

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

Review CEO Endorsement and Make a recommendation

Basic project information

GEF ID

10650

Countries

Moldova

Project Name

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

Agencies

UNDP

Date received by PM

11/29/2021

Review completed by PM

1/3/2022

Program Manager

Ulrich Apel

Focal Area

Multi Focal Area

Project Type

MSP

PIF
CEO Endorsement

Part I ? Project Information

Focal area elements

1. Does the project remain aligned with the relevant GEF focal area elements as presented in PIF (as indicated in table A)?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Project description summary

2. Is the project structure/design appropriate to achieve the expected outcomes and outputs as in Table B and described in the project document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

3. If this is a non-grant instrument, has a reflow calendar been presented in Annex D?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

Co-financing

4. Are the confirmed expected amounts, sources and types of co-financing adequately documented, with supporting evidence and a description on how the breakdown of co-financing was identified and meets the definition of investment mobilized, and a description of any major changes from PIF, consistent with the requirements of the Co-Financing Policy and Guidelines?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Not fully.

- UNDP \$13M grant: per the co-financing letter, the source of this grant is European Union. Therefore, change the source to:

Donor Agency / European Union / Grant / Investment mobilized / \$13M

- Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Administration (Government of Romania):
Change the source from ?Other? to ?Recipient Country Government?

01/03/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you for this guidance. As advised, these changes are now reflected in the Table C ?Confirmed Source of Co-financing? CEO Endorsement Request document.

GEF Resource Availability

5. Is the financing presented in Table D adequate and does the project demonstrate a cost-effective approach to meet the project objectives?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

However, please note comments on the budget:

- The UNDP checklist stipulated that "no UNDP execution support is envisioned in this project". Nonetheless, four items in the budget table have been allocated resources to UNDP of in total \$78,476. Kindly note that we could not find a letter from the OFP requesting the agency to provide executing functions.

- All travel undertaken by the agency should be covered by the agency fee and not from resources of the project.

- Office Supplies should be charged to PMC and not to the project's components

- We could not find ToR for the Project Manager to justify its salary to be charged to the components and not the PMC.

01/03/2022: Addressed as per agency response below and with adjustments in the budget table.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you for these comments, indeed we confirm that UNDP will not provide project execution support as these services were not requested by the IP and we present below the following responses:

- UNDP Execution Support is not envisioned for this project. The TBWP merely reflects/indicates the sources of funds under the PMC namely : (i) \$ 78,476 from GEF and (ii) \$ 50,000 co-financing of project management costs from UNDP TRAC resources.

We adjusted the name of executing/responsible entity in the GEF TBWP to correctly reflect the sources of funds.

-Thank you for this comment. The agency travel will be covered from the GEF fee, indeed. The Travel budget under PMC includes travel expenditures of the project management team co-financed from UNDP TRAC funds.

-Thank you for this advice, the office supplies are now reflected only under the PMC.

-Thank you for the comment and we would like to add more clarifications. The TOR for the Project Manager are included in the Annex 8 of the Project Document "Overview of Project Staff and Technical Consultancies", and they entail separate explicit technical tasks, which call for the correspondent split of the salary among the different technical components; the technical tasks include as follows:

? A). Component 1: Oversee the legal amendments making sure that the knowledge products' results (e.g. the relevant project's studies and reports' findings) are incorporated in the project-born regulatory and legal amendments and in the draft NBSAP. Oversees the development of SESA and ensures application of UNDP SES requirements to the project's policy/legal work.

? B. Component 2: Provide technical inputs into the : (i) PAs management and Business Plans; (ii) Guidelines and Manual for biodiversity mainstreaming in territorial planning; Guides and supports the development of the PAs training modules, together with

the project experts and specialized NGO/company. (iii) Oversees and provides technical inputs into the development of the ESIA/ESMP documents and makes sure that UNDP SES requirements are followed. (iv) Oversees and coordinates with the NGO/companies hired to implement the activities at PAs level and coordinates the process framework in the targeted PAs.

? **C)** Component 3: Technical inputs into the biodiversity specific tourist routes ; participate in the technical working groups of the National Tourism Authority and support development/update of the protocol for anti-COVID-19 measures for safe tourism. The Project manager will ensure that all the project activities are aligned with the UNDP anti-COVID measures for project implementation and encourages

? **D)** Component 4: Edit all the KM products, oversee the accuracy of technical information; write the Exit Strategy and Sustainability and Scaling up Strategy of the project.

Project Preparation Grant

6. Is the status and utilization of the PPG reported in Annex C in the document?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

However, Table F does not show the totals for the PPG. Can this be inserted from your end or has to be done by IT from the GEF backend?

01/03/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

The new CEO ER templates do not include this table however this is inserted in the GEF portal (please see Table E).

Core indicators

7. Are there changes/adjustments made in the core indicator targets indicated in Table E? Do they remain realistic?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: No changes, yes, they remain realistic.

Cleared

Agency Response

Part II ? Project Justification

1. Is there a sufficient elaboration on how the global environmental/adaptation problems, including the root causes and barriers, are going to be addressed?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

2. Is there an elaboration on how the baseline scenario or any associated baseline projects were derived?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

3. Is the proposed alternative scenario as described in PIF/PFD sound and adequate? Is there sufficient clarity on the expected outcomes and components of the project and a description on the project is aiming to achieve them?

Secretariat Comment at PIF/Work Program Inclusion

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

4. Is there further elaboration on how the project is aligned with focal area/impact program strategies?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

5. Is the incremental reasoning, contribution from the baseline, and co-financing clearly elaborated?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

6. Is there further and better elaboration on the project's expected contribution to global environmental benefits or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

7. Is there further and better elaboration to show that the project is innovative and sustainable including the potential for scaling up?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Project Map and Coordinates

Is there an accurate and confirmed geo-referenced information where the project intervention will take place?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Child Project

If this is a child project, is there an adequate reflection of how it contributes to the overall program impact?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

n/a

Agency Response

Stakeholders

Does the project include detailed report on stakeholders engaged during the design phase? Is there an adequate stakeholder engagement plan or equivalent documentation for the implementation phase, with information on Stakeholders who will be engaged, the means of engagement, and dissemination of information?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Has the gender analysis been completed? Did the gender analysis identify any gender differences, gaps or opportunities linked to project/program objectives and activities? If so, does the project/program include gender-responsive activities, gender-sensitive indicators and expected results?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Private Sector Engagement

If there is a private sector engagement, is there an elaboration of its role as a financier and/or as a stakeholder?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Has the project elaborated on indicated risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the project objectives from being achieved? Were there proposed measures that address these risks at the time of project implementation?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Coordination

Is the institutional arrangement for project implementation fully described? Is there an elaboration on possible coordination with relevant GEF-financed projects and other bilateral/multilateral initiatives in the project area?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

However, please note the comments on the budget, which includes items that indicate a UNDP execution function, which would need to be described here and supported by an OFP request. Alternatively, please revise the budget so that it is in line with the described institutional arrangements.

01/03/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you for this, indeed. We confirm that UNDP will not provide project execution support and we have also made slight adjustments in the GEF Budget template to clarify that only the source of funds is reflected in the table.

Consistency with National Priorities

Has the project described the alignment of the project with identified national strategies and plans or reports and assessments under the relevant conventions?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Knowledge Management

Is the proposed Knowledge Management Approach for the project adequately elaborated with a timeline and a set of deliverables?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response

Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS)

Are environmental and social risks, impacts and management measures adequately documented at this stage and consistent with requirements set out in SD/PL/03?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
Monitoring and Evaluation

Does the project include a budgeted M&E Plan that monitors and measures results with indicators and targets?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
Benefits

Are the socioeconomic benefits at the national and local levels sufficiently described resulting from the project? Is there an elaboration on how these benefits translate in supporting the achievement of GEBs or adaptation benefits?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/08/2021: Yes.

Cleared

Agency Response
Annexes

Are all the required annexes attached and adequately responded to?

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/08/2021: Yes.

The UNDP Audit checklist template has also been completed and uploaded to the portal.

Cleared

Agency Response

Project Results Framework

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021:

Please include Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated with appropriate targets in Annex A ?Project Results Framework?

01/03/2022: Addressed.

Cleared

Agency Response

Thank you for this comment. We have added a distinct indicator (Indicator 4/GEF Indicator 6.1) in the Results Framework (in the Annex A of the CEO ER and in the Section IV of the project Document) as well as under the Monitoring Plan (Annex 5 in the UNDP GEF Project Document) .

GEF Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

GEFSEC comments at PIF stage have been adequately responded to.

Agency Response

Council comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a for a MSP

Agency Response

STAP comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a for a MSP

Agency Response

Convention Secretariat comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response
Other Agencies comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response
CSOs comments

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request none received

Agency Response
Status of PPG utilization

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/08/2021: Has been provided in Annex C.

Cleared

Agency Response
Project maps and coordinates

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request
12/08/2021: Has been provided in Annex A.

Cleared

Agency Response
Does the termsheet in Annex F provide finalized financial terms and conditions? Does the termsheet and financial structure address concerns raised at PIF stage and that were pending to be resolved ahead of CEO endorsement? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

n/a

Agency Response

Do the Reflow Table Annex G and the Trustee Excel Sheet for reflows provide accurate reflow expectations of the project submitted? Assumptions for Reflows can be submitted to explain expected reflows. (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

Did the agency Annex H provided with information to assess the Agency Capacity to generate and manage reflows? (For NGI Only)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request n/a

Agency Response

GEFSEC DECISION

RECOMMENDATION

Is CEO endorsement recommended? (applies only to projects and child projects)

Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement Request

12/08/2021: No. Please address comments made in this review.

01/03/2022: Yes. Program Manager recommends CEO endorsement.

Review Dates

	Secretariat Comment at CEO Endorsement	Response to Secretariat comments
First Review	12/8/2021	
Additional Review (as necessary)	1/3/2022	
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		
Additional Review (as necessary)		

CEO Recommendation

Brief reasoning for CEO Recommendations

The objective of the project is to achieve ecological integrity of key floodplain wetlands in the Prut river basin, ensuring positive status of biodiversity, land and water resources, as well as ecosystem services. This will be achieved through provisions for the minimum environmental flow and hydrological repair of declining wetlands and strengthening the PAs management hosting valuable wetlands habitats and key species. The GEF investment will be based on an integrated river basin management approach that ensures the continuity of wetland ecosystem services sustaining livelihoods in the Prut river basin at approximately 20,803 ha of high value wetlands in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and surrounding floodplain. The project-driven hydrological repair of Camenca river's floodplain, will bring an additional 8.3 million m³ of water annually to nourish declining wetlands in the Prut river mid-section, ensuring the survival of approximately 11,175 ha of valuable floodplain habitat even under a severe climate induced water scarcity scenario. The project-supported improvements of legal and financing frameworks for wetlands and protected areas will enable sustainable management of Prut basin's wetlands, hosting globally important migratory aquatic birds species such as herons, egrets, spoonbills, ibises nesting and feeding in these areas. The project's demonstration activities and strengthened regulatory framework will pave the way for a more systematic approaches to improving wetlands condition. Involving private sector and strengthening knowledge about voluntary environment certification and 'greening' businesses as well as strengthening regulatory framework and legal enforcement will reduce the threats to biodiversity values coming from sectoral land and resource use (agriculture, forestry, food industry, oil exploitation). Supporting local communities accessing affordable financing for their local businesses will help alleviate the pressure on natural resources.

In response to the Government's COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (approved on 13th 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.