UNDP-GEF Project: Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into Moldova's territorial planning policies and land use practices

PIMS 5259

Final Evaluation Report



Ecological corridor of forest,
the project site in Talmaza village, Stefan-Voda, Moldova

United National Development Programme (UNDP)

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Executive summary

Table 1. Project summary data

Project Title:	Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into Moldova's territorial plannig policies and land use practises				
GEF Project ID:	5355		at endorsement (Million US$)		at completion (Million US$)
UNDP Project ID:	00090554	GEF financing:	958,904		958,904
Country:	Moldova	IA/EA own:	40,000		40,000
Region:	RBEC	Government	4,810,000		4,810,000
Focal Area:	BD	Other:			
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	BD-2.1	Total co-financing	4,850,000		4,850,000
Executing Agency:	UNDP	Total Project Cost	5,808,904		5,808,904
Other Partners involved:	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment	ProDoc Signature (date project began):			20.V.2015
		(Operational) Closing Date:		Proposed: 31 December 2018	Actual: 31 December 2018

Project description

The UNDP/GEF "Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation into Moldova's territorial planning policies and land use practises" is a four year project with financing from GEF of almost 1 million and co-financing of almost 5 million. The project began in May 2015 with a planned completion date of 31 December 2018. The objective of the project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into Moldova's territorial planning policies and land-use practises. The project was designed to achieve this through two components: the first component focussed on modifying land use planning and the legal framework for enforcement and land use to address biodiversity loss; the second component was established to demonstrate methods for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on communal lands outside protected areas. For the second component two pilot territories were chosen – Stefan-Voda and Soroca.

Table 2. Evaluation rating table

Rating Project Performance		
Criteria	***Rating***	**Comments**
Monitoring and Evaluation: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Overall quality of M&E	S	Overall monitoring of activities was well established and progress was tracked by project team. Reports were provided in a timely manner and of sufficient quality. Project team integrated Mid-term evaluation recommendations into project implementation in the final project year.
M&E design at project start-up	S	Designed followed the general parameters required by GEF and UNDP, including allocation of adequate budget for M&E activities.

M&E Plan Implementation	S	M&E Plan was implemented almost fully. Main elements followed according to design at project start-up in regards to reporting. Although visits to field sites were conducted, documentation in this regard was not kept.
IA & EA Execution: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU),Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Overall Quality of Project Implementation/Execution	S	Despite great challenges in maintaining the oversight of Project Board consistently throughout the project, appropriate focus on results was sustained during implantation.
Quality of UNDP Implementation	HS	Tools in place to manage risks, support of project team in reporting. Project results reached despite challenges.
Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	MU	High turnover of staff, changes in Government structure and functions made it challenging to take full ownership across the range of elements which needed to be addressed by the Project.
Assessment of Outcomes: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S) Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)		
Relevance: relevant (R) or not relevant (NR)	R	All stakeholders stressed the relevance of the project
Effectiveness & Efficiency	HS	The project has been completed in 3,5 years and shows co-financing rates that exceeded those planned.
Overall Project Outcome	HS	It is impressive to see the results the project has achieved in launching into a novel approach in Moldova, integrating BD issues with regional development and agricultural issues and addressing socio-economic elements in the communities.
Sustainability: Likely (L); Moderately Likely (ML); Moderately Unlikely (MU); Unlikely (U).		
Financial resources	ML	The project has put measures in place to help support further replication of plans with the valuation of eco-system services. For implementation of existing plans, activities are built in which can also generate revenue.
Socio-economic	ML	Concrete practical examples to secure socio-economic sustainability have been produced at the local level.
Institutional framework and governance	MU	Institutional framework remains fragile as reforms continue in the environmental sector in Moldova.
Environmental	ML	Negative impacts have been reduced through management plans which, upon implementation will lessen environmental threats.
Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability	ML	Some risks remain, however the exit strategy seeks to use the remaining 1,5 month to secure partners' willingness and capacities.
Impact: Significant (S), Minimal (M), Negligible (N)		
Environmental Status Improvement	M	Although improvements in ecological status have not yet been realized, the stressors have been reduced considerably in the pilot areas. The regulations developed provide a good basis upon which further dissemination of land use management that mainstreams BD (and applies adaptation measures) can be built.
Environmental Stress Reduction	M	
Progress towards stress/status change	M	
Overall Project Results	HS	Project results have been achieved and with further cooperation at project closure with key stakeholders, the results can be disseminated further to increase impact.

As reflected in the Table above, the project has been evaluated highly – reaching planned results, as well as achieving, in some cases, more than was anticipated. This is particularly impressive considering the constraints on the project in terms of mobilizing Government capacities in a time of almost constant changes in staff and adjustments in institutional bodies with which the project was designed to work and cooperate with. Adaptive management applied by the project implementation unit has been the main success as they have invested much effort in stabilizing project results in the communities, which will gain

the most direct results through mainstreaming of biodiversity in their land use planning and practises, increases in benefits to the local municipalities from improved use of land and land management and monitoring of biodiversity values in the area to both raise awareness and confirm the positive effects of the changed land management approaches to the environment.

Summary of conclusions, recommendations and lessons

The terminal evaluation evaluators in general find there is a good basis for securing sustainability of project results. Future UNDP projects could benefit from introducing a system of reporting on site visits to document and promote information exchange among team members, UNDP country office and project stakeholders. Communication strategies in projects can also be made more effective by providing a clear analysis and strategy for communicating project developments to key partners. The current approach, albeit successful in general public awareness on environmental issues (in this case biodiversity in Moldova), could provide more focus and support to specific communication related more directly to the project.

The project results are innovative for the Republic of Moldova. Few territorial plans and plans or urbanization have been developed up until now and, in terms of integrating biodiversity issues within these plans - the project has presented a first-time approach for the country. The momentum created and interest generated by these activities of the project should not be underestimated and it would be wise to tap into this in further reinforcing the potential benefits to biodiversity in the country through planning. This puts UNDP at a high comparative advantage and thus it would be highly beneficial for the organization to further advance this approach to other districts and towns.

With further dissemination of the development of land management plans, the technical issues related to their elaboration are important. The issue of open data, which would allow municipalities to access data important for their planning is a significant one. Open data could make the process less costly and more general expertise. It would also be favourable to continue the current discussions around the technical aspect of the territorial and urbanization plans -- combined with open data, the introduction of GIS approach for planning could, in the long run, lower the costs of development and maintenance of management plans. This, however would probably require change in legislation as well as initial support to increase the capacities of planners in GIS-based planning.

Another result which was highly appreciated by interested parties and which should be further introduced in other territories, especially nature sites (Ramsar sites currently being formed and those protected areas planned in the future) is the development of passports, more detailed information and respective monitoring of species.

The project is planning a final seminar which is to include government officials, land planners. The seminar should be expanded, or the project should consider conducting a series of seminars to use the opportunity to strengthen the sustainability of the project and further disseminate the best practises.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACSA	National Agency for Rural Development
ALRC	Agency for Land Relations ad Cadastre
APA	Republican Union of Agricultural Producers' Association
CALM	Congress of Local Authorities
CC	climate change
EMM	Ecological Movement of Moldova
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
LPAs	Local public authorities
LUPs	Land-use plans
MARDE	Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoEcI	Ministry of Economy and Industry
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPs	management plans
MRDC	Ministry of Regional Development and Construction
MSBMC	Multi-stakeholder Biodiversity Mainstreaming Committee
MTE	Mid-term evaluation
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NFFM	National Farmers Federation Moldova
PMT	project management team
TA	technical assistance
TE	terminal evaluation
UNDP	United National Development Programme

1. Introduction

This Terminal evaluation (TE) was conducted in November 2018, following the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-finances Projects[1] as well as the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results[2].

Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the Terminal evaluation is to provide an independent, external view of the project's results and achievements so that they may be discussed and communicated among the participating partners, as well as stakeholders. The evaluation should also have the following complementary purposes:

- promote accountability and transparency;
- synthesize lessons that can help improve the design and implementation of future GEF-financed UNDP activities;
- provide feedback on issues that may be recurrent across the UNDP portfolio.

Scope and methodology of the evaluation

The scope of the Terminal evaluation is determined by the Terms of Reference (TOR, see Annex III). The TOR will be followed closely and, therefore, the evaluation will focus on assessing i) the concept and design of the project, ii) its implementation in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs, financial planning, and monitoring and evaluation, iii) the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the activities that are being carried out, iv) whether the desired (and other undesirable but not intended) outcomes and objectives are being achieved, v) the likelihood of sustainability of the results of the project, and vi) the involvement of stakeholders in the project's processes and activities.

The TE includes a thorough review of the project documents. Annex B of the TORs for the list of documents to be reviewed, however there are additional documents that the TE reviewed during the course of the mission and in preparation of this report, thus the list in the TOR has been expanded and is contained in Annex III List of documents reviewed. In preparation for the mission, the project team, upon the request of the evaluators, provided information on financing issues, Project Board membership and indicators which allowed for a comprehensive TE mission.

The overall approach and method to be applied for the TE included the following:

- Documentation review
- Stakeholder interviews, including a focus group with the national experts team
- Field visits to the project sites (Stefan Voda and Soroca)

The TE included a mission to Moldova from 4-9 November (see Annex II Itinerary), which included a series of structured and unstructured interviews, both individually and in small groups. The site visits helped to i) validate the reports and indicators, ii) examine any infrastructure development and equipment procured, iii) to consult with local authorities and communities and other potential partners. The TE team worked with the Project team throughout the evaluation. Whenever possible, information reflected by the stakeholders was crosschecked among the various sources. A matrix of the evaluation questions which framed the questions to stakeholders is attached in Annex IV Evaluation Question Matrix.

[1] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/UNDP-GEF-TE-Guide.pdf

[2] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/handbook/documents/english/pme-handbook.pdf

In order to maximise the time allotted for the evaluation and collect as many stakeholder responses as possible for confirming the views expressed by stakeholders interviewed, additional interviews were conducted with: Biodiversity and biosafety office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE); Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure; Inspectorate for Environmental Protection and GEF Operational Focal Point of Republic of Moldova (State Secretary for Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of MARDE).

The evaluation was carried out according to the UNDP Monitoring & Evaluation Policy. Therefore, activities and results were assessed via the following main criteria:

Relevance – the extent to which the results and activities are consistent with local and national development priorities, national and international conservation priorities, and GEF focal area and operational programme strategies
Effectiveness – how the project's results are related to the original or modified intended outcomes or objectives
Efficiency – whether the activities are carried out in a cost effective way and whether the results are being achieved by the least costly option
Results, outcomes, and actual and potential impacts of the project will be examined to determine whether they were positive or negative, foreseen or unintended.
Sustainability – the likelihood of whether benefits would continue to be accrued after the completion of the project. Sustainability will be examined from various perspectives: financial, social, environmental and institutional.

2. Project description and development context

The Republic of Moldova straddles three main European eco-regions -- Central-European mixed forests, Pontic steppe, and East European forest steppe. Moldova is rich in species and agro-forest biodiversity is dominant. Almost two thirds of the country is agricultural land. At the time of project development, the protected area (PA) system covered 5.61% of the country's territory; PAs that correspond to the IUCN classification system accounted for only 1.96% of the country. The system is neither representative of the species nor of habitat diversity across the terrestrial biomes, which means that effective biodiversity management outside PAs is crucial to mainstreaming the ecological integrity of Moldova's ecosystems. Threats to biodiversity include human encroachment through land conversion; soil erosion; pollution; non-native and/or invasive species; unsustainable grazing; habitat fragmentation because of infrastructure development; logging, collection of rare plants, hunting and fishing; and climate change. Despite the Government's reform efforts, the spatial planning framework at the time of project development continued to be deficient, primarily because biodiversity conservation was not being considered.

The Project Document and Request for CEO Approval were approved on 5 February 2015 and the Delegation of Authority (DOA) was received on 27 April 2015. The Project Document was signed on 20 May 2015. The end-date of the project was envisaged as 31 December 2018 - which give the project a duration of almost 44 months (a little over 3,5 years).

The project was designed to engineer a paradigm shift from unsustainable to sustainable, biodiversity-friendly land management in the Moldova landscape, accomplished by assisting Moldova in development policies for mainstreaming biodiversity into territorial planning, livestock/pasture management, forestry and land use. Specifically, the national legislation was to be amended and a policy introduced on identification of species and habitats that must be accounted for in territorial planning and economic activities. Territorial land use plans were to be developed, compliance monitored and enforced based on increased knowledge and capacities of the regulatory,

planning and enforcing authorities as well as land users/owners (production sectors). Further, in-the-field technologies and incentives were to be tested to help maintain the integrity of steppe (pastures), wetland, meadow and forest species and their habitats, promoting inclusion of sound scientific approach to drafting land-use principles and practises.

Figure 1. Project map with pilot districts and sites



The long-term goal of the project was in reforming the manner in which agricultural, forestry and other production activities are planned and regulated across different land units and tenure categories at the landscape level -- so as to avoid, reduce and mitigate the pressures leading to biodiversity loss. There are two types of barriers stated to achieving this long-term goal at the development phase of the project: i) inadequacies in the planning and enforcement framework, and ii) insufficient demonstrated experiences in biodiversity-compatible spatial planning and land management practices. The project aims to contribute to this long-term objective through achievement of its immediate objective, to mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into Moldova's territorial planning policies and land-use practices.

The project was to achieve this objective through two components:

- Land-use planning and enforcement system addresses biodiversity loss: this component addresses the first barrier above on improvements needed in the planning and enforcement framework through: the development of land and forest legislation and regulations for mainstreaming biodiversity at national and local levels; introducing a monitoring system to track change in biodiversity-important areas and reduce impacts through adaptive measure; establish a national, multi-sectoral stakeholder committee to oversee land-use plan development, implementation and enforcement; development of system of penalties for malfeasance to approved rayon and urbanization plans; and training in spatial planning that integrated biodiversity conservation principles

- Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on communal land: demonstrative interventions at the local level in two target districts Soroca and Stefan Voda to include: development of integrated DSPs and General Urbanistic Plans (GUPs)[3] accommodating biodiversity concerns; development of technologies and appropriate infrastructure to showcase biodiversity-compatible land use in pasturelands; ecological connectivity established between and within different forest blocks; training in mainstreaming biodiversity concerns in lands use practises and securement of public funds for mainstreaming initiatives.

The baseline indicators were established at the project design stage as follows:

Table 3. Project indicators, baseline and targets at project design

Indicator	Baseline	Target
Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into Moldova's territorial planning policies and land-use practices		
Land area for which DSPs and GUPs, that deliver BD benefits outside PAs are developed and under implementation	0 ha	Approximately 204,000 ha (2 districts) Additional 3,180 million ha (33 districts) are indirectly influenced by project approach
Component 1: Land-use planning and enforcement systems addresses biodiversity loss		
Number of sectoral regulations and methodological guidelines that facilitate the incorporation of BD requirements into	0	3[4]

[3] The Project Document refers to Land-use plans (LUPs), however, during the inception stage it was clarified that, according to national legislation in Moldova, the appropriate term for these plans is General Urbanistic Plan.

[4] 1.Regulation on identifcation of vulnerable species, habitats and ecosystem goods and services during land use planning; 2. Amendment to the 1991 Land Code introducing requirements for identification and incorporation of biodiversity outside PAs in DSPs and GUPs; 3. Minimal standards for BD conservation in pasture/livestock and hay-field management, arable farming, forest use, fishing and water-based recreation introduced in relevant sectoral legislation.

planning and management of land use outside PAs		
Recorded cases of illegal logging	Soroca: 17 cases (2013) Stefan Voda: 14 cases (2013)	Reduced by half.
Observance of grazing norms by local land users in all pilot sites	0% of land users observing norms (2013)	50% of land users observing norms
Number of government staff trained in collection of BD information and integration of this into the development and implementation of LUPs	0	At least 20 officers
Component 2: Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on communal land		
Increase in land area outside PAs where threats to BD from economic activities are controlled	0 ha	Sustainable land uses demonstrated for: Hay-making: 100 ha Grazing: 2, 484 ha Forestry: 100 ha
% of local land-users in 2 districts who are conducting economic activities in ecologically sensitive areas and receive in-field training and technical assistance with implementing modified practices	0	100%
Increase in public finance for BD mainstreaming in land use planning in pilot areas	None	Budget allocations for BD mainstreaming in pilot areas increased by 10%[5]

Under Component 2, there is an additional indicator with the following targets set at the project design phase:

Component 2: Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on communal land		
Indicator: Population of indicator species outside PAs improves at pilot sites		
Species name (English/Latin)	Baseline	Target
Feather grass (*Stipa pennata*)	3% of total plant composition per 100 m3	10% of total plant composition per 100 m3
Feather grass (*Stipa ucrainica*)	7% of total plant composition per 100 m3	20% of total plant composition per 100 m3
Corn Crake (*Crex crex*)	< 10 breeding males	>40 breeding males
Greater Spotted Eagle (*Aquila clanga*)	<2 pairs	>5 pairs
European Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*)	0 colonies	>3 colonies
Speckled Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus suslicus*)	0 colonies	>5 colonies
European Otter (*Lutra lutra*)	<5 individuals	>10 individuals

The main concerned stakeholders and project partners were clearly identified in the project document at the design stage and confirmed in the inception report. As such, the project document indicated all key national and local stakeholders to be involved in the project:

- Ministry of Environment,
- Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry,
- State Ecological Inspectorate,

[5] The target was noted to be re-confirmed at the inception phase, however the TE notes there was no such record in the Inception Report. Thus the indicator assumably remained at the level set in the design phase.

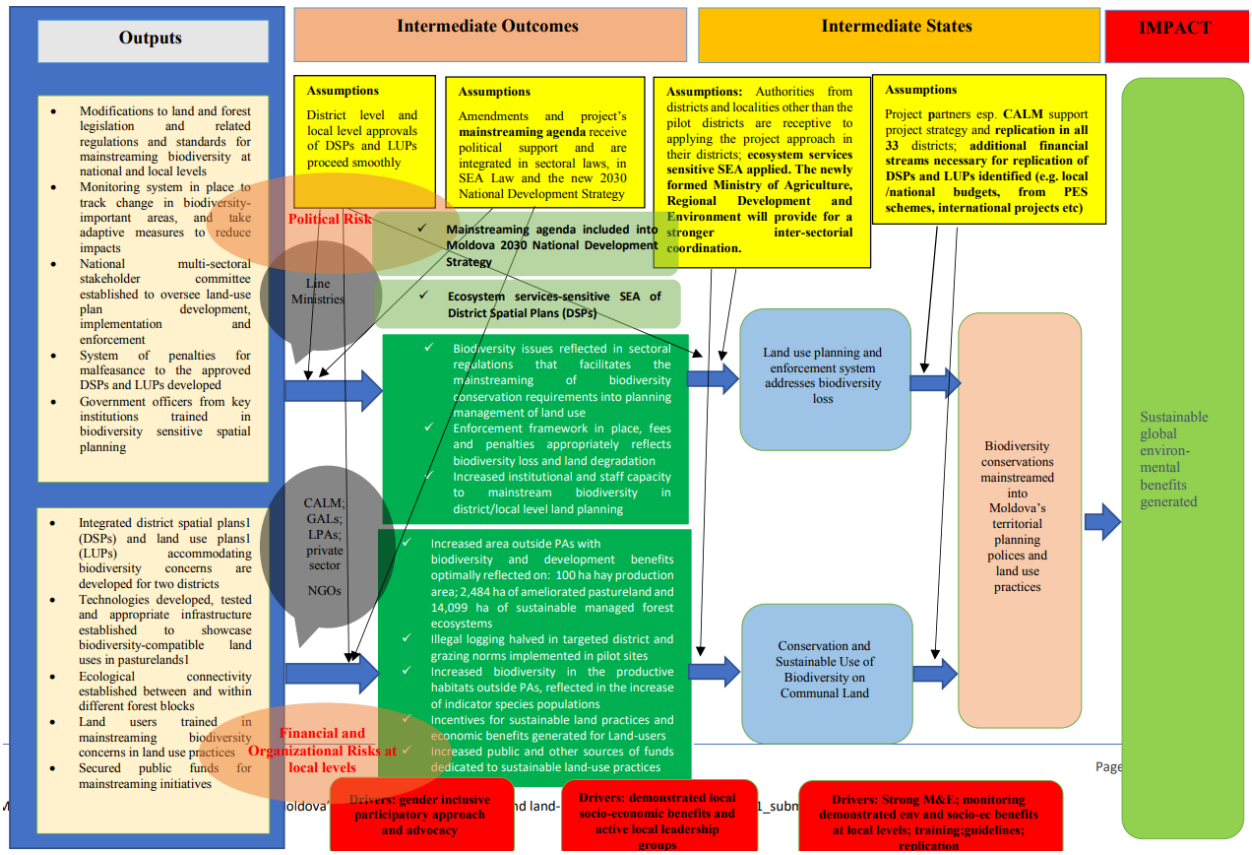
- Agency for Interventions and Payments in Agriculture,
- Ministry of Regional Development and Construction,
- Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre,
- Agency Moldsilva,
- Local Public Authorities (LPAs) at the district and village/community levels,
- Non-governmental organizations, such as Ecological Movement of Moldova (EMM),
- Congress of Local Authorities (CALM),
- National Agency for Rural Development (ACSA),
- Farmer Associations, in particular National Farmers Federation Moldova (NFFM) and Republican Union of Agricultural Producers' Associations (APA).

3. Findings

3.1. Project Design/Formulation

Thorough analysis of the project strategy and design was conducted during the mid-term evaluation which was completed only 12 months before the start of the terminal evaluation. The mid-term evaluation concluded that the project could benefit from a stronger connection between the indicators and outputs, and between outcomes and project objectives. The MTE provided a reconstructed Theory of analysis to ensure impact at sufficient scale to be considered as global environmental benefits via assessing the intended causality of the interventions proposed in the project and recommending strategic interventions to strengthen it.

Figure 2. Reconstructed theory of change diagram



In accordance with the new Theory of change (TOC) diagram, an amended logical framework was proposed by the MTE as well which intended to add more clarity by: identifying intended outcomes as "intermediate outcomes" and included other intermediate states; adding newly adjusted assumptions. The main assumption is that that merge of the three ministries is a potential enabler for better inter-sectoral coordination. The adjusted logical framework reconstructs explicit causal linkages between indicators and outputs, and proposed adaptive management interventions for the expected level of upscaling and replication that generates global environmental benefits and highlights the political, financial and organizational risks as well as identifies drivers and stakeholders roles in upscaling and replication for intended impact.

The inception report identifies a series of risks which are assessed in terms of impact and probability, identifying countermeasures and management responses which would be introduced to ensure that the risk, if realized, does not adversely affect the results of the project, or at least the risks could be managed to prove minimal effect on project achieving the objective it has set out to achieve. The risks identified and fixed in the inception report are presented below:

Table 4. Project risks tabled at inception stage

Risk description	Type of risk	Countermeasures/Management response
Ministry of Environment (MoE), Moldsilva and Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC) do not support the project strategy and are not interested in transferring lessons to additional districts	Political	MoE, Molsilva and MRDC actively involved in project development phase. To reduce conflicts, where possible, formal agreements/MOUs will be used to define role and responsibilities. Training will be provided to stakeholders on governance and conflict resolution. Activities will be designed and implemented in a win-win manner. Sustainable development of landscapes will be emphasized with arguments that are supported with long-term economic forecasts.
Authorities from districts and localities other than the pilots districts are not receptive to applying the project approach in their districts	Political	Risk will be mitigated by involving relevant stakeholders from the 33 additional districts in the project's capacity-building workshops and in-field demonstrations.
Amendments and methodological recommendations for economic land use activities do not receive political support	Political	A participatory process will be used in developing amendments with frequent consultations with government and non-governmental actors. In addition the MSBMC, compromised of representatives from key Ministries, will help in garnering political support for amendments.
Ministry of Justice (MoJ) do not accept recommendations on a more effective system of penalties for malfeasance to approved plans	Political	Representatives of the MoJ will be part of the project implementation process at all stages and will be invited to sit in the MSBMC.
District-level and community-level approval process of the plans proceeds with difficulties	Organizational	Key representatives from the district and community levels are involved in early stages of the development of the biodiversity-enhanced plans.
Low understanding and resistance at the community level for approval of developed plans	Organizational	Ensure that land users are informed about project activities and involves as much as possible in early stages of the development of the biodiversity-enhanced plans, and in pilot activities
MoE and ALRC do not cooperate to make species/habitat data available for the spatially-based digital decision-making system for BD	Organizational	Active participation of staff from ME and ALRC in project capacity building activities, as well as involvement in field-level demonstrations will be ensured. This will provide a foundation for establishing links between BD information and land resource use information which, in turn, will support collaboration on the decision support system.
Climate change (CC) lead to catastrophic impacts	Environmental	Project will work to address the anticipated negative impacts of CC by increasing the resilience of the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in the targeted districts. By removing the precursors of degradation and careful monitoring of the self-restoration

		capacities of steppe, forest, meadows and swamp the project contributes to higher resilience of the ecosystems and the species they host, to CC impacts.
Potential territorial-administrative reform would change the area for the plans	Political	Project to ensure that all BD-relevant analysis as part of the plans go beyond the actual administrative-territorial borders of the pilot districts to be further used in case the territorial-administrative reforms occur.

The MTE introduced some additional risks into the logframe: i) Financial: local authorities do not have sufficient funds for implementation of DSPs at the district level and of GUPs at the local level; additional finance sources are not easily identifiable; ii) Political: insufficient local buy-in from other local authorities at district and locality levels; no financial resources identified for the implementation of the land use plans; poor enforcement capacities and some economic interests of local leaders may further weaken support.

The planned stakeholders for the project as designed included a broad range of players, each with a particular role identified (Table 5. Stakeholder involvement at project design and inception).

Table 5. Stakeholder Involvement at Project design and inception

Stakeholder	Project Implementation Role
Ministry of Environment, including the State Ecological Inspectorate	Review and draft policy and legislation relevant to mainstreaming BD in territorial planning and prepare minimal standard for BD conservation. Identify appropriate procedures for compliance monitoring and enforcement of territorial plans and legislation in regard to BD. Facilitate functioning of project management team (PMT), ensure coordination with other relevant projects and initiatives and active in monitoring of PMT activities.
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, including Agency for Interventions and Payment in Agriculture	Play active role in project implementation, particularly in policy formulation and mainstreaming BD requirements. At rayon level will support project activities through its subdivisions such as agricultural extension services. Politically influence environmentally-friendly agricultural practices among landowners
Ministry of Regional Development and Construction	Review spatial and land-use plans produced by the project, so that BD aspects are and will further be integrated into their policy. Promote consideration of BD in policy framework of planning and land use planning, architecture, urbanism, construction, production of construction materials, housing and regional development.
Agency for Land Relations and Cadaster	Assist in improving the Land Code, including creating a joint working group for development of LUPs. Assist in ensuring congruence between land and soil regimes, and Incorporating data/information related o BD into their information systems.
Agency Moldsilva	Provide TA, co-financing and support in implementation of reforestation and forest resource management. Help build cooperation with local communities on forest extension. Help review legal and/or regulatory products related to land use, so that BD is covered.
Local Public Authorities (LPAs) at district and village/community levels	Promote cooperation among all land users and owners to implement BD-friendly practices, participate in conflict resolution, and promote training and educational activities. Responsible for land use planning.
NGOs: Ecological Movement of Moldova (EMM); BIOTICA Ecological Society; REC-Moldova; NGO-BIOS; Congress of Local Authorities (CALM) and National for Rural Development (ACSA) and ProRuralInvest	Participate in stakeholder consultation and training as relevant. EMM involved in development of policies and regulations for mainstreaming BD into land use planning, assist in development of annotated list of threated specie and habitats, provide advice on identification of areas for reforestation of degraded communal land. REC-Moldova will facilitate and participate in public debates on policies and regulations. NGO BIOS involved in development of minimal standards for BD conservation in most pressing land-use practices. CALM and ACSA assist Government of Moldova and project in amending the Land Code and introducing requirements for identification and incorporation of BD in land-use plans. ACSA to assist in establishing working relations with livestock farmers to implement jointly-developed MPs for grazing and hay-making. ProRuralInvest to assist in developing and testing technologies to demonstrate BD-compatible practises for pilot areas in steppes and meadows.
Private sector: Farmer Associations, in particular National Farmers Federation Moldova (NFFM) and	Involved in consultation meetings. Farmers' associations involved in implementation of demonstration activities. APA and FFM will have strong voice during amendment of the Land Code, as well as in revisions to sectoral legislation that would require to, as a result, follow minimum standards for BD conservation in pasture/livestock and hay-

Republican Union of Agricultural Producers' Association (APA)	field management, arable farming, forest use, fishing and water-based recreation. Participate in the working groups for development of the relevant legislation. APA to assist the project in establishment of cooperatives of livestock owners in order to implement jointly-developed MPs for grazing and haymaking.

Due to the institutional reform that was on-going starting from the point the project was at its one and a half year point into implementation, the fact that the institutional reform included modifications of a number of line ministries and subordinated institutions, the project's stakeholders were also affected. Specifically, the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development was renamed the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, absorbing the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, and the Ministry of Environment. Other stakeholders affected by these changes were those subordinate, or with close affiliation to any of these line ministries such as the Moldsilva Agency, district and local community representatives.

An intention for replication was built into the project design as the overall objective target was to indirectly influence an additional 33 districts (covering an additional 3,180 million hectares) where biodiversity conservation priorities would be mainstreamed into territorial planning. Nonetheless, taking into account the complexities of the enabling policy environment to integrate biodiversity into planning, especially in a country where this approach is novel, the objective for even indirect influence in the project lifetime was probably not realistic.

UNDP undoubtedly holds a comparative advantage in the area of biodiversity in Moldova. Through discussions with stakeholders, the organization is seen as one of the key players in the biodiversity field. It also is well placed, in times of reform, to support the government in compensating for strained capacities by advancing certain areas of policy development, such as this project's work in mainstreaming biodiversity. The TE believes that the UNDP has, with this project, secured an even greater comparative advantage regarding the district and urbanistic plans. As voiced by those interviewed, this was a completely new approach which showed mainstreaming not only of biodiversity, but also addressed other aspects of an integrated planning approach which are important to the local communities: impacts of climate change such as flooding and drought, socio-economic issues related to land use as well as potential for job creation and increase of revenue. Thus, this project gave a result to the localities involved which addressed human development and strengthened their resilience.

Management arrangements

According to the implementation arrangements detailed in the document, the Ministry of Environment is the National Implementing Partner. The project is Nationally Implemented with UNDP support. In 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE) was established, thus becoming the official successor of the MoE.

The Project Management Unit (PMU) was established in July 2015 and consists of a team of two professionals - Project Manager and Project Assistant. The project team is supported by national consultants on specific inputs needed for successful project implementation and results. The project team executes the day-to-day project management supported by the national consultants and stakeholders.

The project document prescribed the establishment of a Project Board comprised of 11 members which were to represent the following institutions: Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Finance, Agency Moldsilva, Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre (ALRC), Academy of Science, UNDP Moldova, representative from NGO (not specifically identified at project document stage), District

Council of Stefan Voda and District Council of Soroca. It was established during the inception phase through a Ministry of Environment Order. The Board was to provide general oversight to ensure achievement of results on the primary project outcomes, facilitating consensus on strategic management decisions when guidance is required by the Project Manager, including project plans and revisions.

The Project Board composition at mid-term evaluation stage is shown in Figure 3. At the terminal evaluation stage, the Project Board composition had decreased further to seven members: UNDP, Ministry, Moldsilva, Moldova Academy of Science, Agency for Public Services (now representing interests previously undertaken by ALRC) and one member from each district (Stefan Voda and Soroca).

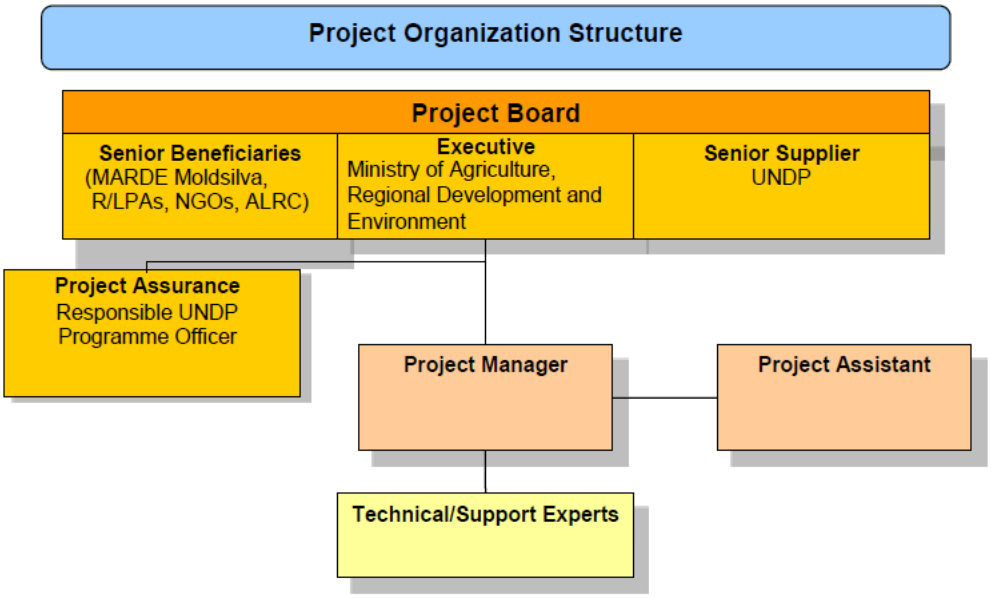


Figure 3. Management arrangements at mid-term evaluation stage

The project document also called for establishing a Multi-stakeholder Biodiversity Mainstreaming Committee (MSBMC). The committee was to be a national coordination mechanism to provide necessary assistance and guidance on the development, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project activities. It was, among other responsibilities, to deliver a unified approach in the development, implementation and enforcement of land-use plans; to facilitate dialogue on biodiversity conservation and coordination of sectors' programs and policies; and to provide guidance and oversight for practises that are biodiversity-friendly and applicable.

In the inception report (November 2015) it was determined that, during the initial stage, the Project Board would play the role of the MSBMC. The reasoning was that modifications in existing legal framework would need to be made prior to establishment of such committee. Due to the changes in the structures of the ministries, and resulting narrowing of the scope of the Board, however, the substantive functions related to facilitating dialogue, providing guidance on practises were apparently not realized. Discussions with current and former Project Board members indicate that the Board was concerned, for the most part, with review and approval of reports and budgets and did not engage in substantive discussions and advice. Undoubtedly this placed greater responsibility on the Project team, which was already quite overtasked with implementation.

3.2. Project Implementation

Adaptive management

There was a very high level of instability for the project team in terms of guidance from the Government due to the high turnover and reforms in structures. Even now, changes in institutions related to the environment are still underway, such as operational establishment of the Environmental Agency (only the director and deputy director are in place since the formal adoption of the new structure (Governmental Decision nr. 549 of 13.06.2018 on the establishment, organization and functioning of Environmental Agency) as well as the amalgamation of the Environmental Fund and Regional Development Fund.

Despite this almost constant instability and uncertainty (especially in the last 1,5 of the project), the team tried to be responsive in order to secure reaching project intended outcomes. This has been possible through a combination of things which the PMU has managed to use to utmost potential: create a team of national consultants that were committed to project results, establish clear commitment and sound ownership of initiatives at the local level, using informal consultations with experts to compensate for difficulties in having a more structure, formal project oversight structure such as the Project Board (which did not meet at all in 2018).

Among the outputs resulting from adaptive management approach:
- redraft of the environmental information integrated system in line with the new Agency;
- development of project concepts to assist districts and localities in resource mobilization.

The overall assessment of adaptive management is positive as the project team was able to progress despite the challenges in the changes in the structure and staff of Government and other partners.

Partnership arrangements

As described above, the Project team met with many challenges in securing sound partnership with the key line Ministry due to restructuring. The biodiversity arm of the Ministry was a strong partner, but involvement in the project implementation from other sections of the Ministry was low.

The 'agricultural arm' which under project design had foreseen supporting activities through its extension officers, seemed to have lost a deal of its capacities for coverage. As witnessed in one of the pilot areas, locals indicated that the extension services office had been closed to some time and found it difficult to formulate how they could assist the locality in improving land use practises. The regional development part of MARDE which was to assist in promoting biodiversity considerations in planning and land use, as other sectors in the Republic of Moldova, has limited number of staff. Shortly before the TE the division of planning there were further change in the distribution of functions among ministries whereby urban planning was separated from spatial development planning, the former being now under the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure. In addition, the changes in structure whereby the subordinate Environmental Agency would be established to deal with policy and regulatory responsibilities at the national and local levels while enforcement and control functions would be transferred to the Environmental Protection Inspectorate has not yet fully been realised.

Under this changing environment at the executive level of the Government, project implementation would be tremendously challenging since it delves quite much in policy development. The project team, however, were able to make the accomplishments in policy development by strengthening the partnerships in other areas that could partially compensate for the limited presence of the executive branch of the Government.

The project strategy in terms of partnerships has applied well the practise of looking for win-win situations - engaging partners, who share the same interests as the project in achieving the results. Some of these are:
- Moldsilva Agency, involved in implementation of forest management practises, on-site training of locals in their pilot forest plots which assists them in building relationship with the localities;
- Institute of Zoology, contracted to develop passports of species and create monitoring guides of species with potential of using this for further research and dissemination;
- Ecological Movement of Moldova, involved in public awareness events, strengthening their own visibility and capacities in organization of such events;
- mayors of the villages, involved in-depth in discussing and implementing practical examples of land-use at the same time providing jobs for their communities.

Stakeholder involvement at the local level was high and constructive. The project also solidified ownership of the project results by these stakeholders at an early stage, thus improving implementation as well as creating foundations for ensuring sustainability.

Monitoring and evaluation: design at entry and implementation

The project had a clear design for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) at the outset of the project. The plan covers the main elements for M&E required by the GEF: a sound plan to monitor results (including a baseline, SMART[6] indicators); appropriate budget to cover the costs of implementation of the M&E plan. The plan of the project includes budget allocations for an inception workshop, technical and periodic status reports, mid-term external evaluation and final evaluation. The total budget for the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation activities is 63,000 USD which seems an adequate amount for a project of this size.

The plan was implemented as planned with the project fulfilling all M&E activities planned:
- Inception report
- measurement of project indicators at the start, mid-term and end of the project
- submission of PIRs annually
- technical and periodic status reports
- mid-term evaluation
- final external evaluation
- regular visits to project field sites.

The Project Board meetings were conducted - perhaps not as often as would have been useful for the PMU to receive feedback. However, considering the circumstances in recurring changes in representation, this is understandable.

As discussed under 3.1., the MTE developed a new TOC diagram for the project as well as introduced changed to the logframe. The project reporting against the new logframe at time of the terminal evaluation, although the approach had not yet been officially approved by the Project Board due to the fact it had been inoperative as a result of staff changes in MARDE for since the completion of the MTE. Overall the TE believes the adjustments made improved the effectiveness of the monitoring indicators to capture the full scope of the impact generated by the project - its progress in the final 12 months and its performance.

Two areas where the TE feels provided indicators may not properly reflect the performance of the

[6] SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

project. In terms of the *recorded volumes of illegal logging*: this indicator was improved at mid-term when the recorded cases was adjusted to relate to volumes in order to reflect that the number of cases do not fully capture the extent of damage to forests, if the volumes are also not recorded. This indicator, however, still does not necessarily capture the intention of improving enforcement of forest management. Increased public awareness on a particular issue can lead to additional reporting of illegal activities - as civil society and individuals become more aware of the harm of illegal logging to the environment and local livelihood, they may be more inclined to notice and report such occurrences which may, thus, bring the numbers (and volumes) higher. The same increase in recordings of illegal cases (and respective volumes) can result from improved capacities of the inspectorate. Similarly weakening capacities may result in a lower number of cases uncovered and enforced by authorities as they may simply not have the staff to patrol the forest areas where there are issues. Since during the TE it was disclosed that there are only two or three inspectors per rayon, the fall in recorded volumes of illegal logging could be as a result of this low number of staff dedicated to conduct various inspections in this area. Thus, a better indicator would be to compare the results on the recorded volumes of illegal logging to the number of inspections conducted. An increased rate of inspections in comparison to 2013 which result in lower volumes of illegal activity would be certain to show that local enforcement capacities are in place and that biodiversity loss is being addressed.

The second area where indicators doubtfully can be reached in the time suggested is the indicator *Population of indicator species outside PAs improves at pilot sites* which indicates seven species (2 flora; 5 fauna). Considering the length of the project (3,5 years) and the fact that the management activities have only been implemented in the last 16 months, changes in the habitat as a result of these action would be difficult to achieve on the fauna. These indicators, however are important for the pilot areas in further implementation and monitoring of the management plans in the districts and villages. As the plans undergo implementation, it would be interesting to monitor the impacts on these species in years to come.

The Mid-term evaluation (MTE) was conducted in October 2017 (report submitted in November 2017) - only one year before the terminal evaluation. The MTE proposed a total of 15 recommendations in its report which included: i) five corrective actions for design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project; ii) five actions to follow-up or reinforce benefits from the project; and iii) five proposals for future directions underlining main objectives and mitigating risks to sustainability. A description of the MTE recommendation as well as a brief overview of the project team's response is provided (Table 6. Overview of MTE recommendations and responses). It must be noted that implementation timeframe for some of the management responses was set in 2019, although the project had determined not to extend the project into 2019.

As reflected in Table 6, the project team did take into account most of the recommendations made by the MTE stage.

Based on the above, it is concluded by the TE that the M&E system both at design and during implementation is Satisfactory (S). Although there were some minor shortcomings, these were corrected by the PMU in response to the mid-term evaluation recommendations and this, along with the clear M&S system followed by the project provided a solid base for reporting on the project's results and impact.

Table 6. Overview of MTE recommendations and responses

Green √	Completed at time of TE	Yellow	In process of completion by project closure	Red	Incomplete

	MTE recommendation, brief description	Management response	Comments at time of TE	Status
1.	Revision of the Logical Framework indicators and targets to strengthen alignment with SMART criteria	Agreed and scheduled for implementation in May 2018	Logical framework revised by project team. Due to inability to call Project Board meeting in 2018 – was not approved by Project Board and reporting to GEF is in accordance to old logframe.	√
2.	Set up Impact Monitoring Framework to track dynamic of restored ecosystems in the pilot plots and the trend of ecosystems covered by the management plans	Agreed and planned to work with local authorities and project partner to build on monitoring activities in October 2018	Monitoring in the future is not clearly imbedded in the planning documents, monitoring programme developed for the LPAs could be strengthened via training and explicit guidance provided. A selection of a small number of monitoring indicators would be favourable.	
3.	Monitoring of co-financing	Agreed to schedule regular updates and complete by March 2019	Calculations & confirmation letters were made available only upon request of TE.	
4.	Monitor financial risks and prepare mitigation plan if necessary (budget planning in local municipalities)	Partially agreed to propose amendments to local budgets during mid-2018 or 2019	There has been some work in this respect, but not in a systemic way with all local authorities involved in the project by the PMU.	
5.	Add 2019 budget and revise closing date of project	Noted	The project team/CO determined not to change the finalization date of the project and thus it remained as December 2018	
6.	Support technical norms of the new Urban Development Code	Agreed to introduce measures to mainstream BD into the Technical norms and propose these to the multi-stakeholder Urban Development Committee by October 2018	Two new technical norms were developed - 1) Technical norms on the composition of the compartment on environmental protection during the development of project documentation of all objects (approved); 2) Technical norms on the composition of the compartment on environmental protection in urban development documentaton (under finalisaton)	
7.	Facilitate biodiversity mainstreaming into Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy	Agreed	Project proposals to mainstream BD into the Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy were included and it was approved by Government on 8.XI.2018 and passed to Parliament for adoption	√
8.	Integrate economic valuation of ecosystem services into the Guidelines of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Law	Agreed	Project proposals on economic valuation of ecosystem services introduced into the Guidelines of the SEA Law and were approved by the Order of the Minister of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment nr. 291 on 01.X.2018	√
9.	Develop full-fledged economic valuation of ecosystem services and Payment of Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme	Not agreed as beyond project scope. However studies performed to be used as basis in studies performed in future GEF projects	Included in recommendations of TE for future GEF project development	n/a
10.	Explore GEF-7 programming opportunities	Noted	For further elaboration in TE recommendations	√
11.	Institutionalise training modules for BD sensitive spatial and land use planning	Agreed	Agreements arrived at with Academy for Public Administration. TE makes further observations to explore re cooperation with other partners as well	√
12.	Develop Training Needs Assessments	Agreed	Financial support for this activity did not materialize and thus it was not conducted.	
13.	Reflect on best practises and lessons learned and extract analytical briefs and information packages	Agreed	Under development during the TE	
14.	Work with the Congress of Local Authorities (CALM) and UNDP SARD Programme to ensure replication of best practises	Agreed	During TE project team met with CALM to discuss options for disseminating information to municipalities	√
15.	Secure stakeholder agreement on exit strategy	Agreed	Exit strategy not yet finalized, but scheduled for completion by project closure.	

Project Finance

Upon completion of the project, the budget has been completely disbursed and reflects the efficient management of financing.

Table 7. Total expenditure of the Project budget in comparison to planned budget

Project Outcome	Total budget in USD	Actual expenditure as of 07.11.2018	% spent
Component 1	110,000	109,155	99%
Component 2	761,731	745,047	98%
Project Management	127,173	118,142	93%
Total	**998,904**	**972,344**	**97%**

Overall, the project expenditures at the level of each component show a consistent trend in fulfilling the initially planned allocations; with expenditures allocated for components in some cases reaching slightly over the planned budget (see Table 8). This reflects adequate financial planning and alignment of the effected activities with the initially planned design, which confirms the strength in the initial project design of the financial spending, as well as in the ability for the project team to implement procurement and activities in line with the planned pace of disbursements.

Table 8. Expenditure comparison by year

	2015			2016			2017			2018		
Outcome	**Budgeted**	**Actual (CDR)**	**% spent**	**Budgeted**	**Actual (CDR)**	**% spent**	**Budgeted**	**Actual (CDR)**	**% spent**	**Budgeted**	**Actual**	**% spent**
Component 1	30,000	28,870	96.23	44,550	46,382	104.11	20,350	20,441	100.45	14,307	13,462	94
Component 2	227,000	275,850	121.52	221,691	218,719	98.66	183,053	145,536	79.5	120,055	104,942	87
Project Management	31,692	36.977	116.67	18,338	15,775	86.02	35,370	37,360	105.63	38,112	28,030	74
Total	**288,692**	**341,697**	**118.36%**	**284,579**	**280,877**	**98.7%**	**238,773**	**203,337**	**85.16%**	**172,474**	**146,434**	**85%**

The annual expenditure comparison shows a fairly steady disbursement in line with the budgeted for each year. There is an over expenditure in year one (2015) which, although not the best practice, it was balanced out in the next year (2016). In terms of implementation, this over expenditure seems to have allowed the project to launch activities strongly during this first year which, in retrospect, meant that results were reached on some issues already in year two of the project. This expenditure, however, seems to have meant that the project was not in the position to consider the extension of the project to mid-2019 (for four full years of the project) as suggested by the MTE. Clearly the main constraint for implementation of this recommendation was the lack of funds remaining in 2018 to add another five months of administrative costs.

UNDP and implementing Partner implementation/execution coordination, and operational issues

There was a very high turnover on the Government side during the course of the Project with 6 Ministers during the 3,5 years. In 2017, as part of the government reform in the Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry and the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development were combined to form the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE). In 2018, there were further adjustments in the functions among ministries whereby urbanization planning was extracted from the responsibilities of MARDE and transferred under the functions of the Ministry of Economy; the territorial planning, however,

remains within the responsibilities of the Regional Development division of the former. Although there is a State Secretary for Environment, with the newly formed MARDE, the project met with more delays to gather approvals from the Ministry. The biodiversity division of the MARDE at the time of the TE was reduced to three officials. The commitment of these individuals to the results that the project could bring was witnessed to be high; this division's ownership of the project results is also high.

As a result of the many changes in the key institutions, in particular the executive agency, the Project Board and its members changed multiple times. Although it is understandable that the Project Board composition changed with the merging of several ministries into one, it may have assisted in project oversight and ownership from part of the Government, if representation of the different responsible functions of the Ministry would be part of the Board. By choosing to limit the Project Board to one representative of the combined ministry, the opportunity for engagement on issues related to other functions of the ministry (related to agriculture and regional development) seemed to have been weakened or lost.

In the circumstances of this changing environment, it is difficult for the TE evaluators to fully assess whether more could have been done by UNDP, the Implementing Agency, to support the project team. There is clear evidence of support the project received from UNDP in being responsive and flexible to encourage the project to meet its results. Support was provided by the Istanbul Regional Hub in reporting. The UNDP CO may have been positioned to support the project in gathering a less formal group of representatives to meet as a substitute of the Multi-stakeholder Biodiversity Mainstreaming Committee which is discussed under 3.1., and was planned at project design. The project could have benefited to have such a group to provide the necessary guidance to trigger the integration of biodiversity, land, regional and socio-economic issues at the national level. Nonetheless, the TE fully acknowledges the enormous strains on capacities during the time this project was under implementation and the difficulties this would have presented in gathering such a group.

The TE considers the Implementing Agency rating as Highly Satisfactory (HS) and, due to the albeit challenging circumstances of Government reform and objective circumstances related to high staff turnover during the course of the project, the Executing Partner rating is Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU).

3.3. Project Results

Overall results

This part of the report presents the activities and results of the project based on the project's Results Framework provided in the project document and revised during the mid-term evaluation. Table 9 indicates the progress of the project in terms of achieving its objective. This is an extract from the logical framework which was amended during the mid-term evaluation to add targets for the project to achieve in addition to those set at project design phase. As indicated, the indicators have been met by the project in terms of land areas for which spatial plans and urbanistic plans have been developed, as well as in terms of trainings provides. The indicator on financial issues is reported as not fully being achieved, however the final evaluator's determined, as witnessed through discussions with project stakeholders on the further implementation of the plans, that the project has increased the probability for such financial resources to be allocated (in part already taken into account on the level of local communities) during implementation of the plans which will take place during the years after the project closes.

Table 9. Indicators and targets to reach the project objective

Objective: To mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into Moldova's					
Indicator	**Baseline level**	**Target level at EoP**	**MTR level**	**TE level**	**FE rating and comments**
Land area for which DSPs and LUPs, that deliver biodiversity benefits outside PAs are developed and under implementation	0 ha	~204,000 ha (2 districts) Additional 3,180 million hectares (33 districts) indirectly influenced by project approach	0 ha	204 137.07 ha (104298.98 ha in Soroca district and 99 838.09 ha in Stefan-Voda district). Additional 3,180 million hectares (33 districts) are indirectly influenced by project approach via the below: Inputs provided for SEA Law enforcement (SEA Guidelines) Incorporation of BD conservation priorities and ecosystem services provided for Moldova 2030 Strategy development Monitoring and impact evaluation guidelines Collaboration with CALM and training with architects and urbanists on biodiversity incorporation into DSP and GUP (based on project practice).	SEA guidelines approved by the MARDE on 01.X.2018 Monitoring and impact evaluation guidelines of Pasture Management Plans and Forest Management Plans under development to be completed by 15.XII
% of local land-users in 2 districts who are conducting economic activities in ecologically sensitive areas and receive in-field training and technical assistance with implementing modified practices	0	100%	0% Training under development for targeted groups and to be organized from mid-2017 and in 2018. Land-users, private sector, farmers to be trained in BD-friendly approaches in livestock grazing, hay-making, arable agriculture, use of forests.	20% Trainings organized on natural resource management and sustainable economic activities in both districts (Soroca and Stefan Voda). Estimated that the practical activities which were undertaken by the project (pasture restoration, afforestation, berries production and medicinal plants growing) reached 20% of targeted beneficiaries.	Additional training to be provided by end of project. In order to secure sustainability, to be continued through cooperation with CALM. Enforcement training could benefit further attention.
Increased finance sources for biodiversity mainstreaming into local plans (e.g. local budget public finance; international funded projects; private sector; PES etc)	None	Budget allocations for biodiversity mainstreaming in pilot areas increased by 10%	None. Study on Economic Value of Ecosystem Services initiated in 2 districts of the country will provide the required economic rationale for advocating the increase in biodiversity-relevant expenditures by local public authorities. Complete study will be available by the end of 2017.	None. Assessment indicates district level budgets do not receive sufficient financial resources for environmental initiatives, financing relies on local taxes for natural resources use (which are very small). Assessment of economic valuation potential of the ecosystems in the two pilot districts provide necessary groundwork that will contribute to future income generation, necessary for the implementation of land use plans in the pilot areas.	Capacities of district level authorities to promote big scale projects supported by the project including complex full-fledged cost - benefit analysis based on and supported by the developed DSP. Further support through promotion of successes of project could assist. Additional investments in districts which can be generated via project results.

Component 1: Land use planning and enforcement system addresses biodiversity loss

In order to meet the targets set under this component, the project achieved these outcomes:

- Pastures management plans developed for 4 communities from Soroca and Stefan Voda districts, covering 1,834 ha of pastures and forests' management plans – covering 800 ha;
- Inventory of rare species in Soroca and Stefan Voda districts performed;
- Rare species' passports developed, setting forth conservation measures (see Table 10);
- Study on Rare Species' Habitats carried out for these two districts;
- Study on the economic value of the ecosystem services from Soroca and Stefan Voda districts carried out;
- Monitoring programme for LPAs developed;
- Two Eco-tourist Guides for attractions from Soroca and Stefan Voda districts developed to increase attractiveness of the area for visitors and attract potential investments in these two districts;
- Activities for piloting business based on use of ecosystem services were initiated in 3 pilot localities;
- 29 officers from central and local levels from Soroca and Stefan Voda districts on mainstreaming biodiversity aspects in land use plans, collecting and monitoring biodiversity data.

The main target related to legislative acts has far exceeded the expectations for the project. This is particularly impressive considering the challenges in the Government with changing staff, including Ministers over the course of the project. Table 11 *Project contribution to incorporating biodiversity conservation requirements into planning and management of land use* shows that, from an expected result of 3 modifications in legislation and regulations, the Project has achieved 20. Although with such a figure, one may be concerned that this shows over-regulation, these proposals for amendments to the regulations listed have been based on a thorough analysis of the national and international legal framework and the country's international commitment under the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

The Table below shows the number of passports developed for species in the two pilots districts of the Project. These passports were prepared by the Institute of Zoology which has a high interest to continue this work spanning a broader area of Moldova. This would be especially favourable in areas with protected areas and the Implementing Agency as well as Executing Agency of this Project could easily take up this experience in forthcoming projects in the area of biodiversity, land management and climate change/adaptation. Complementary monitoring programmes for LPAs could similarly be introduced to strengthen the integration of biodiversity issues within land management in Moldova.

Table 10 Passports prepared for rare species in the districts of Soroca and Stefan Voda

Passport type	Soroca	Ştefan Vodă
Rare animal species,including:	63	57
Mammals	*6*	*10*
Birds	*10*	*13*
Reptiles	*4*	*4*
Amphibians	*8*	*2*
Fish	*6*	*13*
Insects	*29*	*15*
Rare plants	49	41
Secular trees	2	4

Under this component, before the closure of the project, a training session is to be organized for approximately 20 persons (from the newly established Environmental Protection Agency), architects and town planners. The targets set by the stage of terminal evaluation are reflected in Table 11 below.

Table 11: Targets for Component 1

Indicator	Baseline level	Target level at EoP	MTR level	TE level	FE rating and comments
Number of sectoral regulations and methodological guidelines that facilitate the incorporation of biodiversity conservation requirements into planning and management of land use outside protected areas	0	3	20	Approximately 20 regulations and legislative acts: 2 laws containing proposed amendments approved; others- at various stages of approval, e.g. the Forest Code that includes proper considerations of BD issues in forestry related planning and management activities is at advanced approval stage and the Land Code is expected to be approved by end 2018.	The regulations are at a varied level of approval (see Table 12). Overall this level is impressive. Introduction of training at the final stage of the project will secure the ability to see that enforcement part of such regulations provides the necessary impact on the ground.
Recorded cases of illegal logging	Soroca: 17 cases in 2013 (45.9 m3) Stefan Voda: 14 cases in 2013(42.1 m3)	Reduced by half Reduced by half	16 cases (50m3) in Soroca and 12 cases (72 m3) in Stefan Voda.	Soroca: 12 cases (9.1m3) Stefan Voda: 24 cases (25.2 m3).	The figures show a decrease in cases, however these should be compared against # of inspections made in comparison to # of cases discovered as data could merely be a result of reduced capacities of Inspectorate to conduct controls[7].
Observance of grazing norms (especially those related to stocking rates and non-use of pastures in Spring) by local land users in all pilot sites	0% of land users observing norms in 2013	50% of land users observing norms	0%	50% Developed PMPs specify grazing norms related to targeted community pastures as well as monitoring mechanisms for tracking observance rates in target pasturelands. In support of PMP implementation, the workshops organized with land users and local public authorities, and template of Local Grazing Norms developed and endorsed by LPAs. Data gathered to measure impact of implementation of PMPs and FMPs.	The implementation phase of the plans will provide important information to confirm this indicator. The study planned by the project in XII 2018 can input information in the final report of the project to this effect. Would be recommended that grazing norms and other land management practices be introduced for enforcement in other protected areas under establishment in Moldova.
Number of government staff trained in collection of biodiversity information and integration of this into the development and implementation of land use plans	0	At least 20 officers	0	29 officers from central and local level from Soroca and Stefan Voda district trained in 2017 on integration of BD considerations into land use plans, BD data collection and monitoring. Academy for Local Public Administration to include BD mainstreaming aspects in existing trainings curricula for the public servants working in the environment sector.	By project completion a training session for 20 -30 persons (from newly established Environment Protection Agency) and architects and urbanists to be organized. Training on BD mainstreaming could be extended to public servants also working in planning in economic sectors.

[7] The data which the TE evaluators were able to obtain was as follows: For the year 2017 in Soroca – 46 cases of illegal logging including 11 cases in the forests managed by Moldsilva (Forest) Agency, 32 cases in the villages, including: 4 in village green areas, 28 in forests and forest fund, 3 cases on roads protection belts. Total trees cut - 224, from which most in the villages and communal forests - 175. The volume of wood is not indicated in the report, only the total damage caused, which account to 38 955 MDL. In Stefan Voda total cases are 28, including: 4 in the Moldsilva Agency, 6 in communal forests green zones: 2 in green zones, 4 in forest, 9 - trees cut along roadsides, 9 cases in other lands/private etc Total trees cut - 100, damaged - 56, the damage caused is of 14655,7 MDL.

Table 12. Project contribution to incorporating biodiversity conservation requirements into planning and management of land use

Legislative act	Approval status	Incorporation of BD issues	Improvement of land management	Promotion of ecosystem services	Improvement of Specific Research Framework	Implementation of green economy principle
National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030"	Approved by Government 8.XI.2018, submitted to Parliament for adoption	+	+	+		+
Land Code of the Republic of Moldova	MARDE, draft developed in 2017	+	+	+	+	
Forestry Code of the Republic of Moldova	Presented to the Government	+	+	+	+	+
Urbanistic Code of the Republic of Moldova	1st reading in the Parliament	+	+	+	+	+
Guidance on performing strategic environmental assessment procedures	MARDE, approved by the Order of the Minister of MADRE, 01.X.2018	+	+	+	+	
Law on Payment for Environmental Pollution	MARDE	+	+	+		
Law on the Environment Protection	MARDE	+	+	+	+	
Water Law	in Parliament	+	+		+	
Subsoil Code	MARDE	+	+		+	
Animal Kingdom Law	Approved	+	+		+	
Law on Fisheries	Approved	+	+		+	
Law on Plant Protection	MARDE	+	+		+	
Law on Atmospheric Air Protection	in Parliament	+	+		+	
Law on Natural Areas Fund Protected by State	Approved	+	+		+	
The Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova	MARDE, under development	+		+		
Plant Vegetation Law	Approved	+	+	+	+	
Law on the National Ecological Network	Approved	+	+	+	+	+
Law on the Establishment of the Biosphere Reserve "Prutul de Jos"	Approved	+	+	+	+	+
Law on the ratification of the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Additional Protocol on Liability and Compensation for Damage to the Cartagena Protocol	Approved	+	+	+		
Action Plan for 2018-2023 for the approval of the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Moldovan Forest Sector	MARDE	+	+	+	+	+

Component 2: Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity on communal land

The targets and their indicators for this component are reflected in the table below:

Table 13: Targets for Component 2

Indicator	Baseline level	Target level at EoP	MTR level	TE level	FE rating and comments
Increase in land area outside protected areas where threats to biodiversity from economic activities are controlled	0 ha	Sustainable land uses demonstrated as follows: Hay making: 100 ha Forestry: 100 ha Grazing: 1,834 ha	90 ha of pastures restored 88 ha of ecological corridors established through reforestation. Also, Pasture management plans were developed for 4 communities covering 1,834 ha of pastures and Forest management plans covering 800 ha.	100 ha of pastures restored 100 ha of ecological corridors established through reforestation and 52 ha of degraded lands were afforested in other 6 locations in partnership with NGO Planting Good Deeds and IFAD. Grazing: 1,834 ha Pasture management plans were for 4 communities covering 1,834 ha and Forest management plans covering 800 ha.	Confirmed
Population of indicator species outside PAs improves at pilot sites (see table below for details on indicator species)*	Feather grass *Stipa pennata* 3% of the total plant composition per 100 m3	10% of the total plant composition per 100 m3	6% of the total plant composition per 100 m3;	9% of the total plant composition per 100 m3;	Long-term monitoring would be required to confirm land management impact resulting from Project impact on the species
	Feather grass *Stipa ucrainica* 7% of the total plant composition per 100 m3	20% of the total plant composition per 100 m3	11% of the total plant composition per 100 m3	19% of the total plant composition per 100 m3	
	Corn Crake *Crex crex* 10 breeding males	>40 breeding males.	20 breeding males;	36 breeding males;	
	Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* 2 pairs	>5 pairs	< 2 pairs.	5 pairs.	
	European Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus citellus* 0 colonies	>3 colonies	>1 colony	>1 colony	
	Speckled Ground Squirrel *Spermophilus suslicus* 0 colonies	>5 colonies	>3 colonies	3 colonies	
	European Otter *Lutra lutra*5 individuals	>10 individuals	> 6 individuals	> 16 individuals	

In order to meet these targets, the project achieved the following:

- Land Use Plans developed and endorsed for Soroca and Stefan Voda districts;
- Local businesses and valuation of ecosystem services conducted;

- General Urban Plans developed and approved for 4 localities from the pilot districts, including biodiversity conservation aspects;
- In collaboration with the Academy for Public Administration, biodiversity mainstreaming aspects are included in existing training curricula for public servants from the environmental sector;
- 100 ha of ecological corridor established for afforestation of degraded lands in 4 communities from Soroca and Stefan Voda districts;
- 52 ha of degraded lands afforested in additional 6 localities in partnership with the Planting Good Deeds NGOs and IFAD;
- 100 ha of pastures recovered by performing works for improving the grass carpet;
- Courses organized on management of natural resources and sustainable economic activities in both districts (Soroca and Stefan Voda);
- Development of recommendations provided to local public administration from Stefan Voda and Soroca districts for supplementing the public budgets and private investment resources by increasing the financing (from projects) to mainstream biodiversity aspects.

The assessment of the capacities is an important part of understanding the overall results of the project and its attainment of the objective *To mainstream biodiversity conservation priorities into Moldova's territorial planning policies and land-use practices*. The capacity scorecard shows progress from the start of the project until it completion in all aspects as related to the institutional level. The systemic level sees minimal progress for capacities on implementation of policies and monitoring. The capacity to implement policies on the individual level shows negligible progress which may be due very directly to the situation on high staff turnover in many of the institutions that the project has cooperated with on policy development. The cooperation the Project has established the Academy for Public Administration could institutionalize the valuable training to see it reaches capacity development on the individual level more broadly as well.

Table 14. Capacity Assessment Scorecard

Strategic Area of Support	Baseline scores			Scores at mid-term (October 2017)			Final scores (November 2018)		
	Systemic (S)	Institutional (INST)	Individual (IND)	S	INST	IND	S	INST	IND
1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	1	0	n/a	1	2	n/a	1	2	n/a
2. Capacity to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programmes	2	3	1	3	7	2	3	7	2
3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders	2	2	n/a	2	2	n/a	2	2	n/a
4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge	2	n/a	1	2	n/a	1	2	n/a	1
5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn	1	1	n/a	2	2	n/a	2	2	n/a
Total	**8**	**6**	**2**	**10**	**13**	**3**	**10**	**13**	**3**

Upon review of the project outputs and based upon an assessment of the project results, the results are rated as Highly Satisfactory (HS)

Relevance

During the course of the evaluation there was overwhelming agreement about the relevance of this project to Moldova. This was striking due to the broad range of interested parties interviewed, that ranged from high level officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (GEF Operational focal point), division staff and corresponding authorities in the Inspectorate, Biosafety and Biodiversity Project Office who work at the national level to those who work in the districts and villages. The diversity of unanimous praise for this well-timed intervention also spanned sectors - environment (including biodiversity, climate change, flooding and drought), economy, agriculture, regional development and job creation (poverty reduction).

This project is viewed as a pioneer project in Moldova in terms of mainstreaming biodiversity integrating these issues through a predominantly agricultural context (in small communities). The relevance was raised even more via the project strategy of combining policy-level work with examples of practical ways to address biodiversity issues in managing the land in communities. The practical benefit to people in managing their land was significant.

Moldova has currently set a target in its Environmental Strategy 2014-2023 which aims to expand forest areas to 15% of the country by 2023 and to increase the land covered by protected natural areas to 8%. The Strategy also aims to ensure efficient and sustainable management of natural forest ecosystems. The Strategy on the Sustainable Development of the Forests Sector in the Republic of Moldova indicates that to increase ecological protection of the forest, the degree of forestation should be no less than 15% by 2020. The Moldova 2030 strategy, aproved by the Government on 08.XI.2018, indcated the following targets: 13% by 2023, 15% by 2026 and17% by 2030.

Currently the country has coverage of approximately 8% with the same coverage in the pilot areas of the project (8-9%). Thus, it is critical to see progress towards the national targets and the stakeholders interviewed thought a broader development and implementation of plans such as those district plans and urbanistic plans developed within the UNDP/GEF project at least provide a concrete path and actions to methodically steer the communities and districts in this course.

Thus, the project is rated Relevant (R).

Effectiveness & Efficiency

The project has efficiently implemented the different activities planned within the project's framework and the trends in the financial delivery as discussed in 3.2. shows a fairly consistent, even disbursement of funds which conform to a steady implementation of activities. The project has also been implemented in 3,5 years, which has it at its completion about five months earlier than originally designed.

The project team seems to have reviewed the risks of the project on an annual basis, making adjustments, which is a good indication. The project team added risks during the course of project implementation. Already in October 2016, the project tabled a financial risk *Lack of financial resources to implement the developed land use planning documents*. At the time the project's management response was to assess the local public authorities financial resources in order to identify possible resources for implementation of the developed planning documents. In November 2018 the project team tabled the fact that project concepts were prepared and provided to the authorities in order to make it possible for them to access additional funds for conservation. The concepts prepared in response to the actualization of this risk are found Annex V List of project concepts.

In May 2017 the project inputted another Political risk into the ATLAS risk management system *Potential government reform can affect or delay approval and implementation of project outputs.* At the time of fixing this risk, there is a formulation of the impact this may have on different activities, such as legislation approvals, however there is no management response or countermeasure noted therein. Updates of the Organizational risk *MoE and ALRC do not cooperate to make species/data available ..* were created annually and, although this was deemed an issue presently a pretty high impact (4 on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 presents a high impact), there is no countermeasure described. One very critical risk, which was added to the logframe by the MTE *Poor enforcement capacities and some economic interests of local leaders may further weaken support* seems not to have been tabled by the project team. The particular issue of enforcement, however, and the corresponding limited capacities are a clear risk to the project implementation which could have benefited from being introduced, even if only at mid-term and to discuss and develop an approach which could mitigate at least a proportion of the impact this risk has on the project not fully meeting its results.

Co-financing of the project shows that the commitments set at the project outset have well-exceeded the planned levels. This is encouraging in terms of efficiency, but also, hopefully provides some confidence that the co-financiers, which includes the Ministry, Moldsilva Agency and the local authorities are highly committed to this topic.

The project interacted with the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub in the development of the valuation of eco-system services thereby tapping into pooled experiences of other UNDP projects in the region on these issues and utilizing UNDP expertise for maximising efficiency of project resources.

Stakeholder involvement was organized through the work of the team, which interacted directly with many interested parties in the project. They communicated a common message and led the process thoroughly. A communication plan was developed within the framework of the project. Within this communication strategy it had the following objectives:

1. Increasing understanding among target groups of the importance of BD conservation;
2. Training of target groups on the issues and particularities of BD conservation;
3. Introduction of the BD component into land planning and management processes;
4. Modification of the current land use planning and utilization methods in Moldova, taking into account biodiversity aspects;
5. Ensuring the impact and visibility of project activities;
6. Maintaining and improving the visibility of UNDP and GEF by communicating positive results.

The main target groups were identified in very general terms as: institutions and public authorities; land managers, local communities with impact on BD; partners – environmental NGOs and the general public. By grouping all institutions and public authorities in one general group (and basing the SWOT analysis and messages for communication on this grouping), the bulk of the communication activities have been formulated in general terms of biodiversity and may have been strengthened if tailored for the diverse sectoral interests where biodiversity issues may be mainstreamed.

As noted in the MTE, the project attempted to direct it scarce resources in the most strategic manner; planning the delivery of training interventions after the institutional reform was finalized and institutional mandates, roles and responsibilities clearly spelled out. The last 1,5 month of the project is an intense period to ensure this is achieved.

In consideration of the above, the efficiency and effectiveness of the project is considered Highly satisfactory (HS).

Table 15. Co-financing

Source	Type	Planned In-kind	Planned Grant	Actual Grant	Actual In-kind	% of Planned	Description
Originally Planned Contributors							
MoE	Government	100,000			88,740	88.74%	In-kind estimation of office rent, conference room rent in the Ministry, time of the BD department and other staff for project related activities and meetings
MoE	Government		460,000	920,150		200%	Grants provided from the Ecological fund under the following categories: - Biodiversity conservation and expansion of forest coverage - Scientific research in domain of environment
UNDP	GEF Agency		40,000	40,000		100%	Cash co-financing from TRAC.
Moldsilva	Government		4,200,000	5,502,729		131.34%	Costs for 2 enterprises (Soroca and Tighina) associated with: - Forest management planning - Forestry monitoring - Protected areas management - Guarding and protection - Forest regeneration and other forestry works
Moldsilva	In -kind (vehicle)		0	13,860			Vehicle provided to the project and the figure reflects calculated rental fee.
Stefan Voda District	Local authorities		30,000	1,845,371		6451.23 %	Value of grants and projects implemented in the district in environment domain. Only in 2018, an ADA grant was offered to the region in the value of 750,000 euro for establishment of the Lower Dniestr national park and affiliated activities.
Soroca District	Local authorities		20,000	305,867		1529.3%	Value of grants and projects implemented in the district in environment domain. Most of them from the Ecological fund.
Grand Total		**100,000**	**4,750,000**	**8,627,977**	**88,740**	**179.72**	

Sustainability

It is difficult to reach sustainability of results in a challenging sector such as pastures and forests management in Moldova, especially in a short time and with activities geared both for policy development and practical tasks. The TE confirms that the project has succeeded in implementing important results that provide a sound foundation upon which biodiversity can be integrated into Moldova's territorial planning and land use.

An exit strategy was prepared by the project in the final two months of the project which identifies steps and processes for sustaining project results. Under component 1: Land use planning and enforcement systems addressed BD loss, the project has the following plans:

Fostering actions	Steps and processes	Responsible
Modifications to land and forest legislation/	- Promotion of proposals for Land Code and Forestry Code	- MARDE
Monitoring system in place to track change in biodiversity-important areas/	- Implemented species' passports – mayoralties of Bădiceni, Zastânca (Soroca), Copceac, Talmaza (Stefan Voda), Cadaster Service and Ecological Inspection for Soroca and Stefan Voda districts, MARDE - Dissemination of information from the Red Book of Soroca and Stefan Voda districts (Habitats of rare species in these districts) through schools and libraries to which they were distributed; - Contents of brochures developed by project experts will be promoted through the networks managed by CALM.	- LPA and Environment Inspectorate - Project team/CALM
National multi-sector stakeholder committee established to oversee land-use plan development, implementation and enforcement	- Proposals suggested in the BD project included in the Technical Standards of the Urbanism Code - National multi-sector committee is functional	- MARDE - MoEcI, Urbanproject Institute
System of penalties for malfeasance to the approved DSPs and LUPs developed/	- Dissemination and information to general public, LPA through the Catalogue of Fines developed within the project, regarding the liability and the possible sanctions if the developed documents are not respected. - Dissemination of brochures through the beneficiaries of the project and through collaboration with other similar projects.	- MARDE - UNDP - CALM
Government officers from key institutions trained in participatory spatial planning that integrates biodiversity conservation principles	- Contents of the courses developed by the project experts for the state officials from the key institutions integrated into the training program of the Public Administration Academy; - Contents of the courses developed by the project experts promoted through the networks managed by CALM.	- Academy of local public authorities - CALM

In terms of exit strategy for the 1st component, the TE notes the importance of the further implementation and enforcement of the land-use plans and working not only with the MARDE but also with the Ministry

of Economy and Industry (MoEcI) in this regard due to the restructuring of planning issues between these two ministries. Due to this and other allocations of functions dispersed among various institutions and responsible parties, UNDP should consider in the final stage of the project to work with the Urban Development Committee under the MoEcI. Applying this committee and its members as a vehicle in lieu of the National Multi-Sectoral Committee which was not established under the project as planned would help to sustain results to oversee land-use planning, development, implementation and enforcement.

For the Component 2: Conservation and sustainable use of BD on communal land the exit plan is as follows:

Fostering actions	**Steps and processes**	**Responsible**
Integrated district spatial plans (DSPs) and land use plans (LUPs) accommodating biodiversity concerns are developed for two districts	- Planning local budgets (LPAs of level I and II) with provisions of co-financing for attracting funds to finance actions from the district spatial plans and integrated land use plans. - Distribution of Tourist Guides of Soroca and Stefan Voda districts. - Implementation by the LPA of Pasture Management Plans (PMPs) and Forest Management Plans (FMPs).	- LPA
Technologies developed, tested and appropriate infrastructure established to showcase biodiversity-compatible land uses in pasturelands./	- Organizing study visits for interested mayoralties to those 4 localities in which pasture rehabilitation was carried out for dissemination of experience. - Dissemination of brochures with description of developed and tested technologies, and of the created adequate infrastructure so as to show the biodiversity-compatible land use on pastures and the experience of pasture rehabilitation in the localities from Soroca and Stefan Voda districts so as to inform the LPA about the rehabilitation benefits.	- APL - CALM - UNDP for new projects
Ecological connectivity established between and within different forest blocks.	- Final reception of afforestation works - Correct administration of segments of forests planted for ecological connectivity created between diverse forest bodies from Bădiceni, Zastânca (Soroca), Copceac, Talmaza (Stefan Voda) and extending them based on the additionally attracted resources	- Project team - LPA - Moldsilva
Land users trained in mainstreaming biodiversity concerns in land use practices.	- Contents of the courses developed by the project experts for the state officials from the key institutions are integrated in the training programs of the Public Administration Academy and other universities upon request with adjustments to the requirements of the institution; - Contents of the courses developed by the project experts will be promoted through the networks managed by CALM;	- Academy of local public authorities - CALM
Secure public funds for mainstreaming initiatives	- Implementation of the list of project ideas developed by the project and endorsed to LPA.	- LPA

The exit strategy is well thought out and conceived by the project in order to capture the main issues which need to be transferred for further implementation in order to fix sustainability of the results.

Financial sustainability

There are financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of the project outcomes. Although all stakeholders interviewed stressed the importance of further elaboration of district management plans and urbanistic plans to the remaining 33 districts in the country, they also highlighted that this

was a costly exercise which would be complicated for other municipalities to do. The attraction of the appropriate experts and the funding of their work to create the plans, as well as the appropriate consultation with the communities, land users and other interested parties would cost a minimum of between 8-10,000 USD per plan. Although the project cannot expect to fully provide financial sustainability in this regard, the project has taken considerable efforts to do its best to minimize this risk before closure of the project:
- preparation of economic valuation of the plans: this valuation provides information to planners on the estimated benefits a plan can bring to a municipality, if implemented;
- dissemination of information on the development of plans encouraging other projects to integrate the elaboration of plans in the future.

There also is an issue of financial risk in terms of implementation of the plans prepared under the project. The plans are prepared for a period of 10 years and thus, there are management activities that need to be implemented, a majority of which carry some cost to the partners - either in human, financial or technical resources.

For the specific communities with which the project has developed plans, a list of concepts has been compiled which could help mobilize investments for implementation.




Left: 15 ha of medicinal plants generate products to be sold on market Right: Mulcher clears the degraded land for pastures.

To address this, the project has provided practical implementation in the villages for pastures and forest management and applied measures that address the technical, human resource and/or financial constraints that might develop during implementation. Thus, for instance, in Badicieni (shown right above), the project has provided the village with the technical capacity to help clear pastures in the area to increase productivity. In Copceac, the project has supported the community in the planting of medicinal plants in a 15 ha area which in the first season generated over 2 000 kg of seeds.

Table 16. Information on medicinal plants and their yield in 2018 season

Name of plant (in *Latin*)	**Area planted, ha**	**Total yield for 2018 season, kg**
Flax *Linum sp*	1	600
Mustard *Sinapsis alba*	5	800
Milk thistle *Silibum marianum*	1	300
Fennel flower *Nigrella sativa*	1	Left in the field for natural sowing
Sesame *Sesamum indicum*	1	Left in the field for natural sowing

In addition to the planting of medicinal plants, a field of 2 ha was also planted for the purposes of local beekeeping which yielded 1000 kg of seeds. These fields can provide income for the community, which can be partially re-invested in the upkeep of the pastures.

Socio-economic sustainability

The PMU has managed to generate quite a high level of ownership of the project results by the stakeholders involved. The socio-economic interests of the villages are paramount to the success of mainstreaming biodiversity in their management of land use and it is important that they see very directly the socio-economic benefits for their communities. The mayors of Copcea and Talmazi in the Stefan Voda district made a direct correlation of the activities introduced by the project with their ability to supply the representatives of their communities with work which can have both a social (volunteer work for the community's general welfare) and economic functions (job creation). One mayor cited 480 jobs that are created for his community of 7,000 (potential for employment) which he can provide for from the plantation aronija and wild roses, etc (see picture below, right). Another was proud to involve 300 volunteers of his 2 460 population in planting the ecological corridor in his area which will both support national targets for reforestation of the country, but also see, in time, the return of wildlife as well as improve the soil which has been drastically eroded from drought (picture below, left).





Within the communities at the village level, there is enough awareness raised as here they see the direct benefits the most – as well as benefit most on the most personal level. One concern raised by almost all stakeholders at the local level was that the national level was not aware enough of the importance of these plans and the need to disseminate them further to other municipalities in Moldova so that communities could benefit on a broader scale.

Institutional framework and governance sustainability

Although the project has generated a lot of policy documents for attempting to secure sustainability of biodiversity mainstreaming in land use, the institutional framework for implementation and oversight of this policy is weak. The plans for the districts and village have only recently been approved and district leaders admitted they have not yet had a chance to familiarize themselves with them in detail. Due to the short time that remained in the project after approval of the plans, there is a high degree of uncertainty as to how the enforcement and monitoring side of management plans will proceed. The Inspectorate is in a very long state of flux waiting for redirection of functions with the newly established, but not yet fully operational Environmental Protection Agency. The current resources of the Inspectorate are low to conduct oversight. It is also unclear how the reorganization of the National Ecological Fund and Regional Development Fund will affect government support to environmental and especially biodiversity

conservation issues. The transparency of how this will proceed was considered uncertain by stakeholders interviewed.

Environmental sustainability

Interventions of the project aim to increase the resilience of the terrestrial and wetland ecosystems to avoid irreversible ecosystem balance shifts, which may be caused by negative impact of climate change. If management plans continue to integrate environmental aspects, environmental sustainability can be managed to some degree.

The TE have rated the sustainability of the project overall Moderately likely (ML), with the financial, socio-economic and environmental sustainability deemed Moderately likely (ML) and the institutional framework and governance sustainability considered Moderately unlikely (MU).

Conclusions, Recommendations & Lessons

Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project

Some recommendations for the future implementation of UNDP projects:
- strategic stakeholder involvement: in a changing situation of governance and project oversight, review of stakeholders must take into account the role that each stakeholder was to fulfil during project design. By analysing the roles, it is crucial for effective project implementation to substitute as many players in order to fit the roles based upon which the project was designed
- the monitoring and evaluation practises of UNDP-GEF projects would benefit from introducing a system for reporting on site visits. This would promote information exchange among the team members and project stakeholders and provide an effective way to track progress, underline obstacles and mobolise intervention, if required from UNDP and/or other stakeholders (sample provided in Annex VI)
- communication strategies can be more effective if they encompass not only public awareness raising in a general sense, but provide a clear analysis and strategy (set of actions) for communicating project developments to key partners, stakeholders and interest groups.

Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

The project results are innovative for the Republic of Moldova. Few territorial plans and plans or urbanization have been developed up until now and, in terms of integrating biodiversity issues within these plans - the project has presented a first-time approach for the country. The momentum created and interest generated by these activities of the project should not be underestimated and it would be wise to tap into this in further reinforcing the potential benefits to biodiversity in the country through planning. This puts UNDP at a high comparative advantage and thus it would be highly beneficial for the organization to further advance this approach to other districts and towns.

With further dissemination of the development of land management plans, the technical issues related to their elaboration are important. The issue of open data, which would allow municipalities access to data important for their planning is a significant one. Open data could make the process less costly and more general expertise. It would also be favourable

to continue the current discussions around the technical aspect of the territorial and urbanization plans -- combined with open data, the introduction of GIS approach for planning could, in the long run, lower the costs of development and maintenance of management plans. This, however would probably require change in legislation as well as initial support to increase the capacities of planners in GIS-based planning.

In terms of land use planning issues and taking into consideration that the National Multi-Sectoral Committee planned during project design was never established, it would be crucial to project sustainability before project closure to work closely with the Ministry of Economy and perhaps more specifically with the Urban Development Committee to ensure that they have all information, training, as well as a full grasp of future challenges for the implementation, enforcement and further replication of the project's excellent results.

Another result which was highly appreciated by interested parties and which should be further introduced in other territories, especially nature sites (Ramsar sites currently being formed and those protected areas planned in the future) is the development of passports, more detailed information and respective monitoring of species.

The project is planning a final seminar which is to include government officials, land planners. The seminar should be expanded, or the project should consider conducting a series of seminars to use the opportunity to strengthen the sustainability of the project and further disseminate the best practises. The evaluators suggest this may be especially useful in terms of involving people directly involved in enforcement, perhaps even developing a separate training event.

Annex II: Itinerary of the Terminal Evaluation mission from 5-9 November 2018

Time	Person, Organization	Background / Key discussion topics	Venue, address, contact details	*Other participants /details*
		Monday, November 5		
9:00 – 9:15	Mr. Stefan Liller, UNDP DRR	Briefing	UNDP Office 131, 31 August str. 1989	√
9:15 – 10:30	Ms. Inga Podoroghin, E&E Cluster lead	Briefing, Discussions about project progress	UNDP Office 131, 31 August str. 1989	√
11:00 – 12:00	Ms. Ala Rotaru/Mr. Dumitru Sobolev/Ms.Olga Ceban, Biodiversity division from Ministry of Agriculture, Regional development, Environment	Discussions about project activities	Ministry of Environment 9, C. Tanase str.	√
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch			
13:00 – 14:00	Spatial planning division from Ministry of Agriculture, Regional development, Environment: Mr. Boşneaga Alexei – Head of section, senior consultant Mr. Severin Serghei – senior consultant Mr. Amariei Ion – senior consultant	Project relevance and future development in terms of spatial planning		√
14:30 – 18:00	Mr. Alexandru Rotaru, Project manager Mr. Sergiu Cotaga, Project assistant Ms. Catalina Molodoi, Communication consultant (15:00) Mr. Anatolie Risina, MTE national expert (16:00)	Project presentation	BD mainstreaming office	√
		Tuesday, November 6		
9:00 – 10.30	Mr. Nicolae Munteanu, Deputy head of Agency Moldsilva Mr. Petru Rotaru, Head of forestry and protected area department, Forestry Agency "Moldsilva" Mr. Serghei Tonofrei, Superior consultant Mr. Mamai Iulian, Head of guarding and protection service	Implementing Partner, Member of the Project Board Discussions about biodiversity legal framework	124, Ştefan cel Mare blvd. (3rd floor)	√
11:00 – 12:00	Mr. Ion Talmaci, Technical director, Forest research and management institute Mr. Eric Prosii, Head of forest management planning department Mr. Andrei Cerescu, Silva Mileniu 3	Discussions about forest and pasture management planning and pasture restoration activities	Calea Iesilor 69	√
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch			

Time	Person, Organization	Background / Key discussion topics	Venue, address, contact details	*Other participants /details*
14:00 – 15:00	Ms. Laurentia Ungureanu, project expert in biodiversity Mr. Ghenadie Titica (plants expert)	Discussions about red list species inventory, passports and mandatory conservation actions	Institute of Zoology	√
15:30 – 17:00	Mr. Viorel Miron, Economy expert Mr. Veaceslav Zagaievschi, Project manager, Land support system Mr. Vitalie Dilan, GIS expert	Discussion about Valuation of Ecosystem services. Trainings in eco-tourism, green business Discussions about GUP and DSP Discussions about project GIS activities	LSS office, str. Grenoble	√
Wednesday, November 7				
8:15	Departure from Chisinau to Soroca			
11:00 – 12:00	Mr. Ghenadie Munteanu, Head of the district Mr. Vladimir Nicuta, Deputy head of rayon Mr. Ion Golovatii, Chief architect of the district	Implementing Partner, Member of the Project Board	Rayon Council, Soroca str.Ştefan cel Mare 5	√
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch in Soroca			
13:15 – 14:00	Mr. Mihai Panzaru, Deputy director of Forest Enterprise Soroca Head of forest districts	Local branch of Moldsilva Agency and Ecological Inspection. Discussing about afforestation on degraded lands and eco-corridors establishment	str. Vasile Stroiescu, nr. 110 069299777	√
14:00 – 16:00	Field visit to afforestation interventions	Zastinca (Cadastral engineer will join), Badiceni		√
16:00 – 17:00	Mr. Vasile Palamari, Mayor of Badiceni	Implementing Partner. Visiting pasture restoration		√
17:00 – 20:00	Way back to Chisinau			
Thursday, November 8				
8:15 – 10:15	Departure from Chisinau to Stefan Voda			

Time	Person, Organization	Background / Key discussion topics	Venue, address, contact details	*Other participants /details*
10:15 – 11:15	Mr. Alexandru Pavlicenco, Deputy head of the district Ms. Adelina Barbaneagra – Head of investments attraction department Mr. Iurie Deriughin, district cadaster engineer Ms. Roşca Maia, district chief architect Ms. Valentina Barbaneagra, Head, Division of economy, rayon council Ms. Valentina Mustea, Head, division of youth, sports, education and tourism Mr. Gabriel Margineanu, Ecological Society Biotica, NGO, ADA project on LDNP, NGOs representative in the Administrative council of the National Ecological Fund Mr. Nicolae Nastase, project expert (ex-head of rayon ecological inspection) Ms. Tatiana Marin, President, Ecological movement of Moldova, Stefan Voda branch (NGO and Green Museum)	Implementing Partner, Member of the Project Board Visit to the Green Museum	Rayon Council, Stafan-Voda www.stefan-voda.md	√
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch in Stefan Voda			
13:00 – 14:30	Mr. Eugeniu Prutean, Mayor of Talmaza village	Field visit to afforestation interventions Implementing Partner. Visiting pasture restoration.		√
15:30 – 17:00	Mr. Vasile Tintari, Mayor of Copceac	Field visit to afforestation interventions Implementing Partner. Visiting pasture restoration.		√
17:00 – 19:00	Way back to Chisinau			
Friday, November 9				
9:00 – 10:00	Ms. Inga Podoroghin, E&E Cluster Lead Alexandru Rotaru, Project Manager Sergiu Cotaga, Project assistant Mr. Viorel Miron, Economy expert	De-briefing Next steps/ Follow up	UNDP Office 131, 31 August str. 1989	√
10:15 – 11:00	Ms. Lilia Curchi, Ecological Movement of Moldova, Association of ecological journalists, NGO	Cooperation with NGO community	Le Roi	√
11:15 – 12:15	Mr. Octavii Ivanov, CALM	Member of the board CALM role in project implementation and sustainability insurance	Jazz Hotel	√
12:30 – 13:00	Mr. Stefan Liller, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Ms. Silvia Pana-Carp, Programme analyst, UNDP Moldova	De-briefing	UNDP Office 131, 31 August str. 1989	√

Annex III: List of documents reviewed

1. PIF
2. UNDP Initiation Plan
3. UNDP Project Document
4. UNDP Environmental and Social Screening results
5. Project Inception Report
6. Project Implementation Review (PIR) for years 2016, 2017
7. Quarterly progress reports and work plans \
8. Finalized GEF focal area Tracking Tools at CEO endorsement, mid-term and project final stage
9. Oversight mission reports
10. All monitoring reports prepared by the project
11. Financial and Administration guidelines used by the Project Team
12. Minutes of the Board meetings on ….
13. Project Appraisal Committee meeting minutes
14. Communication strategy
15. Exit strategy
16. GEF-7 Replenishment Programming Directions (April 2018)
17. https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/publications/GEF-C.55-Inf.03-GEF-7-STAR.pdf
18. Regulation on the organization and functions of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment, Decision of the Government nr. 695 of 30.08.2017: http://lex.justice.md/md/371190/
19. Guidelines on SEA (approved by MARDE, 01.10.2018): http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=377554&lang=2
20. National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030" (draft, approved by Government, 08.11.2018): https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/content/strategia-nationala-de-dezvoltare-moldova-2030-aprobata-de-guvern
21. Environmental Strategy of the Republic of Moldova 2014-2023 (2014): http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&id=352740
22. Biodiversity Strategy of the Republic of Moldova for 2015-2020 and the Action Plan for its implementation (2015): http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=358781
23. PATR for Soroca and Stefan Voda, 4 urbanistic plans for villages
24. Governmental Decision on the establishment, organisation and functions of the Environmental Agency, nr. 549 of 13.06.2018: http://lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=375961
25. Regulation of the Inspection for Environmental Protection, http://lex.justice.md/md/375960/
26. Vision on the reforming of the environmental project units of the MARDE, October 2018
27. National report on Green Growth Indicators (indicators on biodiversity and protected areas): ***http://www.eap-green.org/resources/Report_EN.pdf***
28. Nationalization of indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (published on 04.07.2017), Government, UNDP, http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/library/sdg/na_ionalizarea-agendei-de-dezvoltare-durabil-in-contextul-republ/adaptarea-agendei-2030-de-dezvoltarea-durabil-la-contextul-repub.html
29. The Administrative Council of the LDRS, established in 2018: https://www.ecocontact.md/2018/06/11/primul-consiliu-de-administrare-a-unei-zone-ramsar-lansat-in-moldova/
30. Annual Report of the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, 2017 (report of Flora for Soroca and Stefan Voda).

Annex IV: Matrix of Terminal Evaluation questions

Evaluative Criteria Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Relevance: How does the project relate to the main objectives of the GEF focal area, and to the environment and development priorities at the local, regional and national levels?			
• Did the project's objectives the GEF focal areas objectives?		Project document	Review
• Did the project's objectives fit within: national priorities priorities of the local government and local communities?		Government & municipal policies and planning documents	
• Have the objectives of the intervention and its design remained appropriate over the course of implementation?			
• How does the project fit with other projects in environment/ land use planning in Moldova? With other donor support?			
Effectiveness: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved?			
• To what extent have the project Objective and Outcomes have been achieved? In what timeframe?		• Project indicators, RRFs, Annual report	
• How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objective and outcomes?		• Annual reports, Project indicators, interviews	
• Which were the key factors that contributed to project success/underachievement; can positive key factors be replicated in other cases, or could negative factors have been anticipated and minimized?			
• How has risk and risk mitigation been managed over course of project?			
• Has adaptive management been applied to ensure effectiveness?			
Efficiency: Was the project implemented efficiently, in-line with international and national norms and standards?			
• Was the project cost-effective? In case its implementation was delayed, did that affect cost-effectiveness? Were expenditures in line with	• Project expenditures for each of the outcomes correspond with rates agreed in the project document; project management costs did not exceed	• Project financial statements, co-financing reports,	

international standards and norms? Was co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?	acceptable levels; project audits revealed no questionable costs and/or violation of procurement, financial and HR administration rules	PIRs, NIM audit reports	
• Was the project management effective? Were there any particular challenges with the management process? Did the project Steering Committee provide the anticipated input and support to project management? Were risks assessed in time and adequately dealt with? Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?	• Project management arrangements contributed/otherwise to attainment of project objective and outcomes, and were implemented according to the established principles and procedures	• Interviews with key project stakeholders, incl. National Implementing Agency and UNDP; project risk log, project Steering Committee minutes	
• How efficient are partnership arrangements for the project?	•	•	
• Did the project utilize local resources and capacities efficiently in implementation of the project?	•	•	
Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, social-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?			
• What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the funding is over?	• Major project endeavors (such as financial instruments, institutional arrangements, infrastructure support) will get financial support and be maintained	• Interviews with stakeholders, project reports, financial data if available	
• What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal framework, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?	Major institutional changes, technical solutions, legal framework amendments get strong support at policy and decision-making levels	Interviews with stakeholders, project reports,	
• Do stakeholders have or are likely to achieve adequate level of 'ownership' of results, interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained? Do they have the relevant capacities?			
• To what extent are project results dependent on socio-economic factors? On issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?			
• Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the post-project impact and global environment benefits?			

• What is the likelihood that the technical achievements, investments in capacity development, etc introduced through the project will be sustainable in the target communities?			
Impact: Are there indications that the project has contributed to, or enabled progress toward, reduced environmental stress and/or improved ecological status?			
• Did the project achieve its planned impacts? Why or why not?			
• Are there (and what are) secondary impacts achieved by the project, especially as related to local communities?			
• Which where the key lessons learned in course of project implementation? Will other projects, areas of support gain from the project results/outcomes?			

Annex V: Recommendations provided to local public administration from Ștefan Vodă and Soroca districts for supplementing the public budgets and private resources by increasing the financing (from projects) for mainstreaming biodiversity-related concerns.

Project ideas selected from regional/district/local strategies:

Environmental projects:

A: Rational use of local natural resources and biodiversity

1. Promotion of environmental-friendly good practices in household management;
2. Creation of environmental and natural spaces' management public-private partnerships;
3. Creation of centers for plants' protection;

B: Rational water use

1. Protection of drinking water resources;
2. Establishing water quality monitoring units;
3. Rehabilitation of water sources protection zones.

C: Waste management

1. Promotion of domestic waste recycling in an environmental-friendly way;
2. Support provided to promoting and building installations for use of organic waste.
3. Concession of waste management to SMEs;

D: Rational use of local energy resources

1. Promotion of renewable energy resources and of experience on using sun, wind, and biomass energy;
2. Promotion if green energy technologies in educational institutions and in the private sector;
3. Increasing awareness about the environmental benefits as a result of using renewable energy resources;

Ecological agriculture

1. Creating clusters in ecological agricultural production;
2. Promotion of ecological labeling for agricultural products;
3. Promotion of new productive species/varieties for ecological agriculture;

Diversification of economy by harnessing local resources

1. Enhancing capacities of non-agricultural economic activities in rural area;
2. Revitalization of traditions and traditional crafts;

Eco-Tourism

1. Tourist development of forestry areas for recreation;
2. Development of the Center for Young Naturalists;
3. Touristic development of natural areas for thematic excursions;
4. Touristic development of natural areas: Turkish Garden (Talmaza), Togai Swamp (Crocmaz, Olăneşti), Stone Ravines (Cioburciu, Purcari), Nighicei Gardens (Popeasca), Garla (Tudora).
5. Creating touristic recreational infrastructure in the Ramsar Area "Lower Nistru".
6. Developing eco-touristic lay-overs in the adjacent areas of natural reserves;
7. Recovering the beaches in the Nistru River localities (Cioburciu, Crocmaz, Olăneşti, Palanca, Purcari, Răscăieţi, Talmaza, Tudora);
8. Development and promotion of commercial brands / local ecological tourism brand;
9. Development of rural an ecological tourism capacities for diversification of local economy;
10. Development of infrastructure for agricultural, ecological and recreational tourism (rehabilitation and modernization of houses, construction of greenhouses, small hotels and restaurants);
11. Performing construction works of Scandinavian walking routes.
12. Development of a mini-zoo and touristic route for walking on horses (Ramsar areas).
13. Touristic development of the river area "Lomakin Elevation";
14. Development of the recreational ponds.

The recipients of the project concepts are the Districts Councils from Ștefan Vodă / Soroca, "MoldSilva" Agency, Administration of protected natural areas from Ștefan Vodă / Soroca, partner LPAs, holders of land plots for afforestation, local initiative groups, individuals/legal entities interested in harnessing rationally the natural resources, district/local museums, environmental/eco-tourism/ecological agriculture NGOs, potential interested donors/local or foreign investors.
The concepts are developed in line with the good national or regional practices, are simple and flexible to be adjusted in line with relevant related actions.

The total cost of the project proposals amounts for **8140 thousand Euro**, including the local contribution of 814 thousand Euro (10%) ensured as appropriate from the district budget, local budgets, state budget, private donations. It is envisaged to implement the projects during a period of 12-24 months, but the respective period may be adjusted depending on the local concrete needs and donors' requirements. The projects may be implemented within some public-private partnerships. In this context, an important role is to be assumed by the district and local public authorities so as to identify and harness **strategic investors** for co-financing and localizing these initiatives in Ștefan Vodă / Soroca districts, as provided in the District/Local Development Strategies.

Box: Situation related to the district budgets in Soroca and Ștefan Vodă
The budget of Soroca district registers for revenues about 164,05 million MDL or **7,88 million Euro** (2015), which is less as compared to the previous year by 10.7%. Out of this amount, the share of own revenues is very low and includes among other - 3.37% local taxes and breakdowns of about 10.55%. The share of transfers from the state budget is higher. It should be mentioned that the fees related to harnessing local natural resources register a low share: the biggest fee is for useful minerals (especially from Cosăuți quarries) – 0.91% of the total – a share which did not change over the last years; while the local fees for water (0.24% of the total) and for standing timber (0.1% of the total) are negligible and are collected with big annual deviations. These fees for natural resources cannot create the necessary support for nature protection initiatives.
At the same time, the expenses related to environment protection are small (0.13% of total) and sporadic, while those for the activities meant for agriculture, forestry management, fishery and water management is also low (0.40%) and decreasing as compared to the previous year. Hence, the environmental activities and projects are supported at a low and inconsequent level from the local public budgets in Soroca district, even though the strategic commitments set the goal of afforesting about 15% of the territory.

The budget of Ștefan Vodă district has been approved for 2016 with revenues of about 130,07 million MDL or **6,23 million Euro**. The share of own revenues is still very low of about 12%. The share of transfers form the state budget is high and exceeds 87.68%. The fees related to harnessing local natural resources register a low share (546 thousand MDL), out of which the highest level is registered by the water fee (530 thousand MDL), and the fees for useful minerals and standing timber are negligible. The fees for natural resources cannot create the necessary support for nature protection initiatives. And all these in conditions when the illegal cuts exceed in this district the legal cuts by three times.
The expenses for environmental needs in Ștefan Vodă district are negligible.

Annex VI: Mission report template (for site visits)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</td><td>ONE PAGE MISSION REPORT SUMMARY

Date:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Name</td><td>Group/Unit</td><td>Tel No.</td><td>Travel Authorization #:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Site visit Itinerary:</td><td>List of Annexes:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">(From) Inclusive Travel Dates (To)</td><td>Key counterpart (s) in each location:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Purpose/Objective of the site visit:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Brief Summary of Findings:

Information on observations made, progress, issues that have been identified, etc.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Recommendations/Actions to be Taken and by Whom:
Actions formulated briefly and specifically</td><td>Distribution: (Copies to)</td></tr>
</table>