



**UNDP Project Document**  
Government of Moldova  
United Nations Development Programme

PIMS 4016  
Atlas Award 00050699  
Project ID: 00062742

***PIMS 4016: Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System in Moldova***

**Brief description**

The globally significant biodiversity of Moldova is only partially protected through a system of protected areas covering 4.65% of the territory. Under current conditions, the Protected Area System (PAS) of Moldova is not effectively safeguarding the country's unique biodiversity: a number of natural ecosystem processes, habitats and species are not adequately represented in the existing PAS; the capacity of the institutions responsible for the management of the PAS is generally weak; and the value of the PAS to the socio-economic well being of society is poorly understood and demonstrated.

The project aims to build the capacity of protected area institutions in Moldova to more effectively establish and administer a representative system of protected areas in Moldova. It will seek to achieve this by: (i) reviewing, revising and reforming the conservation management tenure of the current protected areas; (ii) developing a strategic and operational decision-support tool to support the ongoing consolidation and expansion of the national protected area system; (iii) piloting the establishment of a national park, the first in Moldova, in the Orhei district as a mechanism to rationalize and expand existing, but spatially and institutionally fragmented, protected areas; (iv) reforming and restructuring the governance of, and institutional arrangements for, protected areas; (v) developing national norms and standards, operational guidelines and financing mechanisms for the PAS; (vi) developing protected area planning and management competence and skills of professional and technical staff in the protected area institutions; (vii) designing a national strategic framework for coordinating the implementation of conservation education and awareness programmes; and (viii) implementation of a focused outreach program in and around Orhei to support the piloted establishment of the National Park in the Orhei district. Opportunities to link the protected areas with the country's socio-economic development priorities will, wherever possible, be developed to strengthen the long-term political sustainability of the institutions responsible for the PAS.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

SECTION I: Elaboration of the Narrative.....4

    PART I – Situation analysis.....4

**A – Project Summary**.....4

**B - Country ownership** .....5

            Country Eligibility .....5

            Country Driven-ness .....5

**C – Program and Policy Conformity**.....5

            1. Program Designation and Conformity.....5

            2. Project Design .....7

            2.1 Environmental Context and Global Biodiversity Significance .....7

            2.2 Policy and Legislative Context .....10

            2.3 Institutional Context for Protected Area Management .....12

            2.4 Socio-Economic Context .....13

            2.5 The Baseline – Threats, Root Causes and Barriers .....14

            2.6 Baseline Scenario.....16

    PART II – STRATEGY .....18

        3. Sustainability (including financial sustainability).....25

        4. Replicability .....26

        5. Stakeholder Involvement.....26

    PART III – MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS .....30

        6. Core Commitments and Linkages .....30

        7. Consultation, Coordination and Collaboration.....31

        8. Implementation/Execution Arrangements.....31

    PART IV – MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN AND BUDGET .....32

    PART V – LEGAL CONTEXT.....35

SECTION II: Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and GEF Increment.....37

SECTION III: Total Budget and Work Plan .....40

SECTION IV: Additional Information.....43

    PART I APPROVED MSP PIF (NEXT PAGE) .....43

    PART II RESPONSE TO PROJECT REVIEW BY GEF SECRETARIAT AT PIF STAGE .....54

    PART III ATTACHMENTS .....55

SIGNATURE PAGE.....56

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

APR	Annual Project Report
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BDNCNSAP	Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CO	UNDP Country Office
CSQI	Center for Staff Qualification and Improvement
CPA	Central Public Administration
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
DNRB	Department of Natural Resources and Biodiversity
EA	Executing Agency
EIC	Environmental Information Center
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GM	Government of Moldova
IA	Implementing Agency
IDP	Institutional Development Plan
IR	(Project) Inception Report
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IW	Inception Workshop
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDL	Moldovan Lei
MENR	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NDS	National Development Strategy
NEF	National Environment Fund
NEN	National Ecological Network
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PA	Protected Area
PAs	Protected Areas
PAS	Protected Area System
PIR	Project Implementation Review
PM	Project Manager
PMU	Project Management Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PTR	Project Technical Report
RCU	UNDP-GEF Regional Coordination Unit
SBAA	Standard Basic Assistance Agreement
SEI	State Environmental Inspectorate
SO	Strategic Objective
TBD	To be determined
TOR	Terms of Reference

## SECTION I: Elaboration of the Narrative

### PART I – SITUATION ANALYSIS

#### A – Project Summary

1. Occupying a land-locked area of 33,843 km<sup>2</sup>, Moldova is surrounded by Ukraine on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries and by Romania in the west. The country straddles three main European eco-regions: the Central-European mixed forests, the Pontic steppe, and the East European forest steppe. Many plant and animal species typical for each of these regions are at the limit of their natural range in Moldova. It is estimated that 15% of the country still remains under some form of natural vegetation cover, much of which is however in a degraded state. The majority of the remaining natural vegetation cover in Moldova comprises *forest* habitats (9.6% of the country), predominantly located in the central region of the country. *Steppe* habitats (1.9% of the country) tend to occur in the north and the south of the country, while *wetland* habitats (2.8% of the country) are commonly associated with the aquatic systems of the Prut and Dniester rivers. ‘*Rocky habitats*’ (limestone rocks) covers 0.68% of the country. The country has a rich biota relative to its size, especially considering that the highest elevation reaches only 430 m. The country hosts 1,842 species of vascular plants and nearly 4,600 species of lower plants and fungi. This includes 13 relictual genera, 126 *Red Data Book* species and 4 species at the boundary of their natural distribution. There are about 16,540 species of animals (461 vertebrates and more than 16,000 invertebrates) reported for Moldova. This includes 55 Ponto-Caspian relictual species (of which 10% are endemic to the Black Sea basin) and 116 rare, threatened and endangered species. Some of this globally significant biodiversity is conserved through a system of protected areas, covering 4.65% of the country. The *Law on Natural Areas Protected by the State* (1998) provides the enabling legal framework for 12 categories of protected areas in Moldova: seven of which correspond to the IUCN classification system (Scientific Reserve, National Park, Natural Monument, Nature Reserve, Landscape Reserve, Resource Reserve, Multifunctional Management Area); three of which are local categories (dendrological garden, zoological garden and landscape monument); and two of which are international conservation designations (Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar site). The Scientific Reserves (i.e. strict nature reserves) cover 19,378ha and currently represent the most important instrument for *in situ* biodiversity conservation in the country. There is no national parks established to date in Moldova.

2. The ongoing spread of agriculture continues to be a major threat to the integrity of the few remaining tracts of natural steppe and wetland habitats in Moldova, while the impacts of urban and industrial development is becoming increasingly evident. The need for fuel to heat homes is a significant threat to the remaining forests in Moldova, while the spread of invasive alien species is a growing problem. With the precipitous decline of natural habitats in Moldova over the past 100 years many species and ecosystems are now under siege throughout their range and some are threatened with extinction. Under current conditions, the Protected Area System (PAS) of Moldova does not effectively safeguard its biodiversity against these threats. The effectiveness in conserving biodiversity in the PAS is constrained by several key barriers at the systemic, institutional and individual levels. These include: poor representivity of the protected area system; limited capacity to plan, administer and manage protected areas; and low levels of awareness of the values and benefits of protected areas.

3. The project will seek to rapidly secure the institutional and conservation tenure of the few remaining representative areas of terrestrial habitats in Moldova with high biodiversity significance, and to develop a more sustainable institutional framework for their planning, management and expansion. This intervention will contribute to increasing the number and extent of protected areas in Moldova that can effectively conserve globally unique habitats and the species contained within them. The project has the **objective** of building the capacity of protected area institutions to establish and administer a more representative system of protected areas in Moldova. There are three **components** – along with their associated outcomes, outputs and activities - which will contribute towards achieving the project objective. These are: (1) Improving

representivity and coverage of the protected area system; (2) Strengthening capacity to effectively manage the protected area system; and (3) Enhancing the knowledge and understanding of biodiversity and its conservation.

4. The project will focus on two levels of intervention: (i) the national level, through working with public institutions and agencies in order to create the enabling environment for protected area consolidation, expansion and management; and (ii) the local level, through working directly with the target groups and local communities in order to establish a new National Park in the central Orhei District of Moldova.

## **B - Country ownership**

### **Country Eligibility**

5. The Republic of Moldova ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 1995 (Parliament decision nr. 457-XIII), and is eligible to receive UNDP country assistance.

### **Country Drivenness**

6. The Government of Moldova seeks to align its national environmental policy with regional and international best practice by: (i) improving cooperation on environmental protection at the regional and European levels; (ii) harmonizing legislative and regulatory instruments with regional (EU and CIS) requirements; (iii) developing national programmes and mechanisms for the implementation of international conventions; and (iv) implementing bilateral agreements and participating in regional programmes (e.g. Black Sea, Danube). To regularize this intent, Article 95 of the Law on Environmental Protection confirms that international conventions and agreements take precedence over national legislation if the provisions in the international agreements are more stringent. A National Commission has also been established by presidential decree (November, 1996) to oversee the implementation of the provisions of the different international agreements. Moldova is a signatory to 14 bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements.

7. The Government of Moldova specifically recognizes the importance of biodiversity, as reflected in the approval of two key government decisions in 2001: (i) the adoption of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity Conservation, which was approved by Parliament of 27 April 2001; and (ii) the establishment of an inter-departmental coordination council for the promotion of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Biological Diversity Conservation, which was approved by Parliament on 21 December, 2001. The National Strategy and Action Plan focuses on three strategic approaches for its implementation: (i) the development of the legislative framework to ensure the alignment of biodiversity conservation objectives with the socio-economic development of the country; (ii) the ‘mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development objectives into the policies and strategies of different economic production sectors such as forestry and agriculture; and (iii) the establishment of a national ecological network as the basis for the *in situ* restoration and conservation of biodiversity. The government’s commitment to the establishment of a National Environmental Network (NEN) is demonstrated in the adoption of the Law on the National Ecological Network in 2007 and the subsequent development of the *National Programme for Establishing the NEN* for the period 2008-2015. The government has further demonstrated its commitment to the expansion to the national system of protected areas as a core component of this NEN through the recent designation of three wetlands of international significance totalling 94,705ha thereby increasing the total coverage of protected areas to 4.65% and meeting the MDG goals for the RM.

## **C – Program and Policy Conformity**

### **1. Program Designation and Conformity**

8. The project is aligned with GEF’s Strategic Objective (SO) 1 of the Biodiversity focal area, ‘Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Areas Systems’. The project is consistent with Strategic Programme (SP) 3 of SO 1, ‘Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks’. The project will contribute to the focal area by: (i) enhancing the representation of under-represented habitats in the design of the protected area system in Moldova; (ii) securing the legal and institutional tenure of the protected area estate; and (iii) strengthening the

planning and management capacity of the protected areas to become more politically, socially and financially sustainable. The project will adopt an integrated landscape approach in the planning of a representative PA network in order to: (i) to integrate the protected area system in Moldova into the country's larger ecological network; and (ii) conserve landscape-scale ecosystem processes by linking small, fragmented protected areas into a consolidated national park. The project has, as its key focus, the strengthening of the systemic, institutional and individual capacity of the protected area institutions in Moldova. The project seeks to ensure that a representative protected area estate in Moldova graduates in status from poorly managed (ineffective in protecting biodiversity) toward well managed (effectively mitigating threats).

9. The project will contribute to the achievement of GEF's main indicators under this priority programming area as follows:

Relevant GEF-4 BD Strategic objective (SO)	Expected impacts (long-term)	Relevant GEF-4 BD Indicators	Project contribution to GEF-4 BD Indicators
SO-1: Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems	Biodiversity conserved and sustainably used in protected area system	<p>Extent of habitat cover (hectares) by biome type maintained as measured by cover and fragmentation in protected area system</p> <p>Extent and percentage increase of new habitat protected (hectares) by biome type in protected area systems that enhances ecosystem representation</p> <p>Protected area management effectiveness as measured by protected area scorecards that assess site management, financial sustainability and capacity</p>	<p>177,000ha of forest and steppe biome maintained in the protected area system</p> <p>Extent of protected area system increased from 157,000 to 177,000 (11.3%)</p> <p>15 PA's exceed METT score of 30 Financial sustainability scorecard &gt; 30 Capacity development scorecard &gt;32</p>
Relevant GEF-4 BD Program (SO)	Expected outcomes	Relevant GEF-4 BD Indicators	Project contribution to GEF-4 BD Indicators
Strengthened Terrestrial Protected Area Networks	<p>Improved ecosystem coverage of under-represented terrestrial ecosystems areas as part of national protected area system</p> <p>Improved management of terrestrial protected areas</p>	<p>Terrestrial ecosystem coverage in national protected area systems</p> <p>Protected area management effectiveness as measured by individual protected area scorecards</p>	<p>Protected area system coverage of 5.2% of terrestrial surface area of Moldova</p> <p>15 PA's exceed METT score of 30</p>

10. This project is designed to support the primary objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable-use of its components, and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of these components. The project follows the guidance and decisions provided to the financial mechanisms by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD. The project meets CBD objectives by fulfilling the requirements contained in the Convention's Articles 6 (General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use), 7 (Identification and Monitoring), 8 (In-situ Conservation), 10 (Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity), 11 (Incentive Measures), 12 (Research and Training), 13 (Education and Awareness), and 17 (Exchange of Information). This may be summarised as follows:

<b>CBD Articles</b>	<b>How the Articles of the CBD are supported by project.</b>
Article 6: General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use	Through the integration of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into relevant project plans and policies.
Article 7: Identification, and Monitoring	Through the identification of key ecosystem processes, habitats and species, and the promotion of targeted key biodiversity monitoring programs.
Article 8: <i>In-situ</i> Conservation	Through the strengthening of PA management and the conservation of targeted ecosystem processes, species and habitats in PAs.
Article 10: Sustainable Use of Components of Biological Diversity	Through the development and demonstration of alternative, sustainable livelihood options for the national park to be established in Orhei.
Article 11: Incentive Measures.	Through the provision of incentives to different landowners and land managers to incorporate land into the national park.
Article 12: Research and Training	Through the promotion of targeted research on biodiversity conservation priorities and the provision of training in key PA planning, technical and managerial areas
Article 13: Education and Awareness	Through the provision of education and awareness raising to users of biodiversity, PA managers, decision-makers and all other stakeholders.
Article 17: Exchange of Information.	Through the strengthening and further development of linkages for enhancing the exchange of information.

## **2. Project Design**

### **2.1 Environmental Context and Global Biodiversity Significance**

11. The Republic of Moldova is located in the south-eastern part of Europe. Occupying a land-locked area of 33,843 km<sup>2</sup>, Moldova is surrounded by Ukraine on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries and by Romania in the west. The relief of the country represents a hilly plain, gradually sloping from the north-west to the south-east, with altitudes varying between 5m and 429m and an average elevation of around 147 m above sea level.

12. The country straddles three main European eco-regions: the Central-European mixed forests, the Pontic steppe, and the East European forest steppe. Many species typical for each of these regions are at the limit of their natural range in Moldova. The country has a rich biota relative to its size, especially considering that the highest elevation reaches only 430 m. Approximately 15% of the country remains under some form of natural vegetation cover, much of this in a degraded state. The majority of this natural vegetation cover comprises *Forest* habitats. Forests are located predominantly in the central region of the country, with the northern and the southern areas less forested. Forest coverage is estimated at 325,400ha (~9.6% of the country), although much of this (>85%) comprises plantation forests. *Steppe* habitats (including meadows ecosystems) tend to occur predominantly in the north and the south of the country, and account altogether for about 65,000 ha

(~1.9% of the territory). Due to the systematic conversion to cropland and pastures, the steppe is the most threatened habitat type in Moldova, with less than one percent remaining of some types of grassland and wet meadow vegetation communities that were once common across the country. Vegetation communities associated with the aquatic systems (*wetland habitats*) – notably marshes in the lower reaches of the Prut and Dniester Rivers, and the southern river valleys - cover about 94,600 ha (~2.8% of the country). Most of the floodplain ecosystems in Moldova have been destroyed, and the only remaining intact areas are along the Prut and Dniester Rivers. The remaining natural vegetation – broadly classified as ‘*rocky habitats*’ (limestone rocks) - covers about 23,000 ha (~0.68% of the country). Some 3000 rivers and streams, and 60 natural lakes, are distributed across the country, with more than 95% of the water circulation flowing into one of the two major rivers in Moldova - the Prut or Dniester.

13. Moldova is rich in species diversity considering the absence of mountains and moderate variations in climate. There are no known endemic species in Moldova. The country hosts 1,842 species of vascular plants and nearly 4,600 species of lower plants and fungi. This includes 13 relictual genera, 126 Red Data Book (The Red Book of the Republic of Moldova, 2002) species<sup>1</sup> and 4 species at the boundary of their natural distribution. Plant species diversity is particularly high in forests (more than 850 species), meadows (about 650 species) and steppe (more than 600 species). There are about 16,540 species of animals (461 vertebrates and more than 16,000 invertebrates) reported for Moldova and undoubtedly many more yet to be found as inventories are continually expanded for the invertebrates. This includes 55 Ponto-Caspian relictual species (of which 10% are endemic to the Black Sea basin) and 116 ‘Red Data Book’ species<sup>2</sup>. There may be invertebrates already extirpated from Moldova and certainly many more that are endangered than is indicated by the available data. A number of large faunal species have completely disappeared from Moldova over the last 50 years. While the greatest diversity of vertebrates is recorded in forests (172 species), 153 (89 percent) of these species are recorded from forests associated with meadows. The highest diversity of vertebrates recorded in Moldova is found in the forests of Codrii. The river corridors and associated wetlands are particularly important for migratory birds.

14. Four basic conservation approaches are being developed in Moldova to better secure the in situ conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity: (i) The design and adoption of an ‘ecological network’ (i.e. the NEN) that provides for the conservation of ecological patterns and processes at a landscape-scale; (ii) The establishment and management of a formal system of protected areas within the ecological network to effectively conserve a representative sample of the country’s biodiversity; (iii) The planning and regulation of land uses and land use practices to achieve the conservation and sustainable land use objectives of the ecological network; and (iv) the mainstreaming of biodiversity into broader Moldovan society to ensure that all production sectors that impact on biodiversity, factor biodiversity considerations into the development and implementation of their policies, plans and programmes.

15. This project focuses on the second approach – the establishment and management of a system of protected areas and their buffer zones– in support of the country’s integrated strategic response to the impacts of industrial and agricultural development on the remaining native habitats of Moldova.

16. Currently the system of protected areas in Moldova covers 157,227 ha (or 4.65% of the country<sup>3</sup>) of publicly owned land (state or local authorities)<sup>4</sup>. This coverage corresponds with the 2010 targets established

---

<sup>1</sup> Two of these are also included in the Red Data Book of European Bryophytes

<sup>2</sup> Thirteen of these are also included in the European Red List (1991)

<sup>3</sup> It is estimated that only 1.96% of the country’s native biodiversity is under some type of effective conservation management regime, with the remaining area of the PAS degraded and/or unmanaged (Andreev, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Privately owned land may also be incorporated into the PAS in Moldova by voluntary expropriation, or in terms of a regulated agreement between the state and the landowner



by the country's Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan (2002), the National Development Strategy (2008) and the Millennium Development Goals, for Moldova (2007). The *Law on Natural Areas Protected by the State* (1998) provides the enabling legal framework for 12 categories of protected areas in Moldova: seven of which correspond to the IUCN classification system (Scientific Reserve, National Park, Natural Monument, Nature Reserve, Landscape Reserve, Resource Reserve, Multifunctional Management Area); three of which are local categories (dendrological garden, zoological garden and landscape monument); and two of which are international conservation designations (Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar site). The protected areas in Moldova that correspond to the IUCN classification system account for only 66,048ha (or 1.96% of the country). Of these, the categories 'Landscape Reserve' (52% by area) and 'Scientific Reserve' (29% by area) constitute the largest coverage. The Geological, Paleontological and Hydrological Natural Monuments (118ha) have limited biodiversity significance. There are currently no areas in Moldova designated as National Parks or Biosphere Reserves. Three wetlands of international significance - Lower Prut lakes, Lower Dniester and Unguri-Holoșnița – totaling 94,705ha have recently been included in the 'Ramsar List' and proclaimed as Wetlands of International Importance, although a large proportion (>65%) of these designated sites are under agricultural production, with the remaining areas within the proclaimed sites comprising existing protected areas and other semi-natural areas. The numbers and extent of each category of protected area may be summarized as follows:

<b>Protected areas by category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Size (hectares)</b>
<b>1. Scientific reserves</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19,378</b>
<b>2. Natural monuments</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>2,907</b>
2.1 Geological and paleontological	87	2,682
2.2 Hydrological	31	100
2.3 Botanical	13	125
<b>3. Nature Reserves (habitat/species management areas)</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>8,009</b>
3.1 Forests	51	5,001
3.2 Medicinal plants	9	2,796
3.3 Mixed	3	212
<b>4. Landscape Reserve</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>34,200</b>
<b>5. Resource Reserve</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>523</b>
<b>6. Multifunctional Management Area</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1,031</b>
6.1 Typical areas of steppe vegetation	5	148
6.2 Typical areas of meadows vegetation	25	675
6.3 Forest belts	2	208
<b>7. Botanical gardens</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>8. Landscape Monument</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>9. Zoological gardens</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>10. Wetlands of International Importance*</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>90,751</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>157,227</b>

\* Note: Only 25-35% of the designated wetland sites are natural or semi-natural, with the remainder under some form of productive use

17. Under current conditions, the national Protected Area System (PAS) of Moldova does not effectively safeguard its biodiversity against these threats, as it is not ecologically representative. Large number of species, ecosystems and ecological processes are not adequately protected and the management regimes (management objectives, governance types or management effectiveness) of the existing protected areas do not provide full security for particular species or ecosystems. For example, the majority of protected areas are small (<100ha) and have a fragmented distribution, steppe and forest habitats are under-represented, PA boundaries are not clearly demarcated and the PA classification of a number of PAs is not aligned with their

biodiversity significance and/or management objectives.

18. As part of its integrated response to addressing the threats to biodiversity, the Government of Moldova (GM) has committed to establish a National Ecological Network (NEN). The NEN emphasizes the importance of a landscape level approach as a mechanism to conserve key ecological processes and patterns. To effect the NEN, the Law on Ecological Network was adopted in 2007 and describes: i) the legal framework for the creation and development of the NEN as part of the pan-European ecological network; ii) the establishment of a regime of protection and use of the functional elements of the NEN; and iii) the competencies and obligations of the public administration bodies in the implementation of the NEN. The NEN comprises four components: (i) core areas which are used for the conservation of ecosystems, habitats, species and landscapes; (ii) buffer areas that strengthen the integrity of the ecological network and facilitate its protection from unfavorable external factors; (iii) biological corridors intended to improve connections between natural systems; and (iv) ecological restoration areas that may form part of core, buffer or corridor areas. A National Programme for Establishing the NEN for the period 2008-2015 has recently been drafted to direct the implementation of the NEN. The NEN proposals for Moldova (Biotica, 2002, as amended – see Annex E) currently target 82 areas (4 of international significance and 12 of national importance) to be designated as formal protected areas. This system of protected areas will then form the ‘core’ area of the network.

## 2.2 Policy and Legislative Context

19. The legal and regulatory framework for biodiversity conservation and protected areas in Moldova includes international agreements endorsed by the government of Moldova, national laws and regulations and government decisions.

20. Key international agreements ratified by Parliament include:

<b>International agreement</b>	<b>Ratified</b>
Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979)	June 1993
Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991)	June 1993
Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Helsinki, 1992)	June 1993
Convention on the Trans-boundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Helsinki, 1992)	June 1993
Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne, 1979)	June, 1993
Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992)	March 1995
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (New York, 1992) Kyoto Protocol	March 1995 February 2003
Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) Biosecurity protocol (New York 2001)	May 1995
Convention on Long-range Trans-boundary Air Pollution (Geneva, 1979)	July 1995
Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna, 1985)	July 1996
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987)	July 1996
Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (Basel, 1989)	March 1998
Convention to Combat Desertification (Paris, 1994)	December 1998
Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River.	March 1999
Convention on Access to Environmental Information, Justice and Participation in Decision Making Process (Aarhus, 1998)	April 1999

<b>International agreement</b>	<b>Ratified</b>
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of international importance (1971)	July, 1999
Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971)	July 1999
Convention on Trans-frontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid, 1980)	September 1999
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn, 1979)	September 2000
CITES (Washington)	September 2000
Convention on European heritage (Florence, 2000)	October 2001
Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972)	June, 2002
Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (Stockholm 2001)	February 2004

21. The Law on Natural Areas Protected by the State (1998) provides the overarching legislative framework for the management of the protected area system in Moldova. The law provides for the classification, conservation objectives, tenure, management regime, staffing, zonation, registration of cadastre, financing, research and the governance of different categories of protected areas. The Law designates the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR) as the overall responsible Ministry for regulating the planning, administration and management of protected areas. A number of complementary government decisions support the implementation of the Law. These include: the *regulations framework for national parks, natural monuments and biosphere reserves* (2000); the *regulations framework for botanical gardens, dendrological gardens, zoological gardens, and scientific reserves* (2000); the *regulations framework for areas with multifunctional management, natural reserves, landscape reserves and landscape architecture monuments* (2000); the *regulations for natural and constructed zones* (2000); the *agreement between the Ministry of Environment from Moldova and the Ministry of Waters, Forests and Environment from Romania and Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources from Ukraine on common management of protected areas in Danube Delta and Lower Prut* (2000); the *regulation on cadastre of objects and complexes from the state natural protected areas fund* (2000); *regulation on natural and artificial protected areas* (2000); and the *regulation on the procedure for establishing a system of protected natural areas* (2002).

22. Biodiversity conservation and environmental protection outside the protected area system is largely governed by the following, largely complementary, laws: Law on Environmental Protection (1993); Law on Protection of the Animal Kingdom (1995); Law on Zones and Strips for Rivers and Water Basins Protection (1995); Law on Ecological Expertise and Environmental Impact Assessment (1996); Forestry Code (1996); Law on Natural Resources (1997); Law on Fisheries and Conservation of the Aquatic Biological Resources (2006); Law on Forestation of Degraded Land (2006); the Water Code; and the Law on the National Ecological Network (2007).

23. The process for physical planning in Moldova is primarily outlined in the Law on Principles of Urban and Territorial Development (1997) and other complementary laws and government documents including the Land Code (1995), Civil Code, Law on Cadastre and Law on Lease.

24. As a country in a state of ongoing social, economic and political transition, Moldova's legal framework is in a constant state of flux. The speed at which new laws, and amendments to existing laws, are produced is astonishing. Unfortunately quantity is often being achieved at the expense of quality. Passing laws has to some extent been government's priority, to the detriment of a concomitant investment in ensuring the successful implementation of these laws. Contradictions and conflicts between laws often arise due to the poor quality of internal and external consultation processes. Although there is a stage in the legislative process for checking compatibility between laws, the time allocated for this activity is very short (a few weeks). In general, the environmental legislation in Moldova is primarily oriented toward allocating functions and tasks to different organizations. These functions are however often only broadly defined. Generally, the procedural element is often weak, or even absent in many cases. In other cases, procedures are only contained in regulations, but the drafting of these regulations does not always occur. The lack of clear procedures and definitions sometimes makes implementation difficult because individual organizations are not clear about the

nature of their relationship with other similar entities (on issues such as precedence, timing, dispute resolution, etc.). Definitions of key terms are also not always an integral feature of Moldovan laws, and there are often conflicts in legal interpretation of terms. The overall result can be that priority activities are not always implemented effectively and efficiently, and government credibility within the wider population suffers.

### **2.3. Institutional Context for Protected Area Management**

25. The *Department of Policy, Analysis, Monitoring and Assessment* of the *Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources* (MENR) is responsible for the overall coordination of the improvement of the country's environmental policy and legislation to ensure compliance with EU Directives and international multilateral agreements. The *Department of Natural Resources and Biodiversity* within the MENR (comprising 6 staff – 2 forestry specialists and 4 biologists) has overall responsibility for the coordination, development and promotion of policy, legislation, declaration, protection and use of protected areas and their natural resources. A *National Environmental Fund* (NEF), directly administered by the Ministry, funds (amongst other activities) the ongoing research and monitoring of biodiversity, as well as providing special grants for protected areas project activities. In 2006, the NEF allocated MDL 19,335,000<sup>5</sup> to biodiversity conservation and research activities.

26. Four of the five Scientific Reserves – Codrii, Padurea domneasca, Plaiul Fagului and Prutul de Jos - are under the direct operational management of the Forestry Agency, '*Moldsilva*'. In 2007, Moldsilva's total staff and operating budget for scientific reserves was approximately MLD10,850,000. Of this, approximately 16% is financed from the NEF (MLD~1.736million) while the remaining costs are subsidised primarily by income from 'ecological logging' (mostly for use as fuel wood). Moldsilva are also responsible for the management of landscape reserves, forest nature reserves and forested portions of the Ramsar sites. The Russian-funded *Transdnistria territorial administrative authority* is responsible for the operational management of the remaining Scientific Reserve - Iagorlac.

27. The *Academy of Sciences* (specifically the Botanical Research Institute and the Zoological Research Institute) provides technical and professional research, monitoring and information management support to the protected area system and are responsible for the management of dendrological, botanical and zoological gardens. The water Management agency "*Apele Moldovei*" is responsible for the administration, usage and protection of the water resources in the three Ramsar sites.

28. As part of Moldova's decentralization process, the remaining protected area categories – natural monuments, other nature reserves, multi-functional management areas, landscape architecture monuments and portions of Ramsar sites – are nominally administered by the relevant *local public administrations* (i.e. Gagauzia autonomous territorial unit, 32 districts [*raion*], or 3 municipalities). Although the administration of these protected areas are supposed to be funded from the local budget, most of these reserves typically have no staffing complement or dedicated budget. Lack of funding, even for basic transportation, make it almost impossible for local governments to monitor activities on most of these PAs. Although an *Interdepartmental Coordination Council for the Promotion of the National Strategy and Action Plan* has been established to facilitate the implementation of the Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan (BDCNSAP, 2001), it is currently dysfunctional. A number of reasonably well capacitated *NGO's*, including the Ecological Movement of Moldova, EcoTiras, Biotica Ecological Society, Ecospectru and Habitat, are actively involved in research, planning and management projects in protected areas, as well as implementing broader environmental education and awareness programs linked to protected areas.

29. Land outside the protected area system is publicly (i.e. state or administrative-territorial units) or privately owned. The land privatization process has recently been completed in Moldova and a process of land

---

<sup>5</sup> US\$ 1 = MDL 11.2

consolidation is now underway in which the many very small privately-owned agricultural land parcels are voluntarily aggregated into more sustainable entities through: (i) land acquisition (i.e. land purchase or lease) on a willing seller-willing-buyer basis; and/or (ii) the establishment of agricultural co-operatives or private businesses. A unified system for registration of real estate and ownership rights has been established, operating through 38 Territorial Cadastral Offices forming the State Enterprise *Agency for Land Relations and Cadastre*.

30. Land-use planning in Moldova is directed at the local level. However, infrastructure and experience in planning are currently inadequate at this level, and land use plans are not yet developed for most districts.

31. The *State Environmental Inspectorate* (SEI) of the MENR is the primary institution within the ministry responsible for the protection of the environment outside protected areas in Moldova. The *Inspectorate for Plant Protection* of the *Ministry of Agriculture and Food Products* is responsible for agro-biodiversity conservation and sustainable agricultural practices on agricultural lands outside the PA estate. Much of the native forests outside the PA estate are managed by forestry enterprises within the *Moldsilva* Forestry Agency. The *Institute of Ecology and Geography* and the *Environmental Information Centre* of the MENR are responsible for the design and maintenance of key environmental databases, development of environmental action plans and production of ‘State of Environment’ reports.

#### **2.4 Socio-Economic Context**

32. Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, despite recent progress from its small economic base. Following a decade of economic decline and fragmented institutional development, Moldova has enjoyed relative political stability and sustained economic recovery since 2000. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (MDL 44.1 billion in 2006) grew on average by 5.9 per cent annually during the period 2000-2006. The consumption of households is the main source of economic growth, funded mostly by increased domestic revenues and remittances sent home from abroad. Labor-related out-migration (projected at 310,000 people in 2006) is an important feature of the economic and social landscape in Moldova. Migrants’ remittances are estimated at 35% of GDP. Rising consumption has driven rapid growth in imports (24% on average per year) with exports lagging behind. The trade deficit was 47% of GDP in 2006. Due to remittance inflows, the current account deficit is around 12% of GDP. Investments in fixed capital have had a lesser contribution to the economic growth, accounting for 15.7% of GDP on average. New foreign direct investment in 2006 totaled US\$1,300 million.

33. The economic growth in Moldova has been accompanied by a significant improvement in the fiscal situation. There was considerable growth of the national public budget revenues (up to 40.5% of GDP) in 2006, and the state budget reported an average surplus of 0.2% of GDP. Indirect taxation accounted for the largest part of the upsurge in revenues, and made up approximately 45.4% of all revenues in 2006. A drop in the rate of income taxes paid by natural persons and legal entities kept these revenues at 5% of GDP.

34. Moldova enjoys a favorable climate and good farmland, but has no major mineral deposits. As a result, the economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which covers some 76% of the country’s surface area, accounts for 15% of GDP and employs 33% of the country’s labor force. Agriculture however continues to report low productivity and low compensation for work. The marginal revenues of agricultural producers are dictated by the limited nature of economic trade in most farms (half of the revenues are in-kind), the high prices of invested inputs (specifically for energy resources) and the extremely low sale prices on final outputs. The low performance in agriculture is aggravated by limited access to funding, scarce capital investments, deteriorating infrastructure, poor management of agricultural enterprises, and high susceptibility to natural disasters.

35. Economic growth remains fragile due to Moldova’s vulnerability to external factors. The external

vulnerability is exacerbated by the high concentration of exports to a limited number of countries and products. Despite a shift in the orientation of exports over the last years, specifically towards the European Union markets, most of the exports are still targeting the CIS countries and the Russian Federation in particular. At the same time, approximately 45% (in 2006) of Moldovan exports are agricultural products, with alcoholic beverages dominating.

36. In 2007, the population of Moldova totaled 3,581,100<sup>6</sup>. After more than a decade of transition, human development lags behind recent economic growth. The country has a Human Development Index of 0.708, below the global average of 0.743 (UNDP Human Development Report, 2007). The GDP per resident in 2006 was estimated at US\$936. It has the lowest level of urbanization within Europe, with 41.3% of people living in urban settlements and 58.7% in rural areas. In 2006, the poverty rate in Moldova was 30.2% (20.6% in urban settlements and 34.1% in rural areas). Poverty incidence is the highest among agricultural workers (42.8%) and pensioners (25%).

## **2.5 The Baseline – Threats, Root Causes and Barriers**

### Threats to the integrity of remaining natural areas and their biodiversity

37. A significant proportion of the remaining natural areas in Moldova are highly degraded. The ongoing spread of agriculture continues to be a major threat to the integrity of the few remaining tracts of natural steppe and wetland habitats in Moldova. Native steppe and steppe-associated wet meadows are being systematically converted to cropland and pastures. Although wet meadows are not as readily plowed and converted to croplands as are the steppe habitats, most wet meadow ecosystems are being drained, “improved” as pasture lands (e.g. seeding with non-native species that are often preferred as forage) or converted to low-quality croplands. The need for fuel to heat homes is a substantial threat to the remaining forests in Moldova, while the spread of invasive alien species is a growing problem. For example, the black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) - a dominant component in 38 percent of Moldovan forests - is invasive in the native forests and grasslands. Similarly, boxelder (*Acer negundo*) has become an aggressive invasive tree species along the Upper and Middle Prut River. Draining of wetlands, elimination of native riparian vegetation, impoundment, and the channeling of streams and rivers have all taken a serious toll on aquatic resources in Moldova. Many wetlands are severely degraded, having been mowed and grazed intensively for decades, while others continue to make way for farmland. Streams, rivers, and wetlands have also been negatively impacted by sedimentation and chemical runoff associated with the agriculture-dominated landscape, and industrial and urban influences. With the precipitous decline of natural habitats in Moldova over the past 100 years many species and ecosystems are now under siege throughout their range; some are threatened with extinction. This situation is further compounded by low levels of public awareness of the values and roles of biodiversity in the context of the local economy and traditions.

38. While virtually all the changes to the landscape are made for local economic gain, ironically the cumulative impact of the disruption of the ecological and physical systems of Moldova is occurring to such an extent that is now detrimentally impacting on the economy and well being of society. There is a low resilience of the natural and agricultural areas to the increasing incidence of extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change, especially torrential rains, prolonged hot and dry periods and unseasonal frost. This is evident from recently reported environmental problems in the country, including: large-scale erosion and landslides; increasing desiccation of forests; uncontrolled wildfires; spread of forest pests; and new invasions of non-native plant species. For example, the extent of eroded soils in Moldova is now estimated at 877,644ha (of which 114,165ha is heavily eroded), while the extent of land damaged by landslides is approximately 11,837ha. The loss of soil fertility is reducing agricultural harvests, and requires increased use of expensive chemicals, further damaging ecosystem health. The simplification of the natural landscapes is increasingly affecting the ability of local people to procure food, fiber and fuel. Fish production has declined as the

---

<sup>6</sup> Excluding the Transnistria region, whose population is estimated at 550,500

wetlands are reduced, and the rivers engineered and more polluted. Illicit and uncontrolled harvesting of forests, plowing and grazing of remnant tracts of native steppe, unsustainable stocking rates and draining of wetlands and wet meadows is damaging to wildlife, other natural resources and critical ecosystem services.

#### Barriers to the formal conservation of these remaining natural areas and their biodiversity

39. Under current conditions, the national Protected Area System (PAS) of Moldova does not effectively safeguard a representative sample of natural areas and their biodiversity against all these threats. While significant efforts have been undertaken by the Government to safeguard the biodiversity in the PAS, international assistance is required to facilitate the achievement of the long-term solution which is an ecologically representative and effectively managed protected area system for Moldova. The barriers hampering the achievement of this solution are:

##### *a. Representivity of the PA system*

40. The steppe ecosystems are very poorly represented in the protected area system and, where they are protected, the PAs are small (<100ha) and highly fragmented in distribution. Although the extent of loss of native steppe, and steppe-associated wet meadows, to cropland and pastures is not thoroughly documented, less than 1 percent remains of some types of grassland and meadow ecosystems that were once common in Moldova. For example, only about 1,000 ha of dry to mesic steppe currently remain in the Lower Nistru Terrace and Bugeac Steppe landscape regions. These steppe ecosystems are critically endangered throughout their range, which extends across Ukraine into Russia.

41. Overall forest cover in Moldova is the lowest for any country in Europe, and only a small area of native forests are included in the protected area system. Forests in northern Moldova are highly fragmented, while the few forests in southern Moldova are mostly represented by young plantations. The forests in central Moldova are less fragmented and include several larger tracts in protected areas.

42. The current spatial distribution of protected areas in Moldova is disjointed, and landscape-scale ecological processes are not being effectively conserved. Even the few large protected areas in Moldova will only become ecologically viable if they are expanded and linked to other fragmented patches of natural vegetation. To protect adequate examples of the country's ecosystems, it will also probably be necessary to restore degraded - but still mostly native - ecosystems. There is no clear national strategy, or implementation plan to direct the consolidation and expansion of the national protected area system and PA expansion initiatives in Moldova remain largely opportunistic, *ad hoc* and uncoordinated. Besides the five scientific reserves and three Ramsar sites, little is even known of the current ecological and conservation status of the majority of protected areas in Moldova, or of their collective contribution to meeting representivity targets for the different ecosystem processes, habitats and species in Moldova.

##### *b. Limited capacities for the planning, administration and management of the protected area system*

43. Institutional weaknesses in the responsible institutions serve as a major barrier to the expansion and effective management of the protected area network. These weaknesses are typified by: unclear division of responsibilities; low levels of cooperation; inadequate staffing; budgetary constraints; limited specialised protected area operational and management skills; inadequate enforcement and compliance capability; and poor boundary demarcation of protected areas. At a national level, there are no standardised operational guidelines or norms and standards for PA establishment, planning and management processes and no national monitoring of the management effectiveness of the PAS. The capacity to develop and implement detailed strategic and operational plans to ensure the cost-effective deployment of financial and human resources is particularly weak outside of the scientific reserves. While 'Moldsilva' is a comparably well resourced and capacitated institution, its skills base still has a strong silvicultural and forest research bias, and it has limited exposure to best practice in protected area management. Protected area management skills and competencies needs to be considerably strengthened within all the responsible PA management institutions. There is also an argument, on the grounds of institutional efficiencies and economies of scale, for reforming the legal,

operational and development responsibility for protected areas to provide for the more effective deployment of the country's limited human resources and institutional capacity.

*c. Low levels of awareness of the values and benefits of the protected area system*

44. Public awareness of the significance and value of biodiversity is very low. Very few people seem aware of, or care about, the threats to the remaining native habitats and species in Moldova. There is limited or no information available that allows people to gauge how their lives may benefit from the collective conservation of the country's remnant natural habitats. There is little, or no, involvement of local communities in the governance of protected areas. Where it does occur, public awareness-raising and educational programmes are generally undertaken as part of donor funded projects, and are often not sustained or properly integrated into public structures and programmes. The general lack of awareness and low levels of involvement in decision-making is resulting in limited public ownership of, and responsibility toward, the PAS. There is little or no public pressure, and limited political support, to expand and strengthen the PA management system in Moldova. The high literacy rate and a generally well-educated population however make it possible to develop and implement outreach and extension programs to effectively change how people view and use natural resources.

## **2.6 Baseline Scenario**

45. As a country in transition, Moldova is facing considerable challenges in the socio-economic development of the country, and the linked provision of basic infrastructure and services. Government resource allocations are thus directed at addressing these fundamental needs. Budgetary allocations to support the protected area system, in the short to intermediate term, will continue to be modest. Under the **'business-as-usual' or baseline scenario**, the Government of Moldova will continue to implement environmental legislative and policy reform, commit limited financial resources to scientific reserves and provide negligible technical and professional capacity to support the planning, management and expansion of protected areas. Most of Moldova's protected areas will however remain poorly managed; many protected areas in the country will increasingly become 'paper parks'; and PA expansion initiatives will be largely ad hoc and opportunistic.

46. Without GEF support, the PAS would remain largely static in size and highly fragmented in nature over the medium-term, with critical areas of under-represented habitats (meadows, steppe and forests) remaining outside the formal protected area estate. The government will adopt the National Programme for Establishing the NEN for the period 2008-2015 in order to meet the legal obligations of the Law on Environmental Network, but will not be able to finance its implementation. The few remaining natural and semi-natural areas outside the protected area system will come under increasing pressure from urban and industrial development, and conversion to agricultural landscapes. The continuing degradation of soil resources through erosion, landslides and salinisation and an increased incidence of drought conditions may force small farmers and other public agencies into exploiting the remaining natural areas for agricultural purposes and other 'more productive' uses. Although local authorities will initiate territorial land use planning processes in their areas of jurisdiction to guide more sustainable land use (US\$13,22,196) on these small, fragmented patches of natural areas, they will not have the capacity in the medium-term to enforce these. The efforts of the SEI will be directed to preventing the illegal development and use of these areas as part of its overall environmental compliance functions (US\$555,490) wherever possible, but this will largely constitute an interim 'stop-gap' measure. The staffing complement of the DNRB (2 staff, part-time) will focus their limited time and resources (US\$26,000) on facilitating discussions between Moldsilva, the MENR, the Academy of Sciences and NGOs about the proposed consolidation and expansion of the four scientific reserves, to establish National Parks. This may be a long drawn out process, with a number of unresolved issues about the perceived 'downgrading' of the conservation status of scientific reserves requiring resolution with stakeholder groups. The MENR will, in collaboration with the territorial cadastral offices, continue to register the cadastre of the protected areas (\$US 46,000), albeit on a scale concomitant with its limited capacity. The Molsilva Forestry Agency will seek to consolidate native areas of forest by rehabilitating and restoring forest areas within their area of jurisdiction (US\$ 2,187,832).



47. Without GEF support, the extremely limited institutional resources and capacity for the management of the existing protected areas will remain focused on maintaining and strengthening, wherever possible, the management effectiveness of four Scientific Reserves (US\$3,210,097). The ongoing sanitary harvesting of forests for firewood in the scientific reserves, to secure income for their operational management, will continue to disturb the ecological functioning of forests in the scientific reserves. The remaining protected areas in the PAS will continue to be administered on an ad hoc opportunistic basis by the local authorities and forestry enterprises (~US\$160,000), with limited oversight and support from the Ministry. The protected area management skills base in these institutions will remain low and under-developed. The ecological integrity of the many small, fragmented protected areas will continue to degrade and illegal and unsustainable use will continue, if not increase, progressively reducing these PAs to ‘paper parks’. Information about the biodiversity significance and conservation status of the Ramsar site and the Scientific Reserves will continue to be reasonably well documented by the research institutes (US\$65,000), while information on the other categories of protected areas will remain limited, and largely anecdotal. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (US\$171,000) and UNESCO (US\$128,000) will upgrade the heritage sites in Orheiul Vechi that are designated for incorporation into the National Park, Orhei. The conservation management status of the different categories of protected areas in the PAS for the baseline scenario over the medium-term can be summarized as follows:

PA Category (IUCN-equivalent)	Responsible Institution	Institutional capacity	In situ staff complement	Financing	Management Plan
Ib. Scientific Reserve	Moldsilva Forestry Agency	Varies from GOOD (e.g. Codrii) to LOW (e.g. Prutul de Jos)	YES (138 staff)	~US\$968,750 per annum (US\$155,000 government grant; US\$813,750 self-financing)	1 Management Plan approved 3 Management Plans in preparation
III. Natural monuments	Forestry enterprises (under the direction of Moldsilva)	LIMITED	NO	No dedicated allocation of funds (~US\$8000/annum)	NO
	Local authorities	NO	NO	NO	NO
IV. Nature Reserves	Forestry enterprises	LIMITED – sylvicultural focus	NO	No dedicated allocation of funds (~US\$15,000/annum)	NO
	Local authorities	NO	NO	NO	NO
V. Landscape reserve	Forestry enterprises	LIMITED - sylvicultural focus	NO	No dedicated allocation of funds (~US\$12,000/annum)	NO
VI. Multiple Use Management Area	Local authorities	NO	NO	NO	NO
Ramsar Site	Forestry enterprises & Local authorities	LIMITED or NO	NO	NO/ No dedicated allocation of funds (~US\$5,000/annum)	1 Management Plan approved

The Department of Policy, Analysis, Monitoring and Assessment of the MENR will, in collaboration with the

DNRB continue to improve the normative framework for environmental management (US\$150,000) especially in respect of developing incentives for environmental protection, developing the financial sustainability of protected areas and securing funding from the NEF for the PAS. There will be no dedicated allocation of public finances in the Ministry's IDP and MTER to fund the management of protected areas, while the capacity of the MENR to secure donor funding from international funding agencies for PA expansion and management will be constrained by internal capacity, and a lack of a strategic framework to direct focussed investments in the PAS. The cooperation across and between public institutions in the management of protected areas will remain moderately ineffectual, and in some instances may be typified by unresolved conflicts over alternative land uses for areas proposed to be incorporated into the PAS.

48. Without GEF support, environmental education and awareness programs will be opportunistic, uncoordinated and unfocused. The MENR will: (i) develop the National Strategy on Ecological Education; (ii) allocate financing from the NEF to strengthen the CSQI; (iii) support the establishment of graduate and staff training courses in environmental management by educational institutions; and (iv) facilitate the introduction of environmental topics subjects in the National Educational Curriculum by the Ministry of Education (US\$175,000). The Ecological Movement of Moldova, Biotica and other NGOs will continue to maintain educational brochures and information on the protected area system, and promote local environmental outreach programmes (US\$26,000). Despite these initiatives, the public and political perception that protected areas are a 'financial drain' on the national fiscus, and a restrictive form of land use, may be sustained in the medium-term. Public resistance to the expansion of the protected area estate will continue due to their perceived lack of relevance to the socio-economic and recreational needs of the populace.

## **PART II – STRATEGY**

49. Grant funding is sought to help the Government of Moldova to rapidly secure the institutional and conservation tenure of the few remaining representative areas of terrestrial habitats in Moldova with high biodiversity significance, and to develop a more sustainable institutional framework for their planning and management as part of an integrated national system of protected areas. This intervention will contribute to increasing the number and extent of protected areas in Moldova that can effectively conserve globally unique habitats and the species contained within them. The normative solution that the project seeks to engineer is characterized by: (i) the rationalization and strategic consolidation and expansion of the PAS in Moldova; (ii) the restructuring and strengthening of the protected area institutions responsible for the planning and management of this PAS; (iii) the development of protected area planning and management skills within these responsible protected area institutions; (iv) the establishment of national norms and standards, operational guidelines and financing mechanisms for the PAS to guide and direct the operations of these protected area institutions; and (v) the strengthening of public awareness about the value of the PAS. Opportunities to link the protected areas with the country's socio-economic development priorities will, wherever possible, be developed to strengthen the long-term political sustainability of the institutions responsible for the PAs.

50. The project will focus on two levels of intervention: (i) the national level, through working with public institutions and agencies in order to create the enabling environment for protected area consolidation, expansion and management; and (ii) the local level, through working directly with the target groups and local communities in order to establish a new National Park in the central Orhei District of Moldova.

51. The project will build upon the existing baseline conditions in the project area through the implementation of a set of key incremental interventions designed to secure the area's globally significant biodiversity values and strengthen the national system of protected areas, in conjunction with co-funding from MENR, MoldSilva, UNDP and the local public authorities.

52. The project will realize its outcomes over a timeframe of 4 years. The full cumulative and long term impact of all project activities, however, will only be realized following the project's completion. It is precisely in this sense that the project assists in catalyzing the sustainability of the reserve and the national

protected area system. The Project [Logical Framework](#) shows the indicators to be used for monitoring and evaluating the project's impact (at the Objective and Outcome levels).

53. To address these barriers, the project has the **objective** developing an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems in Moldova. There are two **components** – along with their associated outcomes, outputs and activities - which will contribute towards achieving the project objective. These are: (1) Improving representivity and coverage of the protected area system; and (2) Strengthening capacity to effectively manage the protected area system.

#### *Component 1 - Improving representivity and coverage of the protected area system*

Under this component, activities directly relating to supporting the implementation of the Government Decision of the Republic of Moldova on *Approval of the Regulations for the Procedure for Establishing a System of Protected Natural Areas* (2002) will be undertaken. The project will produce the following outputs under this component:

##### *1.1 Validation of the current system of protected areas*

Very little is known of the current conservation status of most of Moldova's protected areas, with the exception of the five scientific reserves and the three newly designated Ramsar sites. Most protected areas are reportedly not properly demarcated, have limited or no active conservation management, are under constant threat of conversion to productive land uses and are in varying states of bio-physical degradation. Work under this output is thus designed to assist the MENR in reviewing, revising and reforming the current biodiversity significance of, and conservation management arrangements for, the individual protected areas making up the protected area system of Moldova.

The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Mapping (or surveying, as required) the proclaimed boundaries of each protected area, and ensuring the registration of the cadastre with the relevant territorial cadastral office
- (ii) Development of a generic format for data capture in each PA. The inventory form will use the basic framework of the METT to ensure standardization and conformance of data capture information with international norms. The generic format will then be used to design a database structure for the 'State of Moldova's Protected Areas', as an integral part of the national EIS, that is linked to the GIS map of each protected area.
- (iii) *In situ* assessment of each protected area using the generic data capture forms. The assessment will include the preparation of explicit recommendations on the proposed management arrangements, boundaries, level of protection (i.e. PA category in terms of the *Law on Natural Areas Protected by the State*) and operational management interventions required for each PA.
- (iv) Inputting inventory data into the 'State of Moldova's Protected Areas' database.
- (v) Hosting a series of regional stakeholder workshops to review the recommendations for each protected area
- (vi) Preparation of the proposed amendments to the PA conservation status (boundaries, delegated management authority and/or category) of affected PAs to the Government for approval and adoption as a 'Decision of Government'.
- (vii) Securing the formal delegation of management authority to the affected PA agency.

The work will largely be undertaken by national biodiversity specialists and protected area planning and management service providers, who will be responsible for mapping the protected areas, developing the generic formats for data capture, collecting *in situ* protected areas data and inputting data into the 'State of Moldova's Protected Areas' database. A national surveyor will prepare survey diagrams as and where required. The Environmental Information Centre (EIC) of the MENR will define the database requirements, design the database structure and maintain the biodiversity data as an integral part of the government EIS. The Department of Natural Resources and Biodiversity (DNRB) of the MENR will, with the support of the service provider, register the cadastre (as needed) of the protected areas, host the regional stakeholder workshops and prepare the proposed amendments to PA conservation status for

government decision. The contracted service providers and the MENR will need to actively involve a range of national and local stakeholders in the conservation management assessment of each protected area and in making recommendations for any amendments.

### *1.2 Development of a strategy and implementation plan to direct the ongoing expansion of the protected area system in Moldova*

Although the Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan (BDCNSAP, 2001), the National Development Strategy (NDS, 2008) and the National Environmental Network (NEN, 2002) provides for the establishment of a representative network of protected areas in Moldova, there is not yet a clear national strategy about how this is to be achieved; no spatial prioritization; no tools and mechanisms; a limited enabling legal framework; and no medium-term action plan to direct the implementation of consolidation and expansion initiatives. Work under this output is thus designed to develop a strategic and operational decision-support tool for the MENR to support the ongoing consolidation and expansion of the national protected area system.

The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Systematic biodiversity planning, and spatial analysis, of PA priorities in Moldova using current systematic planning tools and technologies (e.g. MARXAN). This will include: an assessment of the current representation of the PA system; the identification of PA system gaps; the development of PA targets; and the identification of spatial priorities for PAs.
- (ii) Identifying and describing the different PA consolidation and expansion mechanisms (e.g. land allocation, land acquisition, contractual agreements, etc.), and the strategic approaches required for each mechanism (i.e. the process steps).
- (iii) Making recommendations on legal reforms, and the development of incentives, needed to facilitate PA consolidation and expansion processes.
- (iv) Formulating the medium-term actions required to achieve the PA consolidation and expansion targets. This will include defining the priorities, the timelines and the responsible institution for each action.
- (v) Identifying the financing options to fund the consolidation and expansion of the PA estate.
- (vi) Describing the institutional and governance arrangements (i.e. roles, responsibilities, co-operative governance structures) for PA consolidation and expansion.
- (vii) Presentation of the strategy and implementation plan to Government for adoption.
- (viii) Integration of the PA priority areas into the NEN and the local land use plans.
- (ix) Revision and updating of the legal and regulatory framework based on any recommendations contained in the strategy.

The work will be undertaken by an international conservation planning specialist and a national protected area planning and management service provider. An international protected area planning and management adviser, an international protected area financing expert and a national institutional development expert will provide specialist inputs as required. The contracted service expertise will need to ensure the active involvement of a focused group of local specialist and institutional stakeholders in the collation or mapping of 'feature' data, the development of conservation targets and the selection of the preferred network of PA priority areas. The DNRB will support the service providers in facilitating the institutional and specialist consultative processes and integrate the PA priority areas into the NEN and land use plans. The MENR will present the strategy and implementation plan to government for formal adoption and prepare amendments to the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks for submission to government. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will maintain working relationships with the different local authorities to support the integration of the PA priority areas into local land use plans. It is envisaged that the strategy and implementation plan will constitute a technical input into the preparation of the Ministry's Institutional Development Plan (IDP) and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

### *1.3 Establishment of the National Park 'Orhei'*

The project seeks to pilot an approach to PA expansion in Moldova that enables the consolidation and expansion of a number of existing, but currently spatially and institutionally fragmented, protected areas into a single protected area – a national park - under a single management authority. There are currently no national parks established in Moldova. The Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan for Moldova confirm that the establishment of national parks in Moldova is considered a high priority for the GM. In 2006, the MENR assessed the feasibility of five possible sites – Codrii, Orheiul Vechi, Prutul de Jos, Padurea Domneasca and Plaul Fuguli – to initiate national park establishment processes. An assessment of these five sites, plus an additional two – Nistrul de Jos and Iagorlic – was undertaken during project preparation. This assessment concluded that Orheiul Vechi (‘Orhei’) is the most viable site for supporting the MENR in initiating and administering the first national park establishment processes in Moldova.

The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Preparing a detailed assessment of national park establishment options and scenarios (e.g. land parcels for incorporation, operational management options, conservation/development zoning scenarios, tourism and recreational development options, financing scenarios, legal requirements, park establishment processes, stakeholder engagement planning, etc.).
- (ii) Initiating communication and consultation processes with all affected stakeholder institutions, groups and individuals to secure in principle agreements for park establishment.
- (iii) Negotiating with Moldosilva Forestry Agency the local authorities and any other affected landowner to formalize agreements to allocate land for the national park, and its management.
- (iv) Securing formal endorsements from the Academy of Sciences and MENR for park establishment.
- (v) Defining the institutional roles and responsibilities of the park management authority.
- (vi) Developing the cooperative governance arrangements for park planning and management.
- (vii) Designating the park management authority.
- (viii) Surveying (as needed) and demarcating the park boundaries.
- (ix) Preparing the management plan, including the identification of use zones, for the park.
- (x) Developing a sustainable financing plan for the park
- (xi) Securing a ‘Decision of Government’ for the designation of the National Park ‘Orhei’
- (xii) Developing the capacity and sourcing the resources to implement the management plan

The work will initially be overseen by the DNRB and other relevant departments of the MENR and technically supported by both the Project Management Unit (PMU) and a national service provider in park establishment processes. An international protected area financing expert will provide specialist inputs into preparing the park financing plan. An international protected area planning and management adviser will provide specialist inputs as required. As an integral part of the stakeholder consultation process, the capacity of local communities and the Orhei local authority will be developed to enable them to participate as equitable partners in the park establishment processes. The PA planning and management service provider will be contracted to undertake the feasibility assessment, draft the management plan, identify the resource and capacity needs and identify sustainable financing sources. The PMU will host and facilitate the negotiation and stakeholder consultation processes. Once the management authority for the national park has been identified, this authority will take direct responsibility for overseeing the remaining park establishment, planning and operational management processes, while the MENR will retain responsibility for ensuring that park establishment processes conform to, and meet with, legal and political requirements.

#### *Component 2 - Strengthening capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system*

Moldova has made significant progress in the improvement of its normative framework for environmental management and protection. There is however a growing disjuncture between the countries’s evolving legislation, policies and strategies and the actual capacity of the responsible institutions to implement them. Under this component, activities are thus directed at reinforcing the capacity of PA management authorities to implement protected area legislation, policies and strategies. The project will produce the following outputs under this component:

### *2.1 Reforming the institutional arrangements for protected area management*

The National Strategic Action Program for Environmental Protection 1995-2020, the BDCNSAP (2001) and the 'National Action Plan on Capacity Building for Integrated Implementation of the Rio Conventions 2006-2010' all identify the need to improve the institutional arrangements for protected area management in Moldova. Work under this output is designed to support the Central Public Administration (CPA) reform processes currently underway in Moldova<sup>7</sup>, by strengthening the governance and operational management arrangements for the national protected area system.

The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Reviewing international and regional best practice in the governance of protected areas, and their efficacy in the Moldovan context.
- (ii) Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different institutions and partners in PAS planning, management and monitoring.
- (iii) Developing a governance model for Moldova's PAS.
- (iv) Supporting the implementation of governance arrangements for the PAS
- (v) Reviewing international and regional best practice in the institutional structuring of government protected area agencies.
- (vi) Reviewing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the current institutional arrangements for protected area management, and their efficacy in the Moldovan context.
- (vii) Identifying alternative institutional development options - including the current institutional arrangements - for the government protected area agency/ies.
- (viii) Undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of the different institutional options for the government protected area agency/ies, and selecting a preferred institutional scenario.
- (ix) Assessing the feasibility of implementing the preferred institutional scenario for the government protected area agency/ies i.e. identifying enabling policy and legislation requirements, resource requirements (infrastructure, funding, staffing), management functions, structural considerations, etc.
- (x) Developing an action plan, with explicit timelines, for the restructuring of the government protected area agency/ies.
- (xi) Assessing institutional financing mechanisms and preparing an institutional financing plan for the government protected area agency/ies.
- (xii) Securing government commitment to and funding for the action plan through the 'Consultative and Supervisory Committee' of the CPA Reform and the 'Public Administration Reform Coordination Unit'.
- (xiii) Supporting the restructuring process in the government protected area agency/ies.
- (xiv) Ensuring the delegation of management authority for all protected areas in the PAS to the appropriate government protected area agency/ies.

The work will be integrated into the CPA reform processes currently underway in the country. Work under this output will be guided by the MENR, and technically supported by the PMU and a national institutional development specialist. An international protected area planning and management adviser and an international protected area institutional development expert will provide technical support as required. An international protected area financing expert will provide specialist inputs into preparing institutional financing plans. The national institutional development specialist will review international and regional best practice, develop a cooperative governance model for the PAS, identify alternative institutional models, review the cost-effectiveness of different institutional models, assess the feasibility of the preferred institutional model and develop an implementation plan to guide the restructuring processes. The PMU will facilitate and support technical discussions with the different institutional stakeholders, and host stakeholder consultation meetings to review the cooperative governance model and

---

<sup>7</sup> See the 'Action Plan of the Central Public Administration Reform Strategy', 2008 ([www.rapc.gov.md](http://www.rapc.gov.md))

the alternative institutional options for government protected area agencies. The MENR will ensure that institutional reforms and cooperative governance models are supported at the level of central government and will amend/ update the enabling policy and legal framework as required.

## *2.2 Preparing 'directions' for the national protected area system*

The 'National Action Plan on Capacity Building for Integrated Implementation of the Rio Conventions 2006-2010' emphasizes that a strategic priority for the MENR is to: develop norms and standards for protected areas; to increase income streams for protected areas by developing their financial sustainability; and to increase the skills and competence levels of staff in protected area planning and management. The Department of Natural Resources and Biodiversity in the MENR has the primary responsibility for the development and promotion of the government policy in the area of environmental protection, conservation and management of sustainable utilization of natural resources, state protected natural areas and biodiversity. However, with a staff complement of only six (2 foresters and 4 biologists), none of which have any specific expertise in protected area planning and management, the capacity of the DNRB to provide policy and planning support to the PAS is extremely limited. Work under this output is thus designed to support the MENR in developing norms and standards for the different categories of protected areas in the PAS, developing operational guidelines for protected area management and identifying financing mechanisms for protected areas.

The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Developing a standard approach to the establishment of protected areas. This will include drafting an agreed set of minimum standards which different categories of protected areas must meet to be incorporated in the National Protected Area System.
- (ii) Identifying a set of common broad management principles for protected areas, which embody contemporary thinking on protected area management, to ensure the on-going maintenance and management of their primary biodiversity and heritage conservation values.
- (iii) Developing operational guidelines for protected areas, including: (a) the preparation of management, and any other subsidiary, plans; (b) responses to common management issues such as fire, rehabilitation and restoration, invasive alien species, problem animals and neighbor conflicts; (c) the provision of tourism/visitor facilities and services; (e) natural resource use; (f) heritage management; (g) stakeholder engagement; and (h) co-operative governance arrangements.
- (iv) Identifying the range of appropriate financing mechanisms for the protected area network and individual protected areas.
- (v) Identifying the reporting requirements to monitor management effectiveness of protected areas and the protected area system.
- (vi) Defining the respective roles and responsibilities of the MENR, other ministries, public enterprises and protected area institutions.
- (vii) Collating all the information (activities i-vi) into a '*Directions for the Moldovan Protected Area System*', and integrating these 'Directions' into the national regulatory framework

The work will be facilitated by a national protected area planning and management service provider with the support of an international protected area planning and management adviser. The service provider will be specifically required to develop and implement a mentoring and training programme for counterpart staff in the DNRB during the iterative development of the PA norms and standards. DNRB staff will be introduced to global and regional best practice through experiential training programmes. The PMU will support the MENR in coordinating the drafting of the consolidated Directions report. A participative process will be undertaken by the service provider in the iterative drafting of the directions, including focal issue-based workshops with research institutions, university faculties, local municipalities, other ministries, NGO's and individual specialists. The contracted service provider will liaise with selected counterpart conservation agencies to benchmark the directions against global best practice.

## *2.3 Strengthening the operational capacity of the protected area institutions*

To complement and support the ongoing restructuring of the government agency/ies responsible for

protected area management in Moldova (see Output 2.1 above), work under this output is designed to develop the individual capacities of the operational staff within these agencies. The need for professional development of protected area staff is clearly articulated in the ‘National Action Plan on Capacity Building for Integrated Implementation of the Rio Conventions 2006-2010’.

The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Identifying the desired skills and competence standards required for effective protected area planning and management at the different occupational levels
- (ii) Assessing the current skills base and competence levels of operational protected area staff in Moldova, and identifying the critical ‘gaps’ for the different occupational levels
- (iii) Assessing and identifying options for human resource development and training programs in order to address these critical gaps in skills and raise competence standards
- (iv) Collaborating with the Center for Staff Qualification and Improvement (CSQI) in the design and development of short-course and undergraduate training and development programmes within the relevant national Academic and Research Institutes
- (v) Facilitating the piloting of short-course training and development programmes by enabling the training of at least 30 protected area staff in different aspects of PA operations including: strategic and business planning; financial management; participative management; enforcement and compliance; restoration and rehabilitation works; IAS control; recreational and tourism management; and knowledge management.
- (vi) Securing the formal certification of training and development programmes for protected area planning and management.

The work under this output will be guided by the requirements of the CSQI. The Academy of Sciences, CSQI and Academic and Research Institutes will be extensively consulted in the design of training and development programmes for PA staff. A human resources development specialist, with technical support from a national protected area planning and management service provider and an international protected area planning and management adviser, will: (a) develop the skills and competence standards for protected areas; (b) assess the current skills base and competence of protected area agency staff; (c) identify the critical skills and competence gaps; and (d) facilitate the design and development of training and development programs. MENR will co-ordinate the drafting of the ‘Competence standard for Moldova’s protected areas’ report and integrate key recommendations of this report into the Ministry’s IDP and MTER. The affected protected area agency will select the appropriate staff to attend the relevant training and development programs.

#### *2.4. Implementing an education and awareness programme in Orhei*

The National Strategic Action Program for Environmental Protection 1995-2020, the BDCNSAP (2001) the ‘National Action Plan on Capacity Building for Integrated Implementation of the Rio Conventions 2006-2010’ and the National Development Strategy (2007) all emphasize the need to raise public environmental awareness in Moldova. Under this output, activities are directed at developing a national strategic framework for coordinating the implementation of conservation education and awareness programmes in Moldova, and the local implementation of a focused outreach program in and around Orhei in support of the establishment of the National Park Orhei (see output 1.3). Work under this output is designed to support the national park establishment processes in Orhei (see output 1.3) by developing in local communities an awareness of the actual and potential value and benefits of the conservation of biodiversity to urban and rural livelihoods in the Orhei region. The Orhei administrative district has a population of approximately 127,000 people. Some 37 000 people live immediately in and around the area proposed for the creation of the National Park (i.e. Orhei town and villages of Seliste, Isacova, Teleşeu, Neculăieuca, Tabara, Curchi and Mana). Because there is currently no national conservation education and awareness program, this output will also support the MENR in developing a national conservation education and awareness plan to strategically contextualize the local implementation of an awareness-raising initiative in Orhei and surrounds.



The activities under this output are directed at:

- (i) Profiling the current status of conservation education and awareness initiatives across Moldova.
- (ii) Reviewing international and regional best practice in conservation education and awareness.
- (iii) Preparing a national conservation education and awareness strategy and implementation plan.
- (iv) Developing an education and awareness programme for the Orhei region that focuses on demonstrating the values and benefits of the conservation of the areas biodiversity and heritage features (both on- and off-reserve)
- (v) Designing and developing appropriate educational and communication media and resource materials (teacher guides, educational ‘toolboxes’, newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, booklets, interpretation boards, local radio inserts, advertisements, etc.) for the local education and awareness programme
- (vi) Implementing outreach programmes (talks, presentations, exhibits, clean-up programs, guided day walks etc.) in local communities and primary and secondary schools
- (vii) Facilitating experiential learning programs in natural areas surrounding Orhei (camping, tree-planting, removing invasive plants, testing organic agricultural technologies, hiking, etc)

The work will be contracted to an environmental NGO, or coalition of NGO’s, who will function as the national conservation education service provider. The service provider will, under the guidance of the MENR, prepare the national conservation education and awareness strategy and action plan for adoption by the government. A wide range of stakeholder groups, including the Ministry of Education, will be consulted in the preparation of the strategy and action plan. The service provider will develop and implement the local conservation and education programme in Orhei, in close collaboration with the team facilitating the national park establishment process.

### **3. Sustainability (including financial sustainability)**

54. The project has been carefully designed to optimize prospects for achieving the sustainability of the protected area network at three levels: financial, institutional and social.

55. The project will provide resources to assess the efficacy of different *financial* mechanisms<sup>8</sup> that could be implemented by the country to help subsidize the capital and recurring operational costs of protected areas. The project will specifically identify the structural requirements needed to implement these financing mechanisms, assess ways to ensure their acceptance by protected area users and estimate the anticipated income streams from each mechanism. At a local protected area level, the project will provide resources to more explicitly identify the medium-term expenditure requirements for the National Park Orhei, and program the roll-out of the appropriate financing mechanisms to generate the income streams needed to meet these anticipated costs. A key element of the financial sustainability of the project is securing the commitment of the government to commit an ongoing annual resource allocation to the management of its protected area system.

56. *Institutional* sustainability will be enhanced in the project through the design of the most effective institutional arrangements for protected area planning and management in Moldova. This will include: (i) identifying the most cost-efficient (social-environmental-financial) institution/s to manage the operations of individual protected areas; (ii) structuring the responsible PA institutions in Moldova to provide a more enabling environment for the planning, management and monitoring of the national protected area system; (iii) describing the co-operative governance arrangements for both the protected area system, and individual protected areas; and (iv) identifying opportunities and institutional mechanisms for co-management of, and partnerships in, protected areas. The project will specifically identify the competence, levels and occupational standards for the responsible institutions that will be required to meet their institutional mandates for protected areas. At the national level, resources will be allocated to build the capacity of the MENR and the

---

<sup>8</sup> The financing mechanisms referred to here are broadly categorized into: public goods (e.g. grants and subsidies, debt-related instruments); corrective or stimulative actions (e.g. environmental fines, user fees/charges, environmental offsets, tradeable permits); and business applications (e.g. venture capital for ‘green business’, low-interest credits and loans).

delegated operational PA management authorities to provide an enabling legal, planning and decision-support framework for the protected area system. At a local protected area level the project will provide resources to develop and implement a tailored training program for the staff of the operational PA management authority/ies.

57. *Social* sustainability will be enhanced through the implementation of a number of individual stakeholder engagement processes developed for each of the project activities in both the protected area system planning and the re-proclamation processes in the individual pilot protected areas. Robust stakeholder engagement plans for the respective project activities will be drafted to direct broad-based stakeholder involvement in all aspects of protected area system planning and development. These stakeholder engagement plans will also make strong provision for conflict management. The project will further identify mechanisms for the ongoing constructive engagement of communities and the NGO sector in protected area planning, development and operations, notably through partnerships, co-management and co-operative governance. Mechanisms for optimizing the beneficiation of local communities from protected areas will be identified at the level of the protected area system, and further developed in detail in the two pilot protected areas. A focused education and awareness program will be developed and implemented in and around the Orhei district to support and complement the national park establishment processes.

#### **4. Replicability**

58. Replication will be achieved through the direct replication of selected project elements and practices and methods, as well as the scaling up of experiences. The project will develop and use a knowledge management system to ensure the effective collation and dissemination of experiences and information gained in the course of the project's implementation. This knowledge management system will be designed to ensure that information and data formats and flows are directed at the most relevant stakeholder groups to support decision-making processes.

59. The following project elements stand out as being most amenable to replication elsewhere in the Moldovan PA system: (i) knowledge of stakeholder consultation processes required to address issues of concern around the existing protected areas; (ii) experience on adjustment of the PA boundaries of existing PAs; (iii) identification of innovative co-management arrangements for existing PAs; (iv) experience of stakeholder engagement processes required to support national park establishment processes; (v) strategic, operational, logistical, institutional and financial planning requirements for national parks in Moldova; (vi) efficacy of the rationalisation of PA organizational structures to more effectively meet the PA management requirements; (vii) identification of competence levels and skills required to effectively administer and manage PAs; (viii) inventorying monitoring and biodiversity data management for increased PA operational effectiveness; (ix) inter-agency coordination in PA management; (x) establishment of multi-stakeholder governance structures for protected areas; and (xi) implementation of sustainable alternative livelihoods projects in PAs to support biodiversity conservation.

60. By year 4, it is anticipated that national park establishment processes will be at varying stages of replication in four priority areas for PA expansion in Moldova, at least two of which would have the scientific reserves forming the core area of these national parks.

#### **5. Stakeholder Involvement**

61. Throughout the project's development, very close contact was maintained with all stakeholders at the national and local levels. All affected national government institutions were directly involved in project development, as were public entities, affected municipalities, research and academic institutions and NGO's. Numerous consultations occurred with all of the above stakeholders (see table below) to discuss different aspects of project design. The draft project brief was presented to stakeholders at a final consolidated stakeholder workshop, and was endorsed by all present.

Type of meeting	Stakeholders consulted
Institutional one-on-one consultations and meetings	Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources; Biodiversity office; Moldsilva; Moldsilva Forestry Agency; Scientific Reserves, Padurea Domnesca and Codrii; Institute of Zoology; Soil Institute; Geographical Institute; Botanical Institute; Environmental Movement of Moldova; REC Moldova; Biotica; Members of Ecological and Agricultural commissions of the Parliament; Inter-Ministerial Commission for implementation of Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; Orhei Local Authority; Ecospectru; Miscarea Ecologica din Moldova; Forestry Enterprise, Orhei; Orhei District Administration
Expert workshops	National experts and international consultant
Stakeholder workshops:	<p><i>Workshop 1</i> (Information dissemination) - Specialists from Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources; State Environmental Inspectorate; Biodiversity office; members of Ecological and Agricultural commissions of the Parliament; and Inter-Ministerial Commission for implementation of Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Moldsilva; Forest Research and Management Institute; Scientific Reserves Padurea Domneasca, Codrii, Plaiul Fagului, and Prutul de Jos; Academy of Science (Institute of Zoology and Botanical Garden); UNDP Moldova; Environmental Movement of Moldova; REC Moldova; Ecospectru; and representatives from Climate Change, Steppe restoration, POP's and Bio-security Projects.</p> <p><i>Workshop 2</i> (Review of project activities) - Specialists from Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources; Biodiversity office; Moldsilva; Forest Research and Management Institute, Academy of Science (Institute of Zoology, Ecology and Botanical Garden), UNDP Moldova, Environmental Movement of Moldova, REC Moldova; Orhei District Municipality; Forestry Enterprise Orhei.</p>

62. The primary stakeholders involved in the project's development and their expected roles and responsibilities in the project's implementation, include the following:

Stakeholder	Anticipated role in project implementation
-------------	--

<p>Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Policy, Analysis, Monitoring and Assessment</li> <li>- Department of Natural Resources and Biodiversity</li> <li>- National Environmental Fund (NEF)</li> <li>- State Environmental Inspectorate</li> <li>- Environmental information centre (EIC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project implementation</li> <li>- Chair of PSC</li> <li>- Inter-institutional coordination</li> <li>- Drafting and adoption of supporting legislation</li> <li>- Integration of project outputs into national strategies, plans and guidelines</li> <li>- Development and maintenance of biodiversity information in the EIC</li> <li>- Liaison with Pan-European planning and conservation initiatives and programs</li> <li>- Define the database requirements, design the database structure and maintain the biodiversity data as an integral part of the government EIS.</li> <li>- Support the service providers in facilitating the institutional and specialist consultative processes and integrate the PA priority areas into the NEN and land use plans.</li> <li>- Support in elaboration of strategy and implementation plan for protected areas.</li> <li>- Guiding the proclamation processes in the pilot area (Orhei National Park) and retain responsibility for ensuring that park establishment processes conform to, and meet with, legal and political requirements.</li> <li>- Ensure that institutional reforms and cooperative governance models are supported at the level of central government and will amend/ update the enabling policy and legal framework as required.</li> <li>- Implementing the project outputs, and replicating lessons learnt, in the remaining protected areas across the country</li> <li>- Co-financing</li> </ul>
<p>Forest Agency “Moldsilva” Forest enterprises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in PSC</li> <li>- Co-financing</li> <li>- Providing supporting data for EIC</li> <li>- Engage in individual project activity consultation processes</li> <li>- Drafting and adoption of supporting legislation</li> <li>- Institutional re-structuring and capacity building to support implementation of project plans and strategies</li> <li>- Demarcation of forests</li> <li>- Integration of project plans, strategies and guidelines into the <i>National Forest Code</i></li> <li>- Participate in train-the-trainers and training</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in PSC</li> <li>- Supporting data for EIC</li> <li>- Drafting and adoption of supporting legislation</li> <li>- Engage in individual project activity consultation processes</li> </ul>
<p>Ministry of Culture and Tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in PSC upon request</li> <li>- Institutional partner in proclamation process for Orhei National Park</li> <li>- Engage in individual project activity consultation processes</li> </ul>

Local public authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participate in PSC (Orhei)</li> <li>– Co-financing</li> <li>– Institutional partner in re-proclamation process for Protected areas</li> <li>– Institutional partner in creation process for National Park Orhei</li> <li>– Supporting data for EIC</li> <li>– Engage in individual project activity consultation processes</li> </ul>
Academic and Research Institutions - State Agrarian University and State University of Moldova - Faculty of Natural Science - Faculty of Agriculture - Faculty of Forestry - Institute of Ecology and Geography - Botanical Garden (Institute) - Zoological Institute - Academy of Science - Museum of Natural History - Zoological Garden (Chisinau) - Institute of Forest Management and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participate in PSC</li> <li>– Specialist inputs into project activities</li> <li>– Providing information and guidance on best practice</li> <li>– Supporting data for EIC</li> <li>– Engage in individual project activity consultation processes</li> <li>– Support to institutional training and development of protected area institutions</li> <li>– Contractual service providers</li> </ul>
NGO's: Environmental Movement of Moldova ; Regional Environment Centre Moldova (REC); Biotica; Ecospectru; Fagus etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participate in PSC</li> <li>– Providing information on lessons learnt and best practice</li> <li>– Institutional partners for Orhei pilot sites, and other protected areas</li> <li>– Engage in individual project activity consultation processes</li> <li>– Implementing agency for project activities</li> </ul>
UNDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Participate in PSC</li> <li>– Providing support for procurement, recruitment and financial management</li> <li>– Monitoring and Evaluation</li> <li>– Lease with the GEF</li> </ul>

### Stakeholder Involvement Plan

63. Project Inception: The project will be launched by a well-publicized multi-stakeholder workshop. This workshop will provide an opportunity to provide all stakeholders with the most updated information on the project, the work plan, and will establish a basis for further consultation as the project's implementation commences.

64. Project implementation: The project's design incorporates several features to ensure ongoing and effective stakeholder participation in the project's implementation. The Project Steering Committee's constituency will ensure broad representation of all key interests throughout the project's implementation. The project's communications strategy will also facilitate stakeholder involvement by keeping all stakeholders informed about the project's objectives, activities and overall progress, as well as informing them of opportunities for involvement in various aspects of the project's implementation.

65. At the activity level, specific interest groups will actively participate in the implementation of project activities. Different stakeholder groups will take the lead depending on the nature of activities, and their particular relative mandates and strengths.

66. The engagement and active participation of local communities in the project's implementation will be

actively promoted. The inclusion of all stakeholders in the planning and decision-making processes for the establishment of a national park in Orhei will also be fundamental to its success. Certain activities were specifically designed to directly involve local stakeholders in the project's implementation. These include the validation of the existing protected areas as a mechanism to reconnect local communities with the individual PAs, the development of alternative sustainable and biodiversity supporting livelihood options in the national park establishment processes and the use of community-based organisations to implement environmental education and awareness-raising campaigns in and around Orhei.

67. Another important feature to attain broad stakeholders' involvement is the orientation of the project to widely disseminate the lessons learnt across the country. During the period of the project implementation a great deal of time and efforts will be put into conducting detailed consultations with the specified groups and seek to increase their close interest and involvement in the project implementation.

68. The project's activities were designed on the basis of inputs from a wide range of stakeholders. The project will continue this process of consultation as activities are implemented. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will fulfil the role of facilitating stakeholder involvement and, therefore, contributing to increased local ownership of the project and its results.

### **PART III – MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **6. Core Commitments and Linkages**

69. Various policy documents frame government policy for biodiversity conservation and the establishment and management of protected areas.

70. The government's commitment to the establishment of a National Environmental Network (NEN) is demonstrated in the *National Programme for Establishing the NEN* for the period 2008-2015. The project will contribute to the development of this programme through the detailed planning of the core areas of the NEN.

71. The project is consistent with the spatial priorities and protected area targets identified in the *Territorial Scheme for Environmental Protection and Rational Use of Natural Resources of the Republic of Moldova: 1991-2010*, the *Millennium Development Goals for the Republic of Moldova: 2000-2015*, the National Ecological Network (2001, as amended), the *Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan* (BDCNSAP, 2002) and the *National Development Strategy: 2008 – 2011* (NDS, 2007). The selection of the project site for the establishment of the National Park 'Orhei' is consistent with a resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova (no. 605 - XV of 2 November, 2001). The project complements and supports the Government Decision on the regulatory framework for the Procedures for establishing a system of protected natural areas (2002).

72. The project activities conform with the priority activities and actions identified in the *National Strategic Action Program for Environmental Protection for 1995-2020*, the BDCNSAP<sup>9</sup>, the NDS, the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Forestry Fund and State Program on Forest Fund Areas Regeneration and Forestation: 2003-2020*, the *National Action Plan on Capacity Building for Integrated Implementation of the Rio Conventions: 2006-2010* and the *Action Plan of the Central Public Administration Reform Strategy for 2008*.

73. The project activities specifically complement the environmental policies (cf. chapter 6.12) of the *Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy* (2004), the *Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Republic of Moldova: 2003 – 2015* and the trans-boundary conservation programmes with Ukraine and Romania, under the framework of the *Concept of Trans-boundary Cooperation: 2004-2006*.

---

<sup>9</sup> Specifically, general actions A3.2, A3.3, B4, D1, D2, D3 and E1.

## **7. Consultation, Coordination and Collaboration**

74. The project will ensure the ongoing coordination and exchange of experiences and information with related conservation initiatives in Moldova, in particular: (i) the ‘Management Scenario Development for the Unguri – Holosnita Ramsar Site’ and the ‘Awareness Raising on the Ramsar Convention Wise Use Policy’ projects, financed by the Secretariat of the Ramsar convention and the National Environment Fund (NEF); (ii) the ‘Moldova Soil Conservation’ and ‘Community Forest Development’ projects that targets the afforestation of degraded agricultural lands, financed by the World Bank (Carbon funds), the Japanese Government and the NEF; and (iii) the ‘Trans-boundary cooperation and sustainable management of the Dniester River’ project, supported by OSCE and UNECE.

75. The project will liaise with counterpart protected area institutions and protected area initiatives in Ukraine and Romania. It will exchange knowledge and information in PA management, review lessons learnt in GEF project implementation, and adopt or adapt existing PA planning and management decision-support tools wherever appropriate. The Project Manager will maintain a close working partnership with the project teams of three GEF-funded projects in Ukraine and Romania: (i) ‘Strengthening Governance And Financial Sustainability of the National Protected Area System in Ukraine’; (ii) ‘Strengthening Romania's Protected Area System by Demonstrating Best Practices for Management of Small Protected Areas in Macin Mountains National Park’; and (iii) Strengthening Romania's Protected Area System by Demonstrating Government-NGO Partnership in Romania's Maramures Nature Park.

76. The project will review lessons learnt and knowledge developed from, sustainable land use and agriculture programmes in and adjacent to Moldova, including; (i) the EU-funded project, implemented by Euroconsult Mott MacDonald that seeks to restore and encourage sustainable integrated land use of steppe habitats in Ukraine, Moldova and the Russian Federation; (ii) the ‘Identification of High Nature Value Farmland (HNVF) in Moldova’ - as a case study for the EECCA sub-region - funded by the Government of Norway; and (iii) The GEF-funded (in preparation) project ‘Integrated and Sustainable Land Management through Community Based Approach in Moldova’.

77. The project will seek to align with, and integrate the system of PAs for Moldova into, the Pan European Ecological Network, the Emerald Network and the Econet for Central Asia.

## **8. Implementation/Execution Arrangements**

78. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR) is the government institution responsible for the implementation of the project and will act as the Executing Agency (EA). UNDP is the Implementing Agency (IA) for the project. The project is nationally executed (NEX), in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA, 1992) and the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP, 2007) signed between the UNDP and the Government of Moldova.

79. The MENR will take overall responsibility for the project implementation, and the timely and verifiable attainment of project objectives and outcomes. It will provide support to, and inputs for, the implementation of all project activities. The MENR will nominate a high level official who will serve as the national coordinator of the project implementation, who will not be paid from the project funds, but will represent a Government in kind contribution to the Project. The UNDP will be responsible for: (i) providing financial services and audit; (ii) overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets approved by PSC; (iii) appointment of independent financial auditors and evaluators; and (iv) ensuring that all activities including procurement and financial services are carried out in strict compliance with UNDP procedures.

80. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established by the ministerial decree (as per the recommendation from each participation institution) as the project’s coordination and decision-making body. The PSC is responsible for ensuring that the project remains on course to deliver products of the required

quality to meet the outcomes defined in the project document. The PSC's role will include: (i) overseeing project implementation; (ii) approving all project work plans and budgets at the proposal of the PM which will be further submitted to UNDP Regional Center in Bratislava and GEF Unit in New York; (iii) endorse the recruitment and appointment of the Project Manager and Project Assistant; (iv) approving any major changes in project plans or programs; (v) providing technical input and advice; (vi) approving major project deliverables; (vii) ensuring commitment of resources to support project implementation; and (viii) arbitrating any conflicts within the project and/or negotiating solutions between the project and any parties beyond the scope of the project; (ix) overall project evaluation. The PSC should include in its composition the following stakeholders (one representative from each of them): the MENR, State Environmental Inspectorate, Forestry Agency Moldsilva, Academy of Sciences, Agency of Land Relations and Cadastre, local public authority (e.g. Orhei), civil society and UNDP. The PSC will be convened by the MENR, and supported logistically by the Project Management Unit (PMU). The PSC meetings will be chaired by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources (or a designate) who will be the president of the PSC. It will meet according the necessity, but not less than once in 6 months, to review project progress, approve project work plans and approve major project deliverables.

81. The day-to-day administration of the project will be carried out by a Project Management Unit (PMU) comprising a Project Manager (PM) and Project Assistant (PA). The PMU offices will be physically located within the MENR offices. The project staff will be recruited through a competitive selection process starting from announcement made by UNDP and recruitment process carried out by a selection panel (three persons from MERN and one from UNDP) and approved by the PSC. The Project Manager will liaise and work closely with all interested stakeholders, at national and international levels, and link the project with complementary national programs and initiatives. The PMU will manage the implementation of all project activities, including: preparation/updates of project work and budget plans, record keeping, accounting and reporting; drafting of terms of reference, technical specifications and other documents as necessary; identification, proposal of project consultants to be approved by the PSC, coordination and supervision of consultants and suppliers; organisation of duty travel, seminars, public outreach activities and other project events; and maintaining working contacts with project partners at the central and local levels.

82. The PMU will produce Annual Work and Budget Plans (AWP&ABP) to be approved by the Project Steering Committee at the beginning of each year. These plans will provide the basis for allocating resources to planned activities. Once the PSC approves the Annual Work Plan this will be sent to the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor for Biodiversity at UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States in Bratislava for revision and approval. Once the Annual Working Plan and Budget is approved by the Regional Centre it will be sent to the UNDP/GEF Unit in New York for final approval and release of the funding. The PMU will further produce quarterly operational reports and Annual Progress Reports (APR) to the PSC, or any other reports at the request of the PSC. Like in the case for the Annual Work Plan these reports are sent for approval and clearance to the UNDP Regional Centre in Bratislava. These reports will summarise the progress made by the project versus the expected results, explain any significant variances, detail the necessary adjustments and be the main reporting mechanism for monitoring project activities. The PMU will be technically supported by contracted national and international service providers. Recruitment of specialist services for the project will be done by the PM, in consultation with the EA.

#### **PART IV – MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN AND BUDGET**

83. The monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the project will follow the UNDP Program Manual and GEF M&E procedures. The M&E will be conducted by the project team and the UNDP Country Office (UNDP-CO) with support from UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit (UNDP-GEF RCU) in Bratislava. The *Project Results Framework Matrix* in Annex A provides impact and outcome indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The M&E approach for the project is to assess how the project results contribute to a change in the development conditions for protected areas in Moldova.



84. The M&E plan for the project includes: (i) an *Inception Report (IR)*; (ii) *Annual Progress Reports (APR)*; (iii) *quarterly operational reports*; and (iv) *mid-term and final evaluations*. Mid-term and final evaluations will be conducted with the help of independent external consultants. The project's M&E Plan will be presented and finalized at the Project's Inception Workshop following a collective identification and verification of project outputs and a fine-tuning of indicators, means of verification, and the full definition of project staff M&E responsibilities.

85. A project inception workshop will be conducted with the full project team, relevant government counterparts, co-financing partners, the UNDP-CO and representation from the UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinating Unit. The objectives of this Inception Workshop (IW) will include assisting the project team to understand and take ownership of the project's goal, objective and outcomes, finalizing the project's first Annual Work Plan (AWP) on the basis of the project's log-frame matrix, and reviewing the M&E Plan. The Inception Workshop will provide the stakeholders an opportunity to fine-tune performance indicators, means of verification and assumptions; responsibilities for M&E including reporting will be allocated. The inception workshop will also provide an opportunity for all parties to understand their roles, functions, and responsibilities within the project's implementation process, including reporting and communication lines, and conflict resolution mechanisms.

86. The overall monitoring of the project will be carried out by the Project Steering Committee (PSC), which will include representatives from at least: the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR); Forestry Agency *Moldsilva*; Academy of Sciences; UNDP-CO; Local Authorities; and representatives from NGOs and CBOs not directly involved in project implementation. The PSC will convene once per year for the *Annual Project Implementation Review (PIRs)*. The Project manager (PM) of the Project Management Unit (PMU) will prepare an *Annual Project Report (APR)* and submit it to the PSC members prior to the meeting for review and comments.

87. The day-to-day monitoring of implementation progress will be the responsibility of the Project Manager (PM), whose work will be based on the project's Annual Work Plan and its indicators. S/He may be assisted by other members of the project team and by external consultants, as deemed necessary and as laid down in the Annual Work Plans. The Project Manager will work in close liaison with UNDP-CO's programme manager, who is responsible for overseeing project implementation and giving the necessary guidance.

88. The project design foresees two external evaluations: a *mid-term evaluation* and a *final evaluation*. The mid-term evaluation will determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and will identify course correction if needed. It will focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation and will highlight issues requiring decisions and actions. The recommendations of this review will give guidance for the second half of the project's term. An independent final evaluation will take place three months prior to the terminal PIR meeting and will be undertaken in accordance with UNDP and GEF requirements. The final evaluation will focus on the delivery of the project's results as initially planned (and as corrected after the mid-term evaluation, if any such correction took place). The final evaluation will focus on impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development and the achievement of global environmental goals. The final evaluation should also provide recommendations for follow-up activities. The terms of reference of the mid-term and final evaluations will be decided after consultation within the Steering Committee. UNDP's Regional Coordinating Unit will give guidance as regards the TORs and the selection of consultants.

89. Project Reporting: The Project Manager in conjunction with the extended project team (Project Management Unit staff, UNDP Programme Manager) will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the following reports that form part of the monitoring process:

(i) A Project *Inception Report (IR)* will be prepared immediately following the Inception Workshop. It will

include a detailed *Annual Work Plan* (AWP) for the first year. The Report will also include the detailed project budget for the first full year of implementation, and including any M&E requirements to effectively measure project performance during the targeted 12 months timeframe. The Inception Report will include a more detailed narrative on the institutional roles, responsibilities, coordinating actions and feedback mechanisms of project related partners. Information on progress to date on project establishment and start-up activities will be included as well as an update of any changed external conditions that may effect project implementation. When finalized, the report will be circulated to project counterparts to respond with comments or queries.

(ii) Short *progress reports* (operational reports) outlining main updates in project progress will be provided quarterly to the local UNDP-CO and the UNDP-GEF Regional Office by the project team.

(iii) The *PIR/APR* will be prepared on an annual basis prior to the Steering Committees' meetings to reflect progress achieved in meeting the project's Annual Work Plan and assess performance of the project in contributing to intended outcomes through outputs and partnership work. The PIR/APR will include recommendations for future orientation in addressing key problems in lack of progress.

(iv) The comprehensive *Project Terminal Report* (PTR) will summarize all activities, achievements and outputs of the project, and will carefully analyze the impacts and outcomes, lessons learnt, objectives met, or not achieved, structures and systems implemented, etc. It will also lay out recommendations for any further steps that may need to be taken to ensure sustainability and replicability of the project's activities.

(v) *Technical reports* will form a key element to assess certain issues and to find solutions. These reports may deal with institutional, legal, technical or other issues. The subjects of these studies will be defined in the Annual Work Plans.

90. Auditing: The Government of Moldova will provide the UNDP Moldova CO with certified periodic financial statements, and with an annual audit of the financial statements relating to the status of UNDP (including GEF) funds according to the established procedures set out in the Programming and Finance manuals. The Audit will be conducted by the legally recognized auditor of the Government, or by a commercial auditor engaged by the Government.

91. Learning and knowledge sharing: The project will identify, analyze, and share lessons learned that might be beneficial in the design and implementation of similar future projects. The project will also identify and participate, as relevant and appropriate, in regional protected area planning, policy, operations and any other networks which may be of benefit to project implementation though lessons learned. Participatory approaches to protected area planning and management are not well-established in Moldova and the project will, as part of its M&E efforts, specifically evaluate and document these experiences.

92. M&E budget: The table below summarizes the monitoring activities, responsible parties, budget and time frames for the project. Only activities to be funded directly by GEF and UNDP sources are listed in the table.

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$	Time frame
Inception Workshop (IW)	Project Coordinator MENR, UNDP, UNDP GEF	5,000	Within first two months of project start up
Inception Report	Project Team PSC, UNDP CO	None	Immediately following IW

Type of M&E activity	Responsible Parties	Budget US\$	Time frame
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Purpose Indicators	Project Coordinator will oversee the hiring of specific studies and institutions, and delegate responsibilities to relevant team members	To be finalized in Inception Phase and Workshop. Cost to be covered by targeted survey funds.	Start, mid and end of project
Measurement of Means of Verification for Project Progress and Performance (measured on an annual basis)	Oversight by Project GEF Technical Advisor and Project Coordinator Measurements by regional field officers and local IAs	TBD as part of the Annual Work Plan's preparation. Cost to be covered by field survey budget.	Annually prior to APR/PIR and to the definition of annual work plans
APR and PIR	Project Team PSC UNDP-GEF	None	Annually
TPR	Government Counterparts UNDP CO, Project team UNDP-GEF RCU	None	Every year, upon receipt of APR
Steering Committee Meetings	Project Coordinator	None	Following IW and annually thereafter.
Technical and periodic status reports	Project team Hired consultants as needed	6,000	TBD by Project team and UNDP-CO
Mid-term External Evaluation	Project team PSC UNDP-GEF RCU External Consultants (evaluation team)	28,450	At the mid-point of project implementation.
Final External Evaluation	Project team, PSC, UNDP-GEF RCU External Consultants (evaluation team)	33,500	At the end of project implementation
Terminal Report	Project team PSC External Consultant	None	At least one month before the end of the project
Audit	UNDP-CO Project team	4,000	Yearly
Visits to field sites (UNDP staff travel costs to be charged to IA fees)	UNDP-CO, UNDP-GEF RCU Government representatives	None	Yearly average one visit per year
TOTAL indicative COST Excluding project staff time, UNDP staff and travel expenses.		77,850	

## PART V – LEGAL CONTEXT

93. This Project Document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article I of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) between the Government of Moldova and the United Nations Development Programme, signed by the parties in 1992. The host country implementing agency shall, for the purpose of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, refer to the government co-operating agency described in that Agreement.

94. The UNDP Resident Representative in Moldova is authorized to effect in writing the following types of revision to this Project Document, provided that he/she has verified the agreement thereto by the UNDP-GEF Unit and is assured that the other signatories to the Project Document have no objection to the proposed changes:

- a) Revision of, or addition to, any of the annexes to the Project Document;
- b) Revisions which do not involve significant changes in the immediate objectives, outputs or activities of the project, but are caused by the rearrangement of the inputs already agreed to or by cost increases due to inflation;
- c) Mandatory annual revisions which re-phase the delivery of agreed project inputs or increased expert or other costs due to inflation or take into account agency expenditure flexibility; and
- d) Inclusion of additional annexes and attachments only as set out here in this Project Document

## SECTION II: Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and GEF Increment

Project Strategy and purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators				Risks and Assumptions
	Indicator	Baseline	Target by EOP	Sources of verification	
<b>Goal:</b>	To build the capacity of protected area institutions in Moldova to establish and administer a more representative system of protected areas				
<b>Objective:</b> To develop an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems	Financial sustainability scorecard for national systems of protected areas	21	>30	Annual Financial Sustainability Scorecard	<b>Assumptions:</b> The <i>National Programme for Establishing the NEN</i> for the period 2008-2015 is developed, adopted and implemented The government commits to an incremental growth in the grant funding allocation for the protected area system <b>Risks:</b> National economic priorities shift away from support for the strengthening of the national ecological network, and the associated protected area activities Other ministries and public agencies do not cooperate to align strategies, plans and projects The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources does not have adequate capacity and resources to provide support to, and monitor the performance of, the PAS and PA institutions
	Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management	<US\$1.5m / annum	>US\$4m/ annum	Annual Financial Report of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Annual Financial Report of MoldSilva Annual Financial Reports of Local Authorities	
	Capacity development indicator score for protected area system	24	>32	Annual Capacity Development Indicator Scorecard	
	Coverage (ha) of the protected area system	157,227ha	176,000ha	Protected area register National State of Environment Report	
<b>Outcome 1:</b> The representivity and coverage of the protected area system is improved	Number of IUCN Category I – VI protected areas whose classification, and management objectives, are aligned with their biodiversity significance	8	289	Protected area register National State of Environment Report	<b>Assumptions:</b> All current PAs retain some biodiversity or heritage conservation potential, albeit with rationalized boundaries, formal management designation and conservation status

Project Strategy and purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators				Risks and Assumptions
	Indicator	Baseline	Target by EOP	Sources of verification	
	Extent (ha) of additional areas of under-represented habitat types incorporated into the formally proclaimed protected area network Forest Steppe (including meadows)	59,495ha 1,187ha	72,495ha 1,450ha	Botanical Institute Monitoring reports National State of Environment Report	
	Extent (ha) of formally proclaimed IUCN Category II National Park	0ha	20,000 ha	Protected Area register National State of Environment Report	
<b>Outcome 2:</b> The capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system is strengthened	Number of protected areas with a formally delegated management authority	4	289	Protected Area register National State of Environment Report	<b>Assumptions:</b> Institutional restructuring processes are actively supported by the Government of Moldova The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources maintains a clear mandate and authority to fulfil oversight obligations for the protected area system Stakeholder institutions constructively engage in the identification of the most cost-effective institutional arrangements for the protected area system The research and educational institutes have the capacity to offer the training and skills development courses developed by the project <b>Risks:</b>
	Number of protected areas with a capacitated management institution	5	>15	National Register of protected areas Annual Report of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	
	Number of protected areas exceeding a METT score of 30	1	>15	METT Annual Review	

Project Strategy and purpose	Objectively verifiable indicators				
	Indicator	Baseline	Target by EOP	Sources of verification	Risks and Assumptions
	Number of operational protected area management staff completing specialised training and/or skills development programs	0	30	Annual Report of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	<p><b>Assumptions:</b> The Orhei District Administration supports the local education and awareness programme</p> <p><b>Risks:</b> Conflicts arise between the MENR and the service provider (i.e. NGO/s) that are irreconcilable</p>
	Number of residents in and around Orhei that are directly involved in the outreach activities	0	>1000	Project reports	
	Number of residents in and around Orhei that are directly involved in experiential learning activities	0	200	Project reports	

### SECTION III: TOTAL BUDGET AND WORK PLAN

<b>Award ID:</b>	00050699
<b>Award Title:</b>	PIMS 4016 BD MSP: Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System in Moldova
<b>Business Unit:</b>	MDA10
<b>Project Title:</b>	PIMS 4016 BD MSP: Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System in Moldova
<b>Atlas Project ID</b>	00062742

**Implementing Partner (Executing Agency)** UNDP (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources)

GEF Outcome/Atlas Activity	Responsible Party/Implementing Agent	Fund ID	Donor Name	Atlas Budgetary Account Code	ATLAS Budget Description	Amount Year 1 2009 (USD)	Amount Year 2 2010 (USD)	Amount Year 3 2011 (USD)	Amount Year 4 2012 (USD)	Total (USD)	Budget note
<b>OUTCOME 1: Improving representivity and coverage of the protected area system</b>	<b>Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MENR)</b>	<b>62000</b>	<b>GEF</b>	71200	International Consultant	6,000	9,000	8,000	4,000	27,000	1
				71300	Local Consultants	30,000	42,000	28,000	16,000	116,000	2
				71600	Travel	5,000	6,000	6,500	8,500	26,000	3
				72300	Materials and goods	0	15,000	20,000	24,000	59,000	4
				72400	Equipment	12,500	22,000	38,000	46,000	118,500	5
				74100	Professional services	22,000	36,000	22,000	10,000	90,000	6
				74500	Miscellaneous	2,500	4,500	3,500	3,000	13,500	7
	<b>Total Outcome 1</b>	<b>78,000</b>	<b>134,500</b>	<b>126,000</b>	<b>111,500</b>	<b>450,000</b>					
<b>OUTCOME 2: Strengthening capacity to effectively manage the protected area system</b>	<b>MENR</b>	<b>62000</b>	<b>GEF</b>	71200	International Consultant	9,000	33,000	15,000	21,000	78,000	8
				71300	Local Consultants	22,000	32,000	44,000	26,000	124,000	9
				71600	Travel	3,500	4,000	4,500	4,500	16,500	10
				74100	Professional services	14,000	58,000	33,000	7,000	112,000	11
				74200	Audio visual and printing costs	4,500	15,000	22,000	21,000	62,500	12
				74500	Miscellaneous	3,000	4,000	4,000	1,000	12,000	13
					<b>Total Outcome 2</b>	<b>56,000</b>	<b>146,000</b>	<b>122,500</b>	<b>80,500</b>	<b>405,000</b>	

<b>PROJECT MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>MENR</b>	<b>62000</b>	<b>GEF</b>	71300	Local Consultants	20,000	30,000	30,000	5,000	85,000	14
				72800	Information and Technology Equipment	10,000	0	0	0	10,000	15
					<b>Total Management</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>95,000</b>	



<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>	<b>164,000</b>	<b>310,500</b>	<b>278,500</b>	<b>197,000</b>	<b>950,000</b>	
----------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	--

**Budget notes:**

1. Contractual appointment of the international conservation planner. Cost of support services provided by the international protected area planning and management adviser (strategy and implementation plan for PA consolidation and expansion; establishment of national park Orhei), international protected area financing expert (establishment of national park Orhei) and the international protected area institutional development expert (establishment of national park, Orhei).
2. Contract appointment of national biodiversity specialist/s (validation of existing protected areas) and surveyor (validation of existing protected areas, establishment of national park Orhei). Cost of support services provided by the national institutional development expert (validation of existing protected areas, strategy and implementation plan for PA consolidation and expansion, establishment of national park Orhei); national financial planning expert (establishment of national park Orhei); national human resources development specialist (establishment of national park Orhei); and national legal adviser (validation of existing protected areas, establishment of national park Orhei).
3. Travel costs for project management staff; park management staff and contracted specialists associated with: habitat, species and ecological process mapping; mapping and ground-truthing of PA boundaries; *in situ* conservation management assessment of individual PAs; and participation in stakeholder consultation processes for the national park. Travel costs estimated at US\$0.25/km.
4. Acquisition of entry, informational and directional signage for the national park, Orhei. Provision of staff safety equipment and clothing.
5. Acquisition of hardware, software and other associated equipment for development of national EIS database, knowledge management and operational equipment for the national park Orhei: Computers and software, Scanner, Data projectors, Screens, Plotter A0, Laser Color Printer A3, GIS software (Corporate licenses), GPS, communications infrastructure equipment; research and monitoring equipment; vehicles; safety equipment; park uniforms and office furniture.
6. Service level agreement with public entities and/or NGOs for national park establishment support services (establishment of national park, Orhei). Provision for costs associated direct (strategy and implementation plan for consolidation and expansion of PAS) and support (validation of existing individual protected areas) services provided by national protected area planning and management service provider.
7. Costs associated with organizing issue-based and consolidated stakeholder workshops (i.e. invitations, communication materials, translation, independent facilitation services, refreshments, meals, accommodation, etc), producing project reports (i.e. design, layout, printing, translation) and establishing cooperative governance structure for park (advertisements, meetings, facilitation, refreshments).
8. Cost of support services provided by the international protected area planning and management adviser (reforming institutional arrangements for PA management, preparing directions for PA system), international protected area financing expert (reforming institutional arrangements for PA management, preparing directions for PA system) and the international protected area institutional development expert (reforming institutional

- arrangements for PA management, preparing directions for PA system, strengthening operational capacity of PA institutions). Also included costs of international consultants to be hired for mid-term and final evaluations as per M&E Plan.
9. Contract appointment of national institutional development expert (reforming institutional arrangements for protected area management, preparing directions for the protected area system) and national human resource development specialist (strengthening operational capacity of protected area institutions). Cost of support services provided by the national legal adviser (reforming institutional arrangements for protected area management, preparing directions for the protected area system); and national financial planning expert (reforming institutional arrangements for protected area management, preparing directions for the protected area system). National consultants, including independent auditor, to be hired for mid-term and final evaluations as per M&E Plan. Also included costs related to an independent auditor and national consultants to be hired for mid-term and final evaluations as per M&E Plan.
  10. Travel (and related) costs for protected area management staff to attend PA staff training and development programs. Also included travel costs, associated with the implementation of the educational and awareness programme in Orhei, for project management staff and the contracted service provider. Travel costs for inception workshop as per project M&E Plan.
  11. Service level agreement for provision of national protected area planning and management advisory services (preparing directions for the protected area system, institutional arrangements for protected area management). Also includes a service level agreement with environmental NGO's or coalition of NGO's for provision of communication and awareness services.
  12. Costs associated with the printing of training materials, the development of web-based learning programs and the preparation of audio-visual training programs. Also includes costs associated with designing and developing communication media and resource materials (brochures, fact sheets, booklets, interpretation boards, local radio inserts, advertisements, video production).
  13. Costs associated with organizing issue-based and consolidated stakeholder workshops (i.e. invitations, communication materials, translation, independent facilitation services, refreshments, meals, accommodation, etc) and producing project reports (i.e. design, layout, printing, translation). Also includes costs of an inception workshop.
  14. Contract appointment of Project manager and Project Assistant at US\$ 1500 and US\$ 1,000/ month incl. taxes.
  15. Acquisition of office furniture (desks, chairs, filing cabinets, tables and cupboards), 2 computers and one printer for project manager and project assistant.

**Summary of Funds:**<sup>10</sup>

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>GEF</b>	<b>164,000</b>	<b>310,500</b>	<b>278,500</b>	<b>197,000</b>	<b>950,000</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,425</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,425</b>	<b>22,850</b>
<b>Forest Agency "Moldsilva"</b>					
<b>MENR</b>	146,893	268,240	192,240	31,294	638,667
<b>Local Authorities</b>	56,155	102,544	73,491	11,963	244,153
<b>Public</b>					
<b>Local Authorities</b>	29,900	54,600	39,130	6,370	130,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>396,948</b>	<b>747,309</b>	<b>583,361</b>	<b>258,052</b>	<b>1,985,670</b>

<sup>10</sup> All co-financing (cash and in-kind) that is not passing through UNDP.

**SECTION IV: Additional Information**

**PART I: Approved MSP PIF**



**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION FORM (PIF)**  
**PROJECT TYPE: Medium-sized Project**  
**THE GEF TRUST FUND**

**Submission Date:** November 2007  
**Re-submission Date:** February, 2008

**PART I: PROJECT IDENTIFICATION**

**GEFSEC PROJECT ID:**  
**GEF AGENCY PROJECT ID:** 4016  
**COUNTRY(IES):** Moldova  
**PROJECT TITLE:** Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System in Moldova  
**GEF AGENCY(IES):** UNDP  
**OTHER EXECUTING PARTNERS:** Biodiversity Office, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources  
**GEF FOCAL AREAS:** Biodiversity  
**GEF-4 STRATEGIC PROGRAM(S):** BP-SP 3  
**NAME OF PARENT PROGRAM/UMBRELLA PROJECT:** N/A

<b>INDICATIVE CALENDAR</b>	
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Expected Dates</b>
Work Program (for FSP)	n/a
CEO Endorsement/Approval	October 2008
GEF Agency Approval	January 2009
Implementation Start	February 2009
Mid-term Review	March 2011
Implementation Completion	June 2013

**A. PROJECT FRAMEWORK**

<b>Project Objective:</b> To develop an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems								
Components	Type	Expected Outcomes	Expected Outputs	Indicative GEF Financing		Indicative Co-financing		Total (\$)
				(\$)	%	(\$)	%	

<p>1. Improving representivity and coverage of the protected area system</p>	<p>TA</p>	<p>The biodiversity value of all individual PAs is assessed, and the protected area status validated.</p> <p>Targets for protected area expansion are developed and prioritised.</p> <p>A new national park, that integrates existing fragments of different protected areas, and incorporates under-represented steppe habitats, is established and demonstrates the efficacy of this approach</p>	<p>-Protected area classification, and management objectives, of individual PAs aligned with biodiversity significance</p> <p>-Detailed implementation plan for the expansion of the protected area system in Moldova</p> <p>-&gt;85% (176,000ha) of the protected area component of the National Ecological Network (NEN) established by EOP</p> <p>-At least 10,000ha of rare steppe habitats included in the formal protected area system</p> <p>At least 15,000 ha formally proclaimed as a new national park</p> <p>New national park establishment processes established in at least 3 new areas, targeting &gt;50,000ha</p>	<p>450,000</p>	<p>42.2</p>	<p>618,667</p>	<p>57.8</p>	<p>1,068,667</p>
--	-----------	---	--	----------------	-------------	----------------	-------------	------------------

2. Strengthening capacity of PA institutions to effectively manage a more representative protected area system	TA	Formal designation of responsible management authority for all PAs in Moldova  Norms, standards and operational guidelines for PA management adopted in PA regulations, and implemented in IUCN category I, II and III PAs  Diversified funding strategies establishes a more sustainable and secure long-term financial base for PAs  Operational competence, levels and standards developed in the protected area institutions	Cost-benefit analysis of management options for the PA system  Capacity development indicator score for responsible protected area institution/s > 40 by EOP  At least 20 IUCN category I, II and III PAs have METT scores > 25 by EOP  At least 20 IUCN category IV-VI PAs have METT scores > 15 by EOP  Financial score (based on financial scorecard) for PA system >30 by EOP  Training programs developed for protected area managers integrated into formal training course/s of at least 1 tertiary institution	420,000	58.1	303,000	41.9	723,000
3. Project management				80,000	46.4	91,153	53.2	171,153
<b>Total project costs</b>				<b>950,000</b>		<b>1,012,820</b>		<b>1,962,820</b>

TA = Technical Assistance; STA = Scientific & technical analysis.

#### B. INDICATIVE FINANCING PLAN SUMMARY FOR THE PROJECT (\$)

	Project Preparation	Project	Agency Fee	Total
GEF Grant	50,000	950,000	100,000	1,100,000
Co-financing	48,000	1,012,820		1,060,820
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,000</b>	<b>1,962,820</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>2,160,820</b>

#### C. INDICATIVE CO-FINANCING FOR THE PROJECT (including project preparation amount) BY SOURCE and BY NAME (in parenthesis) if available, (\$)

Sources of Co-financing	Type of Co-financing	Amount
Project Contribution Government	In-kind	55,040
Project Contribution Government	Grant	959,373
Private Sector	In-kind	1,000
NGO	In-kind	45,407
<b>Total co-financing</b>		<b>1,060,820</b>

**D. GEF RESOURCES REQUESTED BY FOCAL AREA(S), AGENCY (IES) SHARE AND COUNTRY(IES):**  
N/A

**PART II: PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

**A. STATE THE ISSUE, HOW THE PROJECT SEEKS TO ADDRESS IT, AND THE EXPECTED GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS TO BE DELIVERED:**

1. The Republic of Moldova is located in the south-eastern part of Europe. Occupying a land-locked area of 33,843 km<sup>2</sup>, Moldova is surrounded by Ukraine on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries and by Romania in the west. The relief of the country represents a hilly plain, gradually sloping from the north-west to the south-east, with altitudes varying between 5m and 429m and an average elevation of around 147 m above sea level. In 2007, the population of Moldova totaled 3,581,100<sup>11</sup>. The country has a Human Development Index of 0.708, below the global average of 0.743 (UNDP Human Development Report, 2007). It remains one of the poorest countries in Europe, despite recent progress from its small economic base. Moldova enjoys a favorable climate and good farmland but has no major mineral deposits. As a result, the economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which covers some 76% of the country's surface area, accounts for 15% of GDP and employs 33% of the country's labour force (National Development Strategy: 2008-2011).

2. The country straddles three main European eco-regions: the Central-European mixed forests, the Pontic steppe, and the East European forest steppe. This confluence of eco-regions has resulted in a wide diversity of habitats and species; a number of which are rare, relictual or at the limits of their natural distribution. Approximately 15% of the country remains under some form of natural vegetation cover, the majority of which comprise forest habitats. *Forests* are located predominantly in the central region of the country, with the northern and the southern areas less forested. Natural forest coverage is estimated at 325,400ha (~9.6% of the country). *Steppe* habitats tend to occur predominantly in the north and the south of the country, and account altogether for about 65,000 ha (~1.9% of the territory). The steppe is the most threatened habitat type in Moldova, with less than one percent remaining of some types of grassland and wet meadow vegetation communities that were once common across the country. Vegetation communities associated with the aquatic systems (*wetland habitats*) – notably saline marshes in the lower reaches of the Prut and Dniester Rivers, and the southern river valleys - cover about 94,600 ha (~2.8% of the country). Most of the floodplain ecosystems in Moldova have been destroyed, and the only remaining intact areas are along the Prut and Nistru Rivers. The remaining natural vegetation – broadly classified as '*rocky habitats*' (limestone rocks) - covers about 23,000 ha (~0.68% of the country). Some 3000 rivers and streams, and 60 natural lakes, are distributed across the country, with more than 95% of the water circulation flowing into one of the two major rivers in Moldova - the Prut or Dniester.

3. The flora of Moldova is moderately diverse, with 5513 plant species (1989 vascular and 3524 non-vascular species) recorded to date. This includes 13 relictual genera, 129 'Red Data Book' species<sup>12</sup> and 4 species at the boundary of their natural distribution. Seventy seven rare plant communities have also been identified. The country's fauna comprises 14,800 animal species (461 vertebrates and 14,339 invertebrates). This includes 55 Ponto-Caspian relictual species (of which 10% are endemic to the Black Sea basin) and 116 'Red Data Book' species<sup>13</sup>. The lower catchments of the Nistru and Prut rivers are internationally important migratory corridors for a number of bird species.

---

<sup>11</sup> Excluding the Transnistria region (population estimated at 550,500)

<sup>12</sup> Two of these are included in the European Red Data Book

<sup>13</sup> Thirteen of these are included in the European Red Data Book

4. The natural areas in Moldova that provide a refuge for this biodiversity are under ongoing pressure from: (i) sustained urbanisation, and expansion of agricultural lands in the steppe, wetland and aquatic habitats; (ii) spread of invasive alien species in the steppe and forest habitats; (iii) illegal harvesting (forest products, fish, game, other natural resources) in the forest and steppe habitats; (iv) illegal grazing in the steppe, wetland and forest habitats; (v) extensive soil erosion and landslides on slopes; (vi) salinisation of soils as a result of intensive irrigation in low lying wetland areas; and (vii) pollution of the aquatic ecosystems. It is also increasingly apparent that there is a low resilience of the natural and agricultural areas to the increasing incidence of extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change, especially torrential rains, prolonged hot and dry periods and unseasonal frost. This is evident from recent environmental problems in the country, including: large-scale erosion and landslides; new invasions of non-native plant species; spread of forest pests; and increasing desiccation of forests. The most significant cumulative impact of these threats on the biodiversity of Moldova is: (i) the increased fragmentation of the remaining natural areas; (ii) a reduction in the ecological functioning of these natural areas; and (iii) the ongoing loss of threatened habitats and associated species. This is further compounded by a general lack of awareness in the populace of the value and significance of this biodiversity, and the need to effectively conserve it.

5. The Government of Moldova recognizes that it will not be able to set aside large enough areas in a protected area system (PAS) to conserve all species, ecosystems and ecological processes. Thus, as part of its response to addressing the threats to biodiversity, the Government has committed to establish a National Ecological Network (NEN) which will eventually cover 11,113 km<sup>2</sup> (~33% of the country's territory). This commitment is further demonstrated in the recently gazetted *Law on Environmental Network* (2007). The NEN emphasises the importance of a landscape level approach as a mechanism to conserve ecological processes and patterns. The NEN comprises two component parts: (i) a Protected Area System (PAS) which function as 'core conservation areas' for the NEN; and (ii) different categories of productive areas (corridors, restoration areas and buffer zones) under conservation-friendly management regimes. The establishment and effective management of a system of protected areas is thus a cornerstone of the implementation of the NEN. The NEN provides for the designation of 207,002 ha of protected areas. This project seeks to support the consolidation and expansion of the protected area component of the NEN, and the strengthening of the institutions responsible for the management of a more representative and resilient protected area system (PAS).

6. Currently the system of protected areas in Moldova covers 157,227 ha (or 4.65% of the country). This coverage corresponds with the 2010 targets established by the Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan (2002), the National Development Strategy (2008) and the Millennium Development Goals, for Moldova. The *Law on Natural Areas Protected by the State* (1998) provides for 11 categories of protected areas in Moldova, eight of which correspond to the IUCN classification system. The categories 'Landscape Reserve' (52% by area) and 'Scientific Reserve' (29% by area)<sup>14</sup> constitute the largest coverage of the protected area system. Three wetlands of international significance in Moldova - Lower Prut lakes, Lower Dniester and Unguri-Holoşniţa –are also included in the 'Ramsar List'. The PAS of Moldova does not however cover a representative and viable sample of the threatened steppe habitats, and many of the protected areas are too small and fragmented to provide for effective conservation of biodiversity.

7. The project seeks to pilot an approach to PA expansion in Moldova that enables the consolidation and expansion of a number of existing, but currently spatially and institutionally fragmented, protected areas into a single protected area – a National Park<sup>15</sup> - under a single management authority. Preliminary feasibility studies for the possible establishment of five large National Parks - Codrii Centrali, Padurea Domneasca, Orheiul Vechi, Prutul de Jos and Plaiul Fagului – across the country have already been completed (*Possibilities for the*

---

<sup>14</sup> Landscape reserve IUCN classification V and I respectively

<sup>15</sup> There is currently no National Park in Moldova, although the legal framework does provide for its establishment

*Extension of the Natural Protected Areas*, 2006), and demonstrate the efficacy of this approach. Two of these areas - Prutul de Jos and Padurea Domneasca – also have the potential to be incorporated into larger trans-boundary protected areas with Romania.

8. The *Division of Natural Resources and Biodiversity* within the *Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources* has overall responsibility for the coordination, development and promotion of policy, legislation, declaration, protection and use of protected areas and their natural resources. A *National Environmental Fund* (NEF), directly administered by the Ministry, funds (amongst other activities) the ongoing research, planning, expansion, operations, monitoring of protected areas as well as providing special grants for protected areas project activities. In 2006, the NEF allocated MDL 19,335,000<sup>16</sup> to the protection and conservation of biodiversity. The *Academy of Sciences* (specifically the Botanical Institute and the Zoological Institute) provides technical and professional research, monitoring and information management support to the different protected area institutions. Four of the five Scientific Reserves are under the operational management of the reasonably well capacitated Forestry Agency, 'Moldsilva'. In 2006, Moldsilva's total staff and operating budget for scientific reserves was approximately US\$ 881,000. The Russian-funded *Transdnistria* territorial administrative authority is responsible for the operational management of the remaining Scientific Reserve. The other protected area categories – natural monument, nature reserve, landscape reserve, multi-functional management areas, botanical garden, dendrological garden, landscape architecture monument and zoological garden – are administered by the relevant *local authorities* (local administration, rayon or municipality). These local authorities however have limited or no capacity and resources to effectively administer and manage these protected areas. A number of *NGO's*, including the Ecological Movement of Moldova, Biotica Ecological Society, Ecospectru and Habitat, are actively involved in research, planning and management projects in protected areas, as well as implementing broader environmental education and awareness programs linked to protected areas.

9. With the expansion and consolidation of small, fragmented protected areas into larger national parks, the project will then seek to rationalise and strengthen the management authority for the PAS in Moldova. The capacity of the responsible institutions will be developed and supported at the systemic, institutional and individual levels to better secure the long-term institutional sustainability for protected areas.

10. The following **barriers** currently impede the ability of the PAS, and the responsible institutions, to effectively conserve biodiversity.

a. Size, representation and status of PAs

The majority of protected areas are small (<100ha) and have a fragmented distribution. Landscape-scale ecological processes are not effectively conserved. Steppe habitats are under-represented in the PAS. The PA classification of a number of PAs is not aligned with their biodiversity significance and/or management objectives.

b. Capacity Deficits at the Systemic level

There are no national operational guidelines or norms and standards for the establishment processes, planning and management of PAs. Except for the scientific reserves, the protected areas do not have approved management plans, let alone business plans. There is no national monitoring of the management effectiveness of the PAS. There is no clear implementation framework for the expansion of protected areas, and their subsequent integration into the larger National Ecological Network.

c. Limited Capacities at the Institutional Level

Institutional weaknesses in the protected area agencies serve as a major barrier to the expansion and effective management of the protected area network, notably in the local authorities. These weaknesses are typified by: unclear division of responsibilities; low levels of cooperation; inadequate staffing; budgetary constraints; limited specialised protected area operational and management skills; inadequate enforcement and compliance

---

<sup>16</sup> US\$ 1 = MDL 11.3



capability; and poor boundary demarcation of protected areas. The capacity to develop detailed strategic and operational plans to ensure the cost-effective deployment of financial and human resources is particularly weak in the local authorities. While ‘Moldsilva’ is a comparably well capacitated institution, its skills base still has a strong silvicultural and forest research bias, and has limited exposure to best practice in protected area management. Capacity will need to be strengthened within the responsible PA management institutions, notably the local authorities. There is an argument, on the grounds of institutional efficiencies and economies of scale, for consolidating the legal, operational and development responsibility for protected areas into a single authority, thereby allowing a more effective deployment of the country’s limited human resources and institutional capacity.

d. Coordination of Conservation Awareness Activities

Public awareness of the significance and value of biodiversity is very low. This lack of awareness means that there is limited public ownership of, and responsibility to, the PAS. There is little or no public pressure, and limited political support, to expand and strengthen the PA management system in Moldova.

11. The address these barriers, the project has the **objective** of developing an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems in Moldova. It is proposed that the project is structured into two **outcomes**:

Outcome 1 Improve the representivity and coverage of the protected area system

Outcome 2 Strengthen the capacity of PA institutions to effectively manage a more representative protected area system.

12. The project proposes **3 outputs** under outcome 1:

Output 1.1 The development of a detailed implementation plan for the rationalization, consolidation and expansion of the protected area system, as an integral part of the National Ecological Network. This will include a review and update of the current protected area component of the NEN.

Output 1.2 The re-validation of protected areas, and their protected area status, within the national PAS. This will include the collation of biodiversity and management data and the assimilation of this data into the national environmental information system.

Output 1.3 The piloting of the establishment of a national park<sup>17</sup> as a mechanism to consolidate and expand fragmented protected areas of different protected area categories. This piloting process would include the requisite feasibility assessments, awareness-raising, consultation processes, proclamation, designation of management authority, demarcation of boundaries and business/management planning activities.

13. The project proposes **4 outputs** under Outcome 2:

Output 2.1 The review, identification and development of effective institutional models for protected area management. This will include a cost-benefit analysis of institutional options, development of the preferred institutional option and the formal designation of management authority for each protected area in the PAS to the relevant institution.

Output 2.2 Building the capacity of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources to support the planning and management of the PAS. This will include the development of: national norms and standards; national guidelines for key PA operational activities (e.g. forest restoration, invasive species control), financial planning; and a national training course, for the PAS and PA institutions and staff.

Output 2.3 Building the capacity of protected area management authorities to effectively manage PAs. This will include: institutional development; financial planning; strategic and business planning; and individual skills development in protected area institutions.

Output 2.4 Supporting the implementation of a national communications and awareness-raising program linked to the PAS. This will include: strategy development, the development of a variety of communications media and tools and the implementation of awareness raising and communications programmes.

---

<sup>17</sup> Preliminary feasibility studies indicate that the pilot National Park would be Codrii or Padurea Domneasca

14. This project will contribute to achieving **global environmental benefits** by mitigating the threats to the biodiversity contained in at least 176,000 ha of protected areas of Moldova. This will be achieved by overcoming the barriers that prevent the effective management of the terrestrial protected area system and by extending and enhancing protection status to at least 15,000 ha, including critically under-represented steppe habitats.

**B. DESCRIBE THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH NATIONAL PRIORITIES/PLANS:**

15. Various policy documents frame government policy for biodiversity conservation and the establishment and management of protected areas. The project is consistent with the spatial priorities and PA targets identified in the *Millennium Development Goals for the Republic of Moldova: 2000-2015*, the *National Ecological Network* (2001), the *Biological Diversity Conservation National Strategy and Action Plan* (BDCNS&AP, 2002) and the *National Development Strategy* (NDS): 2008 – 2011. The project activities conform with priority activities and actions described in the BDCNS&AP<sup>18</sup> (2002), the *National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Forestry Fund and State Program on Forest Fund Areas Regeneration and Forestation: 2003-2020*, the *Concept of Trans-boundary Cooperation for 2004-2006*, the *Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Republic of Moldova for 2003 – 2015*, and the NDS (2008).

**C. DESCRIBE THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PROJECT WITH GEF STRATEGIES AND FIT WITH STRATEGIC PROGRAMS:**

16. The project is aligned with GEF's Strategic Objective (SO) 1 of the Biodiversity focal area, 'Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Areas Systems'. The project is consistent with Strategic Programme (SP) 3 of SO 1, 'Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks'. The protected area system of Moldova is not uniformly distributed in the landscape and there are substantial gaps, particularly in terms of steppe habitats, that need to be addressed to ensure the adequate representation of the main types of ecosystems. Protected areas are also highly fragmented in the landscape and are not achieving the conservation objectives for landscape-scale ecological processes. The project aims to enhance coverage and management effectiveness of the protected area system of Moldova by piloting - within the broader framework of the National Environmental Network - the establishment of the first National Park in Moldova, and by strengthening the capacities at the systemic, institutional and individual levels to establish and manage a representative protected area system.

**D. OUTLINE THE COORDINATION WITH OTHER RELATED INITIATIVES**

17. The project will ensure active coordination and exchange of experience with other related initiatives in Moldova, in particular: (i) the 'Management Scenario Development for the Unguri – Holosnita New Ramsar Site' and 'Awareness Rising on the Ramsar Convention Wise Use Policy' projects, financed by the Secretariat of the Ramsar convention and co-financed by the National Environment Fund (NEF); (ii) the 'Transboundary cooperation and sustainable management of the Dniester River' project, whose aim is to promote transboundary cooperation and IWRM in the Dniester River Basin, and supported by OSCE and UNECE; and (iii) the 'Moldova Soil Conservation' and 'Community Forest Development' projects that target the afforestation of degraded agricultural lands, financed by the World Bank (Carbon funds), the Japanese Government and the NEF, and implemented by Moldsilva.

**E. DISCUSS THE VALUE-ADDED OF GEF INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROJECT DEMONSTRATED THROUGH INCREMENTAL REASONING**

---

<sup>18</sup> Specifically, general actions A3.2, A3.3, B4, D1, D2, D3 and E1.

18. While the Government of Moldova continues to implement legislative and policy reform, commit limited financial resources and provide technical and professional capacity, to support the planning, management and expansion of protected areas, this will remain inadequate to significantly improve the current management effectiveness and representivity of the protected area system. Under the **baseline scenario**, the extent of the PA network will remain largely static and fragmented, with critical areas of steppe habitat remaining outside the formal protected area estate, and under increasing pressure from urban development and conversion to agricultural landscapes. The available institutional resources and capacity for protected area management will continue to be largely directed by the Government and ‘MoldSilva’ towards enhancing the management effectiveness of Scientific Reserves only. The constraints of the enabling legal framework will prevent the scientific reserves from being actively used for recreation or tourism, and generating sufficient income to cross-subsidize their management costs. This will then sustain the public and political perception that protected areas are a ‘financial drain’ on the national fiscus, and a restrictive form of land use. The remaining protected areas in the PAS will be administered on an *ad hoc* opportunistic basis by the local authorities, with limited oversight and support from the Ministry. The ecological integrity of the many small, fragmented protected areas will continue to degrade and illegal use will continue, if not escalate, increasingly reducing these PAs to ‘paper parks’. Public resistance to the expansion of the protected area estate will also increase due to their lack of relevance to the socio-economic and recreational needs of the populace.

19. The **normative solution** that the project seeks to engineer is characterized by: (i) the rationalization and strategic consolidation and expansion of the PA estate in Moldova; (ii) the establishment of national norms and standards, operational guidelines and financing mechanisms for the PAS; (iii) the restructuring and strengthening of protected area institutions; (iv) the development of protected area management skills within these protected area institutions; and (v) the strengthening of public awareness about the value of the PAS. Furthermore, opportunities to link the protected areas with the country’s socio-economic development priorities - in particular development of the tourism industry – will be developed to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the PAS.

**F. INDICATE RISKS, INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS, THAT MIGHT PREVENT THE PROJECT OBJECTIVE(S) FROM BEING ACHIEVED. OUTLINE THE RISK MANAGEMENT MEASURES, INCLUDING IMPROVING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, THAT THE PROJECT PROPOSES TO UNDERTAKE:**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Mitigation Measures</b>
There is a lack of coordination across, and collaboration between, key stakeholder groups in project implementation	<b>Low</b>	Project coordination will be facilitated through the offices of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the UNDP CO. The project will also establish a Project Steering Committee (PSC), chaired by representatives of the Ministry, to facilitate the coordinated implementation of project activities across affected organizations. All key institutions at both local and national levels have been involved in project design to date, and are fully committed to the project objectives and activities. Representatives from MoldSilva, and the relevant local authorities, will nominate representatives to the PSC, and will be directly involved in project implementation. NGO representation in the PSC will also be accommodated and, where relevant, NGO’s may be involved in aspects of project implementation.

The Government fails to commit sufficient financial support to protected area planning and operations, and protected areas are unable to finance the subsequent shortfall	<b>Medium</b>	The project will review the cost-effectiveness of the current institutional arrangements for the protected area network and identify, where appropriate, restructuring options to increase cost-effectiveness. Based on the preferred institutional model/s, the project will also broadly assess the financing mechanisms and projected income streams for the protected area network, with a specific focus on attaining a level of financial autonomy for protected area institutions and limiting the dependency on an annual grant allocation of government funding. The project will test the implementation requirements for these financial mechanisms at the level of the piloted establishment of the National Park, with lessons learnt directing the roll-out of these in other National Park establishment processes. The project will also seek to negotiate increased financial commitments from government to support protected areas, with this financial commitment being phased out over time as the PA network develops its own income streams and reaches an agreed level of financial sustainability.
Current institutions do not have the capacity or resources to manage protected areas	<b>High</b>	The project will review the efficacy of the current institutional arrangements for the PAS. It will specifically seek to identify the most effective institutional model, and the most appropriate institution/s, needed to strengthen the management effectiveness of the PA network. The project will then project the anticipated human resource capacity needs (staffing, skills, competence levels, knowledge) of the institution/s and define the requisite resources (financing), training and development requirements needed to address the capacity gaps.

**G. DESCRIBE, IF POSSIBLE, THE EXPECTED COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROJECT:**

20. A comprehensive cost-effectiveness analysis will be undertaken as part of the project preparation. The project aims to create the enabling environment for the expansion of the protected area system to conserve currently underrepresented habitats, and to consolidate fragmented small protected areas into a single, large protected area. The planned expansion of PAs is considered cost-effective, as future costs of restoring the fragmented and increasingly degraded and exploited protected areas will be prohibitive, particularly given the high costs of rehabilitation of these habitats and the future costs of land acquisition (as a result of the countries ongoing privatization of land ownership). The project will improve the enabling systemic and institutional environment for protected area expansion, and enhance the capacities of the protected areas management bodies to manage this expanded protected area estate. The project is designed to achieve the proposed outcomes while only incurring essential incremental expenses. To accomplish this, the project will build upon the existing baseline activities and national and local capacities, as well as available infrastructure, and will target increased co-financing commitments during project design and implementation. The project will seek to contribute to the on-going government efforts to expand and strengthen the national PA system, and will reinforce the capacity of protected area institutions to comply with national legislative requirements and international standards. Costs incurred in project implementation will focus on those additional actions required to provide key incremental assistance to the government in undertaking reforms in the PAS planning, management and governance. The project will seek to achieve a catalytic investment in securing the long-term sustainability and conservation effectiveness of the national protected area system.

**H. JUSTIFY THE GEF AGENCY COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE:**

21. UNDP has developed global expertise in supporting the development of an enabling environment for PA establishment and management. The Government of Moldova has requested UNDP assistance in designing and implementing this project, due to UNDP's track record in Europe and the CIS. UNDP currently supports the development and implementation of GEF projects in 63 PAs covering approximately 16 million hectares in 20

countries across Europe and the CIS.

**PART III: APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT BY GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINTS AND GEF AGENCIES**

**A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S):**

Violeta Ivanov, Minister, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources	Date:
---	-------

**B. GEF AGENCY(IES) CERTIFICATION**

This request has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies and procedures and meets the GEF criteria for project identification and preparation.	
Yannick Glemarec GEF Agency Coordinator	Adriana Dinu Project Contact Person
Date:	Tel. and Email: <a href="mailto:adriana.dinu@undp.org">adriana.dinu@undp.org</a> +421 905 428 238

**PART II      Response to Project Review by GEF Secretariat at PIF Stage**

<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Change to CEO Approval Template</b>
No comments received from GEF Secretariat		

**PART III      ATTACHMENTS**

The following annexes are attached as separate files:

**Annex 1.      Letters of co-financing**

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

Country: **Moldova**

UNDAF Outcome(s)/Indicator(s): <i>(Link to UNDAF outcome., If no UNDAF, leave blank)</i>	By 2011, Public Institutions with the support of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) are better able to ensure good governance, rule of law and equal access to justice and promotion of human rights.
Expected Outcome(s)/Indicator (s): <i>(CP outcomes linked to the SRF/MYFF goal and service line)</i>	Management of environment and natural resources is improved in compliance with international/EU standards
Expected Output(s)/Indicator(s): <i>(CP outputs)</i>	Protected area system in Moldova expanded and managed effectively
Implementing partner: <i>(designated institution/Executing agency)</i>	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR)
Responsible parties: <i>(formerly implementing agencies )</i>	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Programme Period: 2009-2013  Key Result Area (Strategic Plan): 4.1. Mainstreaming Environment and Energy: Strengthened national capacities to mainstream environment and energy concerns into national development plans and implementation systems.  <b>Project Title:</b> Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System in Moldova. Atlas Award ID: 00050699 Atlas project ID: 00062742 PIMS: 4016 Start date: May 2009 End Date: May 2013 LPAC Meeting Date: TBD Management Arrangements: NEX
---

<b>Total budget:</b> 1,985,670 USD  Allocated resources: <i>GEF</i> 950,000USD  <b>Co-financing</b> <i>UNDP</i> 22,850 USD  <b>In kind co-financing:</b> <i>Government in-kind</i> 882,820 USD <i>Local Authorities</i> 130,000 USD
---

Name	Date	Signature
------	------	-----------

**Agreed by (Government):**

*Violeta Ivanov, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, GEF Political and Operational Focal Point*

14.04.2009



**Agreed by (UNDP):**

*Kaarina Simmonen*

14.04.09

