

UNEP and UNEP-WCMC Project

Building national biodiversity information supply and demand in Pan Europe to support implementation & progress review of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Reporting period 01 June 2022- 31 October 2023

1. Identification:

Partners Name: P.I. National Office for Environmental Project Implementation of the Ministry of Environment of Moldova
Budget line: BAC UN ENVIRONMENT/MEA
POW 2018-2019 Sub-programme: Project No. 715/1

Title of the approved PRC project: Building national biodiversity information supply and demand in Pan Europe to support implementation & progress review of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

SSFA starting date: 17 January 2022

Completion date: 31 October 2023. Amendment to the SSFA for extension (no-cost) of the project implementation period until 31 December 2023 on the request of the Ministry of Environment has been agreed and signed.

Expected Accomplishment(s):

- 1. Project activities implemented in Moldova*
- 2. Examples of biodiversity information products that have been improved through the support of the project.*

Activities carried out in the reporting period in Moldova with the support of the small-scale funding of the UNEP/WCMC Project:

Main outputs:

1. Relevant experts were involved to support the project's implementation, including liaising with relevant national stakeholders representing the staff of main governmental bodies, academia, NGOs, LPAs, etc.
2. Improved project communication and co-ordination between the national project team was achieved, including relevant sectorial representatives involved in the protected areas management and monitoring, were improved and enhanced due to the UNEP and UNEP-

WCMC advice and assistance. The number of relevant national stakeholders involved was increased up to 25 persons representing the staff of the Ministry of Environment, Environmental Agency, Forestry Agency Moldsilva, State Environmental Inspectorate, Scientific reserves, State University, Tiraspol State University, NGOs Biotica, Ecocontact, LPA, EU4ENV WB project, freelance experts etc. The stakeholders identified needs and opportunities for the implementation of the project.

3. Enhanced communication between UNEP and the national project team in the languages of English and Romanian ensured, including the use of interpreters for meetings when necessary.
4. The policy, decision-making or reporting topics and information capacity needs defined that the project support, in co-ordination with UNEP and UNEP-WCMC, among them – Development of the National updated Strategy on Biodiversity in line with the GBF post 2020, National Report on the state of Environment (one in 5 years), National Reporting to the CBD, CITES, Bern Convention, and other reports.
5. A number of project products developed:
 - Moldova BIODIVERSITY coverage on protected areas information product with the technical assistance of UNEP-WCMC was updated.
 - Moldova Protected Areas Informational system strengthening plan, updated with new information and with the support of new participants from academia, national scientific reserve staff, NGOs, Universities etc.;
 - Moldova Protected Areas Information System Development Work Plan, improved;
 - Moldova Protected Areas Information System UNEP-WCMC training and technical support plan, updated with new findings and needs;
 - Two local experts contracted to develop Guidance on Bio-Informational system for protected areas for Moldova and a Guidance on Bio-information System indicators for Moldova;
 - Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories under IUCN;
 - Introduction to the IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories;
 - Developing indicators, analyses and graphics on protected areas - Cristina Lázaro, Programme Officer – Protected Planet Initiative Emily Howland, Associate Programme Officer – Protected Planet Initiative, Philip Bubb;
 - Moldovan Indicator for protected areas has been developed by the Environment Agency (Elisaveta Alexandrov and Marius Cat, Environmental Agency);
 - Moldova Info System Specification Test on Protected Areas;
 - WDPA and OECM database metadata;
 - Introduction to the data fields and workflows for alignment of a national PA database with the World Database on Protected Areas - Cristina Lázaro, Emily Howland - Protected Planet Initiative, Philip Bubb;
 - Summarised description and allowed values for the WDPA and OECM database fields (Version 1.6);
 - List of new topics suggested for BioInfo System to be developed in the next 2023 year discussed and agreed;
 - A panel presentation of the Moldovan experience on development of national BioInformational system on PA (Angela Lozan) has been done within the COP 15 CBD Side event “Tools & Solutions for the implementation of Post 2020 GBF: Enhancing Synergies & Cooperation” <https://www.cbd.int/side-events/4745>

- An overview on current Biodiversity information system in Moldova, including policy and legislation framework, responsible institutions, available resources and database, maps and Cadastre on Protected areas, prepared.
 - Guidance for conducting Biodiversity Information Supply Strengthening Step 1 – Identify an important biodiversity policy topic with unmet information needs and resources to produce the information, drafted.
 - Moldova Info System Specification Test on Protected Areas, developed and tested.
6. A total 18 project meetings were held in online regime using the Zoom platform and with participation of experts of the UNEP and UNEP- WCMC for capacity development, in the period of December 2022 – September 2023. Minutes of the 18 meetings are enclosed.
 7. Testing of the Guidelines and Templates, developed by Philip, based on the Moldovan case study, and suggested to be used as methodologic guidance for updating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans 2030 in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework post 2020, approved in December 2022.

2. Summary of Status:

In the reporting period the P.I. EPIU (ONIPM) of the Ministry of Environment has implemented planned activities according to the SSFA of the project and its working plan. The activities were advised by a number of experts representing WCMC (Cambridge, UK). The list of involved stakeholder organizations were extended and representing – Ministry of Environment (Biodiversity policy division), Environmental Agency, Forestry Agency Moldsilva, EPIU, Institute of Forestry management, Institute of ecology and geography, Institute of zoology, Institute of Botany (Botanical Garden), State University of Moldova, Tiraspol State University, Scientific Reserve Codrii, Biosphere Reserve Prutul de Jos, NGO EcoContact, NGO Biotica, WB EU4Env project, freelance experts, students etc.

The EPIU has worked with UNEP and UNEP-WCMC to support the Ministry of Environment of Moldova and its responsible executive subdivisions to develop a suitable information on biodiversity for implementation and progress reporting for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the biodiversity dimension of the SDGs and to build capacity amongst national government agencies of the Republic of Moldova, responsible for biodiversity to design, organise and promote biodiversity information systems and indicators that meet policy making and implementation needs. The specific topic for information on biodiversity developed under the project will be focused on the Protected areas informational system.

The project activities were focused on a stocktaking analysis and overview on political framework of the biodiversity system in Moldova. Together with the representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Environmental Agency, Forestry Agency Moldsilva, Institute of Ecology and Geography, EPIU, Eco-Contact NGO, other experts, an exercise on defining the policy, decision-making or reporting topics and information capacity needs that the project will support, in co-ordination with UNEP and UNEP-WCMC has been undertaken. A Moldova Protected Areas information system strengthening – work plan has been drafted and discussed.

The activities were focused to organization of **18th (eighteenth) online workshops** with participation of WCMC experts and various relevant national stakeholders. The selected area for supporting national staff was developing a national BioInformational system for Protected Areas in Moldova. More **than 30 participants** were involved and representing: Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity policy division; Environment al Agency, Forestry agency Moldsilva, Institute of ecology and geography, Institute of forestry management, Environmental Projects Implementation Unit, NGO EcoContact, State University, State Tiraspol University, National Reserves, freelance experts etc. Project communication and co-ordination between the national project team, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC was assisted by regular e-mail communication, WhatsApp, telephone calls, online Zoom platform.

Among the realised activities in the reporting period there are the following:

- An improved information product with the technical assistance of UNEP-WCMC for the selected project topics, and promote the use of the products with their intended users was developed.
- A Draft and pilot a design for a strengthened biodiversity information system for the project's selected topics prepared.
- The best institute to host the PAs database and website, in discussion with the Environment Agency, Institute of Ecology and Moldsilva discussed and agreed.
- the uses and function of the database and website to support government planning, production of indicators and reports, land use decisions, etc. defined.

With the assistance of UNEP and WCMC-UNEP technical assistance, the following needs have been identified:

- Funding needs for providing and maintaining the data and website for the Cadastre. Establish the institutional arrangement for hosting the updated PA database cadastre and website have been considered.
- The responsible staff and any training needs for the creation and operation of the updated PA database determined.
- The computing hardware needs and arrangements for the database and website determined.
- the needs to digitise the boundaries of PAs to put in the Geographic Information System determined.

The following topics have been discussed to plan how to develop the database / cadastre in alignment with the World Database on Protected Areas and how to start to build the updated PA database. Among them:

- Start process to update the year 2000 PA cadastre with current data on PAs.
- Plan how to include PAs managed by LPAs (this could be included in the new law on PAs, with a monitoring system).
- Obtain up-to-date GIS information on PA boundaries.
- Start to assign IUCN Management Categories to PAs.
- Ensure a regular process for Moldsilva PA data to be included in the PA Cadastre.
- Define a business model for the Cadastre of Protected Natural Areas and website. Start to link the database / cadastre on PAs to the World Database on Protected Areas.

The developed template of the National BioInformational System for Protected areas in Moldova has been updated and tested during the online discussion being represented by the main governmental, academic and nongovernmental institutions at various levels.

Among the topics discussed Bio-information System indicators for Moldova: Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories under IUCN; Introduction to the IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories; Developing indicators, analyses and graphics on protected areas; Moldovan Indicator for protected areas has been developed by the Environment Agency; Moldova Info System Specification Test on Protected Areas; WDPA and OECM database metadata; Introduction to the data fields and workflows for alignment of a national PA database with the World Database on Protected Areas; Summarized description and allowed values for the WDPA and OECM database fields;

List of new topics suggested for BioInfo System to be developed in the next 2023 year discussed and agreed.

Two additional local consultants were selected and contracted by EPIU in the limits of the project budget, to drafting national guidelines on PA Bio informational system of Moldova, based on the development and product of the project, and the guideline on PA Bio Informational Indicators. The guidance will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Agency for approval in order to enhance their capacities to establish national Bio Info System for protected areas.

A panel presentation of the Moldovan experience on development of national BioInformational system on PA (Angela Lozan) has been done within the COP 15 CBD Side event "Tools & Solutions for the implementation of Post 2020 GBF: Enhancing Synergies & Cooperation", December 2022, Montreal, Canada. <https://www.cbd.int/side-events/4745>.

A number of specific trainings have been organised based on current capacity and training needs:

- Training and technical support in indicators and the structure of national Pas informational system.
- Training and technical support in digitisation of PA boundaries.
- Training and technical support in assignation of IUCN management categories.
- Guidance on developing a PA database business model.

Specific Database template has been tested by the local stakeholders based on the existent system of Pas informational system in Moldova and its utility and usefulness has been agreed.

Findings and lessons learnt

There a number of challenges and weaknesses have been identified in the framework of the existent Moldovan Info management System.

- The legislative framework has not specified in details the institutional framework and duties of the governmental bodies, responsible for the PAs Management system. The law on Protected areas fund (1989) is planned to be modified and updated.
- The Biodiversity policy NBSAP has been expired and has to be updated until 2030, in line with the post 2020 GBF.
- The newly established Environmental Agency is in charge to develop and integrated monitoring and management system, including for PAs. There are limited institutional, technical and human capacities to develop database, GOS mapping and management system in line with the international requirements.
- There is limited inter-departmental communication and exchange of data and information between governmental bodies and research institutions.
- The Moldsilva Agency has maintain database and information system for those PA which are involved in the State Forestry Fund. There are other PA that are under the ownership of local public authorities. Information and database are limited.

A number of weaknesses and lack has been identifies in the national legal and institutional framework related the monitoring, and management of protected areas, including the system of bio information. Not clear duties and responsibilities of the agencies in duty to provide bio Info system, develop and maintain national integrated database. There is not sufficient inter-departmental communication and exchange of information. Specific information and database on PA are not available in electronic format and not accessible online.

The project provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment through consultation, technical advice, trainings, capacity building helping to develop a national template for Bio Informational system for Protected Areas and other project products, to consolidate communication among the responsible and involved institutions and stakeholders, to modulate the further work in order to adjust the Moldovan BioInfo system to be compatible to the international standards and systems in the field of PAs.

The project provides technical assistance through the consultation, technical advise and trainings to identify the existent gaps, to drafting the structure the future system of PA integrated management for Moldova, to harmonise with the international best practices and standards. Additional topics for trainings and developments via products has been agreed for the next period of project activities.

To be mentioned, the discussion between colleagues from UNEP, WCMC-UNEP and Moldovan team are very much helpful, open, constructive and inter-related, in an excellent consultative atmosphere and with the great impact to the future progress in the field of development the PA Informational Management Framework in Moldova.

3. Activity delivery status

Activity	Description of work undertaken during reporting period	Deliverables	Delivery date	Status of Activity (completed or not completed)	If activity not completed, please describe the reason why and indicate mitigation actions that were taken.
Activity 1 – Provide experts to support the project's implementation, including liaising with relevant national stakeholders and projects to identify and promote opportunities for the implementation of the project.	Experts to support the project's implementation identified and hired by the EPIU. Liaising with relevant national stakeholders and projects provided to identify and promote opportunities for the implementation of the project via telephone calls, emails, small working meetings. Relevant stakeholders on protected areas form the related governmental bodies as well as academia, non-governmental sectors contacted and invited to participate in the project meetings and project activities: Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity policy division; Environmental Agency, Forestry agency Moldsilva, Institute of ecology and geography, Institute of forestry management, Environmental Projects Implementation Unit, NGO EcoContact, freelance experts etc. Liaising with relevant national stakeholders and projects provided to identify and promote opportunities for the implementation of the project via telephone calls, emails, small working meetings. Relevant stakeholders on protected areas form the related governmental bodies as well as academia, non-governmental sectors contacted and invited to participate in the project meetings and project activities: Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity policy division; Environmental Agency, Forestry agency Moldsilva, Institute of ecology and geography, Institute of forestry management, Environmental Projects Implementation Unit,	Administrative arrangements for approval of the SSFA performed. The project team provided preliminary work for identification and communication with main project stakeholders and beneficiaries form relevant governmental sectors, NGOs, academia. An overview on current Biodiversity information system in Moldova, including policy and legislation framework, responsible institutions, available resources and database, maps and Cadastre on Protected areas. Protected Areas system as the target topic of Biodiversity InfoSystem on has been selected and suggested to focus the project activities on	October, 2023	Completed	

	NGO EcoContact, EU4ENV WB project, freelance experts etc. Two additional local consultants were selected and contracted by EPIU in the limits of the project budget, to drafting national guidelines on PA Bio informational system of Moldova, based on the development and product of the project, and the Guidance on PA Bio Informational Indicators. The guidance will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Agency for approval in order to enhance their capacities to establish national Bio Info System for protected areas.	the improvement of the national biodiversity information system. The project team ensures good communication with main stakeholders and beneficiaries and extended the list and numbers of participants to the online meetings, including representatives from academia, universities, NGOs, national reserves, NGOs, freelance etc.			
Activity 2 – Advise and assist in project communication and co-ordination between the national project team, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC.	Project communication and co-ordination between the national project team, UNEP and UNEP-WCMC was assisted by regular e-mail communication, WhatsApp, telephone calls, online Zoom platform. The relevant operational and management personnel have been involved from Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity policy division; Environmental Agency, Forestry agency Moldsilva, Institute of ecology and geography, Institute of forestry management, Environmental Projects Implementation Unit, NGO EcoContact, State University, State Tiraspol University, National Reserves, freelance experts etc.	Monthly regular communication ensured between national team, team of experts and stakeholders and the UNEP-WCMC team.	September 2023	Completed	
Activity 3 – Assist in the translation of communications between UNEP and the national project team in the languages of English and Romanian,	Two interpreters has been contracted to assist and provide interpretation services from English to Romanian, including the online meetings and discussion. Interpreters have facilitated communication between the national team and experts from the WCMC.	Interpretation services were arranged for the monthly organized meetings involving specific topics of BioInfo System for Moldova, feedback of Moldovan team for latest updates in policy and regulation, new	October, 2023	Completed	

including the use of interpreters for meetings as necessary.		topics and presentations delivered during the meetings, updates in the cloud project database platform etc.			
Activity 4. Define the policy, decision-making or reporting topics and information capacity needs that the project will support, in co-ordination with UNEP and UNEP-WCMC	The Moldovan policy, decision-making or reporting topics and information capacity needs have been identified that the project will support, in co-ordination with UNEP and UNEP-WCMC. A list of new topics that Moldova is expecting to develop within the Bio Information System has been developed and discussed, in consultation with the UNEP-WCMC including, Red Book species, Invasive alien species, biosecurity and OMG, Ecological networks (Emerald species), natural ecosystems, forest, wetlands, silvo-pastoral and steppe etc. The State Report on Environmental Protection for 2023-2026 - has been identified as the targeted main policy and decision-making document suggested as the target to be improved with the support of the project. The updated National Strategy on Biodiversity Conservation to be developed in line with the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework targets and supported by the UNEP-WCMC expertise. The project will help in developing of the updated NBSAP 2030, planned to be developed in 2023.	A Moldovan PA informational System draft updated in consultation with an extended number of involved actors and responsible institutions, that includes information of main national political needs towards Post 2020 GBF, main beneficiaries, indicators, expected outputs etc. Invasive alien species has been selected as the following topic to be developed during the second (extension) phase of the project (no-cost).	October, 2023	Completed	
Activity 5. Develop an improved information product with the technical assistance of UNEP-WCMC for the selected	The templates for developing and improving the information system on PA as the main project product was drafted with technical assistance of the UNEP-WCMC and delivered for consultation and testing among the main operational stakeholders of the involved governmental bodies, academia, NGOs and experts. A number of project products developed:	Moldova BIDF coverage on protected areas information product with the technical assistance of UNEP-WCMC was updated. Moldova Protected Areas Informational	October, 2023	Completed	

project topics, and promote the use of the products with their intended users.	- Moldova BIDS coverage on protected areas information product with the technical assistance of UNEP-WCMC was updated. - Moldova Protected Areas Informational system strengthening plan, updated with new information and with the support of new participants from academia, national scientific reserve staff, NGOs, Universities etc.; - Moldova Protected Areas Information System Development Work Plan, improved; - Moldova Protected Areas Information System UNEP-WCMC training and technical support plan, updated with new findings and needs; - Two local experts contracted to develop Guidance on Bio-Informational system for protected areas for Moldova and a Guidance on Bio-information System indicators for Moldova; - Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories under IUCN; - Introduction to the IUCN Protected Areas Management Categories; - Developing indicators, analyses and graphics on protected areas; - Moldovan Indicator for protected areas has been developed by the Environment Agency; - Moldova Info System Specification Test on Protected Areas; - WDPA and OECM database metadata; - Introduction to the data fields and workflows for alignment of a national PA database with the World Database on Protected Areas; - Summarised description and allowed values for the WDPA and OECM database fields (Version 1.6); - List of new topics suggested for BioInfo System to be developed in the next 2023 year discussed and agreed;	system strengthening plan, updated with new information and with the support of new participants from academia, national scientific reserve staff, NGOs, Universities etc.; Moldova Protected Areas Information System UNEP-WCMC training and technical support plan, updated with new findings and needs; Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories under IUCN; Developing indicators, analyses and graphics on protected areas Moldovan Indicator for protected areas has been developed by the Environment Agency Moldova Info System Specification Test on Protected Areas; List of new topics suggested for BioInfo System to be developed in the next 2023 year discussed and agreed.			
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Activity 6. Participate in one project meeting per month with UNEP and UNEP-WCMC for capacity development, progress reporting and project planning.	The total number 18 on-line meetings have been held, one/per months. The representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Biodiversity policy division; Environmental Agency, Forestry Agency Moldsilva, Institute of ecology and geography, Institute of forestry management, Environmental Projects Implementation Unit, NGO EcoContact, freelance experts etc., have been invited and involved in the online meetings. (please see minutes annexed).	Online meetings	October, 2023	Completed	
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4. List of attached documents

(for example, publications, meeting reports, participants list, workshop reports, etc.)

Minutes of meetings, including list of participants and Agenda of meetings:

1. Minutes Inception workshop 21 October 2021,
2. Minutes meeting 25 November 2021,
3. Minutes meeting 2 February 2022;
4. Minutes meeting 4 March 2022;
5. Minutes meeting 8 April 2022;
6. Minutes meeting 14 April 2022;
7. Minutes meeting 18 May 2022.
8. Minutes meeting 17 June 2022
9. Minutes meeting 15 July 2022
10. Minutes meeting 26 September 2022
11. Minutes meeting 18 October 2022
12. Minutes meeting 24 November 2022
13. Minutes meeting on 19 January 2023
14. Minutes meeting on 16 February 2023
15. Minutes meeting on 28 April 2023
16. Minutes meeting on 12 May 2023
17. Minutes meeting on 29 June 2023
18. Minutes meeting on 13 September 2023

- Draft Guidelines and Templates on BioInfor system (by Philip Bubb), tested
- Draft Concept Note and Guidelines for BioInformational System for Moldova (by local team of experts)
- Moldova BIOD coverage on protected areas information product with the technical assistance of UNEP-WCMC.
- An overview on current Biodiversity information system in Moldova, including policy and legislation framework, responsible institutions, available resources and database, maps and Cadastre on Protected areas.
- Moldova Protected Areas Informational system strengthening plan.
- Moldova Protected Areas Information System Development Plan Work Plan.
- Moldova Protected Areas Information System UNEP-WCMC training and technical support plan.
- Moldova's Protected Areas – Information product outline.
- Guidance for conducting Biodiversity Information Supply Strengthening Step 1 – Identify an important biodiversity policy topic with unmet information needs and resources to produce the information.
- Moldova Info System Specification Test on Protected Areas.

Signature:

Date:

Name and title of signing officer: Nicolae ARNAUT, Director, P.I.National Office for Implementation Environmental Projects of the Ministry of Environment

Signature:

Date: 25.09.2023

Name: Angela LOZAN, Project leader (Consultant), National Office of Environmental Project Implementation