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Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment

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Updated Final Report

7 August 2023

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Republic of Moldova

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DISCLAIMER

This report is the work of independent consultants and does not necessarily represent the views, or policy, or intentions of the UNDP, the Embassy of Sweden or other stakeholders referred to in this report.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AXA	AXA Management (Moldovan consulting NGO)
BCI	Business Consulting Institute (Moldovan consulting NGO)
CBS-AXA	CBS-AXA Consulting (Moldovan consulting NGOs in consortium)
CC&DRR	Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease of 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
EIA	Environment Impact Assessment
EoI	Expression of Interest
GBA	Global Business Access (Moldovan consulting company)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICESCR	UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
LPA	Local Public Authority
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoIRD	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development
MDL	Moldova leu (1 USD = 18.1 MDL)
MLSF	Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family
MOVCA	Moldova Organic Value Chain Alliance
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NERDA	North-East Region Development Agency NGO
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PMU	Project Management Unit
PwD	People with Disabilities
ResCom	Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment, Project
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
TBD	To Be Determined
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme.
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USD	United States Dollars

1 Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is the final evaluation of the Project *Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment*. The project is financed by the Embassy of Sweden and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The objective of this assignment was to conduct an evaluation of the overall project progress against the outcome, outputs and indicators of achievement as mandated by the UNDP *Evaluation Guidelines* and following the project donor's *Evaluation Handbook*, with an emphasis on the coherence to the stated deliverables and whether these produced the intended impact. The evaluation was carried out following the guidelines of these two organisations.

Background and Context Analysis

Moldova is very vulnerable to climate change thus it is expected that the average temperature will increase by 2 to 3°C by 2050. This will cause more acute weather patterns in terms of more frequent droughts and worsening floods. These changing climatic conditions will impact rural populations, as there will be insufficient availability of water during droughts and dry spells, while at the same time intensifying the flood risks due to heavy precipitation events/ extreme storms. The most at risk are the poor, and women are especially vulnerable.

The project *Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment* was implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) with financial assistance provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and with contributions from Local Public Authorities (LPA) and other beneficiaries. The project's objective is **"is to build inclusive sustainable and resilient communities and create an enabling environment for women's economic, social and educational empowerment."**

The project aims to empower women and to strengthen rural communities against climate change. These goals are to be achieved through the following four project Outcomes:

1. "Sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally-sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully
2. NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming
3. Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities
4. Sustainable and climate resilient practices and business models disseminated and replicated" (quoted from the Project Document)

The project started on 1 March 2020 and will be completed on 31 December 2023. Hence the project start coincided with the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has since had to work through the impacts of the war in Ukraine, a financial crisis, and the 2022 drought in Moldova. Due to delays due to these events, the project was extended by six months to 31 December 2023.

The project's geographical area of interventions is 30 target communities from seven districts/regions: Nisporeni, Calarasi, Basarabeasca, Leova, Gagauzia, Transnistrian, and the Security Zone.

The project aims at enabling economic, social, and educational resilience of women and their communities, through promotion of alternative livelihoods/sources of income in the context of

environmental degradation and the pending climate change and disaster risks in the target districts/regions. This was achieved by developing the technical skills and knowledge of LPAs, NGOs, LPAs, and the target women. Furthermore, grants were given to recipient communities, small and medium women agricultural producers/ entrepreneurs, and women-headed households to implement projects that environmentally benefit them, promote climate change adaptation and generate additional income within their respective sectors.

The Project has a total final budget of **3,160,492 USD**, after receiving an additional 699,403 USD to support more projects submitted by women with economic activity in their households, to cover the increased costs of products and energy due to the financial crisis, and finally the cost of a six-month project extension. Overall, approximately one-third of the budget was spent on the implementation of projects that further the project's objectives. This was done through a total of 159 grants to communities, women-led households and women entrepreneurs to help these implement projects that empowered women, forwarded climate change adaptation and protected the environment.

The project's first Outcome aims to define the local capacities and knowledge on environment, climate change and gender and to identify the measures required for sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally sound livelihoods and implement these. An initial step is to determine the baseline situation regarding the levels of awareness on climate change and environmental issues within the target regions. This component includes a capacity and needs assessment for women's groups and agricultural producers, combined with the development and implementation of a wide-ranging capacity building to develop the technical skills and knowledge of both target women and LPAs, so that these have the ability to manage natural resources in a sustainable manner and cope with climate change events and risks. The first Outcome is furthermore to support LPAs in integrating women's empowerment, environment and climate change concerns into their local development plans. At the closing stages of the project, the end of project status is to be identified.

The second Outcome is training and capacity building for six NGOs, so that these acquire the ability to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development, and gender mainstreaming.

Outcome 3 aims at implementing sub-projects that demonstrate the project's objectives. A total of 159 endowments went to 30 communities, 120 women-led households, and 11 women entrepreneurs to promote environmentally friendly and climate resilient practices. Most of the recipient communities (60%) focussed on either establishing or improving their waste management services. For the woman-led households, the most frequent activity was agricultural projects (greenhouses and beekeeping), environmentally friendly economic activities, and renewable energy. For women entrepreneurs, the most common use of the grants was for renewable energy and agricultural activities.

The fourth Outcome is to disseminate experience and lessons learnt in the project to enable their replication and scaling at the national level. This was achieved by developing an upscaling and communications strategy, and then implementing the plan by sharing case studies, best practices, lessons learned and other relevant information on climate change adaptation solutions and resilient livelihoods from the pilot communities to a broad audience.

Evaluation Design and Approach

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach to ensure accountability, promote ownership, and arrive at comprehensive recommendations, engaging a wide and diverse range of stakeholders. The Evaluation Team was in contact with all those involved in the project, see Annex F, encompassing donors, decision makers, those responsible for project implementation, beneficiaries and participants in project activities. Overall, over 80 stakeholders, including a

majority of women, representing local and district public authorities from all project sites; central authorities; community members; project experts; implementing partners; end-beneficiaries; and donors were interviewed. To ensure that impartial conclusions and recommendations were made, the Evaluation Team used a broad range of sources and types of information to obtain reliable data and evidence, which was validated through triangulation.

The evaluation was done against the four selected OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria that establish the Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Sustainability of the project.

In addition to assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project, the evaluation determined the extent to which the project is contributing to address the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights, and social standards.

The evaluation faced no constraints during the data collection phase. All stakeholders were prompt in providing information and willing to join meetings. A few intended sub-projects and interviewees could not be contacted, or stated that activities had ceased, in which case substitutes were selected following a prioritisation list.

Findings Summary

The Evaluation Team has found this to be a well-managed and successful project. The undertaking is highly **relevant** to the priorities of the Government of Moldova, of the Embassy of Sweden, and of UNDP. The project's support in terms of women economic empowerment, climate change adaptation solutions and environmental protection directly contributes to improving the livelihoods of the population in the project areas. Here a key dynamic is that climate change adversely impacts sectors that are based on natural resources such as agriculture and forestry, lowering the income of the rural population and increasing food prices. Historically, women are economically disenfranchised in rural areas, resulting in a poverty rate that is 7.5 times higher than for urban women. This imbalance is amplified by climate change related factors, where the most vulnerable, especially women-led households are most at risk falling even further into the poverty, which in turn exacerbate the discrimination patterns. Therefore, the project's goal to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on gender in rural settings is urgently needed and very appropriate.

The project implementation was **effective** and almost all project indicators were either met or exceeded. The original Project Document was comprehensive and well thought out, and all stakeholders can be commended on their close and productive collaboration.

The project was implemented in a very **efficient** manner, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the 2022 drought, and domestic economic, energy and refugee crises. The project adapted well to these challenges and can be lauded for seeking attentional funds to cover increasing costs, and for ensuring a six-month project extension. This allowed the project to successfully surmount the above listed complications and ensure that all the project's objectives were achieved. The PMU managed an impressive number of awareness raising and training activities, as well as more than 150 grants for demonstration projects over a large geographical area. This was achieved with limited resources and the PMU must have been very efficient.

The targeted communities are poor, and this is a considerable challenge to a **sustainable** implementation of the project strategy. A significant project activity was capacity building for LPAs and the twelve communities that directly received support to mainstream gender, environment and climate change adaptation into their strategies and action plans. These plans were endorsed by the respective community mayors and the local councils, and are under implementation. The proposed measures were discussed with stakeholders, inclusive of women, and the residents' awareness has been improved. Gender, environment and mitigation of impacts

from droughts and storms are important to the recipient communities and has their support. This means that these measures are likely to be sustainable over the longer-term. Most of the implemented sub-projects either provided reduced costs (renewable energy or water savings) or revenues (farming in greenhouses or bee keeping), and are therefore financially viable.

The project strengthened 77 NGOs through capacity building and training. These measures have had a beneficial impact for the participating NGOs/CSOs, strengthening their capacity in other environment-related activities. These capacity building modules are now part of the public domain and offer a recurring training facility with no investment costs beyond already coached NGOs and the strengthening of more NGOs.

The intent is that the knowledge gained over the project duration be disseminated and replicated. Over the past three years, the project has extensively shared its experiences through case studies, best practices, lessons learned and other relevant information and communicated this to government authorities, NGOs, and citizens. Hence, comprehension regarding women empowerment, climate change adaptation and environmental measures has increased. To maintain this understanding amongst all stakeholders, it is essential that the training and awareness raising be perpetuated.

The communities targeted by the project now enjoy higher levels of gender equality, as well as better capacity, both individually and jointly, to face certain aspects of climate change and to reduce its impact on their livelihoods. The communities are empowered with an understanding on how to address these issues, and hence to mitigate the impact of climate change and to protect their environment over the longer-term.

Both the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP place a high priority on **crosscutting issues**, such as gender equality, human rights, social concerns, and environmental protection in all their projects. Through all project phases, close attention was paid to these issues by both organisations, as well as by the PMU, to ensure that the project safeguarded the interests of the most vulnerable, receive input from all stakeholders, and preserved the ecosystem.

Conclusions

This project was well designed and implemented in a very capable manner. The project is well aligned with the goals of all stakeholders and benefits the neediest in Moldova in a very efficient manner. The project has made excellent use of its financial resources, bringing positive developments to many communities and consistently empowering women. The project is judged as follows:

Relevance – The project's support to rural development in terms gender equality, climate change adaptation, and environmental solutions directly contributes to improving the livelihoods of the population in the project area, especially vulnerable women. These outcomes are closely aligned with the priorities and policies of the Government of Moldova, including its UN-based human rights and sustainability goals obligations, the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP priorities.

Effectiveness –The original Project Document was comprehensive and well thought out. The project's goals are ambitious in terms of the number of activities to be carried out and the number of people affected, yet practically all the project's indicators were met or exceeded. Any replication of this project should consider strengthening the horizontal and vertical integration of the project. Vertically, the activities at the community, district and regional level should be aligned with national strategies and policies. Hence, action at the regional/local level should feed into the relevant sectoral goals of MoE, MoIRD, MLSF, and MoA. Horizontally, the Project Document foresaw interventions in 30 communities, but in practice the project reached over 100 communities. There may be some advantages to this broader approach, but the synergy of a more

concentrated approach within a predetermined number of communities should be considered in any future project.

Efficiency – The PMU and Project Board ensured a smooth project implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the 2022 drought, and concurrent economic, energy, and refugees crises all challenged the project. To ensure that all project activities could be completed, a six-month extension and an additional grant from the Embassy of Sweden were secured. The project extension appears to have been a perfect fit in terms of both duration and the additional budget allocation.

Sustainability - The project's capacity building and awareness raising activities reached a wide audience, greatly boosting the understanding of gender, climate change, and environmental issues. These efforts are likely to have a long-term positive impact on how community leaders, as well as district and national organisers approach these issues at both the local and national level. Today, there are many more NGOs and citizens that recognise the importance of gender equality, climate change and the environment, ensuring that these are considered when laying national policy or planning the future of communities.

The greenhouses, beekeeping, renewable energy projects and so forth that are the outcome of the numerous grants seem durable, they have not only helped improve the livelihood and well-being of individuals and communities, but also generate additional income for the recipients. Hence, it is most likely that the beneficiaries will have the resources to both maintain and replace their systems as needed in the future. The waste management services that were established for 18 communities are the exception, as collecting garbage constitutes an expenditure for the local authorities. In this case, the established systems keep costs to an absolute minimum, so it is likely that a combination of municipal expenditures and fee collection can cover the costs of labour, fuel and maintenance.

Crosscutting Issues - The project fulfilled all the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP intentions in terms of gender equality, human rights, social concerns and protection of the environment. Through all project phases, close attention was paid to these issues by both organisations, as well as the PMU, to ensure that the project safeguarded the interests of the most vulnerable, receive input from all stakeholders, and preserved the ecosystem.

Recommendations

Gender equality, climate change adaptation and environmental improvement are very much in demand and very appropriate to all stakeholders in rural Moldova. This project demonstrated that capacity building, awareness raising and direct action through grants strengthens rural communities and economically empowers women, significantly assisting one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged segments in society. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that **this project be replicated**, as the promotion of gender equality in the context of the climate change adaptation and environmentally friendly solutions is clearly both needed and very relevant to all stakeholders. The project's approach has been very effective and cost-efficient. When developing (a) similar project(s) the suggestions below should be taken into consideration.

1. The Project Document for ResCom does not foresee to tie the project activities into national planning and programmes. MoE works with climate change, so it would be logical to link the national policies closely with the strategies developed and implemented at the community, district or regional level. Likewise, there could be links to the strategies and goals of MoIRD, MLSF, and MoA. Hence a vertical assimilation of the project, so that regional and local action are tied in with national strategies and policies would be beneficial.

2. A horizontal integration of the project activities could strengthen the outcome. The project implemented a wide range of activities ranging from awareness raising and training, to the implementation of about 150 sub-projects through grants, reaching citizens in more than 100 communities. In some communities, sub-projects were implemented but there was no work strengthening the LPA's capacities or helping them with developing a strategy to mainstream gender, climate change and environment. There could be advantages to keeping all project activities within specific communities and ensuring that a broad range of project activities/goal are implemented within each target community.
3. As foreseen in the Project Document, six NGOs that underwent thorough capacity building in the initial phases of the project, with the expectation that these organisations would be directly involved in the latter stages of the project as resources to assist with the project implementation. Only two NGOs were involved in subsequent project activities, so it is essential to determine why the other four NGOs did not continue their collaboration with the project. The strategy of training and using NGOs for project implementation seems sensible, but either the PMU was very unlucky with the selected NGOs, or there was some flaw, such as that regionally and locally based environmental NGOs have limited institutional and financial capacities, and even after the possible strengthening of their institutional capacities, their abilities to play a leading role in a cross-regional project initiative is weak.

The first two points of advice advocate better integration of the project both vertically and horizontally. It is important to closely align the project with national policy and the priorities of ministries. This both strengthens support for the project and offers synergy. Horizontally, it is logical to focus on a determined number of communities and provide these with the benefit of all project activities, so that awareness raising, capacity building, the integration of project objectives into local planning, grants for community improvement, women led households, etc., are targeted to each selected community. Finally, the reasons for the failure of two-thirds of the trained NGOs to contribute to the subsequent project activities should be examined, so that such capacity building efforts are more beneficial on future projects.

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose of the Final Project Evaluation

The Final Evaluation of the Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment ("ResCom") project was carried out according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Evaluation Guidelines. These procedures are based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria in terms of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. Hence, the Terms of Reference (TOR), as well as UNDP's Evaluation Guidelines, provide the basis for the evaluation framework, which in turn underpins and guides the overall approach. The evaluation was carried out from June to August 2023 by Mr Peder Bisbjerg and Mr Serghei Ostaf. They were hired by the UNDP as the independent International and National Consultants to carry out the review and their Terms of Reference can be found in Annex A. The final Evaluation Report was updated in November 2023 with results of the Endline Study on the Level of Awareness within the project target area.

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framework, which in turn underpins and guides the overall approach. The evaluation was carried out from June to August 2023 by Mr Peder Bisbjerg and Mr Serghei Ostaf. They were hired by the UNDP as the independent International and National Consultants to carry out the review and their Terms of Reference can be found in Annex A. The final Evaluation Report was updated in November 2023 with results of the Endline Study on the Level of Awareness 1 within the project target area.

Under the UNDP *Evaluation Guidelines*, the aim of the final evaluation is to provide a systematic and comprehensive review and appraisal of the performance of the project by assessing its design, processes of implementation, achievement relative to its objectives. Under this overarching aim, the assessment's objectives are i) strengthen learning within the UNDP and among stakeholders to support better decision making; ii) to promote accountability and transparency, strengthening the ability of stakeholders to hold UNDP accountable for its development contributions; and iii) generally to generate empirical knowledge about what has worked, what has not, and why, to help managers and other stakeholders make informed decisions.

A UNDP Project Evaluation's specific objectives are to appraise the project implementation arrangements and the achievements of outcomes, as well as to assess the project's outputs in the context of their contribution to broader developmental goals. Here, the project evaluation is to provide advice on possible improvements, on how an initiative can be continued or scaled up, and on the project's sustainability and replicability. In this evaluation, see Annex A, the Team was requested to consider the project's performance in terms of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability.

Against this background, and as per the TOR, the purpose of this evaluation specifically was twofold – learning and steering, since it assesses and presents the achievements of project results, conclusions and lesson learned including appropriate recommendations for effective implementation of future interventions that can be further integrated into UNDP Moldova Environmental portfolio to move the adaptation process forward.

Since both the United Nations and the Embassy of Sweden promote environmental protection, gender equality, social issues, human rights and disability concerns, the evaluation also covers the degree to which this cross-cutting issues were addressed during project design and implementation.

To conclude, this report is an independent examination of the project, assessing its results in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and crosscutting issues such as gender, environment, and human rights. This report endeavours to provide recommendations on lessons learnt and how the project's achievements can be duplicate, scaled-up or otherwise put to use.

2.2 Structure of this report

This report follows the outline set out in the Terms of Reference, it furthermore strives to follow the structure and content requirements of the UNDP guidelines for project evaluation. Section 3 of this report provides the development context in Moldova and a description of the project, and Section 4 explains the evaluation methodology and application. The next section of this evaluation report covers the Findings, where the project's achievements are held against the outcomes

¹ *Endline Study on the Level of Awareness of Environment Protection and Climate Change in Pilot Districts of the Project "Sustainable and Resilient Communities through Women Empowerment"* by S.C. Magenta Consulting S.R.L. (October 2023)

foreseen in the Project Document, this assessment of the project's performance is made in terms of the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. A final subsection has been added to the Findings, where the crosscutting issues of gender, social inclusiveness, human rights and environmental protection are discussed. The last two sections draw together the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Evaluation Team.

All photos in the report, unless otherwise noted, were taken by Mr Serghei Ostaf in June 2023.

3 Background and Context Analysis

3.1 Background

The Republic of Moldova is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. Its western border with Romania follows the Prut River; and Ukraine borders the country to the north, east, and south. The 33,844 km² country has a population of 3.25 million (2023). The capital and largest city is Chişinău.^{2 3}

During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, on 27 August 1991, the Moldavian SSR declared independence and took the name Moldova. The breakup of the Soviet Union resulted in a decrease in industrial and agricultural output in Moldova, today the service sector has grown to dominate Moldova's economy and constitutes over 60% of the nation's GDP. With a GDP per capita of 5,200 USD in 2021, it is one of the poorest countries in Europe.⁴

Since early 2022, Moldova has faced several challenges due to the war in Ukraine. The country's heavy reliance on food and energy imports from Ukraine and Russia made it vulnerable to conflict-related disruptions to food and energy supplies from these countries and international sanctions imposed on the two countries. Ukraine has cut its electricity exports to Moldova and Russia has greatly reduced the quantity of natural gas it delivers, resulting in high energy costs and electricity shortages. In October 2022 the inflation rate reached an all-time high of 34.6%, this has since eased to 13% (June 2023). These problems are amplified by the presence of over 100,000 Ukrainian refugees in the country and the fact that in 2022 drought destroyed almost 90% of the corn harvest and also badly impacted other crops. This has led to a 10% drop in the GDP, increased poverty and social inequality, augmenting the vulnerability of many women due to fewer financial resources within families.^{5 6}

Moldova is very vulnerable to climate change, and it is expected that the average temperature will increase by 2 to 3°C by 2050. This will cause in more acute weather patterns in terms of additional droughts and more severe floods. These changing climatic conditions will impact rural populations, as there will be insufficient availability of water during droughts and dry spells, while at the same time intensifying the flood risks due to heavy precipitation events/ extreme storms. The most at-risk are the poor, and women are especially vulnerable.

Climate change has already impacted Moldova, between 1990 and 2015, Moldova experienced eleven droughts that caused significant yield declines in crops and pastures. These droughts in

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moldova>

³ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/moldova/#people-and-society>

⁴ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>

⁵ <https://theconversation.com/moldova-is-trying-to-join-the-eu-but-it-will-have-a-hard-time-breaking-away-from-russias-orbit-206838>

⁶ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/moldova/>

turn greatly reduced revenues, harming the agricultural sector. A catastrophic drought in 2007 impacted 80% of the country's rural population. Again, severe drought in 2022, resulted in a poor harvest and much hardship for those dependent on Moldovan farming. This situation is aggravated by increased costs of necessities such as fertilisers due to the ongoing war.

Another impact of global warming is that there will be greater storms with more precipitation. Hence the annual rainfall will come in fewer but larger precipitation events. Such torrential rains will cause increased flooding and almost half of all Moldovan communities are located in flood-prone areas.⁷ The country experienced severe flooding in 2008 that damaged houses, bridges and roads, and flooded 7,500 hectares of agricultural land. Future events are predicted to be harsher.

Hence climate change is placing rural communities in Moldova at greater risk of droughts. Rural women most exposed, as droughts, floods and storms endanger their livelihood. Financial instability and regional conflict add to their vulnerability. This project aims to increase resilience and adaptive capacities of rural women and communities in face of these challenges.

3.2 Project Description

The project *Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment* was implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) with financial assistance provided by the Embassy of Sweden, and with contributions from Local Public Authorities (LPA). The project's objective is **"is to build inclusive sustainable and resilient communities and create an enabling environment for women's economic, social and educational empowerment."**

The project aims to empower women and to strengthen rural communities against climate change. These goals will be achieved through the following four project outcomes:

1. "Sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally-sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully,
2. NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming,
3. Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities,
4. Sustainable and climate resilient practices and business models disseminated and replicated."

The project started on 1 March 2020 and will be completed on 31 December 2023. Hence the project start coincided with the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has since had to work through the impacts of the war in Ukraine, the 2022 drought in Moldova and an economic crisis. Due to delays caused by these events, the project was extended by six months to 31 December 2023.

The project's geographical area for all types of interventions included some 190 target communities from 12 rayons/local authorities of the 2nd level as well as in Gagauzian Autonomous Territorial Entity (Gagauzia) and Administrative-Territorial Units of the Left Bank of the

⁷ From the Project Document for the project *Promotion of climate change and disaster risk reduction solution in the water and civil protection sectors for enhanced rural resilience*

Nistru/Dniester (Transnistria). The communities have been divided into three intervention zones by the project:

- Zone 1: 83 communities from the following rayons - Basarabeasca (7), Nisporeni (22), Calarasi (24), and Leova (30);
- Zone 2: 23 communities from Gagauzia; and
- Zone 3: 90 communities from 7 rayons (Soldanesti, Rezina, Dubasari, Causeni, Orhei, Chisinau, Anenii Noi) included in the Security Zone (63)⁸ and settlements from Transnistria (27).

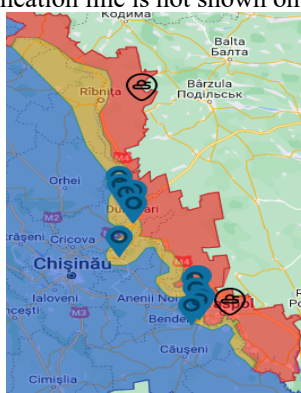
The project aims at enabling economic, social, and educational resilience of women and their communities, through promotion of alternative livelihoods/sources of income in the context of environmental degradation and the pending climate change and disaster risks in the target districts/regions. This was achieved by developing the technical skills, knowledge, and awareness of LPAs at the 1st (communities) and at the 2nd (rayon) levels, CSO/NGOs, women-led households, women-led entrepreneurs, and media. Furthermore, after the series of some 48 training sessions with more than 850 participants, grants were given to target communities (1st level LPAs, 30 grants), grants to small/medium women-led agricultural producers/ entrepreneurs (30), and women-led households (120 in cohorts 1 and 2) to implement projects that environmentally benefit them, promote climate change adaptation and generate additional income within their respective sectors.

The Project has a total final budget of **3,160,492 USD**, after receiving additional 699,403 USD to support more projects submitted by women with economic activity in their households, to cover the increased costs of products and energy due to the financial crisis, and finally the six-month project extension.

Stakeholder engagement

The project design put a high priority on stakeholder engagement, mobilising the community when working at the local level, to ensure that all interventions and initiatives were planned and established with maximum involvement of the community members, especially women. The intent of this approach was to make sure that the local population had ownership of the outcomes.

⁸ The Security Zone (in yellow) was created as part of the 1992 cease-fire agreement between Moldova and Russia and defines the [demilitarised strip of land](#) on both sides of Nistru/Dniester river that is 225 km in length and 12-20 km wide, including some 110 of settlements on both sides, inhabited by some 0.5 million people. The constitutional authorities' civilian administration control part of it, while the de-facto Transnistrian authorities (in red) oversees the nearby part (the exact delineation line is not shown on the map).



The community mobilisation meant that the local population is involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of project activities.

One of the project's crucial stakeholders was the Ministry of Environment⁹ as the national implementation partner. The Ministry develops and promotes environmental policy, legislation, action plans, norms and standards. The Ministry is directly responsible for in the implementation of the Paris Agreement on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and for ensuring climate change adaption within the country. MoE oversees all aspects of ResCom's implementation as the national implementing partner. It also facilitates the functioning of the Project Management Unit (PMU), especially regarding liaison with government authorities from different sectors.

The Local Public Authorities at the rayon and commune levels are actively involved in the decision making and implementation process, ensuring that the inhabitants are heard and that they participate in the project activities. At this level, trained environmental NGOs, community and expert working groups such as the AXA, GBA led Consortiums and the Business Consulting Institute, provided support for women-led businesses and LPAs, and helped promote and implement project activities.

Finally, the media was an indispensable and helpful participant in awareness raising campaigns.

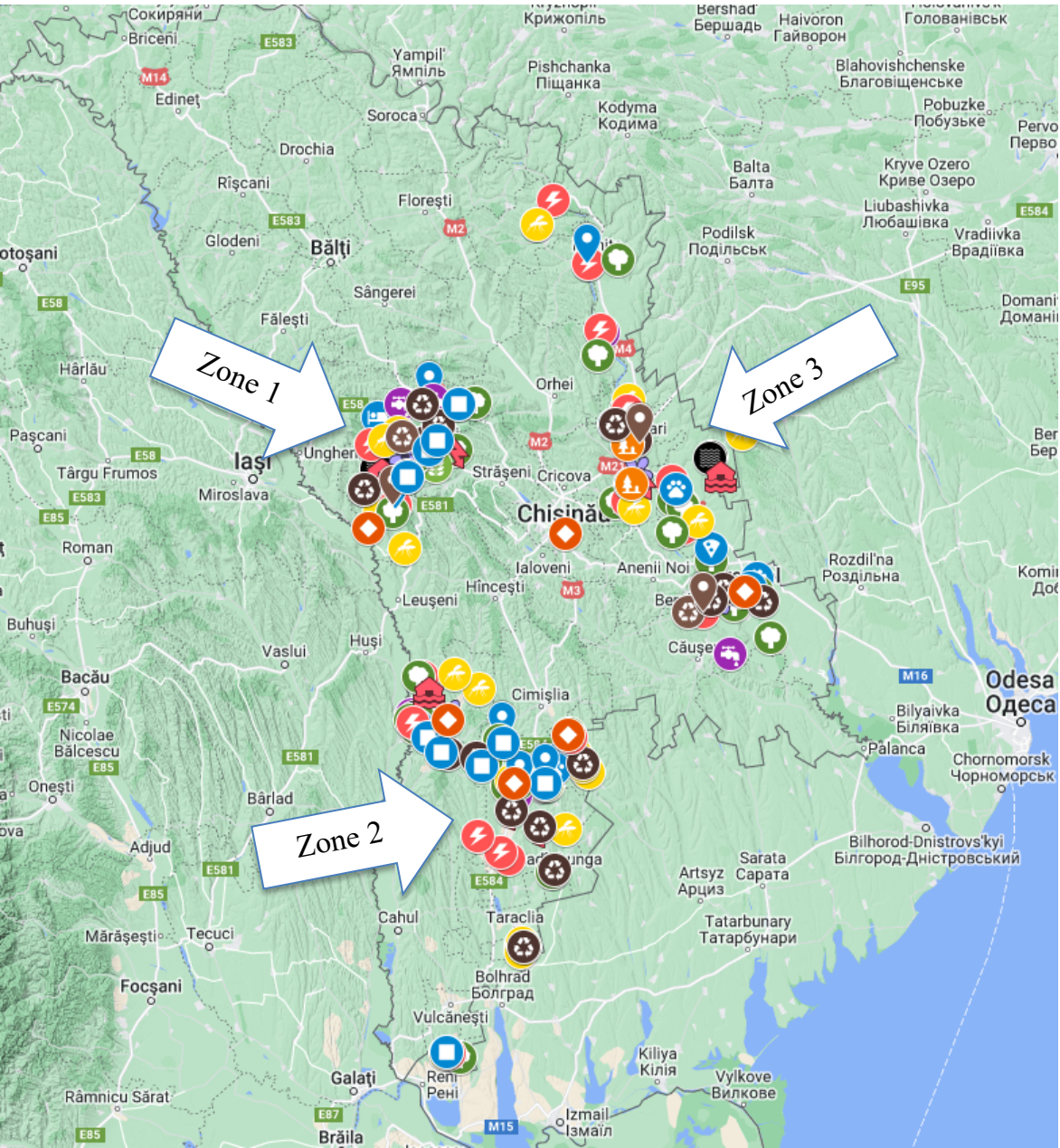
The implementation status and geographical coverage of the project

Administratively Moldova is divided into various levels of local authorities and territorial units: The 1st level of the local authorities is the commune ("comuna"), and the 2nd level of the local authorities is the rayon/district ("raion") and the municipality ("municipalitate"). Additionally, there are two special status regions of Gagauzia and Transnistria. At present Moldova is formed by 32 districts, 3 municipalities and 2 autonomous territorial units that are not part of the 2nd level of the regional administration.

At the level of communes, the project deliverables covered some 190 settlements, in some cases with several types overlapping activities, such as commune action plans, commune grants, women-led entrepreneur grants, women-led household grants, capacity building and training for the communes' representatives, and the strengthening of environmental NGOs and CSOs. At the level of rayons and special status entities, the project products were district climate change and gender equality profiles, and action plans to address these issues. The seven geographic areas the project targeted can be seen in Figure 1.

⁹ At the start of the project this was the Ministry of Regional Development Agriculture and Environment, and since August 2021 it has been the Ministry of Environment

Figure 1: Geographical Mapping of Project Deliverables



Legend: The various symbols stand for animal breeding, plant dehydration, renewable energy, water irrigation, green house, compost, beekeeping, waste management, cheese production, agro tourism, forest area extension, sustainable land management, green house, district profiles and plans, capacitated CSOs, community plans

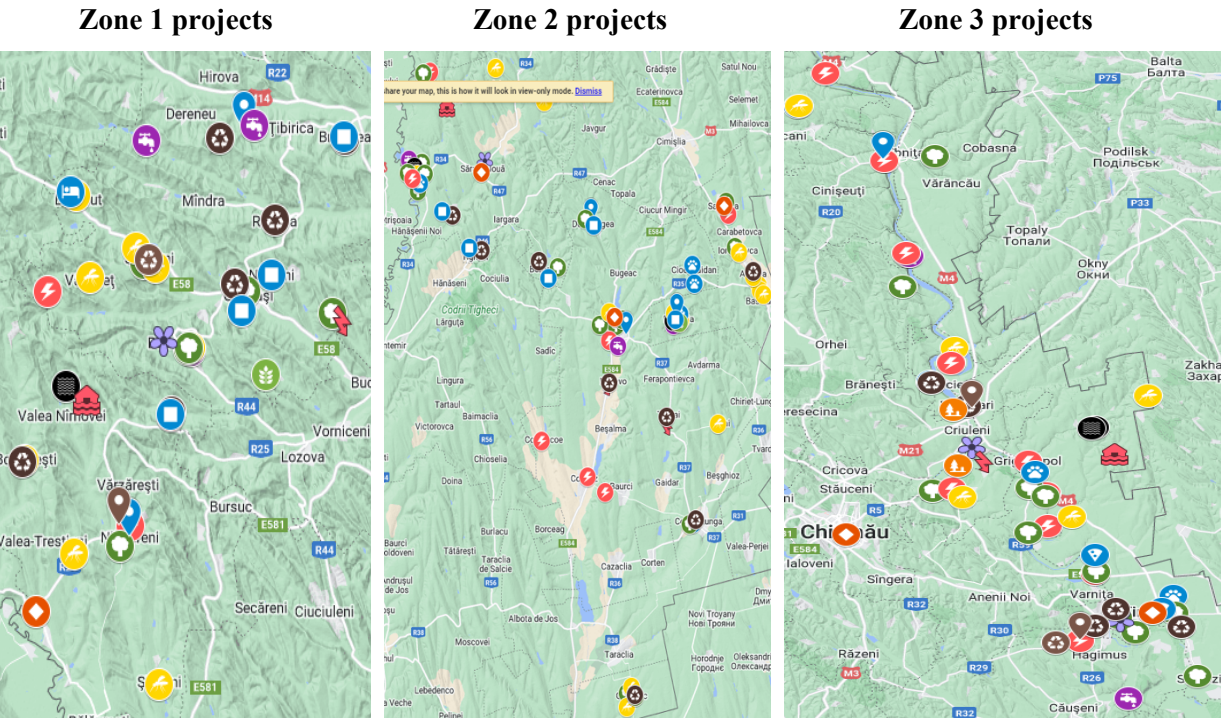
A brief description of each project intervention zone, respective rayons, and entities can be found below.

Project Zone 1 includes the districts of Basarabeasca (where 7 out of 8 communes were covered), Nisporeni (20 of 23 communes covered), Calarasi (23 of 28 communes covered), Leova (25 of 25 communes covered), so overall 75 out of 83 communes were covered in these rayons.

The **Basarabeasca District** is found in southern Moldova on the border to Ukraine and the autonomous territorial unit of Gagauzia. With an area of 295 km² and a population of 23,000, it has both the smallest area and lowest population of any Moldovan district. The annual

precipitation is lower than further north at 450–550 mm. The project activities were in 7 communes.

Figure 2: Project Deliverables mapped by Zone



The **Nisporeni District** consists of the eponymous town and there are 23 communes with 39 settlements. The district is 630 km² and has a population of 53,000. The Nisporeni District is situated west of Chişinău in the central part of Moldova bordering with Romania. and has the lowest precipitation level within Moldova. The region has a temperate continental climate with mild, short winters and warm, long summers. The average annual temperature is 10 °C, where the monthly temperatures are above the annual average from March to November and below from December to February. Average annual precipitation ranges from 500–650 millimetres The project activities were in 20 communes.

The **Calarasi District** in the centre of Moldova and it is the administrative headquarters is in Calarasi. The district is about 1 hour by car NW of Chisinau, it has a population of 64,000 and occupies 753 km². The district has very rugged terrain and a continental climate with an average January temperature of -5 °C and an average July temperature of 21 °C. The project activities were in 23 communes.

Leova and Iargara are the two towns in the **Leova District** and there are also 40 settlements on its 765 km². Approximately 70% of the area’s 52,000 people live in rural areas, and 57% of the district’s land is cultivated, mostly under private ownership. The district holds a total of 71 water reservoirs with total surface area of 848 ha. The Leova District is found on the southwest border with Romania and has some of the lowest precipitation levels in Moldova. The region has semi-dry climate with a calculated average annual temperature rise over the next two decades from 9.36-9.58°C to 11.36-11.98°C, with bigger rainfall events, floods and more severe droughts. The project activities were in all 25 communes.

Project Zone 2 covered 23 out of 26 communities in Gagauzia.

The **Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia** (Gagauzia) is part of Moldova. Its autonomy is ethnically motivated by the predominance in the region of the Gagauz people, who are primarily Orthodox Turkic-speaking people. The territory forms parts of southern Moldova, it is divided into three districts, and it is also split into four enclaves. Gagauzia is composed of 3 districts: Comrat, Ceadir-Lunga and Vulcanesti. The main, central enclave includes the cities Comrat and Ceadir-Lunga and is divided into two districts with those cities serving as administrative centres. The second largest enclave is located around the city of Vulcanesti, while two smaller enclaves are the villages of Copceac and Carbalia. The village of Carbalia falls under administration of Vulcanesti district, while Copceac is part of the Ceadir-Lunga district. The project activities were in 23 communes.

***Project Zone 3** covered the Security Zone and Transnistria. In total 90 communities from 7 rayons (Soldanesti, Rezina, Dubasari, Causeni, Orhei, Chisinau, Anenii Noi) participated in the project. Of these 63 were located in the Security Zone and the remaining 27 were settlements from Transnistria.*

The **Security Zone** and Transnistria region formed project Zone 3 intervention. There are more than 110 settlements in the Security Zone on both sides of Nistru/Dniester River and under the constitutional authority's administration and de facto Transnistrian authorities. During the inception phase, the **Dubasari District** from the Security Zone added to the Project intervention areas in consultation with Embassy of Sweden. The project activities were in 63 communes.

Transnistria is an unrecognised breakaway region that is internationally recognised as a part of Moldova. Transnistria controls most of the narrow strip of land between the Nistru/Dniester River and parts of the Moldovan–Ukrainian border, as well as some land on the other side of the river's bank. Its capital and largest city is Tiraspol. Russian is the majority language in the region and 360,000 people live in the territory's 4,163 km². Transnistria is subdivided into five districts (Camenca, Ribnita, Grigoriopol, Dubasari, Slobozia) that include a number of communes (some 150), and municipalities of Tiraspol and Bender/Tighina. The project activities were in 27 settlements.

A detailed presentation of the implementation status of the project, at the time of the evaluation, can be found in section 5.2. Table 1 provides an overview of the project activities by geographic area.

Table 1: Project deliverables by zone and outcome (cohort 2 grants amounts were not available at the time of evaluation)

zones	beneficiary rays	Outcome 1: Training/exchange visits								Outcome 2: NGOs capacity	OUTCOME 3: Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities							
		1.1a Baseline study (CBS-AXA)'20	1.1b End-of-project study (CBS-AXA)'23	1.1c District CC&G Profile (BCI)'21	1.1d District CC&G Plan (BCI)'21	1.2 LPAs CC&G E Plans (BCI)'22	1.3 Needs evaluation (CCA)'22	1.4 CC&GE Trainings (CCA)'20-21	Capacity-building (NERDA)	3.1 Trainings	3.2 Grants: LPAs (BGA)	3.3 LPAs sustainability (BGA)	3.4 Grants: W-l Business (BGA)	3.5 Grants: W-l hh cohort 1 (AXA)	3.6 Grants: W-l hh cohort 2 (AXA)			
								# part-nts			# \$		# \$	# \$	# \$			
Zone 1		198		4	4	10		24 733	3		16 196,925	4	5 102,538	39	111,855	9	0	
	Nisporeni	65		x	x	1		11 265	x		4 64,000	x	1 18,000	6 8,750	2 0			
	Calarasi	66		x	x	4		5 104			5 36,925	x	2 36,925	13 23,198	1 0			
	Basarabeas	18		x	x	1		4 93	x		3 32,000	x	0 0	8 37,987	5 0			
	Leova	49		x	x	4		4 271	x		4 64,000	x	2 47,613	12 41,920	1 0			
Zone 2		175		1	1	2		11 235	1		5 80,000	5	2 36,000	12	51,106	13	0	
	Gagauzia	175		x	x	2		11 235			5 80,000		2 36,000	12 51,106	13 0			
	Comrat	133				1		157	x		1 16,000	x	1 18,000	7 30,172	7 0			
	Ceadir-Lunga	40						74			3 48,000	3x	1 18,000	3 12,214	5 0			
	Vulcanesti	2				1		4			1 16,000	x	0 0	2 8,720	1 0			
Zone 3		122		2	2	0		13 13	2		9 144,000	9	4 68,462	12	50,421	32	0	
	Security Zone	121		1	1	0		4 0	1		5 80,000	5	2 33,620	6 26,119	22 0			
	Stefan Voda							61						1 4,375	2 0			
	Soldanesti							2						1 4,348	10 0			
	Rezina							125							3 0			
	Dubasari	121		x	x			65			5 80,000	5x	2 33,620		1 0			
	Criuleni							1							1 0			
	Causeni							0						1 4,315	1 0			
	Orhei							0							1 0			
	Chisinau							0	x					1 4,374				
	Anenii Noi							33						2 8,707	4 0			
	Transnistria	1		1	1	0		9 12	1		4 64,000	4	2 34,842	6 24,302	10 0			
	Camenca							2										
	Ribnita							55						1 4,375	1 0			
	Grigoriopol							6					1 22,242		5 0			
	Dubasari							16						1 4,256	1 0			
	Slobozia							17			3 48,000	3x	1 12,600	3 11,519	2 0			
	Tiraspol	1						20	x					1 4,152	1 0			
	Bender							45			1 16,000	x						
Total		495		7	7	12	300	48 980	6	231	30 \$420,925	18	11 \$207,000	63	\$213,382	54	\$0	

4 Evaluation Design and Approach

This section describes the methodology that was used in the planning and execution of the final project evaluation.

4.1 Methodological Approach

The Project Evaluation follows the directions given in the Terms of Reference (Annex A) and the *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines*. These two documents provide the basis for the evaluation framework, which in turn underpins and guides the overall approach. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's (SIDA) *Evaluation Handbook* states that for multilateral organisations, "the evaluation functions of the respective organisation are responsible of evaluating their activities, regardless of who finances them."¹⁰ Therefore, there are no specific requirements to how the evaluation is undertaken from the Embassy of Sweden.

The Evaluation Team used the Evaluation Questions according to the in the Terms of Reference, these are structured following the selected OECD-DAC criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability). The main questions, together with one additional question, forms the evaluation framework that can be found in Annex B.

An Evaluation Matrix was developed during the inception period and is used to track the project progress against set indicators, it can be found in Annex C. The Project Document's Results Framework provides indicators and targets for both project outcomes and project outputs over the project duration. The results framework work covers the individual outcomes and outputs; the indicators, the baseline and end of project target, and finally the proposed means of verification. This is an excellent tool to compare expectations with the actual results, the matrix can be found in Annex D.

The project design was developed using Theory of Change where a logical framework analysis approach is used. First, the desired long-term goals are identified, and the analysis then works back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place for the goals to occur. By identifying all required conditions that are necessary for a successful impact, the Theory of Change assessment ensures that there are no flaws in the project design. This evaluation examines the project design.

Crosscutting Issues

Both the United Nations¹¹ and the SIDA¹² emphasise the high priority of crosscutting issues such as human rights and gender equality on all their projects. These issues must be closely scrutinised during project design, implementation and evaluation. The UN guidance document requires that human rights and gender equality be examined in two dimensions during an evaluation:

- To what extent the intervention was guided by the UN's organisational and system-wide objectives on the issues and whether the objectives were achieved; and
- To what human rights and gender equality were integrated into the project's implementation.

¹⁰ Sida's *Evaluation Handbook* section 1.1.

¹¹ *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*, UNEG Guidance Document (August 2014)
Quote below from page 4.

¹² See <https://www.sida.se/en/sidas-international-work/thematic-areas>

4.2 Data Collection and Analysis Tools

All relevant documentation (see Annex G) was received from the PMU in a prompt manner, and these were analysed in a desk review. This was accompanied by stakeholder consultations in the form of structured and semi-structured interviews (a list of questions can be found in Annex E), and site visits. The Evaluation Team strived to incorporate crosscutting elements into all stages of the project appraisal. The interviews were carried out in each project intervention zone, in each rayon within the project zone under the Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 (see Table 1 at the end of section 3). Under Outcome 3, where there were eight different types of deliverables and a wide range of intervention areas (beekeeping, greenhouses, animal husbandry, renewable energy, herbs and fruits, rainwater, etc), all types of beneficiaries were covered by on-site visits to make direct observations. Overall, 70 beneficiaries under the outcome 3, the grant-making scheme, were paid a visit. This included all 30 LPAs that received grants, all 11 women-led businesses, as well as a representative pool of 29 women-led households. Where the project concentrated several types of grant-making schemes, the on-site visits and interviews were carried out to understand the possible synergetic effect. Where relevant, within the same district and commune, opinions and references from various project beneficiaries were collected on the various interventions and activities carried out by the project, for instance the LPA's opinion on the women-led businesses or households and vice-versa.

Under the Outcome 1, there were more than 50 training sessions and 3 exchange visits with over 800 participants across the project intervention zones. The Evaluation Team chose several respondents randomly from each event organised, including both respondents who had and had not applied for grants, and likewise including both respondents who became the beneficiaries of the grants, as well as those who were unsuccessful. The appraisal included respondents from the women-led households who were beneficiaries under the cohort 2. The interviews were carried out with all direct (i.e. contracted by UNDP Moldova) and indirect (i.e. implementing NGOs) implementing partners responsible for the respective activities' implementation. The interview choice of questions and considerations included all relevant aspects of the project activities and specifically tailored climate change and women-empowerment perspectives. Questions, for instance, included the contribution of the project to women-empowerment, to increased awareness, and to skills transfer on climate change adaptation measures.

To ensure that reliable information was used in the evaluation, data was gathered from as many sources as possible and cross-checked. Hence, the information gathered during the desk review was verified through interviews with a wide range of stakeholders and site visits, (see Annex F for a listing).

Here relevant expert opinion was sought from representatives of the public authorities, experts, organisations active in the area and international good practices documents available as public domain, in order to obtain assessments that were independent from project specific activities or from the project entirely. The findings from these visits, meetings and opinions were used to validate the project's reports. Given the use of multiple sources, it is the Evaluation Team's opinion that this report portrays a comprehensive and reliable assessment of the project.

4.3 Limitations, Risks and Mitigation Measures

At the beginning of the project, the baseline situation regarding the level of awareness on climate change and environmental issues in the target regions was established through studies for each district/region. As similar end-of-project study is planned to establish the current level of awareness on climate change and environmental issues. It seems essential to include the outcome of this study in the Evaluation Report, as it will allow for a comparison between the end-of-project

situation and the 2020 baseline conditions. The study is not expected to be completed till September 2023. Therefore, this report is incomplete until the end-of-project study is concluded, and its findings incorporated into an updated final Evaluation Report.

There were no limitations on travel within Moldova, so the National Consultant was able to meet with all stakeholders and visit the selected project sites. Counterparts were all very helpful and willing to meet. In a few cases it was not possible to contact or meet with beneficiaries, as they did not respond to phone calls or as they stated over the phone that their sub-project was no longer operating. This was rare and the National Consultant simply chose the next beneficiaries on the priority list, including ones from the same settlement.

For the Outcome 3, during the on-site visits where the project financially contributed with the purchase of equipment, the scope of the on-site visits did not make an evaluation of the efficiency of the costs allocation or technology chosen. Rather, the direct beneficiaries were asked about their satisfaction and, where possible, the opinions of the supporting organisations and/or the judgement of the similar projects was sought.

During the evaluation, it was found that the project's activities and decisions were well documented through annual reports, minutes of meeting, etc. Furthermore, it was possible for the National Consultant to visit all project regions, 70 beneficiaries, and so forth. Given the high number of beneficiaries met and the fact that over half the sub-project sites were visited, the Evaluation Team is of the opinion that it is accurately appraising the project's outputs. The Evaluation Team did not make comprehensive cross-checks to see if the project beneficiaries had also received in-kind and/or financial support from other international projects or state-run programmes to verify the project specific contribution. However, the beneficiaries were asked about any additional prior or complimentary support. The responsible project implementing partners were interviewed and the information was cross-checked with complimentary actors.

For the outcome 2, four NGOs were interviewed that had participated in the capacity building and training programmes. For the outcome 1, thirty respondents (less than 4% of the more than 800 participants) were selected for either direct or online interviews. Due to the large number of the beneficiaries under the outcome 1, and time-distance of more than 2 years since the activities were carried out, the selection of the respondents was based on discussions with the project's responsible partners, as well as the opinions of the local administrations from the respective settlements.

It can be remarked that not all the indicators given in the Results Framework Analysis are easily verified. For example, an 70% increase in "very satisfied and satisfied with the environment/anti-pollution services provided in the communities" ascertained through pre- and post-project questionnaires could be easy to determine, but only if both questionnaires include that question (Annex D upmost indicator row). Likewise, it may be early to gauge the sustainability of some of the project's interventions.

5 Findings

This section covers the observations of the Evaluation Team, where the project's achievements are held against the outcomes foreseen in the Project Document. The project's performance as assessed following the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability. A final subsection has been added to this part, where the crosscutting issues of gender, social inclusiveness, human rights, and environmental protection are discussed.

5.1 Relevance

This subsection discusses the relevance of the project within its international and national context. The project's objectives are the protection of vulnerable women through their empowerment and the strengthening of at-risk rural communities through climate change adaptation and environmentally friendly measures. Firstly, it will be examined whether the project's goals meet the needs and priorities of Moldova and the participating national institutions. Secondly, the project's alignment with the strategies of both the Embassy of Sweden and the United Nations are explored.

Gender equality goals declared in the *National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030"* provides several strategic objectives: Support of young women entrepreneurship, increasing agricultural productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers through secure and equal access to impacts of production, knowledge, financial services and markets (Objective 1). Moldova aspires at aligning with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-25 of achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy. The *Strategy for Ensuring Equality between Women and Men (2017-21)*¹³ recognised negative disparity for women owning businesses, and climate changes accentuation of women gender discrimination¹⁴ requiring climate adaptation measures towards women empowerment.¹⁵ However, the strategic objectives, as recognised in a 2022 Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family evaluation, are considered to lack ambition.¹⁶ The Government is currently in the process of formulating a new set of strategic priorities, where the economic empowerment of women is one goal.¹⁷ The *Law 121 on Ensuring Equality* (2012) provides for the adoption of the affirmative measures to contribute to the equality and inclusion of the disadvantaged groups, including on the base of gender.

For the Government of Moldova, the project is obviously directly linked and highly relevant to the implementation of the Paris Agreement;¹⁸ where one objective is an increased ability to respond to the adverse impacts of climate change and to and to foster climate resilience. Under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement, the priority is a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Climate change adversely impacts sectors that are based on natural resources such as agriculture and forestry, lowering the income of the rural population and increasing food prices. The rising poverty augments social and gender inequalities (women earn 12-20% less than men, 16% fewer women manage agriculture activities or businesses, and women receive 18% less than men in agricultural subventions in rural areas), this increases the risks of social conflicts. The *Agriculture Sectoral Adaptation Plan* promotes cross-sectorial climate change adaptation activities and actions in support of these within the agriculture sector. Priorities include:

- dissemination of gender-sensitive and inclusive communication to policy makers, the general public, and the private sector based on an in-depth gender-disaggregated cross-

¹³ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=99875&lang=ro

¹⁴ Also in NDC by Moldova <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ndcs/country/MDA/full>

¹⁵ The strategy includes the area of intervention 2.6. "Climate change", stating as Specific Objective 1.10: "Adjustment of sectorial adaptation strategies to climate change by including gender equality."

¹⁶ https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Raport_Evaluare_FINAL_StrategiaEgalitateGen2017-2021.pdf

¹⁷ <https://social.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Concept-Program-egalitate-de-gen.pdf>

¹⁸ The Paris Agreement is an international treaty on climate change that was adopted in 2015. It covers climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance.

sectorial analysis of the impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, with a specific focus on rural women;

- promoting community-driven city/town development with gender-responsive adaptation actions, by applying an integrated climate vulnerability and gender assessment approach to identify community-level vulnerabilities;
- the organising of gender-sensitive financing plans for prioritised adaptation actions that make use of different sources of public, private, domestic and international finance, and that boost climate-resilient agricultural practices.

The Government of Moldova is cognisant that a large proportion of the rural population is very vulnerable to the interacting effects of climate change. The Ministry of Environment is the anchor agency responsible for defining strategies and policies within climate change adaptation. Moldova's *Environmental Strategy for 2014–2023* focuses on integration of climate change adaptation principles into all sectors of national economy. The *National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030,"* which was approved by the Government in 2018 recognises that drought and flood represent the most pressing climate change risks which requires adaptation actions to reduce the vulnerability and exposure of rural communities.

Therefore, this project's priorities are well reflected in the national priorities, not only does Moldova's *Environmental Strategy for 2014–2023* focus on meeting the country's obligations under the Paris Agreement, but this is also part of other essential strategies and programmes. It can be concluded that the project directly contributes to the execution of the *Environmental Strategy* and to the nation's endeavours to adjust to climate change. Among the priorities in the strategy is climate change adaptations measures in the agricultural sector.

The project is aligned with the Swedish Foreign Ministry's *Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe for 2021–2027*. The strategy has four thematic priorities, three of which align with this project's key priorities:

- "Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality,"
- "Environmentally and climate-resilient sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources," and
- "Inclusive economic development."

Therefore, it can be concluded that this project is very closely aligned with the development aid priorities within international development cooperation set by the Swedish Foreign Ministry.

The project contributes to achievement of the following Targets under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): ¹⁹

SDG # 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Target 2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

Target 2.4: By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help

¹⁹ See <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

SDG # 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

SDG # 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

SDG # 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Target 7.2: By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

SDG # 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

SDG # 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

SDG # 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

As can be seen above, the project is directly contributing to addressing the United Nation's SDGs and relevant in ensuring the ultimate objective, "peace and prosperity for people and the planet."

The United Nations commitment to resilient development in line with the commitments assumed under the Paris Agreement are also reflected in the UNDP country strategy. The UNDP *Country programme document for the Republic of Moldova (2018-2022)* reflects the UN's SDGs, in this programme the second pillar is "increased well-being, enhanced productive employment, increased social inclusion/cohesion," and the third Pillar, "enhanced environmental governance strengthened energy security increased country resilience," emphasises the importance of measures such as:

- Increased average income for most vulnerable households;
- Address skills mismatch supporting groups with limited access to the labour market - youth, women, PwD;
- Balanced and inclusive local development;

- Enhance environmental governance with sound practices in ecosystems, waste and chemicals management;
- Sustainable management of natural resources;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Advance climate change and disasters resilient development to reduce population's vulnerability.

The UNDP's implementation approach for Moldova stresses the importance a targeting "rural poor, women-headed households, [...], communities across the conflict divide and deprived small areas." The strategy advocates "citizen engagement in policy formulation, broader reach and social dialogue, representation of target groups policy dialogue, community mobilization." It can therefore be concluded that the project is very much in line with UNDP's Country Programme for Moldova.

The two other project evaluation questions under *Relevance* “Are the expected results/outputs of the project consistent with the outcome, immediate impact, and overall goal/impact (as part of the analysis of the log frame matrix/project theory)?” and “Were the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources?” These questions are judged to belong under *Effectiveness* and *Efficiency*, as they do not pertain to *Relevance* in the Evaluation Team’s opinion. The responses to these two questions are found in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

5.2 Effectiveness

A fundamental measure of a project’s progress is to review its outcomes to date and assess the progress against the milestones and indicators anticipated during the project planning phase. In the following the project’s progress and its activities are evaluated. This section evaluates each of the Outcomes. For each Outcome, the text below will first provide a summary of the component’s objective. Thereafter, the progress will be presented, followed by a discussion of the status at the time of the evaluation and any observations.

Outcome 1: Sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully

The Project Document states that this capacity building in the target areas is to be done following the approach laid out in the guideline *Supporting Capacity Development - The UNDP Approach* (2015). This document advocates a five-step methodology, where the phases are:

- Engage stakeholders on capacity development,
- Assess capacity assets and needs,
- Formulate a capacity development response,
- Implement a capacity development response, and
- Evaluate capacity development.

The objective of the capacity building is to develop the technical skills and knowledge of both target women and LPAs, so that they have the ability to manage natural resources in a sustainable manner and cope with climate change events and risks. Table 2 lists the project indicators and targets for Outcome 1 as given in the project's Results Framework.

Table 2: Outcome 1 Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Status at evaluation
	Outcome Indicator # 1	70% increase	Partially achieved

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Status at evaluation
OUTCOME 1. Sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully	Level of awareness on environment protection and climate change in pilot districts as a result of project interventions		<70 % increase; see explanation in text below
	<u>Outcome Indicator # 2</u> No. of LPAs from the pilot districts which apply Strategic Environmental Assessment Law with integrated gender aspects	At least 6 / 80 % of acts elaborated by LPA where SEA has been applied	Implemented 6 district/region level LPAs and 11 LPAs now use SEAs
	<u>Outcome Indicator # 3</u> Extend to which the capacity development programme of the project for women/ women entrepreneurs implemented	100%	Implemented:

The Outcome Indicator # 1 anticipates that the level of awareness on environment protection and climate change increases by 70% within the pilot districts over the project duration. In late 2020-beginning 2021 CBS-AXA was contracted to elaborate the base-line study on the level of awareness on climate change and environmental protection. Over the summer of 2023, the company S.C. Magenta Consulting S.R.L. conducted a survey of the current status and submitted the report *End of project study to establish the current level of awareness on climate change and environmental issues in the target regions* in October 2023. There are no direct links between the two surveys that measure the population's awareness about environment protection and climate change that can be compared. The following explains how the status at the time of evaluation was estimated.

In late 2020-beginning 2021 CBS-AXA survey determined the level of awareness on climate change and environmental protection, it used three types of measurements:

- Degree of satisfaction of communities regarding these service provision (Indicators no. 1, 2);
- Major environmental problems and their sources (Indicators no. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7), availability to engage and participate (Indicators no. 8 & 9); and
- Access to water, canalisation and waste management community services and satisfaction (Indicators no. 16 - 30).

The October 2023 *Endline Study on the Level of Awareness of Environment Protection and Climate Change in the Pilot Districts* reported with a wide range of indicators, their topics are listed below with the indicator numbers, where the indicator numbers double as the Figure numbers in the report:

- Major environmental problems, their sources (Indicators no. 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2; 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2); availability to engage in the environmental issues (Indicators no. 8.1, 8.2, 9.1, 9.2, 10.1, 10.2, 11, 12.1, 12.2, 13.1, 13.2, 14.1, 14.2; 17.1, 17.2); and comparative (Indicators no. 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63);
- Access to water, waste and canalisation services (Indicators no. 20, 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, 21.4, 22, 23, 24, 25.1, 25.2, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.1, 33.2, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51.1, 52.2, 53.1, 53.2, 54, 55);
- Service satisfaction level (Indicators no. 1.1 & 1.2); and

- Types of projects implemented (Indicators no. 15 & 16), degree of participation in training and seminars (Indicator no. 18).

In the 2023 survey, the local actors were asked to evaluate their impact on the awareness about climate and environmental issues (Indicator no. 60). The bulk of the local actors perceive the impact as either major (22%) or significant (47%), and a further 19% see a moderate impact; so overall 88% are positive.

Over the project duration, there was a clear increase in the number of people willing to participate in the environmental actions. In 2023 the majority of respondents, namely 67% of the general population, 88% of women households and 97% of local actors stated that they would be willing to participate in programmes or activities to better understand climate and environmental changes (Indicators no. 58 and 59). By comparison, the 2021 survey data (Indicators no. 8 and 9) found that 34% of the general population, and 39% of local actors were willing to participate in the environmental actions. Therefore, the comparison with 2021 shows increased of 97% for the general population and 149% for the local actors.

Hence, there is no direct measure in terms of a baseline and an end-of-project status to gauge the level of awareness on environment protection and climate change. Of the 101 local actors surveyed, 69% thought there was a major or significant increase in awareness regarding these matters. The surveys indicated that over the project's 2½ year duration, there was a significant increase in the willingness to participate in environmental actions. For waste management, there was a 9 to 24 percentage point increase in the availability of proper waste collection and separation, community waste storage, and waste disposal services, with increases or respectively 46%, 39% and 80%. The surveys do indicate that the project had a measurable impact, although the surveys do not show a 70% increase in environmental awareness, something that is anyhow challenging to quantify.

Outcome Indicator # 2 was fully achieved in 2021. Five rayon LPAs and the Gagauzia region were trained in Strategic Environmental Assessment Law (SEA) and seven climate change gender-mainstreamed Action Plans, including one for the Transnistria region were elaborated and are pending approval. In the course of 2020, each rayon level LPAs (Calarasi, Nisporeni, Leova, Basarabeasca and Dubasari) and the Gagauzia region authorities set up working groups composed of some 10-15 representatives from each district level authority and with experts that had been trained by UNDP's implementing partner, Business Consulting Institute (BCI) and assisted in the elaboration of the districts'/regions' Climate Profiles with a gender component included. For the Transnistria region, BCI elaborated another Climate Change Profile. Subsequently, with the assistance of BCI, six gender mainstreamed Action Plans were developed for the respective local development projects and programmes at the district/regional level for Calarasi, Nisporeni, Leova, Basarabeasca, Dubasari and Gagauzia.

The proposals await the respective authorities' approval to be included in the district/region level strategies. Furthermore, in the course of 2021, BCI provided capacity building activities for eleven selected 11 LPAs (Bascalia, Borogani, Cioresti, Tigheci, Bravicea, Filipeni, Sarma, Tuzara, Niscani, Cismichioi and Dezghingea) in the use of SEA and assisted them in the elaboration of the proposals for the gender-mainstreamed climate change adaptation plans at the local level which is awaiting the local council's approval.

Under Outcome Indicator # 3, a comprehensive training programme with a two-day agenda and six practical guidelines containing the necessary steps for starting up and expanding climate-resilient income-generating operations were elaborated. A total of 51 two-day training courses were held by Centre Consultancy in Business (a Moldovan consulting NGO) for women headed households and women entrepreneurs in 2020 and 2021. In total more than 854 people received

the training. There were 24 training sessions organised for project beneficiaries in Zone 1 (Nisporeni, Calarasi, Basarabasca and Leova), 11 training sessions were organised for Gagauzia (Comrat, Ceadir-Lunga and Vulcanesti), four training sessions were organised in the Security Zone, and 12 training sessions were arranged for participants from and in the Transnistria region.

The project activities under Outcome 1 are discussed in more detail below.

Activity 1.1: Carry out district-level environmental and climate change vulnerability assessment

This activity includes two sub-activities: The Baseline and the End-of-project Studies (the latter to be completed in September 2023) and the district/region Climate Profiles. This work was carried out by two different consultancies: CBS-AXA and BCI respectively.

The Baseline Studies are intended to determine the conditions at the start of the project in terms of awareness regarding environmental protection and climate change, and to identify the needs as perceived by NGOs, the population, LPAs, entrepreneurs and women-led entrepreneurs in the targeted regions (with exception of Transnistria). The Baseline Study were carried out in 2020 in all three project intervention zones and in some 35 settlements from all the project districts/regions. In practice, the study focused on 2 major issues: water/canalisation and the available waste management services, their quality, and their potential impact on their quality of life. It was clear that waste and wastewater management were significant concerns, as are water and air pollution. Half of the citizens (56%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the sanitation and waste management services. The End-of-Project Study is calculated to measure the same indicators to determine the impact of the project's activities.

In 2020-21, Climate Profiles were elaborated for seven district/region LPAs (Calarasi, Nisporeni, Leova, Basarabasca, Dubasari, Gagauzia region and Transnistria), these also included both an environmental and a gender component. The profiles were elaborated in a participatory manner with the working groups created in each respective district/region with the exception of the Transnistria region. The focal point for the participatory preparation were the contact persons for the agricultural/economic development at the district/region Council. The participants of the working groups were the representatives of the district/regional authorities and civil society. BCI organised several working sessions to inform the working groups on the process, on climate change and gender challenges, and to present their proposed methodology for the Climate Profile development. This approach allowed for the collection of the working groups' knowledge on the subject and for feedback. BCI also elaborated a questionnaire to collect additional information from the available administrative data, including on women entrepreneurs. The profiles and the proposals were presented and endorsed by the working groups and are pending respective authorities' approval.

The Climate Profiles developed region/district projections and forecasts for: temperature scenarios, precipitations quantities spread, dangerous spring frosts, spatial distribution of water scarcity, spatial distribution of dry periods, and forest stress aridity. The Climate Profiles include major pollution sources and key relevant natural resources regarding the quality of surface and underground water, the canalisation network, water basins, soil and degradation patterns, industrial sector operations, forest and protected lands, and urban and rural waste. The profiles contain a generic gender component with reference to rural women's vulnerability as a result of climate change also based on the region's specific questionnaire with the women-led businesses and entrepreneurs.

The project carried two research undertakings involving quantitative and qualitative research (see Activity 1.3) on the awareness, needs of the environment and climate change, where the gender aspect remains unaddressed in both enquiries. The Baseline Study focuses more on the environment (air, water, soil), human activity impact, the availability of respective public services and willingness of the respondents to get involved. Climate change aspects and links to a gender perspective are not reflected in the study.

Prior to the project activity, there were no Climate Profiles or survey of gender vulnerabilities at the district/region level, including for the districts covered by the project. The national level Climate Profile carried out in the past by Government²⁰ and by international agencies²¹ on several occasions lack the specificities and details of the documents produced by the project. The evaluation of climate change and respective gender impacts appear to be relatively generic to the region's/district's situation based on the Experts' reviews, and at the same time lacking in specific quantifications. The research and reviews produced in Activities 1.1 and 1.3 were expected to be informative and well-integrated into the follow-up activities.

Activity 1.2: Mainstreaming of gender, environmental protection and climate resilience into local development strategies and capacity building of LPAs

Annual Plans detailed this into several sub-activities: To establish partnerships with the LPAs, and to support the LPAs with the integration of environmental and climate change concerns into local development plans through promotion and advocacy of activities. Assist with the development of guidelines on environment and climate-related legislation. Carry-out training events on environment climate legislation and provide capacity building programmes for LPAs. Provide mentorship to LPAs on the application of environmental legislation. These sub-activities were carried out by BCI in 2021.

Establish partnerships with LPAs and support LPAs in integration of environment and climate change concerns into local development plans through promotion advocacy activities;

Based on Activity 1.1, Gender Mainstreamed Actions Plans were developed that included climate change adaptation and environmental protection measures. This activity was carried out by BCI. The Action Plans were elaborated for seven district/region LPAs (Calarasi, Nisporeni, Leova, Basarabasca, Dubasari, the Gagauzia region and Transnistria), these also included environmental and gender components. These are pending adoption by the District/Regional Councils and are considered to be under implementation through short- and medium-term Action Plans related to local projects and include proposals to address identified climate change and environmental risks and vulnerabilities through adaptation measures with respect to the agricultural sector, water/canalisation resources, the health sector, transport and infrastructure.

The plans do not include an ex-ante impact and cost-benefit analysis for the proposed adaptations measures. The conformity of the region's/district's plans with the national climate change adaptation and gender mainstreaming, and separately of the community level plans with the

²⁰ Evaluare Strategica de Mediu pentru Programul de dezvoltare cu emisii reduse a Republicii Moldova pina in anul 2030, 2022, Ministry of Environment.

²¹ UNICEF, Evaluarea Vulnerabilitatii Climatice <https://www.unicef.org/moldova/media/1266/file/Evaluarea-vulnerabilitatii-climatice.pdf>, 2017

region/district level plans, as well as national level sectoral policies and programmes are not addressed.

Support development of guides on environment and climate-related legislation

To forward the mainstreaming of gender, environmental protection and climate resilience into local development strategies, four guidelines were prepared for Local Public Authorities at level I (community) and at level II (district/region). These present the application of environmental, climate and gender legislation at the local level in a visual and user-friendly manner. These guidelines were made in collaboration with the Congress of Local Public Authorities, MoE, and LPAs. There are two guidelines, one for Level I and one for Level II, furthermore, the guidelines were published in both Romanian and Russian.

The four Guidelines were elaborated by BCI on how to undertake: i) Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), ii) Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA), iii) Implementing Environmental and Climate Change Plans in Local Development, iv) Implementing Gender Equality in Climate Change Adaptation Policies. The SEA and EIA Guidelines were updated following the legislative amendments made in October 2022 and that become applicable in October 2023. The 3rd Guidelines contains environmental and climate change measures for land, green spaces, water and waste management and includes examples from national experience. The guideline incorporates both international and national good practices, as can be noted when it is compared to international guidelines.²² The fourth guideline's content was compared against the existing international good practices,²³ and found to be elaborated in all-purpose terms and well suited for the LPAs.

To promote the four guidelines, the project designed four videos that presents the contents of each guideline. These videos cover waste management; water resource management; gender equality; and SEA.

The four guidelines developed by the project were the basis for capacity building. Nine remote regional workshops (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) were conducted for LPAs and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) with a total of 223 participants (including 122 women) to develop their skills in applying environmental and climate related legislation at local level, in using SEA and EIA tools, as well as a gender equality perspective in planning and executing climate resilient solutions and initiatives locally.

Carry-out training events on environment climate legislation/capacity building programme for LPAs and provide mentorship to LPAs on application of environmental legislation.

To introduce environmental and climate change legislation and gender mainstreaming into local planning documents, and possibly apply to receive the technical assistance in the implementation

²² UCIP IFAD Ghid pentru Autoritatile Publice locale din Mediul Rural <http://www.ucipifad.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Ghid-pentru-APL-privind-adaptarea-la-schimbarile-climatice.pdf>, ADA/PNUD Incorporarea masurilor de adaptare la schimbarile climatice in documentele strategice ale Republicii Moldova https://www.globalsupportprogramme.org/sites/default/files/resources/yovel_santos_incorporarea_masurilor_de_adaptare_la_schimbarile_climatice_in_documentele_strategice_ale_republicii_moldova.pdf

²³ UN Climate Change Guidelines and Tools <https://unfccc.int/topics/gender/resources/guidelines-or-other-tools-for-integrating-gender-considerations-into-climate-change-related-activities-under-the-convention>, and UN Women Implementation of gender-responsive Climate Action https://unfccc.int/files/gender_and_climate_change/application/pdf/egmreport.pdf, Adaptation Fund https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Doc.AFB38_39_Inf.1_updated-gender-guidance-doc_1.pdf

of climate change and gender equality adaptation measures in their local development plans. In the course of 2021-22, eleven LPAs (Bascală (Basarabasca), Borogani (Leova), Filipeni (Leova), Sarma (Leova), Tigheci (Leova), Cioresi (Nisporeni), Bravicea (Calarasi), Tuzara (Calarasi), Niscani (Calarasi), Cismichioi and Dezghingea (Gagauzia)) benefited from technical assistance to develop adaptation measures against climate change and environment risks that had been identified, and in some cases, these were gender sensitive. The plans were carried out within the agricultural sector, water resources, health sector, transport and infrastructure. This activity was organised by BCI.

For each community, technical meetings were organised for the members of the local working groups, composed of the representatives from the local administration, specialists, and in some cases CSOs and local entrepreneurs. The proposals are pending approval by the decisions of the local councils. These workshops were attended by representatives of local working groups, as well as local authorities and those responsible for the environmental sector. In order to harness women's voices and perspectives in shaping and advancing gender responsive climate change adaptation measures and solutions at the local level, the project motivated over 100 women to participate in environmental debates and technical working groups in these eleven LPAs.

The review of the content of the community Action Plans varied depending on the community, where some were more elaborate than others. The Action Plans generally contained proposals in the areas of agriculture, health, local infrastructure, water supply/irrigation and canalisation, land management, and waste management. These measures combined regulatory, financial and informational/ educational instruments, in most cases evaluating the financial and in-kind costs associated with the actions.

Activity 1.3: Conduct capacity and needs assessment among women's groups and men agri-producers

This activity was carried out by Centre Consultancy in Business (CCA - an NGO) in 2020 in all project intervention zones with the exception of Transnistria. The Evaluation Survey served two purposes, firstly to identify the knowledge gap and inputs required by women to maintain/put in place income generating activities/businesses which are environment-friendly and resilient to climate change. Secondly, to formulate the capacity development response that was conducted under Activity 1.4 and the grants programme, Outcome 3, that supported the implementation of the identified measures. The other survey was carried out by the project as part of Activity 1.1 in the same districts/regions.

The capacities and needs assessment exercise surveyed 300 people from the project's target districts/regions, seeking out responses from women-led households and entrepreneurs, as well as from both men and women agricultural entrepreneurs. Just over 90% of the respondents were women. The key needs of the respondents in terms of knowledge and capacity building needs covered how to open a business; financing and fiscal management; suited crops and benefits of using ecological farming; and irrigation. Or to put it more unequivocally, the respondents were of the opinion that they required support on all aspects of establishing a green agricultural business. Furthermore, there was a keen interest in improved waste management practices.

The key results of the survey showed: 2/3 had not applied for the grants and 12.5% considered loan rates too high; 2/3 sold their products on local and district markets; 3/4 lacked knowledge of environmentally friendly production; 3/4 were aware of the adverse consequences of climate change and how this adversely affected their settlement (drought, acid rain, epidemics, high temperatures, floods), as well as the manmade contributing factors (CO₂ emissions, deforestation,

excessive land exploitation, inadequate waste management). The survey found that some 2/3-3/4 were aware of the preventive climate change measures such as the reduced energy use, reforestation, wetlands restoration, and adaptive agriculture. At the same time, some 50% were aware of the agricultural adaptation measures: soil care, drought resistant and adaptable plants, rain and hail avoidance, special irrigation, and pest control.

Based on the results and recommendations of the capacity needs assessment, a *Capacity Development Programme of Women and Men Agri-entrepreneurs and Women-Headed Households* was developed. The capacity development programme advocates a two-pronged approach, offering both training and written guidelines to support the beneficiaries. These recommendations were implemented under Activity 1.4 and are described below.

Activity 1.4: Carry out a practical capacity development programme for women and men agri-producers

In the course of 2020-21, a total of 51 two-day training courses were carried out by CCA for women headed households and women entrepreneurs for more than 854 beneficiaries. 24 training sessions were organised for project intervention zone 1 (Nisporeni, Calarasi, Basarabasca and Leova), 11 training courses were organised for Gagauzia (Comrat, Ceadir-Lunga and Vulcanesti), 4 training programmes were organised for the Security Zone participants and 12 training classes for the participants from and in Transnistria region. These training courses were the first true attempt in Moldova to initiate and promote the awareness of community leaders, entrepreneurs, local public administration, and specialists across the project intervention zones.

Two two-day training courses were developed, one for the ‘women headed households’ faction, and a second for the ‘group of women and men entrepreneurs.’ In each case, the course consisted of four modules and covered the topics identified during the needs-assessment phase (Activity 1.3), these were general knowledge of business, marketing and promotion of ecological products, biological and organic agriculture and natural resource management, and sustainable technologies and climate resilient practices.

Of the over 854 participants in the two-day training courses, 78% were women. Some of the training sessions were provided in Russian language to accommodate from the Transnistria and Gagauzia regions. The training sessions included accessible information, practical examples, success stories and also served as a platform for beneficiaries to exchange knowledge and good practices among themselves. All participants in the training courses received support materials and handouts. Under the Knowledge Products Components of the *Capacity Development Programme*, six guidelines informed by the needs-assessment exercise were developed:

- First steps in launching an Eco business,
- Eco Practices in Agriculture,
- Climate Change Resilience Building,
- Energy efficiency methods for small farmers,
- Financial Management of a Business,
- Marketing and promotion of Eco products.

These guidelines have been printed and distributed, furthermore they are available online.

The organisation of the training courses faced difficulties related to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, they managed the health security aspects well, making remote on-line events possible.

In 2022, a National Conference covered efficient management of natural resources and good waste management practices at the local level. The discussions helped draw key lessons on how

to better organise the local services. The conference gathered 80 participants (38 women) from the target districts/regions representing both LPAs and CSOs.

The capacity-building training courses indicated the possibility of grant-making facilities; however, they were not specifically linked and therefore weakened the incentives for the participants to immerse themselves in the programmes. At the same time, the district/region and community elaboration of the gender-sensitive climate change adaptation policies took place. This was carried out by another NGO organisation and the two activities could have been better synchronised, for example, by sharing the relevant received feedback from each activity and using it in the training sessions. However, the COVID-19 pandemic complicated matters and certainly made the implementation of these two activities challenging.

In implementing Outcome 1, the PMU has followed the intentions of the Project Document and covered almost all requirements, as can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Status for Outcome 1 at the time of evaluation

Outcome 1: Sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully		
Indicators	End-of Project Target	Status at Evaluation (explanations in text below)
Output 1 Indicator 1: Number of local development plans that ensures women's equal access to resources for sustainable food production	6 with gender and environment and climate change mainstreamed	7 District/region level LPAs
Output 1 Indicator 2: No. of guides elaborated, presented and disseminated	at least 3 (one on SEA and EIA; one on environment related legislation and one on climate-related legislation)	4 2 for LPAs. 1 SEA, 1 EIA, 4 videos (waste management, water management, gender, SEA)
Output 1 Indicator 3a: No. of LPA and civil society representative participating in the projects workshops; reports on the collected feedback	at least 10 (one national and 6 at the local level- one in each pilot district)	10 9 regional workshops for LPAs and CSOs (223 participants incl. 122 women), 1 National conference (80 participants)
Output 1 Indicator 3b: No. of women and women's groups engaged in debates on environmental impacts	300	>300
Output 1 Indicator 4: No. of inquiries/ no. of documents developed with project support	at least 12 (LPAs which will benefit from gender, environment and CC mainstreaming and other involved in replication)	12 11(12) community level proposals for LPAs Action plans elaborated pending adoption
Output 1 Indicator 5: No. of women from woman headed households participating in the workshop/ reports on collected feedback	at least 600 (tentatively 100 women from each pilot district)	~700 women More than 835 participants, including approximately 700 women and more than 100 from each targeted district/region
Output 1 Indicator 6: No. of women entrepreneurs participating in the workshop; reports on the collected feedback	at least 120 (tentatively 30 women entrepreneurs from each pilot district)	>750 women
Output 1 Indicator 7: No. of developed knowledge products by the project	at least 6 knowledge products (ex. guides for advancing climate-resilient livelihoods, guides on sustainable use of environmental media, etc.)	6 guidelines

As can be seen from Table 3, the project covered all the requirements for Outcome 1. In total 854 people participated in project conducted training, including 665 women that were heads of households and 189 women entrepreneurs.

The indicators serve as a control and measurement towards proper project implementation, the Indicator 1 qualitatively evaluates the degree of gender-sensitivity in the climate change district/region policies/ action plans; Indicators 2 and 7 are quantitative indicators on the number of the guidelines and guides produced; Indicators 3a (district profile/ action plan workshops), 3b (awareness/ needs evaluations, district/ local decisions), 5 (capacity building programmes), and 6 (capacity building workshops) are quantitative indicators, at different stages, ensuring women/ women's groups participation as well as CSOs.

Indicator 1: Number of local development plans that ensures women's equal access to resources for sustainable food production (end-of-project target: 6 with gender and environment and climate change mainstreamed) evaluates the efforts of the district/region policies to facilitate and support women's greater participation and role in sustainable food production as a bottom-up approach, complemented via the project's grants to women-led businesses and households. The project facilitated the elaboration of the district/regions' climate change adaptation plans in a participatory manner, with women in a prominent role. Gender aspects are not featured clearly in the district/regional plans, however these do contain generic approaches that mainstream gender.

Indicator 2: No. of guides elaborated, presented and disseminated (at least 3 (one on SEA and EIA; one on environment related legislation and one on climate-related legislation)) - all guides were elaborated, disseminated and used in the Activities 1.1 and 1.2 with hundreds of participants at both district/region and community levels in the targeted areas, as evidenced by the text of the knowledge products and their expert review opinions.

Indicator 7: No. of developed knowledge products by the project (at least 6 knowledge products (ex. guides for advancing climate-resilient livelihoods, guides on sustainable use of environmental media, etc.)) - all guidelines were elaborated, disseminated and used in the Activity 1.4 with more than 850 participants at the district/region and the community levels in the targeted areas as evidenced by the text of the knowledge products, and their expert review opinions.

Indicator 3a: No. of LPA and civil society representative participating in the projects workshops; reports on the collected feedback (at least 10 (one national and 6 at the local level- one in each pilot district)) – the participation of CSOs and civil society groups in the Activities 1.1 (climate change profile and action plans) and 1.2 (community action plans) have been ensured as evidenced by the list of participants and implementers, as well as by direct interviews with some participants.

Indicator 3b: No. of women and women's groups engaged in debates on environmental impacts (300) - at least 300 women/women groups were engaged in the needs evaluation assessment under activity 1.3 and several tens in Activity 1.1, as evidenced by working groups members interviews, the lists of participants, and discussions with the implementors.

Indicator 5: No. of women from woman headed households participating in the workshop/ reports on collected feedback (No. of women from woman headed households participating in the workshop/ reports on collected feedback) – more than 750 women-led households and entrepreneurs participated in the training activities under Activity 1.4, as evidenced by the lists of participants, selected interviews with the participants, and discussions with the implementors.

Indicator 6: No. of women entrepreneurs participating in the workshop; reports on the collected feedback (at least 120 (tentatively 30 women entrepreneurs from each pilot district)) – more than 750 women-led households and entrepreneurs participated in the training programmes under Activity 1.4, as evidenced by the lists of participants, selected interviews with the participants and the implementers.

Outcome 1 activities aim at: (i) evaluation of the pre-project intervention target areas and target groups (women-led households and entrepreneurs) and to promote a wider awareness on the adverse effects of climate change, and to provide gender-sensitive and empowering settings for climate change adaptation measures and ensure that the target groups are heard by the district/local authorities, and (ii) contribute to the adoption of facilitatory and supportive district/regional and community gender-sensitive climate change policies – both being the core of a bottom-up approach for change in the targeted districts/regions/communities. The project activities in practice approached this by widespread actions across the project intervention zones, rather than concentrating and synergising their efforts in a few selected districts/regions/communities. The

initiative pioneered the approach of women empowerment, and thus gender equality, and in the context of climate change adaptation.

Outcome 2: NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming

Prior UNDP programmes targeting Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) have concluded that there is a need for extensive capacity building of ecological CSOs/NGOs on climate change adaptation topics, as well as supporting their institutional and individual development.²⁴ The objective of this outcome is to strengthen the NGOs capacities to engage in local environmental and climate actions, natural resources management, gender mainstreaming, and decision-making. There was no request for the women-led NGOs/CSOs or feminist/gender equality ecological entities to participate in the capacity-building program. Table 4 lists the project indicators and targets for Outcome 2 as given in the project's Results Framework.

Table 4: Outcome 2 Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Status at evaluation
OUTCOME 2. NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming enhanced	<u>Outcome Indicator # 1</u> % increase in the number of NGOs engaging in the environment, climate change and gender initiatives as a result of project interventions	45% increase	Not clear
	<u>Outcome Indicator # 2</u> No. of NGOs which apply improved internal policies as a result of project interventions	6 as a result of project	Partly implemented 5 NGOs underwent improved internal policies (1 dropped out)

The Outcome 2 Indicator # 1 requires that the number of NGOs engaging in the environment, climate change and gender initiatives as a result of project interventions be increased by 45%. The Project Documents states that the exact number of environmental NGOs is unknown, 67 NGOs registered for participation in the 2020 Environmental NGOs Forum, so this is presumably the baseline. The increase of CSOs/NGOs participation by almost half in the gender-sensitive climate change initiatives at district/region and community levels within 3 years is an ambitious goal and difficult to achieve.

The Outcome 2 Indicator # 2 expect that six NGOs will have improved internal policies as a result of the project's activities. To select these six NGOs that were to be strengthened through project involvement, the PMU introduced an **Activity 2.0**. The Project Document has the identification and selection of "up to 6 NGOs which can benefit from the institutional development support" as part of Activity 2.1. Below we follow the PMU's approach, with both an Activity 2.0 and an Activity 2.1.

²⁴ The Project Document refers to the GEF Small Grants Programme and the EU-financed programme *Strengthening Environmental Governance by Building the Capacity of NGOs*

Activity 2.0: Selection of 6 Environmental NGOs for the Institutional Capacity Development Programme

The PMU proposed a competitive selection of the six environmental NGOs that were going to be part of the institutional capacity development programme. Firstly, an *Applicant's Guide* and an *Expression of Interest Form* (EoI) were prepared. The *Applicant's Guide* included detailed information on the conditions of application, the application period, the necessary documents and the selection process. To ensure that environmental NGOs from all of Moldova could apply, these documents were prepared in both Romanian and Russian.

The request for Expressions of Interest was widely distributed and two information sessions were held for potential applicants, one in Romanian and one in Russian. These sessions were held remotely and had respectively 10 and 16 participants. Where needed, the PMU provided the environmental NGOs with support in completing their EoIs. A total of 17 NGOs submitted EoIs and after a lengthy process, the six beneficiaries of the institutional capacity development program were selected (with 3 NGOs on the waiting list):

- ATOS, Sadaclia, Basarabasca (Zone 1),
- Umanitate, Barboieni, Nisporeni, (Zone 1),
- Vis si Realitate, Sarata Nua, Leova (Zone 1),
- MEM (Environmental Movement), Comrat, Gagauzia (Zone 2),
- Vitality, Tiraspol, Transnistria (Zone 3),
- Progresul Dendrologic, Chisinau, Security Zone (Zone 3).

Of these, 2 are based in Transnistria and Gagauzia respectively. All NGOs that had participated in the selection process were encouraged to make use of the project's coaching and mentoring grants, as well as in capacity development activities offered under the project and initially, the project expected to rely substantially on these NGOs in the implementation of the project activities.

Activity 2.1: Conduct institutional capacity assessment of environmental NGOs

Each of the six selected NGOs were subject to an institutional assessment to identify the management, administrative and financial gaps, whereafter an institutional development programme was developed for each of the selected NGOs. This was undertaken by, on a competitive basis, hiring a company to design and implement the institutional capacity development programme for the NGOs. The selected company was the North-East Region Development Agency (NERDA) from Romania. This is an experienced "non-governmental, non-profit, of public utility organization, with juridic statute, which contributes to reducing regional disparities by stimulating the economic, social and cultural development." ²⁵

NERDA analysed the NGOs' profiles, strategic documents, business plans and other documents and aspects of NGO activities covering: project management capacities; administrative capacity including procurement, contract management, recruitment and human resources management; financial management and internal control capacities; communication and promotion; advocacy and strengthening partnerships; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The identified gaps

²⁵ Quote from NERDA's webpage <https://www.adrnorddest.ro/en/our-story/who-are-we/>

and specific remedial recommendations for each NGO were then used to develop an *Institutional Capacity Development Programme* for each organisation.

However, both regionally and locally based environmental NGOs/CSOs have limited institutional and financial capacities and even after the possible strengthening of their institutional capacities, their abilities to play a leading role in a cross-regional project initiatives is weak. Unless they form a Consortium with the support of more experienced national environmental organisations, which was not the case, their competencies remain limited.

Activity 2.2: Carry out a core capacity development programme for the selected NGOs

The *Institutional Capacity Development Programme* for each NGO was accomplished by NERDA during the first half of 2021, covering three principal domains: i) Project management (including managerial skills and functions, skills and technical knowledge); ii) Administration (including procurement, contract management, recruitment and human resources management); and iii) Financial management and internal controls. The training delivery methods consisted of joint training activities, individual coaching, mentoring and specific assistance on the development and review of specific documents and tools pertaining to internal management, administrative, financial systems of the six beneficiary organisations. A total of 22 NGO representatives were trained, whereof 19 were women groups.

Activity 2.3: Design and implement a capacity building programme for NGOs on environmental and climate change related legislation, challenges and response measures

This activity was a capacity building programme to strengthen environmental NGOs' abilities and motivation to engage in environmental and climate actions, natural resources management and gender issues at the local, regional and national level. The four themes were i) environment, biodiversity and nature protection; ii) climate change adaptation and mitigation; iii) gender mainstreaming and climate change; and iv) management of environmental projects.

In total five one-week training courses were held, including two in Russian. A total of 313 people from 77 NGO participated in this training, with 90% being women. The PMU organised various study tours covering waste management, water management, and ecological agricultural practices. On one study tour, 21 mayors (including 7 women) from the target districts/regions travelled for three days to Romania to study waste management.

In the reviewed capacity-building programmes, there were no materials related to the advocacy of district/ region/ local policy change, and a few participants in the training courses felt that the marking of products was not fully covered (other participants disagreed with this viewpoint).

Table 1: Status for Outcome 2 at the time of evaluation

Outcome 2: NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming enhanced		
Indicators	End-of Project Target	Status at Evaluation
Output 2 Indicator 1: Extend to which the identified assurance plans are implemented	100%	100% Implemented by 5 participated NGOs
Output 2 Indicator 2: No. of trained NGOs	67 NGOs	77 NGOs participated
Output 2 Indicator 3: No. of delivered training events by NGOs	14 (one national and one in each pilot district) as a result of project	>14 training sessions
Output 2 Indicator 4: Extend to which NGOs provide inputs to the knowledge products	at least 20 % from those NGOs who attended the project's events	Not clear (% could not be assessed)

Table 1 above provides an overview of the Outcome 2 indicators. It is difficult to determine the percentage of the 77 NGOs trained under the project that actually contributed to knowledge products. Otherwise, the PMU has been very dedicated in their capacity building efforts for LGAs and NGOs.

Indicators 2 and 3 are quantitative process ones providing the number of trained NGOs and number of delivered training sessions. Indicator 1 is a process-end qualitative for the institutional systems built by the NGOs, while the Indicator 4 is a qualitative one in contributing to some Outcome 1, for which responsibility is entrusted to another implementer.

Indicator 1: Extend to which the identified assurance plans are implemented (100%) – 5 of the NGOs participated in the extensive institutional capacity-building programmes. This is evidenced by the trainers, by selected NGOs representatives, and by project reports. Furthermore, the NGOs implemented the internal systems they were expected to carry out within their organisations.

Indicator 2: No. of trained NGOs (67 NGOs) – number of overall trained NGOs exceeded this requirement reaching 77 NGOs participating in various sessions as evidenced by meetings with NGOs, interviews with the implementers, and project reporting documents.

Indicator 3: No. of delivered training events by NGOs (14 (one national and one in each pilot district) as a result of project) - the number of overall training activities exceeded this, reaching more than 14 as evidenced by selected participated NGOs, interview with the implementers and project reporting documents.

Indicator 4: Extend to which NGOs provide inputs to the knowledge products (at least 20 % from those NGOs who attended the project's events) – this indicator is not in the control of the entrusted implementer and refers to part of Outcome 1. However, the review of Activity 1.3 (needs evaluation) and 1.4 (capacity building) produced documents, interviews with the respective implementers show that there were a number of local civil society groups who contributed to these activities, including from those 77 NGOs participating in the extensive training programmes. The exact percentage could not be established.

The outcome 2 aims at building the capacities of the regional and local civil society actors as change-making contributors towards and sustained participation and support for the Outcome 1 and Outcome 3 activities by strengthening gender-sensitive climate change policies at regional and national level policies adoption and implementation. The regional and local ecosystem of

change-making contributors is one of the conditions for the support for the change based on the past experience and good practices and is a part of the sustainability of the project outcomes as well as the democratic monitoring actions of the regional/local authorities. The project design, however, lacked stronger link and stimuli for the Outcome 2 activities of the capacitated CSOs/NGOs to participate in the Outcome 1 activities in the form of either the institutional small-grants programme or in the support for the region/local/specialised new or existing network of the civil society to sustain the gender-sensitive climate change adaptation policies. Therefore, the region/local ecosystem network needs to be strengthened, as well as the decision-making advocacy, monitoring and active participation in these decisions should be retained as a complimentary activity.

Outcome 3: Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities

The objective of this outcome is the implementation of projects that further the project's objectives. The Project Document foresees that 60 women led households receive micro grants of up to 3,500 USD as part of cohort 1 and following the project extension, another 50 women-led households received grants as part of the cohort 2. Ten women agricultural producers receive grants of up to 18,000 USD each, and that 30 communities receive grants of up to 16,000 USD each. The Project Document offers an inspired set of possible uses for the grants, as can be seen in Table 5:

Table 5: Outcome 3 Grants and proposed activities

Women Led Households (120)	Women Agricultural Producers (11)	Communities (30)
Rainwater collection Access to surface and/or ground waters where permitted and applicable Greenhouses construction Drip irrigation Organic waste management - compost production Bee keeping Seeds and goods storages Animal husbandry Other related activities that would ensure food security in times of climatic extremes	Climate smart agriculture activities Agro-forestry Improving water retention on agricultural lands Soil restoration activities Eco-tourism Organic crop and vegetable production Biomass or compost production Plants nurseries and berries production Orchard management Milk and cheese production Sustainable fish production Management of animal husbandry Integrated practices Post-harvest production Use of agro by-products	Extension of forest area on degraded lands Restoration of wetlands hydrology Biomass production Pasture restoration Waste management Chemicals management Other related environment-friendly and climate change resilient activities

The breakout of war in Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, negatively impacted the Moldovan economy (section 3.1) and increased the costs of energy and goods. The PMU estimate that all grants should be increased by 25%, meaning that additional financing was requested from the Embassy of Sweden and granted. Table 6 gives the final budget for the three types of grants.

Table 6: Grant budget

Beneficiaries' Category	# of Projects	Total Budget
Communities	30	600,000 USD
Women entrepreneurs	11	207,000 USD
Women with economic activity/households (Cohort 1 and Cohort 2)	120 (64+56)	262,500 USD +240,000 USD
Total Grants Budget	161	1,309,500 USD

Outcome 3 activities were implemented by 2 companies: AXA Management responsible for the grants for the women-led households and Global Business Access (GBA) responsible for the community grants and the women-led entrepreneurs grants. AXA and GBA organised the grants competitions and once the beneficiaries were selected, these two companies were to purchase and install all related equipment and technologies for the grants' beneficiaries. Both companies, on the competitive bases, contacted NGO Partners to help with the implementation of the climate change aspects of the grants separately for cohort 1 and cohort 2. Information sessions were held to inform the potential applicants on the grant competition. Nine NGO Partners were selected from 42 applications, two of these (Progresul Dendrologic (Chisinau) and MEM) had previously received training under activities 2.1 and 2.2.

ProEntrance (Chisinau) was selected to support 16 LPAs in Zone 1, MEM for 5 LPAs in Zone 2, while Dnestr Enterprice (Bender) for 9 LPAs in Security Zone and Transnistria region (Zone 3). Progressul Dendrologic (Chisinau) was responsible for the women-led households for Zone 1, Mame in Actiune for women-led households for Gagauzia (Zone 2) and LuRenOm for Security Zone and Transnistria (Zone 3). Pomul Vietii (Chisinau) was selected to support cohort 2 women-led households in Zone 3 (Security Zone and Transnistria) and Zone 2 (Gagauzia).

Potential beneficiaries were solicited to submit sub-project ideas in line with those listed in Table 5. Proposals were submitted and evaluated in a competitive, transparent and inclusive process, using a pre-defined set of evaluation criteria. For selected sub-project ideas, support was provided for preparation of the business plans through coaching and mentoring scheme through the Partner NGOs.

As shown in Table 7, the intent was it is that all (100%) the project's grants go to the intended beneficiaries, that a minimum of ten climate resilient and/or environment-friendly practices be introduced and that the beneficiaries experience an increased revenue through the positive outcomes of the intervention.

Table 7: Outcome 3 Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Status of evaluation
OUTCOME 3. Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities	<u>Outcome Indicator # 1</u> Extend to which the project's grant programme is implemented by women, women entrepreneurs and LPAs	100%	Implemented
	<u>Outcome Indicator # 2</u> No. of climate resilient and/or environment-friendly practices put in place by the project	10	Implemented
	<u>Outcome Indicator # 3</u> Income generated by the newly adopted environmentally friendly and climate resilient practices with project support	10% increase from the baselines identified in the business plans/ the profit produced per years if available	Not clear (% not assessed given lack of data)

Outcome 3 Indicator # 1 specifies the extent to which the project's grant programme is implemented by women, women entrepreneurs and LPAs and requires that 100% of the grants be implemented by women-led households and businesses. There are 2 aspects for this indicator: the formal and the de-facto criteria. Formally all the grants have been implemented by the women-led businesses and households. Based on the interviews and interactions with the women-led initiatives most of the grants' beneficiaries were clearly women-led initiatives with a woman in charge. In a few cases, there were women-led initiatives, where her partner was equally involved. The Evaluation Team did not come across any grants that were not awarded to women-led initiatives.

Outcome 3 Indicator # 2 specifies that at least 10 climate resilient and/or environment-friendly practices be put in place by the project. At least ten climate resilient and/or environmentally friendly practices were to be put in place by the project. In practice, this number was exceeded, as field visits found several dozen practices that had been mentored by NGO. These covered both women led households and women entrepreneurs. This result was evidenced in the field but not clearly reported in project documents.

Outcome 3 Indicator # 3 specifies that income generated by the newly adopted environmentally friendly and climate resilient practices with project support increase by 10% from the baselines identified in the business plans/ the profit produced per years if available. This information is to be generated based on the funding of each grant and the financial data provided by the implementer over the course of the business cycle. The collected data and information could be reviewed by the Evaluation Team based on the calculus for the grants' fiches, expert opinion and selective interviews with the beneficiaries. Review of some of the grants, based on interviews with the business owners and, to a lesser degree, with the households, indicate that the 10% increase has been achieved by most of the businesses and by some of the households. It is not clear at present how many of the women-led households will continue beyond the project period.

Activity 3.1: Support for preparation of environment-friendly and climate resilient sub-project plans (business plans)

The project was to mobilise women's groups and communities, and to provide these with training so that they can establish environmentally friendly and climate resilient practices. Five urban and 25 rural municipalities covering all target areas, including the Security Zone and Gagauzia were selected. A wide range of sub-projects were accepted, these covered waste management, renewable energy, wetlands restoration, reforestation, and park restoration.

The first step was a needs assessment and determination of the current status of waste management within these 30 LPAs. It was found that most LPAs (70%) did not source separate their waste, that there was little composting of organic waste, and that fee collection for waste management services was low. A thorough capacity building programme was designed for the LPAs with online webinars, exercises, and peer sharing with four modules covering:

- Organisation of a waste management service;
- Collection, purification and use of rainwater;
- Energy efficiency projects and renewable energy; and
- Composting of organic waste.

More than 231 people participated in workshops covering these themes, where 90 % were women from target groups benefited from knowledge acquired during the organised online workshops.

The selected communities then developed their environmental and climate resilient sub-project plans in collaboration with the Partner NGOs. Most of the selected sub-projects (60%) related to waste management. These plans were implemented under Activity 3.4.

Activity 3.2: 60 sub-projects with improved livelihood implemented

The grants to woman led households were intended to help the selected beneficiaries to implement undertakings that promoted climate-smart agricultural practices, animal husbandry, and other related activities that contribute to food security at the household level and income generation regardless of the changes in the rainfall patterns and extreme weather events. This activity was implemented by AXA Management in cooperation with the contracted NGOs. There were two cohorts of beneficiaries: for the 1st cohort organised in 2022, 64 woman led households were selected. The 2nd cohort organised in 2023 covered 56 households.

A series of outreach events ensured that there were 255 applications for the women led household grants. Of these the two most common proposed type of project was greenhouses and bee keeping. Third, with 30 applications was animal husbandry. Based on the methodology and selection criteria, the PMU identified the 64 women who would benefit from the grants making them the 1st cohort of beneficiaries.

The sub-projects selected were dominated by agricultural projects (vegetables, berries and flowers), environmentally friendly economic activities (composting, clothes recycling, upcycling, apitherapy, agrotourism, and vertical farming), and resource and energy efficient production (renewable energy use, re-use of wastewater for irrigation, and drip irrigation).

The implementation of the 1st cohort grants was coupled with mentorship and coaching provided by the three partner NGOs, while for the 2nd cohort one partner NGO was hired to work locally and support the selected beneficiaries in the execution of their project and to provide guidance in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development, and gender equality. The mentoring was not extended to the marketing, economic value-chain integration. The progress of each sub-project was monitored by the LPAs together with the Community Initiative Group.

Figure 3: Examples of projects benefitting women-led households from cohort 1, 2 from all 3 zones
Bee-keeping
Cupcui, Leova (Zone 1), Cohort 1
Mill equipment
Cioc-Maidan, Comrat, Gagauzia (Zone 2), Cohort 2



Waste Management
Firladeni, Causeni, Security Zone (Zone 3), Cohort 2



Solar Panels (Green House)
Gisca, Transnistria (Zone 3), Cohort 1



Some 120 small grants (valued \$3-5,000) to women-led households have provided a distinguished and highly valued by the beneficiaries’ facility that proved to be accessible, tailor-made and supportive of climate-change adaptation. These are examples of the small-scale pilots of the affirmative actions, drawn on the *Law on Ensuring Equality* affirmative measures provisions, supporting women-led households with the reasonable adaptation to their conditions and needs (no juridical status or registration required). There are no similar programmes currently carried by state or other actors.

Activity 3.3: 10 entrepreneurial sub-projects implemented

The sub-projects for women agricultural producers were to support environmentally friendly and climate change resilient activities at small and medium scale enterprises. This activity was implemented by Global Business Access in partnership with NGOs. As shown in Table 5 the Project Document is open to a wide range of possible ventures. One requirement was that the potential beneficiary must co-finance 20% of the total investment. Another requisite was that women from vulnerable groups, such as minorities or women with disabilities, should be encouraged to apply. Again, the implementation methodology was identical to the one used for the woman led households under Activity 3.2. In the end, there were eleven (rather than the specified 10) selected projects, these covered:

Renewable energy	4
Agriculture in protected area	3
Sustainable land management	2
Energy efficiency	1
Increasing soil productivity	1

Grants of approximately 20 000 USD each were provided to 11 women led enterprises, which has to date generated 38 new jobs, whereof 22 are taken by women. The requirement to a minimum investment of 20% by the beneficiaries was met, with the women entrepreneurs investing 54,661 USD themselves.

Some of the projects were related to access to renewable energy and biomass-based heating, the energy crisis in some way affected the implementation process, since the services providers in

the alternative energy sources area were at high demand and hence the equipment was in short supply.

Figure 4: Examples of projects benefitting women-led enterprises from all 3 zones

No-till agriculture equipment
Tomai, Leova (Zone 1)



Solar panels (fish farming)
Chirsova, Comrat district, Gagauzia (Zone 2)



Greenhouse (tree planting)
Pohrebea, Dubasari, Security Zone (Zone 3)



Beekeeping (equipment, tourism)
Sipca, Transnistria (Zone 3)



Eleven women-led businesses similarly target women-led enterprises with the affirmative actions to address women economic representation of the inequality in the context of the additional adverse effects of the climate change factors. These are examples of the affirmative actions, drawn on the *Law on Ensuring Equality* affirmative measures provisions.

Activity 3.4: 30 community sub-projects implemented

Thirty communities were assisted with developing environmentally friendly and climate resilient sub-projects together with their LPAs and community members. Again, one goal was the empowerment of women. As can be seen in Table 5, the Project Document suggested an array of environmental and disaster risk reduction projects, as well as the management of waste and chemicals. The LPAs were to cover 10% of the sub-project costs and, with advice from the mentoring NGOs, be responsible for developing sustainability plans for the planned sub-project. Again, the implementation was undertaken under the mentorship of the Partner NGOs and monitored by the LPAs and the Community Initiative Group. As can be seen from the listing below, the majority of projects dealt with improved waste management.

Waste Management	18
Restoration of wetlands	4
Renewable Energy	4
Extension of forest	3
Park restauration	1

Figure 5: Examples of community projects from all 3 zones

Waste management
Bravicea, Calarasi (Zone 1)



Tree planting
Ceadir-Lunga, Gagauzia (Zone 2)



Waste management
Suclea, Slobozia, Transnistria (Zone 3)



Solar panels for water pumping
Molovata, Dubasari, Security Zone (Zone 3)



The UNDP/Embassy of Sweden budget of 600,000 USD was supplemented with USD 111,427 USD (or 18.5 % of overall projects budget) by the local stakeholders, surpassing the 10% minimum local contribution requirement.

Table 8: Status for Outcome 3 at the time of evaluation

Outcome 3: Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities		
Indicators	End-of Project Target	Status at Evaluation
Output 3 Indicator 1a: Number of household women who increase their income due to climate change adaptation/mitigation activities	120	Not calculated (most beneficiaries claim increase), see Table 10 below
Output 3 Indicator 1b: Extend to which business plans are implemented successfully and the expected revenue achieved	100%	Implemented All business plans implemented.
Output 3 Indicator 2a: Number of women entrepreneurs who increase their income due to climate change adaptation/mitigation activities	10	Not calculated (most beneficiaries claimed increase), see Table 10 below
Output 3 Indicator 2b: Extend to which business plan implemented successfully and the expected revenue achieved	100%	All business plans were implemented.
Output 3 Indicator 3: Number of implemented community grants with project financing	30	30 All grants implemented
Output 3 Indicator 4: No. of NGOs involved in the mentoring and coaching over the activities implemented by the project	at least 20% from those NGOs who attended the project's events	12% (9/77) All NGOs that mentored and coached recipients participated in Outcome 1 & 2 activities

As can be seen in Table 8, most of the indicators for Outcome 3 were generally met. The financial assistance was coupled with mentorship and coaching provided by 9 environmental NGOs engaged to act locally and support the selected beneficiaries in implementation of their project and to provide guidance in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development, and gender equality.

Output 3 Indicators 1a and 2a and 1b and 2b are result indicators and imply that at all 100% and least 60 (out of 120) women-led households and at least 10 (out of 11) women-led businesses increase their income as a result of grants recipients implemented climate change adaptation/mitigation activities. While indicator 3 refers to result indicator for community grants. The indicator 4 refers to the result indicator for at least 20% NGOs participate in project event.

Indicator 1a: Number of household women who increase their income due to climate change adaptation/mitigation activities (60) – whether this indicator has been achieved could not be assessed for all grants as evidenced by the interviews with the recipient women-led households, direct observations of the businesses, and interviews with the implementers, most of the beneficiary women claimed the increase in the income.

Indicator 1b: Extend to which business plans (women-led households) are implemented successfully and the expected revenue achieved (100%) - this indicator has been achieved as

evidenced by the selected interviews with the recipient women-led households, direct observations of the businesses, and interviews with the implementers.

Indicator 2a: Number of women entrepreneurs who increase their income due to climate change adaptation/mitigation activities (10) - whether this indicator has been achieved could not be assessed for all grants as evidenced by the selected interviews with the recipient women entrepreneurs, direct observations of the businesses, and interviews with the implementers, most of the beneficiary women claimed an increase in income or expected one after their harvest.

Indicator 2b: Extend to which business plan (women-led businesses) implemented successfully and the expected revenue achieved (100%) - this indicator has been achieved as evidenced by the selected interviews with the recipient women-led businesses, direct observations of the businesses, and interviews with the implementers.

Indicator 3: Number of implemented community grants with project financing (30) – this indicator has been achieved as evidenced by the interviews with the recipient communities, direct observations of all projects.

Indicator 4: No. of NGOs involved in the mentoring and coaching over the activities implemented by the project (at least 20% from those NGOs who attended the project's events) - all NGOs that mentored and coached recipients participated in Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 activities. This is evidenced by the list of participants in the corresponding activities, selected interviews with NGOs, and the implementers.

Outcome 4: Sustainable and climate resilient practice and business models disseminated and replicated

The purpose of this outcome was to disseminate experience and lessons learnt in ResCom to enable their replication and scaling at the national level. This is being achieved through the sharing of case studies, best practices, lessons learned and other relevant information on climate change adaptation solutions and resilient livelihoods from the pilot communities. Outcome 4 has a single indicator, as can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Outcome 4 Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Indicator	Target	Status at evaluation
OUTCOME 4. Sustainable and climate resilient practice and business models disseminated and replicated	<u>Outcome Indicator # 1</u> Extend to which the projects results, good practices and products are codified	100% codified	Partly, still on-going

Outcome 4 Indicator # 1 specifies the extent to which the project results, good practices and products are 100% codified. The project has widely disseminated good practices via media-products aimed at the whole society and shared the good practices via the conferences organised with the participation of the beneficiaries. The codification elements have been on-going via the good practice advice within the mentored women-led households with the good practice posters adapted to each activity.

Activity 4.1: Formulate the Upscaling Strategy

The project is to develop a strategy so that gender-sensitive environment-friendly and climate change resilient practices for sustainable development can be replicated in other communities and districts. The strategy should consider both the institutional and financial requirements to ensure that the activities and measures are sustainable.

To address the problem of the deepening of rural women discrimination and disempowerment due to the consequences of climate change, the project envisaged the use of the several instruments as listed below:

- Information instrument for the wider segment of society and educational instruments for potential women heads of households and businesses that could be project beneficiaries, as well as for district/local decision-makers in the three project zones (Outcome 2 and Outcome 4 activities);
- Financial (grant-making) instruments for 30 LPAs, 60 women-led households (extended by a further 56 households) and 10 women-led agri-producers supported by consultancy services in the adaptation and business best-practices aspects (Outcome 3 activities);
- Creation and capacity-building of the change supportive ecosystem/network composed on NGOs/CSOs and other actors (private sector, district/region/local authorities' representatives) (Outcome 1 and Outcome 4 activities);
- District/local regulatory instruments for facilitation of adoption of strategies and action plans with 7 regional and 12 local authorities (Outcome 1 activities);
- And additionally making use of the existing national regulatory, institutional and financial instruments suited to further the women empowerment objective.

The project design envisaged to produce changes and improvements in 30 communities within 7 district/regions that are heavily impacted by the consequences of climate change. The results to be achieved were lessons learned, replication and the possibly of upscaling the outcomes, both horizontally and vertically. The right mix of the instruments were to be deployed in the specified geographical areas to contribute to the attainment of the specified objective and draw relevant lessons.

Looking at the project deliverables by outcomes at district/region level, one finds districts of 40,000 to 70,000 inhabitants (Zone 1 districts) and regions with 170-200,000 citizens (Gagauzia and Transnistria) with all the instruments mentioned above being implemented (district/region Action Plan, several communities action plans, several community grants, hundreds of training participants, several women-led business grants and several women-led households grants). In reality, rather than cover 30 communities as proposed in the Project Document, the project instruments were spread to far more communities if the grant-making scheme is considered (of which some 60 had never participated in the training organised by the project), and 4 times more communities if all activities and women-led households' cohort 2 grants are considered (some 180 communities). Hence, the project's limited resources are spread more thinly than envisaged in the Project Document.

Table 10: Adaptation technology and results

Type of adaptation technology	HH (1+2)	B	LPA	Additional Revenue, \$	CO2 emissions savings tonnes CO ₂ eq./year
Extension of forest area on degraded lands			4		198
Restoration of wetlands			4		
Renewable energy as result of installation of a photovoltaic system	15	3	4	\$79,300	87.45
Biomass heating system	2	2	-		208.64
Waste management service procurement equipment	1		18		
No-till equipment for sustainable land management		1			
Agriculture	2				
Crop residue chopping and spreading equipment		1			
Greenhouses for vegetables	26	3			
Api-fito tourism	1	1			
Beekeeping	35				
Animal Husbandry	14				
Herbs and fruits	5				
Rainwater collection	3				
Milk processing	2				
Fruits orchard	2				
Fruits, vegetables conservation	3				
Cheese-making	2				
Artisanal	1				
Oil-making	1				

At the community level, it was not possible to determine where all project instruments were concentrated, there are communities where a local action plan was prepared, that received community grant and perhaps 1-2 women-led households grants. Other communities where citizens received training and where women-led business were awarded, but no other interventions were conducted. Hence there was a seemingly lack of focus and consistency, and there was little evidence of an upscaling strategy actually being implemented.

Activity 4.2: Formulate and implement the communication and outreach strategy

The Communication and Outreach Strategy (Communication Strategy) was prepared in 2020. The strategy stated that the poverty rate is 7.5 times higher for rural women than for those in urban areas. Rural women have a high risk of falling further behind, due to the adverse impact of climate change, and as both rural women and decision-makers have limited knowledge on the necessary climate change adaptation measures. This Communication Strategy contained a part on project visibility and a section on communication endeavours to be carried out via public events, press releases, TV and radio, a presence across social media, video stories, guidelines and success stories. The strategy identified several target groups: women and women’s associations, LPAs, environmental/ gender NGOs, opinion-leaders, national/local media, general public with the recommendations of content and the means to reach them.

The PMU has worked hard to achieve this through endless events, press releases, activities on social media and so forth. In addition, there have been many other events, such as tree planting events, community clean-ups, celebration of the International Environment Day, and press visits to grant beneficiaries. Of some hundreds materials reviewed promoted via conventional media

(TVR Moldova, Europea Libera Moldova, ProTV Moldova, Jurnal TV, Publika TV, etc), new media (Facebook, etc) and public events in the regions and at national levels, there were 3 categories of informational materials produced (written, photo and video/graphic): materials to promote visibility of project activities (more than half), materials to promote people awareness on the impact of climate change on water, air, land, etc., as well as materials on climate change adaptation measures (video graphics).

The Communication Strategy has been consistently implemented throughout the project implementation as evidenced by several hundred produced materials by PMU and project partners. The Communication Strategy two components, project visibility and communication, are best separated. The communication should be geared more to the public awareness advocacy actions based on the project surveys and therefore messages targeting specific segments. The visibility of project activities is to continue with the currently adopted approach.

Table 11: Status for Outcome 4 at the time of evaluation

Outcome 4: Sustainable and climate resilient practice and business models disseminated and replicated		
Indicators	End-of Project Target	Status at Evaluation
Output 4 Indicator 1: extend to which the strategies are implemented	100% implementation	100%
Output 4 Indicator 2: no. of used NGOs networks/platforms	at least 5 (tentatively BIOS International Land Coalition, MOVCA network etc.)	>5
Output 4 Indicator 3: no. of used online tools/instruments	100% availability	Implemented

Indicator 1 is a qualitative result indicator, while Indicators 2 and 3 are quantitative result indicators.

Indicator 1: extend to which the (communication) strategies are implemented (100% implementation) is to be evaluated via the records of communication and outreach activities. The project has conducted a very thorough communication and outreach campaign at both national and local level throughout its duration.

Indicator 2: no. of used NGOs networks/platforms (at least 5 (tentatively BIOS International Land Coalition, MOVCA network etc.)) This is to be assessed through the number of NGO networks or platforms reached. The PMU disseminated the projects results through a wide range of networking events, such as the Environmental Forum, the Environmental Festival, the Digitalization in Agriculture Event, the Investment Forum for Engaging public, private and civil society sectors for national economy development, and finally the Opportunities for Ecological Agricultural Development Network initiated by Ecovisio and the Network for the Ecological Agriculture led by Eco-Local NGO, MOVCA and MADR and AED.

Indicator 3: no. of used online tools/instruments (100% availability) could be easily assessed as the reporting provided extensive information and online tools/instruments as social networks, mainstream media, and new-media distribution.

Outcome 5: Project Management

Project management is covered in section 5.3 below.

Crosscutting issues are covered in section 5.5.

5.3 Efficiency

Below the project design and success of its implementation will be examined. This will cover the consistency of the project design, theory of change, whether the management structure and resources outlined in the Project Document were sufficient for producing the anticipated results, and finally if the PMU and Project Board operated in a proficient manner.

Project Design

The Project Document describes the key problem to be addressed by the project as the issue that women in rural areas mostly engaged in subsistence agricultural activities and have a 7.5 times higher poverty rate than women in the large urban centres. Another issue is the income discrepancy between women and men, which is between 12-20% across the urban and rural areas, with women-led households being most vulnerable. This is explained in the rural areas by women's historic economic disenfranchisement, some prevalence of the (self-)prejudicated and cultural/social norms on women roles in the society; the pattern of de facto discrimination is amplified by climate change related factors, where the most vulnerable (increasingly not able to provide resources and services needed to ensure water, food and energy supply), e.g. women-led households fear sinking even more below the poverty line with worsening discrimination patterns. Therefore, the adverse effects of climate change on gender in rural settings is a what the project is striving to change. Over the past decade, women economic empowerment has become recognised in society and accepted by policymakers who contribute to correcting the past injustices. However, climate change factors negatively impact women's economic empowerment, and hence also the possibility of gender equality in rural areas. The project's overall approach is to address economic empowerment of the rural women, particularly in the context of the adverse impact of climate change. The Project Document predicts that climate change additionally amplifies gender inequality and therefore requires specially designed affirmative measures, as provided in the *Law on Ensuring Equality*, for economic empowerment adapted for the rural agricultural context.

The project expected change is described in the Project Document as improved community resilience in 30 communities (with 120-150,000 persons) in 6 regions (with more than 340,000 inhabitants), particularly to: (i) sustain or increase the income of 150 women-led vulnerable households (450-600 persons) by providing grants (\$4-5,000) to existing or new micro/small-scale economic activities adapted to climate change, (ii) secure or sustain the operations of 10 existing medium-size women-led businesses (150-200 persons) by providing medium grants (\$18-20,000) facilitating their adaptation to climate change; and in the latter case to provide advice on good climate change adaptation practices. Additionally, the selected 30 LPAs are to benefit from the grants of medium size (\$20-30,000) to support the process of environmental and climate change adaptation and resilience, including facilitating the elaboration of district/local strategies and action plans. The project is designed to pilot the approach with the provided instruments, draw conclusions for the subsequent replication and upscaling strategy for the next phase, and possibly for the transposition of the findings into the national policy and to other international actors.

The Project Document's theory of change envisages six preconditions, these are *reformulated* below using the original Project Document numbering, and ordered under the three factors that impact the democratic transformation/policy change model:

I) society critical awareness creating a societal demand for change:

- a) society critical awareness on the adverse impacts of climate change,
- b) women societal role acknowledged,

c) women households/businesses educated on climate change adaptations measures,

II) existence of demonstrated viable *technical adaptations solutions/measures*:

f) adaptation practices demonstrate secured women-led households/business livelihoods,

III) willingness of policymakers to support and adopt regional/policies within the *national policy environment*:

d) LPAs assume environmental preservation actions, support climate change adaptations policies,

e) NGOs/CSOs contribute to capable engaged ecosystem in advocating adaptation, support women households/businesses.

With these preconditions in place, there should be an:

“enabling environment for women’s economic, social and educational empowerment tailored to environmental management and climate change will be created, supporting building up of sustainable and resilient communities in Moldova.”²⁶

Any weaknesses or inadequacies in the project preconditions will hinder the change intended by the project. The project has limited action instruments, and these should be focussed precisely to produce the desired change. The project was designed using the theory of change and a results framework, the assumptions and drivers foreseen in the Project Document have proven generally correct; today the rural communities where the project intervened are strengthened in terms of women empowerment, environmental, and climate adaptation measures. The combined impact of mainstreaming of gender, environmental protection, and climate resilience into local development strategies, strengthening the skills of the LPAs, raising the population's awareness, and the grants to implement sub-projects have greatly benefitted the beneficiary communities, and especially vulnerable women.

The PMU found it a challenge to define women led households. In the data available from the Statical Bureau, there are no well-defined criteria to identify who is the head of a household in the case of a family that includes a husband and a wife. A woman is generally not considered as the head of a household unless there is no adult male is living permanently in the household. The PMU wished to extend grants beyond households led by a single woman, in order to extend the access to economic opportunities to a larger group of women who, although not the head of household (as the husband is automatically designated as such), were the main provider of the financial income for the family. This is a very reasonable and beneficial adjustment to the requirements of the Project Document. The Project Document does not suggest that the project activities be tied into national policies and programmes. To strengthen the theory of the change working of the project elaboration and streamlining with the national policies in various domains is advisable: MoE works with environment and climate change, to link the national policies closely with the strategies developed and implemented at the community, district or regional level by the project. Likewise links to the policies and strategies for which the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (MoIRD), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) are responsible could also be envisaged. For example, some sub-projects resulted in well-defined reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, these outcomes should

²⁶ Quote from the Project Document

be included in the Nationally Determined Contributions toward attaining the goals of the Paris Agreement in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The project has to pilot implementation of practical and viable adaptation and economic solutions for the women-led households, women-led businesses, as well as the communities. On the climate adaptation side, the solutions should be technologically sound and work to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change and the beneficiaries should be provided adequate guidance in this respect. A few project beneficiaries in Cohort 1 expressed a wish for better guidance and support from the project experts. On the other hand, the outcome of the grants is economically viable and generates a reasonable income, this indicates that the provided guidance and support was sufficient to ensure successful sub-projects. Linked to this is the need to support the local/regional integration in the value chain production and supply to markets, this is an aspect that has not been fully addressed by the project and is therefore likely to weaken the fulfilment of this precondition. The sustainability of the proposed solutions could fail on the economic side, rather than on the technical adaptation side. Knowledge and experience sharing, and reciprocal fertilisation within the same type of the adaptation measures, should be encouraged so that all can benefit from the lessons learnt.

Another precondition for the change is when the relevant decision-makers are willing to support the adoption of the regional or local policies and action plans, which in turn often requires popular support or demand for the adaptation solutions. Generally, the regional/local authorities have limited ability to create the supporting policy environment and consequently the elaboration and adaptation policies embodiment in the national interdisciplinary policy environment on various aspects is necessary. Therefore, the regional or district programs and action plans, apart from general environmental protection considerations, should also reflect climate change adaptation features and particularly be gender sensitive. Otherwise, these are not complimentary to the needed national policies at the regional/district level that support environment safeguards, and instead just work in parallel or proforma. The review of the national policy framework is expected, while the direct supportive contribution of the regional/local programme and action plans have to be assessed. Finally, the elaboration, adoption and implementation of the supportive policies at regional/district/local levels ideally should be carried out within the wider network of interested stakeholders, such as NGOs/CSOs, experts, community members, the beneficiaries, private groups and decision makers.

Project Documents cannot be infallible, so some leeway should be allowed to the PMU and the Project Board to adapt to the circumstances, for example, in this case by either reallocating the resources or by redefining the requirements to the beneficiaries.

Management Arrangements

The project is being implemented using Direct Implementation Modality as per UNDP's procedures..

The project is managed through a small Project Management Unit, consisting of a national Project Manager, a Project Officer for Environment, a Project Officer for Capacity Building and Gender, an Administration and Finance Associate, and Driver/Clerk. All members of the PMU were recruited on a competitive basis. The Project Manager has overall responsibility for the implementation of project activities and the achievement of planned project outputs and reports to the UNDP Country Office. The two Project Officers provide technical and management support. The Finance Associate provides accounting and administration technical support to the Project Manager. NGOs and national technical experts work on the project are all under the direction of the Project Management Unit.

All major project decisions are taken in close cooperation with the key stakeholders and approved by the Project Board. Senior Beneficiaries represented on the Project Board are the MoE, Congress of Local Authorities, NGOs, Embassy of Sweden, and UNDP.

The project has adapted to challenging conditions surprisingly well. The project has faced a challenging three years in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic which broke out just as the project started, war in Ukraine and a domestic financial crisis followed in early 2022. These events constrained the project's activities. The COVID-19 pandemic hindered the collaboration with local public authorities, contractors, and beneficiaries. The subsequent crisis in Ukraine caused an economic crisis and pushed up the price of goods and energy. This has had the following impacts over the past three years

- The pandemic slowed the decision-making process within LPAs;
- Price increases meant that the PMU had to request additional funding from the Embassy of Sweden to ensure that the grants offered by the project could supply the necessary materials; and
- The restrictions imposed by the pandemic made it necessary to recalibrate some training and awareness raising activities.

ResCom adapted well to these challenges and can be strongly commended for seeking attentional funds to cover increasing costs, and for ensuring a six-month project extension. This allowed the project to successfully surmount the above listed complications and ensure that all the project's objectives were achieved.

As stated in the previous subsection on project design, the project had difficulties in identifying small and mid-sized enterprises led by women entrepreneurs. Here, some flexibility by the PMU and the Project Board could have either redefined the requirements to the women entrepreneurs or reallocated the resources destined for Activity 3.3 to areas that would be more closely associated with vulnerable women and climate change adaptation.

The evaluation found that the PMU and UNDP have been diligent in reporting on the project's progress, keeping minutes of Board Meetings, minutes of focus group meetings with local communities, and so forth.

The project has largely relied on national experts, the exception being NERDA, an NGO from Romania. This has worked well. Throughout the project implementation, it seems that stakeholder involvement has been excellent. At the national expert level, looking at participants from the national institutions, the knowledge and awareness related to the project is high and project partners are well aware of the project's progress and are vested in its outcome. This is certainly due to a close involvement of technical and national experts throughout the project, there also seems to have been a good and proactive collaboration between stakeholders.

Resources spent were related to achieved outputs. Generally, the efficiency is assessed as high by the evaluators, all activities were conducted in a financially efficient manner.

5.4 Sustainability

It is essential that the results achieved by the project are sustained after completion. This section examines the extent to which the project helped put in place the conditions likely to address the drivers, overcome the barriers and ensure the long-term sustainability of the project's intended outcome. Therefore, the project's results should preferably be both replicable and sustainable, contributing to the long-term benefits to vulnerable women, advancement of the climate change

adaptation agenda, and environmental protection. The next paragraphs discuss the project's four main Outcomes and their sustainability.

A significant project activity was capacity building for LPAs and the twelve communities that directly received support to mainstream gender, environment and climate change adaptation into their strategies and action plans. These plans were endorsed by the respective community mayors and the local councils and are under implementation. Furthermore, the proposed measures have been discussed with stakeholders, inclusive of women, and the residents' awareness has been improved. Gender, environment and mitigation of impacts from droughts, fires and storms is important to the recipient communities and has their support. Drawing on the beneficiaries' input, most of the implemented sub-projects either provided reduced costs (renewable energy or water savings) or revenues (farming in greenhouses or bee keeping) and are therefore financially viable or leaving the communities better prepared.

The project strengthened 77 NGOs through capacity building and training. These measures have had a beneficial impact for the participating NGOs/CSOs, strengthening their capacity in other environment-related activities. These capacity building modules are now part of the public domain and offer a recurring training facility with no investment costs beyond already coached NGOs and the strengthening of more NGOs. The training materials and a number of helpful guidelines were developed by this project, so future capacity building and training activities should be easier to organise. The knowledge and materials from this project should also be put to use in future development aid projects that empower women, promote climate change adaptation and environmentally friendly measures.

The project disbursed over one million USD in 161 grants to help communities, women led households and women entrepreneurs. These projects covered waste management, greenhouses, solar power, biomass-based heating, environmentally friendly economic activities, and restoration of wetlands amongst others. As stated in section 5.2, most of these sub-projects are still operational and seem sustainable. The single biggest topic of investments in value was waste management, such projects often prove not to be durable. This is due to the fact that the operating and maintenance costs are, relatively speaking high, so that allocations from LPA budgets, plus fee collection from waste generators, often fall short. Therefore, within a year or two, waste collection services stop due to a lack of spare parts, fuel or some other issue.

In the case of this project, costs for the waste management system were kept at an absolute minimum. Tractors are used for waste transport and the disposal sites are simply a fenced-in areas. Furthermore, the relatively short distances to the disposal site minimises fuel consumption and hence cost. It is judged that these interventions are sustainable, but it will take several years before it can definitely be ascertained whether these interventions are affordable for the communities.

Other projects, such as solar panels, off-set other electricity costs and generally have a positive cash flow. The same applies to greenhouses, bee keeping, or irrigation projects, as these increase revenues for the recipient. As established during the Evaluation Team's site visits, practically all sub-projects are still operational, benefit the recipients economic standing, and seem poised to be profitable for many years to come.

The intent is that the knowledge gained over the project duration be disseminated and replicated. Over the past three years, the project has extensively shared its experiences through case studies, best practices, lessons learned and other relevant information and communicated this to government authorities, NGOs, and citizens. Hence, comprehension regarding women empowerment, climate change adaptation and environmental measures has increased. To maintain this understanding amongst all stakeholders, it is essential that the training and awareness raising be perpetuated.

In the subsequent phases of the project, activities to work with the national government, through the MoE, MoIRD, MoA, MLSF and other ministries and agencies could work to circulate experience and lessons learnt from this project to their staff, LPAs, enterprises, and citizens. This would require such activities be included in their planning and their budgets, so that the necessary resources can be allocated.

A second option, that is already being considered, and that is recommended, is a scaling up of initiatives implemented under the ResCom Project. The Evaluation Team has some suggestions that should be considered in the planning of a similar project that can be found in section 7 “Recommendations.” It is not essential to follow these propositions in the planning of a subsequent project, but some of them could help to provide more coherence and synergy.

The communities targeted by the project now enjoy higher levels of gender equality, as well as better capacity, both individually and jointly, to face certain aspects of climate change and to reduce its impact on their livelihoods. The communities are empowered with an understanding on how to address these issues, and hence to mitigate the impact of climate change and to protect their environment over the longer-term.

5.5 Crosscutting Issues

Crosscutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, social concerns and protection of the environment are fundamental to both the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP projects. In this case, the empowerment of women is the project's primary objective, but all these topics must be closely monitored throughout the project cycle.

Gender equality

The project design is consistent with the objective to promote gender equality and relevant provisions and recommendations on women rights. Moldova has made international and national commitments to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, in particular by ratifying the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and various ILO Conventions. The project touches upon several relevant provisions and recommendations²⁷ from the CEDAW in Moldova: article 4 (adoption of special measures), article 5 (institutional and policy framework aimed at eliminating of discrimination against women), article 7 (eliminate discrimination in public life), article 8 (training on gender equality), articles 13 & 14 (vulnerable & rural women) against which we shall evaluate.

The project contributed to the implementation of the above listed articles of CEDAW by furthering the empowerment of women, raising awareness about gender equality, and mainstreaming of gender equality into local development strategies and training. As part of this gender mainstreaming in 12 LPAs, local working groups were established. Over 100 women joined these working groups, received training and are able to express their views and opinions in ensuring gender sensitive solutions in ensuring climate change adaptation and environmental protection. Furthermore, 120 women headed households received grants to implement undertakings that contribute to food security at the household level, offer income generation, and protect against severe weather events.

²⁷ CEDAW Recommendations for Moldova (2020)

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/MDA/CO/6&Lang=En

All project indicators at impact, outcome and output levels, and gender sensitive, and the project reporting reflected attainment of these indicators. The project has collected sex-disaggregated data across the activities and reported them. The collected data show consistent practice of ensuring gender equality or focusing on women throughout the project. As the project targets population from the rural areas, addressing gender equality is essential.

Human rights and social standards

The project contributes to the improvement of the social and economic rights of the rural population of Moldova as per the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and respective recommendations by UN Treaty body²⁸ (ICESCR: article 7 (disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups), and article 11 (human rights)),²⁹ and towards the relevant SDGs # 2 (food security), # 5 (gender equality), # 8 (inclusive economic growth), and # 11 (safer settlements). Through the empowerment of women and their inclusion in the LPA's decision-making process, their voices are now heard in the community. Hence, this project has helped raise the living standards of the poor and allowed them to be heard within their communities. The ResCom Project also contributed in terms of increased employment in the targeted communities.

Art. 5 of the Law on Ensuring Equality provides for the affirmative measures (and reasonable accommodation) as special provisional actions in support of economically disadvantaged or under-represented economically women in order to ensure women equality. The project activities via grants facilities, capacity-buildings activities aimed specifically at supporting women as examples of affirmative measures.

The project developed a wide range of awareness materials that were widely distributed across the targeted regions and beyond via the national television networks and social networks in both Romanian and Russian languages. The awareness materials often emphasised the need for inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as the poor, women and minorities in the context of the adverse impacts of the climate change factors exacerbating these groups vulnerabilities.

Environmental sustainability

The project objectives contribute to the adaptation to more sustainable agricultural activities and offers distinct actions to manage disaster risks caused by climate change developments. The project carried out a baseline environmental and climate change vulnerability assessment of the project target areas for possible environmental risks (Activity 1.1), identified the respective risks and elaborated possible solutions that were disseminated through awareness raising materials, workshops and guidelines, such as the guidelines developed under Activity 1.2.

A project priority was to introduce environmental and climate change legislation into local planning documents. Today, this has been achieved in twelve LPAs and under Outcome 3 grants were given to 30 LPAs, as well as women led households and women entrepreneurs to promote environmentally friendly and climate resilient practices, where the beneficiaries implemented measures that ensured that waste was removed from the communities, that agricultural endeavours were better adapted to climatic impacts, and that renewable energy utilisation was furthered.

²⁸ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommendations for Moldova (2017)
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E/C.12/MDA/CO/3&Lang=En

²⁹ See the [UN Treaty Body Database](#)

6 Conclusions

The Evaluation Team has found this to be a well-managed and successful project. The project can be judged as follows:

Relevance – The project’s support to rural development in terms gender equality, climate change adaptation, and environmental solutions directly contributes to improving the livelihoods of the population in the project area, especially vulnerable women.

The 2021 *Moldova Comprehensive Gender Assessment*³⁰ found the women are at higher risk of poverty as a result of the unequal division of unpaid care responsibilities, lower employment and an inequity in pensions. The report found at in 2019, 54% of the poor were women, and that retirement aggravates poverty among older women, particularly in rural areas. It is also noted that only a third of entrepreneurs in Moldova are women, caused by different factors including limited access to resources and financial capital, discriminatory practices and gender stereotypes. Consequently, a project that is focused on gender equality and women employment is highly appropriate for Moldova.

According to a 2020 World Bank report on disaster risk management,³¹ Moldova is exposed to an array of natural hazards, and their impact disproportionately affects the poor. Floods, droughts, and severe weather events are the most recurring threats. Consequently, this project is highly relevant in that it mitigates the impact of climate change, a phenomenon that overly harms less affluent rural communities.

The project aligns very well with the strategies and requirements of all stakeholders.

Effectiveness –The original Project Document was comprehensive and well thought out. The project’s goals are ambitious in terms of the number of activities to be carried out and the number of people affected, yet practically all the project’s indicators were met or exceeded, this speaks highly of the PMU and the stakeholders. There have been no changes to the original outcomes or objectives.

Efficiency – The project was implemented in a very competent manner, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and an economic crisis. All project activities were completed successfully, with extensive awareness raising and training activities, the introduction of gender equality, climate change adaptation and environmental measure in the strategies and plans of LPAs, and the distribution of over 150 grants to demonstrate and promote the project’s objectives.

Covid, war, drought, and the financial crisis did somewhat delay the project implementation, so a six-month extension and an additional grant from the Embassy of Sweden was necessary to ensure that all planned activities were completed in a satisfactory manner. This also allowed to reach out with grants to an additional 60 women led households.

Sustainability - The ResCom reached a wide audience with its training and awareness activities, so today there is a much greater knowledge regarding the mainstreaming of gender, environment and climate change adaptation. This is likely to have an impact on the strategic approach to these issues with both national and local government, and this understanding imparted on decision makers will remain for years to come. Likewise, there are many more NGOs and citizens that are

³⁰ *Moldova Comprehensive Gender Assessment* prepared by the Centre Partnership for Development (2021)

³¹ *Strengthening Moldova’s Disaster Risk Management And Climate Resilience - Facing Current Issues and Future Challenges*, World Bank (June 2020)

cognisant of gender equality, climate change and the environment, ensuring a greater visibility for these topics.

Seven district/regional authorities and twelve LPAs have incorporated gender, climate change and environment into their current strategies and plans. These communities will most likely continue to include these matters in their future plans and actions.

The outcomes of practically all the grants seem durable and have helped improve the livelihood and well-being of individuals and communities. In most cases³² the sub-projects generate supplementary income for the beneficiaries, and it seems probably that they will have the capability to both maintain and replace their systems as needed in the future.

Finally, the ResCom Project’s objectives are very closely aligned with the goals of the Government of Moldova, which means that there will be support for the on-going activities, as well as a will to plan and implement similar measures elsewhere within the country. Finally, given that UNDP, the Embassy of Sweden, and other similar organisations also target these goals, and impart them a high priority, there will be strong support and additional financial means to address gender inequality, climate change and environmental matters in the upcoming years.

Crosscutting Issues - The project fulfilled all the Embassy of Sweden and UNDP intentions in terms of gender equality, human rights, social concerns and protection of the environment. Through all project phases, close attention was paid to these issues by both organisations, as well as the PMU, to ensure that the project safeguarded the interests of the most vulnerable, receive input from all stakeholders, and preserved the ecosystem.

Wrap-up - This project was well designed and implemented in a very capable manner. The project is well aligned with the goals of all stakeholders and benefits the neediest in Moldova in a very efficient manner. The project has made excellent use of its financial resources, bringing positive developments to many communities and consistently empowering women. The *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines* use the quality assessment rating scale that can be found in Table 12 below.

Table 12: *Quality assessment rating scale*

Code	Rubric for assigning rating		Value
HS	Highly satisfactory	All parameters were fully met and there were no shortcomings in the evaluation report	6
S	Satisfactory	All parameters were fully met with minor shortcomings in the evaluation report	5
MS	Mostly satisfactory	The parameters were partially met with some shortcomings in the evaluation report	4
MU	Mostly unsatisfactory	More than one parameter was unmet with significant shortcomings in the evaluation report	3
U	Unsatisfactory	Most parameters were not met and there were major shortcomings in the evaluation report	2
HU	Highly unsatisfactory	None of the parameters were met and there were severe shortcomings in the evaluation report	1
N/A	Not Applicable	Not Applicable unscored	unscored

³² This may not be the case for waste management, where the communities may be unable to afford a replacement tractor in 15 years’ time.

Using the *UNDP Evaluation Guidelines* quality assessment rating scale of the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria, it is the Evaluation Team’s judgement that the project scores as indicated in Table 13. This is considered an excellent outcome of the project.

Table 13: Project assessment rating

Evaluation Criteria	Value
Relevance	HS
Efficiency	HS
Effectiveness	HS
Sustainability	HS
Crosscutting Issues	HS

7 Recommendations

This is a project that has been both well designed and executed. The project has been very resilient, weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, a war and an economic challenge. This reflects well on the project planners, the PMU, the Project Board, and other stakeholders. Hence, it can be concluded that the project design procedures and the project management structure used this Embassy of Sweden-UNDP project in Moldova is robust and well-suited.

As shown in this evaluation, the promotion of gender equality, climate change adaptation and environmentally friendly solutions is clearly both needed and very relevant to all stakeholders. The Evaluation Team therefore **strongly recommend that this project be replicated**. When planning a similar project, it is recommended that the suggestion below be considered, has these could help ensure a project that is a little more holistic. The listing is (roughly) prioritised, with the suggestion deemed worth of most attention coming first.

1. The Project Document for ResCom does not foresee to tie the project activities into national planning and programmes. MoE works with climate change, so it would be logical to link the national policies closely with the strategies developed and implemented at the community, district or regional level. For example, some sub-projects resulted in well-defined reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, these outcomes should be included in the Nationally Determined Contributions toward attaining the goals of the Paris Agreement in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Likewise, there could be links to the strategies and goals of MoIRD, MLSF, MoA, and MoE.
2. The project implemented numerous activities between awareness raising, training, implementation of about 120 sub-projects through grants. In some communities, sub-projects were implemented but there was no work strengthening the LPA's capacities and helping it with developing a strategy to mainstream gender, climate change and environment. Keeping all project activities with specific communities and ensuring that a broad range of project activities/goal are implemented within each target community could improve the overall impact. Put simply, the recommendation is to concentrate the geographic spread of the project (see the map in Figure 1) and to provide a comprehensive approach within each targeted community.
3. In this project, the six NGOs that underwent thorough training in the initial phases of the project (Activities 2.1 and 2.2), but only two were directly involved in the latter stages of the project. There are probably justified reasons for this, but the common-sense approach would be that if considerable resources are utilised training a few NGOs, these NGOs

should be involved in subsequent project activities as much as possible. The Evaluation Team judges that regionally and locally based environmental NGOs have limited institutional and financial capacities and even after the possible strengthening of their institutional capacities, their abilities to play a leading role in a cross-regional project initiative is weak.

The first two points of advice advocate better integration of the project both vertically and horizontally. It is important to closely align the project with national policy and the priorities of ministries. This both strengthens support for the project and offers synergy. Horizontally, it is logical to focus on a determined number of communities and provide these with the benefit of all project activities, so that awareness raising, capacity building, the integration of project objectives into local planning, grants for community improvement, women led households, etc., are targeted to each selected community. There could be reasons for deviating from such a plan. For example, offering competitive grants to woman led households throughout a larger geographic area could be a valuable awareness raising tool; and it seems that most these grants are stand-alone, so there is no need for other interventions within the recipient's community to ensure sustainability. Therefore, using the above example of reaching out to women led households over a larger area, could be a cost-effective manner of reaching a large audience. Finally, the reasons for the failure of two-thirds of the trained NGOs to contribute to the subsequent project activities should be examined, so that such capacity building efforts are more beneficial on future projects.

Annex A: Terms of Reference

A. Job Title: International Consultant (Team Leader) to undertake the Final Evaluation of the Sweden/UNDP Project

B. Duty station: Home-based

C. Project reference: “Sustainable and resilient communities through women empowerment”/ResCom;

D. Contract type: Individual Contract,

E. Duration of assignment: up to 25 working days, May – August 2023

Reporting to: ResCom Project Manager and UNDP EEC Cluster lead

F. Background:

Republic of Moldova is facing many significant environmental issues triggered mainly by the unsustainable use of natural resources and agricultural practices. As a result, there is continuous degradation and loss of fertile land and biodiversity and air and water pollution from point and non-point sources due to high motorization and dumping of waste and chemicals. All these along with the pending climate change risks directly and indirectly affect the living conditions and health of the population, and especially of women, as well as the economic development of the country, contributing to further increase in poverty, especially in rural areas.

In Moldova, the poverty rate is 7.5 times higher in rural areas than in large cities. Since a significant part of the rural population is engaged in subsistence agricultural activities, the risk of falling below the poverty line is high in years of climate-related extreme events. Rural population is increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts, especially women and women-led households, who are not able to provide resources and services needed to ensure water, food and energy supply for their families. Moreover, rural poor have limited knowledge regarding the sustainable and environment-friendly agricultural and forestry practices that would increase adaptation and resilience capacities of communities and ecosystems.

Pursuing the **overall goal of project** – to build inclusive sustainable and resilient communities and create an enabling environment for women’s economic, social and educational empowerment, and implicitly to respond to the on-going crisis, several milestones have been reached by the project, namely contributing to enable the target groups – local public authorities, women, NGOs - to have a better understanding of the environmental sustainability and to cope with climate change events and risks and also including through tackling multidimensional poverty, energy access, and resilience to climate change.

By this project, UNDP is directly contributing to women’s economic empowerment, and access to resources, with a particular focus on women agri-producers. This effort contributes to strengthen the linkage between gender and climate change and to shift the focus from the vulnerability to empowerment where the climate change actions have the potential to transform into gender equality opportunities.

The project duration is March 01, 2020 – December 31, 2023, and is being implemented by UNDP with financial assistance provided by the Embassy of Sweden.

The project outcomes, outputs and major activities are as follows:

The strategy of the project is to build inclusive sustainable and resilient communities and create an enabling environment for women’s economic, social and educational empowerment through the following outcomes:

(i) sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally-sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully (ii) NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming; (iii) environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities; and, (iv) sustainable and climate resilient practices and business models disseminated and replicated.

Under Outcome 1 – The activity 1.0 envisaged elaboration of a Baseline Study to determine level of awareness on environment protection and climate change in pilot districts/regions. As part of the Activity 1.1, there were developed Climate Change and Environmental Risks Profiles and mainstreamed environmental protection solutions, climate adaptation measures and gender into local development plans in a participatory and inclusive manner for the Project target regions. The documents were consulted with LPAs (level II), and the public authorities were assisted on their integration in the local plans/strategies.

With regard to Activity 1.2, the four Guides (RO and RU) for LPAs which present the application of environmental, climate and gender legislation at the local level in a visual and user-friendly manner were published and widely promoted online and during a National Conference for LPAs and environmental NGOs. As part of the project was provided also technical assistance to 12 LPAs for mainstreaming of gender, environmental protection and climate resilience into local development strategies and capacity building of LPAs on strengthening the nexus gender-environmental protection.

At the same time, 9 regional workshops for LPAs and CSOs carried out for a total of 223 local government officials (incl. 122 women) from 6 target districts in Implementation of environmental and climate legislation in local development plans and Mainstream gender measures in climate change adaptation policies (3 workshops) and Legal regulation on environmental impact assessment and strategic environmental assessment (6 workshop) topics.

As for the Activity 1.3 and 1.4, the Capacity Needs Assessment of women-led households and women and men agri-producers (participated 300 respondents from 6 target regions) was completed and there was developed and conducted a Capacity Development programme women entrepreneur. Additionally, 6 Knowledge Products were developed and distributed among participants.

Under Outcome 2, following the completion of the System-based audit of six (6) environmental NGOs, an Institutional Capacity Development Programme was carried-out whereas dedicated assistance was provided on improving the Project Management, Administration, financial management and Internal Controls as per gaps revealed by the SBA. In this context, within Activity 2.1. the Project focused on providing individual assistance, mentoring and coaching to each of the six NGOs to develop or/and upgrade their core institutional capacities, systems and skills, along the three broad areas of the Institutional Capacity Development Programme (i.e. Project Management, Administration, Financial Management and Internal Controls).

On top of this, there was also implemented a Capacity Building Programme for NGOs on Environment, Climate Change and Gender based on four Training Modules for a total of 313 beneficiaries.

All these activities conducted under Outcome 1 and Outcome 2 have laid a solid foundation for the next interventions under the 3rd Outcome which envisaged provision of technical and financial support to 30 communities, 60 women representing households and 10 women led agriculture enterprises that will help build resilience to the effects of climate variability and change.

Under the 3rd Outcome has been completed a set of activities that included provision of non-cash support distributed in 3 types of grants for: “Women with economic activity within a Household”, “Women-led

agri/eco businesses” and “Communities” coupled with coaching and mentorship delivered to selected beneficiaries by 9 Environmental NGOs selected based on an open competitive process. **Under Outcome 4** there were implemented several communication activities to achieve the Project outcome and to promote the joint Sweden-UNDP assistance such as direct communication activities (public events, info sessions, interpersonal communication, etc.), outreach communication activities (press releases/articles, success stories, video stories, TV/Radio shows, visibility materials, social media posts, etc.)

G. Objective:

The purpose of this assignment is to assess and present the achievements of the project against the intended objectives, as well as conclusions and lesson learned including appropriate recommendations for scaling up of initiatives implemented under the RezCom Project. The recommendations from the evaluation process would also support development of the new phase of the RezCom Project and will inform on the effective implementation of future interventions that can be further integrated into UNDP Moldova Environmental, Energy and Climate Change Portfolio when it comes to the climate change-gender nexus. As such the final evaluation will serve as both a learning and a steering purpose.

H. Scope of work and expected outputs:

The scope of work of this assignment is to: conduct an evaluation of the overall project progress against the outcome, outputs and indicators of achievement as mandated by the project donor (Sweden) and stipulated in the project document / logical framework matrix in line with the [UNDP's Evaluation Guidelines](#).

Emphasis should be put on their coherence to the stated deliverables and whether these produced the intended impact.

The evaluation shall be done against 4 selected OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria that should establish the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the project. The evaluation should also reflect the degree to which cross-cutting issues such as environmental sustainability, gender equality, human rights and social standards were addressed during project design and implementation.

The evaluation will also seek to identify the constraints encountered by the project regarding project design, implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management and analyze lessons learned and best practices pertaining to the strategies employed, and implementation arrangements. The evaluation should provide relevant recommendations which may be utilized to inform future programming and assess the sustainability of the results and the intervention in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the target group and how the intervention and its results relate and contribute to the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, the evaluation will explore the partnership opportunities harnessed by the project to drive the climate&gender nexus in the country. The evaluation should provide recommendations for the eventual next phase of the project based on the findings of the evaluation process but also based on the results of the on-the-ground interventions. While reflecting on the replicability of the project interventions, indication of how these could contribute to the Paris Agreement and NDC implementation will be provided. Reflections on the project contribution to the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025 would be also welcome.

The findings of the evaluation will moreover be used to engage policy makers and other stakeholders at local, national and regional levels in evidence-based dialogues and to advocate for gender-responsive strategies to promote inclusive local and national economic development with a particular focus on rural women as well as scaling-up women's empowerment, with potential for transformative change in diverse areas including in entrepreneurship, environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.

The evaluation will not be able to fully assess the project performance, as some activities are still ongoing by the end of the year; however, it will address the questions with the results and evidence that is available to date.

1. Scope

The evaluation will cover the assessment of the key activities that have been implemented in the frame of the project.

Timing: The evaluation should cover the almost entire implementation period of the Project, i.e., 01 March, 2020 – May 31, 2023.

Geographical area to be covered: The assessment must cover the target communities from seven districts/regions: Nisporeni, Calarasi, Basarabasca, Leova, Gagauzia, Transnistrian region and security zone.

- 1. Thematic focus to be covered by the evaluation:** building up environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change for women and their communities, women empowerment and local capacity development for climate and disaster resilient development, and food security and income generation regardless of the changes in the rainfall patterns and extreme weather events in the target communities.

Evaluation criteria: Four (4) selected OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, i.e., Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Sustainability.

In addition to assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the project, the evaluation will determine the extent to which the project is contributing to addressing the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights and social standards.

2. Evaluation Questions

To support the analysis the following indicative questions are proposed:

Relevance

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid for the partner country, the partner organization, and the beneficiaries? How do these contribute to the climate change-gender nexus objectives, climate change agenda and priorities in the context of the Paris Agreement and assumed NDC?
- Are the expected results/outputs of the project consistent with the outcome, immediate impact, and overall goal/impact (as part of the analysis of the log frame matrix/project theory)?

-
- Were the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the project already achieved the expected outcome, outputs, and respective targets?
- What have been the main contributing and challenging factors towards project's success in attaining its targets? *(Also consider any which were possibly beyond the control of the project)*
- How has the project successfully built or strengthened an enabling environment for local resilient livelihoods?
- To what extent were the cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights and social standards have been addressed in the design and implementation of the project and to what extent were recommendations from the Sweden appraisals considered and implemented?³³

Efficiency

- If applicable, to what extent were all items/equipment purchased and used as planned under this project/programme?
- Was the project implemented in the most efficient way (time, personnel resources)? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why?

Sustainability

- Regarding capacity development, to what extent will the project outcomes and flow of benefits are likely to continue after the project/external funding ends?
- To what extent did the project forge partnerships and, as part of these partnerships, supported replicability of project benefits/results and advancement of the climate change adaptation agenda?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?
- What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability?

3. Design, approach and workplan

The evaluators should address steering and learning aspects that can be drawn from the project but addressing the evaluation criteria stipulated in the previous section including cross-cutting issues of gender equality, environmental sustainability, and human rights.

³³ Recommendations related to gender, environment, human rights and social standards resulting from the donor's relevant appraisals are a part of the project documentation list to be reviewed during the Final Evaluation process.

The evaluation design, approach and methods should adhere to the evaluation principles such as *impartiality, credibility and utility* including the quality standards in accordance with the [UNDP's Evaluation Guidelines](#).

It is expected that evaluators will apply triangulation method in the process to ensure that multiply sources are used to enhance the credibility of findings. The data collection and analysis methods will be sufficiently rigorous to allow for a complete, fair, and unbiased assessment. All data collected needs to be disaggregated by sex.

The evaluation consists of several phases:

- 1) Elaboration of the Inception Report containing the evaluation framework, detailed evaluation methodology, work plan and logistical arrangements
 - i) The Report should include all stages of the assignment with the detailed description of methods used interviews/meetings to be conducted. The draft outline for the Inception Report is as follows:
 1. *Background, Purpose and Objectives*
 2. *Evaluation Design and Approach*
 - 2.1. *Methodology and Methods*
 - 2.2. *Evaluation Matric*
 - 2.3. *Data Collection instrument*
 - 2.4. *Data Analysis*
 - 2.5 *Limitations Risks and Mitigation Measures*
 3. *Quality Assurance and Ethical Consideration*
 4. *Workplan*
 5. *Annexes*
 - ii) Work plan and methodology should be approved by UNDP Moldova.
 - iii) Evaluation should involve the following stakeholders (but not be restricted to): UNDP Moldova, Government officials involved in the project implementation, representatives from Local Public authorities and private sector beneficiaries from the target communities of the project, etc. A list of interviewees should be included into the work schedule submitted by the Consultant;

Evaluation should be done through a combination of techniques, including:

- Desk study review of all relevant project documentation;
- Extended interviews with project stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries;
- Meetings/interviews with project consultants and experts;
- Data triangulation and quality control;
- Field trips to project beneficiaries;

Alternative evaluation techniques can be suggested, including, but not limited to an online survey.

- 2) Perform a comprehensive documentary analysis of the background documents as well as the project deliverables;
 - i) Evaluate the Project Concept and design. The Consultant will assess the project concept and design. He/she should review the problem addressed by the project and the project strategy,

encompassing an assessment of the appropriateness of the objectives, planned outputs, activities and inputs as compared to cost-effective alternatives. The evaluators will assess the achievement of indicators and review the work plan, planned duration and budget of the project.

- ii) Perform a desk review of the documents elaborated during the project implementation. Evaluation should include but not be limited to the following list of documents:

- Project proposal, including logical framework, timetable and budget;
- Narrative progress reports presented to Sweden;
- [UNDP Evaluation Guidelines](#).
- Other documents as necessary.

- 3) Conduct interviews/meetings with the project stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries according to the work plan provided;

- i) Conduct the interview/meetings with the stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries according to the work plan and methodology provided;
- ii) Organize and conduct visit to 4-5 communities and 10 women entrepreneurs which were selected for the grants support (list of beneficiaries is in annex 1);
- iii) Conduct interviews/meetings with the project consultants and experts (can be done remotely).

- 4) Elaborate and present to UNDP Moldova the Evaluation Report.

Evaluation report should be presented in English language and it should include the lessons learned and recommendations for the next phase of the project. A pre-final draft will be shared for comments and comments will be addressed in the Final Draft. It is expected that the evaluation/review team will present concrete recommendations which are addressed to the specific stakeholders and the filled in [Results-Assessment Form for Final Project Evaluations/Reviews](#).

The draft outline for the Evaluation Report is as follows:

1. *Executive summary*
2. *Introduction*
3. *Background and Context Analysis*
4. *Evaluation Design and Approach*
 - 4.1. *Methodological Approach*
 - 4.2. *Data Collection and Analysis Tools*
 - 4.3. *Limitations, Risks and Mitigations Measures*
5. *Findings*
6. *Conclusions*
7. *Recommendations*
8. *Annexes*

All collected data need to be sex-disaggregated, to the extent possible.

I. Expected Deliverables:

Under supervision of the Project Manager and EEC Cluster Lead, the International Consultant (Team Member) will perform the following substantive duties:

No.	Deliverables	Tentative timeframe
1	Deliverable 1: The Inception Report, containing the evaluation framework, detailed evaluation methodology, work plan and logistical arrangements. (Estimated at 3 working days)	May 31, 2023
2	Deliverable 2: Brief report on interviews with beneficiaries, implementers, partners and key stakeholders conducted. (Estimated at 7 working days)	June 10, 2023
3	Deliverable 3 Draft Evaluation Report and including annexes. (Estimated at 10 working days)	June 30, 2023
4	Deliverable 3: Final Evaluation Report and the filled in in Results-Assessment Form for Final Project Evaluations/Reviews (incorporating comments received on first drafts). (Estimated at 5 working days)	August 15, 2023

All deliverables need to be written in English. The executive summary should summarize key findings and recommendations (three to five pages) and needs to be submitted as part of the final draft report. The findings and recommendations of the draft final report and final report must be structured according to the evaluation questions.

J. Organizational Setting:

The International Consultant will work under the direct supervision of the Project Manager and EEC Cluster Lead with the assistance of the National Consultant (Team member). **The work will include remote work - online meetings and communication.**

K. Financial arrangements:

The financial proposal shall specify a total **lump sum** amount, and payment terms around specific and measurable (qualitative and quantitative) deliverables (i.e. whether payments fall in installments or upon completion of the entire contract). Payments are based upon output, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR. In order to assist the requesting unit in the comparison of financial proposals, the financial proposal will include a breakdown of this lump sum amount (including the daily fee, taxes, and number of anticipated working days).

L. Confidentiality

Materials provided to the Consultant and all proceedings within the consultancy contract shall be regarded as confidential, both during and after the consultancy. Violation of confidentiality requirements may result in immediate termination of contract.

M. Qualifications and skills required:

I. Academic Qualifications:

University degree

- University Degree in environmental sciences, environmental engineering and related areas

II. Years and sphere of experience:

- At least 4 international assignments in conducting or managing evaluations in the environmental field; completed successful evaluations in the climate change area would be an advantage;
- At least 10 years of proven experience in design, monitoring and implementation of environmental management projects
- Project evaluation experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset;
- In-depth knowledge of theory-based evaluation approaches and ability to apply both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and to uphold standards for quality evaluation;

III. Competencies:

- Excellent analytical skills and demonstrated ability to formulate evidence-based conclusions and realistic and actionable recommendations;
- Excellent communication (written and spoken), facilitation and knowledge-sharing skills;
- Excellent knowledge of the national development context, climate change and environment will be an asset;
- Fluency in written and spoken English is required for this assignment.

IV. Personal qualities

- A strong client-service orientation;
- High level of responsibility and organization capacities.

The UNDP Moldova is committed to workforce diversity. Women, persons with disabilities, Roma and other ethnic or religious minorities, persons living with HIV, as well as refugees and other noncitizens legally entitled to work in the Republic of Moldova, are particularly encouraged to apply.

N. Documents to Be Included When Submitting the Proposals

Interested individual consultants must submit the following documents/ information to demonstrate their qualifications:

- Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment, incorporating Financial proposal in Annex 2.
Upload the signed version of the filled in Offeror's letter to UNDP confirming interest and availability for the individual contractor (IC) assignment. Annex 2 to the Offeror's letter, incorporating the Financial Proposal, shall be filled in mandatorily and includes the detailed breakdown of costs supporting the all inclusive financial proposal.

The Financial Proposal shall be additionally submitted directly in the system. Please ensure there are no mathematical errors and that amounts from Offeror's Letter to UNDP Confirming Interest and Availability match with your offer in the system;

- Proposal (Motivation Letter): explaining why they are the most suitable for the work including previous experience in similar Projects (please provide brief information on each of the above qualifications, item by item, including information, links/copies of documents for similar comprehensive studies);
- CV and at least 3 references.

Important notice: The applicants who have the statute of Government Official / Public Servant prior to appointment will be asked to submit the following documentation:

- a no-objection letter in respect of the applicant received from the Government, and;
- the applicant is certified in writing by the Government to be on official leave without pay for the entire duration of the Individual Contract.

Annex B. Evaluation Framework

The Terms of Reference, as well as UNDP's Evaluation Guidelines, provide the basis for the evaluation framework, which in turn underpins and guides the whole approach. The Evaluation Questions given in the Terms of Reference (section 2 of the TOR) are structured following the standard OECD-DAC criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability). The questions from the Terms of Reference can be found in the table below. Under sustainability one question has been added, pertaining to recent the regional turmoil and the financial situation in Moldova.

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions
RELEVANCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How relevant was the project to the needs and priorities of Moldova and the participating institutions? To what extent was the project in line with country programme outputs and outcomes, UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid for the partner country, the partner organization, and the beneficiaries? How do these contribute to the climate change-gender nexus objectives, climate change agenda and priorities in the context of the Paris Agreement and assumed NDC? Are the expected results/outputs of the project consistent with the outcome, immediate impact, and overall goal/impact (as part of the analysis of the log frame matrix/project theory)? Were the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources?
EFFECTIVENESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well has the project performed? Has the project done the right things? Has the project done things right, with good value for money? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent has the project already achieved the expected outcome, outputs, and respective targets? What have been the main contributing and challenging factors towards project's success in attaining its targets? (<i>Also consider any which were possibly beyond the control of the project</i>) How has the project successfully built or strengthened an enabling environment for local resilient livelihoods? To what extent were the cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights and social standards have been addressed in the design and implementation of the project and to what extent were recommendations from the Sweden appraisals considered and implemented?³⁴
EFFICIENCY	

³⁴ Recommendations related to gender, environment, human rights and social standards resulting from the donor's relevant appraisals are a part of the project documentation list to be reviewed during the Final Evaluation process.

Evaluation criterion	Evaluation questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent was the management structure outlined in the project document efficient to generate the expected results? • To what extent were the resources used to address inequalities in general, and gender issues in particular? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If applicable, to what extent were all items/equipment purchased and used as planned under this project/programme? ○ Was the project implemented in the most efficient way (time, personnel resources)? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why? ○ Was the project plan clear, appropriate and realistic? ○ Were project roles, responsibilities and accountabilities sufficiently clear?
SUSTAINABILITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the achieved results will sustain after the completion of the project? • To what extent has the project helped put in place the conditions likely to address the drivers, overcome barriers and contribute to the long term objectives? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regarding capacity development, to what extent will the project outcomes and flow of benefits are likely to continue after the project/external funding ends? ○ To what extent did the project forge partnerships and, as part of these partnerships, supported replicability of project benefits/results and advancement of the climate change adaptation agenda? ○ What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project? ○ What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability? ○ Has the regional turmoil and the financial situation in Moldova impacted the long-term of the project's achievements? If yes, what can be done to alleviate these issues?

Annex C: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection methods
Evaluation criterion: Relevance			
1. To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid for the partner country, the partner organization, and the beneficiaries? How do these contribute to the climate change-gender nexus objectives, climate change agenda and priorities in the context of the Paris Agreement and assumed NDC?	1.1 Evidence of alignment of project activities with country priorities (NDC, SDGs) 1.2 Evidence of direct beneficiary's support, expert opinion 1.3 Evidence of country active policies and research	Document review (UN Strategic documents) and meetings with UNDP Meetings with stakeholders (grantees, beneficiaries, representatives of LPAs and district councils, authorities, and local groups)	Meetings (UNDP team), documentation (comparative analysis) Interviews with stakeholders, review of project implementation reports Review of policies, secondary sources
2 Are the expected results/outputs of the project consistent with the outcome, immediate impact, and overall goal/impact (as part of the analysis of the log frame matrix/project theory)?	2.1 Assessment of the project outcomes against the Project Document 2.2 Evidence of results/outputs consistency with outcome/impact 2.3 Evidence of Theory of Change validity	Document review (UN Strategic documents) and meetings with UNDP Document review (ProDoc, project reports, project minutes, deliverables), and meetings with UNDP (project staff, project Board members, expert's opinions)	Meetings (interviews with Board members, project management), documentation (comparing proposed objectives with results) and field visits Documents, meetings and site visits comparing the proposed objectives with the outcome

Evaluation question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection methods
3. Were the objectives of the project clear, realistic, and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources?	3.1 Evidence project achieved expected outcome, outputs, targets within the anticipated timeframe	Document review, meetings with stakeholders and site visits, reviewed of project deliverables/products	Meetings with stakeholders and visits to selected sites, texts of the documents regarding events, activities
Evaluation criterion: Effectiveness			
1 To what extent has the project already achieved the expected outcome, outputs, and respective targets?	1.1 Evidence project achieved expected outcome, outputs, project fulfilment against set targets	Document review (ProDoc, project minutes, project reports, and produced documents) and meetings with stakeholders (project staff, management, beneficiaries)	Meetings (UNDP team), Interviews with stakeholders, review of project implementation reports Site visits
2 What have been the main contributing and challenging factors towards project's success in attaining its targets? <i>(Also consider any which were possibly beyond the control of the project)</i>	2.1 Evidence of resource allocation towards gender inequality and climate change adaptation 2.2 Adaptation to any regional turmoil and the economic situation	Available documents produced by the project, deliverables UNDP project management, stakeholders, project partners, beneficiaries, opinions of experts	Document reviews and interviews with UNDP project management, stakeholders, and beneficiaries
3 How has the project successfully built or strengthened an enabling environment for local resilient livelihoods?	3.1 Substantiation of empowered women, women-led businesses 3.2 Confirmation of climate adaptation in target communities 3.3 Evidence of increased awareness regarding gender and climate change	Available documents LPAs, beneficiaries and target communities	Document reviews and interviews with LPAs, beneficiaries and target communities

Evaluation question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection methods
4 To what extent were the cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights and social standards have been addressed in the design and implementation of the project and to what extent were recommendations from the Sweden appraisals considered and implemented? ³⁵	<p>4.1 Evidence of contribution to gender- sensitivity and participation in resource allocation.</p> <p>4.2 Evidence of alignment with Environmental, human rights and Gender and Social Standards in planning, procurement, and management of the project</p>	<p>Project documents (appraisals, international (human rights) standards and country recommendations, project implementation reports)</p> <p>Project Experts</p>	<p>Interviews (with gender expert, project management)</p> <p>Document review (comparative analysis, evaluation of recommendations implementation)</p> <p>Site visits and discussions with project beneficiaries.</p>
Evaluation criterion: Efficiency			
1 If applicable, to what extent were all items/equipment purchased and used as planned under this project/programme?	1.1 Evidence of efficient procurement and utilization of project resources and alignment with the project plan	<p>Project budget, project reports, produced documents</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Site visits</p>	<p>Meetings with LPAs, beneficiaries and grantees</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Site visits</p>
2 Was the project implemented in the most efficient way (time, personnel resources)? Have any issues emerged, if so which ones and why?	<p>2.1 Adaptive management measures applied</p> <p>2.2 Good use of human and financial resources</p>	<p>Progress reports</p> <p>Meetings with stakeholders (project experts, outside project experts, mayors, district council representatives)</p>	<p>Interviews with stakeholders</p> <p>Document review</p> <p>Site visits</p>
Evaluation criterion: Sustainability			

³⁵ Recommendations related to gender, environment, human rights and social standards resulting from the donor's relevant appraisals are a part of the project documentation list to be reviewed during the Final Evaluation process.

Evaluation question	Indicators	Sources	Data collection methods
1 Regarding capacity development, to what extent will the project outcomes and flow of benefits are likely to continue after the project/external funding ends?	1.1 Increased awareness 1.2 LPAs include climate adaptation in their decision making 1.3 Long-term sustainability of grantee projects	Interviews with population and beneficiaries Meetings with LPA members Visits to grantee projects	Interviews (mayors, district council members, citizens) Assessment of activities started by grants
2 To what extent did the project forge partnerships and, as part of these partnerships, supported replicability of project benefits/results and advancement of the climate change adaptation agenda?	2.1 Increased knowledge in ministries and with development aid projects 2.2 Improved awareness at the LPA and NGO level	Government officials Aid organisations LPAs NGOs	Interviews with government officials, aid organisations, LPAs and NGOs
3 What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?	3.1 Success of project 3.2 Buy-in for project activities 3.3 External factors (crisis of any kind)	UNDP Project Management LPAs Grantees Beneficiaries	Interviews with UNDP Project Management, LPAs, grantees and beneficiaries
4 What needs to be done and/or improved to ensure sustainability?	3.1 Views of project implementers and ministries 3.2 Opinion of beneficiaries 3.3 Population's attitude	UNDP Project Management LPAs Grantees Beneficiaries Citizens	Interviews with UNDP Project Management, LPAs, grantees, beneficiaries and citizens

Annex D: Results Framework from Project Document

Outcome/ Output	Indicators	Baseline	End of Project Target and Achievement	Source of verification
OUTCOME 1. Sustainable, climate resilient and environmentally sound livelihoods defined and local capacities & knowledge on environment, climate change and gender enhanced and implemented successfully	level of awareness on environment protection and climate change in pilot districts as a result of project interventions	Annex 2 (Sociological Survey on awareness in the piloted districts, in Romanian) states that 49.2% (7.8%+42%) of population and correspondingly 32.9% (3.5%+29.4%) local actors are very satisfied and satisfied with the environment/anti-pollution services provided in the communities.	70% increase	Questionnaire-based survey carried out by the project at the initiation and in the last year of implementation PMU reports Evaluation Report
	no. of LPAs from the pilot districts which apply Strategic Environmental Assessment Law with integrated gender aspects	Annex 2 (Sociological Survey on awareness in the piloted districts, in Romanian) states that 45% of LPAs apply Law on strategic evaluation of environment (nr.11/02.03.2017), 60% apply law on evaluation of impact on environment (nr.86/29.05.2014)	at least 6 / 80 % of acts elaborated by LPA where SEA has been applied	PMU Reports Evaluation Report Success stories / LPA Report Community data surveys
	extend to which the capacity development programme of the project for women/women entrepreneurs implemented	Annex 2 (Sociological Survey on awareness in the piloted districts, in Romanian) states that local actors participated (population: 10%, local actors: 47%, LPAs: 78%, NGOs: 45%, Businesses: 34%, Business Women: 31%) and	100%	PMU Reports Evaluation Report Media monitoring reports / LPA Reports

		willing to participate (population: 28%, local actors: 52%, LPAs: 68%, NGOs: 55%, Businesses: 43%, Business Women: 40%) in capacity-building programs			
OUTPUTS					Local development plans Websites of the pilot LPAs Minutes from the meetings with LPAs PMU Reports Evaluation Report
1. Gender, environment protection and climate change adaptation solutions mainstreamed into local development plans	number of local development plans that ensures women's equal access to resources for sustainable food production	4 with only climate change mainstreamed (from NAP project)	6 with gender and environment and climate change mainstreamed		
2. Guides for LPAs on application of environment- and climate-related legal and regulatory framework developed and disseminated	no. of guides elaborated, presented and disseminated	no guides on environment and climate change related legislation applicable to LPAs are available	at least 3 (one on SEA and EIA; one on environment related legislation and one on climate-related legislation)		The developed guides PMU Reports and Evaluation Report
3. Workshops on particular environmental legislative acts conducted (ex. SEA, EIA) no. of LPA and civil society representative participating in the projects workshops; reports on the collected feedback	no. of LPA and civil society representative participating in the projects workshops; reports on the collected feedback	workshops organized by the project not available	at least 10 (one national and 6 at the local level- one in each pilot district)		Workshop minutes and feedback reports Media reports PMU Reports Evaluation Reports Media Monitoring Reports Workshops minutes and feedback reports
	no. of women and women's groups engaged in debates on environmental impacts	data not available	300		Media reports PMU reports Evaluation Reports
4. Mentoring for application of legislations related to climate and environment provided at request as well as support in	no. of inquiries/ no. of documents developed with project support	data not available	at least 12 (LPAs which will benefit from gender, environment and CC		PMU Reports Evaluation Reports

integrating gender aspects into local planning documents				mainstreaming and other involved in replication)	
5. Workshops for women-headed households on environment protection, climate change and related income generation potential organized	no. of women participating in the workshop/ reports on collected feedback	workshops organized by the project not available		at least 600 (tentatively 100 women from each pilot district)	Workshop minutes PMU Reports and Evaluation Report
6. Workshops for women entrepreneurs on environment protection, climate change and related income generation potential organized	no. of women participating in the workshop; reports on the collected feedback			at least 120 (tentatively 30 women entrepreneurs from each pilot district)	
7. Knowledge products on environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and income generating activities elaborated based on specific needs of communities and women/women entrepreneurs	no. of developed knowledge products by the project	knowledge products developed <by the project> not available / number of available knowledge products is relevant including those included in the footnote		at least 6 knowledge products (ex. guides for advancing climate-resilient livelihoods, guides on sustainable use of environmental media, etc.)	The developed knowledge products /feedback of the users of the knowledge products The capacity and needs assessment reports PMU Reports and Evaluation Report
OUTCOME 2. NGOs capacities to provide expertise to LPAs and women in the field of resilience to climate change, sustainable development and gender mainstreaming enhanced	% increase in the number of NGOs engaging in the environment, climate change and gender initiatives as a result of project interventions	data not available		45% increase	Reports on the environmental NGOs mapping PMU Reports Evaluation Report
	no. of NGOs which apply improved internal policies as a result of project interventions	data not available		6 as a result of project	UNDP quality assurance mechanism PMU Reports Evaluation Report
OUTPUTS	extend to which the identified assurance plans are implemented	assurance plans not available		100%	UNDP quality assurance mechanism PMU Reports

1. Institutional capacities of NGOs for project implementation improved				Evaluation Report
2. Advanced training events on climate change, environment and gender delivered to NGOs (ToT)	no. of trained NGOs	67 NGOs (those who registered during the latest environmental NGOs forum)	67 NGOs	
3. Capacities of the NGOs to deliver climate change and environment-related thematic workshops to LPA and women (households and businesses) improved	no. of delivered training events by NGOs	data not available	14 (one national and one in each pilot district) as a result of project	Training events minutes PMU Reports Evaluation Report
4. Valuable input for the elaboration of knowledge products provided by the NGOs	extend to which NGOs provide inputs to the knowledge products	knowledge products developed by the project not available	at least 20 % from those NGOs who attended the project's events	PMU Reports
OUTCOME 3. Environment-friendly and climate resilient practices and projects implemented by women headed households, women agri-producers and communities	extend to which the project's grant programme is implemented by women, women entrepreneurs and LPAs	the grants programme of the project is not available	100%	Grants' Programme M&E Reports Progress Reports Final Report
	no. of climate resilient and/or environment-friendly practices put in place by the project	the projects haven't implemented any such practices	10	Media monitoring reports M&E Reports Progress Report Final Report M&E Reports
	income generated by the newly adopted environmentally friendly and climate resilient practices with project support	data not available	10% increase from the baselines identified in the business plans/ the profit produced per years if available	Progress Reports Farmers reports Final Reports Business Plans

OUTPUTS	number of household women who increase their income due to climate change	0	60	
1. Climate resilient and environmentally sustainable practices applied in households by women	adaptation/mitigation activities extend to which business plans are implemented successfully and the expected revenue achieved	business plans not yet developed	100%	
2. Climate resilient and environmentally- sustainable practices applied in businesses by women	number of women entrepreneurs who increase their income due to climate change adaptation/mitigation activities	0	10	M&E Reports Progress Reports Farmers reports Final Reports Business Plans
	extend to which business plan implemented successfully and the expected revenue achieved	business plans not yet developed	100%	
3. Projects aimed at enhanced climate resilient and sustainable development of the community implemented by LPAs	number of implemented community grants with project financing	0	30	
4. Mentoring and coaching to support the LPAs, women-led businesses and women-led households provided by the NGOs	no. of NGOs involved in the mentoring and coaching over the activities implemented by the project	data not available	at least 20% from those NGOs who attended the project's events	NGOs reports PMU Reports Evaluation Report
OUTCOME 4. Sustainable and climate resilient practice and business models disseminated and replicated	extend to which the projects results, good practices and products are codified	there are no project's results, good practices and products	100% codified	
OUTPUTS				
1. Project's communication, outreach and upscaling	extend to which the strategies are implemented	project's comm, outreach and replication strategies not available	100% implementation	Communication, outreach and replication strategies

strategies developed and implemented				Video spots, interviews, mass-media monitoring reports
2. Project's results, good practices and products disseminated through the available NGOs networks/platforms	no. of used NGOs networks/platforms	the number of NGOs networks/platform not known	at least 5 (tentatively BIOS International Land Coalition, MOVCA network etc.)	Success stories Seminars reports Websites of the project partners
3. Project's results, good practices and products available online for replication in user-friendly manner	no. of used online tools/instruments	project's results, good practices and products not available	100% availability	PMU reports M&E reports

Annex E: Questions used in interviews

Note: These questions are intended mostly as a checklist to ensure that all focus areas are covered in an interview. It is not envisioned that the questions be asked in a chronological order.

1. What is your role/relationship with the project?
2. What are the main achievements of the project?
3. Do you have any recommendations as to what could have been done better or more efficiently?
4. Would there be reasons to prolong the project? If yes, why and what activities should be undertaken?
5. What steps have been taken to ensure replication of the concept?
6. Have you received awareness raising materials, guidelines, training or a grant from the project. If yes, was it helpful and did you receive all needed support from the project?
7. Did you receive equipment or other physical support through the project? If yes, does the system work? Did you receive a needed training, guidance and operating procedures? Is the system cost effective?
8. What are you doing to ensure sustainability of the project's processes and impacts?
9. Do you think that the system(s) are sustainable?
10. Who are the partners (i.e., people actively working to the same goals) on the project?
11. Who would you say *owns* the project?
12. Who are the stakeholders in the project (i.e., people that are involved in the project, either actively or passively or will be affected by the project in some way)?
13. Who are the main beneficiaries?
14. Have there been sufficient meeting and other communication regarding the project?
15. Has experience been exchanged with the other similar projects? If yes, please provide details.
16. Did the project listen to your advice/ concerns/ requests for information?
17. Who prepares the TOR for all contracting?
18. Who signs the contracts?
19. Is the project having any unexpected positive or negative impacts?
20. How has it been working with a UNDP project?
21. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Project Document?
22. Who are the project's champions?
23. Standard issues:
 - Project Management

- Procurement rules and efficiencies
 - UNDP training/support
 - Financial audits
 - Backing up data and digital information
 - Team functionality
 - Staff turn over
 - If training is provided, how is training is now being used in job?
 - Environmental issues
 - Gender issues?
 - Social issues?
 - Human rights issues?
24. How is the project aligned to the Ministry's or LPA's strategies and policies?
25. How is the project aligned to the UNDP and SIDA goals?
26. Has the project worked to train people and raise awareness? Who were the target groups? How is the project monitoring the outcome of their efforts?
27. How has any changes in attitude and awareness affected project implementation, and how is it being used in the daily, professional lives of the target groups?

Annex F: List of persons interviewed

Please note that approximately 15 interviewees, mostly from women-led households and many of these from Transnistria region, wished to remain anonymous and are therefore not included on the list.

#	Organisation/Institution	Relation to project	Name and position
1	Ministry of Environment,	Board member	Rodica Iordanca Iordanov, Minister
2	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry,	expertise	Galina Petrachi, chief, Direction for rural development programs and policies
3	Ministry of Energy	expertise	Carolina Novac, state Secretary, Renewables, Energy Efficiency, Decarbonisation
4	UN Women	Board member	Svetlana Andries, program specialist
5	Tomai, (Gagauzia, Zone 2), Renewable energy with the capacity of 43.0 Kw for almonds processing	Beneficiary	Marianna Topciu, owner
6	Parcani community (Transnistria, Zone 3), Woman business (green house)	Beneficiary	Nadejda Dobrova, owner
7	Vadul lui Voda Community (Security Zone, Zone 3)	Beneficiary	Ludmila Sitova, owner
8	Gisca community (Transnistria, Zone 3), renewables for green house	Beneficiary	Olesea Marcenco, owner
9	Sipca community (Transnistria, Zone 3) Equipment for soil productivity increase & api-fito tourism	Beneficiary	Natalia Porhun
10	Pohrebea (Security Zone, Zone 2) Woman business (greenhouse)	Beneficiary	Diana Sainsus representative
13	Chirsovo (Gagauzia, Zone 2)	Beneficiary	Serghei Sapunji, Mayor
14	Chirsovo (Gagauzia, Zone 2) Woman business (solar) for fish farm operation	Beneficiary	Inga Milcan, owner
23	Sarata Noua (Leova, Zone 1) Biomass project management responsible	Beneficiary	Galin Lefter, owner

#	Organisation/Institution	Relation to project	Name and position
28	Miscarea Ecologista Stefan Voda NGO	Responsible for Zone 1,	Ludmila Fedotova, representative
29	NGO “ATOS” (Basarabasca, Sadaclia, Zone 1), Outcome 2	Beneficiary	Andrian Macari, director
30	NGO ”Vitality” (Transnistria, Zone 1), Outcome 2	Beneficiary	Viacheslav Bezhenar, director
31	NGO ”Vis și Realitate” (Leova, Sarata Noua, Zone 1), Outcome 2	Beneficiary	Dina Ceban, director
32	Mame in Actiune NGO, Outcome 3	Implementer	Elena Mina, director
33	North-East Regional Development Agency from Romania (NERDA), Outcome 2	Capacity building responsible, system-based audit responsible	Gabriela Macoveiu
34	Progresul Deondrologic NGO, Outcome 2, Outcome 3	Implementer Outcome 3, Beneficiary, Outcome 2	Victoria Lisnic, director
35	Pomul Vietii NGO, mentoring women-led households, Outcome 3	Implementer Outcome 3	Valeriu Andreicuc, Aliona Andreicuc
36	ProEntranse NGO, mentoring LPAs and women-led businesses	Implementer Outcome 3	Lucia Usurelu, director
37	Consultant elaborating Climate Profiles (7), District Action Plans, Local Action Plans (5), Outcome 1	BCI, implementer, Outcome 1	Liviu Andriuta, director
38	District Council Calarasi, Outcome 1, District Profiles and Action Plans	Beneficiary	Eugeniu Tihonov, chief Direction on Economy, Agriculture and Rural Development
39	District Council Nisporeni, Outcome 1, District Profiles and Action Plans	Beneficiary	Nina Gutanu, chief Economic section
40	District Council Leova, Outcome 1, District Profiles and Action Plans	Beneficiary	Nadejda Iacovceno, chief specialist, Direction for Economy, Territorial Development and Investment Attraction
41	Gagauzia, Outcome 1, District Profiles and Action Plans	Beneficiary	Natalia Ciuvaliskaia, chief Economy section
42	District Council Dubasari, Outcome 1, District Profiles and Action Plans	Beneficiary	Dmitrii Popa, vice-president

#	Organisation/Institution	Relation to project	Name and position
43	Consultant elaborating, carrying out capacity-building program for Woman HH, businesses, Outcome 1	Centrul pentru Consultatii de Afaceri (CCA), Outcome 1	Anatolie Palade, director
44	AXA Management Consulting (grants for women-led households), Outcome 3	Implementer Outcome 3	Stela Popa, Vitalie Popa
45	Global Business Access (LPAs and businesses), Outcome 3	Implementer Outcome 3	Alexandru Panfilii, director
46	Public Association 'Mame în Acțiune' (Zone 2) (guiding grant beneficiaries)	Implementer Outcome 3	Elena Mina, Director
47	Business Consulting Agency 'Днестр Энтерпрайзис' (Zone 3) (guiding LPAs grant beneficiaries)	implementer Outcome 3	Ina Polishiuc, Director
48	Parcani, LPA, Transnistria region	Beneficiary	Iurii Ilin, local representative
49	Suclea, LPA, Transnistria region	Beneficiary	Irina Koroleva, local representative
50	Suclea, LPA, Transnistria region	Beneficiary	Iurii Horin, Mayor
51	Comrat Territorial Organization of the Ecological Movement (Zone 2) (mentoring women-led households)	Implementer Outcome 3	Ludmila Fedotova
52	Stefan Voda Territorial Organization of the Ecological Movement (Zone 2) (mentoring women-led households)	Implementer Outcome 3	Tatiana Marin, Director
53	Lumina Renasterii NGO, (Zone 2) (mentoring women-led households)	Implementer Outcome 3	Alexandru Sainsus, Director
54	Women in Sustainable Development NGO, mentoring women-led households	Implementer Outcome 3	Nadejd Andreev, Director
55	Mayor of Sadaclia (Zone 2), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Ion Galeru, Mayor
56	Mayor of Vulcanesti, Gagauzia (Zone 2), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Sofia Jecova, Mayor
57	Mayor of Ceadir Lunga, Gagauzia (Zone 2), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Anatolii Topal, Mayor
58	Mayor of Tomai, Gagauzia (Zone 2), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Fedor Topciu, Mayor

#	Organisation/Institution	Relation to project	Name and position
59	Mayor of Copceac, Gagauzia (Zone 2), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Oleg Garizan, Mayor
60	Mayor of Chirsova, Gagauzia (Zone 2), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Serghei Sapunji, Mayor
61	Mayor of Cosnita, Security Zone (Zone 3), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Alexei Gafeli, Mayor
62	Mayor of Molovata, Security Zone (Zone 3), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Igor Brinza, Mayor
63	Mayor of Holercani, Security Zone (Zone 3), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Tudor Tanasiev, Mayor
64	Mayor of Pirita, Security Zone (Zone 3), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Iurie Soltan, Mayor
65	Mayor of Ustia, Security Zone (Zone 3), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Maxim Verdes, Mayor
66	Mayor of Oniscani, Calarasi (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Gheorghe Grecu, Mayor
67	Mayor of Sipoteni, Calarasi (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Vasile Rata, Mayor
68	Mayor of Bravicea, Nisporeni (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Alexei Zatic, Mayor
69	Mayor of Raciula, Nisporeni (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Maria David, Mayor
70	Mayor of Calarasi, Calarasi (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Ion Olari, mayor, Ecaterina Melnic, secretary
71	Mayor of Leova, (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Alexandru Bujorean, Mayor
72	Mayor of Filipeni, Leova, (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Tudor Camerzan, Mayor
73	Mayor of Borogani, Leova, (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Elena Savitski, Mayor
74	Mayor of Tigheci, Leova, (Zone 1), Outcome 3	Beneficiary	Angela Cretu, Mayor
75	UNDP Moldova	Project Manager	Victoria Ivancioglo
76	UNDP Moldova	Program Analyst	Silvia Pana-Carp
77	UNDP Moldova	Project expert (Environment)	Aurelia Bahnaru
78	UNDP Moldova	Project officer gender/community mobilisation	Tatiana Craciun

#	Organisation/Institution	Relation to project	Name and position
79	Embassy of Sweden/SIDA representative	Donor representative	Virginia Bilici, program responsible
80	GenderCentru NGO	Board member	Valentina Bodrug
81	District Council Leova, Outcome 1, District Profiles and Action Plans	Beneficiary	Elena Copot Secretary district Council

Annex G: List of documents reviewed

#	Title
1	Project Document 2020
2	Inception Report 2020
3	Annual Report 2020
4	Annual Report 2021
5	Annual Report 2022
6	Minutes of Board Meetings
7	Annual Work Plans (part of Annual Reports)
8	Guidelines, visit reports, workshop reports, training materials, action and strategic plans, project fact sheets, etc. produced by the project (these are all included as annexes in the Annual Reports)
9	Financial Reports (part of Annual Reports)
10	Baseline study to establish the initial level of awareness on climate change and environmental issues in the target regions (part of the Annual Report 2021)
11	<i>Endline Study on the Level of Awareness of Environment Protection and Climate Change in Pilot Districts of the Project "Sustainable and Resilient Communities through Women Empowerment"</i> by S.C. Magenta Consulting S.R.L. (October 2023)
12	The UNDP Country programme document for the Republic of Moldova (2018-2022)
13	<i>Strategy for Sweden's reform cooperation with Eastern Europe for 2021–2027</i>
14	<i>Moldova Comprehensive Gender Assessment</i> (2021)
15	<i>National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030"</i>
16	<i>UNDP Evaluation Guidelines</i> (revised June 2021)
17	<i>Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations</i> , UNEG Guidance Document (August 2014)
18	<i>SIDA's Evaluation Handbook - Guidelines and Manual for Conducting Evaluations at SIDA</i> (April 2020)

Annex H: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

(Each UNEG member to create its own forms for signature)

Annex 2: United Nations Evaluation Group Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form

To be signed by all consultants as individuals (not by or on behalf of a consultancy company) before a contract can be issued.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Consultant: PEPER BISBJERG

Name of Consultancy Organisation (where relevant): _____

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (place) on (date)

East Lansing on 1 June 2023

Signature: Peder Bisbjerg

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EVALUATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

1. The conduct of evaluators in the UN system should be beyond reproach at all times. Any deficiency in their professional conduct may undermine the integrity of the evaluation, and more broadly evaluation in the UN or the UN itself, and raise doubts about the quality and validity of their evaluation work.

2. The UNEG³⁶ Code of Conduct applies to all evaluation staff and consultants in the UN system. The principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service by which all UN staff are bound. UN staff are also subject to any UNEG member specific staff rules and procedures for the procurement of services.

3. The provisions of the UNEG Code of Conduct apply to all stages of the evaluation process from the conception to the completion of an evaluation and the release and use of the evaluation results.

4. To promote trust and confidence in evaluation in the UN, all UN staff engaged in evaluation and evaluation consultants working for the United Nations system are required to commit themselves in writing to the Code of Conduct for Evaluation³⁷ (see Annexes), specifically to the following obligations:

1 UNEG is the United Nations Evaluation Group, a professional network that brings together the units responsible for evaluation in the UN system including the specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organisations. UNEG currently has 43 such members.

2 While the provisions of the Code of Conduct apply to all UN staff involved in evaluation, only UN staff who spend a substantial proportion of their time working on evaluation are expected to sign the Code of Conduct, including staff of evaluation, oversight or performance management units directly involved in the management or conduct of evaluations. All evaluation consultants are required to sign when first engaged by a UNEG member.

Independence

5. Evaluators shall ensure that independence of judgement is maintained and that evaluation findings and recommendations are independently presented.

Impartiality

6. Evaluators shall operate in an impartial and unbiased manner and give a balanced presentation of strengths and weaknesses of the policy, program, project or organizational unit being evaluated.

³⁶ UNEG is the United Nations Evaluation Group, a professional network that brings together the units responsible for evaluation in the UN system including the specialized agencies, funds, programmes and affiliated organisations. UNEG currently has 43 such members.

³⁷ While the provisions of the Code of Conduct apply to all UN staff involved in evaluation, only UN staff who spend a substantial proportion of their time working on evaluation are expected to sign the Code of Conduct, including staff of evaluation, oversight or performance management units directly involved in the management or conduct of evaluations. All evaluation consultants are required to sign when first engaged by a UNEG member.

Conflict of Interest

7. Evaluators are required to disclose in writing any past experience, of themselves or their immediate family, which may give rise to a potential conflict of interest, and to deal honestly in resolving any conflict of interest which may arise. Before undertaking evaluation work within the UN system, each evaluator will complete a declaration of interest form (see Annex 3).

Honesty and Integrity

8. Evaluators shall show honesty and integrity in their own behaviour, negotiating honestly the evaluation costs, tasks, limitations, scope of results likely to be obtained, while accurately presenting their procedures, data and findings and highlighting any limitations or uncertainties of interpretation within the evaluation.

Competence

9. Evaluators shall accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge and work only within the limits of their professional training and abilities in evaluation, declining assignments for which they do not have the skills and experience to complete successfully.

Accountability

10. Evaluators are accountable for the completion of the agreed evaluation deliverables within the timeframe and budget agreed, while operating in a cost effective manner.

Obligations to participants

11. Evaluators shall respect and protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and communities, in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. Evaluators shall respect differences in culture, local customs, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age and ethnicity, while using evaluation instruments appropriate to the cultural setting. Evaluators shall ensure prospective participants are treated as autonomous agents, free to choose whether to participate in the evaluation, while ensuring that the relatively powerless are represented. Evaluators shall make themselves aware of and comply with legal codes (whether international or national) governing, for example, interviewing children and young people.

Confidentiality

12. Evaluators shall respect people's right to provide information in confidence and make participants aware of the scope and limits of confidentiality, while ensuring that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source.

Avoidance of Harm

13. Evaluators shall act to minimise risks and harms to, and burdens on, those participating in the evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation findings.

Accuracy, Completeness and Reliability

14. Evaluators have an obligation to ensure that evaluation reports and presentations are accurate, complete and reliable. Evaluators shall explicitly justify judgements, findings and conclusions and show their underlying rationale, so that stakeholders are in a position to assess them.

Transparency

15. Evaluators shall clearly communicate to stakeholders the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. Evaluators shall ensure that stakeholders have a say in shaping the evaluation and shall ensure that all documentation is readily available to and understood by stakeholders.

Omissions and wrongdoing

16. Where evaluators find evidence of wrong-doing or unethical conduct, they are obliged to report it to the proper oversight authority.

Evaluation Staff Agreement Form

To be signed by all staff engaged full or part time in evaluation at the start of their contract.

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System

Name of Staff Member:

Serghei Ostaf _____

I confirm that I have received and understood, and will abide by the United Nations Evaluation Group Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at (place) on (date)

Chisinau, Moldova, 5.06.2023

Signature:

