**Annex 6:** *UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP)*

**Project Information**

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

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

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| **QUESTION 1: How Does the Project Integrate the Programming Principles in Order to Strengthen Social and Environmental Sustainability?** |
| ***Briefly describe in the space below how the project mainstreams the human rights-based approach*** |
| In line with UNDP’s human-rights based approach, the project directly empowers right holders in the persons of public authorities/ duty bearers, SMEs, smallholders, owners of production lands, and communities so that they are the principal facilitators and decision makers for the mainstreaming of wetlands, lakes and riparian zones conservation objectives in the production landscapes which they inhabit in the Prut River basin landscape. The project fully support’s UNDP’s commitment to a human-rights based approach, and supports the universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, but particularly in the case of this project, for the people living in the Prut River landscape. The project does this broadly by supporting the sustainable use of natural resources, including access to and use of wetlands necessary for the rural communities, including the rural poor, in the project’s landscape. In addition, the project will ensure and support the human rights principles of participation, inclusion and non-discrimination.  The project concentrates on the wetland ecosystems of Moldova, located in the Prut River Basin, bordering Romania to the west. The project’s main aim is to achieve improved status of wetlands, lakes and riparian zones in the Prut River Basin, demonstrated by an integrated approach to the management of land, water and biodiversity for ecological and livelihoods benefits. The project will leverage critical partnerships with government, NGOs, local communities and private sector and will contribute to a transformational change of the approaches to sustainable development and conservation of the high value wetlands ecosystems in Moldova, by promoting effective wetlands management models within the context of supporting and securing sustainable and resilient livelihoods for local resources users, whose daily existence depend greatly on the integrity and productivity of these high value wetland ecosystems. The project’s four components are closely aligned and linked to facilitate an enabling environment that provides for effective wetlands protection and management based on a landscape approach that ensures the continuity of ecosystem services sustaining livelihoods:   1. Component 1 contributes to an improved regulatory framework to ensure conservation and sustainable management of wetlands biodiversity 2. Component 2 focuses on improved protection of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) through increasing management effectiveness of existing wetlands protected areas and by promoting participatory approaches and local communities’ participation into the local natural resources’ management. 3. Component 3 will support local communities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve to develop and implement local initiatives, improving their livelihoods. 4. Component 4 will revolve around awareness activities at local and national levels, designed to grab attention and elevate the issues related to wetlands management and their local communities, higher on the political agenda. 5. Component 5: is all about proper monitoring and evaluation of the results, and sharing the evaluative knowledge with the national counterparts, including it in a process of learning and adaptive management.   For an integrated landscape approach, an adequate policy, legal and financing framework must support multiple types of management measures. Water must be managed in a way that facilitates the necessary ecological flow to ensure the survival of wetland ecosystems located downstream. In addition, protected areas including key wetland ecosystems must be adequately planned and managed, appropriately contextualized within the river’s basin landscape. Both biodiversity and livelihoods depend on land and water that are not polluted and not degraded and on vegetation that is resilient and provides fodder and critical habitats. Both livelihoods and biodiversity depend on adequate flows of water and many livelihoods depend on different components of biodiversity. As a mean of illustration, the project’s Component 3 will be explicitly focused on local communities, promoting ecotourism and supporting small entrepreneurs’ access to financing, in order to further develop their biodiversity friendly businesses in a MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. The project local approaches will follow the “Man and Biosphere” principles, will be aligned with the MAB Strategy (2015-2025) and its implementation framework, the Lima Action Plan (2016-2025), which has set out clear objectives, action areas, and indicators to inform the contribution of biosphere reserves to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); biosphere reserves are, in fact, learning sites for sustainable development, where interdisciplinary approaches are tested to understand and manage interactions between social and ecological systems, and solutions are promoted to reconcile conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use. The project aims to put all these different types of on-the-ground management practices in place: support the regulatory adjustments to increase the level of water flow, prevent pollution and improve management effectiveness of key wetland areas; contextualize wetland areas into broader landscape by introducing several best practices in the Prut River basin, demonstrating local communities’ involvement in biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use, and elevating wetland conservation higher on the political agenda |
| ***Briefly describe in the space below how the project is likely to improve gender equality and women’s empowerment*** |
| The project incorporates gender considerations in the project design to ensure that there is equal opportunity for women participation and realization of benefits under the initiative as presented. Formalized structures and measures or legal amendments developed within the project framework will explicitly reflect the role of women in all tiers of biodiversity/ resource management addressing specifically existing disparities faced by women and girls in terms of access to economic participation and participation in decision making and trainings.  Within the national context, women generally share the responsibility for resources management and this is particularly visible at the household level. Owing to their active resource management roles, the project targets women participation in processes associated with the conservation, sustainable use of water and wetlands resources and the delivery of ecosystem services. There are numerous ways in which gender dimensions are reflected in the project:  - Under Component 1 the project supports district and local authorities include biodiversity conservation and monitoring into local development strategies, support public advocacy for women’s rights and gender sensitive biodiversity conservation and management measures.  -Under Component 2, the project supports participatory approaches at local levels, in both protected areas, during the consultations on the Management Plan of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and during the local consultations on the revision of the Management Plan in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, and will include women representatives to enable their participation into decision making over natural resources management, as women’s input, knowledge and guidance are invaluable to any productive, sustainable efforts to avoid, reduce and restore wetlands, lakes and riparian zones.  - Under Component 3, the project’s efforts are directed towards strengthening local rural entrepreneurship, offering equal participation opportunities and enabling women participation into calls for proposals and different other local projects and education/awareness activities.  - The project will ensure that there is gender balance in all project activities (e.g. seminars, community level events) including access to project financial assistance. The project will also gather gender-disaggregated data for evaluation purposes and use gender sensitive indicators to facilitate planning, implementation and monitoring.  In further consideration to the roles and priorities of both men and women, the project has granted women greater opportunities to actively participate in governance bodies that will be strengthened by the project. The project promotes partnerships and activities that close gaps resulting from gender equity issues since women in Moldova generally, but more acutely in the rural communities, are more constrained by traditional gender roles and by the lack of access to financial resources and capacity-building to improve their livelihood. In addition, all partnerships will be developed and established with gender balance and gender mainstreaming approaches in mind. The project team will ensure that gender-mainstreaming aspects are addressed and integrated throughout all aspects of the project’s stakeholder engagement activities. The project will make sure to integrate a gender perspective into all legal and policy amendments and stakeholders consultations, advocating for women rights and striving to offer equal participation opportunities in deliberation processes.  The project will ensure that the activities relating to improved land and water management, such as local trainings and local decision-making mechanisms have appropriate and adequate gender representation. The project will also be working on the improvement management of protected areas and will also ensure the engagement of women in decision-making bodies related to protected areas, such as sub-basinal committees of Camenca and Prut rivers. The expected project provision of gender-disaggregated data, specifically, the distribution of project benefits based on sex, will assist in the monitoring of the effectiveness of addressing equality gaps through project programming. The project has mainstreamed a gender responsive engagement in its strategy (*please see Annex 11 Gender Analysis and Action Plan*) and will put in place a grievance redress mechanism, as described in the Annex 9 (Stakeholders Engagement Plan) and in line with the UNDP SES requirements. The safeguards to be applied to ensure that gender considerations continue to be a part of the project delivery approach include the contribution of gender and community outreach specialists, continued targeting and engagement of women stakeholder groups through the project participation plan, and the mandatory utilization of gender assessments to guide all significant project deliverables. It is the aim of the project is to achieve the categorization of “Gender Responsive” according to UNDP’s gender results effectiveness scale (i.e., the results addressed differential needs of men or women and equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status and rights but do not address root causes of inequalities in their lives). |
| ***Briefly describe in the space below how the project mainstreams sustainability and resilience*** |
| The project’s interventions, backed by Government commitments and regulations, will aim to strengthen the inter-sectorial coordination and local communities’ participation during the development and revision of the protected areas management plans in the two targeted wetland areas (The Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and the Royal Forest Nature Reserve/Ramsar site), which will enhance the likelihood of environment sustainability. In the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, the local communities and local authorities in the surrounding localities will be included in the development of a landscape scale wetland management plan and will increase the sense of ownership of the local communities but also their awareness on the main threats to biodiversity coming from agriculture and illegal poaching . Furthermore, a biodiversity monitoring programme will be developed, which will involve local communities. Representatives of other sectors such as agriculture, hunting associations, mining, tourisms, fisheries etc will be involved in the development of the management plan. Similarly, in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, the revision of the management plan will be based on participatory approaches and dialogues with all the interested economic sectors, ensuring environmental sustainability. The project will work with the Local Action Group Lower Prut and local communities’ representatives in order to develop biodiversity measures and biodiversity monitoring activities with their involvement. The participatory approaches employed will result in empowered rural communities, conscientious and effective managers of natural resources, with increased capacities to manage their land, access financing and enhance their livelihoods. Environmental sustainability will be further ensured through the National Ecological Fund, capacitated to collect pollution charges and redirect funds for wetland conservation measures. The project will support regulatory amendments and will capacitate the National Ecological Fund to increase the percentage of funds redirected to wetland conservation measures, and it is expected that these regulatory amendments will provide not only environmental but also institutional and financial sustainability of results.  The project interventions will ensure the resilience of Prut and Camenca rivers resilience and will lead to 17,456 healthy KBAs/IBAs in the Prut River Basin, an improved management efficiency of 30,176 ha of wetlands and restoration of 6,050 ha of lakes and riparian forests ecosystems. The inventory of the condition of the existing 17,456 ha of KBAs/IBAs in Prut River Basin and the study of the hydro-ecological requirements for healthy wetlands, lakes and riparian areas will provide the necessary technical knowledge and information base for adequate management decisions of 30,176 ha of wetlands. The strengthening of the institutional and technical capacities of the targeted PAs administrations will result in a stabilization of key species populations and a better integration of biodiversity into the broader landscape. The ecological restoration of the targeted wetland are strategically selected in such a way as to respond to the most pressing drivers of biodiversity degradation; as such, the restoration of 50 ha of riparian strips strategically selected in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve will diminish the transport of sediments and waste into approximately 3,000 KBAs/IBAs ecosystems hosted by the main KBAs/IBAs (i.e. lakes Manta and Beleu) and it will restore riparian forest ecosystems which are hosting important nesting and feeding habitats. Similarly, the project-driven restoration of the Camenca river old course (main Prut River tributary) will bring an additional 8,3 million m3 of water flow to Camenca floodplain and wetlands ecosystems, and it will improve ground water level and moisture conditions benefiting approximately 11,175 ha of floodplain meadows and forests. The higher level of the underground water will limit the expansion of boxelder and other species that tend to replace valuable riparian galleries in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve. The cumulative effect of the governance and ecological pathways of the project are expected to improve the enabling legal/policy/financing environment and to maintain the ecological integrity of Prut River Basin wetlands and attenuate the effects of the climate change-induced water deficits. |
| ***Briefly describe in the space below how the project strengthens accountability to stakeholders*** |
| Through its various activities the project promotes accountability to project partners and stakeholders.   1. The project deploys multi-stakeholders participatory mechanisms that increases accountability. Good examples of participatory mechanisms are demonstrated within the framework of Output 1.1 (Activity 1.1.1.2) through the inter-institutional coordination/stakeholders participation framework to improve the legal/policy and financing framework for Moldova’s wetlands and PAs, including multi-stakeholders consultations on development and implementation of gender sensitive NBSAP. Other project activities are leveraging stakeholders’ engagement for improved PA management and increase accountability of duty-bearers through capacitating the National Environmental Fund re-direct more revenues from pollution charges towards wetlands financing under Output 1.1.2 Act. 1.1.2.1. The project promotes a greater accountability of the private sector, through the promotion of green businesses and trainings on ISO14001:2015 Environmental Standard that will hopefully increase the accountability towards environment and natural resource use (Output 3.1.1/ Activity 3.1.1.2). The project will further promote stakeholders’ accountability through mainstreaming biodiversity into local development strategies and further providing training of local authorities and relevant agencies on the importance of biodiversity consideration into land use planning and policies and local development strategies (Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.1) and by facilitating active local community engagement including rural poor, actively promoting participation of women, youth and disadvantaged groups. Similarly, the project-supported community-led biodiversity friendly rural businesses (Output 3.1.1) and the awareness activities destined to increase accountability of decision makers for wetlands/natural resource management, these are all major project milestones, implemented with embedded mechanisms for meaningful participation of all the stakeholders affected, particularly those at risk of being left behind. 2. The project ensures that everyone has access to information, through transparency of all the programmatic interventions, provision of timely and accessible information regarding supported activities (primarily captured under Component 4) but also through partnerships such as with Local Action Group Lower Prut, sub-basin committees and local and national agencies, the project will strengthen its community outreach, including consultations on potential environmental and social risks and impacts and necessary management measures that will be implemented based on local consensus. Transparency and access to information and coordination with other local initiatives, will empower stakeholders to accelerate transition towards accountable decision making processes and more sustainable livelihoods. 3. The project ensures that all the stakeholders can communicate their concerns and have access to rights-compatible complaints redress processes and mechanisms. In cases where there is a risk of economic displacement, such as the activities leading to international recognition of buffer areas (e.g. Ramsar designation in Royal Forest Nature Reserve) the Process Framework will be deployed, in an inclusive and participative manner, supported at local level by project experts and Local Basin Committees including representatives of local governing bodies, local NGOs in order to ensure inclusiveness. The project will ensure that in all interactions with stakeholders (consultations, meetings, web sites) information is available on how to access complaints processes. The Project’s Stakeholder Engagement Plan will ensure the stakeholder’s are engaged and informed about all activities. In addition to the UNDP Stakeholder Response Mechanism[[1]](#footnote-1) which is embedded in all UNDP projects, this project will inform about the Grievance Redress mechanism(GRM) and will designate the Project Board as the project-GRM to ensure first of all that all the people and communities are informed of project-level grievance entry points and avoid/minimize risks of retaliation and reprisal against people who may seek information on project activities or express concerns and/or access project level grievances. 4. The project will monitor environment and social risk management measures through effective and where possible, participatory engagement of the stakeholders. |

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

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| **QUESTION 2: What are the Potential Social and Environmental Risks?**  Note: Complete SESP Attachment 1 before responding to Question 2. | **QUESTION 3: What is the level of significance of the potential social and environmental risks?**  Note: Respond to Questions 4 and 5below before proceeding to Question 5 | | | **QUESTION 6: Describe the assessment and management measures for each risk rated Moderate, Substantial or High** | | |
| **Risk Description**  **(broken down by event, cause, impact)** | **Impact and Likelihood (1-5)** | **Significance**  **(Low, Moderate Substantial, High)** | **Comments (optional)** | **Description of assessment and management measures for risks rated as Moderate, Substantial or High** | | |
| **Risk 1**: Vulnerable groups (smallholders with less land and capacities) including women and women entrepreneurs, might not be involved in project activities and therefore not engaged in, supportive of, or benefitting from project activities. Project-born outputs may not fully incorporate or reflect views of women and ensure equitable opportunities for their involvement and benefit.  SES Principle 2 Human Rights  P2, P3, P5  SES Principle 3 Gender  P10, P11,  SES Principle 5 Accountability  P13, P14 | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate** | Women may be underrepresented, due to ingrained social and cultural norms. Most vulnerable families or groups may not be aware of project-supported opportunities and not involved in the consultations. | **The risk is managed through the project’s strategy**, which (as explained in Part A of this SESP document) has embedded participatory approaches, balanced representations and meaningful participation of women, youth and other vulnerable groups in consultations and equal opportunities to benefit from project activities. With respect to gender, a **Gender Analysis** has been undertaken and a **Gender Action Plan** developed. The project will hire a gender expert that will supervise the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and will make sure that the project will offer equal opportunities for women to participate in and benefit from the project activities.  The project will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that there is adequate consultation and participation. Activities designed under Components 2 and 3 are specifically tailored to deploy participatory processes in which all voices can be heard, especially those small holders, poor households, women entrepreneurs etc. that are usually left behind. Engagement of vulnerable groups and other key community is detailed in the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Gender Plan in line with current UNDP SES guidance. | | |
| **Risk 2:** Local and national decision makers/authorities may not have the capacity to fulfill all aspects of their mandate, and rural resource users may not have the capacity to claim their rights, which could potentially lead to the violation of human rights.  SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P2, P3 | I = 3  P = 3 | **Moderate** | Low capacities at rayonal (district) and local levels are many times resulting in little or no instructions for sustainable management of wetlands, pastures and forests and inadequate monitoring. Local communities, especially in remote villages or vulnerable groups are often unaware of opportunities to improve their livelihoods and to participate in decision making over natural resources. | **The risk is managed through the project’s strategy.** Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.1 includes concrete measures to strengthen and expand the current capabilities of the key institutions responsible for the development planning at district and local levels in three districts (Cahul, Glodeni and Falesti) to mainstream biodiversity considerations, through multi-stakeholders participatory approaches. There will be a number of 6 trainings and coaching sessions to strengthen the local authorities capacities to integrate biodiversity considerations in the local development strategies, providing an opportunity for further consultations and dialogue between decision makers and local communities. On this occasion too, the project will make sure to integrate a gender perspective into all the capacity building events and stakeholders consultations, advocating for women rights and striving to offer equal participation opportunities in trainings and awareness events and decision making processes.  In addition, the project will be working closely with all stakeholders to support government natural resource management authorities and institutions to meet their obligations, and with resource user rights holders to claim their rights. This will be accomplished through multiple stakeholder consultation sessions during all relevant aspects of the project to ensure that all parties are aware of and understand the relevant obligations and rights. | | |
| **Risk 3:** The envisaged legal and policy amendments developed by the project in support of long-term sustainability could affect access and use of resources by local communities, including the rural poor and women.  *SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P5, P6*  *SES Principle 3, Gender, P10*  *SES Principle 3, Gender, P11*  *Principle 5, Accountability, P13*  *Principle 5, Accountability, P14*  *Standard 5 Displacement; 5.2*  *Standard 5 Displacement; 5.4* | I = 3  L =2 | **Moderate** | The project will develop several regulatory and policy amendments that may lead to stricter regulations over natural resources use (Output 1.1.1/ Act. 1.1.1.1 and Act. 1.1.1.3; Output 1.1.2/ Act. 1.1.2.1; Output 1.1.3/Act. 1.1.3.1)  The project will conduct a review of key legislation identified in policy baseline as follows: the Land Code ( No. 828 XII of 25-12-1991) and Forestry Code (No 887 XIII of 21-06-1996); Law on Environmental protection (No 1515 XI of 16-06-1993); Law on Water and River basin Protection Zones and Riparian Strips ( No 440 pf 27-04-1995); Law on Animal Kingdom (No 439 XIII of 27-04-1995); Law on Protected Areas State Fund ( No 1538 of 25-02-1998); Law on Red Book of the Republic of Moldova (No. 325 of 15-12-2005); The law of the vegetal kingdom (No. 239-XVI of 8-11-2007); Law on the Ecological Network (No. 94 of 05-04-2007); The Law on Water (No. 272 ​​of 23-12-2011); Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (No. 86 of 29-05-2014) and related government decisions and framework regulations as well as on-going legislation harmonization with EU framework. Under Act 1.1.13 the project will provide technical expertise and hydro-climate modelling in order to identify the appropriate minimum ecological flow that would need to be ensured for the survival of downstream wetlands and lakes. The project will also support the development of NBSAP aligned with the new post 2020 global biodiversity framework.  The project will amend the National Ecological Fund related regulations in order to prioritize wetlands/PAs financing.  Finally, the project will support the revisions of the local development strategies, mainstreaming biodiversity considerations (i.e. Biodiversity passports of rare/endangered species and critical habitats) and related sustainable management measures.  When modifying existing resource use and management regimes, there is always a possibility of some modification to the enjoyment of human rights or potential economic displacement of individuals living near or otherwise using territory included in the targeted area. The Risk is preventatively rated Moderate. UNDP has extensive experience working in Moldova on similar types of interventions. | The risk will be managed through the **SESA approach** (that must be applied during the development of the project-supported legal and policy amendments , influencing the said amendments, such that potential social and environmental downstream impacts arising from the development of subsequent regulations/policy/guidelines are considered as an explicit part of the amended laws, Regulation and policies (*please see Annex 10 ESMF*  With respect to gender, a **Gender Analysis** has been undertaken and a **Gender Action Plan** developed to address the issue of gender dimension in the policy making. The project will hire a gender expert that will supervise the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and will make sure that the project will offer equal opportunities for women to participate in and benefit from the project activities, and participate in a meaningful way in the policy related deliberations.  This is especially important with regard to the project-supported NBSAP development. The project experts will ensure that gender issues are integrated into NBSAP, setting the framework for gender-responsive biodiversity planning and programming at national and local levels. During the government-led multi-stakeholders consultations on NBSAP, the project will seek to strengthen the understanding of the national institutions and agencies (with mandate on biodiversity conservation and wise use) on the multifaceted biodiversity related issues, in order to recognize and consistently integrate gender issues in environmental policy and law making. The project supports the Ministry of Environment responsible for NBSAP implementation to take advantage of a wide network of strategic partners, including the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection as well as various women organizations and NGOs targeting women in the context of natural resource use, to support more effective, gender responsive NBSAP development and implementation. | | |
| **Risk 4:** Designation of additional areas as Ramsar sites in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, and expansion of the total PA area**,**  could lead to potential limitations or restrictions of the use of natural resources.  Similarly, strengthening the management of existing PAs, such as the development of a Management Plan for the targeted PAs, improved PAs zoning, strengthening the protection regimes and stricter enforcement of the environmental regulation may further restrict access to and use of biodiversity resources by local communities, affecting livelihoods.  SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P5  SESP Principle 2 Human Rights, P6  SES Principle 3, Gender, P10  SES Principle 3, Gender, P11  Principle 5, Accountability, P13  Principle 5, Accountability, P14  Standard 5 Displacement; 5.2  Standard 5 Displacement; 5.4 | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate** | Under **Output 2.1.1,** the project will support the Ramsar designation of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, adding approximately 9,300 ha of adjacent floodplain surface area to the existing PA. The project will also develop a Management plan that will adequately manage the entire Ramsar area through an improved zoning, that will enforce some limitation of natural resource use especially in PA buffer areas, combining conservation measures and biodiversity friendly livelihoods.  In the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, the project will update the existing management plan with potential improvement of current PA zoning as well. The 9 localities in the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve have already been consulted and they have approved of the current draft Management Plan. This draft will however get updated and potential modifications of the currently proposed zoning may be proposed. Additional local consultations will be organized with the local communities’ representatives.  The enhanced protection regime and a better zoning and delineation of on-the-ground of PAs core and buffer areas (although having significant environmental benefits) it may bring along potential risks of restrictions/limitations on the use of natural resources that may be at odd with the current agricultural practices of the local communities in project areas. Associated with that is the risk that not all key user groups of natural resources at project sites are consulted in project implementation and they will be affected by the restrictions on the use of natural resources. | The risk management measures will be addressed by the **Process Framework (PF),** included in the Project document.  The **Stakeholder Engagement Plan**, **Gender Action Plan** and **project level** GRM will complement the Process Framework ( Please see Annex 9 Stakeholder Engagement Plan – it includes a template for the Process Framework).  The **Process framework** is embedded in the project strategy and it is part and parcel of the project’s work under Component 2 (Output 2.1.1/Act 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.3).  The PF will engage local population in the targeted areas. These local meetings will create awareness on the work on PAs and will address and reconcile any real or perceived economic limitations that the PA legal mandate (and/or additional international designation such as Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO) may impose.  Evaluation of the necessity of **potential compensatory mechanisms** and eligibility criteria, describing the measures that will assist the potential affected persons to improve their livelihoods will be identified as the result of these assessments and discussions.  The project manager will ensure that Information and guidance to local communities about the UNDP Conflict resolution and grievance mechanism is provided.  The formal process of the Ramsar designation will not commence unless consensus with the local communities over the PAs border, management arrangements and monitoring measures is secured (please see Annex 9 Stakeholders Engagement Plan / Process Framework Template; and Annex 10 ESMF) .  During the consultations, the project manager supported by the project’s experts/company as well as by the MARDE with *Moldsilva* Agency and *Moldovan Waters* Agency, will ensure that any potential risk of economic displacement in the affected communities, resulting from the designation of new PAs will be mitigated through the Process Framework for both targeted PAs. Should the economic displacement risk be not avoided an **Livelihood Action Plan** will be developed and compensatory measures deployed.A template of the Livelihood Action Plan is provided under Annex 10 ESMF.  Furthermore, the **Stakeholders Engagement Plan** contains meaningful engagement measures and stakeholders roles and responsibilities. During the project implementation, the Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be updated to fulfill the requirements of Standard 5 (or a Livelihood Action Plan will be developed if needed for SES compliance, based on the findings of the screenings etc.)  **Gender Action Plan** contains measures that will be implemented in order to ensure that women have equal opportunities to participate and benefit from the project activities. The project will hire a gender expert that will supervise the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. | | |
| **Risk 5**. The restoration of the old watercourse of the Camenca river will raise the ground water level, which may affect private arable land plots and cause flooding of house basements, negatively affecting livelihoods and may restrict the current (illegal) access to water resources of some of the local residents. The intervention sites may disturb surrounding settlements.  SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P5  SESP Principle 2 Human Rights, P6  SES Principle 3, Gender, P10  SES Principle 3, Gender, P11  Principle 5, Accountability, P13  Principle 5, Accountability, P14  Standard 5 Displacement; 5.1;5.2  Standard 5 Displacement; 5.4  SES Standard 2 Climate Change and Disaster Risk, 2.3; 2.1  Standard 3 Community Safety  3.1 3.2 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7  SES Standard 8 Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency 8.2, 8.5, 8.6 | I=4  L=3 | **Substantial** | Under Output 2.2.1 Act. 2.2.1.2 the project will support the rehabilitation of an old water course of Camenca river, the main tributary of Prut river.  This may trigger some opposing views at local level, especially in Balatina village, due to two factors:   1. The envisaged restoration will increase the groundwater level, which ( despite the ecological and livelihoods benefits brought to the area) can affect some private plots and may flood the basements of the houses located in the river’s proximity. The groundwater level is not likely to raise in such a significant way that would cause floods simply because Camenca river is a small stream. On some plots, the groundwater may reach the surface, replenishing existing lakes and ponds and increasing soil moisture in the grasslands, as the entire floodplain ecosystems will gain water from the replenished aquifer. Water levels in the existing lakes and ponds and water wells is likely to rise. The extent of the water level increase will be rigorously assessed during the full feasibility study, during the project implementation. The PPG stage pre-feasibility study has indicated the potential of ground water level to rise with several centimeters, however in-depth modelling scenarios are needed in order to assess the extent of impact on the groundwater level rise and area covered. 2. While this is a beneficial restoration activity that will bring approx. 8.3 mil m3 of water annually and will tremendously help with the adaptation to the predicted climate-induced water deficits, the local residents may (initially, at least) oppose to this restoration, as there is a certain locally vested interest in the status quo to remain unchanged. Currently an (apparent) illegal small earth dam constructed on the old river bed is diverting water for some of the residents own private use (e.g. poultry farming, irrigation) although the area is a public property (as indicated in excerpts from the pre-feasibility study Annex 20 Project Document). Although this construction is illegal, and located on state property, there have been no legal measures taken so far. | **Mitigation measures will ensure consistency to SES (not adherence) because the relevant project activities are co-financed with funds that will not be administered by UNDP (i.e. will not flow through UNDP accounts).**  The risk is mitigated through two processes:   * the **Process Framework (PF**) embedded in the project strategy, under the Act. 2.2.1.2.   The local dialogue facilitated by the project together with the national and local authorities will first and foremost raise awareness and educate the local communities about the benefits of the restoration works and secondly will find an agreeable solution to enforce the applicable legislation/regulations concerning the illegal constructions on Camenca water course. The local dialogue will be addressing especially the concerns of people from the villages situated in the immediate proximity of the envisaged hydrological works, in particular Balatina village. Any potential economic displacements resulting from the preparatory activities and post-hydrological works will be addressed following UNDP SES guidelines and the project will develop a Livelihood Action Plan as required and compensatory (non-monetary) payments (*Annex 10 ESMF*).   * Secondly, the development of the scoped ESIA/ESMP, as part of a **full Feasibility Study (according to the national legislation)**  during the project implementation will give further clarity on the likelihood and/or scale of any potential negative impact on the local livelihoods.   The project will make sure that the immediate impact area is correctly identified and that the Process Framework will include the most vulnerable community representatives and that in case of any economic displacement, a Livelihood Action Plan will be developed and implemented and a compensatory scheme will be deployed.  As indicated in the Project Document strategy under Act.2.2.1.2, the GEF funds will be made available to develop a Full Feasibility Study **only after the following steps have been addressed namely** (1) National and local authorities have appropriately addressed the illegal constructions on Camenca river (consistent with the SES requirements) and local communities are supportive of this intervention (2) The project has secured the approval of the necessary legal background papers that may be necessary to clarify cadaster issues. In addition (3) the national partners commitment to **co-financing the full hydrotechnical works following UNDP SES requirements (and any other related costs that cannot be covered by the UNDP/GEF project) on Camenca** should be validated again prior to the commissioning of the full feasibility study.  The **full Feasibility** **Study should not be commissioned if these (above mentioned) stages are not completed,** as there is a risk of unforeseen complications that can lead to unmanageable delays of implementing the actual hydrotechnical works on Camenca river, due to the fact that the local dialogue and the process itself may take years of negotiations, (legal) clarifications and enforcement of the legal provisions. | | |
| **Risk 6:** Wetlands riparian restoration measures intended to improve water availability, and reduce threats to critical habitats and environmentally sensitive areas could potentially end up harming them.  Standard 1 Biodiversity and NRM 1.2; 1.3; 1.4; 1.6; 1.7; 1.8  SES Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.5; 3.6  SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.2; 2.3  Standard 7 Labor and Working Conditions 7.1; 7.3 | I=5 3L=2 | **Moderate** | **Output 2.2** comprises a suite of measures to restore wetlands lakes and riparian zones in both targeted PAs.  In the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve, 50 ha of riparian strips will be re-forested in strategically selected spots with the aim of not only restoring degraded land and reducing soil erosion but also acting as a barrier against domestic waste and agriculture run-offs entering 3,000 ha of lakes ecosystems in Manta-Beleu lakes network and increasing siltation.  The likelihood of the risks from targeted project interventions is rated “moderately likely” but given that the objective of the project is to enhance the environmental and social qualities of these areas, the risk of negative and environmental impacts is considered limited in scale and manageable through applicable standard practices, use of native species and/or previously tested methods . Although the environmental risks are considered moderate, limited in scale and with the likelihood of being reasonably managed, and the sites are at sufficient distance from the protected areas, and there will be selected such that will minimize or completely reduce impact on private land, there will be nevertheless minor changes in land cover and potential damage to the vegetation type; temporary disturbance of rodent burrows or bird nests may be possible. | RIPARIAN REFORESTATION  The risks will be managed through an **appropriately scoped ESIA** to identify, prevent and mitigate potential negative impacts on the critical habitats . The wetlands restoration measures are expected to ensure livelihood improvements and environmental sustainability during and beyond the project period.  The **qualified project’s experts** ( Riparian Forest Engineer, Hydrologists, Agronomist, PA specialist) will work with the safeguards experts/company to properly identify risks and proposed management measures. The Project Manager and Experts as well as Implementing Partner and Moldsilva Agency, ICAS, representatives and local authorities will facilitate local consultations with community representatives on the proposed restoration measures, targeted locations and necessary assessments.  In the case of the reforestation works under Output 2.2.1/Act. 2.2.1.1, the selected reforestation areas selected are located on public property , managed by the local authorities and Moldsilva Agency**. ESIAs** will be conducted prior to the commencement of the reforestation activities (please see ESMF Annex 10). The local communities will be made aware of the monitoring requirements of the sites and the ecological benefits that these habitat restorations will bring to the lakes ecosystems. The consultations will be led by the local authorities and the project will work together with the Local Action Group Lower Prut organization to facilitate consultations. | | |
| **Risk 7.** The project supported demonstration activities may fail to properly consider procedures for chance finds of valuable cultural heritage sites.    SES Standard 4; 4.1; 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 | I=3  L=2 | **Moderate** | The project sites for **Outputs 2.2**  have been carefully selected during the PPG based on several criteria chiefly among which is the riparian/floodplain land condition in the PAs. There is very low risk that these sites be overlapping with cultural and/or historically significant sites. | The risk is managed through SESP and the project will ensure that chance find procedures are included in all plans and contracts regarding project-related restoration works, construction, including excavations, demolitions, movement of earth, flooding, or other changes in the physical environment; such procedures establish how chance finds of tangible Cultural Heritage shall be managed, including notification of relevant authorities and stakeholders, avoidance of further disturbance or damage, protection, documentation and assessment of found objects by relevant experts | | |
| **Risk 8:** The project may potentially resort to institutional collaborations with local police and gendarmerie that may risk facilitating potential altercations with local communities.  Enforcement of PAs regime and/or buffer areas, following applicable environmental norms and legislation could pose risks of conflicts between rangers and local communities engaged in traditional livelihoods and practices. Enforcement of applicable laws and regulations in case of illegal earth dam construction on Camenca river, may result in conflicts between the local police and local community.  SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P2  SES Principle 2 Human Rights, P7  SES Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.8 | I=4  L=3 | **Substantial** | The risk rating “Substantial” is considered particularly in relation with the case of the illegal constructions on Camenca river, diverting water for personal use of a restricted number of residents in Balatina village. In this case, attempts to law enforcement could lead to potential hostilities among different local community members and/or between local police and community members that are illegally using natural resources.  In addition, the project may facilitate institutional agreements with local police in order to combat illegal activities such as poaching and illegal logging in the targeted PAs. Enforcement issues of the environmental regulations may lead to conflicts between the PA rangers and the local community. | Risk management measures :   1. Firstly, the project will ensure that the **PAs Management Plans** (Act. 2.1.1.2 and 2.1.1.3) in the targeted areas will encompass measures for patrolling/ enforcing the environmental regulations and engagement with local communities with respect to human rights principles, understanding the local community’s rights and needs. PAs management plan will include human rights-based measures/actions for PAs rangers concerning patrolling and application of fines, search and arrest and interaction with local communities, aiming at promoting collaborative approaches. 2. Secondly, the **targeted PAs trainings** (Act. 2.1.2.2) on patrolling and legal enforcement will be included in the training seminars for rangers and PA staff, local police and central and local authorities with an emphasis on human rights principles (in line with the UNDP SES). Some of the trainings will target specifically community outreach related topics , and addressing illegal activities *"Interaction with local communities".* The training will include a specific module for rangers, on Local Communities and Cultures, in order to strengthen understanding on community rights and needs; respect to human rights and empowering communities to manage and protect wildlife and critical habitats. 3. Most importantly, the issue of illegal constructions on Camenca river and/or other economic displacement risks ( be it real or perceived) owing to the projects’ work in the PAs, will be addressed by **regular meetings between PA managers, ranger patrol staff, local communities, environmental inspectorates and through the Process framework** to analyse trends in monitoring and legal compliance, aiming at addressing ongoing threats in a collaborative manner. **The Process framework** will take place in both targeted PAs and it is described under Annex 10 ESMF and embedded in the project document strategy under Output 2.1 and Output 2.2. 4. The **Grievance Redress Mechanisms** is described under the Annex 9 Stakeholder engagement plan. Grievance Redress Mechanism (in line with UNDP SES) will provide for a fair and free from influence entry point for their potential complaints and/or grievances. The Complaints Register and Grievance Redress Mechanism will provide an accessible, rapid, fair and effective response to concerned stakeholders, especially any vulnerable group who often lack access to formal legal regimes.   In addition, the project will use the Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan to mitigate this risk.  The participation of the most vulnerable members of community including Roma minority, women and women headed households, youth, veterans other vulnerable groups such as Roma etc. in the project activities is prioritized, and in some cases (for example the development of the criteria for project technical assistance of rural entrepreneurs) inclusion of such vulnerable members of community among beneficiaries represents a selection criterion.  With respect to gender, a gender analysis has been undertaken (as required), and a Gender Action Plan developed. The project will hire a gender expert that will supervise the implementation of the Gender Action Plan.  Furthermore, the Stakeholders Engagement Plan will be updated to fulfill the requirements of Standard 5 in the first year of implementation before the relevant activities begin management.  Ramsar designation and any changes to the natural resources regime identified as having the potential to lead to limitations and restrictions of access to resources, will not be implemented until/unless suitable, agreed management measures are in place.  All the necessary approvals will be obtained from national and local authorities (particularly the Ministry of Environment) before the activities, and in line with the Process Framework, SESA, ESIA and Stakeholders Engagement Plan. | | |
| **Risk 9:** The expected impacts resulting from the project-supported biodiversity conservation and restoration measures could be sensitive to changing climate conditions in the future.  *SES Standard 2 Climate Change Vulnerability, 2.2*  *SES Standard 2 Climate Change Vulnerability, 2.3* | I=3  L=2 | **Moderate** | Adverse impacts of extreme climatic events (drought and/or seasonal floods) can affect project’s interventions in the field and the livelihoods of local communities living in the target areas. | The management measures will be implemented **through the project’s strategy.**  The various project’s assessments will be informed by the existing climate risk profile/studies (elaborated within the framework of other projects) and through the project’s own land/water and climate risk assessments.  The project will develop a ***Study of the hydro-ecological conditions for adequate wetlands management, climate resilient measures and adaptation scenarios*** (under Output 2.1.1. Act 2.1.1.5) focusing on the targeted wetlands in the Prut River Basin. The assessments/study will be developed by the project experts in collaboration with NGO and academia. The Study will be conducted in coordination with the field research and hydroclimatic modeling for the establishment of the minimum ecological flow (Activity 1.1.1.3). The Study will include practical recommendations for decision makers to improve wetlands management. Based on these recommendations, the project will develop additional legal/regulatory amendments for the improvement of wetlands management framework.  Attention to the current and potential impacts of climate change has been built-in to all aspects of the project.  A multidisciplinary team of specialists will ensure that the partners and stakeholders will apply the best available climate change forecasts data Moldova and river Prut basin and will ensure that all project activities and plans take potential future climate impacts into consideration.  The project will calculate the **minimum ecological flow** needed for the survival of the wetlands of Prut river taking into account the predicted climate induced water deficits. This will provide scientific based evidence for adequate policy and institutional provisions for sustainable management of maximum and minimum ecological flows to lakes, wetlands, and riparian zones in Prut river basin.  The **hydroclimatic modeling** (under **Output 1.1)** and water use trend analysis will provide scientific evidence for the legal amendments that are expected to improve wetlands management and financing frameworks.  The project’s awareness raising activities will include information on climate risk and vulnerability of wetlands and livelihoods depending on the wetlands ecosystem services.  The project will support species and habitat inventories and will identify potential gaps in the existing system of PAs in order to effectively conserve biodiversity, considering the potential for ecosystem change and ecological shifts due to climate change **impacts (Output 2.1).** As part of the project’s work on strengthening the management effectiveness of PAs it will also strengthen environmental monitoring capacities in order to better track the future effects of climate change within PAs and the targeted KBAs. The project’s work to support the minimum ecological flow and increased allocation of water to lakes and wetlands KBAs/IBAs (Output 1.1.) will be grounded in the best available and most recent climate science relevant for Moldova. | | |
| **Risk 10:** Project activities involving local/field interventions and close engagement with local communities may inadvertently contribute to the spread of COVID-19.  Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.4 | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate** | Activities at local level are based on participatory approaches, and most of the times will include meetings and local consultations. There are a number of training workshops and awareness events, round table meetings etc. | The risk will be mitigated through **adequate safeguards** such as: (i) clear procedures in place in case of COVID19 reinstatement of restrictions, approved during project inception (ii) use of protective equipment, maintaining social distancing and using remote methods of engagement whenever possible (iii) if adequate safeguards cannot be put in place, activities that entail close local communities engagement will be put on hold if necessary, and work programme/budget will be revised as needed. Wherever possible on-line meeting platforms will be used and travel decreased. All project meetings will be organized mindful of government regulations and healthy standards and other appropriate safeguards (including those of UNDSS). Under Output 3.1.2 Act. 3.1.2.4 the project will support the development of **COVID-19 safe tourism protocols** by working with the National Tourism Authority and will apply/test these safety protocols within the tourism itineraries/packages supported by the project. | | |
| **Risk 11**: The project may inadvertently contribute to potential perpetuation of discriminations against women. There are lingering disparities between men and women, particularly in rural areas and in the patriarchal cultures of some of the ethnic minority communities, which could be inadvertently replicated.  *SES Principle 3, Gender, P10, P12* | I=2  L=3 | **Moderate** | The Project could potentially perpetuate discriminations against women based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities. In the rural areas, women account for around 51-52% of the population. They are mainly engaged in housekeeping, teaching, and administrative support services. Many more women form part of the unpaid family labor in family farms. | The management of this risk will be done through the implementation of the **Gender Action Plan (GAP)** and will be monitored by the project specialized gender expert.  The project design has consistently mainstreamed gender sensitive approaches and has created opportunities for tackling women’s needs and the differentiated ways men and women use natural resources. The project will provide ample opportunities for women to learn about biodiversity-friendly business opportunities in rural areas, and participate in the business opportunities facilitated by the project.  Though the training programs for local natural resource users and SMEs women will also be able to access the capacity building and training required to practice green businesses as well as to diversify their livelihoods in more resilient ways.  The project will ensure gender balance in all project activities (e.g. seminars, community level events) including in the membership of different decision-making bodies ( Working groups; Project Board; Evaluation Committees) including access to project financial assistance and/or compensatory measures in case of potential economic displacement.  The project will also gather gender-disaggregated data for evaluation purposes and use gender sensitive indicators (particularly around beneficiaries) to facilitate planning, implementation and monitoring. Complaints will be addressed and managed through the Grievance Redress Mechanism and the Project Board. | | |
| **Risk 12.** Supported local small businesses could involve third party subcontractors, that may inadvertently fail to comply with international labor standards including those related to child labor and/or may inadvertently fail to provide for occupational health and safety standards .  *SES Standard 7; 7.1*  *SES Standard 7; 7.3,7.4* | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate[[2]](#footnote-2)** | The project will support small local businesses to access financing in order to implement local initiatives that will boost their livelihoods. In addition, there will be construction works related to the restoration activities under Output 2.2.  Likelihood of non-observance of UN standards and policies of labor and working conditions especially child labor has been considered based also on some existing reports:  <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/moldova> | The **management measures will be devised on case by case basis per the procedures described in the ESMF.** The project will ensure that national working standards (Labor Code) are respected for all the project activities. The requirements of this Standard are to be applied in an appropriately-scaled manner based on the nature and scale of the project, its specific activities, the project's associated social and environmental risks and impacts, and the type of contractual relationships with project workers.  **The management procedures will be that specific requirements of the terms and conditions of the employment will be established**, that will:  Comply with minimum age requirements set out in International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions or national legislation (whichever offers the greatest protection to young people under the age of 18) and keep records of the dates of birth of all employees verified by official documentation  Check the activities carried out by young workers and ensure that children under 18 are not employed in hazardous work, including in contractor workforces. Hazardous work will normally be defined in national legislation and will be likely to include most tasks in construction and several in agriculture.  Assess the safety risks relating to any work by children under 18 and carry out regular monitoring of their health, working conditions and hours of work  Ensure that any workers aged 13-15 are only doing light work outside school hours, in accordance with national legislation, or working in a government-approved training programme  Ensure that contractors have adequate systems in place to check workers’ ages, identify workers under the age of 18 and to ensure that they are not engaged in hazardous work, and that their work is subject to appropriate risk assessment and health monitoring  In addition, the Project will ensure that appropriate wages will be paid per assigned tasks. Security and safety standards will also be respected and enforced. In addition to the UNDP Stakeholder response mechanism, part of the Grievance Redress Mechanism will provide for a fair and free from influence entry point for their potential complaints and/or grievances. The Complaints Register and Grievance Redress Mechanism will provide an accessible, rapid, fair and effective response to concerned stakeholders, especially any vulnerable group who often lack access to formal legal regimes.  For any sub-contractors due diligence will be conducted as necessary to ascertain that third parties who engage project workers are legitimate and reliable entities and have in place appropriate policies, processes and systems that allow them to operate in accordance with the minimum requirements herein.  The Project manager and UNDP CO will ensure that procedures are established and applied during implementation for managing and monitoring the performance of such third parties in relation to the minimum requirements herein, including incorporation of the minimum requirements into contractual agreements with such third parties, together with appropriate noncompliance remedies. In the case of subcontracting, third parties are required to include equivalent requirements and remedies in their contractual agreements with subcontractors. | | |
| **Risk 13: The project may inadvertently support legal/policy amendments that will allow oil drilling in Protected Areas.**  SES Standard 1 Biodiversity and NRM, 1.1; 1.2; 1.4; 1.7; 1.14  SES Standard 3 Community Health, Safety and Security, 3.5; 3.6  SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.4  SES Standard 8 Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency 8.2, 8.6 | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate** | The project will offer legal assistance to the Ministry of Environment and the Ministerial Committee in charge with monitoring the oil exploitation in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve, in order to modify the legal provisions and regulations related to concessions of mineral resources. | The risk will be mitigated by the SESA approach. The project will also ensure that the legal amendments will adhere to the MAB UNESCO requirements for the biosphere reserve designated in the Lower Prut. | | |
| **Risk 14 The project supported Innovation Challenge may inadvertently promote innovative products that could pose environmental or social risks.**  SES Standard 1 Biodiversity and NRM, 1.1; 1.2; 1.4;  SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.4 | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate** | The project’s work under Output 3.1.2 is focusing on the organization of an Innovation Challenge in order to identify. innovative SMART “biodiversity passport”, possibly a downloadable *Smart Phone App* that will be promoted as the preferred means to download a single ID/code which would give access to information on protected area sites and tourism facilities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve in Romania. | The risk will be mitigated through SES (screening against UNDP SES criteria). The Innovation Challenge will be organized according to UNDP procedures and the screening of proposals will be aligned with UNDP SES requirements (please see ESMF Annex 10) | | |
| **Risk 15 The project supported eco-tourism routes may pose environmental or social risks.**  *SES Principle 2 Human Rights*  *P5, P7*  *SES Principle 3 Gender*  *P10, P12*  *SES Principle Accountability and Resilience*  *P13*  *Standard 1 Biodiversity Conservation and NRM*  *1.2,1.4*  SES Standard 2 Climate Change, 2.4  Standard 7 Labor and Working Condition  7.3, | I=3  L=3 | **Moderate** | Under Output 3.1.2 the project will support the development of local eco-tourism routes (Act 3.1.2.1) and a cross-border tourist package Moldova-Romania (Act 3.1.2.2), building upon the existing local tourists attractions and involving the support of the Local Action Group Lower Prut.  The risks considered here are related to the project potential failure to consider : (i) inclusive participation of local communities in the development of the tourist itineraries, especially with respect to gender and vulnerable communities and (ii) risks related to labor conditions, (iii) risks related to the potential support to unsustainable use of natural resources etc | The risk will be mitigated through SES, using the UNDP social and environmental screening procedures in order to identify and avoid possible risks (Please see ESMF Annex 10). | | |
| **Risk 16:** Oil exploitation operations in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve do not observe the minimum environmental standards, and constitute a likely source of water pollution and fire hazards, posing a risk to the natural habitats and ecosystems in the project’s targeted PAs.  Standard 1 Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management  1.2; 1.4; 1.7; 1.10; 1.14  Standard 8 Pollution Prevention and resource Efficiency; 8.1, 8.2 | I-4  L=4 | **Substantial** | **This risk relates to the project’s area of influence, and does not stem from project activities. The measures (to the right) reflect this fact.**  Oil exploitation in a core area of a MAB/UNESCO Biosphere reserve in Lower Prut is based on unclear legal arrangements. Oil exploitation platform is functioning on subpar environmental standards, that can (an did) ignite fire hazards, affecting critical habitats in 2020.  The Law on Protected Areas (article 26) does stipulate that economic activities affecting natural ecosystem are forbidden in the scientific reserves but provides an exception for the exploitation of natural and mineral resources that are of national interest (such as oil and gas) with the only caveat to respect environmental norms, the latter of which are not observed by private entities. The article 56 of the same law however forbids any economic activity in a core area of a MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, however the oil exploitation platform in a core area of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve is still operational. The current oil concession holder has filed for bankruptcy and its contract expired. Currently (at the time of this SESP) the Ministry of Environment is seeking to reach a final resolution on the oil exploitation in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. | Indirect/circumstantial risk mitigation measures:   * Under Output 1.1. Act. 1.1.1.1 the project will develop legal amendments that when approved, will clarify any potential legal ambiguities surrounding the oil exploitation in the MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. * The project will work with the Organization for SME sector development tin Moldova (ODIMM) and will develop and deliver ISO14001:2015 training modules to promote mandatory ISO 14001 certification and development of capacities for increasing environmental standards. The trainings are primarily destined to oil companies but also for economic operators that are posing medium and high risks of polluting the water resources. * The project will be coordinated with the active NGOS and media in order to advocate for stopping the oil exploitation in core area of the targeted PA. * The project will support the Ministerial Committee that will be in charge to supervise the oil concessional contract and will provide technical legal advisory services as necessary, aiming at increasing technical capacity to mainstream mandatory higher environmental standards for economic activities in PAs in the current regulatory framework. The project will support the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve Administration to conclude local agreements with environmental inspectorates and local police and facilitate rapid interventions in case of fire or other hazards resulting from the oil exploitation platform. Such Agreements may include scoped ESIA and/or an Emergency Management Plan as necessary. | | |
|  | **QUESTION 4: What is the overall project risk categorization?** | | | | | |
|  | | | | | |
| **Low Risk** | | **☐** |  | | |
| **Moderate Risk** | | **☐** |  | | |
| **Substantial Risk** | | **X** |  | | |
| **High Risk** | | **☐** |  | | |
|  | **QUESTION 5: Based on the identified risks and risk categorization, what requirements of the SES are triggered? (check all that apply)** | | | | | |
| Question only required for Moderate, Substantial and High Risk projects | | | | | |
| **Is assessment required? (check if “yes”)** | | **x** |  |  | **Status? (completed, planned)** |
| if yes, indicate overall type and status | |  | **X** | Targeted assessment(s) | Completed during PPG: gender analysis, stakeholder analysis |
|  | x | SESA | Planned during implementation: to be determined based on site-specific screening |
|  | **x** | ESIA | Planned during implementation: to be determined based on site-specific screening |
| **Are management plans required? (check if “yes)** | | **X** |  |  | |
| If yes, indicate overall type | |  | **X** | Screening and Targeted management plans (e.g. Gender Action Plan, Emergency Response Plan, others) | Completed during PPG: Gender Action Plan, Stakeholder Engagement Plan  Planned during implementation: Process Framework, Livelihood Action Plan (if needed), others as needed per site-specific screening and assessment |
|  | x | ESMP | Planned during implementation: to be determined based on site-specific screening |
|  | **x** | ESMF (Environmental and Social Management Framework) | Completed during PPG |
| Based on identified risks, which Principles/Project-level Standards triggered? | |  | Comments (not required) | | |
| Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind | |  |  | | |
| **Human Rights** | | X |  | | |
| **Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment** | | X |  | | |
| **Accountability** | | X |  | | |
| **1. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management** | | X |  | | |
| **2. Climate Change and Disaster Risks** | | X |  | | |
| **3. Community Health, Safety and Security** | | X |  | | |
| **4. Cultural Heritage** | | X |  | | |
| **5. Displacement and Resettlement** | | X |  | | |
| 6. Indigenous Peoples | | ☐ |  | | |
| **7. Labour and Working Conditions** | | X |  | | |
| **8. Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency** | | X |  | | |

**Final Sign Off**

*Final Screening at the design-stage is not complete until the following signatures are included*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Signature*** | ***Date*** | ***Description*** |
| QA Assessor |  | UNDP staff member responsible for the project, typically a UNDP Programme Officer. Final signature confirms they have “checked” to ensure that the SESP is adequately conducted. |
| QA Approver |  | UNDP senior manager, typically the UNDP Deputy Country Director (DCD), Country Director (CD)**,** Deputy Resident Representative (DRR), or Resident Representative (RR). The QA Approver cannot also be the QA Assessor. Final signature confirms they have “cleared” the SESP prior to submittal to the PAC. |
| PAC Chair |  | UNDP chair of the PAC. In some cases PAC Chair may also be the QA Approver. Final signature confirms that the SESP was considered as part of the project appraisal and considered in recommendations of the PAC. |

### SESP Attachment 1. Social and Environmental Risk Screening Checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Checklist Potential Social and Environmental Risks** |  |
| INSTRUCTIONS: The risk screening checklist will assist in answering Questions 2-6 of the Screening Template. Answers to the checklist questions help to (1) identify potential risks, (2) determine the overall risk categorization of the project, and (3) determine required level of assessment and management measures. Refer to the [SES toolkit](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/Pages/Homepage.aspx) for further guidance on addressing screening questions. |  |
| **Overarching Principle: Leave No One Behind**  **Human Rights** | **Answer  (Yes/No)** |
| P.1 Have local communities or individuals raised human rights concerns regarding the project (e.g. during the stakeholder engagement process, grievance processes, public statements)? | *No* |
| P.2 Is there a risk that duty-bearers (e.g. government agencies) do not have the capacity to meet their obligations in the project? | *Yes* |
| P.3 Is there a risk that rights-holders (e.g. project-affected persons) do not have the capacity to claim their rights? | *Yes* |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| P.4 adverse impacts on enjoyment of the human rights (civil, political, economic, social or cultural) of the affected population and particularly of marginalized groups? | No |
| P.5 inequitable or discriminatory impacts on affected populations, particularly people living in poverty or marginalized or excluded individuals or groups, including persons with disabilities? [[3]](#footnote-3) | Yes |
| P.6 restrictions in availability, quality of and/or access to resources or basic services, in particular to marginalized individuals or groups, including persons with disabilities? | Yes |
| P.7 exacerbation of conflicts among and/or the risk of violence to project-affected communities and individuals? | Yes |
| **Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment** |  |
| P.8 Have women’s groups/leaders raised gender equality concerns regarding the project, (e.g. during the stakeholder engagement process, grievance processes, public statements)? | No |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| P.9 adverse impacts on gender equality and/or the situation of women and girls? | *No* |
| P.10 reproducing discriminations against women based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities and benefits? | Yes |
| P.11 limitations on women’s ability to use, develop and protect natural resources, taking into account different roles and positions of women and men in accessing environmental goods and services?  *For example, activities that could lead to natural resources degradation or depletion in communities who depend on these resources for their livelihoods and well being* | Yes |
| P.12 exacerbation of risks of gender-based violence?  *For example, through the influx of workers to a community, changes in community and household power dynamics, increased exposure to unsafe public places and/or transport, etc*. | Yes |
| **Sustainability and Resilience:** Screeningquestions regarding risks associated with sustainability and resilience are encompassed by the Standard-specific questions below |  |
| **Accountability** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| P.13 exclusion of any potentially affected stakeholders, in particular marginalized groups and excluded individuals (including persons with disabilities), from fully participating in decisions that may affect them? | Yes |
| P.14 grievances or objections from potentially affected stakeholders? | Yes |
| P.15 risks of retaliation or reprisals against stakeholders who express concerns or grievances, or who seek to participate in or to obtain information on the project? | No |
| **Project-Level Standards** |  |
| **Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable** [**Natural**](#SustNatResManGlossary) **Resource Management** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 1.1 adverse impacts to habitats (e.g. modified, natural, and critical habitats) and/or ecosystems and ecosystem services?  *For example, through habitat loss, conversion or degradation, fragmentation, hydrological changes* | Yes |
| 1.2 activities within or adjacent to critical habitats and/or environmentally sensitive areas, including (but not limited to) legally protected areas (e.g. nature reserve, national park), areas proposed for protection, or recognized as such by authoritative sources and/or indigenous peoples or local communities? | Yes |
| 1.3 changes to the use of lands and resources that may have adverse impacts on habitats, ecosystems, and/or livelihoods? (Note: if restrictions and/or limitations of access to lands would apply, refer to Standard 5) | Yes |
| 1.4 risks to endangered species (e.g. reduction, encroachment on habitat)? | Yes |
| 1.5 exacerbation of illegal wildlife trade? | No |
| 1.6 introduction of invasive alien species? | Yes |
| 1.7 adverse impacts on soils? | Yes |
| 1.8 harvesting of natural forests, plantation development, or reforestation? | Yes |
| 1.9 significant agricultural production? | No |
| 1.10 animal husbandry or harvesting of fish populations or other aquatic species? | Yes |
| 1.11 significant extraction, diversion or containment of surface or ground water?  *For example, construction of dams, reservoirs, river basin developments, groundwater extraction* | Yes |
| 1.12 handling or utilization of genetically modified organisms/living modified organisms?[[4]](#footnote-4) | No |
| 1.13 utilization of genetic resources? (e.g. collection and/or harvesting, commercial development)[[5]](#footnote-5) | No |
| 1.14 adverse transboundary or global environmental concerns? | Yes |
| **Standard 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 2.1 areas subject to hazards such as earthquakes, floods, landslides, severe winds, storm surges, tsunami or volcanic eruptions? | Yes |
| 2.2 outputs and outcomes sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change or disasters?  *For example, through increased precipitation, drought, temperature, salinity, extreme events, earthquakes* | Yes |
| 2.3 increases in [vulnerability to climate change](#CCVulnerabilityGlossary) impacts or disaster risks now or in the future (also known as maladaptive or negative coping practices)?  *For example, changes to land use planning may encourage further development of floodplains, potentially increasing the population’s vulnerability to climate change, specifically floodingI=* | Yes |
| 2.4 increases of greenhouse gas emissions, black carbon emissions or other drivers of climate change? | Yes |
| **Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 3.1 construction and/or infrastructure development (e.g. roads, buildings, dams)? (Note: the GEF does not finance projects that would involve the construction or rehabilitation of large or complex dams) | Yes |
| 3.2 air pollution, noise, vibration, traffic, injuries, physical hazards, poor surface water quality due to runoff, erosion, sanitation? | Yes |
| 3.3 harm or losses due to failure of structural elements of the project (e.g. collapse of buildings or infrastructure)? | Yes |
| 3.4 risks of water-borne or other vector-borne diseases (e.g. temporary breeding habitats), communicable and noncommunicable diseases, nutritional disorders, mental health? | Yes |
| 3.5 transport, storage, and use and/or disposal of hazardous or dangerous materials (e.g. explosives, fuel and other chemicals during construction and operation)? | Yes |
| 3.6 adverse impacts on ecosystems and ecosystem services relevant to communities’ health (e.g. food, surface water purification, natural buffers from flooding)? | Yes |
| 3.7 influx of project workers to project areas? | No |
| 3.8 engagement of security personnel to protect facilities and property or to support project activities? | Yes |
| **Standard 4: Cultural Heritage** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 4.1 activities adjacent to or within a Cultural Heritage site? | Yes |
| 4.2 significant excavations, demolitions, movement of earth, flooding or other environmental changes? | Yes |
| 4.3 adverse impacts to sites, structures, or objects with historical, cultural, artistic, traditional or religious values or intangible forms of culture (e.g. knowledge, innovations, practices)? (Note: projects intended to protect and conserve Cultural Heritage may also have inadvertent adverse impacts) | Yes |
| 4.4 alterations to landscapes and natural features with cultural significance? | No |
| 4.5 utilization of tangible and/or intangible forms (e.g. practices, traditional knowledge) of Cultural Heritage for commercial or other purposes? | Yes |
| **Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 5.1 temporary or permanent and full or partial physical displacement (including people without legally recognizable claims to land)? | Yes |
| 5.2 economic displacement (e.g. loss of assets or access to resources due to land acquisition or access restrictions – even in the absence of physical relocation)? | Yes |
| 5.3 risk of forced evictions?[[6]](#footnote-6) | No |
| 5.4 impacts on or changes to land tenure arrangements and/or community based property rights/customary rights to land, territories and/or resources? | Yes |
| **Standard 6: Indigenous Peoples** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 6.1 areas where indigenous peoples are present (including project area of influence)? | No |
| 6.2 activities located on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples? | No |
| 6.3 impacts (positive or negative) to the human rights, lands, natural resources, territories, and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples (regardless of whether indigenous peoples possess the legal titles to such areas, whether the project is located within or outside of the lands and territories inhabited by the affected peoples, or whether the indigenous peoples are recognized as indigenous peoples by the country in question)?  *If the answer to screening question 6.3 is “yes”, then the potential risk impacts are considered significant and the project would be categorized as either Substantial Risk or High Risk* | No |
| 6.4 the absence of culturally appropriate consultations carried out with the objective of achieving FPIC on matters that may affect the rights and interests, lands, resources, territories and traditional livelihoods of the indigenous peoples concerned? | No |
| 6.5 the utilization and/or commercial development of natural resources on lands and territories claimed by indigenous peoples? | No |
| 6.6 forced eviction or the whole or partial physical or economic displacement of indigenous peoples, including through access restrictions to lands, territories, and resources?  *Consider, and where appropriate ensure, consistency with the answers under Standard 5 above* | No |
| 6.7 adverse impacts on the development priorities of indigenous peoples as defined by them? | No |
| 6.8 risks to the physical and cultural survival of indigenous peoples? | No |
| 6.9 impacts on the Cultural Heritage of indigenous peoples, including through the commercialization or use of their traditional knowledge and practices?  *Consider, and where appropriate ensure, consistency with the answers under Standard 4 above.* | No |
| **Standard 7: Labour and Working Conditions** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to: (note: applies to project and contractor workers)* |  |
| 7.1 working conditions that do not meet national labour laws and international commitments? | Yes |
| 7.2 working conditions that may deny freedom of association and collective bargaining? | No |
| 7.3 use of child labour? | Yes |
| 7.4 use of forced labour? | Yes |
| 7.5 discriminatory working conditions and/or lack of equal opportunity? | No |
| 7.6 occupational health and safety risks due to physical, chemical, biological and psychosocial hazards (including violence and harassment) throughout the project life-cycle? | Yes |
| **Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency** |  |
| *Would the project potentially involve or lead to:* |  |
| 8.1 the release of pollutants to the environment due to routine or non-routine circumstances with the potential for adverse local, regional, and/or [transboundary impacts](#TransboundaryImpactsGlossary)? | No |
| 8.2 the generation of waste (both hazardous and non-hazardous)? | Yes |
| 8.3 the manufacture, trade, release, and/or use of hazardous materials and/or chemicals? | No |
| 8.4 the use of chemicals or materials subject to international bans or phase-outs?  *For example, DDT, PCBs and other chemicals listed in international conventions such as the* [*Montreal Protocol*](http://ozone.unep.org/montreal-protocol-substances-deplete-ozone-layer/32506)*,* [*Minamata Convention*](http://www.mercuryconvention.org/)*,* [*Basel Convention*](http://www.basel.int/)*,* [*Rotterdam Convention*](http://www.pic.int/)*,* [*Stockholm Convention*](http://chm.pops.int/) | No |
| 8.5 the application of pesticides that may have a negative effect on the environment or human health? | Yes |
| 8.6 significant consumption of raw materials, energy, and/or water? | Yes |

1. <https://www.undp.org/accountability/audit/secu-srm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Recommended for the M&E activities and assessment of this risk at project site: FAO’s [Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture](http://www.fao.org/family-farming/detail/en/c/320249/) (2015) - an important resource for designing, assessing and monitoring projects that need to address the risks of child labour in agricultural production and pastoral activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Prohibited grounds of discrimination include race, ethnicity, sex, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographical origin, property, birth or other status including as an indigenous person or as a member of a minority. References to “women and men” or similar is understood to include women and men, boys and girls, and other groups discriminated against based on their gender identities, such as transgender and transsexual people. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See the [Convention on Biological Diversity](https://www.cbd.int/) and its [Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety](https://bch.cbd.int/protocol). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See the [Convention on Biological Diversity](https://www.cbd.int/) and its [Nagoya Protocol](https://www.cbd.int/abs/) on access and benefit sharing from use of genetic resources. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Forced eviction is defined here as the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection. Forced evictions constitute gross violations of a range of internationally recognized human rights. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)