their production specifics: crops, areas, etc.</li> <li>- Men and women headed agricultural producers</li> </ul> <p>The information will be further updated as the project progresses and will serve as basis for project implementation, as well as additional indicators (categorized and mapped) in the context of achieving LDN.</p>



Any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?		The assessment mentioned above will serve as a fundament for all gender responsive measures. Meanwhile, a project gender action plan was developed to align project interventions to fully account for existing gender gaps and equitably promote gender equality, including across identified socially vulnerable target groups.
Indicate in which results area(s) the project is expected to contribute to gender equality (as identified at project design stage):		
a) closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources		Project activities focused on land tenure at local level will focus on capacity building and experience exchange to aim at closing gender and social equity gaps in access to and control over natural resources
b) improving women's participation and decision making		Project activities focused on women's capacity building, including capacity building of women agricultural producers and rural entrepreneurs will aim at improving women's participation in decision making. That same aim will be followed in all project activities at local level and secure women involvement and inclusion of representative of vulnerable groups in participatory consultations, elaboration of strategies and local action plans to achieve LDN.
c) generating socio-economic benefits or services for women		As a result of initial phase of trainings at local level, including the Women to Women Visits, the Project will select a number of women households to benefit from micro and small grants in activities contributing to achieving LDN. These women will further serve as examples for replication for other women headed households, thus generating direct and indirect socio-economic benefits for rural women.
M&E system with gender-disaggregated data?		M&E System with gender disaggregated data is elaborated and constantly fine-tuned to adapt to new circumstances identified during implementation to follow a gender sensitive approach.
Staff with gender expertise		The project has a full-time gender expert. The gender expert is heading related activities and providing ongoing training to the entire team to keep pace with gender equality principles, news and latest development in the gender area. The entire team is following mandatory and extracurricular FAO gender trainings online.
Any other good practices on gender		As FAO and the donor community are currently treating the domain of gender as also including youth, the project has decided to expand its list of target groups by including young people as

		<p>another layer of beneficiaries. Moreover, youth are the next generation of land owners and land users, thus it became critical to increase their awareness on responsible natural resource management and achieving LDN. A brochure called “Soil Life” was adapted in Romanian and a pilot event at a public school was conducted with children. The success of the event has prompted the project to plan similar interventions in all 32 schools in the pilot area. Thus, the project, through various of its components, will target a variety of potential beneficiaries. From government, research institutions and central authorities and organization, down to grassroot level covering farmers of all sizes, land owners and users, women, vulnerable groups and finally – children who are the next generation soon to be in position to make decisions regarding land and natural resources. If educated correctly in this regard, there are higher odds that a new generation of farmers and decision makers with responsible attitude to natural resources will emerge.</p>	
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## 11. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities / products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management Approach approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval <u>during this reporting period.</u>	
<p>Does the project have a knowledge management strategy? If not, how does the project collect and document good practices? Please list relevant good practices that can be learned and shared from the project thus far.</p>	<p>Under Component 3, the Project has specific activities that are targeted to knowledge management. The project's strategy towards knowledge management is divided in the next steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Periodic monitoring and evaluation to track progress, learn and adapt</li> <li>2. Accumulation and documentation of lessons learned and best practices</li> <li>3. Analysis and validation of lessons learned</li> <li>4. Elaboration of recommendations</li> </ol> <p>Sharing of exchange of experience and lessons learned. The project is collecting and documenting good practices in a separate template. The list of good practices attained and sharable so far are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating effective collaborations between state institutions that are often in the same field, but otherwise do not share data and knowledge.</li> <li>- Working in close collaboration with the State Subsidy Agency to mainstream subsidies targeted for land operators who implement responsible natural resource management.</li> <li>- Creating an environment and professionally motivated groups to gather in view of supporting LDN and adopt an "open door policy" for any interested institutions to join and contribute.</li> <li>- Carefully assessing exiting institutional capacities is key to effective and sustainable implementation of LDN at central level. Outdated methodologies and approaches are often not regarded as a problem, but when identified – these need immediate improvements.</li> <li>- Conservative institutional settings often disregard modern technologies and availability of cost-effective instruments, Updating and re-assessing existing national methodologies is key to sustainable development of research and academia. 2 methodologies innovative for Moldova were elaborated. These are highly regarded, piloted and monitored by a group of representatives of key research institutions.</li> </ul>

<p>Does the project have a communication strategy? Please provide a brief overview of the communications successes and challenges this year.</p>	<p>The project has a communication strategy in place. With COVID and in-person meeting restrictions this year, the project had to limit its communication activities to on-line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project has elaborated a project brochure which is shared to spread information about project activities.</li> <li>- The Guide on Applying to State Subsidy for good soil management practices has been elaborated with Subsidy Agency and is distributed online and offline in paper version.</li> <li>- Local information and engagement events were conducted in Orhei and Rezina gathering LPAs, cadastral engineers and district authorities to promote project interventions. Events brought together representatives of research institutions to bring academic and research authorities closer to the local level.</li> <li>- UNCCD Working Group training event was organized and highlighted to open doors to new potential institutions to contribute to achieving LDN in Moldova</li> <li>- Communication event for children was organized to pilot the approach to involving youth in trainings related to responsible natural resource management and achieving LDN through generations. Participants were handed participation certificates and rewards: cups, pens, notebooks, masks for children, bags, etc. with FAO/GEF logos around the International Soil Day.</li> </ul>
<p>Please share a human-interest story from your project, focusing on how the project has helped to improve people’s livelihoods while contributing to achieving the expected Global Environmental Benefits. Please indicate any Socio-economic Co-benefits that were generated by the project. Include at least one beneficiary quote and perspective, and please also include related photos and photo credits.</p>	<p>The project did not yet reach out to grassroots level to an extent that would enable collecting human-interest stories which would be based on individual experiences. Such stories will be collected during the implementation of Farmer Field Schools, local training events, including those set to take place as part of the Gender-related activities.</p>
<p>Please provide links to related website, social media account</p>	<p><a href="https://www.moldpres.md/news/2021/12/06/21009373">https://www.moldpres.md/news/2021/12/06/21009373</a>  <a href="https://moldova.un.org/en/node/166025">https://moldova.un.org/en/node/166025</a>  <a href="https://icas.com.md/fao-proiect-neutralitatea-degradarii-solurilor-orhei/">https://icas.com.md/fao-proiect-neutralitatea-degradarii-solurilor-orhei/</a>  <a href="http://www.meteo.md/index.php/ro/news/detail/comunicat-unccd">http://www.meteo.md/index.php/ro/news/detail/comunicat-unccd</a>  <a href="https://www.maia.gov.md/ro/content/3971">https://www.maia.gov.md/ro/content/3971</a></p>
<p>Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project Fact Sheet Brochure</li> <li>- Guide on Applying to State Subsidies for good soil management practices</li> <li>- Children’s book “Soil Life”</li> </ul>

Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's Name and contact details	Not available at the moment.
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## 12. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Involvement

**Are Indigenous Peoples and local communities involved in the project (as per the approved Project Document)? If yes, please briefly explain.**

If applicable, please describe the process and current status of on-going/completed, legitimate consultations to obtain Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) with the indigenous communities.

Do indigenous peoples and or local communities have an active participation in the project activities? If yes, briefly describe how.

Local communities are involved in project implementation. At the current stage, the Project has conducted community engagement activities and local seminars to onboard local public authorities and make sure they are open, cooperative and contribute to the ongoing exercises – LDN data collection and the Assessment of Shelterbelts. During current activities, Mayors, representatives of Local Councils and cadastral engineers are the main counterparts in implementation. As information is collected at local level, a detailed, data-driven action plan will be elaborated to ensure involvement of local population, especially from the perspective of gender, youth and vulnerable groups.

### 13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing <sup>22</sup>	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2022	Actual Amount Materialized at Midterm or closure (confirmed by the review/evaluation team)	Expected total disbursement by the end of the project
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	In-kind	160,000 USD	N/A		
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	Public Investment	740,000 USD	155,000		
GEF Agency	FAO	In-kind	968,000 USD	N/A		
Recipient Country Government	Consolidated Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU-IFAD)	N/A	2,200,000 USD	N/A		

<sup>22</sup> Sources of Co-financing may include: Bilateral Aid Agency(ies), Foundation, GEF Agency, Local Government, National Government, Civil Society Organization, Other Multi-lateral Agency(ies), Private Sector, Beneficiaries, Other.

Recipient Country Government	District Council of Orhei	N/A	650,000 USD	N/A		
Recipient Country Government	Institute of Pedology, Agro-chemistry and Soil Protection "Nicolae Dimo" and Soil Data Centre	N/A	320,000 USD	N/A		
		<b>TOTAL</b>	5,038,000 USD	155,000 USD		

**Please explain any significant changes in project co-financing since Project Document signature, or differences between the anticipated and actual rates of disbursement.**

The only co-financing tracked during the reporting period was related to the new Subsidy for soil-friendly practices, the available budget for which amounts 3 million MDL (circa 155,000 USD). No other changes in project co-financing could be tracked due to stakeholder being unable to clearly share financial data pertinent to the valuation of the activities and objects contributing to the project co-financing pool. The project is working with stakeholders to find a common approach to determine, track and report the financial and monetized in-kind contributions to be introduced in the co-financing table.



## Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

<b>Development Objectives Rating.</b> A rating of the extent to which a project is expected to achieve or exceed its major objectives.	
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	Project is expected to achieve or exceed <b>all</b> its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”
<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	Project is expected to achieve <b>most</b> of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings
<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	Project is expected to achieve <b>most</b> of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve <b>some</b> of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits
<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>	Project is expected to achieve of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only <b>some</b> of its major global environmental objectives)
<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	Project is expected <b>not</b> to achieve <b>most</b> of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits)
<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, <b>any</b> of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.)

<b>Implementation Progress Rating.</b> A rating of the extent to which the implementation of a project’s components and activities is in compliance with the project’s approved implementation plan.	
<b>Highly Satisfactory (HS)</b>	Implementation of <b>all</b> components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised implementation plan for the project. The project can be resented as “good practice
<b>Satisfactory (S)</b>	Implementation of <b>most</b> components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan except for only a few that are subject to remedial action
<b>Moderately Satisfactory (MS)</b>	Implementation of <b>some</b> components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with some components requiring remedial action
<b>Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)</b>	Implementation of <b>some</b> components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan with most components requiring remedial action.
<b>Unsatisfactory (U)</b>	Implementation of <b>most</b> components is not in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan
<b>Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)</b>	Implementation of none of the components is in substantial compliance with the original/formally revised plan.

<b>Risk rating.</b> It should assess the overall risk of factors internal or external to the project which may affect implementation or prospects for achieving project objectives. Risk of projects should be rated on the following scale:	
<b>High Risk (H)</b>	There is a probability of greater than <b>75%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.
<b>Substantial Risk (S)</b>	There is a probability of between <b>51%</b> and <b>75%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face substantial risks
<b>Moderate Risk (M)</b>	There is a probability of between <b>26%</b> and <b>50%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only moderate risk.
<b>Low Risk (L)</b>	There is a probability of up to <b>25%</b> that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only low risks.

Annex B



LDN Project\_M&E  
ITT Matrix\_mid-term