



## **Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin**

### **Part I: Project Information**

#### **GEF ID**

10650

#### **Project Type**

MSP

#### **Type of Trust Fund**

GET

#### **CBIT/NGI**

CBIT **No**

NGI **No**

#### **Project Title**

Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin

#### **Countries**

Moldova

#### **Agency(ies)**

UNDP

#### **Other Executing Partner(s)**

Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova

#### **Executing Partner Type**

Government

#### **GEF Focal Area**

Multi Focal Area

#### **Taxonomy**

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Productive Landscapes, Mainstreaming, Extractive Industries, Species, Threatened Species, Biomes, Wetlands, Lakes, Rivers, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Lands, Influencing models, Demonstrate innovative approaches, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Stakeholders, Private Sector, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Communications, Awareness Raising, Type of Engagement, Participation, Information Dissemination, Consultation, Partnership, Local Communities, Civil Society, Non-Governmental Organization, Academia, Beneficiaries, Gender Equality, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender results areas, Access to benefits and services, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Capacity Development, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Adaptive management, Indicators to measure change, Theory of change, Knowledge Exchange, Innovation, Knowledge Generation

**Rio Markers**

**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 1

**Climate Change Adaptation**

Climate Change Adaptation 1

**Submission Date**

11/29/2021

**Expected Implementation Start**

1/1/2022

**Expected Completion Date**

12/31/2026

**Duration**

60In Months

**Agency Fee(\$)**

82,008.00

**A. FOCAL/NON-FOCAL AREA ELEMENTS**

<b>Objectives/Programs</b>	<b>Focal Area Outcomes</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>GEF Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Co-Fin Amount(\$)</b>
BD-2-7	Outcome 8: The area of protected areas under effective and equitable management is significantly increased	GET	624,270.00	15,721,728.00
BD-1-1	Outcome 4: Loss, fragmentation, and degradation of significant natural habitats, and associated extinction debt, is reduced, halted or reversed, and conservation status of known threatened species is improved and sustained, including through monitoring, spatial planning, incentives, restoration, and strategic establishment of protected areas and other measures.	GET	152,648.00	3,000,000.00
LD-1-4	Objective 1: Support on the ground implementation of SLM to achieve LDN	GET	86,324.00	2,000,000.00
<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>			<b>863,242.00</b>	<b>20,721,728.00</b>

## B. Project description summary

### Project Objective

Achieve ecological integrity of key floodplain wetlands ensuring positive status of biodiversity, land and water resources, as well as ecosystem services

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Financing Type</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>GEF Project Financing (\$)</b>	<b>Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)</b>
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Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component I. Enhanced regulatory and Financing Environment	Technical Assistance	<p><b>Outcome 1.1</b></p> <p>Better fiduciary and financial environment for long-term resilience of wetland ecosystems.</p> <p>Indicators/targets:</p> <p>? 10 approved new/amended regulations/policies/laws directly related to improving status, management and financing regimes of wetlands (Indicator 4)</p> <p>? 5 approved new/amended regulations/policies/laws directly related to improving status, management and financing regimes of wetlands (Indicator 5)</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1.1</b> Regulations and by-laws developed, consulted and adopted by relevant institutions that promote identification, monitoring and wise use of wetlands under international treaties.</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.2</b> National Ecological Fund (NEF) capacitated to prioritize financing of wetland conservation and sustainable use</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.3</b> Biodiversity compatible local development strategies in target districts designated and under implementation</p>	GE T	134,500.00	1,000,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 2. Improved protection and management of Key Biodiversity Areas on wetlands	Investment	<p><b>Outcome 2.1.</b> Positive status of wetland habitats and species at targeted Key Biodiversity Areas</p> <p>Indicators/targets: ? 20,803 ha of PAs with stable status/positive changes in the population of globally significant biodiversity at the targeted PAs; 10% increase of METT score ( Indicator 2 and Indicator 7)</p> <p><b>Outcome 2.2</b> Viable wetland and forest ecosystem restoration options demonstrated.</p> <p>Indicators/targets: ? Positive change in the conditions of 3,000 ha lakes and 50 ha riparian ecosystems compared to baseline in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (Indicator 3 and Indicator 8)</p> <p>Positive change of</p>	<p><b>Output 2.1.1</b> Revised PA category upgraded international designation, improved zoning, mapping, management and business plans for Lower Prut Biosphere reserve (including assistance for its integration into the Trilateral Biosphere reserve with Ukraine and Romania) and Royal Forest Nature Reserve</p> <p><b>Output 2.1.2</b> Management units and communities at targeted PAs capacitated to comply with/enforce management/buffer zone regimes, ensure proper monitoring of biodiversity and key wetland ecosystems, undertake species-focused conservation activities and PA patrolling.</p> <p><b>Output 2.2.1</b> Riparian forest strips restored acting as a</p>	GE T	446,824.00	5,072,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 3. Demonstrating sustainable use/livelihoods at wetlands	Investment	<p><b>Outcome 3.1</b> New sustainable income streams created for communities and small size entrepreneurs from sustainable use of resources at wetlands.</p> <p>Indicators/targets:</p> <p>? 20% increase in monetary income of the targeted entrepreneurs, derived from sustainable wetland use and facilitated tourism (gender disaggregated-Indicator 10)</p> <p>? 40% increase in the annual number of visitors in Lower Prut Biosphere reserve (Indicator 11)</p>	<p><b>Output 3.1.1</b> Strengthened capacities of the ?Local Action Group Lower Prut? and local entrepreneurs to implement local biodiversity friendly development initiatives.</p> <p><b>Output 3.1.2</b> Eco-tourism packages for wine/gastronomy routes adjusted to incorporate biodiversity observation in 2 communities.</p>	GE T	103,500.00	11,977,555.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 4. Knowledge management	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 4.1 Knowledge management and gender sensitive KM products developed and disseminated.</p> <p>Indicators/targets:</p> <p>? 20 gender sensitive awareness raising events</p> <p>? 6 knowledge products related to wetlands conservation considerations mainstreaming into policies, laws and regulations, developed and disseminated.</p> <p>Project knowledge products include, where feasible, an analysis of gender equity/empowerment in relation with the specific knowledge topic (Indicator12)</p> <p>5000 women and men getting access to the best available knowledge and practice, through project-supported knowledge products and training (Indicator 13)</p>	<p><b>Output 4.1.1</b> Online awareness raising campaign targeting central and local authorities and decision makers. Local and regional education seminars.</p> <p><b>Output 4.1.2</b> Innovative gender sensitive knowledge products and services from the project synthesized, packaged and disseminated.</p>	GE T	64,692.00	550,000.00



Project Component	Financing Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Project Financing (\$)	Confirmed Co-Financing(\$)
Component 5. Monitoring and Evaluation	Technical Assistance	<b>Outcome 5.1</b> Project Results properly monitored and evaluated	<b>Output 5.1.1</b> Set of monitoring and evaluation activities implemented	GET	35,250.00	50,000.00
<b>Sub Total (\$)</b>					<b>784,766.00</b>	<b>18,649,555.00</b>
<b>Project Management Cost (PMC)</b>						
			GET	78,476.00	2,072,173.00	
			<b>Sub Total(\$)</b>	<b>78,476.00</b>	<b>2,072,173.00</b>	
			<b>Total Project Cost(\$)</b>	<b>863,242.00</b>	<b>20,721,728.00</b>	

Please provide justification

**C. Sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type**

<b>Sources of Co-financing</b>	<b>Name of Co-financier</b>	<b>Type of Co-financing</b>	<b>Investment Mobilized</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Environment	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	?Moldovan Waters? Agency (Ministry of Environment)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Cahul Rayon (District)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Glodeni Rayon (District)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Botanical Garden Institute/Academy of Science of the Republic of Moldova	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Institute of Zoology/Academy of Science of the Republic of Moldova	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	150,000.00
Recipient Country Government	?Moldsilva? Agency (Ministry of Environment)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	4,200,000.00
Recipient Country Government	National Institute for Research and Development in Forestry (ICAS)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	300,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration (Government of Romania)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Civil Society Organization	?Verde e Moldova?	Grant	Investment mobilized	222,000.00
Civil Society Organization	?Verde e Moldova?	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	100,000.00
Donor Agency	Austrian Development Agency (ADA)	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	949,728.00
Donor Agency	European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	13,000,000.00
GEF Agency	UNDP (TRAC resources)	Grant	Investment mobilized	50,000.00
<b>Total Co-Financing(\$)</b>				<b>20,721,728.00</b>

**Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified**

The Government components of the Investment mobilized represent relevant parallel investment and governmental finance channeled through the budgets of co-financing partners listed above: (i) The Ministry of Environment Investment mobilized entails (i) 200,000 USD towards funding the planned ecological restoration works on Camenca River; (ii) 800,000 USD represents parallel financing through different governmental budgetary lines towards investments in sustainable agriculture, water management, sustainable tourism , education and awareness activities. The donor agency components of Investment mobilized represents relevant project conducted in the targeted areas complementing the UNDP/GEF investment: e.g. UNDP grant investment represents activities implemented in Cahul region under EU4 Cahul project; UNDP TRAC resources contributing to the project management. Section VII "Financial Planning and Management" of the GEF-UNDP Project Document provides more information about parallel investments and cofinancing considered under different outputs. The co-financing commitments have been confirmed in writing as evidenced by the co-financing letters attached to the GEF-UNDP Project Document (Annex 14-separate attachment).

**D. Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>	<b>Total(\$)</b>
UNDP	GET	Moldova	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	776,918	73,807	850,725.00
UNDP	GET	Moldova	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	86,324	8,201	94,525.00
<b>Total Grant Resources(\$)</b>					<b>863,242.00</b>	<b>82,008.00</b>	<b>945,250.00</b>

**E. Non Grant Instrument**

NON-GRANT INSTRUMENT at CEO Endorsement

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Includes Non grant instruments? **No**

Includes reflow to GEF? **No**

**F. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)**

PPG Required **true**

**PPG Amount (\$)**

50,000

**PPG Agency Fee (\$)**

4,750

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Trust Fund</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Focal Area</b>	<b>Programming of Funds</b>	<b>Amount(\$)</b>	<b>Fee(\$)</b>	<b>Total(\$)</b>
UNDP	GET	Moldova	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	45,000	4,275	
UNDP	GET	Moldova	Land Degradation	LD STAR Allocation	5,000	475	
<b>Total Project Costs(\$)</b>					<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>4,750.00</b>	<b>54,750.00</b>

## Core Indicators

**Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
30,178.00	20,803.00	0.00	0.00

**Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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**Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
30,178.00	20,803.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WDP ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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Name of the Protected Area	WPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Akula National Park Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve	125689	SelectPr otected area with sustainable use of natural resources	14,771.00	14,771.00			31.00		
Akula National Park Royal Forest Nature Reserve/ Ramsar site	125689	SelectH abitat/Species Management Area	15,407.00	6,032.00			57.00		

**Indicator 3 Area of land restored**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
6050.00	14225.00	0.00	0.00

**Indicator 3.1 Area of degraded agricultural land restored**

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

**Indicator 3.2 Area of Forest and Forest Land restored**



Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 3.3 Area of natural grass and shrublands restored

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 3.4 Area of wetlands (incl. estuaries, mangroves) restored

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
6,050.00	14,225.00		

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)	527869	556806	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)	527,869	556,806		
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)	0	0		
Anticipated start year of accounting	2021	2026		
Duration of accounting	20	20		

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e (indirect)				

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
<b>Anticipated start year of accounting</b>				
<b>Duration of accounting</b>				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
<b>Target Energy Saved (MJ)</b>				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
<b>Female</b>	21,000	21,000		
<b>Male</b>	19,000	19,000		
<b>Total</b>	40000	40000	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

## Part II. Project Justification

### 1a. Project Description

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description):

There have been no substantial changes in terms of the global environmental problems identified since the PIF was designed and approved. The existing problems and root causes have been analysed in more detail, and presented in the GEF/UNDP Project Document. The project's Theory of Change (ToC) summarizing the remaining barriers and proposed pathways to change, is presented in the GEF/UNDP Project Document.

2) The baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects:

The baseline analysis was detailed during the PPG stage, and the on-going interventions in the field of relevance. additional to the initiatives highlighted in the PIF are listed below:

**National Environmental Strategy for 2014-2023** aims at establishing basic principles and priorities of the environmental governance, ground the necessary reform in the field of environment and further align the national legislation with the EU Directives. The Strategy has 8 specific objectives and it is covered by several budgetary sub-programmes e.g. (i) Policies and Environmental management; (ii) Ecological security ; (iii) Environment quality monitoring; (iv) Weather forecast; (v) Ecological security at local level. The Strategy defines the use of economic tools in the field of environment, under Objective 4 improving measures for reducing environmental pollution. The annual allocation to the budgetary subprogrammes is 910 million MDL (approx. 51 million USD) out of which in 2019 there have been 120 million MDL disbursed (approx. 11.8 million USD).

**National Waste Management Strategy 2013-2027** aims at developing the necessary waste management infrastructure and services to protect environment and public health. It also aims at supporting the institutional framework required to for the gradual alignment to EU Directives. The annual budget is 80 million MDL (approx. 4.5 million USD). The 2019 disbursements under the budget sub-programme 'Integrated waste management' are 7.3 MDL (approx. 412,000 USD).

**National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2020** takes into consideration economic resource management and social challenges in agriculture and rural development. It aims at the agriculture sector development for 2014-2020, consistent with the European Union policies and instruments. The Strategy prioritizes the coherence between agriculture, environment and rural development, which represent economic, environmental and social problems. The priority budgetary programmes and subprogrammes are: Agriculture Development and National Forestry Sector

Development, and the annual budget allocated is 2 million MDL (approx. 112,900 USD) . The expenditures recorded in 2019 are 1.9 billion MDL (approx. 107 million USD).[1]<sup>1</sup>

**National Plan for Expanding Forested Areas 2019-2023** with a total budget of 545.8 million MDL (approx. 30.9 million USD) implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (currently Ministry of Environment) , Moldsilva Agency, ICAS- Forest Research and Management Institute. It aims at the afforestation of 11 thousand ha of degraded land, 1.7 thousand riparian protection areas, and planting 0.3 thousand ha of forest shelter belts for the protection of agricultural land

**EU4Moldova Focal Regions/EU4Cahul 2019-2025**, funded by the EU (25.8 million USD), implemented by UNDP, is aiming at supporting the development of smart, inclusive and sustainable regional growth poles in Cahul and Ungheni districts of Moldova, to bring a better quality of life and new opportunities to citizens. The EU Focal Regions supports both Cahul and Ungheni districts to improve the necessary public services and infrastructure, involving private sector and stimulating investments, improving employment and equal opportunities for men and women. The EU4Cahul Project is the main co-financier of the GEF project under Outcome 3.1, supporting new sustainable income streams and biodiversity friendly local business in 9 municipalities located within the perimeter of Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve in Cahul district. The GEF will invest in technical assistance and preparation of eligible proposals to be financed by the EU4Cahul project, encouraging sustainable, nature-based local businesses and the EU4Cahul will support these businesses through targeted financial assistance and facilitation of joint development platforms (e.g. ?Focal Region Business Association of Tomato Producers, Processors and Exporters?, ? Focal Region Tourism and Recreation Association?).

**Enhancing Climate Resilience in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve 2020-2023** with a total budget of 1 million EUR from the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the project is implemented by Eco Contact (NGO), aiming at supporting sustainable management and resilience of the wetland ecosystems in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve considering climate change impacts and increasing local livelihoods and their adaptation capacities. The ADA project is co-financing some of the proposed activities under the GEF project, especially under the following outputs: Output 3.1.1. (referring to the proposed joint activities with the Local Action Group ?Lower Prut?), Output 2.1.1 (joint capacity building activities on climate change and biodiversity conservation topics) and Output 4.1.1. (joint awareness raising activities). Furthermore, the GEF project will build on the results of Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment developed by Eco Contact/ ADA project in designing its strategy. Given the fact that both projects are targeting Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve communities, both projects will capitalize on the opportunities for synergic such as: joint capacity building and awareness activities on the importance of the wetland ecosystems services for adaptation to climate change.

**Restoring Danube Delta Wetlands and Steppe (2019-2023)** with a total budget of 4 million USD is financed by Rewilding Europe in in three countries: Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, with the aim of

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restoring 40,000 ha of wetlands in Danube basin and Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. Activities in Moldova are implemented by Verde e Moldova (NGO) in the area of Lake Beleu, where the project is implementing topo-bathymetric studies that will serve as a basis for future desilting works. Both the Rewilding and the GEF projects are focusing on Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve in Moldova, and there are opportunities for knowledge sharing and joint capacity building and awareness raising activities that will be further explored during the project implementation.

**Competitive Agriculture in Moldova (MC-P), Phase II 2021-2023**, with a total budget of 1.5 million USD, is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment including its agencies: Moldsilva and ICAS and the World Bank, aiming at the rehabilitation of 2200 ha of forest belts for the protection of agricultural fields in the center and the north regions and generation of GHG emission reductions estimated at kt 43 CO<sub>2</sub>eq.

**NAP2 Advancing Moldova's National Climate Change Adaptation Planning 2020-2024**, GCF grant of 2.1 million USD implemented by UNDP and FAO is aiming at reducing climate change related risks by strengthening institutional and technical capacities that support integrated climate change adaptation planning and programming, expands and deepens the national approach in climate change adaptation planning at different levels, strengthening synergies both vertically, at different levels of governance, and horizontally between the sectors affected by climate change (UNDP), with particular focus on agriculture sector (FAO) to improve integration of agriculture development and responsiveness to a changing climate while improving food security. The GEF project will coordinate its work with the FAO activities, in view of sharing knowledge and experience.

**?Strengthening the institutional framework in the water and sanitation sector in Moldova? Project 2018-2021**, with a budget of 3.3 million MDL (approx. 190,000 USD) is funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and implemented by Moldovan Waters Agency, Moldsilva Agency and ICAS. The project is aiming at Inventory and delimitation of the riparian strips by categories of use for the rivers Ciuhur, N?rnova, Cahul, C?inar, Ciuluc and Botna; Elaboration of execution projects for 60.2 ha forest protection shores for the rivers Ciuhur, N?rnova, Cahul, C?inar, Ciuluc and Botna; Planting of 60.2 ha of forest crops for the protection of the banks for the six rivers included in the project. The GEF project will build on the knowledge and experience in management and afforestation of riparian strips, working together with ICAS and Moldosilav agencies, for the wetland restoration activities under Component 3.

**?EU4Environment? 2019-2022** is a regional project funded by the European Union (EU contribution 19.5 million EUR) aiming at supporting environmental governance in the targeted countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). It supports environment-related activities, unlocking green growth potential and setting better mechanisms to manage environmental risks and impacts. The GEF project will work with the EU 4 Environment project in Moldova on the necessary amendments to the National Environmental Fund Regulation. The EU4Environment is currently working on a new Operational Manual of the NEF targeting administrative aspects. The GEF will be incremental to the current efforts, in that it will specifically address the efficient use of funds under the NEF and will prioritize wetlands restoration and PA management among select funding areas

**?Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment? 2020-2023**, funded by the Sweden Development Agency, with a total budget: 2.28 million USD, implemented by UNDP, aims at building inclusive and resilient communities and create an enabling environment for women's economic and social empowerment through (i) sustainable climate resilient and environmentally sound livelihoods, local capacities and knowledge on environment, climate change and gender (ii) capacitated NGOs to support local authorities and women associations and local women in the field of resilience to climate change (iii) supporting women and women headed households to implement climate resilience projects and practices (iv) supporting climate resilience local business models. The GEF project will build on gender sensitive assessments, and will use the training manuals developed and knowledge and experience generated by this project in promoting women empowerment measures at local level.

?Promotion of climate change and disaster risk reduction in the water and civil protection sectors for enhanced rural resilience? Project 2018-2021, with a total budget of 1 million EUR funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), and implemented by the UNDP, is aiming at supporting the implementation of climate smart water management solutions for agriculture, flood management and fire prevention and expansion of community based rescue/firefighting teams in rural communities in Moldova with the purpose of reducing exposure and vulnerability of the rural communities to climate change and disasters. The GEF project will build on the knowledge generated by the technical manuals developed and training seminars and drills implemented under this project, the knowledge generated in preventing and fighting fire and flood hazards.

**?Nistru River Hydro Power Complex Social and Environmental Impact Study? 2018-2021** with a budget of 653,000 USD implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment is supporting the negotiations of the Agreement on the Nistru Hydropower Complex between Moldova and Ukraine. This intervention aims at providing technical and legal expertise to the negotiation process and the necessary assessments regarding the potential environmental impact of the hydro power complex. The GEF project will use the knowledge and experience generated and will learn from the conclusions and findings of various assessments especially the environmental impact assessments on Nistru River.

**?DanubeParks- Transdanube Travel Stories? 2020-2022** it is a regional project implemented by DanubeParks and funded by the Interred Danube Transnational programme with a total budget of approx. 1.82 million EUR. The project is aiming at providing improved management strategies, tools and platforms for supporting transnational tourism in Danube region by implementing innovative concepts, new narratives and sustainable mobility management tools. The final objective is to support Danube basin countries to use their touristic potential of cultural and natural heritage fully and sustainably. The GEF project will cooperate with DanubeParks project for the development of a cross-border integrated tourism package Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (Moldova) and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Romania). The two projects will further explore the implementation of joint stakeholders meetings and events that will promote innovative, cross-border safe and sustainable tourism.

3) The proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;

The project document follows the PIF main components, outcomes and outputs, which have remained almost the same and the slight adjustments are explained in the table below:

1. PIF Output	Project Document Output	Explanation for changes
<p><b>Output 1.1.1</b> Regulations and by-laws developed, consulted and adopted by relevant institutions that promote identification, monitoring and wise use of wetlands under international treaties</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1.1</b> Regulations and by-laws developed, consulted and adopted by relevant institutions that promote identification, monitoring and wise use of wetlands under international treaties.</p>	<p><b>No change</b></p>
<p><b>Output 1.1.2</b> National Ecological Fund capacitated to identify, collect, manage and disburse pollution charges for wetland conservation (link to baseline and further details are in the main text).</p>	<p><b>Output 1.1.2</b> National Ecological Fund (NEF) capacitated to prioritize financing of wetland conservation and sustainable use</p>	<p>NEF is an economic instrument based on annual allocations from the state budgets.</p> <p>The PPG consultations have indicated that the NEF does not collect taxes <i>per se</i>, instead these are collected directly by the state treasury and as such, the NEF has no control over the total collected fees and funding priorities (unless the legislation is amended). The Ministry of Finance authorizes the distribution of allowances, based on the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment indicated priorities, approved by the Board of Directors. The funds allocations are approved according to the national legislation regulating the development of the national budget ( Law 181/2014) based on which no increase of the funding (e.g. for PAs) beyond legal provisions is permitted.</p> <p>The change of the Output wording reflects the fact that the project will support the development of legislative and regulatory amendments (including NEF internal Regulation) to prioritize the financing of wetlands, including through the NEF (detailed under Act. 1.1.2.1 in the Project Document).</p>

<b>Output 1.1.3</b> Biodiversity-compatible local development strategies in two target districts designed and under implementation	<b>Output 1.1.3</b> Biodiversity compatible local development strategies in target districts designated and under implementation	<b>No change.</b>
<b>2. PIF Output</b>	<b>Project Document Output</b>	<b>Explanation for changes</b>
<b>Output 2.1.1</b> Revised PA category upgraded international designation, improved zoning, mapping, management and business plans for Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (including assistance for its integration into the trilateral Biosphere Reserve with Ukraine and Romania) and Royal Forest Nature Reserve.	<b>Output 2.1.1</b> Revised PA category upgraded international designation, improved zoning, mapping, management and business plans for Lower Prut Biosphere reserve (including assistance for its integration into the Trilateral Biosphere reserve with Ukraine and Romania) and Royal Forest Nature Reserve	<b>No change</b>
<b>Output 2.1.2</b> Management units and communities at targeted PAs capacitated to comply with/enforce management/buffer zone regimes, ensure proper monitoring of biodiversity and key wetland ecosystems, undertake species-focused conservation activities and PA patrolling.	<b>Output 2.1.2</b> Management units and communities at targeted PAs capacitated to comply with/enforce management/buffer zone regimes, ensure proper monitoring of biodiversity and key wetland ecosystems, undertake species-focused conservation activities and PA patrolling.	<b>No change</b>



<p><b>Output 2.2.1</b> Riparian forest strips restored (through assisted regeneration or reforestation as feasible) acting as a barrier to agricultural and waste runoff in Lower Prut, at Manta-Beleu Lakes network. High value forested floodplain ecosystems in Padurea Domneasca (Royal Forest) restored through optimization of flooding regime in Camenca River Basin and regulation of the ground water table.</p>	<p><b>Output 2.2.1</b> Riparian forest strips restored acting as a barrier to agricultural and waste runoff in Lower Prut, at Manta-Beleu Lakes network. High value forested floodplain ecosystems in Padurea Domneasca (Royal Forest) area restored through optimization of flooding regime in Camenca River Basin and regulation of the ground water table</p>	<p>The wording "(through assisted regeneration or reforestation as feasible)" has been removed. The PPG field missions and studies of the feasibility of interventions have indicated the most suitable afforestation and reforestation methodologies, detailed in the Project Document Act. 2.2.1.1 and Annex 19 (Reforestation works: feasibility of proposed interventions).</p>
<p><b>3. PIF Output</b></p>	<p><b>Project Document Output</b></p>	<p><b>Explanation for changes</b></p>
<p><b>Output 3.1.1</b> Strengthened capacities of Local Action Group "Lower Prut" and local entrepreneurs" to implement local development initiatives such as: waste management, organic agriculture and biomass pelleting, biodiversity monitoring.</p>	<p><b>Output 3.1.1</b> Strengthened capacities of the "Local Action Group Lower Prut" and local entrepreneurs to implement local biodiversity friendly development initiatives.</p>	<p>The Output title has been slightly changed, the wording "such as: waste management, organic agriculture and biomass pelleting, biodiversity monitoring" has been removed.</p> <p>During the PPG phase, the expert team conducted a screening of the local economic opportunities. As a result, the main activities that could potentially be assisted through the project have been identified. The PPG observations have indicated that most rural local businesses in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (Cahul region) are in the agri-food production and rural eco-tourism. Some of these local entrepreneurs will be assisted to mobilize funds for "greening" their businesses, under different calls for proposals to be launched under the EU4Cahul Project (implemented by UNDP and funded by the EU) and increase their technical knowledge and awareness through dedicated trainings under Act 3.1.1.1. and 3.1.1.2).</p>

<b>Output 3.1.2</b> Eco-tourism packages for wine/gastronomy routes adjusted to incorporate biodiversity observation in 2 communities.	<b>Output 3.1.2</b> Eco-tourism packages for wine/gastronomy routes adjusted to incorporate biodiversity observation in 2 communities.	<b>No change.</b>
<b>4. PIF Output</b>	<b>Project Document Output</b>	<b>Explanation for changes</b>
<b>Output 4.1.1</b> Online awareness raising campaign targeting central and local authorities/decision makers and local and regional education seminars	<b>Output 4.1.1</b> Online awareness raising campaign targeting central and local authorities and decision makers. Local and regional education seminars.	<b>No change.</b>
<b>Output 4.1.2</b> Monitored and evaluated project results and innovative gender sensitive knowledge products and services from the project synthesized, packaged and disseminated	<b>Output 4.1.2</b> Innovative gender sensitive knowledge products and services from the project synthesized, packaged and disseminated.	The M&E activities are grouped under Component 5.
<b>5. PIF Outcome and Output</b>	<b>Project Document Outcome and Output</b>	<b>Explanation for changes</b>
N/A	<b>Outcome 5.1</b> Project result properly monitored and evaluated  <b>Output 5.1.1</b> Set of monitoring and evaluation activities implemented	The "Monitoring and Evaluation" was organized into a new and separate component to ensure correspondence with the GEF Budget template

4) Alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies;

There have been no changes since the PIF was designed and approved in terms of strategic alignment with the GEF Focal area. The project's quantitative contributions to the GEF's Core Indicators are summarized in Section I.F. above, and further detailed in the Core Indicators Worksheet in **Annex F** of this CEO Endorsement request.

The project is programmed for the BD focal area within its Objective 2 "Address direct drivers to protect habitats and species" and elements addressing Objective 1 "Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes". The main entry point to address direct drivers of biodiversity loss will be "Improving Financial Sustainability, Effective Management, and Ecosystem Coverage of the Global Protected Area Estate" where the project will contribute to the achievement of global and regional targets for the targeted GEF 7 core indicators for the BD focal area. The project will also work to strengthen the capacity of existing PA covering the most significant Prut River Basin wetlands in the country.

With respect to LD focal area, project has limited but focused interventions consisting in the restoration of 50 ha of forested riparian strips in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, in strategic locations (identified at PPG stage) that will reduce pollution and sediments as a result of agriculture encroachment and will support wetlands ecosystems resilience. The project's reforestation is aligned with LD 1-4 "Reduce pressures on natural resources from competing land uses and increase resilience in the wider landscape".

5) Incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

The initial total cost of the project estimated at PIF stage was **USD 21,635,242**. At the PPG stage, the total cost of the project is : **21,584,970 USD**.

The difference in co-financing amount results from the following changes:

- The anticipated contribution from the company "Valiexchim" in the form of investments into increased environmental standards has not materialized. The Valiexchim company was the oil drilling contract holder in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, however, the company had filed for bankruptcy and its contract ended. The Ministry of Environment is currently looking into ways of addressing the oil drilling issue in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. A Ministerial Committee has been set up and will work on improving the domestic legislation related to oil/mineral resources concessions.

- An additional 449,728 USD coming from the anticipated cofinancing from the Austrian Development Agency (and its partner EcoContact) which has materialized in the form of support to the project through an 804,420 EUR (949,728 USD) worth parallel project implemented in the target PAs<sup>[2]</sup>.

It should be noted that at the time of the CEO Endorsement, the oil concession in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve core area is still riddled with uncertainties and at the moment the oil exploitation has been put on hold. The UNDP CO and the Project experts will work with the Ministry of Environment and the new Ministerial Committee, in order to offer technical assistance regarding the PAs legislation, international MAB/UNESCO requirements and applicable environmental standards.

6) Global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF);

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The GEF/UNDP Project Document reflects slight changes to the incremental/additional cost reasoning, based on the PPG conducted feasibility analysis of the envisaged restoration works under Component 2.

a) Change (Output 2.1.1): 15,407 ha replaced with 15,468 ha

Under Output 2.1.1 the PIF had envisaged that approximately 15,407 ha of wetland habitats situated in the mid-river Prut section, including the current PA Royal Forest Nature Reserve (6,032 ha) will enjoy an improved wetland management and international Ramsar designation of approximately. The PPG conducted observations have indicated that the correct area that would be designated as Ramsar area would cover 15,468 ha (which includes the current PA Royal Forest Nature reserve territory of 6,032 ha).

b) Change (Output 2.2.1): 3,000 ha replaced with 11,175 ha.

Under the Output 2.2.1, the PIF estimation had envisaged that 3,000 ha of floodplain in the Camenca basin would be restored, however based on a PPG conducted pre-feasibility study it became clear that the restored area would be much larger and it would cover approximately 11,175 ha of wetlands, by facilitating the inflow of an additional annual 8.3 million cubic meter of water in the old Camenca river floodplain.

However the restored floodplain area of 11,175 ha would more or less overlap with the proposed Ramsar area located outside the current PA Royal Forest Nature Reserve. For this reason, the GEF Core Indicator Sheet has been slightly changed, to avoid double counting (as explained under the Table E). The additional wetland habitat included in the proposed Ramsar area, located outside PA Royal Forest Nature Reserve ( 9,436 ha )- initially (at PIF stage) counted under Indicator 1.2 ( Terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness) are now moved under Indicator 3.4 ( Area of wetlands restored).

Therefore the envisaged global environmental benefits will be expressed as:

(i) 20,803 ha of terrestrial protected areas under improved management effectiveness, consisting of the 14,771 ha of PA Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and the existing 6,032 ha of PA Royal Forest Nature Reserve-without the additional area to be included under Ramsar (Indicator 1.2);

(ii) 14,025 ha of restored lakes and wetland area, calculated as a sum of the 50 ha restored forested riparian strips; 3,000 ha lake ecosystems in the area of Manta-Beleu lakes in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (Indicator 3.4)

(iii) and the 11,175 ha of floodplain restored as a result of Camenca river restoration work. In addition, the value of the envisaged total carbon sequestered (Indicator 6.1) has slightly increased -as calculated using FAO-EXACT tool, considering the reforestation/ afforestation activities of 50 ha of riparian forests and the improved condition of 11,175 grasslands in Camenca floodplains, as a result of hydrological repair of wetlands.

7) Innovativeness, sustainability and potential for scaling up. ?

There have been no changes to these aspects of the project since the PIF was designed and approved, though each of these aspects has been given further consideration, and more comprehensive detail and analysis has been provided. An updated description of the project's innovativeness, sustainability, and potential for scaling-up is included in Section III of the Prodoc under *Innovation, Sustainability and Upscaling*.

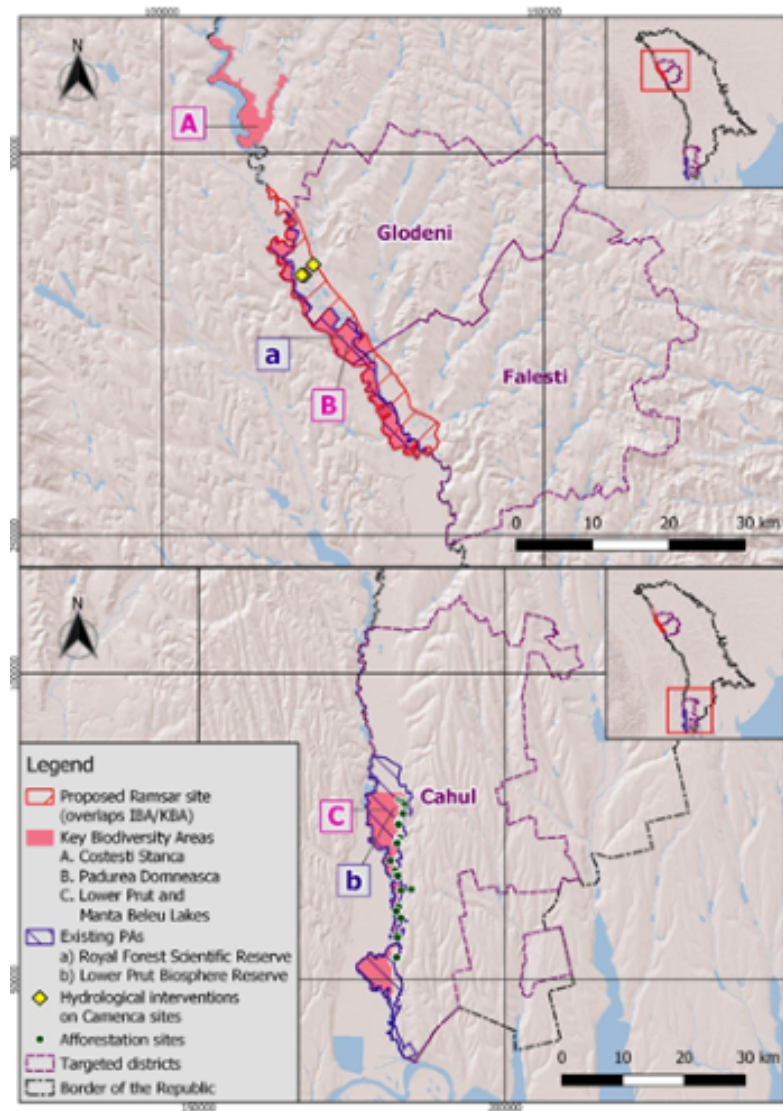
[1] [https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Eng\\_-\\_Studiu\\_Instrumentele\\_fiscal-bugetare\\_aplicate\\_yn\\_domeniul\\_mediului\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.expert-grup.org/media/k2/attachments/Eng_-_Studiu_Instrumentele_fiscal-bugetare_aplicate_yn_domeniul_mediului_compressed.pdf)

[2] <https://treasury.un.org/operationalrates/OperationalRates.php>

## 1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

Please see GEF-UNDP Project Document Annex 3 Project map and geospatial coordinates of project sites and Annex E of this CEO Endorsement request document.



## 1c. Child Project?

**If this is a child project under a program, describe how the components contribute to the overall program impact.**

N/A

## 2. Stakeholders

**Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:**

**Civil Society Organizations** Yes

**Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities** Yes

**Private Sector Entities** Yes

**If none of the above, please explain why:**

**Please provide the Stakeholder Engagement Plan or equivalent assessment.**

Please see Annex 9 Stakeholders Engagement Plan of the GEF-UNDP Project Document.

## **Stakeholder Engagement Plan during the Project Implementation**

Objectives of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan:

- ? Identify/validate the roles and responsibility of all stakeholders and ensure their participation in the complete project cycle
- ? Take onboard the knowledge, experience, and skills of stakeholders to enhance the design and implementation of the project
- ? Ensure that stakeholders are engaged in the monitoring and reporting of the project.
- ? Establish a mechanism through which local communities, minorities and other vulnerable groups can raise issues they may face in the implementation of the project.

The project's design incorporates several features to ensure ongoing and effective stakeholder participation in the project's implementation. UNDP is committed to ensuring meaningful, effective, and informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of UNDP Programmes and Projects. Principally UNDP requires that its projects are designed with meaningful and effective participation of all stakeholders. This foundation for sustainable development assures that local peoples and other stakeholders play a key role in advancing achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs). UNDP's commitment to stakeholder engagement arises from internal policies, procedures, and strategy documents as well as key international human rights instruments, principles and numerous decisions of international bodies, particularly as they relate to the protection of citizens' rights related to freedom of expression and participation. While there is no singular

prevailing policy on stakeholder engagement within the national context, stakeholder consultations are commonly associated with project development processes.

The goal of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to involve all stakeholders of the project, including women, youth, and NGOs, participating public and private sector entities, as early as possible in the implementation process and throughout project duration, and to facilitate a feedback mechanism which ensures that stakeholders views and concerns informs project direction and adaptive management

Beyond informing stakeholders, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan provides the basis for the establishment of effective communication channels and the building of working relationships necessary for successful project implementation. It seeks to define a technically and culturally appropriate approach to consultation and disclosure. The plan ensures that all key stakeholders are fully familiar with the components of this project and that they remain committed to and supportive of the related activities in the project. To secure their participation in related disclosure activities and knowledge dissemination, the relevant stakeholders will be contacted and engaged with using different strategies and methods that best suit their contributions and interests in the engagement program. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be implemented in conjunction with the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan that provide more detailed guidance on helping to ensuring gender equity in the project and responding to the stakeholders' tailored communication needs.

The mechanisms to facilitate involvement and active participation of different stakeholder in project implementation will comprise a number of different elements:

(i) Project inception workshop to enable stakeholder awareness of the start of project implementation

The project will be launched by a multi-stakeholder workshop. This workshop represents another opportunity to provide stakeholders with the most updated information on the project and the project work plan. It will also establish a basis for further consultation as the project's implementation commences. The inception workshop will address a number of key issues including: assist all partners to fully understand and take ownership of the project; detail the roles, support services and complementary responsibilities of the Implementing Partner -Ministry of Environment, and the?? Implementation Unit for Environmental projects EPIU? and other key stakeholders. The project will discuss the roles, functions, and responsibilities within the project structure, including reporting and communication lines, and conflict resolution mechanisms. The Workshop will also be a forum to: review the project budget; finalize the first annual work plan as well as review and agree on the indicators, targets and their means of verification, and recheck assumptions and risks; provide a detailed overview of reporting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements; and plan and schedule project meetings for the Project Board. A COVID-19 project strategy will be developed by the Project manager and discussed with the main stakeholders in order to inform about the clear procedures in place in case of COVID-19 reinstatement of restrictions and methods of putting in place adequate safeguards.

(ii) Constitution of the Project Board to ensure representation of stakeholder interests in project

A Project Board (PB) will be constituted to ensure broad representation of all key interests throughout the project's implementation. The representation, and broad terms of reference, of the PB are further described in the Section Management Arrangements of the Project Document.

(iii) A collaborative approach to engage local communities

A participatory strategy will be developed and implemented to ensure effective participation at local level, including rural entrepreneurs and farmers' associations, and other representatives of the local community involved in the development and implementation of project activities. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the objectives of the project, the proposed activities and the possibilities for their participation in various activities. Various communication techniques and methods will be proposed that are most appropriate for local conditions. The engagement strategy will also contain a mechanism for the provision of technical assistance to selected local businesses through various methods, including through the relevant government agencies and the district/municipality/village administration and through local action groups such as the Local Action Group Lower Prut and basin committees such as Camenca Basin Committee and the Women Association for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development. To identify local measures and activities in pilot project districts, a more refined trajectory of stakeholder participation in project activities will be agreed upon at the Inception phase. The project team will advocate for women participation and representations in all the consultative bodies and committees and participation in and benefiting from the project activities.

(v) Establishment of a Project Management team to oversee stakeholder engagement processes during project

The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be set up by the MOE/EPIU comprising a Project Manager (PM), project Administrative and Financial Assistant (AFA) supported by technical consultants/project specialists that will take direct technical and administrative responsibility for facilitating stakeholder involvement and ensuring increased local ownership of the project and its results. The PM, Project Specialists and Administrative and Financial Assistant will be located in Chisinau to ensure coordination among key stakeholder organizations at the national level during the project period, while taking several missions to the targeted PAs and project sites. A gender consultant will be hired to oversee the Gender Action Plan and support gender mainstreaming and ensuring that the project advocates for women and youth participation and promotes equal men and women opportunities to benefit from the project's activities; an M&E consultant will be hired to support the Project manager implement the M&E plan and monitoring of the project's indicators.

(vi) Project communication to facilitate awareness and participation

The project will refine, implement and maintain a communications plan, presented as part of a broader Knowledge management, to ensure that all stakeholders are informed on an ongoing basis about the



project's objectives; the project's activities; overall project progress; and the opportunities for involvement in various aspects of the project's implementation. This strategy will ensure the use of communication techniques and approaches are appropriate to the local contexts such as appropriate languages and other skills that enhance communication effectiveness. The project will develop and maintain a web-based platform for sharing and disseminating information on sustainable wetlands management, and biodiversity-friendly agriculture practices around PAs/KBAs.

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(vii) Stakeholder consultation and participation in project implementation

The key partners will actively participate into project activities. In addition, a comprehensive stakeholder consultation and participation process will be developed and implemented for each of the following outputs/activities:

? **Output 1.1/Act. 1.1.1; 1.1.2; 1.1.3:** The UNDP/GEF project will deploy multi-stakeholders participatory approaches, by facilitating workshops and roundtable meetings to discuss existing legal inadequacies and the necessary amendments and guidelines addressing all needs identified. The process of development and adoption of the legal amendments will include close cooperation primarily with the institutions responsible for the PAs and watershed management: i.e. the Ministry of Environment; Moldovan Waters Agency; Moldsilva Agency; Moldovan Parliament (relevant committees); the Environment Agency, the Environmental Reference Laboratory, Local Government Authorities, Local ecological inspectorates. The project will further partner with a Coalition of Environmental NGOs for advocacy activities e.g. Eco Contact, National Council of Environmental NGOs and Association of Environment and Eco-tourism Journalists in Moldova to raise awareness on, and advocate for, an adequate legal, policy and financing framework for sustainable wetlands management (Output 4.1.1). In addition, the project will facilitate cross-border dialogue with Romanian counterparts on the scientific data underpinning the adjusted minimum ecological flow and the negotiations on the amendments to the Regulation of the Stanca Costesti Dam and the meetings will be chaired by the Moldovan government representatives (under Activity 1.1.1.3). Formal and informal partnerships will be developed and established with gender balance and gender mainstreaming approaches in mind. The project team will ensure that gender-mainstreaming aspects are addressed and integrated throughout all aspects of the project's stakeholder engagement activities. The project will make sure to integrate a gender perspective into all legal and policy amendments and stakeholders consultations, advocating for women rights and striving to offer equal participation opportunities in deliberation processes.

? **Output 1.1.2/Act. 1.1.2.1:** The project will work with the Ministry of Environment in order to elevate wetlands funding higher on the Ministry agenda, and therefore mainstream this issue among funding priorities put forward on annual basis for the Ministry of Finance approval. The project will further support stakeholders' consultations and approval of these amendments (in coordination with Activity 1.1.1.2 and the Awareness raising activities under Component 4).

? **Output 1.1.3/Act 1.1.3.1** The project will support mapping of key wetlands habitats in the targeted protected areas (under Output 2.1.) and will work with the district authorities to integrate the main biodiversity consideration and provisions for natural resource management and biodiversity monitoring in a) midterm revision of the current strategies and b) into their new local development strategies. In addition, the project's experts will work with the local districts' authorities in Cahul (hosting the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve) and Glodeni and Falesti districts (hosting the Royal Forest Reserve) and organize 6 training and coaching sessions (two meetings for each district in the second year of the project implementation) to strengthen support the biodiversity mainstreaming into local development planning and the revisions of the local development strategies at midterm. The beneficiaries of these meetings and coaching sessions will be staff from the targeted district councils, and the local councils and municipalities of targeted localities, local branches of the Ministry of Environment, Agency for Land Relations and Cadaster, Moldsilva Agency, PAs administrations, and State Ecological Inspectorate.

? **Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.2:** The project will work with the Botanical Garden Institute and Institute of Zoology experts in order to conduct flora and fauna inventories and development of Biodiversity Passports; and will further work closely with the Ministry of Environment and local and district level authorities and State Ecological Inspectorate, for the mainstreaming of Biodiversity Passports concept as well as clear measures for the conservation of red list/rare/endangered species outside PAs into local strategies and planning.

? **Output 2.1.1./Act 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.2 and Output 2.1.2/Act 2.1.2.1** The project will work with the local key stakeholders through the Process framework (described under ESMF Annex 10). The stakeholders involved are the following: (i) for the project's work in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve area: the local communities in the affected villages will be consulted (Braniste, Avraneni, Balatina, Cuhnesti, Bisericani, Moara Domneasca, Viisoara, Calinesti, Pruteni, Drujeni villages); the local authorities; the Camenca Basin Committee; local NGOs familiar with this region such as the Association of Women for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development; Moldsilva Agency; Moldovan Waters Agency; and the Ministry of Environment; local policy and local environmental inspectors; Royal Forest Administration; (ii) for the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve area Act. 2.1.1.3 the project will engage with the following stakeholders for updating the draft Management Plan of the PA: Moldsilva Agency/ PA Administration, department of Biodiversity of MOE, Institute of Ecology and Geography, Botanical Garden Institute, Institute of Zoology, local NGOs ( EcoContact; Verde e Moldova; WWF/DYNA project; Society for Protection of Birds and Nature and others), Society of Hunters and Fishermen and will organize consultations with the local authorities of the 9 villages located within the border of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, with the support of the Local Action Group *Lower Prut*. The local authorities of Crihana Veche, Cahul, Colibasi, Vadul lui Isac, Valeni, Branza, Manta, Caslita-Prut, Colibasi, Giurgiulesti will participate into consultations and formal approval of the Management Plan Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and the consultations on the trilateral biosphere reserve (Act. 2.1.1.4).

? **Output 2.1.1/Activity 2.1.1.4 and Output 3.1.2/Act 3.1.2.2:** the project will engage with Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration for the designation of the trilateral biosphere reserve

Danube Delta and Lower Prut Basin as well as for the development of a cross border tourists package. The project will be supported and will work with Danube Parks Organization.

? **Output 2.2.1/Act 2.2.1.1** Together with Moldsilva Agency and ICAS, as well as Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve Administration, the project will conduct reforestation activities in Crihana Veche, Manta-Pascani, Vadul lui Isac, Branca; Colibasi, Valeni and will work with the local authorities in these localities during the reforestation works and later for monitoring purposes.

? **Output 2.2.1/Act 2.2.1.2** is aiming at the implementation of the hydrotechnical works for the rehabilitation of the old Camenca river watercourse. The situation in this case is complicated by the fact that some residents/household have illegally diverted water for own consumption in Balatina village. The project supported restoration works will re-direct Camenca river flow into its own old riverbed. This means that the river will no longer feed the illegally constructed water reservoir. This situation alone will likely elicit a negative response from the respective local residents. Targeted dialogues with the owner of the illegal reservoir, and other local community representatives, local authorities, local police and the representatives of the MOE, Moldovan Waters Agency and the Moldsilva Agency including the Royal Forest Nature Reserve management/staff will be organized starting with the inception phase, in order to discuss this situation, inform about the project's activities and hopefully get to an amicable resolution. The stakeholders involved are the following: the local communities in the affected villages (in particular Balatina, Cuhnesti, Tomestii Noi, Movileni villages); the local authorities; the Camenca Basin Committee; local NGOs familiar with this region such as the Association of Women for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development; Moldsilva Agency; Moldovan Waters Agency; and the Ministry of Environment; local policy and local environmental inspectors; Royal Forest Administration. The stakeholders engagement through the Process framework will be conducted in **2 stages**:

o During the inception phase, the project will start the Process Framework's first round of consultations at local level, in the affected villages, involving the Ministry of Regional Development, Agriculture and Environment; the Moldovan Waters Agency and Moldsilva Agency with the PA Royal Forest Nature Reserve staff as well as the local environmental inspectors and local authorities namely the mayors of the villages located in the proximity of the envisaged hydrological works- especially Balatina village. The village has about 3815 people, and the discussions will aim in principle to inform about the intended works, assess local acceptance, raise awareness on the benefits of the rehabilitation of the old watercourse and agree on the next steps, identify the households located near the proposed hydrological intervention site and assess potential impact on these households, and identify the appropriate measures to address illegal earth dam constructions on the old water course of Camenca river. Addressing the existing illegal constructions is of utmost importance.

o The second round of consultations under the Process Framework will be held after the Feasibility Study will be finalized (*please see Project Document Activity 2.2.1.2 with regard to mandatory sequencing of the project's work i.e. all the legal matters must be addressed and local authority endorsements must be secured before commissioning the Feasibility Study*). The project will work with the existing Camenca Sub-basin Committee and hold local consultations aiming at fully engaging the local communities located in the floodplain area. There are 14 villages located in the area but only a handful of them are located more or less in the proximity of the project intervention site (Balatina, Cuhnesti and Tomestii Noi and Movileni in particular). The project will facilitate the approval of the

feasibility study by the local authorities. If any economic displacement will be validated, the project will develop a Livelihood Action Plan and will deploy compensatory mechanisms as needed.

? **Output 3.1.1/ Act. 3.1.1.1.** The project will work with the Local Action Group Lower Prut and will select 5 local entrepreneurs that will be supported to apply for EU4Cahul grants. The project will advocate for women participation and will offer equal participating opportunities to women and men to all the training events.

? **Output 3.1.1./Act. 3.1.1.2** The project will work with the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development ( ODIMM)[1] to develop and deliver green business modules to local entrepreneurs and SMEs.

? **Output 3.1.2/Act 3.1.2.1** The project will work with the Local Action Group Lower Prut and participating municipalities, with the Association for Tourism Development in Moldova and local communities, for the development of tourism package/itineraries and will facilitate partnerships with local tourism operators and with larger Danube Tour Operators, in order to link the local routes to pan-Danube cruises. The project will engage women participation through the *Local Action Group Lower Prut* and will offer equal chances to men and women to benefit from green business opportunities created with the project's support.

? **Output 3.1.2/Act 3.1.2.3:** UNDP CO will organize the Innovation Challenge or will seek a third party that will be contracted for the organization of the Innovation Challenge. The project may be supported by UNDP's Innovation Lab. The potential private sector operators that could be active and interested in matching/co-financing the Innovation product is Orange Moldova.

? **Output 4.1.1/Act. 4.1.1.1** will be supported by a specialized PR/media company and the project will engage with NGOs and environmental journalists e.g. the Association of Environmental and Ecological Tourism Journalists; the Women in Sustainable Development of Moldova (WISDOM); Regional Environmental Center (REC); Ecological Society BIOTICA; National Council of Environmental NGOs; Eco Contact; other international organizations.

A participatory approach will be adopted to facilitate the continued involvement of local stakeholders including the vulnerable and marginalized members of the community (including women and youth) in the implementation of the project activities within the targeted villages.

(viii) Formal structures to facilitate multi- stakeholders involvement in project activities

The project will also actively seek to establish and/or work with formalized structures to ensure the ongoing participation of local and institutional stakeholders in the project activities. More specifically it will support the establishment of multi-stakeholders working groups for the support to NBSAP development and the discussions/debates on the proposed legal and regulatory amendments. At local level, the project will advocate for the inclusion of women and vulnerable groups representatives in the

midterm review of the district (rayonal) local development strategies. Furthermore, the project the project will work with the Local Action Group Lower Prut in order to facilitate multi-stakeholders mechanisms for the discussions and agreement on the proposed protected areas management and international designation proposed for the targeted PA. The project will organize the Process framework for the project's work on PAs (as per UNDP SES requirements please see SESP Annex 6).

(ix) Awareness and Capacity building

Significant GEF resources are directed at building awareness and capacities of *inter alia*: local resource users and agricultural producers, rural tourism entrepreneurs, local branches of line ministries, local environmental inspectorates and police; Protected Areas staff; local authorities and their planning and environmental law enforcement staff. Wherever possible, the project will also seek to build the capacity of local communities (e.g. local community groups and vulnerable and marginalized segments) to enable them to actively participate in project activities. The project will, wherever possible, use the services and facilities of existing local training and skills development institutions, such as the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development (ODIMM). In addition, the project will partner with NGOs and environmental journalists e.g. the Association of Environmental and Ecological Tourism Journalists; the Women in Sustainable Development of Moldova (WISDOM); Regional Environmental Center (REC); Ecological Society BIOTICA; National Council of Environmental NGOs; Eco Contact; other international organizations to raise decision makers and the public awareness on the need to increase sustainable wetlands financing and management and promote green businesses that do not pollute/deplete water and biodiversity resources.

### **Dispute Resolution and Grievance Redress**

UNDP adopts the use of a Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects have access to appropriate grievance resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related complaints and disputes.<sup>[2]</sup> In compliance with the SRM, this project will also ensure that the processes and associated policies and procedures are implemented with high standards and that the communities in the targeted regions simultaneously benefit from the activities and have a voice in their implementation. It is necessary to note that this project is categorized as a medium risk project (see UNDP SES) and as such the SRM is meant to ameliorate the potential for any conflicts and ensure that there are opportunities to immediately resolve issues so that they do not escalate. An SRM is developed to reduce any loss of trust and a halt to the project activities.

Apart from directly addressing conflicts especially associated with moderate and high-risk projects, the SRM also has the added value that can:

- ? Improve environmental and social outcomes for local communities and other stakeholders affected by UNDP projects.
- ? Enhance UNDP's ability to manage risks related to its Social and Environmental Standards, in order to avoid or mitigate social and environmental impacts.

- ? Ensure that UNDP responds to the concerns of project stakeholders (particularly vulnerable groups that are central to UNDP's programmatic work) with regard to social and environmental risks and impact.
- ? Ensure feedback and operational learning from the SRM, by integrating SRM requests, responses and [3]<sup>3</sup> results into UNDP's results-based management, quality assurance processes; and
- ? Reflect and advance best practices among development institutions, whose stakeholders (including governments, civil society, indigenous peoples, and international partner agencies) increasingly expect social and environmental grievance resolution processes to be a regular, integrated part of project management.

Although the implementation of an SRM is not anticipated, the grievance mechanism (see below) is intended for use by all individuals, groups, communities, or agencies who may inadvertently be affected by the implementation of this Project. Priority beneficiaries and users of the grievance mechanism are: farm owners, non-government organizations, academia, and private individuals in the LADAB landscape who are considered to have had adverse experiences caused by or exacerbated by the project.

### **Conflict and Grievance Mechanism**

The process to settle conflicts and grievances will be presented in several of the consultations with stakeholders and as part of the ongoing commitment to information sharing processes that will be instituted in the project cycle. Stakeholders will be informed that the implementation of a project specific mechanism will not incur any costs and that the same mechanism remains in place for the duration of the project. Stakeholders will be informed of the following process as outlined below. During the project implementation, they will provide feedback and endorsement for the project specific conflict resolution mechanism. Should grievances and conflicts arise, they should be submitted to UNDP Uzbekistan. Registered grievances will be reviewed and managed by the Project Board. To do so, the project will at inception:

- ? Identify appropriate staff who will aid with responses to conflicts and grievance that may arise from stakeholder.
- ? Develop and install specific guidelines for use by staff and other personnel who will be assigned to enact various roles for the resolution of any conflict or grievance; and
- ? Provide formal training to staff and other personnel who have assigned roles to perform in the implementation of the conflict and grievance mechanism.

A grievance mechanism will be additionally incorporated within the on-granting process established within Component 3 (Output 3.2.3) with responsibility to monitor for early detection of grievances. Standard Operating Procedures for recording and addressing community and other stakeholder grievances at the grantee project level will be established.

### **Operationalizing the Project Approach to Conflict and Grievance in the NIM Context**

- ? *The Concern or Grievance* ? Where a grievance or concern is experienced or identified as resulting from the project interventions, it is expected that this matter will be immediately conveyed to a representative from the National Implementation (or NIM) Partner. The format in which a matter is

raised can be in writing, verbally or via text. At this level, the aim of this first step is to bring awareness to the issue before and to prevent any further escalation of the issue.

? *Immediate attention to the concern or grievance* ? The matter raised will be acknowledged and addressed by the project manager or a designate to prevent any adverse effects on individuals engaged in the project, a specific region or on the pace of project interventions.

? *Resolution of the concern or grievance* ? The project official who receives this information will inform the project manager and the project specific oversight mechanism will be enacted.[4]<sup>4</sup> It is expected, however, that such concerns and grievances can be appropriately and effectively settled through the use of discussion, correspondence, meetings and management decisions. This approach will likely not require formal logging or tracking.

? *The conclusion of the grievance or concern* ? At its conclusion, the decision to conclude the grievance will be documented to the complainant in written form.

### **Monitoring**

Overall, despite that the project has a medium-risk assessment based on its SES, stakeholders will remain engaged in monitoring during project implementation. Updated and revised measures will be presented at project board meetings and at the broader stakeholder group meetings. Outputs and indicators from the Project Results Framework will serve to assess stakeholder engagement and intervention effectiveness. These indicators will be disaggregated further by stakeholder type, gender, etc., as needed and appropriate.

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[1] <https://www.odimm.md/en/>

[2] See UNDP Draft Guidance Note, UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES) Stakeholder Engagement, p. 17. The Stakeholder Response Mechanism helps project-affected stakeholders, UNDP's partners (governments, NGOs, businesses) and others jointly address grievances or disputes related to the social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported projects.

[3] UNDP, Stakeholder Response Mechanism: Overview and Guidance, p.5

[4] During project implementation a specific approach outlining specific roles and responsibilities consistent with the policies and procedures of the NIM partner will be developed and presented to the stakeholders. They will also use this opportunity to provide additional information and feedback to strengthen the project specific response mechanism.

In addition, provide a summary on how stakeholders will be consulted in project execution, the means and timing of engagement, how information will be disseminated, and an explanation of any resource requirements throughout the project/program cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement

The project stakeholder analysis and engagement strategy has been updated and more fully elaborated during the PPG phase. The project stakeholder analysis is summarized in Section III of the Project Document. A more detailed ?Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan? is included as Annex 9 of the Project Document and includes information on how stakeholders will be consulted in project

execution, the means and timing of engagement, how the information will be disseminated, resource requirements throughout the project cycle to ensure proper and meaningful stakeholder engagement, and coordination with other relevant initiatives including GEF projects. The successful implementation of the project will largely depend on the effective communication and coordination with the multiple project stakeholders, and the implementation of mechanisms to ensure the participation of these stakeholders. The key national and regional stakeholders are reflected in the below table:

Stakeholders	Legislative mandate and functions relevant to the project	Role for the project
<p>Ministry Environment (MOE)</p>	<p>The Ministry is responsible for the development of legislation, action plans, norms and standards in environment, agriculture and regional development. The Directorate of policies in the area of biodiversity has the basic mission of developing and promoting the state policy in the sphere of reasonable use of natural resources, conservation of biodiversity, state protected natural areas, forest stock, hunting stock and biological security, within the limits of its competence and conditions provided by the environment legislation in force, by the Regulations of the Ministry and Regulations of the Directorate</p>	<p>The Ministry is the Project Implementing Partner. The Directorate of Biodiversity Policies hosts the GEF OFP office. MOE will review and approve the project-born draft policy and legislation relevant to wetlands, protected areas, pollution charges and amendments to the National Ecological Fund's Regulation. The Ministry will lead the NBSAP development, to which the project will contribute by providing specialized technical expertise. The Ministry will provide political and institutional supervision for the overall project activities on behalf of the Government of Moldova. The Ministry will be supported by its affiliated public institution ?Implementation Unit for Environmental Projects-EPIU?. The Ministry will provide leadership to the project management team hired/hosted by the EPIU and will support the liaison with government authorities from different sectors and will make sure that the project will coordinate with other relevant projects and initiatives. The Ministry will design/enforce policy measures in support of project endeavors and ensure parallel co-financing aimed at improving wetlands and PAs financing and sustainable management.</p>



National Ecological Fund	The National Ecological Fund operates under the Ministry, managed by an Administrative Council, chaired by the minister.	The project will partner with the NEF and will coordinate with the project Eu4Environment which is implementing NEF reform for the implementation of output 1.1/Act. 1.1.2.1. The project will be incremental to the existing initiatives in that it will support key legal amendments and bylaws to prioritize wetlands/PAs financing, otherwise not included in the on-going reform or under existing expert studies. To this end, the project will work with the NEF staff and the legal department of the Ministry Environment to support targeted legal amendments to the NEF regulatory framework.
Agency? Moldsilva?	Moldsilva Agency is a semi-autonomous state enterprise that operates under MOE, develops and organizes the application of measures on the conservation, ecologic reconstruction of the forests in the state protected natural areas managed by it; develops and presents proposals on the construction of state protected natural areas in the conditions established by the legislation, ensures the observance of the regime of management of the inventory of natural areas, conservation and protection of the objects of the vegetal and animal kingdoms from such areas. Through the territorial subordinated entities, it manages approximately 50 % of the total surface of the state protected natural areas.	Moldsilva will be a key partner for the implementation of the project activities and the PAs restoration work i.e. reforestation activities on degraded lands, as well as for their related duties in the protected areas management. Through its state forestry units, the agency will provide technical assistance, co-financing and support in implementing project components. Moldsilva will help build cooperation with local communities where it operates.
ICAS- Forest Research and Management Institute	ICAS mission is to substantiate on a scientific basis the management and development of the forestry sector by producing and disseminating scientific and technical information, providing specialized advice, recommending and implementing new and modernized technologies, developing innovative products that contribute to increase competitiveness of the forestry sector.	ICAS will be a key partner especially in implementing the reforestation work in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. The main responsibilities will revolve around re-validation of the demonstration areas that were selected at PPG stage; support to screening and targeted assessments of the reforestation areas (as per UNDP SES requirements), facilitation of engagement with local authorities; technical assistance in developing the technical projects based on which the reforestation works will be implemented and support to monitoring of the reforestation success.

<p>Agency ?Moldovan Waters?</p>	<p>The Moldovan Waters Agency is the administrative authority subordinated to MOE, which is responsible for the implementation of the state policy in the area of water resources management; it manages the lands of the water inventory, surface water bodies and hydrotechnical constructions in the public property of the state, on the basis of the Nistru and Danube-Prut and Black Sea hydrotechnical basins located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.</p>	<p>?Moldovan Waters? Agency will be the main counterpart under Component 1 (Output 1.1.1), and will facilitate coordination with the Romanian counterparts, regarding the hydro-ecological models and revisions to the existing Regulation of the Stanca-Costesti Dam, in order to increase the ecological flows to downstream wetlands, lakes and riparian ecosystems.</p>
<p>Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority DDBRA (Romania)</p>	<p>Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania) is a public institution subordinated to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Romania and manages the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The DDBRA has partnered with DanubeParks for the implementation of the project ?Trans-Danube.Trave.Stories? (2020-2022). Danube Parks is a network of Protected Areas of nine Danube Basin countries.</p>	<p>DDBRA is an important partner in the project for the implementation of Act. 2.1.1.4. support to designation of a Trilateral Biosphere Reserve Danube Delta Lower Prut and the project?s PA work under the Act. 2.1.1.3, in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and for the development of a cross border tourism package Romania-Moldova linking nature/cultural heritage based tourism itineraries in Danube Delta and Lower Prut Region with regional platforms promoted by other international organizations such as Danube Parks, under Act. 3.1.2.2, as well as other awareness raising activities that may be explored jointly with DDBRA and DanubeParks.</p>
<p>Inspectorate for Environmental Protection</p>	<p>The state control and supervision, prevention and fighting the infringements in the sphere of protection of flora, fauna and protected natural areas in order to ensure a high level of supervision and protection of the environment, public interests, ecological security of the state are performed by the Inspectorate for Environment Protection subordinated to MOE.</p>	<p>The Inspectorate for Environmental Protection will be a key project partner in implementing the provisions of the PAs management plans, the provisions of the biodiversity conservation measures mainstreamed in the local strategies and supporting the project?s ecological restoration works. It is also a project beneficiary and will participate in the project capacity building workshops.</p>

<p>Environment Agency</p>	<p>The Environment Agency, subordinated to MOE, performs the monitoring of the quality of state protected natural areas, monitoring of the state and use of the water and soil resources, monitoring of the vegetal and animal kingdom, monitoring of the state of the underground, monitoring of air pollution, geological monitoring, monitoring of environment pollution for the purpose of providing to natural and legal person information on the quality of environment, developing the statistical indicators in the sphere of environment protection (<i>GD No. 549/2018 on the creation, organization and operation of the Environment Agency</i>).</p>	<p>The Environment Agency is a beneficiary and will participate in the capacity building events.</p>
<p>Local Public Authorities (LPAs) at the district and village/community levels</p>	<p>The authorities of the local public administration (ALPA) organize the management of the protected areas the landholders of which they are; implement protection measures ensuring the protection regime corresponding to the instituted management category (art. 15, Law 1538/1998). In accordance with the environmental legislation, ALPA has the role of being responsible for the organization of implementation, at a local level, of the policy on environmental protection and reasonable use of natural resources.</p>	<p>District and village/community public administrations have a significant role to play in the projects. Their responsibilities are to promote cooperation among all land users and owners, to implement biodiversity-friendly practices, to support agri-businesses and rural sustainable (eco) tourism initiatives supported by the project, to participate in the Process framework (aligned with UNDP SES requirements) and identify compensatory mechanisms for any potential economic displacement risks that may arise as a result of the project activities and support the project's awareness seminars and events at local level. The local authorities are responsible for the design and implementation of the local development policies and will support the mainstreaming of the project-born 'Biodiversity Passports' of key species and related biodiversity conservation measures and sustainable management of biodiversity resources outside PAs.</p>
<p>Local Action Group 'Lower Prut' and clusters of small tourism entrepreneurs</p>	<p><i>The Local Action Group Lower Prut (LAGLP) was set up under EU LEADER programme and the members are all the local authorities of the 9 villages located in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve.</i></p>	<p>The LAGLP will mobilise local communities' participation in biodiversity monitoring measures and ecotourism initiatives under Component 3 and will support the organisation of the awareness seminars. The LAGLP will support/facilitate the technical assistance seminars and selection of rural entrepreneurs to participate into different calls for proposals under the EU4Moldova programme.</p>

<p>Private sector: Farmers associations; fishermen; concessionary companies (fisheries); tourism companies; oil extraction/mining</p>	<p>Rural population, farmers and fishermen, small tourism entrepreneurs and oil extraction company ?Valiexchim SRL? (currently the latter?s contract expired and the company filed for bankruptcy) are the most important stakeholders for the implementation of Component 2 and Component 3 and will be closely involved in restoration activities, PAs work/consultation meetings during the development of the PAs management plans and biodiversity monitoring measures, development of different regulatory amendments with regard to permitting system in protected areas and will participate into various capacity development activities.</p>
<p>NGOs:  Association of Environmental and Ecological Tourism Journalists; the Women in Sustainable Development of Moldova (WISDOM); Regional Environmental Center (REC); Ecological Society BIOTICA; National Council of Environmental NGOs; Eco Contact; other international organizations.</p>	<p>All NGOs will participate in stakeholder consultation during the development of the protected areas management plans development and revision in targeted areas, and in the awareness raising seminars as relevant. Joint activities will be explored:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Joint awareness and education activities in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, with the NGOs implementing activities in the targeted PAs such as Eco Contact, Verde e Moldova and WWF/DYNA Projects.</li> <li>- Avifauna inventories in both targeted areas engaging the Society for Birds and Nature Protection</li> <li>- Awareness raising seminars engaging the Association for Environmental and Ecological Tourism Journalists.</li> <li>- With the Coalition of Environmental NGOs for advocacy activities e.g. Eco Contact, National Council of Environmental NGOs and Association of Environment and Eco-tourism Journalists in Moldova, the project will partner in order to raise awareness on, and advocate for, an adequate legal, policy and financing framework for sustainable wetlands management.</li> <li>- Participation of the Women Association for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development in the consultations on the full Feasibility Study of the envisage hydrotechnical works on Camenca river.</li> <li>- Partnership with the Association for Tourism Development in Moldova for the support to the development of COVID-19 protocols in tourism industry.</li> </ul>
<p>Botanical Garden Institute  Institute of Zoology</p>	<p>The Moldovan Academy of Science, the Institute of Zoology and the Botanical Garden Institute will be important partners supporting various species inventories, technical analysis and reports on the hydro-ecological conditions of wetlands in the Prut basin, development of the ?Biodiversity Passports? and support to mainstreaming biodiversity into local development strategies as well as support to the projects on-line awareness campaign and other seminars, writing easy-to-read papers on the biodiversity rich wetlands hosted by Prut basin?s wetlands, their threats and climate vulnerability.</p>

Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development (ODIMM)	ODIMM is a business support organization in Moldova, focused on Moldovan migrants, women entrepreneurs, business support programmes and organization of targeted training seminars.	UNDP/GEF project will work together with the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development (ODIMM)[1] to develop and deliver green business modules to local entrepreneurs and SMEs. The project will complement the series of SMEs green business trainings implemented by ODIMM.
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The extensive stakeholders consultations and engagement that began during the PPG phase will be continued throughout the project implementation. Several mechanisms will be used by the project that include: a) Project Inception Workshop: the project will be presented to both direct stakeholders and the public; b) Project Board: comprised of representatives of the government agencies, the private sector, and academia, it will be responsible for approving the work plans, participating in the recruitment processes, and providing overall strategic guidance to the project; c) Project Management Unit (PMU): will be hosted by the Ministry of Environment's Implementation Unit for Environmental Projects-EPIU and will be responsible for the implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan, gender action plan, grievance redress mechanisms, and M&E; the PMU will draft a COVID-19 Project Plan of measures which will include measures to mitigate implementation delays that could occur due to potential reinstatement of COVID-19 related restrictions, and safety measures, that will be discussed and agreed at the Inception Workshop d) Communication and Dissemination: The PMU will implement the Knowledge Management Plan and ensure participation of and communication with all the stakeholders through a variety of methods (in person meetings, virtual platforms (Zoom), webpage, social media, etc.). The project generated knowledge products will be made publicly available through these media and communication tools. e) Governance role for project target groups: project target groups will be represented on the Project Board as well as engaged bilaterally. f) Gender Action Plan: will secure the involvement of both genders, especially women and youth; a Gender Expert/Advisor will be hired to review and update the implementation of the Gender Action Plan; g) Grievance Mechanism: will be established and published so that all stakeholders are aware of its existence, documenting any potential grievances and ensuring they are addressed in a timely manner; h) Decentralized M&E: this will include meetings with the project target groups, interviews with direct beneficiaries, and meetings with special groups such as women to verify indicators.

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[1] <https://www.odimm.md/en/>

**Select what role civil society will play in the project:**

**Consulted only; Yes**

**Member of Advisory Body; Contractor; Yes**

**Co-financier;** Yes

**Member of project steering committee or equivalent decision-making body;** Yes

**Executor or co-executor;**

**Other (Please explain)**

### **3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**

**Provide the gender analysis or equivalent socio-economic assesment.**

Please see Annex 11 Gender Analysis and Action Plan of the GEF UNDP Project Document.

Moldova is consistently preoccupied about fulfilling its commitments under international human rights treaties, confirmed by the guaranteed equality principle embedded in the domestic legislation, an especially important step being the amendments and addenda made in the fields of ensuring equality between women and men, preventing and combating domestic violence and violence against women, and trafficking in human beings in order to adjust the regulatory framework to the international standards through the adopted Law No 71/2016, Law No 196/2016 and Law No 32/2018. Important strategic policy documents were adopted and are under implementation such as: National Gender Equality Strategy 2017-2021, National Strategy on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2018-2023, National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings 2018-2023, National Action Plan on Implementation of the provisions of the UNSCR 1325 Women in Peace and Security 2018-2022, as well as other sectorial strategies (health, employment, social protection, security, child protection, etc.) A structured institutional state mechanism in the area of gender equality was established, consisting of the Government Commission on Gender Equality, Division for Gender Equality Policies/MHLSP1, Gender Units/Gender Coordinating Groups within line ministries and other central public authorities, Gender Units within local public authorities. This symbolizes positive developments in achieving gender equality and women empowerment. However, despite these positive changes, the analysis of the situation in the Republic of Moldova on the issue of gender equality and promotion of women indicates that the most of the lingering challenges rest with empowering women in the political, economic, and social areas; work and family life reconciliation; domestic violence; and the specific situation of certain groups of disadvantaged women such as Roma women, women from rural areas, women living with HIV, women in detention, migrant women. Women in rural areas are four times more exposed and prone to absolute poverty and more vulnerable to climate change than women in urban areas.

A Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan (Annex 11) were developed to guide gender mainstreaming during the project implementation and ensure that the project interventions targeting local communities will promote equal benefit sharing and women participation. The gender analysis has highlighted that women are underrepresented among decision makers at national and local levels. Women's access to land and natural resources is hindered by stereotypes and by their lack of knowledge about their rights. In the rural area, women are managing approximately 19% of farmland area, a much smaller area than men, and the potential of generating income is more limited. The distribution of resources between women and men is uneven, and the pandemic and economic hardship deepens the gender gap. The project will promote an environment that will help overcome gender biases, promote women's empowerment and foster inclusion and equal opportunities. According to the

Gender Action Plan the key gender mainstreaming elements of the project strategy could be summarized as follows: (i) Balanced representation and meaningful participation of women and men in key project activities, including those related to capacity building and management planning for protected areas; (ii) Engagement and mobilization of individuals, local women groups, women NGOs to participate in project implementation and benefit from business opportunities that are created under different project components (iii) Better access for women entrepreneurs and women's businesses ? sustainable tourism, ?green? farming etc. to the opportunities provided by the project, to the technical assistance that they may need in order to apply under different calls for proposals launched by EU4Cahul project, coaching, participation into trainings and awareness seminars; (iv) integration of gender dimension into all the project-supported legal and policy work under Component 1 through a SESA approach. Gender considerations will be fully mainstreamed into project implementation and will inform rayonal (district level) and local development planning as well as community level project activities through creating a platform for participation in decision making at local level. Under Component 1 the project will support district and local authorities to include biodiversity conservation and monitoring into local development strategies and will support public advocacy for women?s rights and gender sensitive biodiversity conservation and management measures. Under Component 2, the project will support participatory approaches at local levels, in both protected areas, during the consultations on the Management Plan of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and during the local consultations on the revision of the draft Management Plan of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, and will include women NGOs and local community representatives to enable their participation into decision making over natural resources management, as women?s input, knowledge and guidance are invaluable to any productive, sustainable efforts to restore wetlands, lakes and riparian zones. Under Component 3, the project?s efforts will be directed towards strengthening local women entrepreneurship, enabling women participation into calls for proposals and different other local projects and education/awareness activities. The project will ensure that there is gender balance in all project activities (e.g. seminars, community level events) including access to project financial assistance. Following the UNDP-GEF Gender Mainstreaming Guide[1], the Gender Analysis has identified key considerations that can advance gender integration and which overall, can enhance the outcomes associated with each of the related components in the project. The project will report on direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender, as a co-benefit of the GEF investment (Indicators 1,10,12 and 13). During the project implementation, the Gender Action Plan (GAP) proposed actions will be detailed and embedded in the Project Annual Workplans. A detailed gender work planning, target setting and reporting takes place in the project inception and implementation phase. The implementation of GAP will be tracked as one of the key project M&E elements. supported by the Project manager and the Gender expert.

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[1] UNDP -GEF (2016) Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in UNDP supported GEF Financed Project.

**Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment?**

Yes

**Closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes**

**Improving women's participation and decision making Yes**

**Generating socio-economic benefits or services or women Yes**

**Does the project?s results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?**



Yes

#### **4. Private sector engagement**

##### **Elaborate on the private sector's engagement in the project, if any.**

The private sector will be engaged in a series of activities aimed at mainstreaming higher environmental standards and biodiversity considerations in their local operations and prevent, avoid or minimize the water/wetlands pollution hazards. Under Output 1.1.1/Act. 1.1.1.1 the project will work with the Ministry of Environment and will offer technical assistance on legal amendments to the mining concession legislation, with particular emphasis on oil drilling in protected areas and the harmonization of the existing legislation with the Protected Areas Law in alignment with the international MAB/UNESCO requirements in order to prevent/reduce or stop the oil pollution risks to lakes, wetlands and riparian areas. The project will liaise with the oil concession holders in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve in order to support capacity building on ISO 14001 and other environmental certification and standards (potentially EU EMAS).

Furthermore, under Output 3.1.1. (Act. 3.1.1.2) the project will engage small and medium enterprises and will support training seminars on ISO 14001 environmental standards and other modules on green businesses in partnership with the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development (ODIMM). Under the Output 3.1.1/Act. 3.1.1.1 the small rural entrepreneurs will be offered technical assistance for developing proposals for the mobilization of additional resources under various existing initiatives, chiefly among them EU4Cahul, in order to incentivize biodiversity friendly rural businesses. The local tourism entrepreneurs in Lower Prut Biosphere reserve will be engaged under Output 3.1.2 in the development of two local tourism itineraries with the participation of women and women headed households to promote local cuisine and integrate their products in the proposed local tourism itineraries. The private sector representatives will be engaged in awareness raising seminars and other educational activities that will be implemented jointly with other initiatives in the targeted areas.

#### **5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives**

##### **Elaborate on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, the proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation.(table format acceptable):**

As per standard UNDP requirements the Project Manager (with the support of a M&E consultant) will monitor risks on a quarterly basis and report on the status of risks to the UNDP Country Office. The UNDP Country Office will record progress in the UNDP ATLAS risk log. Management responses to critical risks, as well as environmental and social grievances will also be reported to the GEF in the annual PIR. The detailed risk management strategy for the project (including all the risks and safeguards) is included under Annex 7 UNDP ATLAS Risk Register. The project will deploy risk management measures to mitigate any implementation delays that may result due to potential reinstatement of the COVID-19 related restrictions. The mitigation measures will be aligned with the UNDP corporate guidance for 'Managing programmes and projects in the age of COVID-19'. UNDP together with the Ministry of Environment have adaptive management capacities and possibilities to ensure COVID-19 related mitigation measures and effectiveness of the proposed overall project implementation and stakeholders engagement. The Project Team, under UNDP Guidance, will develop a COVID-19 Project Strategy to be presented during the Project Inception Workshop, with appropriate mitigation measures in case of COVID-19 restrictions, including ways to reach out to the most marginalised groups.



In response to the Government's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (approved on 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 by the Prime Minister), the United Nations in Moldova has developed a Response and Recovery Plan with a 12-18 months horizon, based on the UN Framework and with the support of different development partners. The Response and Recovery Plan has highlighted the amplified vulnerabilities and widening inequalities during the COVID-19, and the existing critical capacity gaps that are hampering adequate responses, focusing largely on health equipment in the short term. The medium term recovery opportunities that this proposed project will support, are aligned with UNDP portfolio 'Beyond recovery Towards 2030' and with the integrated UN System in Moldova's support to COVID-19 response under the 'Economic Response and Recovery' pillar, including: integration of environment-friendly technologies, stimulating green innovation and circular economy and supporting smallholders access financing. The project is fully aligned with the medium post COVID-19 recovery opportunities by supporting communities recovery through facilitation of green and sustainable entrepreneurship, facilitating small holder family farms accessing of affordable financing for sustainable natural resources management, promoting rural entrepreneurship including women entrepreneurship, supporting environmental friendly and safe local eco-tourism and other biodiversity friendly alternative income leveraging activities. The project will be supporting the Working Group led by the National Tourism Authority to develop national COVID-19 standards for tourism and hospitality sector. In the long term the project will support the green recovery efforts by enabling strengthened natural and livelihoods resilience and protecting and restoring the natural capital and wetland ecosystem services in the Prut basin.

The summary of risks to the project outcomes is presented in the table below:

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
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Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
National and local government institutions responsible for the district and local development strategies do not have adequate capacity to support, maintain and enforce integrated biodiversity considerations into local strategies	M	M	The risk has been mitigated through the project's strategy. The project will strengthen and expand the current capabilities of the key institutions responsible for the development planning at district and local levels and the enforcement of environmental regulation in three districts (Cahul, Glodeni and Falesti) and will offer support in the midterm revision of the local district strategies (2020-2024) to mainstream biodiversity and key habitats' considerations into local development plans.

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
<p>Oil drilling in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve may jeopardize the project's results, and hamper project efforts to secure high value wetlands ecosystems.</p> <p><i>(Risk related to the project Area of Influence, not under the project's control but it still needs to be monitored)</i></p>	H	M	<p>The oil drilling in the PA falls under the incidence of a concessional contract between the government and a private company. Although the contract has presumably ended, the oil exploitation continued at least throughout 2020. The oil exploitation platform operates below the environmental standards, resulting in occasional oil spills in the core area of the Biosphere reserve (in the lake Beleu (KBA)) affecting key species nesting areas and posing fire hazards. In order to (indirectly) manage the risk and increase alignment with MAB/UNESCO requirements, the project will work with the Ministry of Environment and will develop legal amendments to clarify an ambiguity in the current legislation with regard to the permission for oil drilling in a core area of a MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The decision to approve the legal amendments and (possibly) shut down the operations rests with the Government. The project will be working closely with a range of government stakeholders, partners, and resource users/managers, NGOs and potential investors. From a legal perspective, the project will work to identify any critical conflicts in government policies and normative acts related to the sustainable use of natural resources in the protected areas that would diminish the potential to achieve the project objective and will propose subsequent amendments (Component 1). In addition, the project will deliver capacity building on green businesses and introductory courses on ISO 14001 Standards to increase the environmental standards of economic operators, especially important for businesses with high risk of water and wetland pollution. The project will partner with NGOs and advocate for sustainable use of wetlands in line with international designation such as Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO.</p>

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
<p>The project's impact on the status of biodiversity and wetlands ecological integrity could be sensitive to changing climatic conditions in the future.</p>	M	M	<p>The project will demonstrate and put in place measures for degraded riparian land restoration in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and hydrotechnical works for restoration of natural flooding regime in Camenca floodplain in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve that is grounded by climate risk assessments, feasibility analysis and tested methodologies that will enable stakeholders to adapt sustainable natural resources management to any given context and threats. The hydrotechnical work on Camenca river for example, will be based on project-supported feasibility analysis and climate risk assessments. The PPG phase-conducted pre-feasibility analysis has highlighted that through the envisaged hydrotechnical works, an additional 8.3 million m<sup>3</sup> water could be brought to the area, thus increasing wetland resilience even under the worst climate scenarios. Furthermore, under Component 1, the project will support amendments to the Regulation of the Stanca-Costesti dam in order to provide for adjusted minimum Environmental Flow that will take into account the climate induce water scarcity scenarios.</p>

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
The National Ecological Fund may fail to increase financing toward sustainable wetland management .	M	M	<p>Due to potential limited interest from the Ministry to change funding priorities and approve project-born legal amendments and/or due to a lack of capacities for competitive biodiversity projects submitted by the PAs, there is a risk that NEF will not prioritize wetland financing. The risk is mitigated through the project's strategy. The project will work closely with the Ministry of Regional Development, Agriculture and Environment and will support/advocate for targeted amendments to the Regulation of the National Ecological Fund and relevant legislative acts in order to create the enabling environment for an increased funding available for wetlands' restoration and sustainable management. These amendments will be assessed and discussed with the Ministry of Regional Development, Agriculture and Environment and the project will advocate for expedite formal approval. At the same time, the project will implement awareness activities (targeting decision makers) to highlight the risks and threats to the wetlands, raise awareness and understanding of wetlands problems, especially in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, where key habitats are drying out in absence of regular flooding and in general make everyone aware of the wetlands' ecosystem services fragility under climate-induced predicted water scarcity. These problems are known by politicians; however it is possible that the full consequences are not properly understood, due to (in part) of a lack of data. The project will address the data gap as well, by generating relevant knowledge and hydro-ecological assessments to back up responsible wetland-centred policy making. Targeted trainings/coaching of PAs staff in project development/coaching and helping with the project writing, is expected to address the risk of a lack of quality wetlands management projects submitted for NEF funding.</p>

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
Political instability and reshuffled political priorities may hamper the formal adoption of the project-born legal and regulatory amendments destined to improve wetlands management framework.	H	M	The project will capitalize on the good relations and cooperation between UNDP and the Ministry of Regional Development, Agriculture and Environment (MARDE) and will work actively to reinforce political support and maintain the wetlands issues high on the political agenda. The Project will facilitate regular high level meetings between UNDP Resident Representative the Minister/Deputy Minister, Director of the Moldsilva Agency, the GEF OFP and CBD, Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO focal points in order to assess the progress towards the desired development outcome, test ToC assumptions and address risks.
Co-financing of the planned ecological restoration on Camenca river may not materialize.	H	M	Local dialogue facilitated by the project together with the national and local authorities will first and foremost raise awareness and educate the local communities as well as national decision makers about the benefits of the restoration works. Materialization of co-financing will be monitored by UNDP CO and the Project manager and addressed during the regular high level meetings between UNDP Resident Representative the Minister/Deputy Minister, Director of the Moldsilva Agency, the GEF OFP and CBD, Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO focal points.
There is a risk that the EPIU may fail to comply with UNDP NIM and GEF standards as it lacks familiarity with UNDP/GEF procedures. The project is likely to face operational difficulties and delays associated with the new execution modality.	M	M	Although the core capacities of the Environmental Projects Implementaiton Unit (EPIU) of the Ministry of Environment are sufficient to carry out the project activities, there are weaknesses in the organisational structure and staffing, accounting policies and procedures, and programme management as per the micro HACT assessment (2021). Capacity limitations along with the lack of direct experience with UNDP NIM implementation call for targeted capacity building. The UNDP CO together with the IP, will organize internal UNDP NIM and project management related trainings and the UNDP CO will provide the technical guidelines for day-to-day management and it will ensure that hands-on experience and learning by doing will complement the risk mitigation measures.

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
<p>COVID-19 related travel limitations may affect intended project's support to alternative livelihoods and PA financing through local eco-tourism</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>The project will work with the Local Action Group Lower Prut and local communities' representatives as well as with Moldova's Association of Inbound Tourism (ANTRIM) and with line ministries (the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Health) to develop Safe Tourism standards, that will be applied by the project initially in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve .</p>

Identified Risks and Category	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
<p>COVID 19 related risks to the project implementation:</p> <p>Project delays due to COVID 19 reinstated restrictions</p>	M	M	<p>The project will develop COVID-19 mitigation measures during Project Inception phase and agree on ways to mitigate any implementation delays that may result due to potential reinstatement of the COVID-19 related restrictions. UNDP issued corporate guidance on 'Managing programmes and projects in the age of Covid-19' which will be used in devising tailored measures for this project, presented and approved at the Inception Workshop along with the main health safeguards to be deployed during the implementation, in order to protect people and environment and prevent the virus spread (i.e use of masks, social distancing, remote meetings whenever possible; remote field monitoring as much as possible). ). The risk to the project posed by potential reinstatement of restrictions (travel; lockdown, others) will be mitigated through several steps that could include (but will be not limited to) : (i) Re-assessment of the COVID-19 restrictions on the AWP implementation (ii) Create/activate stakeholders and key project partners Telegram/Zoom group and move all the meetings online (iii) if activities will be delayed a few months but workplan will deliver on time and within budget, no formal revision is needed (iv) if activities cannot be completed on time, workplan will be revisited and budgets revised/ clearance by online Board meetings (v) if local activities and local field staff can continue activities, monitoring will be done remotely (using photos from the field) or through a virtual mechanisms (project will reach out to community leaders and key partners in the field who can ensure that activities will be aligned with the needs and take into account the constraints faced by the community. The project will ensure that adequate protective gear is handed over to local field staff and community members and that social distancing and other health safeguards are in place. UNDP TRAC unspent balance can be repurposed to COVID-19 in case of <i>force majeure</i>.</p>

The Social and Environmental Safeguards are presented under Annex 6 of the Project Document and included in the Risk Register (Annex 7). The PPG stage has identified two (2) Substantial and thirteen (13) Moderate social and environmental risks related to the project activities, that have been identified at PPG stage and that will be monitored accordingly during the project implementation, as specified in the SESP (Annex 6) and ESMF (Annex 10). The ESMF has been developed on the basis of the social and environmental risk screening based on UNDP SES requirements, in order to specify the processes to be undertaken by the project for the additional assessments of potential impacts and identification and



development of appropriate risk management measures, in line with UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES). The ESMF also details the roles and responsibilities for its implementation and includes a budget and Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

## 6. Institutional Arrangement and Coordination

### **Describe the institutional arrangement for project implementation. Elaborate on the planned coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.**

1. Institutional arrangements are described in Section VI Governance and Management Arrangements in the GEF/UNDP Project Document. The coordination with key stakeholders their roles and responsibilities in the project implementation is described in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan (GEF/UNDP Project Document Annex 9). Synergies with other existing projects are indicated under GEF/UNDP Project Document/ Section II Strategy under the on-going relevant initiatives. The project implementation will be based on the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM) implying full ownership of the government.

The **Implementing Partner(IP)** for this project is the Ministry of Environment (MOE) with its affiliated institution- the *Environmental Projects Implementing Unit (EPIU)*.

The Ministry of Environment has been selected as the IP as it represents the government institution responsible for the development of legislation, action plans, norms and standards in the field of environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources, including management of protected areas, air, waste, water resources, water supply and sewerage system, ensuring compatibility of legal framework with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). The responsibilities of the MOE include:

- Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems;
- Chairing the Project Board meetings;
- Monitoring the progress of the project at strategic level, towards the achievement of the development outcomes;
- Ensuring effective Risk and Safeguards management as outlined in this Project Document
- Ensuring that the project partners will deliver the pledged co-financing;
- Ensuring that there is a coherent project organization structure and logical set of work plans ;
  - ? Set tolerances in the AWP and other plans as required for the Project Manager;
  - ? Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets;
  - ? Approving and signing the multiyear workplan;
  - ? Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and,
  - ? Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.

However, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) has limitations in receiving donor cash advances. e.g. MOE cannot open separate budget accounts (i.e. for each project) other than the one opened at the Ministry of Finance to support execution of the assigned activities under the State Budget. This would preclude UNDP from tracking and monitoring the expenses as per the approved budget and procurement plans. Financial execution of a stand-alone donor-funded project or programme is beyond the scope and mandate of the MOE. To date, the Ministry led GEF projects have been implemented with UNDP CO support in order to mitigate these capacity gaps.

The ministry has founded the Environmental Projects Implementation Unit (EPIU) as per the Law nr.98/2012 (art 4, point b), GD 695/2017 (7th point), GD145/2021 and GD 1249/2018 in order to overcome the above mentioned barriers, and enable the receipt and management of the donor funded projects. The EPIU is the public institution, functioning under the MOE's mandate, responsible for contributing to policy implementation through specific projects. The EPIU is able to receive cash advances and carry out the projects' activities. The EPIU will have the following responsibilities:

- Contracting and contract management for procurement of goods, services, and works for the project at national level;
- Certification for contract performance and acceptance of goods and services as per Project Procurement Plan;
- Financial management, including payments for goods and services involving national consultants and made in national currency.
- Logistical support, including duty travel for project personnel and consultants, project event management within the country.
- Equipment and Asset Management services, including IT equipment maintenance, licenses, and ICT support for the project team and project activities.
- Administrative support for the project.

The micro HACT assessment conducted at the PPG stage has highlighted several capacity constraints of the IP/EPIU which will be addressed through targeted NIM related project management training sessions starting with the project inception phase.

**Project Implementation:** The project organization structure will consist of a Project Board, Project Assurance, Project Management Unit. A Project Management Unit will be established following UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM) and will be hosted within IP/EPIU premises.

Project management services including safeguards monitoring will be delivered by the Project Management Unit (PMU) within the Public Institution ? Implementaiton Unit for Environmental Projects? (EPIU) under MoE jurisdiction. The project team will consist of a Project Manager (PM), which will have the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board within the constraints laid down by the Board. The Project Manager's prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost. The project team will be supported by specialised technical experts to support

the envisaged Outputs, including safeguards experts/company to develop/implement SES requirements and support capacity building regarding UNDP/SES and safeguards. The Project Manager will be supported by a Project Financial and Administrative Assistant, who will assist in project planning, revisions and budget execution documents, contracting of national / local consultants and all project staff, in accordance with UNDP procedures and national legislation requirements. In addition the M&E and Gender consultants will provide technical support services on the project and monitoring of safeguards. The PMU will be further supported by national technical experts, research institutes and NGOs. (Project Document Annex 8: *Overview of Project Staff and Technical consultancies*).

**UNDP Country Office (CO)** in Moldova will provide quality assurance, in accordance with the requirements of the GEF and UNDP Policies and Procedures. Most of UNDP's oversight work for the project will be conducted from its Country Office in Chisinau under the supervision of the Programme Specialist for Environment and Energy and other senior programme staff, including the UNDP Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative as warranted. UNDP will also oversee the Final Evaluation of the project (including TORs development and contracting of experts). The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor, based in the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, will provide technical support in terms of project cycle management and oversight, to ensure consistency with expectations from UNDP and GEF.

The UNDP office will support the Ministry of Environment in ensuring coordination and synergies with other similar projects and international initiatives. Implementation of the proposed project will be fully coordinated with a number of on-going relevant multilateral and bilateral financed initiatives as described under Section II Project Strategy in the GEF/UNDP Project Document, in order to avoid possible duplication and increase synergies and effectiveness. At regional level, within River Prut Basin the project will coordinate with the Romanian counterparts for the calculation of the minimum ecological flow impacting wetlands of Lower Prut region including at the confluence with Danube river; Coordination and will be further supported with the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania and Ukraine, for the designation of the MAB UNESCO Trilateral Biosphere Reserve Lower Prut and Danube Delta, as well as with other international organizations such as WWF, the Danube Parks and International Commission for the Protection of Danube River (ICPDR) for knowledge exchange.

More specifically, under Component 1, the GEF/UNDP project will work with the Ministry of Environment to ensure intersectoral policy coordination and will support alignment of project targets and measures with existing and future commitments on biodiversity and climate. The project will support the development of the new National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and will be aligned with the MoE led Emerald Network of Protected Areas initiative of the government, aimed at expanding the national system of protected areas to complement the EU Nature 2000 protected areas (both project areas are included in the Emerald Network). The GEF/UNDP project will build on successful lessons learned and best practices and technical assessments (*as described in the Knowledge Management Plan under Annex 22 Project Document*) of the prior GEF funded project in Moldova PIMS 4183 ?Environmental Fiscal Reform? (2011-2015) which has developed legal assessments to support the reform of the National Ecological Fund and on the former GEF funded project PIMS 5355 ?Mainstreaming biodiversity in local development plans ? (2015-2019) which has produced legal assessments and recommendations to mainstream biodiversity in the land use and spatial planning.

Under Component 2 the project will work on improving the protection of KBAs/IBAs and key species population through increasing the management effectiveness of existing wetland protected areas and will implement restoration works. In the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, the project will work together with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) funded project ?*Enhancing Climate Resilience in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve*? and will build on the climate vulnerability assessments developed under this project and integrate main findings and adaptation and biodiversity conservation measures into the revised

Management Plan of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. The project will also work with the NGO 'Verde e Moldova', implementing the project 'Restoring Danube Delta Wetlands and Steppe' together with 'Rewilding Europe'. This project has conducted topographic studies in Lake Beleu based on which restoration measures will be implemented in order to remove siltation. Similarly, the *WWF Project Danube River Basin Hydro-morphology and River Restoration (DYNA)* will focus on awareness and soft restoration measures around Lake Beleu. The project will coordinate with these initiatives and will build on the available studies and proposed measures to introduce future restoration actions in the revised Project Management Plan (especially the replication of the works to remove siltation in Beleu Lake). Furthermore, as the proposed project will restore riparian strips around lakes Beleu-Manta (to act as buffer against the agriculture and waste pollution) coordination among all projects will be very important and the project's selected reforestation areas have been selected in consultation with local authorities as well as the WWF/DYNA project experts.

Under Component 3, the project will coordinate and it will work with the EU funded project *EU4Cahul* and to facilitate access to micro-grants financing aimed at supporting local entrepreneurs and the GEF project will offer targeted technical assistance to biodiversity-friendly local businesses. The project will also support the Local Action Group Lower Prut through technical assistance to develop local biodiversity monitoring plans to be included in local Environment Strategies in the localities situated on the biosphere reserve's territory. Ecotourism activities will be further supported by working and coordinating with the Local Action Group and various local entrepreneurs as well as with the Danube Delta Biosphere reserve (Romania) and Danube Parks in order to support the development of cross-border tourism packages Lower-Prut/Danube Delta and further knowledge exchange using also the platforms of ICPDR and various bilateral and trilateral ministerial meetings.

Under Component 4, the proposed project will join efforts with all the current on-going initiatives to organize awareness raising seminars. The detailed stakeholders participation and coordination with these initiatives under different project outputs are captured under the Stakeholders Engagement Plan (Annex 9 Project Document).

#### **7. Consistency with National Priorities**

Describe the consistency of the project with national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions from below:

NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc.

- National Action Plan for Adaptation (NAPA) under LDC/UNFCCC
- National Action Program (NAP) under UNCCD
- ASGM NAP (Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining) under Mercury
- Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA) under Minamata Convention
- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) under UNCBD
- National Communications (NC) under UNFCCC
- Technology Needs Assessment (TNA) under UNFCCC
- National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) under UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD

- National Implementation Plan (NIP) under POPs
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)
- National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) under GEFSEC
- Biennial Update Report (BUR) under UNFCCC
- Others

The project remains fully consistent with national priorities as originally outlined in the PIF. The project responds to the Republic of Moldova's international commitments under UN CBD, MAB UNESCO and Ramsar by improving the management efficiency of the protected areas in the Prut River basin and supporting an enabling environment for addressing drivers of biodiversity degradation coming from sectors such as agriculture and mining. The project will be implemented within the context of the United Nations Partnership Framework for Moldova and UNDP Country Programme in Moldova (2018-2022), aligned with Moldova's National Development Strategy Vision 2030, Chapter 10 "Ensuring the fundamental rights for a healthy and safe environment" - the priority action "Extending the areas of natural areas protected by the state and ensuring the efficient and sustainable management of natural ecosystems". The project is aligned with the NBSAP 2015-2020 which had emphasized the need of wetlands restoration and Ramsar designation of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve. The project is aligned with the National Environmental Strategy 2014-2023, particularly with the activities 83,87 and 88 under the Action Plan, assigned to the specific Objective 6.4: "Expansion of forests area up to 15 per cent of the state territory, protected areas up to 8 percent and ensuring the efficient and sustainable management of the natural ecosystems". The project is also aligned with the National Waste Management Strategy 2013-2027, the National Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development 2014-2023, the National Plan for Expanding Forested Areas 2019-2023. The project's focus on restoration of degraded riparian strips of grasslands and forests is supporting the overall progress towards the national LDN target "Improving land/soil conservation and ecological restoration of degraded lands and farmland buffer strips up to 100% to achieve by 2030 no net loss of productive land/soils and increase resiliency, adaptation capacity and agricultural ecosystem services". The project is further aligned with the implementation of the Management Plan of the Danube-Prut and Black Sea (2018) and supports Moldova's active role as a full partner in the EU macro-regional strategy for the Danube Region. The project addresses one of the national priority areas included under the agenda *European Green Deal and Moldova*: "Improved nature and environment through restoration of ecosystems and reforestation".

## **8. Knowledge Management**

**Elaborate the "Knowledge Management Approach" for the project, including a budget, key deliverables and a timeline, and explain how it will contribute to the project's overall impact.**

A comprehensive Knowledge Management Plan has been included in Annex 22 of the GEF/UNDP Project Document.

The project's approach on Knowledge Management targets two levels of activities, strategies and products. First, at local and national levels, the project will actively contribute towards the development of

understanding and awareness about wetlands ecosystem services in the Prut River Basin. The communication and capacity building activities will focus on the importance of sustainable water management, wetland ecosystem services and biodiversity friendly production practices around protected areas, climate change and resilient livelihoods and how they translate into global environmental benefits while sustaining local livelihoods. The second level is the regional/cross-border level, where the project will act as an active contributor to supporting negotiations on sustainable water and wetlands management by providing technical expertise for the amendments to the current Regulation under with the cross-border Stanca Costesti Dam operates on Prut River; it will leverage the knowledge generated within the project, by actively supporting mainstreaming mitigation measures against the climate change predicted water deficits and more importantly, the project will provide the technical arguments and study for mainstreaming of provisions related to the guaranteed ecological flow to the Prut River wetlands. Furthermore, by supporting cross-border innovative, safe and sustainable tourism as well as supporting the merger of the three protected areas namely 1. Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (Moldova), 2. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Romania) and 3. Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Ukraine), the project will also tap into and will contribute to, the vast Danube Basin countries? knowledge repository.

## 9. Monitoring and Evaluation

### Describe the budgeted M and E plan

The budgeted M&E Plan is included in Section V of the GEF/UNDP Project Document. Also, the project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is copied below.

<b>Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget:</b>		
This M&E plan and budget provides a breakdown of costs for M&E activities to be led by the Project Management Unit during project implementation. These costs are included in Component 4 of the Results Framework and TBWP. For ease of reporting M&E costs, please include all costs reported in the M&E plan under the one technical component. The oversight and participation of the UNDP Country Office/Regional technical advisors/HQ Units are not included as these are covered by the GEF Fee.		
<b>GEF M&amp;E requirements</b>	<b>Indicative costs (US\$)</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
<b>Inception Workshop</b>	<i>Included under the project components from UNDP TRAC (TBWP BL 37)</i>	Inception Workshop within 2 months of the First Disbursement.
<b>Inception Report</b>	None	Within 90 days of CEO endorsement of this project.
<b>M&amp;E of GEF core indicators and project results framework</b>	7,500 (TBWP BL 27)	Annually and at mid-point and closure.
<b>GEF Project Implementation Report (PIR)</b>	None	Annually typically between June-August
<b>Monitoring of the safeguards implementation</b>	<i>Included under Project Component 2 (TBWP BL 9)</i>	On-going.
<b>Supervision missions</b>	None	Annually
<b>Learning missions</b>	None	As needed

<b>Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and Budget:</b>		
This M&E plan and budget provides a breakdown of costs for M&E activities to be led by the Project Management Unit during project implementation. These costs are included in Component 4 of the Results Framework and TBWP. For ease of reporting M&E costs, please include all costs reported in the M&E plan under the one technical component. The oversight and participation of the UNDP Country Office/Regional technical advisors/HQ Units are not included as these are covered by the GEF Fee.		
<b>GEF M&amp;E requirements</b>	<b>Indicative costs (US\$)</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
<b>Travel related to GEF terminal evaluation</b>	3,000 (TBWP BL28)	2026
<b>Independent Terminal Evaluation (TE)</b>	24,750 (TBWP BL 27; BL29)	November 30,2026
<b>TOTAL indicative COST</b>	<b>\$ 35,250</b>	
<i>Do not exceed 5 % when GEF project grant up to USD 5 million.</i>		

## 10. Benefits

**Describe the socioeconomic benefits to be delivered by the project at the national and local levels, as appropriate. How do these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of global environment benefits (GEF Trust Fund) or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)?**

The envisaged benefits to local and national stakeholders will be interconnected with the aggregated environmental benefits enabled by the project's features: (i) embedded integrated benefits and synergies across focal areas (ii) mechanisms for integrated policy making and (iii) river basin landscape-scale designed interventions.

The project incentivizes local actors away from destructive behaviour through engaging them in alternative economic activities under Component 3 as well as biodiversity friendly livelihoods around protected areas.

Project socio-economic benefits are associated with the following individual elements of the project intervention strategy:

- Improved management of the PA estate holding a unique recreational value for the local population and visitors. Diversification and improved quality of tourist offer within the lower Prut and Danube basin.
- PA business planning, enhanced finance management capacities providing for more sustainable PA finance;
- Support to small businesses in tourism, and biodiversity friendly agriculture;
- Increased capacities of SMEs for green businesses and increased knowledge on the ISO14001 standards.
- Promotion of biodiversity-positive entrepreneurship around PAs.

The project is expected to have an estimated 40,000 direct beneficiaries and provide gender-disaggregated reporting as stated in the Section IV of the Project Document 'Project Results Framework'.

## 11. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

## Overall Project/Program Risk Classification\*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate	High or Substantial		

### Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Elaborate on the types and risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and impacts (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and any measures undertaken as well as planned management measures to address these risks during implementation.

## Project Information

<i>Project Information</i>	
1. Project Title	Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin
2. Project Number (i.e. Atlas project ID, PIMS+)	PIMS ID 6551 (GEF ID 10650)
3. Location (Global/Region/Country)	Moldova
4. Project stage (Design or Implementation)	Design (ProDoc stage)
5. Date	Sept 2021

## Part A. Integrating Programming Principles to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability

QUESTION 1: How Does the Project Integrate the Programming Principles in Order to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability?



*Briefly describe in the space below how the project mainstreams the human rights-based approach*

In line with UNDP's human-rights based approach, the project directly empowers right holders in the persons of public authorities/ duty bearers, SMEs, smallholders, owners of production lands, and communities so that they are the principal facilitators and decision makers for the mainstreaming of wetlands, lakes and riparian zones conservation objectives in the production landscapes which they inhabit in the Prut River basin landscape. The project fully supports UNDP's commitment to a human-rights based approach, and supports the universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, but particularly in the case of this project, for the people living in the Prut River landscape. The project does this broadly by supporting the sustainable use of natural resources, including access to and use of wetlands necessary for the rural communities, including the rural poor, in the project's landscape. In addition, the project will ensure and support the human rights principles of participation, inclusion and non-discrimination.

The project concentrates on the wetland ecosystems of Moldova, located in the Prut River Basin, bordering Romania to the west. The project's main aim is to achieve improved status of wetlands, lakes and riparian zones in the Prut River Basin, demonstrated by an integrated approach to the management of land, water and biodiversity for ecological and livelihoods benefits. The project will leverage critical partnerships with government, NGOs, local communities and private sector and will contribute to a transformational change of the approaches to sustainable development and conservation of the high value wetlands ecosystems in Moldova, by promoting effective wetlands management models within the context of supporting and securing sustainable and resilient livelihoods for local resources users, whose daily existence depend greatly on the integrity and productivity of these high value wetland ecosystems. The project's four components are closely aligned and linked to facilitate an enabling environment that provides for effective wetlands protection and management based on a landscape approach that ensures the continuity of ecosystem services sustaining livelihoods:

- (i) Component 1 contributes to an improved regulatory framework to ensure conservation and sustainable management of wetlands biodiversity
- (ii) Component 2 focuses on improved protection of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) through increasing management effectiveness of existing wetlands protected areas and by promoting participatory approaches and local communities' participation into the local natural resources' management.
- (iii) Component 3 will support local communities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve to develop and implement local initiatives, improving their livelihoods.
- (iv) Component 4 will revolve around awareness activities at local and national levels, designed to grab attention and elevate the issues related to wetlands management and their local communities, higher on the political agenda.
- (v) Component 5: is all about proper monitoring and evaluation of the results, and sharing the evaluative knowledge with the national counterparts, including it in a process of learning and adaptive management.

For an integrated landscape approach, an adequate policy, legal and financing framework must support multiple types of management measures. Water must be managed in a way that facilitates the necessary ecological flow to ensure the survival of wetland ecosystems located downstream. In addition, protected areas including key wetland ecosystems must be adequately planned and managed, appropriately contextualized within the river's basin landscape. Both biodiversity and livelihoods depend on land and water that are not polluted and not degraded and on vegetation that is resilient and provides fodder and critical habitats. Both livelihoods and biodiversity depend on adequate flows of water and many livelihoods depend on different components of biodiversity. As a mean of illustration, the project's Component 3 will be explicitly focused on local communities, promoting ecotourism and supporting small entrepreneurs' access to financing, in order to further develop their biodiversity friendly businesses in a MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The project local approaches will follow the 'Man and Biosphere' principles, will be aligned with the MAB Strategy (2015-2025) and its implementation framework, the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025), which has set out clear objectives, action areas, and indicators to inform the contribution of biosphere reserves to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); biosphere reserves are, in fact, learning sites for sustainable development, where interdisciplinary approaches are tested to understand and manage interactions between social and ecological systems, and solutions are promoted to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. The project aims to put all these different types of on-the-ground management practices in place: support the regulatory

*Briefly describe in the space below how the project is likely to improve gender equality and women's empowerment*

The project incorporates gender considerations in the project design to ensure that there is equal opportunity for women participation and realization of benefits under the initiative as presented. Formalized structures and measures or legal amendments developed within the project framework will explicitly reflect the role of women in all tiers of biodiversity/ resource management addressing specifically existing disparities faced by women and girls in terms of access to economic participation and participation in decision making and trainings.

Within the national context, women generally share the responsibility for resources management and this is particularly visible at the household level. Owing to their active resource management roles, the project targets women participation in processes associated with the conservation, sustainable use of water and wetlands resources and the delivery of ecosystem services. There are numerous ways in which gender dimensions are reflected in the project:

- Under Component 1 the project supports district and local authorities include biodiversity conservation and monitoring into local development strategies, support public advocacy for women's rights and gender sensitive biodiversity conservation and management measures.

- Under Component 2, the project supports participatory approaches at local levels, in both protected areas, during the consultations on the Management Plan of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and during the local consultations on the revision of the Management Plan in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, and will include women representatives to enable their participation into decision making over natural resources management, as women's input, knowledge and guidance are invaluable to any productive, sustainable efforts to avoid, reduce and restore wetlands, lakes and riparian zones.

- Under Component 3, the project's efforts are directed towards strengthening local rural entrepreneurship, offering equal participation opportunities and enabling women participation into calls for proposals and different other local projects and education/awareness activities.

- The project will ensure that there is gender balance in all project activities (e.g. seminars, community level events) including access to project financial assistance. The project will also gather gender-disaggregated data for evaluation purposes and use gender sensitive indicators to facilitate planning, implementation and monitoring.

In further consideration to the roles and priorities of both men and women, the project has granted women greater opportunities to actively participate in governance bodies that will be strengthened by the project. The project promotes partnerships and activities that close gaps resulting from gender equity issues since women in Moldova generally, but more acutely in the rural communities, are more constrained by traditional gender roles and by the lack of access to financial resources and capacity-building to improve their livelihood. In addition, all partnerships will be developed and established with gender balance and gender mainstreaming approaches in mind. The project team will ensure that gender-mainstreaming aspects are addressed and integrated throughout all aspects of the project's stakeholder engagement activities. The project will make sure to integrate a gender perspective into all legal and policy amendments and stakeholders consultations, advocating for women rights and striving to offer equal participation opportunities in deliberation processes.

The project will ensure that the activities relating to improved land and water management, such as local trainings and local decision-making mechanisms have appropriate and adequate gender representation. The project will also be working on the improvement management of protected areas and will also ensure the engagement of women in decision-making bodies related to protected areas, such as sub-basinal committees of Camenca and Prut rivers. The expected project provision of gender-disaggregated data, specifically, the distribution of project benefits based on sex, will assist in the monitoring of the effectiveness of addressing equality gaps through project programming. The project has mainstreamed a gender responsive engagement in its strategy (*please see Annex 11 Gender Analysis and Action Plan*) and will put in place a grievance redress mechanism, as described in the Annex 9 (Stakeholders Engagement Plan) and in line with the UNDP SES requirements. The safeguards to be applied to ensure that gender considerations continue to be a part of the project delivery approach include the contribution of gender and community outreach specialists, continued targeting and engagement of women stakeholder groups through the project participation plan, and the mandatory utilization of gender assessments to guide all significant project deliverables. It is the aim of the project is to achieve the categorization of 'Gender Responsive' according to UNDP's gender results effectiveness scale (i.e., the results addressed differential needs of men or women and equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status and rights but do not address root causes of inequalities in their lives).

***Briefly describe in the space below how the project mainstreams sustainability and resilience***

The project's interventions, backed by Government commitments and regulations, will aim to strengthen the inter-sectorial coordination and local communities' participation during the development and revision of the protected areas management plans in the two targeted wetland areas (The Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and the Royal Forest Nature Reserve/Ramsar site), which will enhance the likelihood of environment sustainability. In the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, the local communities and local authorities in the surrounding localities will be included in the development of a landscape scale wetland management plan and will increase the sense of ownership of the local communities but also their awareness on the main threats to biodiversity coming from agriculture and illegal poaching. Furthermore, a biodiversity monitoring programme will be developed, which will involve local communities. Representatives of other sectors such as agriculture, hunting associations, mining, tourism, fisheries etc will be involved in the development of the management plan. Similarly, in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, the revision of the management plan will be based on participatory approaches and dialogues with all the interested economic sectors, ensuring environmental sustainability. The project will work with the Local Action Group Lower Prut and local communities' representatives in order to develop biodiversity measures and biodiversity monitoring activities with their involvement. The participatory approaches employed will result in empowered rural communities, conscientious and effective managers of natural resources, with increased capacities to manage their land, access financing and enhance their livelihoods. Environmental sustainability will be further ensured through the National Ecological Fund, capacitated to collect pollution charges and redirect funds for wetland conservation measures. The project will support regulatory amendments and will capacitate the National Ecological Fund to increase the percentage of funds redirected to wetland conservation measures, and it is expected that these regulatory amendments will provide not only environmental but also institutional and financial sustainability of results.

The project interventions will ensure the resilience of Prut and Camenca rivers resilience and will lead to 17,456 healthy KBAs/IBAs in the Prut River Basin, an improved management efficiency of 30,176 ha of wetlands and restoration of 6,050 ha of lakes and riparian forests ecosystems. The inventory of the condition of the existing 17,456 ha of KBAs/IBAs in Prut River Basin and the study of the hydro-ecological requirements for healthy wetlands, lakes and riparian areas will provide the necessary technical knowledge and information base for adequate management decisions of 30,176 ha of wetlands. The strengthening of the institutional and technical capacities of the targeted PAs administrations will result in a stabilization of key species populations and a better integration of biodiversity into the broader landscape. The ecological restoration of the targeted wetland are strategically selected in such a way as to respond to the most pressing drivers of biodiversity degradation; as such, the restoration of 50 ha of riparian strips strategically selected in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve will diminish the transport of sediments and waste into approximately 3,000 KBAs/IBAs ecosystems hosted by the main KBAs/IBAs (i.e. lakes Manta and Belevu) and it will restore riparian forest ecosystems which are hosting important nesting and feeding habitats. Similarly, the project-driven restoration of the Camenca river old course (main Prut River tributary) will bring an additional 8,3 million m<sup>3</sup> of water flow to Camenca floodplain and wetlands ecosystems, and it will improve ground water level and moisture conditions benefiting approximately 11,175 ha of floodplain meadows and forests. The higher level of the underground water will limit the expansion of boxelder and other species that tend to replace valuable riparian galleries in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve. The cumulative effect of the governance and ecological pathways of the project are expected to improve the enabling legal/policy/financing environment and to maintain the ecological integrity of Prut River Basin wetlands and attenuate the effects of the climate change-induced water deficits.

***Briefly describe in the space below how the project strengthens accountability to stakeholders***

Through its various activities the project promotes accountability to project partners and stakeholders.

- a) The project deploys multi-stakeholders participatory mechanisms that increases accountability. Good examples of participatory mechanisms are demonstrated within the framework of Output 1.1 (Activity 1.1.1.2) through the inter-institutional coordination/stakeholders participation framework to improve the legal/policy and financing framework for Moldova's wetlands and PAs, including multi-stakeholders consultations on development and implementation of gender sensitive NBSAP. Other project activities are leveraging stakeholders' engagement for improved PA management and increase accountability of duty-bearers through capacitating the National Environmental Fund re-direct more revenues from pollution charges towards wetlands financing under Output 1.1.2 Act. 1.1.2.1. The project promotes a greater accountability of the private sector, through the promotion of green businesses and trainings on ISO14001:2015 Environmental Standard that will hopefully increase the accountability towards environment and natural resource use (Output 3.1.1/ Activity 3.1.1.2). The project will further promote stakeholders' accountability through mainstreaming biodiversity into local development strategies and further providing training of local authorities and relevant agencies on the importance of biodiversity consideration into land use planning and policies and local development strategies (Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.1) and by facilitating active local community engagement including rural poor, actively promoting participation of women, youth and disadvantaged groups. Similarly, the project-supported community-led biodiversity friendly rural businesses (Output 3.1.1) and the awareness activities destined to increase accountability of decision makers for wetlands/natural resource management, these are all major project milestones, implemented with embedded mechanisms for meaningful participation of all the stakeholders affected, particularly those at risk of being left behind.
- b) The project ensures that everyone has access to information, through transparency of all the programmatic interventions, provision of timely and accessible information regarding supported activities (primarily captured under Component 4) but also through partnerships such as with Local Action Group Lower Prut, sub-basin committees and local and national agencies, the project will strengthen its community outreach, including consultations on potential environmental and social risks and impacts and necessary management measures that will be implemented based on local consensus. Transparency and access to information and coordination with other local initiatives, will empower stakeholders to accelerate transition towards accountable decision making processes and more sustainable livelihoods.
- c) The project ensures that all the stakeholders can communicate their concerns and have access to rights-compatible complaints redress processes and mechanisms. In cases where there is a risk of economic displacement, such as the activities leading to international recognition of buffer areas (e.g. Ramsar designation in Royal Forest Nature Reserve) the Process Framework will be deployed, in an inclusive and participative manner, supported at local level by project experts and Local Basin Committees including representatives of local governing bodies, local NGOs in order to ensure inclusiveness. The project will ensure that in all interactions with stakeholders (consultations, meetings, web sites) information is available on how to access complaints processes. The Project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan will ensure the stakeholder's are engaged and informed about all activities. In addition to the UNDP Stakeholder Response Mechanism[1] which is embedded in all UNDP projects, this project will inform about the Grievance Redress mechanism(GRM) and will designate the Project Board as the project-GRM to ensure first of all that all the people and communities are informed of project-level grievance entry points and avoid/minimize risks of retaliation and reprisal against people who may seek information on project activities or express concerns and/or access project level grievances.
- d) The project will monitor environment and social risk management measures through effective and where possible, participatory engagement of the stakeholders.

**Part B. Identifying and Managing Social and Environmental Risks**

<p><b>QUESTION 2:</b> What are the Potential Social and Environmental Risks?</p> <p>Note: Complete SESP Attachment 1 before responding to Question 2.</p>	<p><b>QUESTION 3: What is the level of significance of the potential social and environmental risks?</b></p> <p>Note: Respond to Questions 4 and 5 below before proceeding to Question 5</p>			<p><b>QUESTION 6: Describe the assessment and management measures for each risk rated Moderate, Substantial or High</b></p>
<p><b>Risk Description</b>  (broken down by event, cause, impact)</p>	<p><b>Impact and Likelihood (1-5)</b></p>	<p><b>Significance</b>  (Low, Moderate, Substantial, High)</p>	<p><b>Comments (optional)</b></p>	<p><b>Description of assessment and management measures for risks rated as Moderate, Substantial or High</b></p>

<p><b>Risk 1:</b> Vulnerable groups (smallholders with less land and capacities) including women and women entrepreneurs, might not be involved in project activities and therefore not engaged in, supportive of, or benefitting from project activities. Project-born outputs may not fully incorporate or reflect views of women and ensure equitable opportunities for their involvement and benefit.</p> <p>SES Principle 2 Human Rights</p> <p>P2, P3, P5</p> <p>SES Principle 3 Gender</p> <p>P10, P11,</p> <p>SES Principle 5 Accountability</p> <p>P13, P14</p>	<p>I=3 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>Women may be underrepresented, due to ingrained social and cultural norms. Most vulnerable families or groups may not be aware of project-supported opportunities and not involved in the consultations.</p>	<p><b>The risk is managed through the project's strategy,</b> which (as explained in Part A of this SESP document) has embedded participatory approaches, balanced representations and meaningful participation of women, youth and other vulnerable groups in consultations and equal opportunities to benefit from project activities. With respect to gender, a <b>Gender Analysis</b> has been undertaken and a <b>Gender Action Plan</b> developed. The project will hire a gender expert that will supervise the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and will make sure that the project will offer equal opportunities for women to participate in and benefit from the project activities.</p> <p>The project will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that there is adequate consultation and participation. Activities designed under Components 2 and 3 are specifically tailored to deploy participatory processes in which all voices can be heard, especially those small holders, poor households, women entrepreneurs etc. that are usually left behind. Engagement of vulnerable groups and other key community is detailed in the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Gender Plan in line with current UNDP SES guidance.</p>
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<p><b>Risk 2:</b> Local and national decision makers/authorities may not have the capacity to fulfill all aspects of their mandate, and rural resource users may not have the capacity to claim their rights, which could potentially lead to the violation of human rights.</p> <p>SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P2, P3</p>	<p>I = 3 P = 3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>Low capacities at rayonal (district) and local levels are many times resulting in little or no instructions for sustainable management of wetlands, pastures and forests and inadequate monitoring. Local communities, especially in remote villages or vulnerable groups are often unaware of opportunities to improve their livelihoods and to participate in decision making over natural resources.</p>	<p><b>The risk is managed through the project's strategy.</b> Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.1 includes concrete measures to strengthen and expand the current capabilities of the key institutions responsible for the development planning at district and local levels in three districts (Cahul, Glodeni and Falesti) to mainstream biodiversity considerations, through multi-stakeholders participatory approaches. There will be a number of 6 trainings and coaching sessions to strengthen the local authorities capacities to integrate biodiversity considerations in the local development strategies, providing an opportunity for further consultations and dialogue between decision makers and local communities. On this occasion too, the project will make sure to integrate a gender perspective into all the capacity building events and stakeholders consultations, advocating for women rights and striving to offer equal participation opportunities in trainings and awareness events and decision making processes.</p> <p>In addition, the project will be working closely with all stakeholders to support government natural resource management authorities and institutions to meet their obligations, and with resource user rights holders to claim their rights. This will be accomplished through multiple stakeholder consultation sessions during all relevant aspects of the project to ensure that all parties are aware of and understand the relevant obligations and rights.</p>
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<p><b>Risk 3:</b> The envisaged legal and policy amendments developed by the project in support of long-term sustainability could affect access and use of resources by local communities, including the rural poor and women.</p> <p><i>SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P5, P6</i></p> <p><i>SES Principle 3, Gender, P10</i></p> <p><i>SES Principle 3, Gender, P11</i></p> <p><i>Principle 5, Accountability, P13</i></p> <p><i>Principle 5, Accountability, P14</i></p> <p><i>Standard 5 Displacement ; 5.2</i></p> <p><i>Standard 5 Displacement ; 5.4</i></p>	<p>I = 3</p> <p>L =2</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>The project will develop several regulatory and policy amendments that may lead to stricter regulations over natural resources use (Output 1.1.1/ Act. 1.1.1.1 and Act. 1.1.1.3; Output 1.1.2/ Act. 1.1.2.1; Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.1)</p> <p>The project will conduct a review of key legislation identified in policy baseline as follows: the Land Code ( No. 828 XII of 25-12-1991) and Forestry Code (No 887 XIII of 21-06-1996); Law on Environmental protection (No 1515 XI of 16-06-1993); Law on Water and River basin Protection Zones and Riparian Strips ( No 440 pf 27-04-1995); Law on Animal Kingdom (No 439 XIII of 27-04-1995); Law on Protected Areas State Fund ( No 1538 of 25-02-1998); Law on Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (No. 325 of 15-12-2005); The law of the vegetal kingdom (No. 239-XVI of 8-11-2007); Law on the Ecological Network (No. 94 of 05-04-2007); The Law on Water (No. 272 of 23-12-2011); Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (No. 86 of 29-05-2014) and related government decisions and framework regulations as well as on-going legislation harmonization with EU framework. Under Act 1.1.13 the project will provide technical expertise and hydro-climate modelling in order to identify the appropriate minimum ecological flow that would need to be ensured for the survival of downstream wetlands and lakes. The project will also support the development of NBSAP aligned with the new post 2020 global biodiversity framework.</p> <p>The project will amend the National Ecological Fund related regulations in order to prioritize wetlands/PAs financing.</p> <p>Finally, the project will support the revisions of the local development strategies, mainstreaming biodiversity considerations (i.e. Biodiversity passports of rare/endangered species and critical habitats) and related sustainable management measures.</p> <p>When modifying existing resource use and management regimes, there is always a possibility of some modification to the enjoyment of human rights or potential economic displacement of individuals</p>	<p>The risk will be managed through the <b>SESA approach</b> (that must be applied during the development of the project-supported legal and policy amendments , influencing the said amendments, such that potential social and environmental downstream impacts arising from the development of subsequent regulations/policy/guidelines are considered as an explicit part of the amended laws, Regulation and policies (<i>please see Annex 10 ESMF</i>)</p> <p>With respect to gender, a <b>Gender Analysis</b> has been undertaken and a <b>Gender Action Plan</b> developed to address the issue of gender dimension in the policy making. The project will hire a gender expert that will supervise the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and will make sure that the project will offer equal opportunities for women to participate in and benefit from the project activities, and participate in a meaningful way in the policy related deliberations.</p> <p>This is especially important with regard to the project-supported NBSAP development. The project experts will ensure that gender issues are integrated into NBSAP, setting the framework for gender-responsive biodiversity planning and programming at national and local levels. During the government-led multi-stakeholders consultations on NBSAP, the project will seek to strengthen the understanding of the national institutions and agencies (with mandate on biodiversity conservation and wise use) on the multifaceted biodiversity</p>
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<p><b>Risk 4:</b> Designation of additional areas as Ramsar sites in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, and expansion of the total PA area, could lead to potential limitations or restrictions of the use of natural resources.</p> <p>Similarly, strengthening the management of existing PAs, such as the development of a Management Plan for the targeted PAs, improved PAs zoning, strengthening the protection regimes and stricter enforcement of the environmental regulation may further restrict access to and use of biodiversity resources by local communities, affecting livelihoods.</p> <p>SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P5</p> <p>SESP</p>	<p>I=3 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>Under <b>Output 2.1.1</b>, the project will support the Ramsar designation of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, adding approximately 9,300 ha of adjacent floodplain surface area to the existing PA. The project will also develop a Management plan that will adequately manage the entire Ramsar area through an improved zoning, that will enforce some limitation of natural resource use especially in PA buffer areas, combining conservation measures and biodiversity friendly livelihoods.</p> <p>In the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, the project will update the existing management plan with potential improvement of current PA zoning as well. The 9 localities in the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve have already been consulted and they have approved of the current draft Management Plan. This draft will however get updated and potential modifications of the currently proposed zoning may be proposed. Additional local consultations will be organized with the local communities' representatives.</p> <p>The enhanced protection regime and a better zoning and delineation of on-the-ground of PAs core and buffer areas (although having significant environmental benefits) it may bring along potential risks of restrictions/limitations on the use of natural resources that may be at odd with the current agricultural practices of the local communities in project areas. Associated with that is the risk that not all key user groups of natural resources at project sites are consulted in project implementation and they will be affected by the restrictions on the use of natural resources.</p>	<p>The risk management measures will be addressed by the <b>Process Framework (PF)</b>, included in the Project document.</p> <p>The <b>Stakeholder Engagement Plan, Gender Action Plan</b> and <b>project level GRM</b> will complement the Process Framework ( Please see Annex 9 Stakeholder Engagement Plan ? it includes a template for the Process Framework).</p> <p>The <b>Process framework</b> is embedded in the project strategy and it is part and parcel of the project's work under Component 2 (Output 2.1.1/Act 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.3).</p> <p>The PF will engage local population in the targeted areas. These local meetings will create awareness on the work on PAs and will address and reconcile any real or perceived economic limitations that the PA legal mandate (and/or additional international designation such as Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO) may impose.</p> <p>Evaluation of the necessity of <b>potential compensatory mechanisms</b> and eligibility criteria, describing the measures that will assist the potential affected persons to improve their livelihoods will be identified as the result of these assessments and discussions.</p> <p>The project manager will ensure that Information and guidance to local communities about the UNDP Conflict resolution</p>
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<p><b>Risk 5.</b> The restoration of the old watercourse of the Camenca river will raise the ground water level, which may affect private arable land plots and cause flooding of house basements, negatively affecting livelihoods and may restrict the current (illegal) access to water resources of some of the local residents. The intervention sites may disturb surrounding settlements.</p>	<p>I=4 L=3</p>	<p><b>Substantial</b></p>	<p>Under Output 2.2.1 Act. 2.2.1.2 the project will support the rehabilitation of an old water course of Camenca river, the main tributary of Prut river.</p>	<p><b>Mitigation measures will ensure consistency to SES (not adherence) because the relevant project activities are co-financed with funds that will not be administered by UNDP (i.e. will not flow through UNDP accounts).</b></p>
<p>SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P5</p>			<p>This may trigger some opposing views at local level, especially in Balatina village, due to two factors:</p>	<p>The risk is mitigated through two processes:</p>
<p>SESP Principle 2 Human Rights, P6</p>			<p>The envisaged restoration will increase the groundwater level, which ( despite the ecological and livelihoods benefits brought to the area) can affect some private plots and may flood the basements of the houses located in the river's proximity. The groundwater level is not likely to raise in such a significant way that would cause floods simply because Camenca river is a small stream. On some plots, the groundwater may reach the surface, replenishing existing lakes and ponds and increasing soil moisture in the grasslands, as the entire floodplain ecosystems will gain water from the replenished aquifer. Water levels in the existing lakes and ponds and water wells is likely to rise. The extent of the water level increase will be rigorously assessed during the full feasibility study, during the project implementation. The PPG stage pre-feasibility study has indicated the potential of ground water level to rise with several centimeters, however in-depth modelling scenarios are needed in order to assess the extent of impact on the groundwater level rise and area covered.</p>	<p>- the <b>Process Framework (PF)</b> embedded in the project strategy, under the Act. 2.2.1.2.</p>
<p>SES Principle 3, Gender, P10</p>			<p>While this is a beneficial restoration activity that will bring approx. 8.3 mil m3 of water annually and will tremendously help with the adaptation to the predicted climate-induced water deficits, the local residents may (initially, at least) oppose to this restoration, as there is a certain locally vested interest in the status quo to remain unchanged. Currently an (apparent) illegal small earth dam constructed on the old river bed is diverting water for some of the residents own private use (e.g. poultry farming, irrigation) although the area is a public property (as indicated in excerpts from the pre-feasibility study Annex 20 Project Document). Although this construction is illegal, and located on state property, there have been no legal measures taken so far.</p>	<p>The local dialogue facilitated by the project together with the national and local authorities will first and foremost raise awareness and educate the local communities about the benefits of the restoration works and secondly will find an agreeable solution to enforce the applicable legislation/regulations concerning the illegal constructions on Camenca water course. The local dialogue will be addressing especially the concerns of people from the villages situated in the immediate proximity of the envisaged hydrological works, in particular Balatina village. Any potential economic displacements resulting from the preparatory activities and post-hydrological works will be addressed following UNDP SES guidelines and the project will develop a Livelihood Action Plan as required and compensatory (non-monetary) payments (<i>Annex 10 ESMF</i>).</p>
<p>SES Principle 3, Gender, P11</p>				<p>- Secondly, the development of the scoped ESIA/ESMP, as part of a <b>full Feasibility Study (according to the national legislation)</b> during the project implementation will give further clarity on the</p>
<p>Principle 5, Accountability, P13</p>				
<p>Principle 5, Accountability, P14</p>				

<p><b>Risk 6:</b> Wetlands riparian restoration measures intended to improve water availability, and reduce threats to critical habitats and environmentally sensitive areas could potentially end up harming them.</p> <p>Standard 1 Biodiversity and NRM 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 1.8 SES Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.5; 3.6</p> <p>SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.2; 2.3</p> <p>Standard 7 Labor and Working Conditions 7.1; 7.3</p>	<p>I=5 3L=2</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p><b>Output 2.2</b> comprises a suite of measures to restore wetlands lakes and riparian zones in both targeted PAs.</p> <p>In the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve, 50 ha of riparian strips will be re-forested in strategically selected spots with the aim of not only restoring degraded land and reducing soil erosion but also acting as a barrier against domestic waste and agriculture run-offs entering 3,000 ha of lakes ecosystems in Manta-Beleu lakes network and increasing siltation.</p> <p>The likelihood of the risks from targeted project interventions is rated 'moderately likely' but given that the objective of the project is to enhance the environmental and social qualities of these areas, the risk of negative and environmental impacts is considered limited in scale and manageable through applicable standard practices, use of native species and/or previously tested methods . Although the environmental risks are considered moderate, limited in scale and with the likelihood of being reasonably managed, and the sites are at sufficient distance from the protected areas, and there will be selected such that will minimize or completely reduce impact on private land, there will be nevertheless minor changes in land cover and potential damage to the vegetation type; temporary disturbance of rodent burrows or bird nests may be possible.</p>	<p>RIPARIAN REFORESTATION</p> <p>The risks will be managed through an <b>appropriately scoped ESIA</b> to identify, prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts on the critical habitats . The wetlands restoration measures are expected to ensure livelihood improvements and environmental sustainability during and beyond the project period.</p> <p>The <b>qualified project's experts</b> ( Riparian Forest Engineer, Hydrologists, Agronomist, PA specialist) will work with the safeguards experts/company to properly identify risks and proposed management measures. The Project Manager and Experts as well as Implementing Partner and Moldsilva Agency, ICAS, representatives and local authorities will facilitate local consultations with community representatives on the proposed restoration measures, targeted locations and necessary assessments.</p> <p>In the case of the reforestation works under Output 2.2.1/Act. 2.2.1.1, the selected reforestation areas selected are located on public property , managed by the local authorities and Moldsilva Agency. <b>ESIAs</b> will be conducted prior to the commencement of the reforestation activities (please see ESMF Annex 10). The local communities will be made aware of the monitoring requirements of the sites and the ecological benefits that these habitat restorations will bring to the lakes ecosystems. The consultations will be led by the local authorities and the project will work together</p>
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<p><b>Risk 7.</b> The project supported demonstration activities may fail to properly consider procedures for chance finds of valuable cultural heritage sites.</p> <p>SES Standard 4; 4.1; 4.2, 4.3, 4.5</p>	<p>I=3 L=2</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>The project sites for <b>Outputs 2.2</b> have been carefully selected during the PPG based on several criteria chiefly among which is the riparian/floodplain land condition in the PAs. There is very low risk that these sites be overlapping with cultural and/or historically significant sites.</p>	<p>The risk is managed through SESP and the project will ensure that chance find procedures are included in all plans and contracts regarding project-related restoration works, construction, including excavations, demolitions, movement of earth, flooding, or other changes in the physical environment; such procedures establish how chance finds of tangible Cultural Heritage shall be managed, including notification of relevant authorities and stakeholders, avoidance of further disturbance or damage, protection, documentation and assessment of found objects by relevant experts</p>
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<p><b>Risk 8:</b> The project may potentially resort to institutional collaborations with local police and gendarmerie that may risk facilitating potential altercations with local communities.</p> <p>Enforcement of PAs regime and/or buffer areas, following applicable environmental norms and legislation could pose risks of conflicts between rangers and local communities engaged in traditional livelihoods and practices. Enforcement of applicable laws and regulations in case of illegal earth dam construction on Camenca river, may result in conflicts between the local police and local community.</p> <p>SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P2 SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P7 SES Standard</p>	<p>I=4 L=3</p>	<p><b>Substantial</b></p>	<p>The risk rating ?Substantial? is considered particularly in relation with the case of the illegal constructions on Camenca river, diverting water for personal use of a restricted number of residents in Balatina village. In this case, attempts to law enforcement could lead to potential hostilities among different local community members and/or between local police and community members that are illegally using natural resources.</p> <p>In addition, the project may facilitate institutional agreements with local police in order to combat illegal activities such as poaching and illegal logging in the targeted PAs. Enforcement issues of the environmental regulations may lead to conflicts between the PA rangers and the local community.</p>	<p>Risk management measures :</p> <p>1. Firstly, the project will ensure that the <b>PAs Management Plans</b> (Act. 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.3) in the targeted areas will encompass measures for patrolling/enforcing the environmental regulations and engagement with local communities with respect to human rights principles, understanding the local community's rights and needs. PAs management plan will include human rights-based measures/actions for PAs rangers concerning patrolling and application of fines, search and arrest and interaction with local communities, aiming at promoting collaborative approaches.</p> <p>Secondly, the <b>targeted PAs trainings</b> (Act. 2.1.2.2) on patrolling and legal enforcement will be included in the training seminars for rangers and PA staff, local police and central and local authorities with an emphasis on human rights principles (in line with the UNDP SES). Some of the trainings will target specifically community outreach related topics , and addressing illegal activities "<i>Interaction with local communities</i>". The training will include a specific module for rangers, on Local Communities and Cultures, in order to strengthen understanding on community rights and needs; respect to human rights and empowering communities to manage and protect wildlife and critical habitats.</p> <p>Most importantly, the issue of illegal constructions on Camenca river and/or other economic displacement risks</p>
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<p><b>Risk 9:</b> The expected impacts resulting from the project-supported biodiversity conservation and restoration measures could be sensitive to changing climate conditions in the future.</p> <p><i>SES Standard 2 Climate Change Vulnerability, 2.2</i></p> <p><i>SES Standard 2 Climate Change Vulnerability, 2.3</i></p>	<p>I=3 L=2</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>Adverse impacts of extreme climatic events (drought and/or seasonal floods) can affect project's interventions in the field and the livelihoods of local communities living in the target areas.</p>	<p>The management measures will be implemented <b>through the project's strategy</b>.</p>
				<p>The various project's assessments will be informed by the existing climate risk profile/studies (elaborated within the framework of other projects) and through the project's own land/water and climate risk assessments.</p>
				<p>The project will develop a <i>Study of the hydro-ecological conditions for adequate wetlands management, climate resilient measures and adaptation scenarios</i> (under Output 2.1.1. Act 2.1.1.5) focusing on the targeted wetlands in the Prut River Basin. The assessments/study will be developed by the project experts in collaboration with NGO and academia. The Study will be conducted in coordination with the field research and hydroclimatic modeling for the establishment of the minimum ecological flow (Activity 1.1.1.3). The Study will include practical recommendations for decision makers to improve wetlands management. Based on these recommendations, the project will develop additional legal/regulatory amendments for the improvement of wetlands management framework.</p>
				<p>Attention to the current and potential impacts of climate change has been built-in to all aspects of the project.</p>
				<p>A multidisciplinary team of specialists will ensure that the partners and stakeholders will apply the best available climate change forecasts data Moldova and river Prut basin and will ensure that all project activities and plans</p>



<p><b>Risk 10:</b> Project activities involving local/field interventions and close engagement with local communities may inadvertently contribute to the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.4</p>	<p>I=3 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>Activities at local level are based on participatory approaches, and most of the times will include meetings and local consultations. There are a number of training workshops and awareness events, round table meetings etc.</p>	<p>The risk will be mitigated through <b>adequate safeguards</b> such as: (i) clear procedures in place in case of COVID19 reinstatement of restrictions, approved during project inception (ii) use of protective equipment, maintaining social distancing and using remote methods of engagement whenever possible (iii) if adequate safeguards cannot be put in place, activities that entail close local communities engagement will be put on hold if necessary, and work programme/budget will be revised as needed. Wherever possible on-line meeting platforms will be used and travel decreased. All project meetings will be organized mindful of government regulations and healthy standards and other appropriate safeguards (including those of UNDSS). Under Output 3.1.2 Act. 3.1.2.4 the project will support the development of <b>COVID-19 safe tourism protocols</b> by working with the National Tourism Authority and will apply/test these safety protocols within the tourism itineraries/packages supported by the project.</p>
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<p><b>Risk 11:</b> The project may inadvertently contribute to potential perpetuation of discriminations against women. There are lingering disparities between men and women, particularly in rural areas and in the patriarchal cultures of some of the ethnic minority communities, which could be inadvertently replicated.</p> <p>-</p> <p><i>SES Principle 3, Gender, P10, P12</i></p>	<p>I=2 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>The Project could potentially perpetuate discriminations against women based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities. In the rural areas, women account for around 51-52% of the population. They are mainly engaged in housekeeping, teaching, and administrative support services. Many more women form part of the unpaid family labor in family farms.</p>	<p>The management of this risk will be done through the implementation of the <b>Gender Action Plan (GAP)</b> and will be monitored by the project specialized gender expert.</p> <p>The project design has consistently mainstreamed gender sensitive approaches and has created opportunities for tackling women's needs and the differentiated ways men and women use natural resources. The project will provide ample opportunities for women to learn about biodiversity-friendly business opportunities in rural areas, and participate in the business opportunities facilitated by the project.</p> <p>Though the training programs for local natural resource users and SMEs women will also be able to access the capacity building and training required to practice green businesses as well as to diversify their livelihoods in more resilient ways.</p> <p>The project will ensure gender balance in all project activities (e.g. seminars, community level events) including in the membership of different decision-making bodies ( Working groups; Project Board; Evaluation Committees) including access to project financial assistance and/or compensatory measures in case of potential economic displacement.</p> <p>The project will also gather gender-disaggregated data for evaluation purposes and use gender sensitive indicators (particularly around beneficiaries) to facilitate planning, implementation and monitoring. Complaints will be addressed and managed through the Grievance Redress Mechanism and the Project Board.</p>
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<p><b>Risk 12.</b> Supported local small businesses could involve third party subcontractors, that may inadvertently fail to comply with international labor standards including those related to child labor and/or may inadvertently fail to provide for occupational health and safety standards .</p>	<p>I=3 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate[2]</b></p>	<p>The project will support small local businesses to access financing in order to implement local initiatives that will boost their livelihoods. In addition, there will be construction works related to the restoration activities under Output 2.2.</p> <p>Likelihood of non-observance of UN standards and policies of labor and working conditions especially child labor has been considered based also on some existing reports:</p> <p><a href="https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/moldova">https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/moldova</a></p>	<p>The <b>management measures will be devised on case by case basis per the procedures described in the ESMF.</b> The project will ensure that national working standards (Labor Code) are respected for all the project activities. The requirements of this Standard are to be applied in an appropriately-scaled manner based on the nature and scale of the project, its specific activities, the project's associated social and environmental risks and impacts, and the type of contractual relationships with project workers.</p> <p><b>The management procedures will be that specific requirements of the terms and conditions of the employment will be established,</b> that will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comply with minimum age requirements set out in International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions or national legislation (whichever offers the greatest protection to young people under the age of 18) and keep records of the dates of birth of all employees verified by official documentation</li> <li>- Check the activities carried out by young workers and ensure that children under 18 are not employed in hazardous work, including in contractor workforces. Hazardous work will normally be defined in national legislation and will be likely to include most tasks in construction and</li> </ul>
<p><i>SES Standard 7; 7.1</i></p>				
<p><i>SES Standard 7; 7.3,7.4</i></p>				

<p><b>Risk 13: The project may inadvertently support legal/policy amendments that will allow oil drilling in Protected Areas.</b></p> <p>SES Standard 1 Biodiversity and NRM, 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; 1.7; 1.14</p> <p>SES Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.5; 3.6</p> <p>SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.4</p> <p>SES Standard 8 Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency 8.2, 8.6</p>	<p>I=3 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>The project will offer legal assistance to the Ministry of Environment and the Ministerial Committee in charge with monitoring the oil exploitation in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, in order to modify the legal provisions and regulations related to concessions of mineral resources.</p>	<p>The risk will be mitigated by the SESA approach. The project will also ensure that the legal amendments will adhere to the MAB UNESCO requirements for the biosphere reserve designated in the Lower Prut.</p>
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<p><b>Risk 14 The project supported Innovation Challenge may inadvertently promote innovative products that could pose environmental or social risks.</b></p> <p>SES Standard 1 Biodiversity and NRM, 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.4</p>	<p>I=3 L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>The project's work under Output 3.1.2 is focusing on the organization of an Innovation Challenge in order to identify innovative SMART 'biodiversity passport', possibly a downloadable <i>Smart Phone App</i> that will be promoted as the preferred means to download a single ID/code which would give access to information on protected area sites and tourism facilities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania.</p>	<p>The risk will be mitigated through SES (screening against UNDP SES criteria). The Innovation Challenge will be organized according to UNDP procedures and the screening of proposals will be aligned with UNDP SES requirements (please see ESMF Annex 10)</p>
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<p><b>Risk 15 The project supported eco-tourism routes may pose environmental or social risks.</b></p> <p><i>SES Principle 2 Human Rights</i></p> <p><i>P5, P7</i></p> <p><i>SES Principle 3 Gender</i></p> <p><i>P10, P12</i></p> <p><i>SES Principle Accountability and Resilience</i></p> <p><i>P13</i></p> <p><i>Standard 1 Biodiversity Conservation and NRM</i></p> <p><i>1.2,1.4</i></p> <p>SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.4</p> <p>Standard 7 Labor and Working Condition</p> <p>7.3,</p>	<p>I=3</p> <p>L=3</p>	<p><b>Moderate</b></p>	<p>Under Output 3.1.2 the project will support the development of local eco-tourism routes (Act 3.1.2.1) and a cross-border tourist package Moldova-Romania (Act 3.1.2.2), building upon the existing local tourists attractions and involving the support of the Local Action Group Lower Prut.</p> <p>The risks considered here are related to the project potential failure to consider : (i) inclusive participation of local communities in the development of the tourist itineraries, especially with respect to gender and vulnerable communities and (ii) risks related to labor conditions, (iii) risks related to the potential support to unsustainable use of natural resources etc</p>	<p>The risk will be mitigated through SES, using the UNDP social and environmental screening procedures in order to identify and avoid possible risks (Please see ESMF Annex 10).</p>
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<p><b>Risk 16:</b> Oil exploitation operations in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve do not observe the minimum environmental standards, and constitute a likely source of water pollution and fire hazards, posing a risk to the natural habitats and ecosystems in the project's targeted PAs.</p>	<p>I-4 L=4</p>	<p><b>Substantial</b></p>	<p><b>This risk relates to the project's area of influence, and does not stem from project activities. The measures (to the right) reflect this fact.</b></p>	<p>Indirect/circumstantial risk mitigation measures:</p>
<p>Standard 1 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management</p> <p>1.2; 1.4; 1.7; 1.10; 1.14</p>			<p>Oil exploitation in a core area of a MAB/UNESCO Biosphere reserve in Lower Prut is based on unclear legal arrangements. Oil exploitation platform is functioning on subpar environmental standards, that can (and did) ignite fire hazards, affecting critical habitats in 2020.</p>	<p>Under Output 1.1. Act. 1.1.1.1 the project will develop legal amendments that when approved, will clarify any potential legal ambiguities surrounding the oil exploitation in the MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.</p>
<p>Standard 8 Pollution Prevention and resource Efficiency; 8.1, 8.2</p>			<p>The Law on Protected Areas (article 26) does stipulate that economic activities affecting natural ecosystem are forbidden in the scientific reserves but provides an exception for the exploitation of natural and mineral resources that are of national interest (such as oil and gas) with the only caveat to respect environmental norms, the latter of which are not observed by private entities. The article 56 of the same law however forbids any economic activity in a core area of a MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, however the oil exploitation platform in a core area of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve is still operational. The current oil concession holder has filed for bankruptcy and its contract expired. Currently (at the time of this SESP) the Ministry of Environment is seeking to reach a final resolution on the oil exploitation in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve.</p>	<p>The project will work with the Organization for SME sector development tin Moldova (ODIMM) and will develop and deliver ISO14001:2015 training modules to promote mandatory ISO 14001 certification and development of capacities for increasing environmental standards. The trainings are primarily destined to oil companies but also for economic operators that are posing medium and high risks of polluting the water resources.</p>
				<p>The project will be coordinated with the active NGOS and media in order to advocate for stopping the oil exploitation in core area of the targeted PA.</p>
				<p>The project will support the Ministerial Committee that will be in charge to supervise the oil concessional contract and will provide technical legal advisory services as necessary, aiming at increasing technical capacity to mainstream mandatory higher environmental standards for economic activities in PAs in the current regulatory framework. The project will support the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve Administration to conclude local agreements with environmental inspectorates and local police and facilitate rapid interventions in case of fire or other hazards resulting from the oil exploitation.</p>

**QUESTION 4: What is the overall project risk categorization?**

Low Risk	?	
Moderate Risk	?	
<b>Substantial Risk</b>	X	
High Risk	?	

**QUESTION 5: Based on the identified risks and risk categorization, what requirements of the SES are triggered? (check all that apply)**

Question only required for Moderate, Substantial and High Risk projects

<u>Is assessment required? (check if ?yes?)</u>	x		Status? (completed, planned)
if yes, indicate overall type and status		X	Targeted assessment (s) Completed during PPG: gender analysis, stakeholder analysis
		x	SESA Planned during implementation: to be determined based on site-specific screening
		x	ESIA Planned during implementation: to be determined based on site-specific screening



<p><b>Are management plans required? (check if ?yes)</b></p>	<p><b>X</b></p>			
<p>If yes, indicate overall type</p>		<p><b>X</b></p>	<p>Screening and Targeted management plans (e.g. Gender Action Plan, Emergency Response Plan, others)</p>	<p>Completed during PPG: Gender Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan  Planned during implementation: Process Framework, Livelihood Action Plan (if needed), others as needed per site-specific screening and assessment</p>
		<p>x</p>	<p>ESMP</p>	<p>Planned during implementation: to be determined based on site-specific screening</p>
		<p>x</p>	<p>ESMF (Environmental and Social Management Framework)</p>	<p>Completed during PPG</p>

Based on identified risks, which Principles/Project-level Standards triggered?		Comments (not required)
Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind		
<b>Human Rights</b>	X	
<b>Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment</b>	X	
<b>Accountability</b>	X	
<b>1. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management</b>	X	
<b>2. Climate Change and Disaster Risks</b>	X	
<b>3. Community Health, Safety and Security</b>	X	
<b>4. Cultural Heritage</b>	X	
<b>5. Displacement and Resettlement</b>	X	
6. Indigenous Peoples	?	
<b>7. Labour and Working Conditions</b>	X	
<b>8. Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency</b>	X	

[1] <https://www.undp.org/accountability/audit/secu-srm>

[2] Recommended for the M&E activities and assessment of this risk at project site: FAO's [Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture](#) (2015) - an important resource for designing, assessing and monitoring projects that need to address the risks of child labour in agricultural production and pastoral activities.

#### Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Module	Submitted
<b>6551_ESMF_10650_Moldova Wetlands_Sept2021_cleared</b>	<b>CEO Endorsement ESS</b>	
<b>6551_Annex 6_UNDP SESP_Moldova_Sept2021_cleared</b>	<b>CEO Endorsement ESS</b>	
<b>6551 Moldova pre-SESP</b>	<b>Project PIF ESS</b>	

**ANNEX A: PROJECT RESULTS FRAMEWORK** (either copy and paste here the framework from the Agency document, or provide reference to the page in the project document where the framework could be found).

<b>This project will contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goal (s):</b> <i>SDGs 2,5,8,12,13,15</i>				
<b>This project will contribute to the following country outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD, GPD):</b> <i>UNDP Country Programme Document 2018-2022 Pillar 3 Climate change, environment and energy ; UNDAF Outcome 3: The people of Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from enhanced environmental governance, energy security, sustainable management of natural resources and climate and disaster resilient development</i>				
	<b>Objective and Outcome Indicators</b>  <b>(no more than a total of 20 indicators)</b>	<b>Baseline</b>  <i>Must be determined during PPG phase</i>	<b>Mid-term Target</b>  <i>Expected level of progress before MTR process starts</i>	<b>End of Project Target</b>  <i>Expected level when terminal evaluation undertaken</i>
<b>Project Objective:</b>  To achieve ecological integrity of key floodplain wetlands ensuring positive status of biodiversity, land and water resources, as well as	Indicator 1 ( <u>GEF Core Indicator 11</u> ): # direct project beneficiaries disaggregated by gender (individual people)	0	20,000  (10,000 women)	40,000  (21,000 women)
	Indicator 2 ( <u>GEF Core Indicator 1 Sub-Indicator 1.2</u> ): Terrestrial protected areas under improved management for conservation and sustainable use (Hectares)	0	20,803[1]	20,803 ha

ecosystem services	Indicator 3 (GEF Core Indicator 3 Sub-Indicator 3.4) (Sum of Indicators 9 and 10 below): Area of restored wetlands (Hectares)	0	Technical project of the envisaged reforestation work in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve completed. Feasibility study of the envisaged Camenca River restoration work completed. All legal matters addressed.	14,225 ha[2]
	Indicator 4 (GEF Core Indicator 6.1): Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated (metric tons of CO2 eq)	0	0	556,806
<b>Project component 1</b>	<b>Enhanced regulatory and financing environment</b>			
<b>Project Outcome</b> <b>Outcome 1.1</b> Better fiduciary and financial environment for long-term resilience of wetland ecosystems	Indicator 5: Number of approved new/amended regulations/policies/laws directly related to improving status, management and financing regimes of wetlands	0	Draft regulations and amendments prepared and submitted for approval	10
	Indicator 6: Number of approved new/amended regulations/policies/laws related to prioritization of the financing of wetlands through the National Ecological Fund.	0	Draft regulations and amendments prepared and submitted for approval	5

<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 1</b>	<p><b>Output 1.1.1</b> Regulations and by-laws developed, consulted and adopted by relevant institutions that promote identification, monitoring and wise use of wetlands under international treaties</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.2</b> National Ecological Fund (NEF) capacitated to prioritize financing of wetland conservation and sustainable use</p> <p><b>Output 1.1.3</b> Biodiversity-compatible local development strategies in target districts designed and under implementation</p>			
<b>Project Component 2</b>	<b>Improved Protection and Management of Key Biodiversity Areas on Wetlands</b>			
<b>Outcome 2.1</b> Positive status of wetland habitats and species at targeted Key	<i>Indicator 7</i> Increase of METT score for the targeted national PAs	<i>Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve 31</i>  <i>Royal Forest Nature Reserve 57</i>	33  60	35  63

Biodiversity Areas	<p><b>Indicator 8:</b> Stable status/positive changes in the population of globally significant biodiversity at the targeted PAs.</p> <p><b><u>Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve :</u></b></p> <p>Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i></p> <p>Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i></p> <p>Black-crowned Night Heron <i>Nycticorax</i></p> <p>Eurasian Spoonbill <i>Platalea leucorodia</i></p> <p>Grey heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i></p> <p>Ferruginous Duck <i>Aythya nyroca</i></p> <p>Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i></p> <p>Red-breasted Goose <i>Branta rufficollis</i></p> <p>Kingfisher <i>Alcedo atthis</i></p> <p><b><u>Royal Forest Nature Reserve:</u></b></p> <p>Little Egret <i>Egretta garzetta</i></p> <p>Black-crowned Night Heron <i>Nycticorax</i></p> <p>Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i></p> <p>Grey Heron <i>Ardea cinerea</i></p> <p>Mute Swan <i>Cygnus olor</i></p> <p>White-tailed Eagle <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i></p>	<p>Baseline: as indicated in the METT scorecards</p> <p>Baseline to be validated during inventories</p>	<p>Midterm target: As indicated in the METT scorecards</p>	<p>End project target: As indicated in the METT scorecards</p>
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<b>Outputs to achieve</b> <b>Outcome 2.1</b>	<b>Output 2.1.1</b> Revised PA category upgraded international designation, improved zoning, mapping, management and business plans for Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (including assistance for its integration into the tri-lateral Biosphere Reserve with Ukraine and Romania) and Royal Forest Nature Reserve. <b>Output 2.1.2</b> Management units and communities at targeted PAs capacitated to comply with/enforce management/buffer zone regimes, ensure proper monitoring of biodiversity and key wetland ecosystems, undertake species-focused conservation activities and PA patrolling.			
<b>Outcome 2.2.</b>  Viable wetland and forest ecosystem restoration options demonstrated	Indicator <b>9</b> : Number of hectares of lakes and riparian ecosystems restored in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve	Baseline to be established at project inception	50 ha of riparian strips reforested	Positive change in the conditions of the 3,000 ha lakes and 50 ha riparian ecosystems, compared to baseline
	Indicator <b>10</b> : Number of hectares of floodplain areas restored in and around the Royal Forest Nature Reserve	0 ha	Feasibility study for the hydrotechnical works developed  Local community consulted and supports the intervention  All legal matters addressed	Positive change at 11,175 ha of floodplain ecosystems, compared to baseline
<b>Outputs to achieve</b> <b>Outcome 2.2</b>	<b>Output 2.2.1</b> Riparian forest strips restored (through assisted regeneration or reforestation as feasible) acting as a barrier to agricultural and waste runoff in Lower Prut, at Manta-Beleu Lakes network. High value forested floodplain ecosystems in Padurea Domneasca (Royal Forest) restored through optimization of flooding regime in Camenca River Basin and regulation of the ground water table.			
<b>Project component 3</b>	<b>Demonstrating sustainable use/livelihoods at wetlands</b>			
<b>Outcome 3.1</b>  New sustainable income streams created for communities and small size	Indicator <b>11</b> : Percentage of increase in monetary income to targeted entrepreneurs derived from sustainable wetland use and facilitated tourism (gender disaggregated)	Baseline to be established at project inception	Net Income men: \$X + 10%  Net income women: \$X + 10%	Net Income men: \$X + 20%  Net income women: \$X + 20%



entrepreneurs from sustainable use of resources at wetlands	Indicator 12: Percentage of increase in the annual number of visitors in Lower Prut Biosphere reserve	Baseline visitation data for Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve  1300 tourists (2020 data)	Eco-tourism routes involving 2 municipalities in Lower Prut Biosphere reserve developed  Cross-border tourism package Moldova-Romania developed	40% increase compared to baseline
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 3</b>	<b>Output 3.1.1</b> Strengthened capacities of Local Action Group ?Lower Prut? and local entrepreneurs? to implement local biodiversity friendly development initiatives. <b>Output 3.1.2</b> Eco-tourism packages for wine/gastronomy routes adjusted to incorporate biodiversity observation in 2 communities.			
<b>Project component 4</b>	<b>Knowledge Management</b>			

**Outcome 4.1**

Knowledge management and gender sensitive KM products developed and disseminated

Indicator 13: : Number of knowledge products related to wetlands conservation considerations mainstreaming into policies, laws and regulations, developed and disseminated. Project knowledge products include, where feasible, an analysis of gender equity/empowerment in relation with the specific knowledge topic.

0

Draft methodologies developed

Draft analysis and studies developed

**20 gender sensitive awareness raising events and 6 Knowledge products:**

**KM product 1:** Methodology for calculation of the minimum ecological flow supporting the evidence-based amendments to the Regulation of Stanca Costesti Dam and PA legislation.

**KM product 2:** ?Biodiversity passports? concept integrated into local development strategies.

**KM Product 3:**?Hydroecological and Climate resilient assessment of Prut River wetlands? supporting evidence-based wetlands/PAs related legislative amendments.

**KM Product 4 ?** ISO 14001 Standards? training module developed/delivered supporting the environmental regulations.

**KM Product 5** ?Feasibility Study of the Restoration of the old watercourse of Camenca River? developed, grounding the restoration works.

**KM Product 6 ?** Socio-economic and Eco-tourist assessments? in pilot PAs including

	<i>Indicator 14:</i> Number of women and men getting access to the best available knowledge and practice, through project-supported knowledge products and training	0	2,000 (1,000 women)	5,000 (2,500 women)
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 4.1</b>	<b>Output 4.1.1</b> Online awareness raising campaign targeting central and local authorities/decision makers and local and regional education seminars  <b>Output 4.1.2</b> Innovative gender sensitive knowledge products and services from the project synthesized, packaged and disseminated			
<b>Component 5</b>	<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>			
<b>Outcome 5</b> <i>Project results properly monitored and evaluated</i>	<i>Indicator 15:</i> Monitoring and Evaluation reports  Evaluative knowledge available to project partners	0	Internal UNDP review based on UNDP M&E	Final GEF evaluation report
<b>Outputs to achieve Outcome 5</b>	Output 5.1 Monitored/evaluated project results, and evaluative knowledge incorporated in the project adaptive management			

[1] Sum of: total area of the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve (14,771 ha) and Royal Forest Nature Reserve (6,032 ha) ? the latter is calculated without the area proposed to be designated as Ramsar site in order to avoid double counting, as the proposed Ramsar site larger overlaps the restored Camenca floodplain counted under Indicator 3.

[2] The target represents the sum of 3,000 lakes restored in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve + 50 ha reforested riparian strips in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve+ 11,175 ha of floodplain restored in and around Royal Forest Biosphere Reserve (River Camenca floodplain)

## **ANNEX B: RESPONSES TO PROJECT REVIEWS (from GEF Secretariat and GEF Agencies, and Responses to Comments from Council at work program inclusion and the Convention Secretariat and STAP at PIF).**

N/A

## **ANNEX C: Status of Utilization of Project Preparation Grant (PPG). (Provide detailed funding amount of the PPG activities financing status in the table below:**

\*Expected unspent budget balance USD 720.6 (status on 2 November 2021)

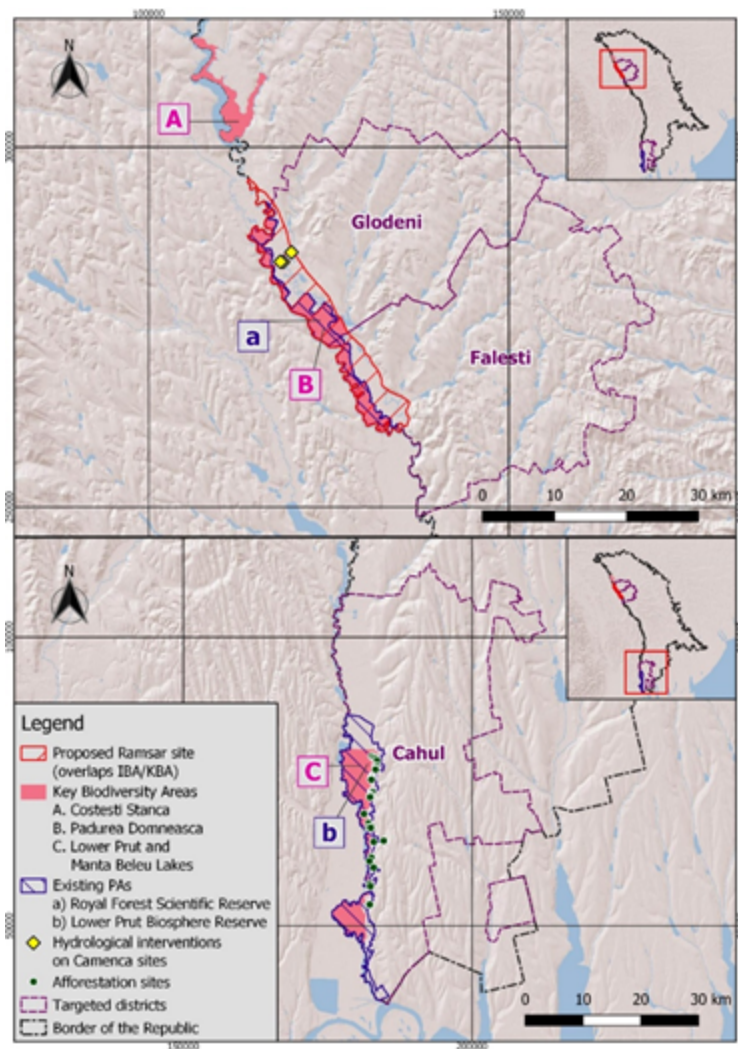
If at CEO Endorsement, the PPG activities have not been completed and there is a balance of unspent fund, Agencies can continue to undertake exclusively preparation activities up to one year of CEO Endorsement/approval date. No later than one year from CEO endorsement/approval date. Agencies should report closing of PPG to Trustee in its Quarterly Report.

**The unused PPG funds will be returned to the GEF.**

<b>Project preparation activities implemented</b>	<b>GEF Amount USD</b>		
	<b>Budgeted Amount</b>	<b>Amount spent to date</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Preparatory Technical Studies &Reviews	6,500.00	6,500.00	
Project preparation grant to finalize the UNDP-GEF project document for project Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin	41,150.00	40,429.40	720.6
HACT micro-assessment	2,350.00	2,350.00	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>49,279.40</b>	<b>720.6</b>

#### **ANNEX D: Project Map(s) and Coordinates**

**Please attach the geographical location of the project area, if possible.**



Project sites	Centroid		Extent minimum		Extent maximum	
	X	Y	X	Y	X	Y
Glodeni district	47° 44' 2 4.9"	27° 30' 26.7"	47° 35' 04.4"	27° 24' 02.8"	47° 52' 12.3"	27° 27' 41.1"
Falesti district	47° 34' 20.0"	27° 43' 11.2"	47° 22' 18.9"	27° 34' 18.3"	47° 46' 38.8"	27° 47' 00.6"
Cahul district	45° 51' 25.9"	28° 16' 52.4"	45° 27' 57.4"	28° 12' 50.9"	46° 09' 13.9"	28° 18' 16.0"
Proposed Ramsar site	47° 36' 48.0"	27° 23' 50.4"	47° 28' 25.8"	27° 30' 54.9"	47° 47' 31.2"	27° 15' 04.3"

**ANNEX E: Project Budget Table**

Please attach a project budget table.

Expenditure Category	Detailed Description	Component (USDeq.)							Total (USD eq.)	Responsible Entity
		<i>Component 1</i>	<i>Component 2</i>	<i>Component 3</i>	<i>Component 4</i>	<i>Sub - Total</i>	<i>M &amp; E</i>	<i>PM C</i>		(Executing Entity receiving funds from the GEF Agency ) [1]
		<i>Sub-component 1.1</i>	<i>Sub-component 2.1</i>	<i>Sub-component 3.1</i>	<i>Sub-component 4.1</i>					
<b>Equipment</b>	Includes costs of a) 10 PAs information boards for both PAs. Total cost: \$2,500; b) Field equipment Royal Forest Nature Reserve. Total cost: \$10,000; c) Field equipment Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. Total cost: 15,000; d) Materials for a small enclosure to serve for the treatment and care of wounded wildlife in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve e.g. aquatic birds. Total cost: \$10,000.; e) Flora and Fauna field guides for both targeted PA. Total costs: \$2,000		39,500				39,500		39,500	NIM / IP
<b>Equipment</b>	Costs of audio-visual equipment for distant work and video conferencing equipments (display, microphone and cameras, speakers; conferencing phone; internet connection ). Total cost:\$10,000.					-		10,000	10,000	NIM / IP

<b>Vehicle</b>	Includes costs of demarcation and information boards for the eco-tourism routes in Lower prut Biosphere Reserve (Output 3.1.2). Total cost: \$2,500.			2,500					<b>2,500</b>	NIM / IP
<b>Grants</b>	Include costs of micro- grants (i.e. Low Value Grants as per UNDP LVG procedure) to stimulate local rural family businesses, acting as compensatory measures for any potential economic displacement identified during the Process framework (Output 2.1/Act. 2.1.1.1.; 2.1.1.2; 2.1.1.3; 2.2.1.2). Total cost: \$10,000.			10,000					<b>10,000</b>	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Individual</b>	Cost of 20% of the Project manager salary. Total cost \$ 18,000	18,000							<b>18,000</b>	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Individual</b>	Cost of 20% of the Project manager salary. Total cost \$ 18,000		18,000						<b>18,000</b>	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Individual</b>	Cost of 20% of the Project manager salary. Total cost \$ 18,000.			18,000					<b>18,000</b>	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Individual</b>	Costs of Innovation Challenge prize (Total cost: \$40,000)			40,000					<b>40,000</b>	NIM / IP

<b>Contractual Services ? Individual</b>	Includes 10% of the Project manager salary. Total cost: \$ 9,000.				9,000	9,000			9,000	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Individual</b>	Includes a) Partial cost (10%) of the Project Manager salary. Total cost: \$9,000 ( 10% of \$1500/monthx12monthsx5years); b) Full cost of a Project Financial and Administrative Assistant. Total cost: \$42,000 (\$700x12monthsx5years).					-		51,000	51,000	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Company</b>	Costs of trainings services of a Company/NGO to deliver targeted trainings and coaching of local authorities (Output 1.3). Total cost \$9,000, year 3.	9,000				9,000			9,000	NIM / IP



<p><b>Contractual Services ? Company</b></p>	<p>Includes costs of contractual services in support of outputs under Component 2 as follows: a) Specialised safeguards company/consortium (Output 2.2/Act 2.2.1.2; Output 2.2./Activity 2.2.1.1, Output 1.1./Activity 1.1.1.1) for the development of SESA, ESIA/ESMP and the full feasibility study of the hydrotechnical works on Camenca River. Total costs \$ 100,000; b) Specialised company for the execution of reforestation works including technical project (Output 2.2/Activity 2.2.1.1). Total cost \$ 80,324; c) Company/consortium/NGO for the Protected Areas project work ( in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve- Output 2.1.1 Activity 2.1.1.1; Activity 2.1.1.2;Activity 2.1.2.1, Activity 2.1.2.2; in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve- Output 2.1.1./Activity 2.1.1.3; Activity 2.1.1.4; Activity 2.1.2.1; Activity 2.1.2.2: and both PAs training under Activity 2.1.2.2). Total cost: \$110,000; d) Specialised company for the development of Protected Areas Integrated Monitoring Data Bases ( Output 2.1.2 Activity 2.1.2.1) in both targeted PAs. Total cost: \$30,000.</p>		<p>320,324</p>					<p><b>320,324</b></p>	<p>NIM / IP</p>
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<b>Contractual Services ? Company</b>	Includes costs of contractual services of a company to deliver training services on ISO14001:2015 Standard (Output 3.1.1. Activity 3.1.1.2). Total cost:\$20,000.			20,000		20,000		20,000	NIM / IP
<b>Contractual Services ? Company</b>	Includes the costs of contractual services of a PR/media company for the implementation of the awareness raising campaign and media events. Total cost:\$20,000.			20,000		20,000		20,000	NIM / IP
<b>International Consultants</b>	Includes cost of an international GEF project evaluator to support GEF Terminal Evaluation. Total cost: \$21,000 (30 days/\$700/day), year 5.				-	21,000		21,000	NIM / IP

<p><b>Local Consultants</b></p>	<p>Contractual appointment of a team of local experts to provide professional, technical and scientific support to activities under Component 1 as follows: a) Ecologist/Wetlands Specialist (Output 1.1./2.2.). Total cost: \$9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) during year 1 and 2; b) Hydrologist /Water management expert (Output 1.1./2.2) Total cost: \$9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) during year 1 and 2; c) Land use policy specialist (Output 1.3). Total cost: \$4,500 (30 days/\$150/day) during year 3; d) Conservation Biologist/Botanist (Output 1.3). Total cost: \$9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) during year 2 and 3; e) Conservation Biologist/Zoologist (Output 1.3). Total cost: : \$9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) during year 2 and 3; f) Senior Biodiversity Specialist(for NBSAP Output 1.1/Act.1.1.1.1). Total cost:\$10,000 (50 days/\$200/day) during year 1 and 2; g) Legal/policy expert Environmental governance (Output 1.1 and cross-cutting). Total costs: \$15,000 (100 days/\$150/day) during years 1-5; h) Hydroclimatic modelling expert (Output 1.2). Total cost: \$30,000 (60 days/\$500/day) year 1.</p>	<p>95,500</p>				<p>95,500</p>		<p>95,500</p>	<p>NIM / IP</p>
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<p><b>Local Consultants</b></p>	<p>Contractual appointment of a team of local experts to provide professional, technical and scientific support to activities under Component 2 as follows: a) Agro-forestry expert/riparian forestry engineer (Output 2.2.1). Total cost:\$6,000 (40 days/\$150/day) years 1-4.; b) Hydrologist/Water engineer (Output 2.2.1). Total cost:\$9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) years 1-5; c) GIS specialist (Output 2.1). Total cost \$ 9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) years 1-3; d) Protected Areas expert (Output 2.1.1) Total cost: \$9,000 (60 days/\$150/day) years 1-4.</p>		33,000			33,000		33,000	NIM / IP
<p><b>Local Consultants</b></p>	<p>Contractual appointment of a team of local experts to provide professional, technical and scientific support to activities under Component 3 as follows: a) Economist/Technical expert on rural livelihoods (Output 3.1. Act. 3.1.1.1.). Total cost: \$ 4,500 (30 days/\$150/day) years 1-2.; b) Senior Tourism Expert/Rural green tourism(Output 3.1.2 Act 3.1.2.1; 3.1.2.2; 3.1.1.2). Total cost: \$4,500 (30 days/\$150/day) years 1-2.</p>		9,000		9,000		9,000	9,000	NIM / IP

<b>Local Consultants</b>	Includes the costs of a Gender consultant (implementation of Gender Action Plan/GAP). Total cost: \$7,500.				7,500	7,500			7,500	NIM / IP
<b>Local Consultants</b>	Includes: a) costs of local M&E expert. Total cost:\$7,500 (50 days/\$150/day) years 1-5; b) costs of a national evaluation expert to support GEF terminal evaluation. Total cost: \$3,750 (25 days/\$150/day) year 5.					-	11,250		11,250	NIM / IP
<b>Trainings, Workshops, Meetings</b>	Includes costs of the organization of local/national round table meetings to discuss/agree on the legal amendments, including at least 2 cross-border meetings on Stanca Costesti regulations (Output 1.1.). Total costs: \$6,000	6,000				6,000			6,000	NIM / IP
<b>Trainings, Workshops, Meetings</b>	Includes costs of: a) consultations with local communities in both Protected Areas. Total cost:\$ 4,000 ; b) Three regional workshops in Chisinau, with the participation of three countries Moldova-Romania-Ukraine to discuss opportunities for the MAB-UNESCO Trilateral Reserve Danube Delta Lower Prut. Total cost: \$12,000		16,000			16,000			16,000	NIM / IP

<b>Trainings, Workshops, Meetings</b>	Includes costs related to the organization of training workshops on eco-tourism and round-table meetings with tourist operators with the participation of Romanian counterparts (Output 3.1.2). Total cost: \$6,000.			6,000		6,000			6,000	NIM / IP
<b>Trainings, Workshops, Meetings</b>	Includes costs of 3 awareness raising workshops organized jointly with other donor-funded projects in the targeted areas, and organization of local and national awareness raising events (Act. 4.1.1.2 and Act. 4.1.2.1) . Total costs: \$ 13,192.				13,192	13,192			13,192	NIM / IP
<b>Travel</b>	Includes: a) Travel expenses Total cost \$6,000	6,000				6,000			6,000	NIM / IP
<b>Travel</b>	Includes travel expenses of project experts to targeted areas, in support of outputs 2.1 and 2.2. Total costs \$10,000		10,000			10,000			10,000	NIM / IP
<b>Travel</b>	Includes travel costs related to activities under Output 3.1.2: a) Development of eco-tourism package in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and cross-border tourism package Lower Prut-Danube Delta. Total costs: \$3,000.; b) Travel expenses related to the eco-tourism training workshops. Total costs: \$2,000.			5,000		5,000			5,000	NIM / IP

<b>Travel</b>	Includes travel expenses to the project sites related to awareness raising events and Process framework (consultations with the local communities) to raise awareness on Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO values. Total costs: \$7,000.				7,000	7,000			7,000	NIM / IP
<b>Travel</b>	Includes travel costs and DSA of M&E consultants (M&E) Total cost:\$3,000					-	3,000		3,000	NIM / IP
<b>Travel</b>	Includes travel costs of the PM team (Total cost:\$ 8,000 )							8,000	8,000	NIM / IP
<b>Other Operating Costs</b>	Includes costs of printing information materials related to the new eco-tourism routes in Lower Prut Biosphere reserve and cross-border tourism package Moldova-Romania (Output 3.1.2). Total cost:\$3,000.			3,000		3,000			3,000	NIM / IP

<b>Other Operating Costs</b>	Includes a) the costs of Production, design and printing of the following KM products : (1) KM product 1: Methodology for calculation of the minimum ecological flow mainstreamed into Regulation of Stanca Costesti Dam and PA legislation; 2) KM product 2: Biodiversity passports? Concept integrated into local development strategies ; 3) KM Product 3: Hydroecological and Climate resilient assessment of Prut River wetlands? ; 4) KM Product 4 ? ISO 14001 Standards? training module. Total cost: \$3,000. b) Production and design and printing costs of other information materials printed and on-line. Total costs:\$ 5,000.				8,000	8,000		8,000	NIM / IP
<b>Other Operating Costs</b>	Includes costs of professional services for NIM audits. Total cost: \$9,476					-	9,476	9,476	NIM / IP
<b>Grand Total</b>		134,500	446,824	103,500	64,692	749,516	35,250	78,476	863,242

**ANNEX F: (For NGI only) Termsheet**

Instructions. Please submit an finalized termsheet in this section. The NGI Program Call for Proposals provided a template in Annex A of the Call for Proposals that can be used by the Agency. Agencies can use their own termsheets but must add sections on Currency Risk, Co-financing Ratio and Financial Additionality as defined in the template provided in Annex A of the Call for proposals. Termsheets submitted at CEO endorsement stage should include final terms and conditions of the financing.

**ANNEX G: (For NGI only) Reflows**

Instructions. Please submit a reflows table as provided in Annex B of the NGI Program Call for Proposals and the Trustee excel sheet for reflows (as provided by the Secretariat or the Trustee) in the Document Section of the CEO endorsement. The Agencies is



required to quantify any expected financial return/gains/interests earned on non-grant instruments that will be transferred to the GEF Trust Fund as noted in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy. Partner Agencies will be required to comply with the reflows procedures established in their respective Financial Procedures Agreement with the GEF Trustee. Agencies are welcomed to provide assumptions that explain expected financial reflow schedules.

**ANNEX H: (For NGI only) Agency Capacity to generate reflows**

Instructions. The GEF Agency submitting the CEO endorsement request is required to respond to any questions raised as part of the PIF review process that required clarifications on the Agency Capacity to manage reflows. This Annex seeks to demonstrate Agencies' capacity and eligibility to administer NGI resources as established in the Guidelines on the Project and Program Cycle Policy, GEF/C.52/Inf.06/Rev.01, June 9, 2017 (Annex 5).