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|  | DRAFT Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) |  |

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| **Project title:** Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin |
| **Country:**  Moldova | **Implementing Partner:** Ministry of Environment (MOE/EPIU) | **Execution Modality***:* NIM |
| **Contributing Outcome (UNDAF/CPD, RPD, GPD)***:* *UNDP Country Programme Document 2018-2022 Pillar 3 Climate change, environment and energy ;* *UNDAF Outcome 3: The people of Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, benefit from enhanced environmental governance, energy security, sustainable management of natural resources and climate and disaster resilient development*  |
| **UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Category:**Substantial | **UNDP Gender Marker:** GEN2 |
| **Atlas Award ID:**  | **Atlas Project/Output ID:** |
| **UNDP-GEF PIMS ID number:** 6551 | **GEF Project ID number:** 10650 |

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| **Public Consultation/Disclosure Notice** |
| Date: **XXXX** |
| The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is requesting feedback on the attached draft Environmental and Social Management Framework and associated Social and Environmental Screening Procedures for this project.Comments and questions can be sent to the following address: |
| United Nations Development Programme**Physical Address**: **Tel**: **Fax**: **Email**: **Website**:  |
| **The last date for receiving of comments is XXXX** |

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# Executive Summary

This Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared for the submission of the UNDP project proposal “Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin” to the GEF. Its purpose is to assist in the assessment of potential environmental and social impacts. The Framework forms the basis upon which Environmental and Social Management Plan(s) will be developed, so as to ensure full compliance with the requirements of UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards. The ESMP will be implemented by the Ministry of Environment (IP) and its affiliated Environmental Projects Implementing Unit (EPIU) – by the project manager and a team of qualified experts and overseen by the UNDP CO. The management measures will be monitored throughout the duration of the project.

Preliminary analysis and screening conducted during the project development phase via UNDP’s Social and Environment Screening Procedure (SESP) identified potential social and environmental risks associated with project activities. The screening procedure established that the project falls under Substantial Risk category and that the identified potential social and environmental risks’ impacts are manageable through identified mitigation measures detailed in the Screening Template, included in **Annex 6** to the UNDP/GEF Project Document.

The PPG stage have identified the following risks: **one Substantial Risk** - related to the project’s Area of Influence (AoI) represented by the oil exploitation platform in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve; there are **two other Substantial Risk** related to the project activities, **thirteen Moderate Risks** related to project activities. It should be noted that **Risk 5** is related to project activities funded from co-financing, hence due diligence will be used in order to ensure consistency with SES procedures.

This ESMF has been developed on the basis of the risk screening during SESP (Annex 6 Project Document) to specify the processes that will be undertaken by the project for the additional assessments of potential impacts and identification and development of appropriate risk management measures, in line with UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES). This ESMF also details the roles and responsibilities for its implementation and includes a budget and Monitoring and Evaluation plan.

This ESMF identifies the steps that will be followed after the inception phase of the project:

**a)** Preparing and implementing Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) for upstream activities associated with the project supported policy development (e.g. NBSAP), regulatory and legislative amendments (Output 1.1.1 Activity 1.1.1.1). Preparing an Environment and Social management Framework (ESMF) in case that the management measures cannot be fully addressed by SESA.

**b)** Scoped ESIA/ESMPs for the restoration works in Royal Forest Nature Reserve/Ramsar area (hydrotechnical works) on Camenca river (Output 2.2.1 Activity 2.2.1.2) and for the reforestation works in the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve (Output 2.2.1 Activity 2.2.1.1), based on the selected pilot plots at PPG phase (as described under Annex 19 project Document).

**c)** Screening aligned with UNDP SESP for activities that are not precisely identified at PPG stage, such as the development of the tourist itineraries and the organization of Innovation Challenge under Outcome 3. Based on the screenings and required assessment, preparing and approving appropriate management plans for avoiding, and where avoidance is not possible, reducing, mitigating, and managing adverse impacts, via preparation of targeted management plans (e.g. Livelihood Action Plan; Cultural Heritage Management Plan; Waste Management Plan; Emergency Management Plan etc.)

**e)** Process Framework for the project’s work in the targeted Protected Areas and in the Ramsar area.

**f)** Updating the project’s SESP as necessary.

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| AWPAFPMDDANTRIMARFC | Annual Work PlanWomen’s Association for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development ( NGO)Moldova’s Association of Inbound TourismAgency for Land Relations and Cadastre |
| BAUCACS | Business as UsualTechnical Committee of the Forest Research and Management Institute  |
| CBO | Community-based organization |
| CC | Climate change |
| CPDEMPEPIUESIA | Country programme document (UNDP Moldova)Environmental Management PlanEnvironmental Projects Implementation Unit (under the Ministry of Environment)Environmental and Social Impact Assessment |
| ESMFESMPGAAP | Environmental and Social Management FrameworkEnvironmental and Social Management Plan Gender Assessment and Action Plan |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GRM | Grievance Redress Mechanism |
| IP | Implementing Partner  |
| IBAICAS | Important Bird and Biodiversity AreaForestry Research and Management Institute  |
| KBA | Key Biodiversity Area |
| KM | Knowledge management |
| LAGLP | Local Action Group “Lower Prut” |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MTR | Mid-term review |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PIMS | Project Information Management System |
| PIR | Project Implementation Review |
| PMU | Project Management Unit |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SECU | Social and Environmental Compliance Unit |
| SES | Social and environmental standards (UNDP) |
| SESA | Strategic environmental and social assessment |
| SESP | Social and environmental screening procedure (UNDP) |
| SRL | Limited liability company |
| STAP | GEF Scientific Technical Advisory Panel |
| TBD | To be determined |
| TE | Terminal evaluation |
| TOR | Terms of reference |
| UNPDF | United Nations Partnership for Development Framework |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNDP CO | United Nations Development Programme Country Office |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

# Introduction

This Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared for the UNDP-supported project “Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with focus on high-nature value areas in the Prut River basin”.

UNDP is the GEF Agency for the project to which this ESMF applies.

## Project description

**Brief project description**

The objective of this project is to achieve ecological integrity of key floodplain wetlands in the Prut river basin, ensuring positive status of biodiversity, land and water resources, as well as ecosystem services. The project’s components are closely aligned and linked to facilitate an enabling environment that provides for effective wetlands protection and management based on an integrated river basin management approach that ensures the continuity of wetland ecosystem services sustaining livelihoods.

**Component 1 Enhanced regulatory and financing environment.**

Under this component, the project will support the revision of the existing legislation and will address legal inadequacies in order to strengthen wetland protection and better compliance with the EU Directives, MAB UNESCO and Ramsar guidelines. The project will further support the current efforts of the “Moldovan Waters” Agency (“Apele Moldovei”) to coordinate with the Romanian water management authorities and amend the Stanca Costesti Dam regulation in order to estimate and include the minimum ecological flow needed to maintain ecological integrity of wetlands and lakes in Prut river basin, taking into account climate change impacts and predicted water deficits.

**Component 2 Improved protection and management of Key Biodiversity Areas on wetlands**

This component focuses on improved protection of Key Biodiversity Areas in Prut Basin and key species populations through increasing the management effectiveness of existing protected areas with focus on Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and Padurea Domneasca (Royal Forest) Scientific Reserve. The project aims at strengthening the management effectiveness of the protected areas and by so doing, enabling positive changes in the population of key species. The project will support strategic wetlands restoration activities such as the reforestation of riparian strips in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and restoration of the old watercourse of Camenca river to benefit wetland area of the Royal Forest Scientific Reserve and surroundings. The project’s work under this component will also facilitate the international Ramsar designation of the Royal Forest Scientific Reserve. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment and in coordination with the Romanian and Ukrainian counterparts, the project will further facilitate the preparatory works for the designation of a trilateral MAB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve that will cover the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (Moldova) and Danube Delta (Romania and Ukraine), supporting the harmonisation of wetlands protection measures and biodiversity monitoring in the lower Danube basin. In addition, the UNDP/GEF project will develop or update the management plans for these protected areas, as needed, and will conduct additional key habitats mapping and zoning, species inventory, identification of indicator species, development of integrated data base in the targeted protected areas and will strengthen the capacities for law enforcement and patrolling, planning and budgeting for key restoration activities.

 **Component 3 Demonstrating sustainable use/livelihoods at wetlands**

The project’s work under this component will support local communities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve to develop and implement local biodiversity friendly businesses and “green” initiatives for sustainable and resilient livelihoods. The UNDP/GEF project will closely coordinate with the EU funded project EU4Cahul, in order to support several “green” rural entrepreneurs located in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve to apply under the EU4Cahul calls for proposals. In addition, the UNDP/GEF project will coordinate and partner together with the Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development ( ODIMM) to develop and deliver green business modules to local entrepreneurs and SMEs. The project will complement the series of SMEs green business trainings implemented by ODIMM. Furthermore, in partnership with the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve (Romania) and Danube Parks organization, the project will support the development of a cross-border tourism product that promotes biodiversity friendly and culturally rich tourist attractions in Lower Prut and Danube Delta.

**Component 4 Knowledge Management**

This project component will focus on sharing the project experience, on partnerships and coordination with similar interventions and on raising awareness on wetlands ecosystems services and their fragile status especially under the impact of climate change. Social media, blogs, a dedicated website, networking and direct targeted messages to decision makers will be used as the main digital channels. The messages will also emphasize the necessary regulatory measures that need to be in place to address threats to wetlands. The project will coordinate and engage with media and environment journalists as well as with other donor-funded projects in order to raise awareness especially related to the issues addressed by the project in the targeted protected areas, which are mainly: water pollution, water scarcity and climate change impacts and stringent need for wetlands financing and sustainable management.

**Component 5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

Under this component, the project will focus on monitoring and evaluation of the project results according to UNDP and GEF procedures, sharing the evaluative knowledge with the national counterparts to support learning and efficient wetlands conservation programming in the future.

A brief overview of the project’s proposed activities are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Overview of Project Outcomes, Outputs, Activities

|  |
| --- |
| **Outcomes/Outputs and Activities** |
| **Preparatory activities/project Inception** : Finalization of the management arrangements, Internal trainings on UNDP-NIM procedures, drafting NIM Capacity Building Plan and AWP, Project’s Covid-19 measures and safeguards, Setting up Project Board, Inception Workshop, hiring personnel and technical experts, securing office premises.  |
| **Component 1 Enhanced regulatory and financing environment** |
| **Outcome 1.1. Better fiduciary and financial environment for long term resilience of wetland ecosystems. This project outcome will allow overcoming barriers that prevent an increase of financing, conservation and sustainable management of wetlands** |
| Output 1.1.1: Regulations and by-laws developed, consulted and adopted by relevant institutions that promote identification, monitoring and wise use of wetlands under international treaties. |
| **Act 1.1.1.1** Development of legal amendments to address improved wetlands management including support to the new NBSAP |
| **Act 1.1.1.2** Stakeholders Engagement  |
| **Act 1.1.1.3** Support to the revision of the Regulation governing the Stanca Costesti Dam, to include the revised minimum ecological flow accounting for climate change |
| Output 1.1.2 National Ecological Fund (NEF) capacitated to prioritize financing of wetland conservation and sustainable use  |
| **Act 1.1.2.1** Improvements in the legal framework governing the National Ecological Fund, for increased PAs and wetlands support |
| Output 1.1.3 Biodiversity compatible local development strategies in three target districts designated and under implementation |
| **Act 1.1.3.1** Improving technical capacities for biodiversity integration into local plans and strategies  |
| **Act 1.1.3.2** Developing biodiversity passports for critical species and mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into local development plans |
| **Component 2 Improved protection and management of Key Biodiversity Areas on wetlands** |
| **Outcome 2.1 Positive status of wetland habitats and species at targeted Key Biodiversity Areas** |
| Output 2.1.1 Revised PA category upgraded international designation, improved zoning, mapping, management and business plans for Lower Prut Biosphere reserve (including assistance for its integration into the trilateral Biosphere reserve with Ukraine and Romania, and Royal Forest Nature Reserve. |
| **Act 2.1.1.1** Designation of Royal Forest Ramsar Site |
| **Act 2.1.1.2** Development of the Management Plan for the Royal Forest Nature Reserve/Ramsar site |
| **Act 2.1.1.3** Updating the Management Plan of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve |
| **Act 2.1.1.4** Support to the cross-border dialogue and designation of the Trilateral Biosphere Reserve Danube Delta and Lower Prut |
| **Act 2.1.1.5** Hydro-ecological and climate resilience assessment of Prut river wetlands  |
| Output 2.1.2 Management units and communities at targeted PAs capacitated to comply with/enforce management/buffer zone regimes, ensure proper monitoring of biodiversity and key wetland ecosystems, undertake species-focused conservation activities and PA patrolling. |
| **Act 2.1.2.1** Targeted support to PAs infrastructure |
| **Act 2.1.2.2** Strengthening technical capacity of Protected Areas staff |
| **Outcome 2.2 Viable wetland and forest ecosystem restoration options demonstrated.**  |
| Output 2.2.1 Riparian forest strips restored in Lower Prut Biosphere reserve. Optimisation of seasonal flooding in Padurea Domneasca Nature Reserve area. |
| **Act 2.2.1.1** Reforestation of degraded riparian forest ecosystems in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve |
| **Act 2.2.1.2** Rehabilitation of the old natural watercourse of Camenca River |
| **Component 3 Demonstrating sustainable use/livelihoods at wetlands** |
| **Outcome 3.1 New sustainable income streams created for communities and small size entrepreneurs from sustainable use of resources at wetlands** |
| Output 3.1.1 Strengthened capacities of the “Local Action Group Lower Prut” and local entrepreneurs to implement local biodiversity friendly development initiatives. |
| **Act 3.1.1.1** Technical assistance to rural entrepreneurs to access EU4Cahul financing schemes. |
| **Act 3.1.1.2** Delivery of targeted trainings on green business models and enhanced environmental standards |
| Output 3.1.2 Eco-tourism packages for wine/gastronomy routes adjusted to incorporate biodiversity observation in 2 communities.  |
| **Act 3.1.2.1** Development of local tourism routes involving at least 2 local municipalities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve  |
| **Act 3.1.2.2** Development of a cross border (Moldova-Romania) tourist package |
| **Act 3.1.2.3** Innovation Challenge |
| **Act 3.1.2.4** Support to COVID safety protocols and tourism recovery |
| **Component 4 Knowledge management**  |
| **Outcome 4.1 Knowledge management and gender sensitive KM products developed and disseminated** |
| Output 4.1.1 Online awareness raising campaign targeting central and local authorities and decision makers. Local and regional education seminars. |
|  **Act 4.1.1.1** On-line awareness campaign on the importance of wetlands in the Prut River Basin |
| **Act 4.1.1.2** National and local awareness and education events |
| Output 4.1.2 Innovative gender sensitive knowledge products and services from the project synthesized, packaged and disseminated.  |
| **Act 4.1.2.1** Systematizing project experience |
| **Component 5 Monitoring and Evaluation** |
| **Outcome 5.1 Project results properly monitored and evaluated** |
| Output 5.1.1 Set of monitoring activities implemented  |

## Purpose and scope of this ESMF

This Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been prepared to assist in managing the potential adverse social and environmental impacts associated with activities of the proposed project activities primarily under Component 1 and Component 2 of the project, in line with the requirements of UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards. The Implementing Partner -which is the Ministry of Environment and its affiliated Environmental Projects Implementation Unit (EPIU) - will monitor the ESMF implementation, starting with Project Inception stage to ensure the environmental and social risks and impacts are fully assessed and management measures are in place prior to the implementation of the relevant project activities.

The ESMF forms the basis upon which the Implementing Partner/EPIU will develop the specific Environmental and Social Management Plan(s) ESMP, to ensure that significant adverse environmental and social impact mitigation and management measures are implemented and monitored as required. It identifies the steps for detailed assessment of the project’s potential social and environmental risks, and for preparing and approving the required management plans for avoiding, and where avoidance is not possible, reducing, mitigating, and managing the identified adverse impacts of this project. Its scope covers all project activities described in Section 1.1, which include co-financing in terms of in-kind contributions and grants investment by government agencies needed to implement the project’s wetlands restoration activities under Output 2.2.1.

It also sets out the additional safeguards measures that apply to the project after the inception phase, including but not limited to:

1. Conducting a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA), targeted at impacts associated with “upstream” aspects of the project involving regulatory and legislative amendments and project policy support.
2. Conducting an appropriately scoped ESIAs for the hydrotechnical works on Camenca river and wetlands riparian reforestation activities
3. Conducting additional necessary screening for the un-identified activities.
4. Conducting the Process framework.

 This ESMF will be publicly disclosed in line with UNDP’s Information Disclosure Policy and SES. At this stage, not all the activities have been fully specified in terms of specific locations and interventions, and as such they cannot be fully assessed for all the potential social and environmental risks and impacts. This ESMF has been therefore prepared to set out the principles, rules, guidelines, and procedures for screening, assessing, and managing the potential social and environmental impacts of the project as they are developed and designed.

## Potential Social and Environmental Impacts

During the PPG phase, the project has been reviewed against UNDP SESP (2021 version). The analysis identified a range of potential social and environmental impacts associated with the project activities. The SESP template (Project Document **Annex 6**) details the applicable specific environmental and social risks. The significance of each risk, based on its likelihood of occurrence and extent of impact, has been estimated as being either low, moderate, substantial or high. Based on the significance of these individual risks but also looking at their cumulative effect, the project has been allocated an overall SESP risk categorization rating of **Substantial.**

The following Risks have been identified during the SESP:

**Substantial Risks**

*Risk related to the project’s Area of Influence[[1]](#footnote-1) :* **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.*

*Risk related to Co-financed activities (co-finance not administered by UNDP but activities are included in project framework):*

**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.*

*Risk related to project activities financed through project accounts*:

**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.*

**The Substantial Risk category is defined by UNDP SES[[2]](#footnote-2) as:** *“Projects that include activities with potential adverse social and environmental risks and impacts that are more varied or complex than those of Moderate Risk projects but remain limited in scale and are of lesser magnitude than those of High-Risk projects (e.g. reversible, predictable, smaller footprint, less risk of cumulative impacts).”*

**Moderate Risks**

*(all risks are related to project activities financed through project accounts)*

**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.

**Risk 2:** Local and national decision makers/authorities may not have the capacity to fulfil 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**Risk 7.** The project supported demonstration activities may fail to properly consider procedures for chance finds of valuable cultural heritage sites

**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.

**Risk 10:** Project activities involving local/field interventions and close engagement with local communities may inadvertently contribute to the spread of COVID-19.

**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.

**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 .

**Risk 13:** The project may inadvertently support legal/policy amendments that will allow oil drilling in Protected Areas.

**Risk 14** The project supported Innovation Challenge may inadvertently promote innovative products that could pose environmental or social risks.

**Risk 15** The project supported eco-tourism routes may pose environmental or social risks.

A synthesis of the key project activities with potential social and environmental impacts is shown in Table 2 below. This table is supported by the more detailed information on project-specific risks contained in the SESP (Project Document Annex 6).

**Table 2:** Summary of activities and potential risks and benefits

| **Project activity** | **Potential social and environmental risks** | **SESP references (see SESP in Annex)** | **Social and environmental Benefits** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **UPSTREAM ACTIVITIES** **Risk management: SESA**  |  |
| **Policy and plans** * **Activity 1.1.1.1**
* **Activity 1.1.1.3**
* **Activity 1.1.3.1**
 | Economic displacement 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): The project will conduct a review/amendments (as relates to the improvement of wetlands management) 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. The project-supported legislative amendments will facilitate a better alignment with IUCN criteria, Ramsar and MAB/UNESCO requirements. Under Act 1.1.1.3 the project will provide technical expertise and hydro-climate modelling in order to facilitate the amendment of the Regulation of the Stanca Costesti Dam[[3]](#footnote-3), and to identify the appropriate minimum ecological flow that would need to be ensured for the survival of downstream wetlands and lakes under the predicted climate-induced water scarcity. Furthermore, the project will also support the government-led development of NBSAP aligned with the new post 2020 global biodiversity framework.The project will also 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. | **RISKS**Risk 3 /ModerateRisk 4/ModerateRisk 10/ModerateRisk 12/Moderate**SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Principle 2 HUMAN RIGHTS SES Principle 3 GENDERSES Principle 5 ACCOUNTABILITYSES Standard 2 CLIMATE CHANGESES Standard 5 DISPLACEMENTSES Standard 8 POLLUTION PREVENTION and RESOURCE EFFICIENCY | KBAs/IBAs and Ramsar sites located in Prut River basin will maintain their balance and ecosystem services with adequate level of water flows. The amended minimum ecological flow that will be (hopefully) embedded in the amended Regulation, is taking into consideration ecosystems’ needs under the variability induced by the climate change, and it is ensuring the integrity of the wetlands located downstream of Stanca-Costesti Dam. Legal framework will enable wetland protection and sustainable wetland management and the National Ecological Fund will be able to redirect a larger part of the funds towards wetlands management.Increasing financing of wetlands will provide for the needed ecological reconstruction measures and sustainable management. Biodiversity considerations will be mainstreamed in production areas in three districts in the form of Biodiversity Passports and recommended measures for conservation of critical species and habitats situated outside PAs. The project will support gender and biodiversity conservation and habitat management provisions in the revisions of the 2020-2024 district development strategies in three districts of Moldova. |
| **DOWNSTREAM ACTIVTIES****Risk management: 1)Screening and Targeted Assessments; 2) Scoped ESIA** |  |
| **Wetlands restoration activities** * **Activity 2.2.1.1**
* **Activity 2.2.1.2**
 | Project supported restoration may harm the natural ecosystems1. REFORESTATION WORKS  *(risks managed through scoped ESIA)*

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 project’s supported reforestation measures are deploying tested methodologies. Although the social and environmental risks are considered moderate, limited in scale and with the likelihood of being reasonably managed, there will be nevertheless minor changes to the landscape during the reforestation works. In addition, the project will use native and non-native tree species that are resilient and salt and drought tolerant, recommended based on national methodologies , and tested and well acclimatised during the past 50-70 years. Nevertheless, the project will run safety targeted assessments once again prior to the commencement of the works. 1. HYDROTECHNICAL WORKS ON RIVER *CAMENCA* *(risks managed through ESIA)*

Project supported restoration of Camenca river old watercourse may raise ground water level. 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/ESIA to be developed during the project implementation. The risks indicated below will be included in the ESIA and/or targeted assessments as well. Risks to community safety The project will primarily focus on restoring (reforestation of) degraded/eroded river banks, saline lands and ravines and support small repair of riparian strips. Despite the project’s efforts to design and implement safe demonstration activities with minimum or no impact, there is the risk of safety hazard posed by the malfunctions of the infrastructure/small scale repair works at project site, use of inflammable substances etc. Similarly, the hydrotechnical works may potentially flood some of the households (basements) located near the intervention site. Project activities involving local/field interventions and close engagement with local communities may inadvertently contribute to the spread of COVID-19.Project supported wetlands restoration measures could be vulnerable to potential climate change impactsAdverse impacts of extreme climatic events (drought; seasonal floods) may affect the project’s interventions in the field and the livelihoods of local communities living in the target areas, despite the project’s restoration activities grounded by scientific principles and participatory mechanisms to enable stakeholders to adapt the management of natural resources to any given context and threats. | **RISKS****Risk 5/Substantial**Risk 6/ModerateRisk 7/ModerateRisk 8/LowRisk 9/SubstantialRisk 10/ModerateRisk 11/ModerateRisk 12/ModerateRisk 14/Moderate**SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Principle 2 HUMAN RIGHTS SES Principle 3 GENDERSES Principle 5 ACCOUNTABILITYSES Standard 1 BIODIVERSITY&NRMSES Standard 2 CLIMATE CHANGESES Standard 3 SAFETYSES Standard 5 DISPLACEMENT | 11,175 ha of Camenca river floodplain restored through increased ground water level and reinstated seasonal flooding benefiting critical wetlands habitats. Additional 8.3 million m3 water volumes annually flows in this area, ensuring the survival of Prut and Camenca rivers floodplains even under the worst climate scenario. Regenerated 50 ha of heavily degraded riparian meadows and forest ecosystems, acting as a barrier to waste and agricultural runoffs in 3000 ha of lake ecosystems in Beleu and Manta lakes/ Ramsar sites  |
| **DOWNSTREAM ACTIVITIES** |
| **Designation of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and adjacent land as Ramsar area and stricter enforcement of regulations and MAB UNESCO criteria in the targeted PAs****Revision of zoning and regulatory mechanisms, including tools such as ecological corridors****Restoration works on Camenca** **Broadening participation in PA management including through community supported ecological corridors, ranger patrols and sustainable livelihood activities*** **Activity 2.1.2.1**
* **Activity 2.1.2.2**
* **Activity 2.2.1.2**
 | Economic displacementCommunities in the project area could face economic displacement because of the increased protection regimes. For example, additional wetlands habitats adjacent to the current existing Royal Forest Nature Reserve are planned to be added under the PAs management and designated as Ramsar sites. Therefore, the local population may be under the impression that additional restrictions of the natural resource use may be enforced. Some of these concerns may be true, as an improved zoning, the planned development of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve/Ramsar area Management Plan and improved patrolling skills will certainly limit and/or better enforce limitations of the use of forest and grassland resources in core areas (Activity 2.1.2.1). In the same vein, the project supported updating/finalisation of the Management Plan of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and clarification of its legal status and trainings will lead to the stricter enforcement of the regulations and adherence to the MAB/UNESCO criteria (Activity 2.1.2.1) that may be at odd with the local communities interest to continue with the free access to natural resources. These impacts may affect women differently to men. Restrictions could exacerbate or bring about community conflicts over access to resources.One particular aspect related to the restoration works on Camenca old watercourse (Act 2.2.1.2) has to do with the local conditions, complicated by an illegally constructed small size earth dam on Camenca, that will be affected by the restored old water course, in that the water will be directed straight into its old riverbed. This will, undoubtedly, elicit a negative response from the local people that are now benefiting from the illegally diverted water (used for poultry farming and/or irrigation). Although this construction is illegal, and located on state property, there have been no legal measures taken so far.Potential reproduction of discriminations against women There remain disparities between men and women, particularly in rural areas and in the patriarchal cultures of some of the local communities.Lack of capacity of duty bearers to deliver project activities to UNDP-GEF standardsIt may be difficult with current levels of capacities of local authorities and organizations to implement projects according to UNDP and GEF standards regarding human rights, public participation, gender mainstreaming and attention to social and environmental safeguards. | **RISKS**Risk 1/ModerateRisk 2/ModerateRisk 4/ModerateRisk 5/SubstantialRisk 9/Moderate Risk 11/ModerateRisk 12/Moderate**SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Principle 2 HUMAN RIGHTS SES Principle 3 GENDERSES Principle 5 ACCOUNTABILITYSES Standard 5 DISPLACEMENT | 15,407 ha of wetlands in middle section of the Prut River basin, including the current Royal Forest Nature Reserve (6,032 ha) enhanced international recognition and improved zoning, management and monitoring capacity. 14,771 ha of wetland in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve with increased management effectiveness (20% METT score) improved zoning, key habitat mapping, monitoring of key species.The project’s work in the targeted PAs, the Ramsar designation and adherence to MAB/UNESCO criteria, improved zoning and an improved management regime of natural resources and adherence to the legislation and norms, will improve wetlands and ground water level condition which will, in time, contribute to positive changes in the population of key species at breeding sites compared to the baseline. |
| **Undefined activities**  | Development of eco-tourism itineraries in Lower Prut-Danube regionUnder 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 etcInnovation ChallengeThe project’s work under Output 3.1.2 is focusing on the organization of an Innovation Challenge in order to identify. innovative SMART products that will promote biodiversity values in the targeted PAs. There is a risk that the selected solutions may inadvertently have negative social or environmental impacts.   | **RISKS****Risk 14/Moderate****Risk 15/Moderate** **SAFEGUARDS TRIGGERED** SES Principle 2 HUMAN RIGHTS SES Principle 3 GENDERSES Principle 5 ACCOUNTABILITYSES Standard BIODIVERSITY and NRM SES Standard CLIMATE CHANGESES Standard LABOR and WORKING CONDITIONS  |  These activities are designed to promote cultural and biodiversity values of Lower Prut-Danube eco-region, promoting sustainable eco-tourism with full participation of local communities. These activities will build on the results of previous local and cross-border initiatives that have identified and marked tourist routes in Lower Prut area. Most routes include different combinations of the same natural attractions (reservations, forests, rivers, lakes), cultural heritage (archeological sites, museums, churches, medieval artefacts, cultural monuments, local handicraft workshops), traditional food and accommodation facilities (guesthouses small hotels), including ad-hoc folk music representations, local fish dishes and wines. |

# Legislation and Institutional Frameworks for environmental and social matters

This section provides a preliminary review of the policy, legal and institutional (PLR) framework related to the potential risks and benefits of the proposed project and prospective activities to be implemented with the use of the funding received. The PLR framework underpins how social and environmental safeguards will be addressed and respected. The preliminary baseline analysis will be further expanded during the project inception stage, when a full Strategic Social and Environmental Assessment (SESA) will be conducted, in order to address a full range of analytical and participatory approaches that aim to integrate social and environmental consideration into policies and plans supported by the project (i.e. “upstream” activities). As necessary, SESA recommendations will be implemented through a management plan (ESMF) that outlines the required assessment of targeted “downstream” activities.

##

## National legislation, policies and regulations

The main baseline policies, laws and regulations related to the use of natural resources are the following:

**Codes**

***The Land Code (No. 828-XII of 25-12-1991)*** is inclusive of land destinated for nature protection, recreative activity, lands of historical-cultural value, lands of the underground areas and green areas. The act protects the equal right of various forms of property on lands, it established the way of land use, protects the soils from the holders that damage the lands and do not repair such damages. The law stipulates penalties for a negatively impacting soil quality, it regulates the rights and obligations of landholders, including those on the territory of which heritage objects are located. The document established the way of collecting payments for land use.

***The Forestry Code (No. 887-XIII of 21-06-1996)*** regulates the sustainable management of the forest stock by means of reasonable usage, regeneration, guarding and protecting the forests, maintaining, conserving and improving the forest biological diversity, providing forest resources to satisfy the current and future needs of the society based on their multifunctionality. The act establishes the competences of the Government, Central Forest Authority, Central authority for the protection of environment, and Environment Agency in the sphere of reserves and other protected areas on the lands of the forest stock. One of the tasks established by the Code for the line institutions is ensuring the biological diversity and reasonable use of the genetic and biological resources, protection of environment. The Code stipulates that the rent of lands from the forest stock inside the protected natural areas is forbidden. The act establishes the rights and obligations of the holders of forest lands, other forest beneficiaries, the norms of using the forest products and the forest. The legislative act also stipulates payments for forest usages, measures of economic incentives for the reasonable use, regeneration, guarding and protecting the forests. The liability measures for the infringement of the forest legislation are also specified. Moreover – the amount of compensation for the damage caused by forest contraventions is established according to certain tariffs.

***Policies/Programs***

***Government Decision on the approval of the National Program on the creation of the national ecological network for 2011-2018 (GD No. 593 of 01-08-2011).*** The program represented an objective for the fulfilment of the undertakings of the Republic of Moldova, as a country – party to the Convention on biological diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), by creating opportunities for stopping the loss of biodiversity, by creating state protected objects and complexes.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Environmental Strategy for 2014-2023 and Action Plan for its implementation (GD No. 301 of 24-04-2014).*** The Environmental Strategy is a long term strategic planning document and it proposes a total reform of the environment protection sector, so as to have an operating institutional, administrative and environmental management system adjusted to the requirements of the European Union, which would ensure environmental sustainability and the increase of the quality of environmental factors. The Action Plan includes the specific objective 6.4. providing for the extension of the surface of protected areas from 5.6 % to 8%.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Strategy of the Republic of Moldova on adaptation to climate change until 2020 and Action Plan for its implementation (GD No. 1009 of 10-12-2014)*** is a document that had to ensure that the social and economic development of the Republic of Moldova becomes resilient to the impact of future climate changes. Besides, the Strategy supports the fulfilment of the global goals established in the Framework Convention of the United Nations on climate change (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) to which Moldova is Party.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Strategy on biological diversity of the Republic of Moldova
for 2015-2020 and Action Plan for its implementation (No. 274 of 18-05-2015).*** The development of this Strategy was conditioned by the need to transpose the provisions of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011-2020 and of the Aichi objectives for Biodiversity established at COP CBD in Nagoya (Japan, 2010). The Strategy evaluates the causes underlying biodiversity degrading and provides for specific measures to decrease the risks of losing its components. Both the environmental strategy and the one regarding the biological diversity of Moldova provide for the extension of the surface of protected areas.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Program for promoting “green” economy in the Republic of Moldova for 2018-2020 and Action Plan for its implementation (GD No. 160 of 21-02-2018)***. The development of the Program was conditioned by the lack of a medium-term planning policy document at a national level in the sphere of promoting “green” economy in the sectors of social-economic development of the country: energy efficiency and use of renewable sources, greening small and medium enterprises, ecologic agriculture, sustainable transport industry (cleaner production and sustainable consumption), sustainable public procurements, construction, education for sustainable development.

***Legislative acts***

***Law on Environment Protection (Nr. 1515-XI din 16-06-1993)*** represents the basic legal framework for the development of special normative acts and instructions in separate problems in the sphere of environment for the purpose of: i) ensuring the right of each and every individual to a healthy and esthetically pleasant environment; ii) fulfilling the supreme responsibility of each generation for the protection of environment in front of the future generations; iii) obtaining an extent as large as possible of using natural resources without exceeding the admissible limits, avoiding their depletion and degradation, the risk for human health and other unwanted and unforeseeable consequences; iv) protecting the soil and underground, waters and air from chemical, physical and biological pollution, from other activities deregulating the ecological balance; v) conserving the biodiversity and genetic stock, integrity of natural systems, historical and cultural national values; vi) restoration of ecosystems and their components affected by the anthropic activity or by natural calamities. The law also established the competencies of the Parliament, President, Government and local self-administration bodies in the sphere of environment protection. This law corresponds to the provisions of the EU Directives in the sphere of environment protection and stipulated in the Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union, as well as to all the strategies at a national level generating the general framework for this document.

***Law on the Areas and Buffer Strips for the Protection of Rivers and Water Basins (No. 440 of 27-04-1995)***provides the creation of protection areas and buffer river strips for the protection of water basins, it determines the regimes of usages and activities for their protection, the law stipulates that in the water protection areas certain types of economic activities are limited, and within the limits of the buffer river strips for water protection, contrarily, only certain economic activities are allowed, such as the hydrotechnical constructions for protection and consolidation, and such interventions as cutting.

***Law on Animal Kingdom (No. 439-XIII of 27-04-1995)*** regulates the relations in the sphere of protection and use of wild animals (mammals, birds, amphibia, fish, insect, shellfish, mollusks, etc.), naturally living on the mainland, in the water, in the atmosphere or in the soil, and permanently or temporarily populating the territory of the republic. Among the measures to ensure the protection of the animal kingdom, the law stipulates the creation of the state protected natural areas. The law also comprises: i) Regulations of the hunting stock; ii) List of fauna species included in the Red Data Book of the Republic of Moldova and the fees to be collected for the damages caused by natural and legal persons by illegal hunting, fishing, acquiring, collecting, trading, possession and export or by annihilation; iii) List of relatively rare fauna species and systematic groups (nature monuments) protected by the state and the fees to be collected for the damages caused by natural and legal persons by illegal hunting, fishing, acquiring, collecting, trading, possession and export or by annihilation; iv) Fees to be collected for the damages caused by natural and legal persons by illegal hunting, fishing, acquiring, collecting, trading, possession and export or by annihilation of the hunting animals in the republic. The law is partially harmonized with the Directive 2009/147/CE on the conservation of wild birds (by means of Law No. 237 of 17.11. 2017).

***Law on the Inventory of State Protected Natural Areas*** (***No. 1538-XIII of 25-02-1998)*** establishes the legal basis for the creation and operation of the inventory of state protected natural areas, its principles and way of conservation, as well as the duties of the central and local public authorities, nongovernmental organizations and citizens in this domain. The law offers the legal framework for 12 different categories of protected areas in the Republic of Moldova: **7** different types (scientific reserve, national park, nature monument, natural reserve, landscape reserve, resource reserve, multifunctional management area) are delimited in accordance with the classification of the International Union for Nature Conservation, while **3** types are applied at a local level (dendrological garden, zoological garden, and landscape architecture monuments). Moreover, **2** types are established through other international regulations – biosphere reserve (UNESCO Program) and wetland of international importance (Ramsar Convention).

***Law on the Red Data Book of the Republic of Moldova (No. 325 of 15-12-2005)*** regulates the social relations in the sphere of protection, use and restoration of the species of plants and animals which are disappeared, critically threatened, threatened, vulnerable, rare and undetermined, included in the Red Data Book of the Republic of Moldova, for the purpose of preventing the extinction and ensuring the conservation of their genetic inventory, and establishes the legal basis for keeping the Red Data Book, duties of the public authorities of all levels land of the scientific institutions in this domain. The law provides for ensuring the protection and restoration of the objects in the Red Data Book by priority creation of objects and complexes form the inventory of state protected natural areas, as well as creation if the ecological network on the territories where the objects of the Red Data Book are located (grow) and on the migration ways of the species of animals included in the Red Data Book. Likewise, the law provides that the cross-border problems relating to the protection and restoration of the objects from the Red Data Book are solved by means of concluding and fulfilling bilateral and multilateral agreements, by creating biosphere reserves, natural reserves, national parks and other cross-country objects that shall be included in the inventory of state protected natural areas.

***Law on Plant Kingdom (No. 239-XVI of 8-11-2007)*** establishes the legal framework in the sphere of conservation, protection, restoration and use of the objects of the plant kingdom, as well as the competences of the public authorities of all levels and of the scientific institutions in this domain. The law establishes the way of usage of the plant kingdom objects in protected areas, as well as the economic mechanisms to give incentives for the reasonable use of the plant kingdom objects and the liability for infringing the legislation in this regard. The law brings the national legislation into conformity with the provisions of the Regulations of the Council of Europe no. 338/97/CE of 9 December 1996 on the protection of the species from the wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein and with the Directive of the Council of Europe no. 92/43/CE of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of the natural habitats and species of wild flora and fauna for the purpose of conserving and protecting the plant kingdom, with the Directive 92/43/CEE of the council on the conservation of natural habitats and of species of wild fauna and flora.

***Law on the Ecological Network (No. 94 of 05-04-2007).*** The object of this law is the creation of a legal framework for the constitution and development of the national ecological network as an integrant part of the Pan-European ecological network and local ecological networks in order to establish a regime of management and protection of the national ecological network and local ecological networks, as well as the competences and obligations of the public administration authorities in this domain. The design and building of the national ecological network shall be done taking into consideration the state protected natural areas, existing or planned, as well as other elements of nature. The legal provisions regarding the creation of the national ecological network laid the basis for the National Program on the creation of the national ecological network for 2011–2018.

***Law on Water (No.272 of 23-12-2011)*** creates the legal framework necessary for the management, protection and usage of waters, it is meant to ensure the creation of a legal framework for the management, protection and efficient use of surface waters and underground waters, establishing the rights of water use and promoting investments in the sphere of waters, establishing mechanisms for the protection of the state of waters, preventing any subsequent degradation of waters, protection and restoration of the water environment, prevention of subsequent deteriorations, conservation and improvement of the state of water ecosystems and, regarding their needs for water, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly depending on the water ecosystems, ensuring a sufficient supply with good quality surface water and underground water. The law is partially harmonized with the directives of the Council: *no. 91/271/CEE of 21 May 1991* on the treatment of urban wastewater and *no. 91/676 CEE of 12 December 1991* on the protection of waters against the pollution with nitrates coming from agricultural sources, with the directives of the European Parliament and Council: *no. 2000/60/CE of 23 October 2000* on establishing a community policy framework in the sphere of water resources; *no. 2006/7/CE of 15 February 2006* on the management of water quality for bathing; *no. 2007/60/CE of 23 October 2007* on the evaluation and management of flood risks; *no. 2008/105/CE of 16 December 2008* on the environmental quality standards in the sphere of water, it creates the necessary legal framework for the management, protection and usage of waters.

***Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (No. 86 of 29-05-2014)***establishes the procedures and ways applied in the process of environmental impact assessment for some public and private projects or some types of planned activity that may have a significant impact on the environment of the Republic of Moldova or other states. The selection criteria are established for the determination of the need to perform the environmental impact assessment. These also include the influence of planned activity on the protected areas, including wetlands, and on the protected species, their habitats and biomes.

***Normative acts***

***Government Decision on the approval of the Regulations of the Cadaster of objects and complexes from the inventory of state protected natural areas (GD No. 414 of 02-05-2000).*** The Regulations are developed in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the inventory of state protected natural areas no. 1538/1998 and establishes the destination, way of keeping the Cadaster, as well as the way of organization of the records of the objects and complexes from the inventory of protected natural areas.

***Government Decision on the approval of the framework regulations of the national parks, nature monuments, resource reserves and biosphere reserves (GD No. 782 of 03-08-2000)***. The Regulations establish the general normative principles of operations of these 4 categories of protected areas and serve as a basis for the development of regulations for each newly created park, monument or reserve, in which the objectives and tasks of the new protected areas shall be established, as well as the responsibilities of the landholders and of the local public authorities.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Framework Regulations on the multifunctional management areas, Framework Regulations on natural reserves, Framework Regulations on landscape reserves and Framework Regulations on the landscape architecture monuments (GD No. 784 of 03-08-2000).*** The Regulations establish the general normative principles of operation of the mentioned categories of protected areas and serve as a basis for the development, in case of need, of specific regulations for these categories of protected areas.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Framework Regulations on botanical gardens, Framework Regulations on dendrological gardens, Framework Regulations on zoological gardens, Framework Regulations on scientific reserves (GD No. 785 of 03-08-2000).*** The Regulations establish the general normative principles of operation of the botanical gardens, dendrological and zoological gardens, as well as of the scientific reserves, and serve as a basis for the development of specific regulations for these categories of protected areas.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Regulations on the procedure of instituting the regime of protected natural area (GD No. 803 of 19-06-2002)*** establishes the categories of protected natural areas, their goals and management regime, the way of documentation and examination of the proposals on the institution of the regime of protected natural area, as well as the authorities and institutions responsible for their presentation and analysis.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Framework Regulations on wetlands of international importance (GD No. 665 of 14-06-2007)*** establishes the way of organization and operation of the wetlands of international importance and serve as a basis for the development, in case of need, of specific regulations of some Ramsar areas that shall be approved by the central authority for environment.

***Government Decision on the Regulations of the State Cadaster of Water (GD No. 763 of 23-09-2013)*** The Regulations establish the structure and content of the State Cadaster of waters. The goal of the cadaster is the management, protection and efficient use of surface waters and underground waters on the basis of the state records of cadastral data and provision of cadastral information to the central public authorities, authorities of the local public administration, interested natural and legal persons. The cadaster represents a state informational system containing records of data regarding the hydrographic network, water resources, intakes and returns of water, hydrotechnical heritage, including the identification, delimitation, classification and state of the water bodies, protecting areas and buffer strips and protected areas located in such zones.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Regulations on the regulation of the number of wild animals in the state protected natural areas from the state forest stock (GD No. 239 of 05-04-2014)*** provides the measures and methods of regulating the number of some species of animals on the entire surface of state protected natural areas from the state forest stock, for the purpose of protecting the health of the population, protecting animals and plants and preventing the damages that may be caused to the national economy, wild fauna and their habitats in case of increasing the number of some species of animals and/or burst of epizooties.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Management Plan of the Danube-Prut and Black Sea hydrographic basin district (GD No. 955 of 03-10-2018)*** is developed in accordance with the provisions of art. 19 para. (2) of the Law on waters no. 272/2011, on the evaluation of the quality and quantity of water resources; evaluation of the risk of water deficit, draught, floods, pollution and failure of the dams from within the hydrographic basin district; identification of the zones from within the hydrographic basin district in which there is risk of pollution from diffuse sources; analysis of the existing protected areas and established protected areas; priorities of special usage of water. The management plan contains a program of measures for the identified risks and problems, which include the progressive decrease of pollution from punctiform and diffuse sources, recovery of costs for water consumption, sustainable use of water resources.

***Government Decision on the approval of the Concept of the automated informational system „State Cadaster of Waters” (GD No. 491 of 23-10-2019).*** The Government Decision establishes the destination, goal of creation and tasks of the Automated Informational System “State Cadaster of Waters” (AIS SCW). According to the Concept, AIS SCW represents a totality of organizational, technical, software and staff means used for the collection, processing, transmission and keeping the information for the performance of data records on the water resources and opportunity of providing to the interested parties data on their state and protection on the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova. AIS SCW forms the State Cadaster of Waters representing a totality of systematized data on the following objects: hydrographic network, water bodies, hydrotechnical constructions, protection areas and buffer strips, wetlands of international importance, water intakes and discharges, etc.

Gender

According to the Law No5-XVI of 9 February 2006 on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men the strong Institutional Framework for equality assurance of chance between women and men was established, including a) Parliament, b) Government; c) Governmental Commission for Equality between Women and Men; d) Ministry of Health and Social Protection (specialized body); e) ministries and other central administrative authorities (gender units); f) local public administration authorities (gender units). During 2006-2018 based on new provisions, the Institutional Framework was extended, including together with the Governmental Commission on Equality between Women and Men such structures as Council for Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality, Gender coordination group, ombudsmen and other.[[4]](#footnote-4)

The central public authority empowered to elaborate and promote policies in the field of equality between women and men is the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection (MHLSP), that contains a specialized subdivision - Department of policies to ensure equality between women and men. Despite of the strong provisions, there are many gaps.[[5]](#footnote-5) However, with the Law receiving very little attention in terms of national budgetary allocations, and insufficient political will, the mechanisms tasked with implementing the Law have a limited capacity; low functionality of the local gender focal points. It is acknowledged that the gaps in the national systems also adversely affect the effective implementation of national legislation on gender equality and the Strategy.[[6]](#footnote-6)

## International Conventions

The Republic of Moldova (Moldova) is a Member State of the Council of Europe (COE) and of the United Nations (UN), and has human rights obligations at the regional and universal levels.

*Regional: European System*

As a Member of the COE, Moldova has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and is subject to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Moldova has ratified the Revised European Social Charter, but has not authorized the European Committee of Social Rights to decide collective complaints against it. Its human rights policies and practices are also monitored by the COE Commissioner for Human Rights, who identifies gaps in human rights protection, conducts country visits, engages in dialogue with States, and prepares thematic reports and advice on human rights obligations. Individuals and groups have submitted complaints of human rights violations committed by Moldova to the European Court of Human Rights. For example, the Court found that Moldova violated its obligation to prevent inhuman or degrading punishment, as well as the right to liberty and personal security, in the case of an individual who was detained and deprived of necessary medical treatment while in prison. *See* ECtHR, *Paladi v. Moldova*, no. 39806/05, ECHR 2009 Judgment of 10 March 2009. Additionally, the Court may grant interim measures to protect people in urgent situations of risk in Moldova.As a State party to the Revised European Social Charter, Moldova must submit yearly reports to the European Committee of Social Rights on its implementation of the Charter’s provisions.

Moldova is a party to the following **regional human rights treaties**:

* European Convention on Human Rights and several of its [protocols](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/chartSignature/3)
* Revised European Social Charter
* COE Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
* European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
* Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

*United Nations System*

As a UN Member State, Moldova is subject to the oversight of various UN human rights bodies, including the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review and thematic special procedures. As a party to specific universal human rights treaties, Moldova’s policies and practices are monitored by UN treaty bodies. It has accepted the complaints procedure of four treaty bodies.

Moldova has ratified the following **UN human rights treaties**:

* International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
* International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)
* Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)
* Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
* Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
* Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
* International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

Moldova has also ratified the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR aimed at abolishing the death penalty, and optional protocols to the CRC addressing children in armed conflict and the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography. Moldova has a duty to submit **State reports** to the UN treaty body associated with each UN human rights treaty Moldova has ratified. These reports must be submitted on a periodic basis and describe the steps taken to implement the treaty provisions. Moldova has also ratified optional protocols and made appropriate declarations allowing individuals to submit **complaints** against the State alleging violations of the ICCPR, CEDAW, CAT, and CERD. Additionally, certain UN treaties contain **inquiry procedures**, which allow the UN treaty body to consider allegations of grave or systematic human rights violations. Moldova has accepted the inquiry procedures of the CAT and CEDAW. On June 2, 2010, Moldova extended a **standing invitation** to UN special procedures, which means that any such mandate holders are welcome to conduct visits in Moldova. For example, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights went on a mission to Moldova in September 2013 and published a report in June 2014 on poverty and human rights there.

## Institutional Framework

Table 3: Institutional framework and legislative mandates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stakeholders** | **Legislative mandates and Responsibility and role in the project** |
|  |
| Ministry Environment (MOE)  | The Ministry is responsible for the development of legislation, action plans, norms and standards in environment field. The Directorate of policies in the area of biodiversity of MOE has the basic mission of developing and promoting the state policy in the sphere of reasonable use of natural resources, conservation of biodiversity, state protected natural areas, forest stock, hunting stock and biological security, within the limits of its competence and conditions provided by the environment legislation in force, by the Regulations of the Ministry and Regulations of the DirectorateIn the field of environment, the Ministry is responsible for the development of legal and regulatory framework in the field of environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources, including management of air, waste, water resources, water supply and sewerage system, ensuring compatibility of legal framework with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). In the process of developing environmental policies and legislation, MOE closely cooperates with the specialized research institutions (Botanical Garden (Institute), Zoology Institute, Institute of Ecology and Geography, with the civil society (NGO community) and other structures.Likewise, with the adherence to the *Convention on Access to Information, Justice and Public Participation in Decision Making in the sphere of environment (Aarhus Convention),* the right of public participation and access to justice is ensured. At the same time, the *Law on transparency in decision making (No. 239/2008)* obliges MOE to ensure transparency in the process of developing the legislation, thus giving incentives for the participation of the citizens and other stakeholders in the decision-making process.Wetlands are used for economic purposes, for irrigation, fishing, grazing, hunting or recreation, they are transformed or completely destroyed, which causes a major impact on the environment. The lands from the wetlands of international importance are managed by various holders, including by the “Moldova Waters” Agency, „Moldsilva” Agency.Some of the Ministry’s functions and competences for water, air and waste are implemented by specialized bodies under its mandate, with which the project will coordinate : State Hydrometeorological Service (**SHS**), Agency “**Apele Moldovei (Moldovan Waters)** ”, Agency for Geology and Mineral Resources **(AGMR)** and State Ecological Inspection (**SEI**).The National Ecological Fund operates under the Ministry, managed by an Administrative Council, chaired by the minister. The Ministry will review and draft policy and legislation relevant to protected areas, pollution charges and amendments to the National Ecological Fund’s Regulation. The Ministry will provide leadership to the project management team especially regarding liaison with government authorities from different sectors. Ministry will ensure coordination with other relevant projects and initiatives.The Environmental Projects Implementation Unit (EPIU) is founded by MOE in order to enable the implementation of donor funded projects. EPIU will support MOE in the implementation of this UNDP/GEF project and will host the project team.  |
| Agency” Moldsilva” | Moldsilva Agency, by mutual agreement with the central authority for environment protection, organizes the strict observance of the regulations on reserves and other protected areas (art. 12 of the *Forestry Code* No.887/1996). Similarly, in accordance with the *Regulations on the organization and operation of „Moldsilva” Agency, structure and staff of its central office* (GD No. 150/2010), Moldsilva develops and organizes the application of measures on the conservation, ecologic reconstruction of the forests in the state protected natural areas managed by it; develops and presents proposals on the construction of state protected natural areas in the conditions established by the legislation, ensures the observance of the regime of management of the inventory of natural areas, conservation and protection of the objects of the vegetal and animal kingdoms from such areas. Through the territorial subordinated entities, it manages approximately 50 % of the total surface of the state protected natural areas.Moldsilva will be an important partner for the implementation of reforestation activities on degraded lands, as well as for their related duties in the protected areas management. The agency will provide, through its state forestry units, technical assistance, co-financing and support in implementing project components. Also, Moldsilva will help build cooperation with local communities where it operates.  |
| Agency “Moldovan Waters”  | The Moldovan Waters Agency is the administrative authority subordinated to MOE, which is responsible for the implementation of the state policy in the area of water resources management; it manages the lands of the water inventory, surface water bodies and hydrotechnical constructions in the public property of the state, on the basis of the Nistru and Danube-Prut and Black Sea hydrotechnical basins located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova; (*Regulations on the organization and operation of the „Moldova Waters” Agency, its structure and number of staff,* GD No. 882/2014). The state control and supervision, prevention and fighting the infringements in the sphere of protection of flora, fauna and protected natural areas in order to ensure a high level of supervision and protection of the environment, public interests, ecological security of the state are performed by the **Inspectorate for Environment Protection** subordinated to MOE (*GD No. 548/2018 on the organization and operation of the Inspectorate for Environment Protection).*“Moldovan Waters” Agency will be the main counterpart under Component 1 (Output 1.1.1), and will facilitate coordination with the Romanian counterparts, regarding the hydro-ecological models and revisions to the existing Regulation of the Stanca-Costesti Dam, in order to increase the ecological flows to wetlands downstream. |
| Environment Agency  | The Environment Agency, subordinated to MOE, performs the monitoring of the quality of state protected natural areas, monitoring of the state and use of the water and soil resources, monitoring of the vegetal and animal kingdom, monitoring of the state of the underground, monitoring of air pollution, geological monitoring, monitoring of environment pollution for the purpose of providing to natural and legal person information on the quality of environment, developing the statistical indicators in the sphere of environment protection (*GD No. 549/2018 on the creation, organization and operation of the Environment Agency*). |
| Environmental Reference Laboratory  | Environmental Reference Laboratory (ERL) from the Environment Agency is responsible for the supervision of the quality of environment components (surface waters, wastewaters, air, soil, water alluvia, atmospheric precipitations, level of the debit of gamma radiation in the environment, etc.), on the basis of a large monitoring network located on the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova. On 18 March 2021, ERL received the Accreditation Certificate for the ISO/IEC 17025 Standard from the National Accreditation Centre of the Republic of Moldova MOLDAC. |
| Local Public Authorities (LPAs) at the district and village/community levels  | The authorities of the local public administration (ALPA) organize the management of the protected areas the landholders of which they are; implement protection measures ensuring the protection regime corresponding to the instituted management category (art. 15, Law 1538/1998). In accordance with the environmental legislation, ALPA has the role of being responsible for the organization of implementation, at a local level, of the policy on environmental protection and reasonable use of natural resources.District and village/community public administrations have a significant role to play in components 2, 3 and 4 of the projects. Their responsibilities are to promote cooperation among all land users and owners, to implement biodiversity-friendly practices, to support agri-businesses, to participate in conflict resolution, and promote awareness activities. The district authorities will be responsible for local development policies and mainstreaming of biodiversity measures, with technical support provided by the project.  |
| NGOs: Ecological Movement of Moldova (EMM); BIOTICA Ecological Society; NGO “ECO-Contact” Regional Environmental Center (REC) Moldova; BIOS; NGO “Verde e Moldova”;  | All NGOs will participate in stakeholder consultation during the protected areas management plans development and revision in targeted areas, and in the awareness raising seminars as relevant. Joint activities will be explored.  |
| Local Action Group “Lower Prut” and clusters of small tourism entrepreneurs | *The Local Action Group Lower Prut* (LAGLP) was set up under EU LEADER programme and it includes all the 9 villages located in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. The LAGLP will mobilise local communities’ participation in biodiversity monitoring measures and ecotourism initiatives and will support the organisation of the awareness seminars. The LAGLP will participate into different calls for proposals under the EU4Moldova programme. |
| Private sector: Farmers associations; fishermen; concessionary companies (fisheries); tourism companies; oil extraction/mining (Valiexchim SRL)  | Rural population, farmers and fishermen, small vegetable farming entrepreneurs ( SRL “Matinal” and SRL “Faguras” ), concessionary holders ( S.A Pepiniera Piscicola Cahul) small tourism entrepreneurs and oil extraction company “Valiexchim SRL” are the most important stakeholders under Component 2 and Component 3 and will be closely involved in restoration activities, consultation meetings during the development of management plans and biodiversity monitoring measures, as well as the development of different regulatory amendments with regard to permitting system in protected areas.  |

## UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards

UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES) in effect as of 1 January 2021, underpin UNDP’s commitment to mainstream social and environmental sustainability in its programs and projects to support sustainable development, and are an integral component of UNDP’s quality assurance and risk management approach to programming. Through the SES, UNDP meets the requirements of the GEF’s Environmental and Social Safeguards Policy.

The objectives of the SES are to:

* Strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of Programs and Projects
* Avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment
* Minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible
* Strengthen UNDP and partner capacities for managing social and environmental risks
* Ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement, including through a mechanism to respond to complaints from project-affected people

UNDP uses its Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) to identify potential social and environmental risks and opportunities associated with all proposed projects. All project components are screened, including planning support, policy advice, and capacity-building, as well as site-specific, physical interventions. Activities that will be completed under project co-financing are also included in the scope of the assessment.

Projects are required to comply with [UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/undp-social-and-environmental-standards/)). The SES are an integral component of UNDP’s quality assurance and risk management approach to programming. This includes the [Social and Environmental Screening Procedure](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/operations1/undp-social-and-environmental-screening-procedure/) ( Project Document SESP, Annex 5). The SES underpin UNDP’s commitment to mainstream social and environmental sustainability in its Programs and Projects to support sustainable development. Through the GEF Accreditation Process, the SES are acknowledged to be consistent with the GEF’s Environment and Social Standards. The objectives of the standards are to:

* + - Strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of Programs and Projects
		- Avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment
* Minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible
* Strengthen UNDP and partner capacities for managing social and environmental risks
* Ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement, including through a mechanism to respond to complaints from project-affected people.

The SES are an integral component of UNDP’s quality assurance and risk management approach to programming. This includes the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (see the completed SESP for the project in Annex 4 to project document).

Table 4: Key Elements of UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES)​

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ​​​​Programming Principles | ​Project-Level Standards | ​Procedures and Accountability  |
| **Principle 1**: Leave No One Behind**Principle 2**: Human Rights [**Principle 3:** ​Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Gender%20Equality%20and%20Women%27s%20Empowerment.aspx)[**Principle 4:** Sustainability](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Environmental%20Sustainability.aspx) and Resilience**Principle 5**: Accountability  | ​Standard 1:  [Standard 2:](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%202.aspx) Standard 3: Standard 4: Standard 5: Standard 6: Standard 7: Standard 8:  | Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management​Climate Change and Disaster RisksCommunity Health, Safety and SecurityCultural Heritage[Displacement and Resettlement​](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%205.aspx)[Indigenous Peoples](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%206.aspx)Labour and Working Conditions Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency | * [Quality Assurance](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Policy%20Delivery.aspx) & Risk Management
* [Screening,](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Policy%20Delivery.aspx) Assessment and Management of SES Risks and Impacts
* [Stakeholder Engagement](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Stakeholder%20Engagement.aspx) and [Response Mechanism](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Response%20Mechanisms.aspx)
* [Access to Information](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Access%20to%20Information.aspx)
* [Monitoring, Reporting](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Monitoring%2C%20Reporting%20and%20Compliance.aspx)**,**[Compliance review](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Compliance%20Review.aspx)
 |

Where projects are rated as being High, Substantial or Moderate Risk, some form of social and environmental assessment is required, together with the identification of management mechanisms to mitigate identified risks. The assessment must be commensurate with the magnitude and severity of foreseen risks.

The nature of the assessment will vary according to the type of risk foreseen. Where potential impacts are foreseen from “upstream” project activities, such as those involving regulatory and legal amendments and policy support or capacity building, they are typically assessed using forms of Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA). Risks and impacts associated with projects that have a physical footprint (“downstream” activities) are typically addressed through an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) or targeted on-the-ground assessments.

The SESP was finalized during the project preparation, as required by UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards (SES). The SESP identified 15 project risks and 1 risk related to the project’s Area of Influence (AoI) that could have potential negative impacts in the absence of safeguards. Based on their likelihood and impact the category of each risk has been estimated, resulting in 3 Substantial risks and 13 Moderate risks.

The screenings also indicate that three Programming Principles and six Project Level Standard have been triggered by the Substantial and Moderate Risks:

* Principle 2: Human Rights (due to potential exclusion of marginalized people from decision-making that may affect them including new proposed legislation and locations of pilot demonstrations; potential conflicts between rangers and local communities and/or police and local communities);
* Principle 3: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (due to potential reproduction of gender discrimination at demonstration sites and in capacity building activities);
* Principle 5: Accountability (due to potential exclusion of marginalized people from decision-making)
* Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management (due to potential disruption of habitats due to pollution; or inadvertent harmful impact on natural ecosystems subsequent to restoration activities)
* Standard 2: Climate Change and Disaster Risks (due to potential vulnerability to extreme climate events drought or floods);
* Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security (due to risk of exposure of communities to rising ground water level subsequent to the restoration of the Camenca river old watercourse)
* *Standard 4 Cultural Heritage (*due to potential impact of restoration and proposed eco-tourism routes)
* Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement (due to potential economic displacement stemming either from legal amendments, stricter enforcement of environmental legislation, improved PAs patrolling and restoration activities)
* *Standard 6: Indigenous People (this standard was not triggered)*
* Standard 7: Labour and Working Conditions (due to third party contactors potential failure to comply with international labor standards)
* Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency (due to activities that may impact operations of Stanca Costesti Dam and the oil exploitation platform in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve).

Full details on the risks and categorizations is contained in the SESP Template annexed to this ESMF. *A summary of the risk significance under each SES principle and standard, and the project-level safeguard standards triggered by each project is shown in Table 6 below.*

Table 5: Summary of safeguards triggered based on screening conducted during project preparation

| **Overarching Principle / Project-level Standard** | **Risk rating** | SES Requirement |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Principle 2 : Human Rights | **✓****Substantial** | SESA, ESIATraining, Process Framework |
| Principle 3: Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment | **✓****Moderate** | SESA, ESIA, GAP  |
| Principle 5: Accountability | **✓****Moderate** | SESA, ESIA, Training |
| Standard 1: Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Natural Resource Management | **✓****Moderate** | SESA, ESIA, SESP |
| Standard 2: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation | **✓****Moderate** | SESA, ESIA, SESP |
| Standard 3: Community Health, Safety and Security | **✓****Substantial** | ESIA, SESP, Process Framework |
| Standard 4 Cultural Heritage  | **Moderate**  | SESP |
| Standard 5: Displacement and Resettlement | **✓****Substantial** | SESA; GAP; Process Framework  |
| Standard 6: Indigenous People | **n/a** |  |
| Standard 7 Labor and Working Conditions  | **✓****Moderate** | Requirements of this Standard are to be applied in an appropriately-scaled manner based on the nature and scale of the interventions |
| Standard 8: Pollution Prevention and Resource Efficiency  | **✓****Moderate**  | ESIA, SESP |
| **Number of risks in each risk rating category:** |  |
| **Substantial** | 3 |  |
| **Moderate** | 13 |  |
| **Low** | 0 |  |
| **Total number of project risks** | 16 |  |
| **Overall Project Risk Categorization** | **Substantial** |  |
| **Number of safeguard standards triggered** | **11** |  |

## Gaps in policy framework

The Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment (SESA) will include further analysis of the legal and policy frameworks that apply to the project, identifying gaps and strategies to enable the project’s policy-level activities to operate with.

# Procedures for Screening, Assessing and Managing Social and Environmental Impacts

In accordance with UNDP SES policy, the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) has been applied to the project during the project development phase. Under this policy, a SES principle or standard is triggered when a potential risk is identified and assessed as having either a ‘moderate’, ‘substantial’ or ‘high’ risk rating based on its probability of occurrence and extent of impact. Risks that are assessed as ‘low’ do not trigger the related principle or standard.

In accordance with the SES, and due to the **Substantial overall Risk category,** social and environmental assessments, including the identification of management mechanisms to mitigate identified risks must be undertaken. The required procedures are outlined below:

* **Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment for upstream activities**

A scoped Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESA) will be undertaken during the following activities:

***Activity 1.1.1.1. Development of legal amendments to address improved wetlands management including support to the new NBSAP*.**

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 (*please see Annex 17 Institutional and Legal Framework*). The legal amendments proposed by the project will address some of the critical problems identified during the project preparation related to wetlands management. In addition, the project will support the government-led development of the new NBSAP.

***Activity 1.1.1.3 Support to the revision of the Regulation governing the Stanca Costesti Dam to include the revised minimum ecological flow accounting for climate change***

The amendment of the current Regulation has started in 2020, aiming at improving the dam’s operations considering the decrease of the Prut river flow in the past years. The current work on the Regulation is described in the bilateral “*Memo*”- an official document agreed by both parties, listing the necessary modifications and envisaged works. Initially at PIF and re-confirmed at PPG the Moldovan Waters Agency have highlighted the opportunity for the project’s support. The project’s entry point is the area (agreed in the *Memo*) that would otherwise not be addressed, such as the calculation of the minimum river flows required by lakes and other downstream water bodies. The project will therefore assist the joint Hydrotechnical Committee, by providing technical expertise, technology and methodologies for calculation of new amended minimum ecological flows that accounts for climate change and predicted water deficit. The project will use GEF resources to establish the minimum ecological flow under the predicted climate change impacts and will recommend measures for the optimization of water volumes and timing of water releases. The project will support the amendment of the bilateral Regulation on Stanca Costesti Dam, and will align with the *Memo* (Section 6) which includes provisions related to the functioning of the Stanca Costesti Dam and water exploitation regimen. In its current form, the Stanca Costesti Regulation stipulates that the minimum ecological flow is preliminarily estimated at 30m3/s until a realistic calculation of the lakes and wetlands requirements will be provided (which is what the project will do). In the current form of the Regulation, there is no specification on the timing of water releases in order to simulate natural seasonal floods, which would support fish reproduction and stabilization of flora and fauna population especially in lower Prut lakes.

***Activity 1.1.3.1 Biodiversity integration into local plans and strategies.***

The project will support mapping of key wetlands habitats in the targeted protected areas (under Output 2.1.) and will work with the district authorities to integrate the main biodiversity consideration and provisions for natural resource management and biodiversity monitoring in a) midterm revision of the current strategies and b) into their new local development strategies. In addition, the project’s experts will work with the local districts’ authorities in Cahul (hosting the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve) and Glodeni and Falesti districts (hosting the Royal Forest Reserve) and organize 6 training and coaching sessions (two meetings for each district in the second year of the project implementation) to strengthen support the biodiversity mainstreaming into local development planning and the revisions of the local development strategies at midterm. 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. SESA approach will be applied to the amendments to the local strategies.

The SESA will be carried out by independent experts in accordance with UNDP’s SES policy and the [UNDP SES Guidance Note on Assessment and Management](https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SES%20Document%20Library/Uploaded%20October%202016/UNDP%20SES%20Assessment%20and%20Management%20GN%20-%20FInal%20Nov2020.pdf) to identify and assess social and environmental impacts associated with the proposed regulations in a participatory manner with stakeholders as follows:

* 1. Identify social and environmental priorities to be included in planning and policy processes
	2. Assess gaps in the institutional, policy, and legal frameworks to address these priorities
	3. Identify potential adverse social and environmental impacts associated with policy options
	4. Engage decision makers and stakeholders to ensure a common understanding and broad support for implementation
	5. Formulate policy and institutional measures needed to close policy and legal gaps, address institutional weaknesses, and avoid adverse social and environmental impacts.

The SESA will consist of an assessment of impacts that integrates environmental and social considerations into policies, plans and programmes and evaluates their interlinkages with economic considerations. It will evaluate the effect of supported regulatory/policy changes on a broad, cross sectoral basis with the aim of making policy decisions and other upstream actions more sustainable.

The SESA approach will be applied to all the project-supported legal and policy amendments under Component 1 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 and policies.

Information and strategies identified will inform decision making and will be used to guide assessments of downstream activities.

The SESA process will be accompanied by a concise report that summarizes the main findings and results of SESA, including:

1. SESA stakeholder engagement process;
2. Key social and environmental priorities and issues associated with the proposed project-born amendments and policy work;
3. Institutional arrangements for coordinating integration of social and environmental issues into chosen amendments;
4. Legal, regulatory, policy, institutional and capacity recommendations to address any identified gaps for managing the social and environmental priorities and implementing applicable social and environmental policies;
5. Identification of measures (e.g. policies, institutional strengthening, governance reform) to address and manage anticipated adverse social and environmental risks and impacts, including a summary Action Matrix (see annexed outlines);
6. where applicable, final or advanced draft of ESMF as framework for managing social and environmental risks during implementation of the proposed regulations or strategies.

As a high-level document, the SESA is based on the broad scope of envisaged high-level project activities. As such, work on the SESA will commence during the first six months of the project.

* **Scoped ESIA/ESMP for the establishment of the minimum ecological flow**

This procedure will be applied to the following activity:

*Activity 1.1.1.3 Support to the revision of the Regulation governing the Stanca Costesti Dam to include the revised minimum ecological flow accounting for climate change.*

The project’s support is proposed to be sequenced as follows:

1. Setting-up a Working Group to support the joint Hydrotechnical Committee and provide science based revised minimum ecological flow requirements. The project experts will work with specialists from Moldovan Waters Agency, Moldsilva Agency, Environment Agency, Hydrometeorological Agency; The Working Group will be chaired by the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment. The project experts will facilitate the tasks of the Working Group and the cross-border dialogue with the Romanian Waters Agency and knowledge exchange with regard to scientific norms and requirements of lakes, reservoir and wetlands.
2. Development of the methodology and required norms for the calculation of the minimum ecological flow and optimal water releases. Facilitation of cross-border round table meetings between both Romanian and Moldovan parties (either in-person or on-line) for the approval of the Methodology; Support the joint Hydrotechnical Commission in order to amend the Regulation of the Stanca Costesti Dam and include the Methodology;
3. Calculation of minimum ecological flow as follows (i) conduct field missions and hydrological, climate, ecological studies and data processing (ii) hydroclimatic model and analysis of climatic scenarios (iii) finalization of the study and identification of the minimum ecological flows needed for lakes and wetlands and recommendations for optimal water releases and an improved harmonization of water releases with the Danube hydrological regime; This work will be done in coordination with the project’s development of the Study of the Prut wetlands hydro-ecology (Activity 2.1.1.5).
4. Supporting Moldovan Water Agency to engage in cross-border dialogue between Moldovan and Romanian stakeholders in view of securing consensus upon the minimum ecological flows and time releases that account for climate change-predicted water deficits;
5. Work with the Joint Hydrological Committee and develop/mainstream the project-born amendments into the Regulation, and align with the Official Memo /Section 6, related to the calculation of the minimum ecological flow for the wetlands and lakes.

The project will support Moldovan Waters Agency and work with the legal department of the Ministry of Environment and develop a new Government Ordinance to give effect to these changes

The safeguards measures will be an appropriately scoped ESIA that will be conducted during this process, aligned with UNDP SES requirements.

The project specialists (Hydrologists, Ecologist, PA expert, Gender expert, M&E expert) and the specialised safeguards experts (or company) will make sure that full assessments of social and environmental risks are embedded In the process of identification/calculation of the minimum environmental flow.

ESIA will be conducted through several steps which will include:

* A scoping exercise will be undertaken during the initial hydrological studies and field missions (step 3 above). The scoping may involve the following: (i) TORs for additional expertise/recruitment; (ii) identification of significant social and environmental issues and potential adverse impacts to be addressed (iii) identification of data availability and gaps for conducting the assessments (iv) identification of UNDP/SES requirements to be addressed (v) scoping meeting with concerned stakeholders
* Develop baseline information on the relevant environmental social, physical and cultural baseline in the area of influence;
* Review the applicable regulations and legal acts relevant to the water resources in the context of the problem at hand (i.e. availability of water resources for the ecological integrity of wetlands, lakes, riparian areas in the Prut basin, downstream of Stanca Costesti Dam)
* Identify and examine proposed alternative scenario (i.e. minimum and optimum environmental flow in the context of climate change)
* Analyse and evaluate risks and impacts (according to SES requirements); support stakeholder consultations (in coordination with step 4 above)
* Prepare ESIA report and proposed risk mitigation/management measures
* Include safeguards measures in the proposed Regulation amendments (in coordination with step 5 above).
* **Scoped ESIA/ESMP for Reforestation works**

**Activity 2.2.1.1 Reforestation of degraded riparian forest ecosystems in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve**

 The project work will focus on the restoration of degraded riparian forest strips, in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. The reforestation activities will be co-financed by “Moldsilva “agency and will be implemented on approximately 50 ha around Manta and Beleu lakes, in strategic locations, 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 PPG expert team has selected the sites and identified the methodology for the implementation of the reforestation works, please see **Annex 19** (Project Document): Restoration works- Feasibility and Methodology of proposed reforestation activities. The design and implementation of the reforestation works will be carried out as per the provisions of the technical regulations approved by the Moldsilva Agency ( i.e. norms and technical guidelines, guides, standard projects). At the PPG stage, a number of 33 plots have been selected for reforestation works with a cumulative area of50,02 ha.

This project is required to conduct screening and targeted assessments (as needed) of potential negative impact on the natural ecosystems associated with reforestation works, prior to the commencement of the restoration activities.

First, the selected sites will be reviewed against the criteria of the Exclusion List (below). Reforestation activities will be deemed ineligible for the project if they:

* Involve conversion or degradation of natural habitats;
* May cause measurable adverse impacts to critical natural habitats;
* Risk the introduction of invasive alien species;
* May negatively affect endangered species;
* Involve physical or economic displacement of people;
* Do not comply with technical norms and standards;
* Purchase, use or store harmful pesticides or hazardous materials;
* Involve forced labor/ child labour;
* Are likely to create any impact that would be categorized as “High” or “Substantial”

Second, the sub-projects/sites that have passed the exclusionary criteria will be individually screened with the UNDP SESP template. Scoped ESIAs will be part of the Technical feasibility projects (as per national legislation) prior to the commencement of the reforestation works.

The screening procedures (described above) will apply to the following selected sites (please also see Annex 19 of the Project Document):

* Crihana Veche: 7 sectors with total area of 7,11 ha, average area of each plot: 1,02 ha
* Manta- Paşcani: 11 sectors with total areas of 10,94 ha, average area of each plot: 0,99 ha
* Vadu lui Isac: 2 sectors with total area of 2,65 ha, average area of each plot: 1,33 ha
* Colibaşi: 9 sectors with total area of 21,62 ha, average area of each plot: 2,40 ha
* Brânza: 2 sectors with total area of 4,87 ha, average area of each plot: 2,44 ha
* Văleni: 2 sectors with total area of 2,83 ha, average area of each plot: 1,42 ha

The project will take into consideration the PPG analysis of the proposed tree species, to support the screening especially regarding the potential risk of introducing alien invasive species – please see assessment table under Section 9.6 of this document.

The local communities from the above mentioned villages will be consulted and informed about the monitoring requirements of the sites and the ecological benefits that these restoration 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.

An important element in the success of reforestation is reducing the risk of fire hazards in forest plantations by limiting at minimum the use of inflammable materials. Adequate distance between plantations rows and requirements for fencing and protection against domestic livestock grazing will be established at the implementation phase based on the technical projects at each selected site. The natural barriers such as lakes, ponds, rivers and other wetlands should be used as fire protection barriers, and the artificial ones – roads, pipelines should be also considered. If the forest stands do not have natural and artificial barriers separating insulated blocks, then, strips of at least 2.5 m should be built in the centre of the area, which may be used as roads for the transportation of planting materials, as well as for firefighting purposes. Mineralized strips shall also be installed along these roads. These strips should be located at the border of forest plantations located near settlements, public roads, agricultural enterprises/fields in order to avoid or decrease at minimum the fire hazards.

**Scoped ESIA/ESMP for the Restoration of the Camenca river water course**

**Activity 2.2.1.2 Rehabilitation of the old natural watercourse of Camenca River**

The hydrological repair of the Camenca river old watercourse supported by the project would bring an additional 8.3 million m3 water in the Camenca floodplain. It is estimated that approximately 11,175 ha of floodplain will benefit from increased groundwater level. The local livelihoods will stand to benefit from the intervention due to the increased water availability. The total floodplain area ( 11,175 ha) is encompassing 5,787 ha state property largely representing small ponds and lakes and areas of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve; an additional 4,554 ha belong to local public authorities, represented by communal grasslands and small ponds; and 834 ha are private agricultural lands. The restored seasonal flooding of Camenca river’s adjacent lands, expected after the rehabilitation of Camenca watercourse is unlikely to affect large areas and are not expected to lead to floods due to the fact that Camenca is a small river. It is estimated that the seasonal flooding will translate into an increase of ground water level. On some plots, the groundwater may reach the surface, replenishing existing lakes and ponds and raising 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.

The project is required to conduct **a scoped ESIA/ESMP (aligned with UNDP SES requirements), as part of the full Feasibility Study** (the latter aligned with the national legislation). An outline for the ESIA and ESMP report is annexed to this document under Section 9.2. The required steps are presented below:

1. Before the commissioning of the full feasibility study, the project will start the **Process framework** in 2 phases (described in the section below) starting with the inception phase. After the below steps 2-3 will be addressed, the project will conduct the second consultations phase. The second consultation phase will start after the finalisation of the Full Feasibility Study and will aim at obtaining the local approval of the local authorities and full consultations of local communities in targeted areas.
2. Concomitantly, the national and local authorities will appropriately address the illegal construction on Camenca river. The Process Framework will facilitate reaching consensus over this issue as well, since it affects the envisaged restoration works.
3. After securing endorsement from local authorities and preliminary consultations with local communities, the project will facilitate the potential legal/notarized documents necessary to transfer the selected land plots from the local municipal cadastre to state property (as needed) in order to enable the implementation of the hydrotechnical works.
4. Only after these steps are implemented will the project commission the full Feasibility Study/ESIA for hydrotechnical works under Scenario 1 (*as per the pre-feasibility analysis at PPG stage; please see* ***Section 9.7*** *of this document and* ***Annex 20*** *under the Project Document*). The full Feasibility Study will be financed from GEF resources and **will adhere to the UNDP SES requirements**. The development of the full feasibility study is estimated to take up to 6 months, including 2 months of field assessments.
5. The hydrotechnical works will start only after the approvals and local and national authorities endorsements of the full feasibility study. The project will hire a specialised company for the ESIA/ESMP, full feasibility study, and screening/targeted assessments of all the restoration activities. (please see technical specifications under Annex 8/Project Document).
6. The hydrotechnical works will be co-financed by the national partners and will be **consistent with the UNDP SES requirements.** Appropriate safeguards will be included in the contractual agreements with the third-party contractors as per the findings of the feasibility study and ESIA/ESMP.

The difference between GEF/UNDP financed activities and co-financed activities (funds from in-kind or parallel funding for activities that are part of the project framework/results) in terms of alignment with UNDP SES is that **“while UNDP does not ensure adherence to UNDP SES requirements beyond activities funded through UNDP accounts, the entire project is however reviewed for consistency with the requirements of the UNDP SES” (please see UNDP SES guidelines).**

**Findings of the Preliminary Screening of the PPG expert team**

**Social aspects**. The society, including in the Republic of Moldova, has generally a conservative reaction to the changes affecting their day-to-day life and/or material interests directly. In our case, in accordance with the proposed scenarios, oppositions are expected on the one hand – from the owner of the illegally built reservoir, on the other hand – from the population living at the border of the area of study, within the settlements and/or holding the few agricultural lands located in the area of study.

The owner of the illegally built reservoir will (very likely) oppose the restoration works because of the material losses he would incur (i.e. the illegal access to public water resources for own consumption will be cut off, as per the applicable law).

The local inhabitants may likely oppose the project’s intervention due to inertia and because they may not fully comprehend the ecological benefits brought by the activity of restoration of Camenca river.

However, these social risk aspects are only based on the analysis of society behaviour in similar projects, consultations with professionals that have implemented before projects in the sphere of environment, without any survey or sociological investigations in the area of study. These risks therefore must be validated during and after the inception phase, through the Process framework (described below).

**Environmental aspects**. The positive aspect of restoring the natural riverbed of Camenca river lies with the reinstated seasonal floods of Camenca’s lower reaches, benefiting 11,175 ha of floodplains and rising of groundwater level which will benefit the entire floodplain/ proposed Ramsar area, including some areas of the forest ecosystems in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve.

The PPG expert team has concluded that there is limited or no risk of floods subsequent to the restoration and additional water flows in the area, simply because Camenca is a small river. In case of extreme climate change events, and flooding of Prut river which will implicitly affect Camenca floodplains, the area would be flooded anyway, independently of the project-supported restoration and independently of Camenca flow regime. However, Prut river induced floods are very rare and less likely now due to climate induced water scarcity which is increasingly prevalent.

The PPG expert team concluded that due to the increase of the level of ground water in the adjacent areas, where the settlements are, mainly those in Balatina village located closer to the restoration works there is a risk of possible increase of moisture in basements and gardens.

More rigorous assessments of these risks is required by the project, to be done through the hydrologic, hydraulic, and hydrogeological modelling, which will be part of the feasibility study. Consultations with local communities and potential compensatory measures will be validated in the first year of the project implementation and implemented in parallel with the restoration works.

* **Process Framework and Management Plans for Potential Economic Displacement**

This project is required to conduct targeted assessments of potential economic displacement from the Biodiversity/PAs aspects of the project’s work including the following activities:

**Activity 2.1.1.1 Designation of the Royal Forest Ramsar site.**

The project will use GEF resources to bring past efforts to fruition and finalise the official designation of Royal Forest Nature Reserve as a Ramsar site - a priority objective under Moldova NBSAP (2015-2020), that had started in 2008 by NGO and academia community. At the same time, the project will support the development of the Management and Financial Plan of the Royal Forest Nature Reserve, covering the entire proposed Ramsar site. Building on past inventories the GEF resources will be used to identify information gaps and design targeted inventories of key species and critical wetlands habitats. and will update any existing information. The proposed Ramsar area covers approximately 15,468 ha, encompassing the core area of 6,032 ha of the proposed Ramsar site which corresponds to the current Royal Forest Nature Reserve and an additional 9,436 ha proposed to be added to the existing reserve (6,032 ha), including a mosaic of habitats: some of the oldest wooded floodplains of Europe, rivers, meadows, marshes, relict lakes and active river channels; hayfields and pastures and 10 villages: Braniste, Avraneni, Balatina, Cuhnesti, Bisericani, Moara Domneasca, Viisoara, Calinesti, Pruteni, Drujeni villages.

**Activity 2.1.2.1 Support to Protected Areas**

In the **Royal Forest Nature Reserve** (including the proposed Ramsar area) the project will focus on compliance and enforcement mechanism against illegal hunting, fishing and tree cutting; promoting sustainable tourism and ensuring monitoring of the key biodiversity values, and Ramsar requirements. The UNDP/GEF project with help ensuring improved management measures for the proposed Ramsar site, and mainstream international requirements and best practices for Ramsar wetlands into the management and operational planning for the area. The Ramsar designation and improved zoning as well as the envisaged restoration of the Camenca river’s old water course (described under Output 2.1) will improve wetlands and ground water level condition which will, in time, contribute to positive changes in the population of key species at breeding sites compared to the baseline

In the **Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve** the project’s incremental support to updating the Management Plan will be accompanied by strengthened capacities for the implementation of the management measures, expected to lead, in time, to a more stable population of key species and increase of breeding sites. Currently the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve management unit is not capacitated to conduct consistent monitoring activities that cover the main KBAs and the entire Ramsar site (encompassing both Manta and Beleu lakes). Currently the monitoring of aquatic birds targets Beleu lake only. This is due to the fact that the Regulation on the Operationalization of the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve and management plan that cover the entire MAB UNESCO designated territory are not yet officially approved. The Lower Prut Biosphere reserve Administration is therefore not sufficiently capacitated to implement an effective management of the entire MAB UNESCO area.

**Activity 2.2.1.2 Rehabilitation of the old natural watercourse of Camenca River**

 This activity is co-financed by the Ministry of Environment and it will be consistent with UNDP SES requirements, and will be sequenced in more stages as explained further below. The full feasibility study and execution of the hydrotechnical works should be implemented only after a comprehensive stakeholders consultations and appropriately addressing the existing illegal small earth dam construction on Camenca river.

One particular aspect related to the restoration works on Camenca old watercourse has to do with the local conditions, complicated by an illegally constructed small size earth dam on Camenca, that will be affected by the restored old water course, in that the water will be directed straight into its old riverbed and the illegal reservoir will be decoupled from the river flow. This will, undoubtedly, elicit a negative response from the local household that is currently benefiting from the illegally diverted water (used for poultry farming and/or irrigation). Although this construction is illegal, and located on state property, there have been no legal measures taken so far.

The project is required to conduct a **Process framework** under the above-mentioned activities, in order to facilitate community endorsement, consensus and to validate the risk of economic displacement. The assessment will be carried out by qualified experts and the Project manager, in a participatory manner with all the stakeholders starting with the project inception phase. The assessment will assess potential economic displacement impacts associated with this area of work. The screening (SESP) completed for the project during project development phase will be used as the basis of this targeted assessment.

The assessment will include appropriate consultation with affected communities, to consult on potential impacts and management measures and ensure community participation in planning, implementation and monitoring. The following processes and plans will follow the targeted assessments of economic displacement:

* Process Framework (for the work on Biodiversity/PAs, above): A Process Framework is prepared when UNDP-supported projects may cause restrictions in access to natural resources in legally designated parks and protected areas. The purpose of the process framework is to establish a process by which members of potentially affected communities participate in the design of project components, determination of measures necessary to address the requirements of SES Standard 5, and implementation and monitoring of relevant project activities. The level of detail of the Process Framework may vary depending on project activities, characteristics of restrictions and their impacts, and the number of persons affected. The Process Framework supplements the project’s environmental and social assessment with a participatory framework focused on the potential impacts of access restrictions (Annex 9: Stakeholder Engagement Plan in the Project Document includes Template Process Framework).
	+ Under this project, **Activities 2.1.1.1. and 2.1.2.1** are aiming at designation of Ramsar sites in the Royal Forest Nature Reserve and the development of management plans in both targeted PAs (i.e. Royal Forest Nature Reserve and Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve). These activities will include the application of rules/regulations according to PAs and this may well lead to the limitations of use of the natural resources according to the PAs zoning. The project-facilitated consultations with the local communities who are living in and around both PAs must therefore ensure that the new or improved protection regime in the PAs is properly understood by the local communities and that the proposed conservation measures are supported by the local communities. During the consultations, the project manager supported by the experts will ensure that any potential risk of economic displacement in the affected communities, resulting from the designation of new PAs will be properly assessed and if confirmed, appropriately mitigated through compensatory measures. The compensatory measures will be identified during the project’s targeted assessments. The formal process of the Ramsar designation and the formal approval of the PAs management plans will not commence before securing consensus/ endorsement of the local communities over the PAs zoning, management arrangements and monitoring measures. Targeted assessments will be carried out in parallel with the biodiversity assessments and inventories. The stakeholders to be engaged with in the Royal Forest Reserve are first and foremost the local communities in the 10 villages envisaged to be included in the new Ramsar area: Braniste, Avraneni, Balatina, Cuhnesti, Bisericani, Moara Domneasca, Viisoara, Calinesti, Pruteni, Drujeni villages, that will need to be consulted in the process of the PA Management Plan development and the discussions on the feasibility of the Ramsar designation. In the Lower Prut Biosphere reserve
	+ The **Activity 2.2.1.2** is aiming at the implementation of the hydrotechnical works for the rehabilitation of the old Camenca river watercourse. The situation in this case is complicated by the fact that some residents/household have illegally diverted water for own consumption in Balatina village. The project supported restoration works will re-direct Camenca river flow into its own old riverbed. This means that the river will no longer feed the illegally constructed water reservoir. This situation alone will likely elicit a negative response from the respective local residents. Targeted assessments and dialogue with the owner of the illegal reservoir, and other local community representatives, local authorities , local police and the representatives of the MOE, Moldovan Waters Agency and the Moldsilva Agency including the Royal Forest Nature Reserve management/staff will be organized starting with the inception phase, in order to discuss this situation, inform about the project’s activities and hopefully get to an amicable resolution. The stakeholders involved are the following: the local communities in the affected villages (in particular Balatina, Cuhnesti, Tomestii Noi, Movileni villages); the local authorities; the Camenca Basin Committee; local NGOs familiar with this region such as the Association of Women for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development; Moldsilva Agency; Moldovan Waters Agency; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment; local policy and local environmental inspectors; Royal Forest Administration. The Process Framework in this situation **will encompass two stages:**
		- * During the inception phase, the project will start the Process Framework’s **first round** of comprehensive consultations at local level, in the affected villages, involving the Ministry of Regional Development, Agriculture and Environment; the Moldovan Waters Agency and Moldsilva Agency with the PA Royal Forest Nature Reserve staff as well as the local environmental inspectors and local authorities namely the mayors of the villages located in the proximity of the envisaged hydrological works- especially Balatina village. The village has about 3815 people, and the discussions will aim in principle to inform about the intended works, assess local acceptance, raise awareness on the benefits of the rehabilitation of the old watercourse and agree on the next steps, identify the households located near the proposed hydrological intervention site and assess potential impact on these households, and identify the appropriate measures to address illegal earth dam constructions on the old water course of Camenca river. Addressing the existing illegal constructions is of outmost importance.
			* **The second round of consultations** under the Process Framework will be held after the Feasibility Study will be finalized (*please see Project Document Activity 2.2.1.2 with regard to mandatory sequencing of the project ‘s work i.e. all the legal matters must be addressed and local authority endorsements must be secured before commissioning the Feasibility Study*). The project will work with the existing Camenca Sub-basin Committee and hold local consultations aiming at fully engaging the local communities located in the floodplain area. There are 14 villages located in the area but only a handful of them are located more or less in the proximity of the project intervention site (Balatina, Cuhnesti and Tomestii Noi and Movileni in particular). The project will facilitate the approval of the feasibility study by the local authorities. If any economic displacement will be validated, the project will develop a Livelihood Action Plan and will deploy compensatory mechanisms as needed.
* Livelihood Action Plan (for Biodiversity/Pas work above, if needed): If determined necessary by targeted assessments at project sites, a Livelihood Action Plan will be developed, in case the project activities will cause directly or indirectly, economic displacement whereby the livelihoods of individuals or communities are restricted, partially, or fully, in their access to land or resources to support their economic well-being. These action plans will address beneficiary participation in economic displacement decision-making, adequate (full and fair) compensation and assistance, as well as risk management to ensure that livelihoods are at least as good as prior to the program implementation and that the livelihoods of poor and marginalized are improved. The plan will include independent monitoring procedures, clarification of land rights consistent with applicable law, and outline capacity, training, and development actions targeting beneficiaries’ livelihoods. It will ensure that UNDP SES requirements, best practice standards, and mitigation measures are being met, such that Program activities involving economic displacement cannot proceed until completion of livelihood action plans that are site-specific. Where impacts on the economically displaced population are minor, an abbreviated action plan may be developed that establishes the eligibility criteria for economic compensations for the affected persons.
	+ - * If confirmed by the targeted assessment, the risk of economic displacement will be mitigated by compensatory measures. **Women, women headed households, youth, Roma minority, veterans, poor families , will have priority, and will be helped first if risk of economic displacement will be confirmed**. The compensatory measures will be identified during the assessments and dialogue with local communities, and will be tailored according to the local residents’ needs but in principle it is envisaged that the project will offer non-monetary compensations for repairs and/or support to biodiversity-friendly local initiatives (up to 500-1000 USD per affected household- from GEF resources; any additional expenses will be covered by co-financing as necessary) to support the affected households e.g. repairs of basements that may be affected by the increased moisture caused by the increase of groundwater level as a result of the river restoration works; support to rehabilitate any potential private land that may be affected by the increase of groundwater level; support to backyard greenhouses; support to processing medicinal plants; buying seeds or other biological materials; support to small poultry farming and/or drip irrigation etc.
* **Screening procedures for undefined activities**

The screening (using UNDP SESP) will be applied to the following activities, as part of the process for developing and/or selecting these currently undefined activities:

Activity 3.1.2.1 Development of local tourism routes involving at least 2 local municipalities in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve The project will support the development of one local eco-tourist initiative that would expand the existing tourist routes and add other components such as bird watching tours in Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve. The tourist route should be developed based on the analysis and application of the international best practices in promoting sustainable tourism in PAs and UNEP/CBD International Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism, MAB UNESCO and Ramsar guidelines. The project-supported tourist route at local level is proposed to combine the natural attractions of the Lower Prut area with the tradition of local cuisine, which has a specificity highlighted by several fish, vegetable and lamb dishes combined with local wines from the wine area "Valul lui Traian ”. The principle applied by most localities in the Local Action Group Local Prut /LAGLP is to promote individual local routes for each locality with the presentation of attractions, crafts, the specifics of the traditional port, but also the food specialties offered by women in the village.

Activity 3.1.2.2 Development of a cross border (Moldova-Romania) tourist package. In cooperation with the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, the project will develop an integrated tourist route including attractive cross border itineraries that links the Lower Prut (Moldova) and Danube Delta Biosphere Reserves (Romania). The project will cooperate with Danube Parks, within the framework of their project “Tansdanube.Travel.Stories”[[7]](#footnote-7) to develop and promote the cross-border tourist package on regional platforms.

Activity 3.1.2.3.Innovation Challenge In addition, the project will use GEF resources to organize an Innovation Challenge for the identification of innovative SMART “biodiversity passport”, 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 project will build on UNDP prior experience on working with innovative private sector solutions. The UNDP/GEF will organize the Innovation Challenge according to UNDP rules inviting e private sector participation (e.g. mobile operators), NGOs and other stakeholders and will explore opportunities for co-financing and operationalisation of the winning SMART products. The screening of the proposals – a process that will be developed during project implementation – will address and be aligned with UNDP SES requirements.

For the above mentioned activities, the project will use UNDP SESP to identify potential social and environmental risks of the activities, and devise adequate risk mitigation measures. The measures might include adjustments to the design of the activities, to avoid risks where necessary and appropriate (in line with the SES).

* The safeguards measures related to the identification of the tourists routes/package will be included in the tourist routes development process and consulted with local communities (Act. 3.1.2.1 and Act. 3.1.2.2)
* Safeguards measures aligned with UNDP SES requirements will be included in the set of selection criteria of the proposals under the Innovation Challenge (Act. 3.1.2.3)

Based on the screenings and required assessment, appropriate management measures for avoiding, and where avoidance is not possible, reducing, mitigating, and managing adverse impacts, via preparation of targeted management plans (e.g. Livelihood Action Plan; Cultural Heritage Management Plan; Waste Management Plan; Emergency Management Plan etc.) will be ensured.

* **Case by case safeguards measures related to Labour and Working Conditions**

Under Outcome 3 the project will support small local businesses to access financing in order to implement local initiatives that will boost their livelihoods. The wetlands restoration measures under Outcome 2.2 will also include restoration works. In order to implement adequate safeguards measures relevant to Standard 7 Labor and Working Conditions, the project will conduct case by case screening, using UNDP SESP. The risk mitigation measures should be aligned with specific UNDP SES requirements, as relevant (below).

**The management procedures will be that specific requirements of the terms and conditions of the employment will be established**, as follows[[8]](#footnote-8):

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| **Terms and conditions of employment:** Written labour management procedures are established6 that set out the conditions in which project workers will be employed or engaged and managed, in accordance with the requirements herein and applicable labour laws, rules and regulations.7 8 The procedures are appropriate to the size, locations and workforce of project activities. |
| ​Project workers are provided information and documentation that is clear and understandable regarding their terms and conditions of employment, including information that sets out their rights under applicable labour laws, rules and regulations (including any applicable collective agreements), and their rights related to hours of work, wages, overtime, compensation and benefits, occupational safety and health and the requirements herein.9 This information and documentation is provided at the beginning of the working relationship and when any material changes to the terms or conditions of employment or engagement occur. |
| ​Project workers are paid on a regular basis as required by applicable labour laws, rules and regulations.10 Deductions from payment of wages are only made as allowed by human resources management policies and applicable labour laws, rules and regulations. Project workers are informed of the conditions under which such deductions will be made. Project workers are provided with adequate periods of rest per week, annual holiday and sick, maternity and family leave, as required by applicable labour laws, rules and regulations. |
| ​​Project workers receive written notice of termination of employment and details of severance payments in a timely manner as required by applicable labour laws, rules and regulations. All wages that have been earned, social security benefits, pension contributions and any other entitlements are paid, either directly to the project workers or, where appropriate, for the benefit of the project workers, with evidence of such payments. |
| **​Non-discrimination and equal opportunity:**Decisions relating to the employment or treatment of project workers are not made on the basis of personal characteristics unrelated to inherent job requirements.11 The employment of project workers is based on the principle of equality of opportunity and treatment, and there shall be no discrimination with respect to any aspects of the employment relationship, such as recruitment and hiring, compensation (including wages and benefits), working conditions and terms of employment, access to training, job assignment, promotion, termination of employment or retirement, or disciplinary practices. Women and men shall receive equal remuneration for work of equal value. The labour management procedures shall set out measures to prevent and address violence, harassment, intimidation and/or exploitation. Where applicable labour laws, rules and regulations are inconsistent with this paragraph, activities are carried out in a manner that is consistent with these requirements to the extent possible. |
| ​​Neither special measures of protection and assistance to remedy discrimination nor selection for a particular job based on the inherent requirements of the job are not deemed as discrimination. |
| ​​Appropriate measures of protection and assistance are provided to address the vulnerabilities of project workers, including specific groups of workers, such as women, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and young workers. |
| ​​Appropriate measures will be taken to prevent and address any form of violence and harassment, bullying, intimidation and/or exploitation, including any form of gender-based violence (GBV). |
| ​​**Workers organizations:** In countries where national law recognizes workers' rights to form and to join workers' organizations of their choosing and to bargain collectively without interference, the applicable parties subject to national law who have engaged project workers must comply. In such circumstances, the role of legally established workers' organizations and legitimate workers' representatives is respected and they will be provided with information needed for meaningful negotiation in a timely manner. Where national law restricts workers' organizations, the applicable parties subject to national law shall not restrict project workers from developing alternative mechanisms to express their grievances and protect their rights regarding working conditions and terms of employment and shall not seek to influence or control these alternative mechanisms. The applicable parties shall not discriminate or retaliate against project workers who participate, or seek to participate, in such workers' organizations and collective bargaining or alternative mechanisms. |
| ​​**Forced labour:** Forced labour, which consists of any work or service not voluntarily12 performed that is exacted from an individual under threat of force or penalty, shall not be used in connection with the project.13 This prohibition covers any kind of involuntary or compulsory labour, such as indentured labour, bonded labour, or similar labour-contracting arrangements. No trafficked persons may be employed in connection with the project activities.14 |
| ​Where cases of forced labour are identified, immediate steps must be taken by the applicable parties to correct and remedy them. |
| ​**Child labour:** Child labour, which consists of employment of children below the minimum age of employment as defined by the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), may not be used in connection with or arising from the project activities. |
| ​​A minimum age for employment shall be specified in connection with the project activities, as determined by national law for applicable parties subject to national law and consistent with the ILO Convention No. 138.15 |
| ​​Notwithstanding paragraph 16 above, a child under the age of 18 may not perform work in connection with or arising from the project activities which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm his/her health, safety or morals. Such work is determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority and commonly specified in national lists of hazardous work prohibited to children. In the absence of such regulations, guidance on hazardous work to be prohibited in connection with the project should derive from the relevant ILO instruments.16 In addition, a child under the age of 18 may not, in connection with project activities, perform work that is likely to interfere with his/her compulsory education or be harmful to his/her physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. |
| ​**Where cases of child labour are identified, immediate steps shall be taken by applicable parties to correct and remedy them, including the rehabilitation and social integration of the child where necessary.** |
| **Occupational safety and health (OSH):** Necessary processes and measures that address the safety and health of project workers shall be in place to support project design, planning and implementation. These processes and measures may be encompassed and implemented through the applicable party's occupational safety and health management system17 or processes and shall address:​* Identification and assessment of potential hazards and risks, particularly those that could result in serious injury, ill health or death and those identified through worker health surveillance;
* Elimination of hazards and minimization of risks through implementation of preventive and protective measures in the following order of priority: elimination or substitution, engineering and organizational controls, administrative controls, and where residual hazards and risks cannot be controlled through these collective measures, provision of personal protective equipment at no cost to the worker;
* Safety and health training, including on the proper use and maintenance of personal protective equipment, at no cost to workers conducted by competent persons and the maintenance of training records;
* Recording and notification of occupational accidents and incidents and any resulting injuries, ill health or death;
* Emergency prevention and preparedness and response arrangements to emergency situations; and
* Employment injury benefits and/or remedies for adverse impacts such as occupational injuries, disability, ill health or disease and death.18
 |
| ​​All applicable parties who employ or engage project workers shall put in place the above safety and health processes and measures to prevent and protect workers from chemical, physical, biological and psychosocial hazards and to establish and maintain safe and healthy workplaces including the work environment, organization, processes, tools machinery and equipment.19 Such parties actively consult and collaborate with project workers and promote their understanding and participation in the implementation of safety and health measures, as well as provide them information, training and personal protective equipment. Mechanisms are used for consultation and participation of project workers, such as worker safety representatives or joint worker-management safety and health committees. |
| ​​Workplace mechanisms are made available for project workers to report work situations that they believe are not safe or healthy and to remove themselves from a work situation they have reasonable justification to believe presents an imminent and serious danger to their life or health. project workers who remove themselves from such situations are not required to return to work until necessary remedial action to correct the situation has been taken, and are not retaliated against or otherwise subject to reprisal or negative action. |
| ​​Project workers are provided with safe and healthy facilities appropriate to the circumstances of their work, including access to canteens, hygiene facilities, and appropriate areas for rest where appropriate on the basis of the work performed. Where accommodation services are provided to project workers, policies are put in place and implemented on the management and quality of accommodation to protect and promote the health, safety, and well-being of the project workers, and to provide access to or provision of services that accommodate their physical, social and cultural needs. |
| ​Where more than one party are employing or engaging workers and such workers are working together in one location, the parties who employ or engage the workers shall collaborate in applying the OSH measures, without prejudice to the responsibility of each applicable party for the safety and health of its own workers. The design and implementation of OSH measures shall be reviewed and necessary action taken in the event of significant changes in the working conditions or workers. |
| ​A process for conducting accident investigations and regular evaluation of preventive and protective measures and OSH performance shall be put in place and necessary corrective actions adopted based on the results of such investigations and evaluations.​ |
| ​​**Workplace grievance mechanism:** A workplace grievance mechanism (distinct from any general project-level grievance mechanism) is provided for all project workers (and, where relevant, their organizations) to raise workplace concerns (including potential violations of existing rights and entitlements as provided for in legislation, collective agreements, employment contracts and human resources policies). The mechanism will be easily accessible to project workers who are to be informed of the grievance mechanism at the time of recruitment and the measures to protect them against any reprisal for its use. |
| ​​The grievance mechanism shall be designed to address workers' concerns promptly, using an understandable, transparent process that provides timely feedback to those concerned in a language they understand, without any retribution, and shall operate in an independent and objective manner. The grievance mechanism may utilize existing grievance mechanisms, providing that they meet the above criteria. Existing grievance mechanisms may be supplemented as needed with project-specific arrangements. |
| ​​The grievance mechanism shall not impede access to other judicial or administrative remedies that might be available under applicable laws, regulations or rules or through existing arbitration procedures, or substitute for grievance mechanisms provided through collective agreements, if applicable. The mechanism ensures workers' rights to be present and to participate directly in the proceedings and to be represented by a trade union, if applicable, or person of their choosing. |
| **​Contractor/Third Party Workers:** Due diligence is conducted 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.​ |
| ​​Procedures are established 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. |
| ​​Contractor workers shall have access to a grievance mechanism. Where the third party employing or engaging the workers is not able to provide an easily accessible grievance mechanism, the grievance mechanism provided to direct project workers shall be made available. |
| **​​Primary Supplier Workers:** Potential risks of violations of primary supplier workers' fundamental rights20 and safety and health issues which may arise in relation to primary suppliers (at a minimum) are to be identified. Roles and responsibilities for monitoring primary suppliers are established. If child labour or forced labour cases or breaches of other fundamental rights are identified, the applicable party will require the primary supplier to take appropriate steps to remedy them. |
| ​​Additionally, where primary supplier workers are exposed to hazards that present a risk of serious injury, ill health or death, the relevant primary supplier is required to have procedures in place to address such safety and health issues. Such procedures and mitigation measures shall be reviewed periodically to ascertain their effectiveness. |
| ​​The ability to address these risks shall depend upon the applicable party's level of control or influence over its primary suppliers. Where prevention and remedy are not possible, shift the project's primary suppliers to suppliers that can demonstrate that they are meeting the relevant requirements herein. Where there is imminent danger of serious injury, ill health or death to workers, the applicable party shall exercise its control or influence to stop the operation concerned until such time as the primary supplier can demonstrate that it can control the hazard in a manner consistent with the minimum requirements herein. |

* **Overall project SESP updates**

During implementation, the project will be re-screened with the UNDP SESP:

1. as prescribed by the project’s SESA, ESIA/ESMP and screening procedures and management plans (as relevant) ;
2. when determined necessary by the Project Manager (after consideration of the advice from PMU staff with responsibility for safeguards), the Project Board, or UNDP; and/or
3. when project circumstances change in a substantive or relevant way.

**Conclusions**

The procedures above are based on the broad scope of project activities, outputs and outcomes. The management strategies are therefore designed to manage those impacts in their broadest sense, and the allocated significance ratings (of High, Substantial and Moderate) are based on a precautionary approach. The relevance of these risks may vary across sites, and the significance or likelihood of associated risks or impacts is not necessarily uniform across at all locations.

**Screening** of project activities at the demonstration sites using existing SESP, will take place in order to validate and rigorously assess PPG findings.

The Safeguards Experts/company will be hired by the project to conduct the assessments, develop SESA and ESIA, full feasibility study and support the screening at project sites for undefined activities. The Project manager will ensure the development and implementation of SESA and ESIAs and will be supported by technical/support staff. Technical inputs will be provided by the project’s qualified experts.

The first step after the project inception will be to leverage stakeholders engagements, start the implementation of participatory inclusive consultations and validate all the selected areas during the PPG.

The screening will start during the first year of the project implementation.

**Assessment** of activities will be based on SES requirements and commensurate with the magnitude of the envisaged risk, and targeted specifically at the risk, especially considering risks to poor, vulnerable or marginalized communities (including Roma) and individuals. The appropriate level of stakeholder consultation will be required at all stages.

**Management** of identified risks will follow the “mitigation hierarchy” model, described above. Management of additional site-specific activities will be captured in management plans. Where required, additional stand-alone plans for the activity may be developed, or addendums made to existing stand-alone plans, such as a Livelihood Action Plan or a site-specific addition to the Gender Action Plan. The management plan is dynamic and may require subsequent amendments as new project activities are identified, screened, assessed, and implemented. Additional required mitigation and impact management measures must be integrated into management plans with the technical inputs of specialised project experts.

Throughout all safeguards procedures, the project’s SEP, Comprehensive Stakeholders Engagement and Gender Action Plan (GAP) will be followed and updated as needed based on the screenings, assessments and management plans.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan (Annex 9 Project Document): Fair, inclusive and gender-responsive stakeholder engagement will be essential for ensuring equitable involvement and inclusion of women, men, youth, other vulnerable groups such as Roma and elderly people. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan will enable project staff to ensure that selection is carried out in synergy with the related legal and policy governance structure and that the implementation and selection procedures meet the required norms and standards. The plan will specifically consider how to engage marginalized and vulnerable groups equitably and meaningfully (women, women headed households, youth, elderly, rural poor, ethnic minorities such as Roma, and/or any other group deemed to be vulnerable) within the project areas. The plan will also provide terms of reference and modalities for managing stakeholder engagement in project activities at each site and with each community.

Gender Analysis and Action Plan (GAAP – Annex 11 Project Document) : The Gender Action Plan was developed based on a existing reports and gender analysis. The purpose of the GAP is to promote the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in the Prut River Basin by reducing gender gaps identified in natural resource use and access to resources and services, as well as participation in natural resource management. Addressing gender gaps and inequalities is necessary for women in the pilot regions of Moldova to live in a safe environment and enjoy equal rights and opportunities with men and achieve commensurate results. To achieve this goal, the GAP proposes gender sensitive activities to address the unequal access to and control over natural resources; unbalanced participation and involvement in decision making in environmental planning and management at all levels and unequal access to socio-economic benefits and services. The gender plan includes targeted activities deployed with the aim of ensuring the equitable participation of women at three levels: as project beneficiaries, as active promoters of sustainable wetlands management measures and at decision making level. The gender activities will be implemented and supported by dedicated gender consultant and by the project team.

# Institutional arrangements and capacity building

## Roles and responsibilities for implementing this ESMF (as per the UNDP/GEF Project Document Section VI)

The roles and responsibilities of project staff and associated agencies in the implementation of this ESMF is described below. This ESMF does not cover the roles and responsibilities associated with implementation of the subsequent ESMPs and/or stand-alone management plans; those will be defined for each management plan that is developed in the project inception phase, as required per this ESMF.

**Implementing Partner:**

The Implementing Partner for this project is the **Ministry of Environment (MOE) with its affiliated institution- the *Environmental Projects Implementing Unit* (EPIU).**  The Implementing Partner is the entity to which the UNDP Administrator has entrusted the implementation of UNDP assistance specified in this signed project document along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNDP resources and the delivery of outputs, as set forth in this document. The project is implemented according to the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM).

The Ministry of Environment has been selected as an IP as it represents the government institution responsible for the development of legislation, action plans, norms and standards in the field of environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources, including management of protected areas, air, waste, water resources, water supply and sewerage system, ensuring compatibility of legal framework with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). The responsibilities of the Ministry of Environment will include:

* Project planning, coordination, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. This includes providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. The Implementing Partner will strive to ensure project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project supports national systems;
* Chairing the Project Board meetings;
* Monitoring the progress of the project at strategic level, towards the achievement of the development outcomes;
* Ensuring effective Risk and Safeguards management as outlined in this Project Document
* Ensuring that the project partners will deliver the pledged co-financing;
* Ensuring that there is a coherent project organisation structure and logical set of work plans ;
* Set tolerances in the AWP and other plans as required for the Project Manager;
* Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets;
* Approving and signing the multiyear workplan;
* Approving and signing the combined delivery report at the end of the year; and,
* Signing the financial report or the funding authorization and certificate of expenditures.

The ministry has founded the Environmental Projects Implementation Unit (EPIU) as per the Law nr.98/2012 (art 4, point b), GD 695/2017 (7th point), GD145/2021 and GD 1249/2018 in order to overcome the above mentioned barriers, and enable the receipt and management of the donor funded projects.The EPIU is the public institution, functioning under the MOE mandate, responsible to contributing to policy implementation through specific projects.

The EPIU will be accountable to the Ministry of Environment in accordance to as responsibilities and obligations outlined in the EPIU statute and Government Decision No. 1249/2018. The implementation support services to be provided by the EPIU will include:

* Contracting and contract management for procurement of goods, services, and works for the project at national level;
* Certification for contract performance and acceptance of goods and services as per Project Procurement Plan;
* Financial management, including payments for goods and services involving national consultants and made in national currency.
* Logistical support, including duty travel for project personnel and consultants, project event management within the country.
* Equipment and Asset Management services, including IT equipment maintenance, licenses, and ICT support for the project team and project activities.
* Administrative support for the project.

The IP/EPIU and the Project manager will:

* Ensure that all the required assessments (targeted assessment, SESA, ESIA etc), assessment reports and the required management plan(s) (an ESMP and/or stand-alone management plan, or Livelihood Action Plan as necessary) are developed, disclosed for public consultation and approved, and management measures are adopted and integrated during project implementation;
* Ensuring all requirements of UNDP’s SES and national regulatory/policy frameworks and relevant international standards have been addressed (e.g. mitigation of identified adverse social and environmental impacts).
* Providing all required information and data necessary for timely, comprehensive, and evidence-based project reporting, including results and financial data, as necessary. This will include ensuring that project-level M&E is undertaken by national institutes and is aligned with national systems so that the data used and generated by the project, supports national systems.
* Risk management with respect to Social and Environmental Standards, as outlined in the respective ESMPs.
* Procurement of goods and services, including human resources.
* Financial management, including overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets.
* Holds responsibility and accountability to UNDP for overall management of the project, including compliance with UNDP SES and the EIA/SEA legislation as applicable.

**Project stakeholders and target groups:** The project will work with existing multi-stakeholder partnership mechanisms and establish new partnerships where necessary to ensure project target groups are involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring & evaluation of the activities in their communities. Local government units having jurisdiction over the project landscapes will designate project-level focal points. The focal points will be seconded through part-time arrangements and funded through government co-financing contributions, providing support for project activities at the local levels.

**UNDP:** UNDP is accountable to the GEF for the implementation of this project. This includes oversight of project execution to ensure that the project is being carried out in accordance with agreed standards and provisions. UNDP is responsible for delivering GEF project cycle management services comprising project approval and start-up, project supervision and oversight, and project completion and evaluation. UNDP is also responsible for the Project Assurance role of the Project Board/Steering Committee. UNDP’s role includes:

* provision of oversight on all matters related to safeguards.
* informing all the stakeholders and right-holders involved in, or potentially impacted, positively or negatively, by the GEF-financed projects, about the UNDP’s corporate Accountability Mechanism (described below).
* ensuring that the Compliance Review and the Stakeholder Response Mechanisms are operational during the lifetime of the projects.
* ensuring adherence to the SES for project activities implemented using funds channelled through UNDP’s accounts, and undertake appropriate measures to address any shortcomings.
* Verifying and documenting that all UNDP SES requirements have been addressed.
* Providing technical guidance on implementation of this ESMF and administrative assistance in recruiting and contracting expert safeguards services (as required), and monitoring adherence of each project to the ESMF and UNDP policies and procedures.

**Project organisation structure:**

Project Board: The Project Board (also called Project Steering Committee) is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP’s ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition.

* Provide overall guidance and direction to the project, ensuring it remains within any specified constraints.
* Address project issues as raised by the Project Coordinator.
* Provide guidance on new project risks, and agree on possible mitigation and management actions to address specific risks.
* Agree on Project Coordinator’s tolerances as required, within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF, and provide direction and advice for exceptional situations when the Project Coordinator’s tolerances are exceeded.
* Advise on major and minor amendments to the project within the parameters set by UNDP-GEF.
* Ensure coordination with various government agencies and their participation in project activities.
* Review combined delivery reports prior to certification by the implementing partner.
* Address project-level grievances.
* Review the final project report package during an end-of-project review meeting to discuss lessons learned and opportunities for scaling up/replication.
* Monitor implementation of this ESMF and compliance with national and international regulations, and UNDP social and environmental standards.
* Decision making for the adoption of necessary measures including full integration of management measures including SES requirements and any management plans such as ESMP, any standalone plans, within project Outputs and annual work plans.
* Establish and support GRM mechanism to address any grievances.

Project governance and management arrangements:

**Implementing Partner**

Ministry of Environment (MOE)

**Project Board/Steering Committee**

**Key Development Partners**

Agency Moldsilva

Agency Moldovan Waters

UNDP

Academia

**Project Executive**

Project National Director nominated by the Ministry of Environment (MOE)

**Beneficiary Representatives**

Protected Areas ;Local authorities

Local Action Group Lower Prut

NGOs; Moldova Tourism Agency

Private sector representatives

**Project Assurance**

*UNDP*

*UNDP-GEF PTA, RTA, UNDP CO DRR/RR/Programme Specialist (Climate, Environment, Energy Cluster)*

**Project Support (Project Management Unit)**

 Implementation Unit for Environmental projects

MOE/EPIU

**Project Organization Structure**

**The Project Board** (also called Project Steering Committee) is responsible for taking corrective action as needed to ensure the project achieves the desired results. In order to ensure UNDP’s ultimate accountability, Project Board decisions should be made in accordance with standards that shall ensure management for development results, best value money, fairness, integrity, transparency and effective international competition. In case consensus cannot be re

The composition of the Project Board must include the following roles:

1. **Project Executive**: Is an individual who represents ownership of the project and chairs the Project Board. The Executive is normally the national counterpart for nationally implemented projects. The Project Executive is the Ministry of Environment.
2. **Beneficiary Representative(s):** Individuals or groups representing the interests of those who will ultimately benefit from the project. Their primary function within the board is to ensure the realization of project results from the perspective of project beneficiaries. Often civil society representative(s) can fulfil this role. The Beneficiary representative are: the regional, district and local level authorities; PAs representatives; tourism agencies; NGOs, CSOs, local entrepreneurs, SMEs.
3. **Development Partner(s):** Individuals or groups representing the interests of the parties concerned that provide funding and/or technical expertise to the project. The Development Partner(s) are: the Ministry of Environment; UNDP; Agency “Moldsilva”; Agency “Moldovan Waters”, Academia.
4. **Project Assurance:** UNDP performs the quality assurance and supports the Project Board and Project Management Unit by carrying out objective and independent project oversight and monitoring functions. This role ensures appropriate project management milestones are managed and completed. The Project Board cannot delegate any of its quality assurance responsibilities to the Project Manager. UNDP provides a three – tier oversight services involving the UNDP Country Offices and UNDP at regional and headquarters levels. Project assurance is totally independent of the project execution.

**Project extensions**: The UNDP-GEF Executive Coordinator must approve all project extension requests. Note that all extensions incur costs and the GEF project budget cannot be increased. A single extension may be granted on an exceptional basis and only if the following conditions are met: one extension only for a project for a maximum of six months; the project management costs during the extension period must remain within the originally approved amount, and any increase in PMC costs will be covered by non-GEF resources; the UNDP Country Office oversight costs during the extension period must be covered by non-GEF resoruces.

**Project Management Unit**: Project management services including safeguards monitoring will be delivered by the Project Management Unit that will function within the Public Institution “ Implementaiton Unit for Environmental Projects” under MOE jurisdiction, staffed as follows: The Project Manager (PM) has the authority to run the project on a day-to-day basis on behalf of the Project Board within the constraints laid down by the Board. The Project Manager is responsible for day-to-day management and decision-making for the project. The Project Manager’s prime responsibility is to ensure that the project produces the results specified in the project document, to the required standard of quality and within the specified constraints of time and cost and aligned with the SES requirements (SESA, ESIA, Targeted assessments) and management plans ( ESMF and ESMP etc). The Project manager will make sure that SESA, ESIA and ESMP are developed, implemented and monitored and will provide technical inputs into different assessments aligned with SES requirements, will oversee implementation of environmental and social safeguards and SESP updates, raising awareness about project-level Grievance and Redress Mechanism (GRM). The project team will be supported by specialised safeguards experts/company to develop/implement SES requirements and support capacity buidling regarding SES and safeguards. The PM will be supported by a Project Financial and Administrative Assistant, who will assist in project planning, revisions and budget execution documents, contracting of national / local consultants and all project staff, in accordance with UNDP procedures and national legislation requirements. The PM will be further supported by national technical experts, research institutes and NGOs. In adition the M&E and Gender consultants will provide technical support services on the project and monitoring of safeguards. (Project Document Annex 8: O*verview of technical consultancies).*

## Capacity Building

The relevant qualified project technical experts and the specialists with expertise in social and environmental safeguards will be engaged to support the technical assessments and development of management plans as well as ad-hoc targeted assessment needed for any undefined activity, and the subsequent development of ESMPs and any stand-alone management plans. These experts will offer an induction session for Project Management Units (and implementing partners, as needed) on safeguards responsibilities and approaches.

The UNDP-GEF Unit will provide advice to project teams as needed to support the implementation of this ESMF and the preparation, implementation and monitoring of social and environmental management plans/measures.

The Project Steering Committee will have the final responsibility for the integration of ESMF/ESMP/stand-alone management plan(s) in the execution of the project. The integration of those plans will need to consider particular institutional needs within the implementation framework for application of the ESMP, including a review of the required budget allocations for each measure, as well as the authority and capability of institutions at different administrative levels (e.g. local, regional, and national), and their capacity to manage and monitor ESMP implementation. Where necessary, capacity building and technical assistance activities will be included to enable proper implementation of the ESMP.

# Stakeholder engagement and information disclosure

Discussions with project stakeholders, including local communities at project sites, commenced during the project development phase. A list of the stakeholders that were engaged in these consultations has been included in the Stakeholders Engagement Plan (Annex 9: Stakeholders consulted during project development). The project has an individual Stakeholder Engagement Plan (including a template for the Process Framework) and Gender Action Plan, which is annexed to the Project Document ( Annex 9: Stakeholders Engagement Plan and Annex 11: Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan). These Plans will be followed to ensure that stakeholders are engaged in project implementation and particularly in the further assessment of social and environmental impacts and the development of appropriate management measures. Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan will be updated during project implementation based on the assessments and management plans conducted in line with this ESMF, as needed.

Potentially affected stakeholders will be engaged during the implementation of this ESMF. This will include FPIC consultations with IPs if applicable.

As part of the stakeholder engagement process, UNDP’s SES require that project stakeholders have access to relevant information. Specifically, the SES (SES, Policy Delivery Process) stipulates that, among other disclosures specified by UNDP’s policies and procedures, UNDP will ensure that the following information be made available:

* Stakeholder engagement plans and summary reports of stakeholder consultations
* Social and environmental screening reports with project documentation
* Draft social and environmental assessments, including any draft management plans
* Final social and environmental assessments and associated management plans
* Any required social and environmental monitoring reports.

As outlined in the SES and UNDP’s Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP), the type and timing of assessments and management plans vary depending of the level of social and environmental risk associated with a project as well as timing of the social and environmental assessment.

This ESMF (and the project SESP) will be disclosed via the UNDP website in accordance with UNDP SES policy. The subsequent project ESMPs or stand-alone management plan(s) will also be publicly disclosed via the UNDP website once drafted and finalized and adopted only after the required time period for disclosure has elapsed.

These requirements for stakeholder engagement and disclosure will be adhered to during the implementation of this ESMF, and the subsequent implementation of the resulting ESMPs and any stand-alone management plans.

# Accountability and Grievance Redress Mechanisms

## UNDP’s Accountability Mechanisms

UNDP’s SES recognize that even with strong planning and stakeholder engagement, unanticipated issues can still arise. Therefore, the SES are underpinned by an Accountability Mechanism with two key components:

* 1. A Social and Environmental Compliance Review Unit (SECU) to respond to claims that UNDP is not in compliance with applicable environmental and social policies; and
	2. A Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by projects have access to appropriate grievance resolution procedures for hearing and addressing project-related complaints and disputes.

UNDP’s Accountability Mechanism is available to all of UNDP’s project stakeholders.

The Social and Environmental Compliance Unit (SECU) investigates concerns about non-compliance with UNDP’s Social and Environmental Standards and Screening Procedure raised by project-affected stakeholders and recommends measures to address findings of non-compliance.

The Stakeholder Response Mechanism helps project-affected stakeholders, UNDP’s partners (governments, NGOs, businesses) and others jointly address grievances or disputes related to the social and/or environmental impacts of UNDP-supported projects.

Further information, including how to submit a request to SECU or SRM, is found on the UNDP website at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/operations/accountability/secu-srm/>

## Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanisms

The Implementing Partner/ Responsible Party will establish and implement, as described in the Project Document, a transparent, fair, and free-to-access project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM), approved by stakeholders, which will be put in place at the start of implementation. Interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to the Project Management Office, the Executing Agency, Implementing Agency (UNDP), or the GEF. The Implementing Partner/Responsible Party together with UNDP will establish the Project Board responsibilities for the development and oversight of the GRM, including reporting on the work of the GRM to all stakeholders.

**The mandate** of the GRM will be to:

(i) receive and address any concerns, complaints, notices of emerging conflicts, or grievances (collectively “*Grievance*”) alleging actual or potential harm to affected person(s) (the “*Claimant(s)*”) arising from Project.

(ii) assist in resolution of Grievances between and among Project Stakeholders; as well as the various government ministries, agencies, and commissions, CSOs and NGOs, and others (collectively, the “*Stakeholders*”) in the context of the Project.

(iii) Conduct itself at all times in a flexible, collaborative, and transparent manner aimed at problem solving and consensus building.

**The functions** of the GRM will be to:

(i) Receive, Log and Track all Grievances received.

(ii) Provide regular status updates on Grievances to Claimants, Project Board (PB) members and other relevant Stakeholders, as applicable.

(iii) Engage the PB members, Government institutions and other relevant Stakeholders in Grievance resolution.

(iv) Process and propose solutions and ways forward related to specific Grievances *within a period not to exceed sixty (60) days* from receipt of the Grievance.

(v) Identify growing trends in Grievances and recommend possible measures to avoid the same.

(vi) Receive and service requests for, and suggest the use of, mediation or facilitation.

(vii) Elaborate bi-annual reports, make said reports available to the public, and more generally work to maximize the disclosure of its work (including its reports, findings, and outcomes).

(viii) Ensure increased awareness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, and credibility of the GRM process.

(ix) Collaborate with Partner Institutions and other NGOs, CSOs and other entities to conduct outreach initiatives to increase awareness among Stakeholders as to the existence of the GRM and how its services can be accessed.

(x) Ensure continuing education of PB members and their respective institutions about the relevant laws and policies that they will need to be aware of to participate in the development of effective resolutions to Grievances likely to come before the GRM.

(xi) Monitor follow up to Grievance resolutions, as appropriate.

Further details regarding requirements for the GRM are included in Terms of Reference for developing a Grievance Redress Mechanism, in Section 9.4.

# Budget for ESMF Implementation

Funding for implementation of the ESMF is included in the Project budget. The estimated costs are indicated below. Costs associated with the time of Project Management Unit (PAs/Water/Land Project Specialists and Local Field Coordinators) coordinating the development and implementation of this ESMF and UNDP CO support are not shown.

Table 6: Breakdown of project level costs for ESMF implementation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Cost, USD** |
| **Carrying out SESA, ESIA and screening/ targeted assessments** |  |
| Contractual services (carry out SESA and ESIAs; develop ESMP and other plans; TBWP Budget line BL 9/Project Document) | 100,000 |
| Gender Consultant | 2,000 |
| Travel expenses  | 3,000 |
| Audio-visual and print production (for communicating ESMP issues) | 1,000 |
| SESA/ESMP public consultations | 3,000 |
| **Sub-total:** | **109,000** |
| **Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ESMP and other management plans** |  |
| Project Manager | 5,000 |
| M&E Consultant (technical support) | 2,000 |
| Gender Consultant | 1,000 |
| ESMP trainings during project implementation | 1,000 |
| Compensatory payments (mini-grants)  | 10,000 |
| **Sub-total:** | **19,000** |
| **TOTAL:** | **128,000** |

# Monitoring and evaluation arrangements

Reporting on progress and issues in the implementation of this ESMF will be documented in the project quarterly reports and annual project implementation reports (PIRs). Until the ESMPs and stand-alone management plans are put in place, UNDP CO will be responsible for compiling reports on the implementation of this ESMF, for reporting to the Project Board/Local Coordination Committees. Key issues will be presented to the Project Board during each committee meeting.

Implementation of the subsequent ESMPs and stand-alone management plans will be the responsibility for the individual project management team, and other partners as agreed upon and described in those future plans.

The ESMF monitoring and evaluation plan is outlined below in Table 7:

Table 7: ESMF M&E plan and estimated budget

| **Monitoring Activity & Relevant Projects** | **Description** | **Frequency / Timeframe** | **Expected Action** | **Roles and Responsibilities** | **Cost (per project, excl. staff time** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Track progress of ESMF implementation  | Implementation of this ESMF coordinated for each project, and with results reported to each Project Board meeting ( Project Board meets at least 2 times a year) | Quarterly (until ESMPs and management plans are in place) | Required ESMF steps are completed in a timely manner. | Project Manager with support from the M&E consultant UNDP CO | None |
| Track progress of the assessment of targeted “upstream” activities/SESA and development of the management plans (depending on the complexity of issues) or identification of specific management measures to be incorporated in the project documentation (SESP updated). | SESA will evaluate potential social and environmental effects of policies, plans supported by the project in a participatory manner. This will include primarily project’s policy work under Outcome 1. | Quarters 1 and 2 of project implementation | Required ESMF/or other management plans completed in a timely manner  | Project Manager, project specialists and M&E consultant | None  |
| Track progress of the targeted screening and assessments of various “downstream” activities and development of reports and management plans. Development of ESMP as needed. | Carried out in a participatory manner, in-depth analysis of potential social and environmental impacts, as well as identification / validation of mitigation measures, drafted in participatory manner | Quarters 2-3 of project implementation | Risks and potential impacts are assessed with support of external consultants and participation of project team and stakeholders; management actions identified and incorporated into project implementation strategies. | External service providers With guidance from UNDP, Project Manager, Project Specialists , Gender and M&E consultants | USD 1,000 |
| Track progress of the development of appropriately scoped ESIA/ESMP  | Supported by external service providers, in relation with the hydrotechnical works on Camenca river Act, 2.2.1.2  | Quarters 3-4 | Risks and potential impacts are assessed with support of external consultants and participation of project team and stakeholders; management actions identified and incorporated into project implementation strategies. | External service providers With guidance from UNDP, Project Manager, Project Specialists , Gender and M&E consultants | USD 2,000 |
| Implementation of mitigation measures and monitoring of potential impacts identified in targeted assessment(s) and per the subsequent ESMP  | Permanent and participatory implementation and monitoring of impacts and mitigation measures, in accordance with ESMP (to be prepared together with targeted assessment) | Continuous, once SESA is completed and ESMP is in place | Implementation of ESMP; participatory monitoring of targeted assessment findings (i.e., identifying indicators, monitoring potential impacts and risks); integration of ESMP into project implementation strategies.  | UNDP CO and IP/EPIUProject ManagerM&E Consultant oversight by UNDP CO, Project Board | TBD, based on targeted assessment. |
| Development of targeted assessment and report, and livelihood restoration plan as needed;  | Carried out in a participatory manner, targeted analysis of potential livelihood impacts establishment/ enhanced management, as well as identification / validation of mitigation measures, drafted in participatory manner | Quarters 1 and 2 of project implementation | Potential impacts related to economic displacement around PAs are assessed with support of external consultants and participation of project team and stakeholders; targeted assessment report completed; if justified based on findings of targeted assessment, a livelihoods action plan will be developed; management actions will be identified and incorporated into project implementation strategies. | External service providers (environmental and social)With guidance from UNDPProject ManagerGender and M&E Consultant  | TBD |
| Implementation of management measures and monitoring of potential impacts identified in targeted assessmentImplementation of Process Framework | Permanent and participatory implementation and monitoring of management measures, in accordance with findings of targeted assessment (and livelihoods restoration plan if developed) | Continuous, once assessment is complete and management plan is in place | Implementation of stand-alone management plans; Implementation of Process Framework; participatory monitoring; integration of management plans into project implementation strategies | Project Manager oversight by UNDP CO, Project Board | TBD, based on assessment |
| Learning | Knowledge, good practices, and lessons learned regarding social and environmental risk management will be captured regularly, as well as actively sourced from other projects and partners and integrated back into the project. | At least annually | Relevant lessons are captured by the project teams and used to inform management decisions. | Project ManagerProject specialists  | None |
| Annual project quality assurance | The quality of the project will be assessed against UNDP’s quality standards to identify project strengths and weaknesses and to inform management decision making to improve the project | Annually | Areas of strength and weakness will be reviewed and used to inform decisions to improve project performance | UNDP CO, with support from Project Manager and M&E consultant  | None |
| Review and make course corrections | Internal review of data and evidence from all monitoring actions to inform decision making | At least annually | Performance data, risks, lessons, and quality will be discussed by the project steering committee and used to make course corrections | Project Board  | None |
| Annual project implementation reports  | As part of progress report to be presented to the Project Steering Committee and key stakeholders, analysis, updating and recommendations for risk management will be included | Annually | Updates on progress of ESMF/ESMP will be reported in the project’s annual PIRs. A summary of the avoidance and mitigation of potential social and environmental impacts will be included in the program annual report, sharing best practices and lessons learned across the program. | UNDP CO, UNDP-GEF RTA, Project Manager | None  |
| Project review | The Project Board will consider updated analysis of risks and recommended risk mitigation measures at all meetings | Twice annually  | Any risks and/ or impacts that are not adequately addressed by national mechanisms or project team will be discussed in Project Board meetings Recommendations will be made, discussed, and agreed upon. | Project Board,Project Manager | None |

# Annexes

## SESP *as per Annex 6, UNDP/GEF Project Document)*

*The latest SESP Template (2021) can be found under the UNDP POPP following link:* [*https://popp.undp.org/\_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP\_POPP\_DOCUMENT\_LIBRARY/Public/PPM\_Programming%20Standards%20and%20Principles\_Social%20and%20Environmental%20Screening%20Template\_ENGLISH.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1*](https://popp.undp.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PPM_Programming%20Standards%20and%20Principles_Social%20and%20Environmental%20Screening%20Template_ENGLISH.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1) *)*

## Indicative outline of and Environment Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) and an Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP)

# Indicative Outline of ESIA Report

An ESIA report should include the following major elements (not necessarily in the following order):

**(1) Executive summary:** Concisely discusses significant findings and recommended actions.

**(2) Legal and institutional framework:** Summarizes the analysis of the legal and institutional framework for the project within which the social and environmental assessment is carried out, including (a) the country's applicable policy framework, national laws and regulations, and institutional capabilities (including implementation) relating to social and environmental issues; obligations of the country directly applicable to the project under relevant international treaties and agreements; (b) applicable requirements under UNDP’s SES; and (c) and other relevant social and environmental standards and/or requirements, including those of any other donors and development partners. Compares the existing social and environmental framework and applicable requirements of UNDP’s SES (and those of other donors/development partners) and identifies any potential gaps that will need to be addressed.

**(3) Project description:** Concisely describes the proposed project and its geographic, social, environmental, and temporal context, including any offsite activities that may be required (e.g., dedicated pipelines, access roads, power supply, water supply, housing, and raw material and product storage facilities), as well as the project’s primary supply chain. Includes a map of sufficient detail, showing the project site and the area that may be affected by the project’s direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. (i.e. area of influence).

**(4) Baseline data:** Summarizes the baseline data that is relevant to decisions about project location, design, operation, or mitigation measures; identifies and estimates the extent and quality of available data, key data gaps, and uncertainties associated with predictions;assesses the scope of the area to be studied and describes relevant physical, biological, and socioeconomic conditions, including any changes anticipated before the project commences; and takes into account current and proposed development activities within the project area but not directly connected to the project.

**(5) Social and environmental risks and impacts:** Predicts and takes into account all relevant social and environmental risks and impacts of the project, including those related to UNDP’s SES (Overarching Policy and Principles and Project-level Standards). These will include, but are not limited to, the following:

*(a) Environmental risks and impacts*, including: any material threat to the protection, conservation, maintenance and rehabilitation of natural habitats, biodiversity, and ecosystems; those related to climate change and other transboundary or global impacts; those related to community health and safety; those related to pollution and discharges of waste; those related to the use of living natural resources, such as fisheries and forests; and those related to other applicable standards.[[9]](#footnote-9)

*(b) Social risks and impacts*, including: any project-related threats to human rights of affected communities and individuals; threats to human security through the escalation of personal, communal or inter-state conflict, crime or violence; risks of gender discrimination; risks that adverse project impacts fall disproportionately on disadvantaged or marginalized groups; any prejudice or discrimination toward individuals or groups in providing access to development resources and project benefits, particularly in the case of disadvantaged or marginalized groups; negative economic and social impacts relating to physical displacement (i.e. relocation or loss of shelter) or economic displacement (i.e. loss of assets or access to assets that leads to loss of income sources or means of livelihood) as a result of project-related land or resource acquisition or restrictions on land use or access to resources; impacts on the health, safety and well-being of workers and project-affected communities; and risks to cultural heritage.

**(6) Analysis of alternatives:** Systematically compares feasible alternatives to the proposed project site, technology, design, and operation – including the "without project" situation – in terms of their potential social and environmental impacts; assesses the alternatives’ feasibility of mitigating the adverse social and environmental impacts; the capital and recurrent costs of alternative mitigation measures, and their suitability under local conditions; the institutional, training, and monitoring requirements for the alternative mitigation measures; for each of the alternatives, quantifies the social and environmental impacts to the extent possible, and attaches economic values where feasible. Sets out the basis for selecting the particular project design.

**(7) Mitigation Measures:** Summary of (with attachment of full) Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) (see indicative outline of ESMP below.) The ESMP identifies mitigation measures required to address identified social and environmental risks and impacts, as well as measures related to monitoring, capacity development, stakeholder engagement, and implementation action plan.

**(8)** **Stakeholders.** Summarizes and links to project Stakeholder Engagement Plan or ESMP that includes plan for consultations. Includes summary of consultations undertaken for development of ESIA (see appendices).

**(9) Conclusions and Recommendations:** Succinctly describes conclusion drawn from the assessment and provides recommendations. Includes recommendation regarding the project’s anticipated benefits in relation to its social and environmental risks and impacts.

**(10) Appendices:** (i) List of the individuals or organisations that prepared or contributed to the social and environmental assessment; (ii) References – setting out the written materials both published and unpublished, that have been used; (iii) Record of meetings, consultations and surveys with stakeholders, including those with affected people and local NGOs. The record specifies the means of such stakeholder engagement that were used to obtain the views of affected groups and local NGOs, summarizes key concerns and how these concerns addressed in project design and mitigation measures; (iv) Tables presenting the relevant data referred to or summarized in the main text; (v) Attachment of any other mitigation plans; (vi) List of associated reports or plans.

**Indicative Outline of ESMP Report**

**An ESMP may be prepared as part of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) report or as a stand-alone document.[[10]](#footnote-10) The content of the ESMP should address the following sections:**

(1) Mitigation: Identifies measures and actions in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy that avoid, or if avoidance not possible, reduce potentially significant adverse social and environmental impacts to acceptable levels. Specifically, the ESMP: (a) identifies and summarizes all anticipated significant adverse social and environmental impacts; (b) describes – with technical details – each mitigation measure, including the type of impact to which it relates and the conditions under which it is required (e.g., continuously or in the event of contingencies), together with designs, equipment descriptions, and operating procedures, as appropriate; (c) estimates any potential social and environmental impacts of these measures and any residual impacts following mitigation; and (d) takes into account, and is consistent with, other required mitigation plans (e.g. for displacement, indigenous peoples).

(2) Monitoring: Identifies monitoring objectives and specifies the type of monitoring, with linkages to the impacts assessed in the environmental and social assessment and the mitigation measures described in the ESMP. Specifically, the monitoring section of the ESMP provides (a) a specific description, and technical details, of monitoring measures, including the parameters to be measured, methods to be used, sampling locations, frequency of measurements, detection limits (where appropriate), and definition of thresholds that will signal the need for corrective actions; and (b) monitoring and reporting procedures to (i) ensure early detection of conditions that necessitate particular mitigation measures, and (ii) furnish information on the progress and results of mitigation.

(3) Capacity development and training: To support timely and effective implementation of social and environmental project components and mitigation measures, the ESMP draws on the environmental and social assessment of the existence, role, and capability of responsible parties on site or at the agency and ministry level. Specifically, the ESMP provides a description of institutional arrangements, identifying which party is responsible for carrying out the mitigation and monitoring measures (e.g. for operation, supervision, enforcement, monitoring of implementation, remedial action, financing, reporting, and staff training). Where support for strengthening social and environmental management capability is identified, ESMP recommends the establishment or expansion of the parties responsible, the training of staff and any additional measures that may be necessary to support implementation of mitigation measures and any other recommendations of the environmental and social assessment.

# (4) Stakeholder Engagement: Summarizes and links to project Stakeholder Engagement Plan or outlines plan to engage in meaningful, effective and informed consultations with affected stakeholders. Includes information on (a) means used to inform and involve affected people in the assessment process; and (b) summary of stakeholder engagement plan for meaningful, effective consultations during project implementation, including identification of milestones for consultations, information disclosure, and periodic reporting on progress on project implementation. Require documentation of consultations (summaries including presentations, key points raised and responses provided, participation lists). Include information on project grievance mechanism (below) and on UNDP Accountability Mechanisms (SRM, SECU).

# (5) Grievance redress mechanism: Describes effective processes for receiving and addressing stakeholder concerns and grievances regarding the project’s social and environmental performance.

# Describe mechanisms to provide stakeholders and potential affected communities avenues to provide feedback or grievances, and receive responses, with regard to the implementation of specific activities, policies, or regulations.

# (6) Implementation action plan (schedule and cost estimates): For all four above aspects (mitigation, monitoring, capacity development, and stakeholder engagement), ESMP provides (a) an implementation schedule for measures that must be carried out as part of the project, showing phasing and coordination with overall project implementation plans; and (b) the capital and recurrent cost estimates and sources of funds for implementing the ESMP. These figures are also integrated into the total project cost tables. Each of the measures and actions to be implemented will be clearly specified and the costs of so doing will be integrated into the project's overall planning, design, budget, and implementation.

## Guidance on the Strategic Environment and Social Assessment (SESA)

<https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SES%20Document%20Library/Uploaded%20October%202016/UNDP%20SES%20Assessment%20and%20Management%20GN%20-%20FInal%20Nov2020.pdf>

## Sample Terms of Reference: Project-level Grievance Redress Mechanism

Source: Guidance Note on Stakeholder Engagement, UNDP Social and Environmental Standards (SES), October 2017

**I. Mandate**

The mandate of the GRM will be to:

Receive and address any concerns, complaints, notices of emerging conflicts, or grievances (collectively “*Grievance*”) alleging actual or potential harm to affected person(s) (the “*Claimant(s)*”) arising from Project.

Assist in resolution of Grievances between and among Project Stakeholders; as well as the various government ministries, agencies, and commissions, CSOs and NGOs, and others (collectively, the “*Stakeholders*”) in the context of the Project.

Conduct itself at all times in a flexible, collaborative, and transparent manner aimed at problem solving and consensus building.

**II. Functions**

The functions of the GRM will be to:

1. Receive, Log and Track all Grievances received.
2. Provide regular status updates on Grievances to Claimants, Project Board (PB) members and other relevant Stakeholders, as applicable.
3. Engage the PB members, Government institutions and other relevant Stakeholders in Grievance resolution.
4. Process and propose solutions and ways forward related to specific Grievances within a period not to exceed sixty (60) days from receipt of the Grievance.
5. Identify growing trends in Grievances and recommend possible measures to avoid the same.
6. Receive and service requests for, and suggest the use of, mediation or facilitation.
7. Elaborate bi-annual reports, make said reports available to the public, and more generally work to maximize the disclosure of its work (including its reports, findings, and outcomes).
8. Ensure increased awareness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, and credibility of the GRM process.
9. Collaborate with Partner Institutions and other NGOs, CSOs and other entities to conduct outreach initiatives to increase awareness among Stakeholders as to the existence of the GRM and how its services can be accessed.
10. Ensure continuing education of PB members and their respective institutions about the relevant laws and policies that they will need to be aware of to participate in the development of effective resolutions to Grievances likely to come before the GRM.
11. Monitor follow up to Grievance resolutions, as appropriate.

**III. Composition**

The GRM will be composed of:

[Name of Implementing Partner] as the Secretariat and either:

1. A standing GRM Sub-Committee [made up of x, y, z PB members],

and/or

1. Ad hoc GRM Task Teams in response to specific requests for grievance.

The GRM Sub-Committee will be balanced in composition (government and non-government) and should not include any PB members with a direct interest or role in the grievance/dispute.

**IV. [Name of Implementing Partner]**

In its role as GRM Secretariat, [Name of Implementing Partner] will perform the following core functions:

* Publicize the existence of the GRM and the procedure for using it.
* Receive and log requests for dispute resolution.
* Acknowledge receipt to the requestor.
* Determine eligibility.
* Forward eligible requests to the PB for review and action.
* Track and document efforts at grievance/dispute resolution and their outcomes.

**V. Project Board/GRM Sub-Committee/GRM Task Team**

The Project Board/GRM Sub-Committee and/or GRM Task Team will perform the following core functions:

* Take direct action to resolve the grievance/dispute (e.g. bring the relevant parties together to discuss and resolve the issue themselves with oversight by the PB).
* Request further information to clarify the issue, and share that information with all relevant parties, or ensure that a government agency represented on the PB took an appropriate administrative action to deal with a complaint.
* Refer the grievance/dispute to independent mediation, while maintaining oversight; or
* Determine that the request was outside the scope and mandate of the PB and refer it elsewhere (e.g. Ministry of Justice and Police or to the courts).

**VI. Communicating a Grievance**

(i) Who can Submit a Grievance?

A Grievance can be sent by any individual or group of individuals that believes it has been or will be harmed by the Project.

If a Grievance is to be lodged by a different individual or organization on behalf of those said to be affected, the Claimant must identify the individual and/or people on behalf of who the Grievance is submitted and provide written confirmation by the individual and/or people represented that they are giving the Claimant the authority to present the Grievance on their behalf. The GRM will take reasonable steps to verify this authority.

*(ii) How is the Grievance Communicated?*

The GRM shall maintain a flexible approach with respect to receiving Grievances in light of known local constraints with respect to communications and access to resources for some Stakeholders. A Grievance can be transmitted to the GRM by any means available (i.e. by email, letter, phone call, meeting, SMS, etc.). The contact information is the following:

[Implementing Partner to add address, phone number, fax, etc.]

To facilitate communications with and between the GRM and potential Claimants, the GRM will receive support from the PB members’ institutions, local government, and civil society organizations

*(iii) What information should be included in a Grievance?*

The Grievance should include the following information:

the name of the individual or individuals making the Complaint (the “Claimant”).

a means for contacting the Claimant (email, phone, address, other).

if the submission is on behalf of those alleging a potential or actual harm, the identity of those on whose behalf the Grievance is made, and written confirmation by those represented of the Claimant’s authority to lodge the Grievance on their behalf.

the description of the potential or actual harm.

Claimant’s statement of the risk of harm or actual harm (description of the risk/harm and those affected, names of the individual(s) or institutions responsible for the risk/harm, the location(s) and date(s) of harmful activity).

what has been done by Claimant thus far to resolve the matter.

whether the Claimant wishes that their identity is kept confidential.

the specific help requested from the GRM.

However, complainants are not required to provide all of the information listed above. Initially, the complainant need only provide enough information to determine eligibility. If insufficient information is provided, the GRM has an obligation to make a substantial, good faith effort to contact the complainant to request whatever additional information is needed to determine eligibility, and if eligible, to develop a proposed response.

**VII. Logging, Acknowledgment, and Tracking**

All Grievances and reports of conflict will be received, assigned a tracking number, acknowledged to Claimant, recorded electronically, and subject to periodic updates to the Claimant as well as the office file.

Within one (1) week from the receipt of a Grievance, the GRM will send a *written* acknowledgement to Claimant of the Grievance received with the assigned tracking number.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Each Grievance file will contain, at a minimum:

1. The date of the request as received.
2. The date the written acknowledgment was sent (and oral acknowledgment if also done.
3. The dates and nature of all other communications or meetings with the Claimant and other relevant Stakeholders.
4. Any requests, offers of, or engagements of a Mediator or Facilitator.
5. The date and records related to the proposed solution/way forward.
6. The acceptance or objections of the Claimant (or other Stakeholders).
7. The proposed next steps if objections arose.
8. The alternative solution if renewed dialogues were pursued.
9. Notes regarding implementation.
10. Any conclusions and recommendations arising from monitoring and follow up.

**IX. Maintaining Communication and Status Updates**

Files for each Grievance will be available for review by the Claimant and other Stakeholders involved in the Grievance, or their designated representative(s). Appropriate steps will be taken to maintain the confidentiality of the Claimant if previously requested.

The GRM will provide periodic updates to the Claimant regarding the status and current actions to resolve the Grievance. Not including the acknowledgment of receipt of the Grievance, such updates will occur within reasonable intervals (not greater than every thirty (30) days).

**X. Investigation and Consensus Building**

Within one (1) week of receiving a Grievance, [Implementing Partner] will notify the PB/**GRM Sub-Committee (GRM SC)/GRM Task Team (GRM TT)** and any other relevant institutions of the receipt of the Grievance.

[IF THE PB, RATHER THAN A PRE-DESIGNATED GRM SC OR GRM TT IS THE PRIMARY BODY RECEIVING COMPLAINTS: The PB will identify a specific team of individuals drawn from the PB and/or their respective institutions to develop a response to the Grievance. The names of these individuals will be made available to the Claimant.]

The designated PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will promptly engage the Claimant and any other relevant Stakeholders deemed appropriate, to gather all necessary information regarding the Grievance.

Through the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT, the GRM will have the authority to request from relevant Government institutions any information (documents or otherwise) relevant to resolving the Grievance and avoiding future Grievances of the same nature.

As necessary, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will convene one or more meetings with relevant individuals and institutions in [national capital], or elsewhere in [name of country] as needed.

The objective of all investigative activities is to develop a thorough understanding of the issues and concerns raised in the Grievance and facilitate consensus around a proposed solution and way forward.

The PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will procure the cooperation of their respective staff with the investigation.

At any point during the investigation, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT may determine that an onsite field investigation is necessary to properly understand the Grievance and develop an effective proposed solution and way forward.

**XI. Seeking Advisory Opinion and/or Technical Assistance**

At any point after receiving a Grievance and through to implementation of the proposed solution and way forward, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT may seek the technical assistance and/or an advisory opinion from any entity or individual in [country] or internationally which may reasonably be believed to be of assistance.

**XII. Making Proposed Actions and Solutions Public and Overseeing Implementation**

The PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will communicate to the Claimant one or more proposed actions or resolutions and clearly articulate the reasons and basis for proposed way forward.

If the Claimant does not accept the resolution, the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT will engage with the Claimant to provide alternative options.

If the Claimant accepts the proposed solution and way forward, the GRM will continue to monitor the implementation directly and through the receipt of communications from the Claimant and other relevant parties. As necessary, the GRM may solicit information from the relevant parties and initiate renewed dialogue where appropriate.

In all communications with the Claimant and other stakeholders, the GRM will be guided by its problem-solving role, non-coercive principles and process, and the voluntary, good faith nature of the interaction with the Claimant and other stakeholders.

**XII. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Bi-annually, the GRM will make available to the public, a report describing the work of the GRM, listing the number and nature of the Grievances received and processed in the past six months, a date and description of the Grievances received, resolutions, referrals and ongoing efforts at resolution, and status of implementation of ongoing resolutions. The level of detail provided with regard to any individual Grievance will depend on the sensitivity of the issues and Stakeholder concerns about confidentiality, while providing appropriate transparency about the activities of the GRM. The report will also highlight key trends in emerging conflicts, Grievances, and dispute resolution, and make recommendations regarding:

1. Measures that can be taken by the Government to avoid future harms and Grievances.
2. improvements to the GRM that would enhance its effectiveness, accessibility, predictability, transparency, legitimacy, credibility, and capacity.

**XIII. Mediation**

For the option of independent mediation, mediators on the roster/panel should have at least the following qualifications:

* Professional experience and expertise in impartial mediation.
* Knowledge of [project type and activities in the country] and the region, including an understanding of indigenous and tribal culture and practices.
* [National and local language, as appropriate] proficiency.
* Availability in principle for assignments of up to 20 days.
* Willingness to declare all relationships and interests that may affect their ability to act as impartial mediators in particular cases.

If mediation succeeded in resolving the dispute or grievance, the outcome will be documented by [Implementing Partner] and reviewed by the Task Team. If it is unsuccessful, stakeholders will have the option to return to the PB members/GRM SC/GRM TT for assistance.

**XIV. Without Prejudice**

The existence and use of this GRM is without prejudice to any existing rights under any other complaint mechanisms that an individual or group of individuals may otherwise have access to under national or international law or the rules and regulations of other institutions, agencies, or commissions.

## Reforestation works: Risk analysis (relates to Risk 7/SESP Standard 1.6)

| **No.**  | **Common name of the species**  | **Species code**  | **Scientific name of the species**  | **Main characteristics of the species of trees and shrubs recommended to be planted**  | **Evaluation of the risk of introducing invasive species**  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |
|  | White willow | SA | *Salix alba* | Species with flat rooting, much extended laterally. It is strongly tillering and easily pricked-out. This is an excellent species for defending and fixing the shores of running waters and even standing waters, it is not pretentious towards climate, it has a luxurious development on alluvial, fertile soils which are well supplied with water. It tolerates best long flooding, forming adventive roots on the stem covered with water. It is used as main species on lands with excess water, as well as on lands subjected to long flooding.  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Goat willow | SAC | *Salix caprea* | Species with a high ecological amplitude, as it is not so pretentious towards soil. Easily installed on empty and degraded lands, resistant to frost and drought. It has a strong light temper, but is also resistant to shadows; it does not stand large and long floods. This is a melliferous species, it may be used in a low proportion (up to 10%). | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | White poplar | PLA | *Populus alba* | Species with quite deep rooting, with numerous lateral roots. It is relatively weakly tillering. Among poplars, this is the most exigent towards soil, it needs clayish-sand, quite deep soils. Easily installed on salted soils, resistant to long term floods. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Black poplar  | PLN | *Populus nigra* | Species with rooting much extended laterally. It is resistant to long term floods and has the ability of forming adventive roots on the stem when it is covered by alluvia. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Pedunculate oak | ST | *Quercus robur* | Species with high longevity, slightly pretentious to climate conditions, but exigent to soil conditions, it prefers fertile, deep soils, with canvas of phreatic water on the surface; it is very resistant to drought due to pivoting rooting. It is developing well on clayish-sand or sandy-clay, alluvial soils and even on sandy alluvia with a clay horizon in the depth. It stands short term floods, but not standing water. Species with strong light temper. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Strandzha oak  | STG | *Quercus hartwissiana* | Species with strong light temper, very resistant to frost, sufficiently resistant to drought, slightly affected by pests and diseases. It prefers humid and fertile soils. | Species acclimatized in Moldova for more than 50 years. It is already introduced in forest crops from the forest fund managed by the forest entities in the southern areas of Moldova (Silva-Sud Cahul, Manta-V, Iargara, Comrat, Tighina). It creates viable forest stands in combination with other species on degraded lands, in unfavourable pedo-ecological conditions. In existing forest crops it is not aggressive towards the indigenous forest species and does not determine the modification of the quantitative and/or qualitative structure of the natural biocenosis. The species is recommended according to the technical guidelines and recommendations in force: Technical guidelines on the afforestation of degraded lands, IFRA, 2015; Technical recommendations on the regeneration and afforestation of lands from the state forest fund, CACS, 1996. |  |
|  | Common ash  | FR | *Fraxinus excelsior* | Species exigent towards the soil, but it may also grow on poorer lands with superficial soils and even on clay quarries. This is a species relatively sensitive to soil erosion. It is among the species with the richest and strongest rooting, and from this point of view it is very recommended for fixing erosional lands. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Tartar maple | ART | *Acer tataricum* | Species resistant to draught and frost. It is slightly demanding towards soils, it stands slightly salted soils. As it has shadow temper, it is recommended as an auxiliary species in forest crops with oaks . Melliferous species, recommended proportion for the composition of forest crops – 10-15%. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Norway maple | PAC | *Acer platanoides* | Species pretending to a warmer climate during summer, but resisting well to excessive frosts. It grows and develops well on dry, but fertile soils with a high content of calcium, it does not stand salted or erosional soils. Melliferous species, resistant to smoke and dust. recommended proportion for the composition of forest crops – 10-15%. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | European white elm | ULV | *Ulmus laevis* | Species showing large climatic amplitude, preferring sheltered stations, with less harsh climate. It tolerates standing water and is not demanding to soil trophism. It has light temper and is more related to plains and groves. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Field elm | ULC | *Ulmus minor* | Species with pivoting rooting in the first 10-15 years, then rooting becomes pivoting-flat, much developed laterally. Combination species characteristic for woods on fields and low hills, slightly resistant to frost, it prefers warm regions, protected from dry and very cold winter winds. Thermophile species resistant to draught and not standing early and late frosts, it prefers rich, deep, aerated soils. It may stand short floods, on dry soils it has a shrub-like conduct, different from the ecotype of relatively dry soils, suitable for cultivation on degraded lands in dry steppe and forest steppe areas. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Siberian elm | ULT | *Ulmus pumila* | Steppe tree, very resistant to draught and frosts. It has a large amplitude of adaptation to edaphic conditions. It is well resistant on heavy, compact, dry and stony soils, it may also vegetate on clayish, marl or salted lands, as well as on degraded raw soils. It does not suffer from Dutch elm disease (*Ophiostoma ulmii*). It may be used for the afforestation of degraded lands, especially compact and clayish lands. Combination species on dry and salted soils.  | Species acclimatized in Moldova for more than 70 years. It is already introduced in various phytogeographic areas of Moldova, including the southern area (Silva-Sud Cahul, Manta-V, Iargara, Comrat, Tighina). It creates viable forest stands in combination with other species on degraded lands, in unfavourable pedo-ecological conditions. In existing forest crops it is not aggressive towards the indigenous forest species and does not determine the modification of the quantitative and/or qualitative structure of the natural biocenosis. The species is recommended according to the technical guidelines and recommendations in force: Technical guidelines on the afforestation of degraded lands, IFRA, 2015; Technical recommendations on the regeneration and afforestation of lands from the state forest fund, CACS, 1996. |  |
|  | Field maple | JU | *Acer campestre* | Species demanding towards heat and soil, it vegetates quite well on dry and slightly soils, as well. Daffodil shall be used as an auxiliary species, where the main species is oak. Recommended proportion for the composition of forest crops – 10-15%. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Mahaleb cherry | VIT | *Prunus mahaleb* | Resistant to draught, well developed even on soils with weak to moderate erosion, it is considered the ointment of degraded lands. As it is a light species, its participation in the afforestation formula on marginal rows is recommended. Melliferous, fruit-giving species, recommended proportion for the composition of forest crops – 10-15%. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Manna ash | MJ | *Fraxinus ornus* | 3rd size tree, often a shrub, with somehow flat rooting. It appears especially in hill area, in sunny, warm places. This is a thermophile, xerophyte, heliophile element. It grows on limestone, skeletal, rendzina, alkaline to slightly acid soils. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Black pine | PIN | *Pinus nigra* | Species slightly friendly from the pedo-ecological point of view. Black pine is well developed in the conditions of hot summers and dry climate, drought, on sandy-clay soils, medium deep, with limestone substratum with low humidity. Black pine is used with good results on degraded lands, especially with limestone substratum, protects and improves soil. It is recommended to be used for planting on degraded lands, for fixing the shores subjected to erosion, as well as on stony, sandy or poor soils, where other species do not manage to maintain themselves. Recommended proportion for the composition of forest crops – <50%. | Species acclimatized in Moldova for more than 70 years. It is already introduced in various phytogeographic areas of Moldova, including the southern area (Silva-Sud Cahul, Manta-V, Iargara, Comrat, Tighina). It creates viable forest stands in combination with other species on degraded lands, in unfavourable pedo-ecological conditions. In existing forest crops it is not aggressive towards the indigenous forest species and does not determine the modification of the quantitative and/or qualitative structure of the natural biocenosis. The species is recommended according to the technical guidelines and recommendations in force: Technical guidelines on the afforestation of degraded lands, IFRA, 2015; Technical recommendations on the regeneration and afforestation of lands from the state forest fund, CACS, 1996. |  |
|  | European wild pear | PR | *Pyrus pyraster* | European wild pear grows on heavy, loam-clayish soils, degraded chernozems and even salted soils in holomorphic stations. It avoids limestone or too humid, impermeable soils. Melliferous and fruit-giving species, it may be used in a lower proportion (<5%).  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Sophora | SF | *Sophora japonica* | High species (20-25 m) slightly demanding towards the soil, it resist well to the pollution of air in the areas adjacent to roads with intense circulation and it likes light. It prefers fertile, deep soils, rich in limestone. Pivoting-flat root and high stem. Melliferous species, with medium economic-beekeeping share. Recommended proportion for the composition of forest crops – <50%. | Species acclimatized in Moldova for more than 70 years. It is already introduced in various phytogeographic areas of Moldova, including the southern area (Silva-Sud Cahul, Manta-V, Iargara, Comrat;). It creates viable forest stands in combination with other species on degraded lands, in unfavourable pedo-ecological conditions. In existing forest crops it is not aggressive towards the indigenous forest species and does not determine the modification of the quantitative and/or qualitative structure of the natural biocenosis. The species is recommended according to the technical guidelines and recommendations in force: Technical guidelines on the afforestation of degraded lands, IFRA, 2015; Technical recommendations on the regeneration and afforestation of lands from the state forest fund, CACS, 1996. |  |
|  | Cherry plum | CD | *Prunus divaricata* | Cherry plum is a species for the improvement of degraded lands in dry stations. Melliferous and fruit-giving species, it grows well on dry, stony, limestone soils. The species is resistant to frost and draught, it has light temper. It may be used as combination species in low proportion (up to 10%).  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Rowan | SR | *Sorbus aucuparia* | Tree of the 3rd size, combination species. The rooting is strong, pivoting-flat. Tree with semi-shadow temper. Melliferous species, it is not very demanding towards climate and soil. It is adaptable to warm, dry climate (for example, forest steppe). It may be used as combination species in lower proportion (up to 10%). | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Tamarisk | E | *Tamarix ramosissima* | Indigenous shrub, up to 4 m high, with very branched rooting, penetrates deeply the soil. It tolerates well the draught, is resistant to dust and smoke and is not demanding towards soil. Tamarisk is especially recommended for anti-erosion plantations meant for the improvement of salted lands, fixing water shores, etc. | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Common hazel | A | *Corylus avellana* | Species living in glades or slightly shadow areas, which are humid, it is slightly demanding towards soil composition, it grows inclusively on limestone soils. Nevertheless, it does not grow on sandy or acid soils and it need fertile or medium-fertile lands. Common hazel is resistant to frost. It may be used in lower proportion (up to 10%).  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Black elder | R | *Sambucus nigra* | Species demanding towards heat. Nitrophile plant, with semi-shadow temper. Recommended as a shrub in the composition of sub-stand of woods, as through its rooting system it impedes the development of quack-grass, and through its easily decomposing leafage it contributes to soil improvement. Melliferous and fruit-giving species, it may be used in lower proportion (5-10%).  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Guelder rose | Z | *Viburnum opulus* | Shrub that may reach the height of 2.5-3.5 m at maturity. Guelder rose is developed well in sunny or shadow areas, on fertile and well drained soils. Melliferous and fruit-giving species, with cu ornamental-decorative aspect, it may be used in lower proportion (up to 10%). | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Clove currant | - | *Ribes aureum* | Shrub growing in form of bushes of 1-2 m height. Most favorable are clayish-sandy, clayish-loamy soils, etc. It is resistant to air dryness, it grows even on salted soils, has deep rooting, fixes the lands in slopes. Melliferous and fruit-giving species, it may be used in lower proportion (up to 10%). | Species acclimatized in Moldova for more than 50 years. It is already introduced in various phytogeographic areas of Moldova, including the southern area (Silva-Sud Cahul, Manta-V, Iargara, Comrat, Tighina). It creates viable forest stands in combination with other species on degraded lands, in unfavourable pedo-ecological conditions. In existing forest crops it is not aggressive towards the indigenous forest species and does not determine the modification of the quantitative and/or qualitative structure of the natural biocenosis. The species is recommended according to the technical guidelines and recommendations in force: Technical guidelines on the afforestation of degraded lands, IFRA, 2015; Technical recommendations on the regeneration and afforestation of lands from the state forest fund, CACS, 1996. |  |
|  | Hawthorn | L | *Crataegus monogyna* | Species not demanding towards soil and climate, it vegetates well on a large variety of soils, up to most dry and compact, improving soil through its rich litter. Melliferous and fruit-giving species, it may be used in lower proportion (<10%). | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | European smoketree | W | *Cotynus coggygria* | It vegetates well on brown soils, on degraded chernozems with limestone substratum. Although it stands shadowing, it is recommended for marginal rows of forest crops, taking also into consideration the decorative aspect given by its inflorescence. It may be used in lower proportion (up to 10%). | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Dogwood | G | *Cornus mas* | Species tolerating both bright places, as well as semi-shadow places. Dogwood is resistant to frost, it does not show specific demands to soil, it tolerates both humid and dry soils. Melliferous species with ornamental-decorative aspect, it may be used in lower proportion (up to 10%). | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Lilac | J | *Syringa vulgaris* | Species is recommended to be used in forest crops and windbreaks, taking into consideration not only the special decorative aspect, but resistance to frost and growing on soils with a content rich in carbonates. It has a strong suckering response, in context it is recommended to be used with caution near agricultural lands. It may be used in lower proportion (<10%).  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |
|  | Wild privet | I | *Ligustrum vulgare* | It vegetates well on a large range of soils, from degraded chernozems to secondary podzol soils. It has quite good development on superficial skeletal soils, formed on limestone. It fixes soil very well. It is a shrub giving good results also on steppe lands with low to strong erosion. Resistant to draught and shadowing. Melliferous species with ornamental-decorative aspect, it may be used in lower proportion (<10%).  | Not applicable, indigenous species. |  |

## Hydrotechnical works: Background and Risk screening

Three scenarios for the implementation of hydrotechnical works have been assessed at PPG stage and of the 3 scenarios assessed, the expert team has proposed Scenario 1 considering the minimum or no impact on private land.

**Scenario 1** represents the construction of a channel which would redirect the water flow directly into the old river bed of Camenca stream, along the western border of Balatina village.

**Scenario 2** represents the breaking of the unauthorized reservoir and earth dam which is now tapping the water from Camenca and orientation of the waterflow through the old riverbed of Camenca (paddle).

**Scenario 3** implies stopping the access of water to the unauthorized reservoir and orientation of the water flow through the old riverbed of Camenca downstream the mentioned reservoir.

*Fig. 1 The three scenarios for the hydrotechnical constructions meant for rehabilitating the natural flow of Camenca river (the Red arrow shows the unauthorised (illegal) reservoir diverting water on public domain)*



**Scenario 1 was selected and involves two** basic hydrotechnical activities:

1 – construction of a barrage on the channelled (current) riverbed of Camenca river to stop the water flowing into Prut river

2 – embankment along the old river bed (proposed for restoration) of approximately 50 m, to redirect the flow of Camenca river into the old “stream”/riverbed.

*Fig. 2 Represents the two steps of the hydrotechnical works under Scenario 1*



The technical parameters of the mentioned hydrotechnical constructions will be calculated during their technical design, through the feasibility study.

The envisage barrage (step 1 in the Fig 2 above) ) is meant to stop the water flowing through the channelled riverbed directly into Prut and instead re-directing it into its old riverbed (through step 2 in the figure above).

The embankment (step 2 in the figure above) should have the length of approximately 50 m and a width at the edge of approximately 2 m. The ratio between the wet embankment and dry embankment may be of 3:4, but this aspects will be decided during the full feasibility study development. The consolidation of the wet embankment is important (maybe even with concrete slabs), for a higher resistance to the flash flood drain, as the water will turn to the left at this point (in Camenca “stream” marked with blue arrow) under a large angle. Other technical parameters will be determined by the hydrologists.

It is clear that the dimensions of the channel ( step 2 of fig. 2) envisaged for the re-direction of Camenca flow into its own original riverbed should, in general, follow the dimensions of the natural riverbed, in other words – a width at the edge of approximately 30 m and at the bottom of approximately 10 m, with a depth of 3-4 m, and should be of trapezoidal form. But the main condition is to allow the unimpeded flow of a flash flood debut ensuring P=1%, namely– 152 m3/s. The channel may be built only by excavation, without covering the banks with concrete, instead using their previous consolidation, more exact technical data will be given by the full feasibility study.After the waterbed restoration the river flow should follow its original watercourse:

*Fig 3 Restored original riverbed (red arrow)*



***PPG experts preliminary assessment of Social and environmental aspects (excerpt from the pre-feasibility analysis of the proposed restoration work done by PPG hydrologists)***

Social aspects. The society, including in the Republic of Moldova, has generally a conservative reaction to the changes affecting their day-to-day life and/or material interests directly. In our case, in accordance with the proposed scenarios, oppositions will be raised by the society, on the one hand – by the owner of the illegally built reservoir, on the other hand – by the population living at the plain margin of the settlements and/or holding the few agricultural lands located in the area of study. The owner of the illegally built reservoir will (certainly) oppose because of the material losses he would incur. The local inhabitants will oppose more due to the inertia and because of not understanding the ecological benefits brought by the activity of rehabilitation of Camenca river. However, these social risk aspects are only based on the analysis of society behaviour in similar projects, consultations with professionals that have implemented before projects in the sphere of environment, without any survey or sociological investigations in the area of study.

*Environmental aspects*. The positive aspect of restoring the natural riverbed of Camenca river is undeniably evident, additional flooding (more appropriately – restoration of natural/seasonal flooding of the old watercourse) of Prut plain in the lower course of the river will bring in 8.3 m3 water annually to the floodplain of the ecosystems in and outside of “Pădurea Domnească” reserve.

There is no risk of flood induced by the project supported restoration of the old Camenca watercourse and the additional water flow, because Camenca river is a small stream. In case of an overflow of Prut river for example, these territories will be flooded anyways, regardless of whether the project will go ahead with the restoration of Camenca river old water course or not, and independently on the supply of water from Camenca river. In case of flash-flood, this territory will again be covered with water for a short time, independently on the project supported riverbed restoration activities. There is a risk of increase in the level of ground waters on the territory of the households neighbouring Prut floodplain, which may have negative effects manifested by possible increased moisture in their basements, or their gardens, etc. The xact answers to these topics (i..e risk assessment) will be obtained after the hydrologic, hydraulic, and hydrogeological modeling, which will be done in the feasibility study.

1. A project’s **“area of influence” (AoI)** encompasses (i) the primary project site(s) and related facilities, (ii) associated facilities, (iii) areas and communities potentially affected by cumulative impacts from the project or from other relevant past, present and reasonably foreseeable developments in the geographic area, and (iv) areas and communities potentially affected by induced impacts from unplanned but predictable developments or activities caused by the project, which may occur later or at a different location (e.g. facilitation of settlements, illegal logging, agricultural activities by new roads in intact forest areas). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES\_Toolkit/SES%20Document%20Library/Social%20and%20Environmental%20Standards/UNDP%20Social%20and%20Environmental%20Standards\_Pre-Launch.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The project’s support to the government-led amendments of the Cross-Border Agreement and Regulation governing the cross-border Stanca Costesti Dam (Romania-Moldova) is technical. The UNDP/GEF project will support hydro-climate modelling and field missions to estimate the minimum ecological flow necessary for maintaining the ecological integrity of the lakes, wetlands and riparian areas downstream the Stanca Costesti Dam. The Romanian and Moldovan technical experts (hydrologists-ecologists) of the Agency *Moldovan Waters* and Agency *Romanian Waters* will review the project’s estimations and will decide upon final approval and mainstreaming into the Regulation. The project may also facilitate cross-border technical workshops. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\_id=107179&lang=ro#](https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=107179&lang=ro) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Despite the progress made, many challenges should be mentioned such as: low level of implementing legal provisions of national machinery on gender equality, lack of functionality and sustainability of the national machinery’s activities etc. // Alternative report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Republic of Moldova. Submitted by the Platform for Gender Equality from Moldova, December, 2019

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared Documents/MDA/INT\_CEDAW\_CSS\_MDA\_41047\_E.docx](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MDA/INT_CEDAW_CSS_MDA_41047_E.docx) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the Republic of Moldova. CEDAW/C/MDA/CO/6. 2 March 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.danubeparks.org/projects/transdanubetravelstories-2020-2022> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES\_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%207.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. For example, the Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines (EHSGs), which are technical reference documents with general and industry-specific statements of Good International Industry Practice. The EHSGs contain information on industry- specific risks and impacts and the performance levels and measures that are generally considered to be achievable in new facilities by existing technology at reasonable cost. Available at [www.ifc.org/ehsguidelines](http://www.ifc.org/ehsguidelines). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This may be particularly relevant where contractors are being engaged to carry out the project, or parts thereof, and the ESMP sets out the requirements to be followed by contractors. In this case the ESMP should be incorporated **as part of the contract with the contractor,** together with appropriate monitoring and enforcement provisions. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Oral acknowledgments can be used for expediency (and also recorded), but must be followed by a written acknowledgment [↑](#footnote-ref-11)