



FAO-GEF Project Implementation Report

2023

Period covered: 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

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1. Basic Project Data

General Information

Region:	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Country (ies):	Republic of Moldova
Project Title:	Enabling a policy environment for integrated natural resources management and implementation of an integrated approach to achieve land degradation neutrality in Moldova
FAO Project Symbol:	GCP/MOL/006/GFF
GEF ID:	10222
GEF Focal Area(s):	Land Degradation
Project Executing Partners:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry 2. Ministry of Environment
Initial project duration (years):	1 June 2020 – 31 May 2023
Project coordinates: <small>This section should be completed ONLY by: a) Projects with 1st PIR; b) In case the geographic coverage of project activities has changed since last reporting period.</small>	

Project Dates

GEF CEO Endorsement Date:	29 August 2019
Project Implementation Start Date/EOD :	1 June 2020
Project Implementation End Date/NTE¹:	31 May 2023
Revised project implementation End date (if approved) ²	31 May 2025

Funding

GEF Grant Amount (USD):	1,666,895
Total Co-financing amount (USD)³:	5,038,000
Total GEF grant delivery (as of June 30, 2023 (USD):	532,741
Total GEF grant actual expenditures (excluding commitments) as of June 30, 2023 (USD)⁴:	460,816
Total estimated co-financing materialized as of June 30, 2023⁵	155,000 NOTE: Source - National Agency for Payment and Intervention in Agriculture. 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.

¹ As per FPMIS

² If NTE extension has been requested and approved by the FAO-GEF Coordination Unit.

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

⁴ The amount should show the values included in the financial statements generated by IMIS.

⁵ Please refer to the Section 13 of this report where updated co-financing estimates are requested and indicate the total co-financing amount materialized.

M&E Milestones

Date of Last Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting:	16 June 2022
Expected Mid-term Review date ⁶ :	N/A
Actual Mid-term review date (if already completed):	N/A
Expected Terminal Evaluation Date ⁷ :	End of 2024
Tracking tools (TT)/Core indicators (CI) updated before MTR or TE stage (provide as Annex)	<i>[It is mandatory for projects to update the TT or CI before Mid-Term or Terminal Evaluation stage. For projects that have a planned MTR or TE in the next fiscal year, please indicate YES here and provide the updated TT or CI as Annex.]</i>

Overall ratings

Overall rating of progress towards achieving objectives/ outcomes (cumulative):	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Overall implementation progress rating:	<i>Satisfactory</i>
Overall risk rating:	<i>Medium</i>

ESS risk classification

Current ESS Risk classification:	Low
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Status

Implementation Status (1 st PIR, 2 nd PIR, etc. Final PIR):	3 rd PIR
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Project Contacts

Contact	Name, Title, Division/Institution	E-mail
Project Coordinator (PC)	Mihail Ojog, Project Coordinator, FAO Moldova	mihail.ojog@fao.org
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⁶ The Mid-Term Review (MTR) should take place after the 2nd 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.

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

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 ⁸	Baseline	Mid-term Target Mid-term Target ⁹	End-of-project Target	Cumulative progress ¹⁰ since project start Level (and %) at 30 June 2023	Progress rating ¹¹
To support and scale up the introduction of innovative practices of climate-smart agriculture practices, forestry and sustainable	Outcome 1.1 Enhanced capacity in Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) planning and implementation to achieve LDN	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	- LDN principles are integrated in 3 draft strategic documents: National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2022-2027 and the Draft National Agricultural Extension Program, as well as the Agricultural Subsidy System as a separate support measure. The Project has also contributed to the New Forest Code, by incorporating LDN related subjects. - 11 national institutions are collaborating on LDN planning process	HS
	Output 1.1.1.: Inter-sectoral expert group at national and local	* Inter-sectoral expert group at national level established and functional	No Inter-sectoral expert group at	3 meetings of the group	6 meetings of the group At least 15 trainees	- 9 meetings of the Working Group held - 4 extensive training events organized, 40 participants trainees attended, of which, 30% women - National and international consultants are further supporting the UNCCD Working Group to secure sustainability and build ownership	HS

⁸ This is taken from the approved results framework of the project.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Please report on results obtained in terms of Global Environmental Benefits and Socio-economic co-benefits as well.

¹¹ 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)**. Refer to Annex 1.

<p>able forest and land management, which can be scaled up to achieve LDN.</p>	<p>level to support the implementation of the UNCCD and LDN established and strengthened</p>	<p>* Number of trainees from MARDE, IPASP and Moldsilva * % of female and male officers assisting to the trainings</p>	<p>national level exists 0</p>		<p>50% Women 50% Men</p>		
	<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 Soil map of the selected LDN pilot area</p>	<p>No assessment has been conducted Old soil map available</p>	<p>Assessment has been conducted</p>	<p>Soil map has been updated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current state of LDN in Moldova preliminarily assessed in terms of legislation, methodologies, available data, technical and institutional capacities - Old soil maps identified and assessed in terms of relevance, scale, level of detail, information and utility. - Assessment and mapping of Land Cover, Land Productivity Potential and Soil Carbon Content launched, headed by the Soil Research Institute (IPASP) - Training conducted on basic GIS instruments and algorithms to collect LDN baseline data using satellite imagery, Artificial Intelligence and machine learning delivered to IPASP to build and increase capacities - 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 for data collection. - Land Use / Land Cover indicator collected for 89227 ha, while surveying a total area of 95260 (pilot area, including urban/populated areas) - Composite maps for Land Productivity Potential (LPP) gathered for 89227 ha for most widely produced crops in Moldova. These mapped the following: land use/land cover for 9 categories of LULC, topography, slope, aspect, Digital Elevation Model, Soil Carbon Stocks, soil type/texture, NDVI, NDMI, DRA, temperatures (10 years model), precipitation (10 years model), CHT, Frost (10 years model), boundaries and cadastral data satellite imagery, WMS and base maps. - LPP indicator weights and ranges were applied to identify locations with highest productivity potential for different types of crops, of which: 3 field crops (wheat, barley, peas) in 2 planting schemes; 2 forage crops (alfalfa and sainfoin); 11 perennial crops (apple, pear, quince, cherry, sour cherry, apricot, walnut, hazelnut, technical grapes and table grapes). Productivity indicator for the mentioned crops can be extrapolated to other crops and varieties with similar production requirements. - Technical consultancy provided to implement AI/machine learning. Innovations incorporated with the system to enable easy access to data in a user-friendly manner. - Data is collected, systematized and validated through quality assurance mechanisms. - Data collection results and approach were positively endorsed through a public consultation involving a multi-stakeholder approach - Further improvements and use-cases are discussed within a large consultative body and will be operated in the next project phase. 	<p>S</p>

<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"> - Existing National Programs and Governmental level interventions in soil quality monitoring preliminarily assessed - Old soil maps identified for pilot area - Approach to LDN indicators (common understanding and utility) data collection developed and validated - Soil Monitoring Approach and Methodology elaborated and approved internally with IPASP scientific council. - The Methodology is validated with the scientific council. - Soil Monitoring Methodology piloted in Output 1.1.2. - First draft methodology submitted by IPASP underwent public consultation and will be accordingly modified to better incorporate AI, GIS and machine learning methods, with project support - The project extension period will be used to refine the methodology and institutionalize it at national level, including determining ownership and financing to secure sustainability. 	<p>S</p>
<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"> - The structure and approach of the Strategic plan on LDN in the pilot area developed - National and international experts are identified to implement the task - All land, soil, meteorology and social data for the task are available - Technical tasks and terms of reference under development - The Strategy will serve as a basis for the community-level participatory plans on achieving LDN and will be implemented in the project extension period. 	<p>S</p>
<p>Outcome 1.2 Strengthened policy and legal framework for INRM and LDN</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"> - Policy and frameworks pertinent to the domain of land, soils and INRM identified and assessed - LDN is integrated in 3 strategic documents, including the Agricultural Subsidy System as a separate support measure - Key stakeholders are in process of passing and adopting the legislative documents and policies, incorporating the provided recommendations - Continuous support was requested and is provided to stakeholders in identifying other entry points in policies, strategic documents and frameworks under development to incorporate LDN and INRM. - Currently, the project team is mainstreaming LDN, Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and INRM in the Environmental Strategy of Republic of Moldova 	<p>HS</p>
<p>Output 1.2.1.: Legal framework including regulatory mechanisms, economic and financial incentives for SLM, CA and LDN analyzed</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"> - Gap analysis of legislation and regulatory frameworks and policies conducted. - Analytic Report with recommendations for improvements on 16 policy/legal documents elaborated - Incentives are present as part of the National Subsidy System and the project supports the promotion of these measures at national level - The Analytic report was presented to the line ministries and agencies, with respective recommendations and technicalities - A permanent communication channel established, as additional further technical support was requested in view of improving acting legislation and policies to better reflect LDN, CSA and INRM 	<p>HS</p>

	and strengthened						
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	- Mapping of existing groups conducted to avoid duplication - Such an entity does not exist, however multiple ministerial groups with similar mandates were identified as active, but not lucrative - The topic was raised during multiple conversations with stakeholders and a consensus was reached to use the UNCCD Working Group as an institutionalized inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder entity		HS
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	- Current legal framework and existing legal provisions investigated in view of identifying acting regulations and instruments that envisage a cost-benefit based policy making - An existing national methodology on cost-benefit analysis identified within the State Chancellery of Moldova. - The project conducted a gap analysis and prepared recommendations for practical application in regard to policies and legislation pertaining to LDN and connected domains. - Recommendations presented to ministries and lead agencies. Practical implementation of these recommendations will be further supported by the project in the next implementation phase.		S
Outcome 2.1 Improved land management in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova	Area with improved land management	0	30,000	92,000	- This indicator is covering the entire pilot area and will be a combined cumulative result of multiple Outputs. - As part of the mapping exercise, Land Cover and Land Use, Productivity potential and Soil Carbon Stocks were mapped and introduced in a pilot system. These indicators cover the entire pilot area of 95,260 ha. - 32 community level Shelterbelt Management Plans were developed and presented in public consultations. These covered the entire project pilot area, identified and evaluated the condition of 938.48 ha of shelterbelts. These were presented during 32 events (in each LPA) at which participated over 300 people. - The exact are of land that will benefit from the rehabilitated shelterbelts is to be determined in the next project phase. - Furthermore, the entire project pilot area will be covered by the Strategy to achieve LDN and the Community level participatory land use plans, all to be implemented in the project extension period.		S
Output 2.1.1.: Participatory land-use planning in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic	Area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-specific plans in Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts	No area covered	Half area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-specific plans in Nistru-	All area of agro-landscape land covered by landscape-specific plans in Nistru-	- A new methodology for shelterbelt assessment using GIS instruments combined with satellite imagery, artificial intelligence computing and physical inspection visits was developed and successfully implemented for mapping exercises in the pilot area - Additional trainings delivered to forestry research institute to increase capacities and skill for implementing new instruments and modern methodologies - Successful collaborations established with 32 local public authorities and cadastral engineers to support conducting the mapping exercise - 938.48 ha of shelterbelts have been identified and assessed in the pilot area. Their current state is: critical (4%), moderately damaged (13%), slightly damaged (63.5%) and in good condition (19.5%).		S

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interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova developed			Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts	Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts	<p>These provided the basis for 32 Community Level Shelterbelt Management Plans presented and accepted by the LPAs in the pilot area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project launched the call for expressions of interest from LPAs and land owners in the pilot area. The process will help identify and select the best candidates for grants for planting and rehabilitation of shelterbelts in the project extension period. 7 LPAs have already submitted their expression of interest and are under revision. - An extensive analysis of the tree nursery in Orhei was conducted and objects for project grant (multifunctional tractor) were identified. The procurement of the tractor has been launched and will be finalized in the extension period. Additional measures of support will be identified and provided. - The nature and content of the Participatory Land Use Plans were conceptualized. - Potential partnerships and key stakeholders for implementation of this Output are identified - The participatory consultation process was designed in preparation for incoming data to support decision making. - The specific plans will be elaborated based on the Strategy (result of Output 1.1.4), which is ready for elaboration, as LDN indicators and maps are available. - Exercise to be conducted in the next implementation phase. 	
Output 2.1.2.: Innovative sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry practices and approaches implemented in the project areas	ha with demonstrations of best practices and approaches	No area covered	3,000	10,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A list of over 400 demonstration plots was compiled and data collection efforts ongoing - 6 Farmer Field Schools successfully launched (3 in Orhei and 3 in Rezina) according to the pre-established methodology. The FFS are covering a wide range of subjects and demo plots for various training items are cumulatively amounting to 1743 ha. - Over 737 farmers (540 men and 197 women) have attended the 36 FFS events conducted in the reporting period - Information from early adopters (FFS beneficiaries/participants) was collected through questionnaires and shows that participating farmers are applying the apprehended knowledge about CSA practices cumulatively on 5,760 ha of land. - Additional FFS, ad-hoc trainings and capacity building events, as well as study tours and publications, will be implemented in the project extension phase. 	S
Outcome 2.2 Gender equality strategy mainstreamed in the Project pilot area	Gender mainstreamed in all project activities and gender equality specific interventions implemented in the Project pilot area	Gender equality interventions not implemented in the Project pilot area	Gender mainstreamed in all implemented activities, and gender equality interventions implemented in the Project 1 pilot area	Gender mainstreamed in all implemented activities, and gender equality interventions implemented in the total pilot area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender assessment of project documents, plans and budgets conducted. - Internal Gender Mainstreaming Plan elaborated. - Gender and Social Assessment of the Pilot Area conducted. Data is adding value and context to other LDN indicators. - 32 events for children were conducted to promote soil health. Over 620 children and over 60 teachers participated in the events - A communication campaign was conducted around the International Soil Day to raise awareness about soil health and the importance of caring for it. Given the information provide by web monitoring, the events were highlighted in national and regional mass media were viewed by over 3000 people on the first day alone. 	S

<p>Output 2.2.1.: Sustainable livelihood strategies for women's empowerment developed and implemented</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"> - The nature and content of the Gender Action Plan for the pilot area under elaboration. - Gender, Social and Economic Assessment of the pilot area was conducted to inform the approach to the Gender Action Plan at local level. Data and findings will be incorporated in Local participatory land use plans. - VGGT event organized to share experience and lessons learned at national and international level. The event brought together local, national and international participants and presenters. The event served as a platform for sharing challenges and experiences, as well as good practices in the region, including case studies from North Macedonia, Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. 	<p>S</p>
<p>Output 2.2.2.: Gender-sensitive climate resilient practices to enhance land productivity implemented</p>	<p>Area with demonstrations of best practices and approaches</p>	<p>0 covered</p>	<p>3,000</p>	<p>10,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approach to Output developed. - Terms of reference for the implementation of the Output developed to increase cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the partnership and the implementation of the tasks - Selection of implementation partner ongoing - A large set of activities targeting rural women, including youth, will be carried out in the project extension phase. The focus of the tasks will be around: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of the creation of women agricultural cooperatives across various value chains; 2. Trainings for young women entrepreneurs in domains related to IT, marketing, management, business development, legal domain and accounting; 3. Creation of Women Agricultural Clubs and promotion on practical applications to achieve LDN at the grassroots level. 	<p>S</p>
<p>Outcome 3.1. Monitoring and dissemination of lessons learned to support scaling up of LDN to the national level</p>	<p>M&E system is in place Lessons learned and disseminated</p>	<p>No system in place</p>	<p>Implementation of project based on adaptive results based-management</p>	<p>Project delivers expected results and shares lessons learned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft M&E System and instruments prepared. - Lessons learned are accumulated as project progresses - Project technical evaluation conducted. Findings and lessons learned were presented to a larger auditory of stakeholders, including all members of the PSC. Stakeholders positively endorsed and supported a continuation of the project for an additional 2 years period according to a draft Work Plan for the extension period. 	<p>S</p>
<p>Output 3.1.1.: Project results monitored and evaluated</p>	<p>Annual, semestral and Final evaluation reports</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>PIRs and PPRs submitted</p>	<p>Final evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PIRs and PPRs submitted on time. - Final evaluation will be conducted 6 months before the project end date, which is 31 May 2025. 	<p>S</p>
<p>Output 3.1.2.: Recommendations for enhancing CSA and</p>	<p>Recommendations for CSA and shelterbelt management</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>2 Experience sharing notes</p>	<p>3 experience sharing notes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moldova Climate Guide elaborated and launched together with the State Hydrometeorological Service. The guide contains a separate chapter on using agro-meteorological data for decision making and sharing examples of use cases and opportunities. - CSA Guide in Moldova under design and publishing. This publication will bring in a modern look at CSA practices and INRM activities, with focus on the geographical and climate context of Moldova. 	<p>S</p>

	shelterbelt management in Moldova developed and disseminated					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guide on Good Management of Shelterbelts and cost-benefits is elaborated with ICAS. The guide is under design and in preparation for publication. The guide will cover technical aspects, challenges and opportunities in shelterbelt management under current geographical, climate, policy and legislative contexts. - The above-mentioned publications will be used to elaborate a set of brochures and short technical briefs to be distributed in the pilot area during capacity building and training events. - Publication for Children on Soil Health adapted and distributed in all 32 community schools of the pilot area 	
	Outcome 3.2: Enhanced capacity in scaling up LDN to the national level	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First monitoring approach under piloting and testation - All data and maps are available and incorporated in a preliminary beta-test software, which is based on freeware platforms with limited, but sufficient functionalities of this stage - The project is preparing for a series of consultations with all stakeholders to identify the structure and technical aspects of the new system, potential entity that would ultimately take ownership over the system, and further needs for support to secure sustainability. - The new software will be elaborated and launched separately, or be incorporated within existing systems in the project extension period. 	S
	Output 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection conducted and testing of new system performed - Preparations for system technical specifications, data flow, data input roles and ownership in progress and will continue in the project extension period. 	S
	Output 3.2.2 Experiences on LDN shared and exchanged	Experience sharing notes	0	5 Experience sharing notes	10 experience sharing notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 inception experience exchange events hosted by ICAS, IPASP and State Hydrometeorological Service - Experience exchange notes under development as project deliverables progress - 4 scientific articles under development and preparation for publication in national and international scientific journals - As recommended within the technical evaluation, further experience exchanges during the project extension period will focus on domestic and international study tours and experience sharing exercises. 	S

3. Implementation Progress (IP)

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

Outcomes and Outputs ¹²	Indicators as per the Logical Framework	Annual Target (as per the annual Work Plan)	Main achievements ¹³ (please DO NOT repeat results reported in previous year PIR)	Describe any variance ¹⁴ in delivering outputs
Outcome 1.1 Enhanced capacity in INRM planning and implementation to achieve LDN	LDN principles integrated into strategic land-use planning processes 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	LDN was integrated in one additional 1 strategic document -The New Forest Code 11 national institutions are continuously collaborating on LDN planning process	Project implementation is on track with indicator targets. Targets are exceeded. Further support is required to assure sustainability.
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	Inter-sectoral expert group at national level established and functional Number of trainees from MARDE, IPASP and Moldsilva % of female and male officers assisting to the trainings	6 meetings of the group At least 15 trainees 50% women and 50% men	6 meetings conducted 3 extensive trainings organized UNCCD/PRAIS report submitted At least 40 trainees have participated in a series of training sessions 30% women and 70% men	The indicators were achieved and exceeded. However, additional support will be required for longer time periods to secure sustainability of project interventions and ensure a higher level of ownership of institutions over the UNCCD processes. Additional trainings and support are going to be provided to the UNCCD WG as the central multi-stakeholder, inter-governmental entity promoting and supporting LDN at all levels
Output 1.1.2. Natural and anthropic factors affecting soil fertility in the	Assessment of the natural and anthropic factors affecting soil fertility in the selected LDN pilot area	Soil map has been updated	Assessment finalized Soil maps and other base maps are updated. Maps are developed in high resolution and include:	The indicator was fully achieved and covered a total area of 95,260 ha. The applied methodology was proven in practice and will be further improved to add value and weight to the LDN decision making process.

¹² Outputs as described in the project Logframe or in any approved project revision.

¹³ 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)

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

<p>selected LDN pilot area assessed and mapped</p>	<p>Soil map of the selected LDN pilot area</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land Use / Land Cover indicator collected for 8,9227 ha - Composite maps for Land Productivity Potential (LPP) gathered for 89227 ha for most widely produced crops in Moldova. These are maps for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land use/land cover for 9 categories of LULC 2. Topography, 3. Slope, 4. Aspect, 5. Digital Elevation Model, 6. Soil Carbon Stocks, 7. Soil type/texture, 8. NDVI, 9. NDMI, 10. DRA, 11. Temperatures (10 years model), 12. Precipitation (10 years model), 13. CHT, 14. Frost (10 years model), 15. Boundaries and Cadastral data, 16. Satellite imagery, 17. WMS and 18. base maps. <p>LPP indicator weights and ranges were applied to identify locations with highest productivity potential for different types of crops, of which: 3 field crops (wheat, barley, peas) in 2 planting schemes; 2 forage crops (alfalfa and sainfoin); 11 perennial crops (apple, pear, quince, cherry, sour cherry, apricot, walnut, hazelnut, technical grapes and table grapes). Productivity indicator for the mentioned crops can be extrapolated to other crops and varieties with similar production requirements.</p>	<p>High resolution maps will be used at local level and will ensure objective enable decision making by providing information at the level of 1 pixel = 1 ha. All of the above have been highly appreciated by stakeholders and implementation partners as an innovation in Moldova and exceeding the initial targets and expectations.</p>
<p>Output 1.1.3. Monitoring system of soil</p>	<p>Agreed monitoring approach/indicators of soil quality</p>	<p>Monitoring approach of soil quality agreed</p>	<p>IPASP supported in preparing the Soil Quality Monitoring Approach. Public consultations conducted and further</p>	<p>Although in delay, however the results are exceeding the initial expectations. The innovative methodology was highly regarded by the members of scientific medium,</p>

quality in project pilot area implemented			improvements to the approach are implemented to better reflect artificial intelligence, satellite imagery and algorithms, as basis for a cost-efficient model.	implementation partners and stakeholders. At their request, the methodology will go through an additional revision process to provide a more detailed approach and incorporation of modern technologies. Since due to challenges in data collection and testing of the approach, the methodology was just presented in May 2023, the due results will be attained during the extension period of the project.
Output 1.1.4. 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	Approach prepared and selection of implementation partners is underway.	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. Since the key inputs were materialized, the results will be attained in the project extension period.
Outcome 1.2 Strengthened policy and legal framework for INRM and LDN	Policy and legal frameworks with integrated INRM and LDN principles	LDN integrated into at least 3 policy/legal documents	LDN principles in one additional policy document – The New Forest Code of Moldova. Currently, the project team is providing inputs to the new Environmental Strategy of Moldova to incorporate LDN, CSA and INRM.	There is positive variance towards achieving the Outcome indicator. FAO has provided substantial support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and the Ministry of Environment, as well as subordinated agencies and research institutions. This resulted in more than 3 policy/legal documents incorporating LDN, CSA and INRM. Further on, the Project has been requested by implementation partners to continue to provide this support, which it currently does for the Environment Strategy of Moldova.
Output 1.2.1 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	Revised/new legislation/regulations	Updated Gap analysis of legislation and regulatory frameworks and policies conducted and results are presented to main stakeholders	FAO finalized the implementation of this Output. Although the target has been achieved, FAO was requested to continue supporting the stakeholders to secure sustainability and enable informed decision making to support achieving LDN.
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 established	Inter-ministerial and inter-governmental group created. This will be the UNCCD Working Group institutionalized and capacitated by the project.	There is positive variance, as the output can be considered accomplished. However, additional support is necessary to ensure the UNCCD WG is sustainable and receives continuous capacity building to take full ownership of its roles and responsibilities as a newly created entity.

Output 1.2.3 Cost/benefit analysis to inform decision making process elaborated	Cost/benefit analysis	Cost/benefit analysis is conducted	There is a Cost benefit analysis tool to be applied as part of the responsibilities of the State Chancellery of Moldova.	This Output is not relevant, as since the signing of the Project document, the State Chancellery of Moldova has elaborated a tool to track cost benefit of legislation and policies in all domains. The project will continue to approach the State Chancellery in view of providing support to improve the instrument, however specific requests for support have not been received from the Government.
Outcome 2.1 Improved land management in the agro-landscape of Nistru-Cogâlnic interfluves, Orhei and Rezina districts of Moldova	Area with improved land management	92,000	The 92,000 ha under improved land management is the total project pilot area. The 32 Shelterbelt Management Plans are already covering the entire project area	The project will provide a series of support measures to cover this 92,000 ha area. The first of them are the 32 community-level shelterbelt management plans. Next, the same area will be covered by the Strategy to achieve LDN as well as 32 community level participatory action plans on achieving LDN. As per the definition of the indicator, it can be considered that there is positive variance towards its achievement, with additional build-on during the extension phase of the project.
Output 2.1.1. 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	All 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 elaborated by IPASP and ICAS as of May 2023. These activities will be implemented in the project extension period.
Output 2.1.2. Innovative sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry practices and approaches implemented in the project areas	ha with demonstrations of best practices and approaches	10,000	5,760 ha of demonstration plots and farmer lands on which CSA practices from FFS were applied	There is a positive variance towards achieving this indicator, as this currently covers only Farmer Field School activities. More activities in FFS and shelterbelt rehabilitation will be conducted in the project extension period, as this was highly regarded and specifically requested by stakeholders and partners due to the current successful approach and results.
Outcome 2.2 Gender equality strategy mainstreamed in the Project pilot area	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 total 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 the extension phase of project implementation.	There is positive variance in this outcome, as all project interventions are permanently and continuously screened through the gender lens to make sure all proper actions are taken to involve women and youth in project activities and products.

Output 2.2.1.: Sustainable livelihood strategies for women's empowerment developed and implemented	Gender Action Plan	Gender Action Plan for the project area	The Gender Action Plan will be elaborated before local interventions on gender equality and social aspects.	Gender Action Plan elaboration is in slight delay, but that is due to its interdependency on local activities that were not yet launched due to a number of challenges. As the challenges were overcome, and all information and data is available to enable advancing in a calculated and informed manner, the activities in this regard will be implemented in the project extension period.
Output 2.2.2.: Gender-sensitive climate resilient practices to enhance land productivity implemented	Area with demonstrations of best practices and approaches	10,000	The implementation of this Output is prepared for the extension period.	This activity was 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.
Outcome 3.1. Monitoring and dissemination of lessons learned to support scaling up of LDN to the national level	M&E system is in place Lessons learned and disseminated	Project delivers expected results and shares lessons learned	Project M&E System in place and constantly updated. 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	Final evaluation	PIRs and PPRs are submitted on time. A technical evaluation was conducted to inform decision making on project no-cost extension	The project has successfully implemented most of the activities, however, as noted in the Project Technical Evaluation, certain challenges and bottlenecks required adaptive management decisions and additional implication. The mentioned challenges created certain delays, so the project required a no-cost extension. The extension has been granted for a 2 years period. Thus, the final evaluation will take place in first half of year 2025.
Output 3.1.2.: Recommendations for enhancing CSA and shelterbelt management in Moldova developed and disseminated	Recommendations for CSA and shelterbelt management	3 experience sharing notes	32 experience sharing and knowledge building notes elaborated for each of the localities in the pilot area.	Recommendations were developed and presented to in all 32 LPAs of the pilot area. Each LPA received a map demonstrating the current state of shelterbelts and recommendation to harness the opportunities of shelterbelt rehabilitation and how these can benefit all inhabitants. Due to the definition of the indicator, it can be considered over-achieved, however additional activities will complement this indicator, i.e. 32 participatory plans at local level, 32 recommendations to achieve LDN in each pilot village, as well as separate publications to be elaborated during the extension period. On top of that, the project will be elaborating specific experience exchange approaches through domestic and international exchange visits to enhance knowledge and know-how in terms of achieving LDN.

Outcome 3.2: Enhanced capacity in scaling up LDN to the national level	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	LDN monitoring system in place with target setting agreed	The LDN Monitoring System is under elaboration.	Since this Output was dependent on the successful piloting of the approach, the collection of data for the model and the consensus of multiple institutions on the approach, the actual LDN monitoring system will be finalized in the extension period. Currently, as noted in the Technical Evaluation Report, there is no consensus among stakeholders on ownership, financing and other sustainability measures, which will have to be attained through a series of round tables and meetings, which in turn is a complex and challenging exercise with certain risks beyond the project's control.
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 set up Monitoring system on LDN set up	The structure, content and specifications of the Database are clear, but require additional improvements and incorporation of a new set of indicators.	The online database be based on open-source software and will incorporate the mapping products already available within the project. However, as mentioned above, a series of challenges will have to be overcome in view of securing ownership and sustainability. These results will be attained in the project extension period.
3.2.2 Experiences on LDN shared and exchanged	Experience sharing notes	10 Experience sharing notes	Experience sharing notes are under development. 4 scientific articles on the LDN data collection methodology are under development with IPASP scientific council and project experts.	Scientific articles were identified as the first step to exchanging experience on LDN. Further on, the project will elaborate brochures and leaflets based on the larger list of publications produced within the project. These will be compiled in experience sharing notes, along with the experiences documented within the planned domestic and international exchange visits and study tours recommended as a result of the Technical Evaluation for the extension period.

4. Summary on Progress and Ratings

Please provide a summary paragraph on progress, challenges and outcomes of project implementation consistent with the information reported in sections 2 and 3 of the PIR (max 400 words)

Although marked by a series of challenges beyond its control, as well as multiple complications impossible to foresee at project elaboration stage, the LDN project has achieved a handful of results. A number of outputs were completed, with some even exceeding the initially set expectations. At the same time, the project's cost-efficiency approach has resulted in savings, which will further enhance and over-achieve the established indicators.

The UNCCD Working Group was established as a new entity with project support, and through capacity building and awareness raising, the entity succeeded in becoming a notorious promoter of LDN in Moldova, gathering the experts from multiple institutions in different professional and technical fields.

Despite the lack of domestic capacities, the project succeeded in elaborating a cost-effective and innovative methodology to monitor LDN. Various types of data were collected to serve decision making at all levels due to the high resolution of maps and the compilation of a wide range of indicators, beyond the initial expectations. LULC and Land Productivity were approached innovatively to serve data users at all levels. The state and condition of shelterbelts in the pilot area was assessed using a new methodology, which was highly regarded by the Government as an example to be followed during the implementation of the National Afforestation Plan. Farmer Field Schools have exceeded all expectations and within a small budget, managed to cover a large area of demo plots, as well as promoted CSA and LDN within its over 700 participants to result in practices applied on over 5,700 ha cumulatively.

Legislation and policies were screened and improvement recommendations were provided to key ministries. Agencies and institutions related to LDN aspects were supported and motivated to approach this new subject in a coordinated manner. Publications were produced to streamline LDN in various domains, including agriculture, forestry and meteorology, as well as embedding the importance of soil health through events for over 600 school children. Moreover, a communication campaign was conducted around the International Soil Day to raise awareness about soil health and the importance of caring for it. Given the information provide by web monitoring, the events were highlighted in national and regional mass media were viewed by over 3000 people on the first day alone

Having overcome most of the challenges and having savings, the project was proposed for a 2-year extension, to build on the current results and further support achieving LDN in Moldova, as this project is the first one of its sorts, tackling this new, multi-sectorial and complex subject for the country. The project elaborated a draft Workplan for the extension period and a PSC will be summoned to discuss possible budget reallocations and improved implementation approaches to support achieving the set project objectives.

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.

	FY2023 Development Objective rating ¹⁵	FY2023 Implementation Progress rating ¹⁶	Comments/reasons ¹⁷ justifying the ratings for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the ratings since the previous reporting period
Project Manager / Coordinator	S	S	<i>Regardless of overall external challenges, the project has significantly progressed since the previous reporting period. All the changes and achievements in ratings show a positive variance. Multiple objectives were achieved and even surpassed the set targets. All the data and technical aspects required for further progress, which required more time to attained due to a number of challenges mentioned in previous PIRs, are now in place. These include innovative methodologies, approved approaches, maps, as well as skilled human resources. A no-cost extension was proposed and granted, and the project will further build on the current achievements.</i>
Budget Holder	S	S	<i>The project has achieved significant progresses in promoting LDN both at the national level and in the selected pilot districts. The innovation introduced in mapping the land and forests in the pilot districts have resulted in valuable opportunities for central and local authorities in upscaling these activities. Yet, a number of important activities related to farmer field schools, gender and forests belts have to be implemented in the next two years of the project.</i>
GEF Operational Focal Point¹⁸			
Lead Technical Officer¹⁹	HS	HS	<i>The project in this period has seen very good progress, highlighting the impact of the establishment of Farmer Field Schools which cover a large area of demo plots, promoting CSA and LDN within over 700 participants resulting in practices applied on over 5700 ha and the elaboration/building a cost-effective and innovative methodology to monitor LDN, which can be used in other similar projects. Moreover, a communication campaign focuses on children was conducted around the International Soil Day to raise awareness about soil health- with a high media impact.</i>
GEF Technical Officer, GTO (ex Technical FLO)	S	MS	<i>The project has laid out a significant amount of policy and coordination structure as well as providing knowledge and information. The two-year extension period grants a great opportunity for achieving the intended results in the pilot implementations as well.</i>

¹⁵ **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.

¹⁶ **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.

¹⁷ Please ensure that the ratings are based on evidence

¹⁸ In case the GEF OFP didn't provide his/her comments, please explain the reason.

¹⁹ The LTO will consult the HQ technical officer and all other supporting technical Units.

5. Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS)

This section is under the responsibility of the LTO (PMU to draft)

Please describe the progress made to comply 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. Please indicate if new 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
ESS 1: Natural Resource Management				
ESS 2: Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Natural Habitats				
ESS 3: Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture				
	<p>The Project Coordination Unit will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems through the use of seed voucher schemes, for instance • Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers • 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 • Request FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources team (AGPMG) to provide technical specifications for all procurement of seeds and planting materials. • Request clearance from AGPMC is required for chemical treatment of seeds and planting materials • Clarify that the seed or planting material can be legally used in the country to which it is being imported • 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 	<p>The project did not encounter any challenges in these regards. Officially registered types of seeds were readily available through competitive procurement. FAO and project experts have screened the types of seeds and provided expertise in the selection and procurement process, such that all Environmental and Social Safeguards are strictly followed.</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.</p> <p>Potential risks are pertaining to the plantation and rehabilitation of shelterbelts. Since the National Afforestation Plan has begun implementation, local tree seedling producers could be overwhelmed by the demand. The project will continue to closely collaborate with Moldsilva to ensure that local varieties of trees identified as specific to the project pilot area are available in due amount. Alternatively, varieties imported from Romania are explored as possible</p>	<p>PMU, FAOR, LTO</p>

	accruing from their use. This is part of FAO Environmental and Social Safeguards.		substitutes, given the proximity and similarity of climate conditions.	
ESS 4: Animal - Livestock and Aquatic - Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture				
ESS 5: Pest and Pesticide Management				
ESS 6: Involuntary Resettlement and Displacement				
ESS 7: Decent Work				
ESS 8: Gender Equality				
ESS 9: Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Heritage				
New ESS risks that have emerged during this FY				

In case the project did not include an ESM Plan at CEO endorsement stage, please indicate:

Initial ESS Risk classification (At project submission)	Current ESS risk classification Please indicate if the Environmental and Social Risk classification is still valid ²⁰ . If not, what is the new classification and explain.
Low	Initial ESS has not changed

<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>
N/A

²⁰ **Important:** please note that if the Environmental and Social Risk classification has changed, the ESM Unit (Esm-unit@fao.org) should be contacted. The project shall prepare or amend an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) or other ESS instruments and management tools based on the new risk classification (please refer to page 13 <https://www.fao.org/3/cb9870en/cb9870en.pdf>)

6. Risks

The following table summarizes risks identified in the Project Document and reflects also any new risks identified during the 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 ²¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Management Unit
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"> Avoid undermining local seed & planting material production and supply systems through the use of seed voucher schemes, for instance Ensure that the seeds and planting materials are from locally adapted crops and varieties that are accepted by farmers and consumers 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 Request FAO Seed and Plant Genetic Resources team (AGPMG) to provide technical specifications for all procurement of seeds and planting materials. Request clearance from AGPMC is required for chemical treatment of seeds and planting materials Clarify that the seed or planting material can be legally used in the country to which it is being imported <p>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.</p>	<p>The project team has secured collaborations with Moldovan research institutions and scientific institutes to coordinate and approach this matter. A collaboration with the National Field Crop Research Institute "Selectia", the National Institute "Porumbeni" and the National Forestry Agency "MoldSilva" is maintained productive and will further contribute to the implementation of agro-forestry related activities. Moldsilva is receiving continuous project support to enhance its production as part of tree seedling nurseries. FAO REU team and project national experts are providing constant support in selection of best seeds and varieties. All Environmental and Social Safeguards are strictly followed.</p>	

²¹ Risk ratings means a rating of 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.

	Type of risk	Risk rating ²¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Manager 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"> 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 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. FAO and the project team will at all costs avoid to interfere 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 	The Project was able to successfully avoid any political implications and continued to support officially appointed points of contact at central and institutions levels. The next round of local elections will take place in autumn 2023, and the project will adapt to those accordingly, however a slight impact to implementation timeframes might take place. The election in 2023 will be local elections, thus it is expected that many current mayors could leave office. This will prompt the project to conduct an additional round of information sharing at local level and ensure that activities started with the LPAs have productive continuity.	
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.	This risk is no longer valid as all limitations and restrictions related to COVID have been officially lifted.	
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. Signing of specific legal and binding cooperation documents will be supported by the project. Experience exchange events and building of partnerships will be promoted within the project.	This risk required additional implication by the project. For instance, a binding cooperation document was signed by IPASP and ICAS on free of charge data exchange. SHS will join this agreement. Although more time is required for successfully engaging all institutions, the objectives of the Project are being achieved, even beyond initial expectations.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating ²¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Manager Unit
5	Unclear responsibilities of institutions at national and local level	High risk	Y	Component 1 of the project provides support to improve institutional structures and legislation for INRM, including roles and responsibilities at national institutions and local public authorities. Permanent and ad-hoc groups are summoned around the subject of LDN to create additional engagement and better understanding of responsibilities and roles.	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. The UNCCD WG was created and is constantly supported in implementing and updating its mandate. This is an ongoing exercise, and even though timelines were expanded, attaining the initial objectives are on track and beyond.	
6	Low technical capacity in operationalizing LDN at national and local level halting the project's progress	Moderate risk	Y	Continuous capacity development in LDN, CSA and shelterbelt management in the project pilot area is provided under Components 1 and 2, which will mitigate this risk. Component 3, in addition, brings capacity building to replication the LDN experience in other areas and to scale it up to national level. More activities, including study tours and experience exchange need to be implemented to further support increasing these capacities.	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 communications with stakeholders at local and central level to secure cooperation in operationalizing LDN.	
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. The 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 growing on behalf of all stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in achieving LDN. Despite the support, the insufficiency of personnel at all levels causes slight hindrance in implementation and requires additional efforts in onboarding new delegates and decision makers.	
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.	Although this phenomenon is well recognized and practically visible at local level, the project has not encountered problems in mitigating the risk. On the contrary, project knowledge and experience harnesses the opportunities and provides additional value by tackling this subject in its interventions, publications, awareness raising and technical trainings. These will continue in the project extension period.	
9	Lack of commitment of local stakeholders at the village and community level to adopt CSA and sustainable shelterbelts practices	Moderate	Y	Project is implemented 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.	Although the risk is valid, the project is managing it and will continue to do so in the extension period through information, awareness raising and on-hands examples.	

	Type of risk	Risk rating ²¹	Identified in the ProDoc Y/N	Mitigation Actions	Progress on mitigation actions	Notes from the Budget Holder in consultation with Project Manager 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 trainings are conducted for project team and implementing partners. 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 come 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 are 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.	
11	Farmers at local level are influenced by the drought and neglect LDN in favor 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 revised its approach and successfully includes 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 to ultimately decrease the risk of farmers irrationally exploiting natural resources in pursuit of short-term profits.	
12	Changes are occurring to legislation that would negatively affect the establishing process of shelterbelt plantations, 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. However, rules are clear so far and the project can progress with implementation. Further subsequent changes are considered by the Government, but the project is keeping aware of these by participating in the policy elaboration process and providing support to improve the legislation. At the same time, the project adapts its approach to the changing legislation environment.	

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

FY2022 rating	FY2023 rating	Comments/reason for the rating for FY2023 and any changes (positive or negative) in the rating since the previous reporting period
Moderate	Moderate	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. However, this was compensated by financial savings and the approved project extension, which time-wise will bring in a lot more security in having the risks properly mitigated. The project team is constantly monitoring the project implementation context to identify new risks, but also opportunities to effectively mitigate existing risks. Given the mitigation measures in place, the Project is foreseen to reach the development objectives beyond initial expectations.

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.

The project has received a Technical Review mission in Spring 2023.	Measures implemented <u>during this Fiscal Year</u>
Recommendation 1: Project Extension	The Technical Evaluation report, as well as the consultation with stakeholders and members of PSC, lead to the proposal of a no cost extension for 2 years. A draft Work Plan for the extension period was elaborated by FAO and endorsed by the Steering Committee. The rationale for the extension, the Work Plan and the support expressed by the PSC and stakeholders has led to the FAO-GEF Unit granting the no-cost extension.
Recommendation 2: Don't make too many changes to the project during the extension	The Project intends to consider this recommendation and abide by the initial development objectives. Slight improvements will be operated; however, these will only contribute to achieving the project indicators.
Recommendation 3: Expedite the project's delivery rate	For this purpose, as soon as the no-cost extension was granted, the project team and FAO has started working on elaborating a detailed Work Plan and Budget for the extension period. This will be discussed at the next PSC. The set of activities that are planned in the initial Work Plan and will not suffer any modifications are going to be launched as soon as possible.
Recommendation 4: Project SRF	The project will work on an SRF to better reflect project efforts, challenges and results. The SRF will be proposed to the PSC for discussions and endorsement.
Recommendation 5: Institutional Review of MOLDSILVA	The project is in discussions with Moldsilva Agency and Ministry of Environment to identify entry points for the institutional review.
Recommendation 6: Organize a workshop of the co-financing partners	The project is preparing a concept for the event and will look into organizing the workshop in autumn 2023.
Recommendation 7: Arrange study tours	The study tours were included in the new Work Plan for the extension period. These will be included in the new budget and will start as soon as the PSC endorses the new proposed Budget.
Recommendation 8: Data collection and sharing platform	The project is preparing the concept of the data base and will start public consultation and additional stakeholder meetings to ensure the platform is elaborated according to good practices and considering the Moldova context and peculiarities.
Recommendation 9: Budget re-allocation	The project has managed to ensure savings. These will be subject to budget reallocations based on the new Work Plan and proposed Budget. Certain activities and budget lines are also under revision to better serve the development objectives and ensure the project attains all targets set and meets the created expectations.

Has the project developed an Exit Strategy? If yes, please summarize	
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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 Guidelines²². 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			
Components and cost			
Institutional and implementation arrangements			
Financial management			
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 required a 2 years no-cost extension, as a result of the Technical Evaluation that was carried out.	Effective as of May 31, 2023	Project Steering Committee and the GEF-FAO Unit
Executing Entity	The executing entity at project start was the MADRE. Subsequently the Ministry was divided in two separate entities – MAFI and MM. These are now both part of the PSC.	August 2021	
Executing Entity Category			
Minor project objective change			
Safeguards			
Risk analysis			
Increase of GEF project financing up to 5%			
Co-financing			
Location of project activity			
Other minor project amendment (define)			

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

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
Government Institutions			
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry	Key stakeholder, Chairman of the PSC, Implementation partner	Continuous stakeholder engagement conducted effectively. Focal point is constantly informed of project activities and is participating at project events.	Currently, the Ministry is supportive and engaged in project implementation highly regarding the project objectives and results.
Ministry of Environment	Key stakeholder, member of PSC, implementation partner	Stakeholder engagement conducted effectively. New focal point established and constantly informed of project activities.	The Ministry is supportive of project implementation. The State Secretary is the GEF Focal Point and is constantly informed of project progress. The State Secretary participated in the Technical Evaluation and presentation of results and is highly supportive of the project.
State Hydrometeorological Service	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Communication on weekly basis. The project permanently supports the stakeholder with the organization and activities of the UNCCD Working Group	No challenges were encountered with regard to engaging this stakeholder.
State Forestry Agency "Moldsilva"	Key stakeholder, member of PSC, implementation partner	Communication on weekly basis. Focal point established and providing constant support to project implementation.	No challenges were encountered with regard to engaging this stakeholder.
Moldsilva Orhei Forestry Enterprise	Implementation partner, beneficiary	The nursery will benefit of support from the project in form of procurements for enhancing tree nursery production. Further, they will support project implementation with regards to rehabilitation of shelterbelts. Dedicated focal point established.	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	Focal point through Moldsilva. Will support project implementation with regards to rehabilitation of shelterbelts, especially supplying with trees and services for shelterbelt rehabilitation.	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 supportive for project implementation and is a consultative body mainly through its Agriculture and Land Relation and Cadaster Departments with regard to acting as entry points at local level. Actively participated in promotion of project activities LDN, Farmer Field Schools, Events for children in	No particular challenges were encountered with regard to collaboration at district and local level.

		schools, forestry and soil mapping exercises, and other activities at local level.	
LPA Ivancea	Implementation partner, beneficiary	At Mayoralty level, the project keeps contact with the Mayors and the Cadastral Engineers. LPAs were all collaborative and directly engaged in project activities, including mapping, events for children in schools, FFS and other activities at local level. Many already started applying for the rehabilitation of shelterbelts through the call for expressions of interest launched at local level as as result of local presentations conducted by ICAS and the project.	No particular challenges occurred during engagement. As the project started more prominent activities at local level, the LPAs are gradually realizing their role as beneficiaries and not only implementation partners.
LPA Trebujeni			
LPA Pohorniceni			
LPA Piatra			
LPA Susleni			
LPA Viscauti			
LPA Jora de Mijloc			
LPA Bulaiesti			
LPA Berezloghi			
LPA Bolohan			
LPA Step-Soci			
LPA Zorile			
LPA Biesti			
LPA Mirzesti			
LPA Pohrebenei			
LPA Chiperceni			
LPA Cucuruzeni			
LPA Crihana			
LPA Podgoreni			
LPA Zahoreni			
District Council Administration of Rezina	Implementation partner, beneficiary	Local Public Authority of Level 2. The District Council supportive for project implementation and is a consultative body mainly through its Agriculture and Land Relation and Cadaster Departments with regard to acting as entry points at local level. Actively participated in promotion of project activities LDN, Farmer Field Schools, Events for children in schools, forestry and soil mapping exercises, and other activities at local level.	No particular challenges occurred during engagement. As the project started more prominent activities at local level, the LPAs are gradually realizing their role as beneficiaries and not only implementation partners
LPA Otac			
LPA Cuizauca			
LPA Busauca			
LPA Ghiduleni			
LPA Pereni			

LPA Cogalnicieni		At Mayoralty level, the project keeps contact with the Mayors and the Cadastral Engineers. LPAs were all collaborative and directly engaged in project activities, including mapping, events for children in schools, FFS and other activities at local level. Many already started applying for the rehabilitation of shelterbelts through the call for expressions of interest launched at local level as as result of local presentations conducted by ICAS and the project.	
LPA Trefesti			
LPA Gordinesti			
LPA Pripiceni-Razesti			
LPA Ignatei			
LPA Peciste			
LPA Raspopeni			
Non-Government organizations (NGOs)			
Public Association “National Soil Science Society”	Stakeholder, member of PSC, implementation partner	The project is in contact with the representatives of the Association and expertise from the entity is provided to the project as contribution to project success. The stakeholder actively supported the innovations mainstreamed by the project and positively endorsed the project extension and new work plan.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO BIOS	Implementation partner	One of the participants to the elaboration of the Project document, the NGO is actively supporting the project though advise and participation in project activities to promote and mainstream achieving LDN.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO Ecostrategii	Implementation partner	The NGO is a consultative body for the project along with other NGO-sector organizations.	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 gender related 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. Highly supportive of the project as part of the PSC.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Water Users Association in Lopatna (Orhei)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	The organization is a local association of water users. Within the project, they are part of the Farmer Field Schools activities.	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 are part of the Farmer Field Schools activities.	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. Expertise and advise are shared with the project and used in project implementation at central and local level.	No engagement challenges were encountered.

NGO “Agroinfo service Orhei”	Implementation partner	NGO collaborates with FAO in FFS activities and other training activities at local level.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO “Nistru Agri Consult” (Rezina)	Implementation partner	NGO collaborates with FAO in FFS activities and other training activities at local level.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Private sector entities			
Agro TV Moldova	Implementation partner	The organizations are communication partners for project implementation. Contributed to promoting project results and activities.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Agrobusiness.md	Implementation partner		
Others[1]			
Forestry Research and Management Institute (ICAS)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	ICAS is an active contributor to project activities. They lead the collection of data for maps on Shelterbelt condition, elaborated a Guide on Good Shelterbelt Management Practices and are actively collaborating with the project at local level to promote shelterbelt management and rehabilitation initiatives. ICAS is also part of multiple consultative bodies, including the UNCCD WG, and is a key supporter to achieving LDN.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Institute of Pedology, Agro-chemistry and Soil Protection “Nicolae Dimo” (IPASP)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	IPASP has collaborated with the project on collecting LDN indicators and elaboration of the Soil Quality Monitoring Methodology. Currently promoting the Methodology in the scientific medium through elaboration of scientific articles. A trusted partner and promoter of LDN also as a member of the UNCCD WG.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
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 providing consultation in the implementation of project activities to promote LDN at all levels.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
Moldova State Agricultural University	Implementation partner	The University was open to collaboration and has been supporting the project since inception. However, it has recently been absorbed by the State Technical University. Further cooperation will be established as institutional roles and responsibilities are clear.	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.

<i>New stakeholders identified/engaged</i>			
Institute of Ecology and Geography (IGE)	Implementation partner, beneficiary	IGE supported the project with technical aspects and promotion of LDN. As a result of the Education Reform, it has been absorbed by another University and its' specialists are currently employed by various institutions on part time. However, they are part of the UNCCD WG and actively supporting LDN at country level. Further cooperation will be established as institutional roles and responsibilities are clear.	No engagement challenges were encountered.
NGO "Ecocontact"	Implementation partner	The NGO closely collaborates with the project, especially with regard to support for the UNCCD WG.	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. They were engaged by the project and became open to share data and contribute to LDN indicator collection and reporting. Focal point through SHS.	The Agency was rather closed to openly sharing their data; but has accepted the use of it.
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	Involved in project implementation as part of the UNCCD Working Group and other working groups. Brings added value from the perspective of statistical data.	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	Participated 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 was 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) during this reporting period.		
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	A gender and social analysis of the pilot area was previously conducted within the project. With the finalization of data collection of land, soil and agro-meteorology data and mapping, separate maps will be produced based on the gender analysis to provide more context and correlation of technical and gender/social indicators.
Any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women's empowerment?	Yes	A National Seminar on Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure (VGGT) was conducted in partnership with FAO REU, national and international consultants. The event gathered representatives of Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Environment, National Bureau of Statistics, national research institutions, gender and agriculture NGOs, Local Public Authorities and women farmers.
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	No	A National Seminar on Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure (VGGT) was conducted in partnership with FAO REU, national and international consultants. The event gathered representatives of Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Environment, National Bureau of Statistics, national research institutions, gender and agriculture NGOs, Local Public Authorities and women farmers. More activities will be implemented in the project extension phase.
b) improving women's participation and decision making	Yes	This result will be achieved in the project extension phase when more prominent project activities regarding the women and youth are unfolded in the pilot area.
c) generating socio-economic benefits or services for women	Yes	This result will be achieved in the project extension phase when more prominent project activities regarding the women and youth are unfolded in the pilot area.
M&E system with gender-disaggregated data?	Yes	M&E System with gender disaggregated data was elaborated and data is tracked in a specialized Indicator Tracking Table. The process is capturing particular impacts with specific focus on women and youth. These include interventions within Farmer Field Schools, capacity building events and trainings, as well as youth related activities. The M&E is permanently revised and adapted to capture new and more precise impacts on women and youth.
Staff with gender expertise	Yes	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	Yes	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 another layer of beneficiaries. Treating youth as the next generation land owners and land users, the project has conducted a series of events to increase responsibility and the sense of ownership over natural resource management, especially soil. Awareness raising events were conducted in 32 schools covering the entire pilot. Over 620 children and over 60 teachers participated in the events as part of a larger awareness campaign around the International Soil Day in 2022.

11. Knowledge Management Activities

Knowledge activities / products (when applicable), as outlined in Knowledge Management Approach approved at CEO Endorsement / Approval, during this reporting period.	
<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"> 1. Periodic monitoring and evaluation to track progress, learn and adapt 2. Accumulation and documentation of lessons learned and best practice 3. Analysis and validation of lessons learned 4. Elaboration of recommendations <p>A list of good practices so far is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The application of innovative methodologies to collect LDN indicators that support decision making, including at farm level - The application of innovative methodologies to assess the condition of shelterbelts to inform decision making on plantation and rehabilitation activities - The use of agro-climatic data for informed decision making at all levels - The real-life application of CSA practices to demonstrate cost-effectiveness and productivity of combined climate friendly agricultural practices - Project approach to awareness raising by promoting LDN, INRM and soil health among children
<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. The following communication events were conducted and reflected in mass media and online.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Campaign on Soil Health conducted for Children in 32 schools in the pilot area - UNCCD Events - International Seminar on VGGT - Launching of Moldova's Climate Guide - 32 training events in Pilot area LPAs to increase awareness on shelterbelt management and benefits - 36 Farmer Field Schools events organized <p>All these events were successful, however additional efforts are required to raise awareness and bring more understand of the wider public with regard to LDN, which is a completely new concept for most people, even those in academia and research.</p>
<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</p>	<p>Gabriela is a sixth-grade pupil studying in the local school in Trebujeni village. She is one of more than 600 pupils from Orhei and Rezina who attended a lesson about soil organized by FAO Moldova within the Land Degradation Neutrality Project.</p> <p>"I learned that about 95 percent of our food comes from the soil. Although I knew this from my parents, because they always told us that the earth nourishes us, I did not realize that the percentage is so high. This means that if we don't take care of the soil, one day we will be left with no food" Gabriela says.</p> <p>Gabriela's parents have a garden just like everyone in the village. That is why she and her classmates know how to take care of the soil and understand what human activities are harmful to the soil. Sorin, Gabriela's classmate, says: "During this lesson, we discussed how some people harm the soil a lot</p>

<p>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>through their practices and then expect the soil to work for them and give them food - they cut down forests, throw away polluting waste such as plastic, set fire to leaves in gardens or fields, use a lot of chemical fertilizers and don't let the soil rest."</p> <p>Adelina demonstrated during the lesson and afterwards in front of the camera, the actions each of us can take to enjoy what the soil has to offer: "Plant trees, as many as we can, recycle plastic waste or buy fewer items in plastic packaging, take leaves to the garden and bury them into the ground instead of burning them, and stop using so many poisonous chemicals."</p>
<p>Please provide links to related website, social media account</p>	<p>Training of inter-sectorial expert group on LDN and INRM: http://www.meteo.md/index.php/ro/news/detail/comunicat-unccd Training on LDN and PRAIS Report for UNCCD Working Group: http://www.meteo.md/index.php/ro/news/detail/uncd Launch of Climate Guide: http://www.meteo.md/index.php/ro/news/detail/lansarea-ghidului-climatic Public Consultations on UNCCD Country Report: http://www.meteo.md/index.php/ro/news/detail/sedinta-raport International VGGT Event in Moldova: https://www.mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4045</p>
<p>Please provide a list of publications, leaflets, video materials, newsletters, or other communications assets published on the web.</p>	<p>Moldova's Climate Guide: http://meteo.md/images/uploads/news/2023/05/ghid_clime_2023.pdf Communication campaign on promotion of LDN during Soil Day: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBo191det8s https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/news-archive/detail-news/fr/c/1623928/ https://www.zdg.md/stiri/stiri-sociale/lectii-speciale-in-scolile-din-moldova-in-contextul-zilei-mondiale-a-solului-pamantul-ne-hraneste-iar-noi-putem-sa-il-rasplatim-cu-grija-noastra/ https://diez.md/2022/12/05/foto-video-elevii-invata-sa-respecte-si-sa-protejeze-solul-in-cadrul-unor-lectii-dedicate-zilei-mondiale-a-solului/ http://provincial.md/actual/lectii-despre-beneficiile-solului-organizate-in-32-de-scoli-din-raioanele-orhei-si-rezina https://www.moldpres.md/news/2022/12/06/22009333 https://tvrmdova.md/article/d6fa50e3aa011881/lectii-de-informare-organizate-in-scolile-din-r-moldova-in-contextul-zilei-mondiale-a-solului.html https://ecopresa.md/lectii-despre-beneficiile-solului-au-fost-organizate-in-mai-multe-scoli-din-moldova/</p>
<p>Please indicate the Communication and/or knowledge management focal point's name and contact details</p>	<p>Not available at the moment. These functions are headed by the project coordinator and implemented by project experts in their specific area of expertise with relevant partnerships</p>

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.

13. Co-Financing Table

Sources of Co-financing ²³	Name of Co-financer	Type of Co-financing ²⁴	Amount Confirmed at CEO endorsement / approval	Actual Amount Materialized at 30 June 2023	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		
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		
TOTAL			5,038,000 USD	155,000 USD		

²³Sources of Co-financing may include: GEF Agency, Donor Agency, Recipient Country Government, Private Sector, Civil Society Organization, Beneficiaries, Other.

²⁴Grant, Loan, Equity Investment, Guarantee, In-Kind, Public Investment, Other (please refer to the *Guidelines on co-financing* for definitions)

https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/documents/GEF_FI_GN_01_Cofinancing_Guidelines_2018.pdf

Annex 1. – GEF Performance Ratings Definitions

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

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

Risk rating will 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:	
High Risk (H)	There is a probability of greater than 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face high risks.
Substantial Risk (S)	There is a probability of between 51% and 75% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face substantial risks
Moderate Risk (M)	There is a probability of between 26% and 50% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only moderate risk
Low Risk (L)	There is a probability of up to 25% that assumptions may fail to hold or materialize, and/or the project may face only low risks

Annex 2.

GEO LOCATION INFORMATION

The Location Name, Latitude and Longitude are required fields insofar as an Agency chooses to enter a project location under the set format. The Geo Name ID is required in instances where the location is not exact, such as in the case of a city, as opposed to the exact site of a physical infrastructure. The Location & Activity Description fields are optional. Project longitude and latitude must follow the Decimal Degrees WGS84 format and Agencies are encouraged to use at least four decimal points for greater accuracy. Users may add as many locations as appropriate. Web mapping applications such as [OpenStreetMap](#) or [GeoNames](#) use this format. Consider using a conversion tool as needed, such as: <https://coordinates-converter.com> Please see the Geocoding User Guide by clicking [here](#)

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	Geo Name ID	Location & Activity Description
Zorile (Orhei District), GȚ "Țurcan Andrei"	47.467891	28.745003		Farmer Field School (FFS)
Jora de Sus (Orhei District), GȚ "Ghilinschii Dumitru"	47.481023	29.078727		Farmer Field School (FFS)
Pohorniceni (Orhei District), GȚ "Galagan Serghei"	47.36936	28.883828		Farmer Field School (FFS)
Cuizauca (Rezina District), GȚ "Luchian Alexandra"	47.620837	28.801085		Farmer Field School (FFS)
Peciste (Rezina District), SRL "Lorirodi-Trans"	47.709391	28.718023		Farmer Field School (FFS)
Echimauti (Rezina District), GȚ "Ceban P.I."	47.585696	28.968918		Farmer Field School (FFS)
FAO Moldova	47.030201	28.834922		Project Implementer
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry	47.02871893844586	28.837249854202565		Stakeholder
Ministry of Environment	47.029784	28.826572		Stakeholder
Environmental Agency	47.032072	28.847244		Stakeholder
State Forestry Agency "Moldsilva"	47.01981760902583	28.83995363226604		Stakeholder
Moldsilva Orhei Forestry Enterprise	47.33165486923487	28.805907569307077		Beneficiary
Moldsilva Rezina Forestry Enterprise	47.73180558735962	28.853947166871535		Beneficiary
State Hydrometeorological Service	46.97306751236575	28.849529015346462		Member of UNCCD Working Group
The Forest Research and Management Institute (ICAS)	47.045418729098884	28.77853874801585		Partner of implementation
State Agricultural University of Moldova	47.0612350219414	28.810019878799356		Partner
The Institute of Pedology, Agro-chemistry and Soil Protection "N. Dimo (IPASP)	47.00205437731532	28.776935077947304		Partner of implementation
Institute of Ecology and Geography	46.998541	28.817411		Partner
Institute for Plant Protection and Ecological Agriculture	46.971464	28.891005		Stakeholder

"Soil – Data Centre" of IPASP	47.02622454405503	28.837856188519368		Satkeholder
The Institute of Crop Production "Selectia"	47.763398891051615	27.896332773528396		Stakeholder
National Bureau of Statistics of Republic of Moldova	46.990564	28.821409		Stakeholder
Agency for Land Relations and Cadaster of the Republic of Moldova	47.031152	28.827916		Stakeholder
Agency for Intervention and Payments in Agriculture	47.02871893844586	28.837249854202565		Stakeholder
NGO Eco-Contact	47.018844	28.829621		Stakeholder
The National Agency for Rural Development	47.03016029260347	28.82066720426312		Stakeholder
Public Association "National Soil Science Society" (NSSS)	46.984396908077024	28.816537213441798		Stakeholder
NGO BIOS	47.04576825465433	28.856811667444507		Stakeholder
NGO Ecostrategii	47.00205437731532	28.776935077947304		Stakeholder
Gender Centru	47.01875939984776	28.82343813751868		Stakeholder
National Farmers Federation of Moldova	47.02973149843593	28.824027305892457		Stakeholder
Water Users Associations for Irrigation (WUAls) Lopatna	47.49515269352775	29.052247011608		Stakeholder
Water Users Associations for Irrigation (WUAls) Jorile	47.47334511836586	29.093068243138013		Stakeholder
Agro TV Moldova	47.020862549512906	28.834602629331908		Media partner
Agrobusiness.md news portal	47.06146051731757	28.87135178330451		Media partner
District-level Public Authority of Orhei	47.37831795547137	28.825282712147956		Partner LPA
District-level Public Authority of Rezina	47.74966403253838	28.96155942915866		Partner LPA
District-level Public Authority of Soldanesti	47.80596445000274	28.789483137638612		Partner LPA
NGO "Agroinfo Service Orhei" (from Orhei)	47.37831795547137	28.825282712147956		Implementing partner (FFS)
NGO "Nistru Agri Consult" (from Rezina)	47.74966403253838	28.96155942915866		Implementing partner (FFS)
Pilot localities (Orhei district):				
Ivancea	47.295034	28.840227		Beneficiary / Partner
Trebujeni	47.316962	28.966435		Beneficiary / Partner
Pohornoceni	47.375438	28.885192		Beneficiary / Partner
Piatra	47.364035	28.899645		Beneficiary / Partner
Susleni	47.413863	28.985874		Beneficiary / Partner
Viscauti	47.435227	29.072698		Beneficiary / Partner
Jora de Mijloc	47.470580	29.095390		Beneficiary / Partner
Bulaiesti	47.476444	28.978602		Beneficiary / Partner
Berezlogi	47.436533	28.938031		Beneficiary / Partner
Bolohan	47.430399	28.873421		Beneficiary / Partner
Step-Soci	47.453861	28.792074		Beneficiary / Partner
Zorile	47.457931	28.740148		Beneficiary / Partner

Biesti	47.513198	28.864603		Beneficiary / Partner
Mirzesti	47.494702	29.001873		Beneficiary / Partner
Pohrebeni	47.556663	28.899577		Beneficiary / Partner
Chiperцени	47.521980	28.839068		Beneficiary / Partner
Cucuruzeni	47.489665	28.726820		Beneficiary / Partner
Crihana	47.522830	28.721091		Beneficiary / Partner
Podgoreni	47.561309	28.778536		Beneficiary / Partner
Zahoreni	47.583852	28.733590		Beneficiary / Partner
Pilot localities (Rezina district):				
Otac	47.591085	28.827867		Beneficiary / Partner
Cuizauca	47.612484	28.813448		Beneficiary / Partner
Busauca	47.593444	28.789651		Beneficiary / Partner
Ghiduleni	47.612353	28.738153		Beneficiary / Partner
Pereni	47.657012	28.773912		Beneficiary / Partner
Cogalniceni	47.637055	28.819778		Beneficiary / Partner
Trefesti	47.677364	28.803792		Beneficiary / Partner
Gordinesti	47.694654	28.797569		Beneficiary / Partner
Pripiceni-Razesti	47.687967	28.758860		Beneficiary / Partner
Ignatei	47.680585	28.655691		Beneficiary / Partner
Peciste	47.715534	28.708852		Beneficiary / Partner
Pilot localities(Soldanesti district):				
Raspopeni	47.747921	28.621101		Beneficiary / Partner

Please provide any further geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions is taking place as appropriate.