

# Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area System in Moldova

*Moldova*

GEF Agency: United Nations Development Programme

Executing Agency: Ministry of Environment

GEF Biodiversity Focal Area, Strategic Priority 1

Medium-size Project: GEF ID: 3675, UNDP PIMS: 4016

UNDP Atlas Project Number: 00050699

**Terminal Evaluation**

**September 20, 2013**



*Photo: Trebuteni Village and the Raut River in the Old Orhei Zone of Orhei National Park*

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## **Acronyms**

APR	Annual project review
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
ha	Hectares
Km	Kilometers
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDL	Moldovan Leu
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MSP	Medium-sized Project
N/A	Not applicable
N/S	Not specified
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEN	National Environmental Network
NEX	National Execution
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PA	Protected area
PAS	Protected area system
PIF	Project Information Form
PIR	Project implementation Review
PMIS	Project Management Information System
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SGP	Small Grants Programme
TORs	Terms of Reference
UA	Unable to assess
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollars

## I. Executive Summary

Project Title:	Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area System of Moldova			
GEF Project ID:	3675		<i>At endorsement (million US\$)</i>	<i>At completion (million US\$)</i>
UNDP Project ID:	PIMS: 4016 ATLAS: 50699	GEF financing:	0.95	0.95
Country:	Republic of Moldova	IA/EA own:	0.02	0.05
Region:	ECA	Government:	0.88	0.94
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other:	0.13	0.13
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	BD SO1, SP3 (GEF-4) BD SO1, Outcome 1.1 (GEF-5)	Total co-financing:	1.04	1.11
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment	Total Project Cost:	1.99	2.06
Other Partners Involved:	"Moldsilva" Forest Agency, Local Public Authorities, Academy of Sciences, NGOs	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		April 14, 2009
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: May 31, 2013	Actual: December 31, 2013

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND OVERVIEW

1. The Moldova Protected Areas System (PAS) project is classified as a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Medium-sized Project (MSP), with total GEF support of \$0.95 million (not including \$0.05 in project development funding), and originally proposed co-financing is \$1.04 million United States dollars (USD), for a total project budget of \$1.99 million USD. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the GEF Agency, and the project is executed under UNDP's national execution (NEX) modality, with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) as the national executing partner. The project was executed over four and a half years, from April 2009 through December 2013.

2. According to the project document, the project objective is *"to develop an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems in Moldova"* and the project strategic results framework states that the project "goal" is *"To build the capacity of protected area institutions in Moldova to establish and administer a more representative system of protected areas."* It should be further noted that the intended global benefit is the conservation of Moldova's globally significant biodiversity. The project objective was planned to be achieved through two main outcomes:

3. **Outcome 1: The representativeness and coverage of the protected area system is improved**

4. **Outcome 2: The capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system is strengthened**

5. According to GEF and UNDP evaluation policies, terminal evaluations are required practice for GEF funded MSPs, and the terminal evaluation was a planned activity of the monitoring and evaluation plan of the Moldova PAS project. As per the evaluation Terms of Reference (TORs) this terminal evaluation reviews the actual performance and progress toward results of the project against the planned project activities and outputs, based on the standard

evaluation criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, results and sustainability. The evaluation assesses project results based on expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for other similar projects in the future in Moldova and elsewhere, and provides recommendations as necessary and appropriate. The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included two primary elements: a) a desk review of project documentation and other relevant documents; and, b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders, including those in the Orhei region. The evaluation is based on evaluative evidence from the start of project implementation (April 2009) through September 2013 (with expected project completion in December 2013). The desk review was begun in August 2013, and the evaluation mission was carried out from September 16 – 20, 2013.

## MAIN EVALUATION CRITERIA

6. With respect to **relevance**, the Moldova PAS project is **relevant / satisfactory** for addressing the threats to biodiversity and barriers for effective management of a representative system of protected areas. The project is strongly linked with the national and local priorities and strategies related to protected areas and biodiversity conservation for Moldova. The government's commitment to the establishment of a National Environmental Network (NEN) was indicated by the adoption of the *National Programme for Establishing the NEN* (2001, amended 2007) for the period 2008-2015. The project also supports the goals and targets of Moldova's biodiversity conservation strategy and action plan (NBSAP), adopted in 2002 (a new NBSAP is currently under development). It is also clear that the project is directly relevant to the needs and priorities of the local communities around Orhei National Park. Further, the project supported Moldova's commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and was in-line with the strategic priorities for the GEF biodiversity focal area.

7. Based on all aspects of project implementation and financial management, project **efficiency** is rated **satisfactory**. The Moldova PAS project was implemented in a cost-effective manner, with professional and timely workplanning, budgeting, and activity execution. The project team and oversight partners undertook appropriate adaptive management measures as assumptions and contextual conditions changed during the life of the project. Implementation was initially somewhat slower than planned, and the project has had a seven-month no-cost extension, while overall management costs have remained approximately at the planned level of 10% of GEF funding. The **quality of execution** and **quality of UNDP implementation** are both considered **highly satisfactory**, as the project has been characterized by excellent stakeholder participation and engagement, highly professional project management, and strong communication and cooperation with government institutions and other key stakeholders. Given the instability in the national political context during project implementation, it is highly impressive that the project not only managed to forge ahead, but actually achieved significant results.

8. Based on the extent of results achieved, project **effectiveness** is considered **satisfactory**, and the **overall project outcome** rating is assessed as **satisfactory**. The highlight of the project results is the establishment of Orhei National Park, the first national park in Moldova. The new national park covers 33,792 hectares (ha), and will be managed as an IUCN category V

protected area. Establishing the national park raised the coverage of protected areas in Moldova from 4.65% (2010) to 5.60% overall (2013), a 20% expansion of protected area coverage in the country. This was the third attempt to establish a national park in Moldova, and was successful thanks to strong local support from public authorities and communities in the Orhei region, that was partially cultivated through project efforts. The national park was established only within the last six months of the project however, and a number of additional steps are required at this point to full operationalize the national park; based on the broad support for the national park it is fully anticipated that all necessary steps will be carried out by Moldsilva, MoE, and the communities of Orhei.

9. Other key results of the project include:

- Complete re-assessment of all 312 protected areas in Moldova, with information consolidated into a database, and feeding into key national policy and legislative frameworks such as the new NBSAP that will incorporate a national strategy for development of the protected area system, and draft amendments for the legislation on protected areas;
- Training modules and courses held with participation of a majority of protected areas related professionals in Moldova, and subsequent incorporation of the training modules in Moldsilva's professional development program.

10. Thanks to the work completed with project support, the overall system, institutional, and individual capacity for effective management of protected areas in Moldova has been significantly increased, and is expected to continue developing in coming years on the foundation of results from the Moldova PAS project. According to the project indicators, the capacity development indicator score for the protected area system has been calculated at 57, against the baseline of 24 (surpassing the target of 32). In addition, Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) scores for key protected areas, including Orhei National Park, have increased 10%, from an already high average baseline of 66 to an average score of 73.

11. Overall **sustainability** is considered *moderately likely*. There are few sustainability risks to the direct results of the project, but there are a number of factors that remain uncertain for the overall status and future development of Moldova's protected area system. There is a need for additional follow-through of some key project outputs, such as the draft revised law on protected areas. With respect to financial aspects, there are a number of relevant follow-up initiatives, including the recently started European Union (EU) funded Clima East project that will be focusing in the Orhei National Park region. It remains to be seen however to what extent the central government will fund national park management and operations. On the socio-political front, there is broad and strong stakeholder support for Orhei National Park, but the picture for other key elements of the protected area system remains less clear; for example, with respect to the status of the scientific reserves. These issues are also linked with the institutional framework for protected area management, which is currently in evolution, and will be determined once the institutional reform of MoE has taken place. There are no acute environmental risks to the sustainability of the project results, though the key threats to biodiversity in the country remain much as originally described in the project document, with agriculture, land use change, and climate change among the key threats.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

12. The following are the terminal evaluation's key recommendations, with the target audience in brackets following the recommendation. The recommendations are summarized in the executive summary, and provided with greater context and detail in Section VII.B on recommendations at the end of this evaluation report. Also in the main evaluation report a number of suggestions are provided based on the opportunities available for future work in the region that would build on the success of the project thus far.

13. **Recommendation 1:** UNDP should continue supporting MoE to identify an institutional structure that fully supports the needs and priorities of the protected area system, and that will ensure sustainability of the results of this project in the near term. In this line, the Government of Moldova should within one year of completion of this project seek the support of UNDP and other key partners in identifying pros and cons of various protected area management institutional structures, as well as identifying any critical issues with respect to protected areas management. [Government of Moldova, MoE, Moldsilva, UNDP]

14. **Recommendation 2:** The Government of Moldova should immediately take the necessary steps to fully support establishment and operationalization of Orhei National Park. These include: 1.) Adopting the draft government decision outlining the national park regulations and by-laws; 2.) Approving the necessary government financing for start-up and functioning of the national park administration (as requested in Moldsilva's requested specific budget line); 3.) Adopt the draft National Environmental Strategy 2014-2023 to provide a sound overarching policy framework; and 4.) Subsequently adopt the draft legislation on protected areas to provide the specific policy basis for the management context for the national park. [Government of Moldova]

15. **Recommendation 3:** It is critical to establish the national park administration by the January 2014 government deadline, and for all key stakeholders (Moldsilva, UNDP, MoE) to prepare to implement some initial on-the-ground activities in the 2014 summer season that will demonstrate the environmental and economic benefits to which the national park can contribute. [UNDP, Moldsilva, MoE, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Regional Development Agency (central office), Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry]

16. **Recommendation 4:** Relating to the previous recommendations, there must a continuation of the multi-stakeholder approach for management of Orhei National Park; the management structures proposed for the national park appear to support such an approach, and management must be undertaken in this spirit. This collaborative approach should also be disseminated and replicated to serve as a model for future potential national parks in Moldova, including for the Lower Dniester and Codrii sites. [Moldsilva, Ministry of Environment]

17. **Recommendation 5:** UNDP should support the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Moldova to take advantage of new opportunities for small grant support in the Orhei National Park region. SGP should take advantage of this opportunity to synergize and link with the range of other initiatives connected with the establishment and implementation of the national park. [UNDP, GEF SGP in Moldova]

18. **Recommendation 6:** To support sustainability and consolidation of the PAS project results prior to project completion, the main project partners should pay particular attention to the following items of the project workplan:

- a. Develop a plan for more detailed data entry of the protected area “passport” PDF files into the protected areas database to develop a fully text-searchable geo-spatially linked resource. This could be potentially further supported under the potential upcoming biodiversity mainstreaming/territorial planning Project Preparation Grant (PPG) (or later the project itself) to ensure that the protected areas data can be integrated with the territorial planning process. [Project team, MoE]
- b. Develop an exit strategy relating to the protected area guidelines produced by the project, in collaboration with the protected areas unit of Moldsilva. The project produced a set of six guidelines documents relating to various aspects of protected area management, which are an excellent resource. There are plans to disseminate these materials to relevant stakeholders in Moldsilva and elsewhere, but considering the density and technical nature of these documents (covering more than 500 pages in total) there needs to be a program in place to ensure the uptake and implementation of the guidelines by the relevant staff involved with protected area management. This could be linked with Moldsilva’s incorporation of the project training courses into its annual professional development curriculum. [UNDP, Project team, Moldsilva]
- c. Develop a training monitoring program for follow-up on the trainings conducted under the project to assess the long-term uptake and application of the project trainings. [UNDP, Moldsilva]
- d. UNDP (at the regional/global level) should also work to improve capacity development indicators to move beyond simple output indicators (e.g. number of people participating in a training) to a results-based approach that more effectively assesses the uptake and application of individual-level capacity development activities. [UNDP]
- e. Ensure production, publication, and dissemination to government and other key stakeholders of the protected areas gap analysis and future strategic prioritization. Planning for future development of the protected area system should be a consultative process in any account, and a national workshop to discuss the outputs of the PAS project in this regard could be useful. [Project team]

19. **Recommendation 7:** The key project partners should work with Ministry of Education to ensure the incorporation of Orhei National Park into educational publications to be printed in the 2015 cycle, especially for Orhei area, but also nationally. The educational materials to be produced in the 2015 cycle can incorporate both in the curricula and in manuals relevant content from the education and awareness materials previously produced by the project. Steps will need to be taken in the first half of 2014 to ensure incorporation in the 2015 cycle. [Project Team, Moldsilva, MoE, Ministry of Education]



## MOLDOVA PAS PROJECT TERMINAL EVALUATION RATING SUMMARY

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. Implementation & Execution	rating
M&E Design at Entry	MS	Quality of UNDP Implementation	HS
M&E Plan Implementation	S	Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	HS
Overall Quality of M&E	S	Overall Quality of Implementation / Execution	HS
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance	R, S	Financial Resources	ML
Effectiveness	S	Socio-political	ML
Efficiency	S	Institutional Framework and Governance	ML
Overall Project Outcome Rating	S	Environmental	ML
4. Impact		Overall Likelihood of Sustainability	ML
Environmental Status Improvement	N		
Environmental Stress Reduction	N		
Progress Toward Stress/Status Change	S	<b>Overall Project Results</b>	S

*Note: An explanation of the rating scale is included in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, which are attached as Annex 1 of this evaluation report.*

## **II. Introduction: Evaluation Scope and Methodology**

20. According to GEF and UNDP evaluation policies, terminal evaluations are required practice for GEF funded MSPs, and the terminal evaluation was a planned activity of the monitoring and evaluation plan of the Moldova PAS project. The UNDP Moldova Country Office initiated the terminal evaluation near the completion of the project's four-year implementation period. The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons and identify recommendations that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP and GEF programming.

21. The purpose of this evaluation is:

- To assess overall performance against the project objective and outcomes as set out in Project Document and other related documents;
- To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project;
- To analyze critically the implementation and management arrangements of the project;
- To assess the progress to date towards achievement of the outcomes;
- To assess the sustainability of the project's interventions;
- To list and document initial lessons concerning project design, implementation and management;
- To assess project relevance to national priorities.

22. The terminal evaluation reviews the actual performance and progress toward results of the project against the planned project activities and outputs, in line with the evaluation TORs (see Annex 1). The evaluation assesses project results based on expected outcomes and objectives, as well as any unanticipated results. The evaluation identifies relevant lessons for other similar projects in the future in Moldova and elsewhere. The evaluation focuses on the project duration in the period from mid-2009 to late-2013 (the main period of project implementation), but also provides recommendations for project's post-implementation period. The evaluation is conducted on the basis of the standard evaluation criteria. These are Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Results, and Sustainability. These criteria are further explained in Annex 2.

23. In addition to assessing the main GEF evaluation criteria, the evaluation provides the required ratings on key elements of project design and implementation. Further, the evaluation will, when possible and relevant, assess the project in the context of the key GEF operational principles such as country-drivenness, and stakeholder ownership, as summarized in Annex 3. An assessment of mainstreaming of UNDP program principles is also included, as required, in Annex 8. The evaluation matrix and interview guide that served as the foundation for the evaluation's data collection approach are included in Annex 2 and Annex 4 to this report.

24. The evaluation methodology was based on a participatory mixed-methods approach, which included three primary elements: a) a desk review of project documentation and other relevant documents; b) interviews with key project participants and stakeholders, including those in Orhei Rayon; and c) field visits to sites targeted under the project including Orhei National Park, Codrii Reserve, and Plaiul Fagului. The evaluation is based on evaluative evidence from the start of project implementation (July 2009) through September 2013 (with expected

project closure in December 2013). The desk review was begun in September 2013, and the evaluation mission was carried out from September 16-20, 2013. The list of stakeholders interviewed is included as Annex 7 to this evaluation report.

25. All evaluations face limitations in terms of the time and resources available to adequately collect and analyze evaluative evidence. Also, as is understandable, some project documents were available only in Moldovan (Romanian) language, although the composition of the evaluation team with a national expert and an interpreter ensured that language was not a barrier to the collection of evaluative evidence. In addition, all key documents were available in English. Altogether the evaluation challenges were not significant, and the evaluation is believed to represent a fair and accurate assessment of the project.

26. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with UNDP and GEF monitoring and evaluation policies and procedures, and in-line with United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards. This includes the GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines,<sup>1</sup> covering key principles such as independence, impartiality, transparency, disclosure, knowledge sharing, and protection of stakeholder rights and interests.

27. The intended users of this terminal evaluation are the Moldovan Ministry of Environment as the project executing organization (including the project team), other Moldovan institutions (e.g. Moldsilva), the UNDP Moldova Country Office, and the UNDP-GEF network. As relevant, the terminal evaluation report may be disseminated more widely with additional stakeholders to share lessons and recommendations.

### III. Project Overview and Development Context

#### A. Development Context<sup>2</sup>

28. Economic Context: The Republic of Moldova's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita is the lowest in Europe. However the per capita GDP development has been good since 2005. The GDP per capita in national currency terms more than doubled between 2005 and 2011 and the GDP per capita in 2005 Purchasing Power Parity in US\$ terms grew an impressive 25.9%. However, in the middle of this period the GDP growth rate plunged after the 2008 global financial crisis. The 7.8% GDP growth in 2008 changed to 6% contraction in 2009. This development was very short lived and economy returned to a 7% GDP growth in 2010. The continuing GDP growth rate of 6.4% in 2011 is an indication that the economy has made a full recovery from the 2008-2009 financial shock.

29. Moldova enjoys a favorable climate and good farmland, but has no major mineral deposits. As a result, the economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which covers some 76% of the country's surface area, and employs 28% of the country's labor force. Moldova's GDP structure has changed since 2005, with agriculture's share of GDP diminished from 19.1% in 2005 to 14.4% in 2011. A similar decrease took place with industrial production from 18.3% in

<sup>1</sup> GEF Evaluation Office Ethical Guidelines, Evaluation Document No. 2 (1 (GEF Evaluation Office, 2007) is available at [http://gefco.org/uploadedFiles/Policies\\_and\\_Guidelines\\_Ethical\\_Guideline-published\(1\).pdf](http://gefco.org/uploadedFiles/Policies_and_Guidelines_Ethical_Guideline-published(1).pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Portions of this section are drawn from the project document's description of the development context. Changes to specific data have been made where necessary.

2005 to 16.1% in 2011. GDP share of the construction industries stayed the same while the share of the services increased from 58.7% in 2005 to 65.5% in 2011. The agro-food exports constitute about 45 to 50% of total exports and it is backed by the export-oriented agro-processing industry, which produces approximately 7 to 8% of the GDP.<sup>3</sup>

30. Environmental Context: Occupying a land-locked area of 33,843 square kilometers (km<sup>2</sup>), Moldova is surrounded by Ukraine on its northern, eastern and southern boundaries and by Romania in the west. The country straddles three main European eco-regions: the Central-European mixed forests, the Pontic steppe, and the East European forest steppe. Many plant and animal species typical for each of these regions are at the limit of their natural range in Moldova. It is estimated that 15% of the country still remains under some form of natural vegetation cover, much of which is however in a degraded state. The majority of the remaining natural vegetation cover in Moldova comprises forest habitats (12.1% of the country), predominantly located in the central region of the country. Steppe habitats (1.9% of the country) tend to occur in the north and the south of the country, while wetland habitats (2.8% of the country) are commonly associated with the aquatic systems of the Prut and Dniester rivers. 'Rocky habitats' (limestone rocks) covers 0.68% of the country.

31. The country has a rich biota relative to its size, especially considering that the highest elevation reaches only 430 meters. The country hosts 1,842 species of vascular plants and nearly 4,600 species of lower plants and fungi. This includes 13 relictual genera, 126 *Red Data Book* species and 4 species at the boundary of their natural distribution. There are about 16,540 species of animals (461 vertebrates and more than 16,000 invertebrates) reported for Moldova. This includes 55 Ponto-Caspian relictual species (of which 10% are endemic to the Black Sea basin) and 116 rare, threatened and endangered species.

32. Moldova's network of protected areas (see Figure 1) is quite fragmented, with 313 protected areas covering 191,019 ha (5.6% of the national territory), for an average size of 610 ha per protected area. The *Law on Natural Areas Protected by the State* (1998) provides the enabling legal framework for 12 categories of protected areas in Moldova: seven of which correspond to the IUCN classification system (Scientific Reserve, National Park, Natural Monument, Nature Reserve, Landscape Reserve, Resource Reserve, Multifunctional Management Area); three of which are local categories (dendrological garden, zoological garden and landscape monument); and two of which are international conservation designations (Biosphere Reserve and Ramsar site). The Scientific Reserves (i.e. strict nature reserves) cover 19,378 ha and currently represent the most important instrument for *in situ* biodiversity conservation in the country. The majority of the protected areas are in the national forest estate, and are therefore de-facto managed by the forestry public enterprise, Moldsilva.

33. The ongoing spread of agriculture continues to be a major threat to the integrity of the few remaining tracts of natural steppe and wetland habitats in Moldova, while the impacts of urban and industrial development is becoming increasingly evident. The need for fuel to heat homes is a significant threat to the remaining forests in Moldova, while the spread of invasive alien species is a growing problem.

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<sup>3</sup> Additional source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Republic of Moldova Environmental Performance Review 2014, Draft Report.

**Scientific Reserves**

- Codru
- Iagorlăc
- Tetșani
- Pădurea Hârbovăț

**Landscape Reserves**

- Resources Reserves

**Natural Reserves**

- Ocnia forests
- Râdoia herbs
- Canemir complex

**Areas of Multifunctional Use**

- typical area of steppe vegetation
- typical areas of meadow vegetation
- windbreaks

**Nature Monuments**

- hydrological
- botanical
- Botanical Gardens
- Dendrological Gardens
- Monuments of landscape architecture
- Zoological Gardens

**Reserve Area, ha**

- more than 1000
- 1000–500
- 500–100
- less than 100

## **B. Concept Development and Project Description**

### **i. Concept Background**

34. According to project stakeholders, the initial idea for establishment of a national park in the Orhei region was in the early 1980s, following the international recognition that Moldova did not have any national parks. The initial attempt to establish the park was from 1989-1991, but did not succeed for a variety of reasons according to stakeholders, including inadequate local level consultation, as well as the extensive political upheaval that occurred in eastern Europe at this time. A second attempt to establish a national park in Moldova (in a location other than Orhei) was supported under the World Bank-implemented GEF project “Biodiversity Conservation in the Lower Dniester Delta Ecosystem” (GEF ID #1600) in the 2002-2005 period; however, this project was not fully successful, and a national park was not established, mainly due to political conflicts related to hunting. According to the Moldova PAS project stakeholders, the concept for the current project took root as UNDP and the MoE sought opportunities to utilize GEF funding, within initial discussions in the mid-2000s. However, the original concept relating specifically to the establishment of Orhei National Park had to be re-formulated as the GEF strategy for the biodiversity focal area shifted away from single-site approaches to more systemic approaches. Eventually the Project Information Form (PIF) was submitted in early 2008, and approved March 31, 2008.

35. For additional information and background on the project development timing see Section III.B.iv below on milestones, and for additional information on the project design, see Section IV.A on key aspects of the project design.

### **ii. Threats and Barriers Targeted**

36. The project document identifies the key threats and main barriers the project sought to address. According to the project document the key threats to biodiversity and protected areas in Moldova are:

- Ongoing expansion of agricultural lands, including conversion of wetland areas
- Firewood requirements in a country highly depending on wood for home heating and cooking
- Irrigation for agriculture, sedimentation and chemical runoff in rivers and streams
- Climate change influenced extreme weather events
- Illegal and uncontrolled harvesting of timber, wildlife, and plants

37. The main barriers to developing a representative and well-managed system of protected areas were identified as the following:

- *Inadequate representativeness of the protected area system*
- *Limited capacities for the planning, administration and management of the protected area system*
- *Low levels of awareness of the values and benefits of the protected area system*

### iii. Project Description

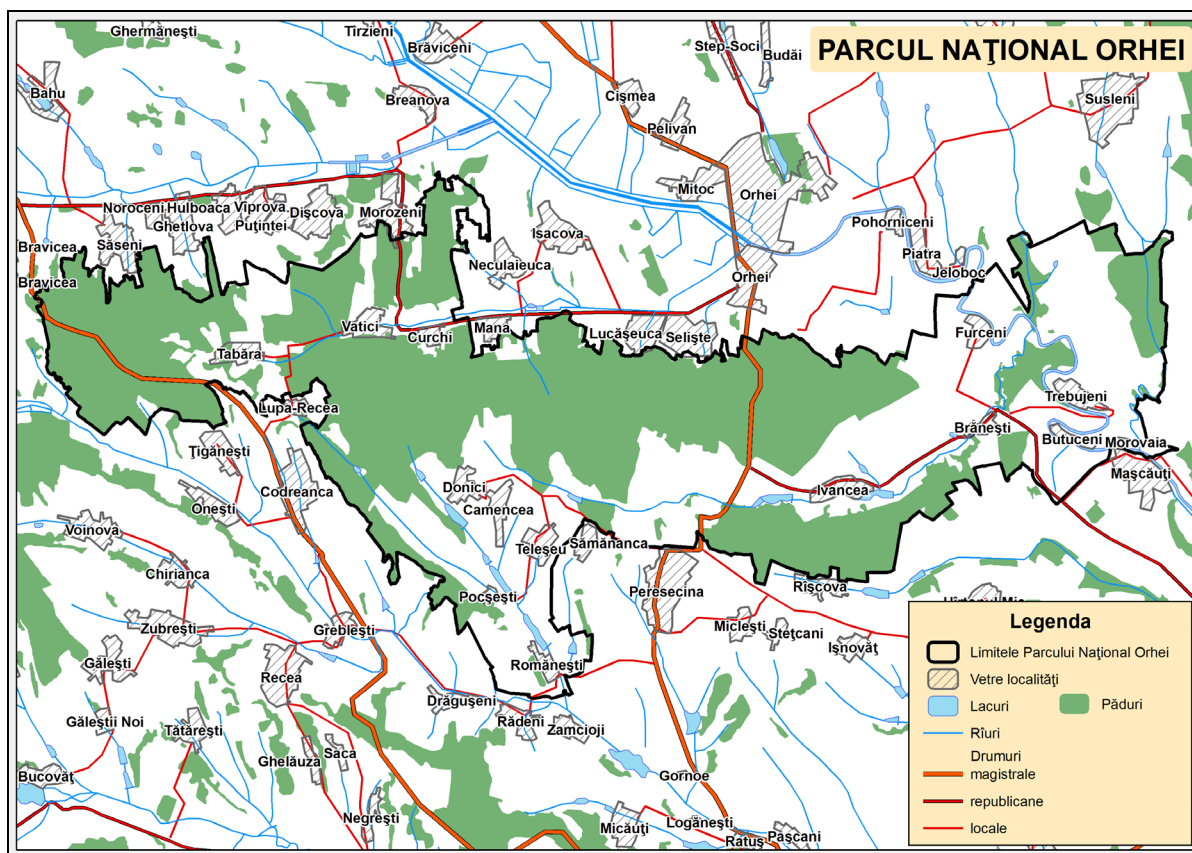
38. The Moldova PAS project is classified as a GEF MSP, with total GEF support of \$0.95 million (not including \$0.05 in project development funding), and originally proposed co-financing is \$1.04 million USD, for a total project budget of \$1.99 million USD. UNDP is the GEF Agency, and the project is executed under UNDP's NEX modality, with the MoE as the national executing partner. The project was executed over four and a half years, from April 2009 through December 2013.

39. According to the project document, the project objective is *"to develop an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems in Moldova"* and the project strategic results framework states that the project "goal" is *"To build the capacity of protected area institutions in Moldova to establish and administer a more representative system of protected areas."* It should be further noted that the intended global benefit is the conservation of Moldova's globally significant biodiversity. The project objective was planned to be achieved through two main outcomes:

40. **Outcome 1:** The representativeness and coverage of the protected area system is improved

41. **Outcome 2:** The capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system is strengthened

**Figure 2 Orhei National Park Boundaries and Main Features Map** (source: project documentation)





42. The project focused at both the system and site levels for protected areas in Moldova. The main site-level intervention was in the area of Orhei Rayon (approximately 45 km to the north of the capital of Chisinau), with the goal of establishing the country's first national park, Orhei National Park. Figure 2 above shows the area of Orhei National Park targeted under the project. The Moldovan Parliament designated the national park on July 12th, 2013, with boundaries encompassing 33,792 ha (see Section V.A on results for more information on this aspect of the project's work). While a national park in name, the area is classified as an IUCN Category V protected area, given the range of human activity in and around the landscape.

#### iv. Project Timing and Milestones

43. The project's key milestone dates are shown in Table 1 below. Although according to stakeholders there were initial discussions and communications much before 2008, the project PIF and PPG were approved on March 31, 2008, and evidently project development activities, including stakeholder consultation workshops, were carried out in April-December 2008. The Request for CEO Endorsement document was submitted to the GEF December 18, 2008, and CEO Approval was received March 30, 2009. The UNDP and country Prodoc signature date was April 14, 2009, and the first disbursement was May 12, 2009. The project manager was hired July 1, 2009, and the project inception workshop was held July 17-18, 2009, in Chisinau.

**Table 1 Project Key Milestone Dates<sup>4</sup>**

Milestone	Expected date [A]	Actual date [B]	Months (total)
1. PIF Approval	Not Applicable	March 30, 2008	
2. PPG Approval	Not Applicable	March 30, 2008	0
3. CEO Endorsement Request	March 30, 2009	December 18, 2008	8.5
4. CEO Approval	January 18, 2009	March 10 (30?), 2009	3 (11.5)
5. Country Prodoc Signature	Not Specified	April 14, 2009	1 (12.5)
6. First Disbursement	Not Specified	May 12, 2009	1 (13.5)
7. Project manager hired	Not Specified	July 1, 2009	1.5 (15)
8. Inception Workshop	Not Specified	July 17-18, 2009	0.5 (15.5)
9. Mid-term Evaluation	July 2011	July 2011	24 (39.5)
10. Terminal Evaluation	June 2013	September 2013	26 (65.5)
11. Project Operational Completion	May 31, 2013	December 31, 2013	3 (68.5)
12. Project Financial Closing	May 31, 2014	December 31, 2014	12 (80.5)

44. Although there were discussions about the project concept for some years prior to approval, once the official project approval process was started, with the submission of the PIF, the project approval process proceeded relatively quickly, with only 14 months from PIF

<sup>4</sup>Sources: 1.A. N/A; 1.B. GEF PMIS; 2.A. N/A; 2.B. GEF PMIS; 3.A. Within 12 months of PPG approval, as per GEF business standards; 3.B. CEO Endorsement Request document; 4.A. Within 30 days of CEO Endorsement Request, as per GEF business standards; 4.B. GEF PMIS; 5.A. N/S; 5.B. 2010 PIR; 6.A. N/S; 6.B. 2010 PIR; 7.A. N/S; 7.B. 2010 PIR; 8.A. N/S; 8.B. Inception Report; 9.A. 24 months (out of planned 48) after project implementation start; 9.B. Mid-term Evaluation Report; 10.A. End of original project completion; 10.B. Date of terminal evaluation field mission for data collection; 11.A. 2010 PIR; 11.B. Communication with project team; 12.A. 2010 PIR; 12.B. Estimate based on standard UNDP-GEF procedures.



approval to first disbursement. This is much quicker than GEF MSPs have historically proceeded, but roughly in-line with the GEF business standards implemented during the GEF-4 period (July 2006 – June 2010), when the project was developed and approved. The project has received a seven month no-cost extension, so project completion is expected December 31, 2013, instead of May 31, 2013.

### C. Moldova PAS Project Relevance

45. Based on the assessment of project relevance to local and national priorities and policies, priorities related to relevant international conventions, and to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives, overall project **relevance** rating is considered to be **relevant / satisfactory**.

#### i. Relevance at Local and National Levels

46. The Moldova PAS project is strongly linked with the national and local priorities and strategies related to protected areas and biodiversity conservation for Moldova. The government's commitment to the establishment of a National Environmental Network (NEN) was indicated by the adoption of the *National Programme for Establishing the NEN* (2001, amended 2007) for the period 2008-2015. The project also supports the goals and targets of Moldova's NBSAP, adopted in 2002 (a new NBSAP is currently under development). For example, the NBSAP specifically includes an item on "Elaborate the project document and create the national parks 'Orhei' and 'Codrii Tigheciului'." The project is broadly supportive of and relevant to Moldova's suite of environmental policy and legislation, including the Law on Environmental Protection (1993), Law on Protection of the Animal Kingdom (1995), Forestry Code (1996), Law on Natural Resources (1997), Law on Forestation of Degraded Land (2006). The project also supports Moldova's Millennium Development Goals targets (specifically related to Target 7 for ensuring environmental sustainability).

47. It is also clear that the project is directly relevant to the needs and priorities of the local communities in the vicinity of Orhei National Park. The communities themselves have been one of the driving forces for creation of the national park, and the project has provided a conduit for translating this priority into action at the national level. Creation of the national park is anticipated to support sustainable socio-economic development in the region. This also represents the first significant expansion of Moldova's protected area system since soviet times, equating to an increase of approximately 22% in area under protection in the country (enlargement of the protected area system by more than 1/5<sup>th</sup>), also equivalent to an increase of 1% of the national territory under protection. During the terminal evaluation mission, representatives of the communities in the area expressed their sincere appreciation for the efforts, activities and results of the Moldova PAS project in supporting and contributing to the establishment of Orhei National Park.

#### ii. Relevance to Multilateral Environmental Agreements

48. The CBD, established in 1992, provides the framework and overall objective for biodiversity conservation projects supported by the GEF. The GEF is a designated financial mechanism for the CBD. As such, projects funded by the GEF must be relevant to and support the implementation of this convention.

49. Moldova ratified the CBD in October 1995 and is therefore fully eligible for technical assistance from UNDP and GEF. Through the expected outcomes and overall goal of strengthening Moldova's protected area system, the Moldova PAS project supports implementation of the CBD. The project contributes to thematic programmes of the CBD such as the Program of Work on Protected Areas.<sup>5</sup>

50. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the CBD, in 2010, in decision X/2, member nations of the convention adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, which included the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.<sup>6</sup> The Moldova PAS project is broadly supportive of most, if not all of the targets, but is specifically relevant to the following targets:

- *Target 1: By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.*
- *Target 2: By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.*
- *Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.*
- *Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.*
- *Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.*
- *Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.*
- *Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.*
- *Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.*
- *Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.*
- *Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded,*

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.cbd.int/protected/overview/> for additional information on the CBD Program of Work on Protected Areas.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=12268> for the full text of the decision, including the Aichi Targets.

*taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.*

- *Target 19: By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.*

51. Moldova is also a party to a number of additional multilateral environmental agreements to which the project is relevant, and which are supported by various aspects of the project. Perhaps the most notable of these is the Ramsar Convention (ratified July 1999), but others include the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ratified June 1993), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (ratified September 2000), the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (ratified September 2000), the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (ratified June 2002), the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River (ratified March 1999), and the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (February 2004). The full list of key international agreements ratified by Moldova is included in the project document, under section 2.2 (pp. 10-11).

### **iii. Relevance to GEF Strategies, Priorities and Principles**

52. The GEF has limited financial resources so it has identified a set of strategic priorities and objectives designed to support the GEF's catalytic role and leverage resources for maximum impact. Thus, GEF supported projects should be, amongst all, relevant to the GEF's strategic priorities and objectives. While strategic priorities are reviewed and proposed for each four-year cycle of the GEF, the overall focus of the GEF's support in the biodiversity focal has remained relatively consistent over the years, with protected areas being a primary area of support. The Moldova PAS project was approved under the strategic priorities for GEF-4 (July 2006 – June 2010),<sup>7</sup> and is being implemented under the strategic priorities for GEF-5 (July 2010 – June 2014).<sup>8</sup> The project is aligned under the first GEF-4 Strategic Objective for biodiversity: "Catalyzing the Sustainability of Protected Areas", and under this objective, it is focused on the third Strategic Program: "Strengthening Terrestrial Protected Area Networks." The project's objective is to support and strengthen Moldova's national system of protected areas, and all activities in the project workplan contribute to this goal. Considering that Moldova is a land-locked country, it is clear that the focus of the project is on terrestrial protected areas. Under the GEF-5 biodiversity strategic objectives, the project supports Objective 1: "Improve the Sustainability of Protected Area Systems," and contributes to Outcome 1.1: "Improved management effectiveness of existing and new protected areas." The project includes multiple activities to improve management effectiveness of protected areas – for example, the training activities carried out under the project, and the protected area management guidelines produced. In addition, the project has set aside resources to help set-up and operationalize the new Orhei National Park, which will be carried out in the last few months of the project.

<sup>7</sup> For the focal area strategic approach for GEF-4, see GEF Council document GEF/C.31/1, "Focal Area Strategic and Strategic Programming for GEF-4," July 16, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> For the focal area strategic priorities for GEF-5, see GEF Council document GEF/R.5/31, "GEF-5 Programming Document," May 3, 2010.

## IV. Project Design and Implementation

### A. Key Elements of Project Design and Planning

53. It appears that the project design was more opportunistic than strategic in terms of prioritizing key biodiversity considerations, in the sense that the design did not specifically address wetland ecosystems, which are among the most biodiverse but threatened ecosystems in the country. Steppe ecosystems are also highly threatened, and were not addressed. It was highly valuable to establish the first national park in the country as a precedent for future protected areas work and expansion, but at the same time, the project design does not fully address the main threats to biodiversity and barriers to effective biodiversity conservation that were identified in the project document.

54. There also should have been more emphasis on working on a national protected areas system development strategy earlier on in the project. The protected areas re-evaluation process was a critical input for any such work, and took place over most of the project implementation period, but there could have been more work to catalyze and initiate a national consultative process for developing such a strategy, ultimately to be based on the data provided by the re-evaluation process.

### B. Project Management and Cost-Effectiveness (Efficiency)

55. Overall the **efficiency** of the project is rated *satisfactory*. The Moldova PAS project was implemented in a cost-effective manner, with professional and timely workplanning, budgeting, and activity execution. The project team and oversight partners undertook appropriate adaptive management measures as assumptions and contextual conditions changed during the life of the project. Implementation was initially somewhat slower than planned, and the project has had a seven-month no-cost extension, from the originally planned closing of May 31, 2013 to December 31, 2013. Overall management costs have remained approximately at the planned level of 10% of GEF funding.

#### i. Moldova PAS Project Implementation Arrangements and Management

56. Project management and implementation was conducted in accordance with UNDP and Moldovan national procedures, policies, and legal requirements. The project was implemented under NEX procedures, with the MoE as the national executing partner. A project management unit (PMU) consisting of a project manager and a project assistant was located in Chisinau near the UNDP office, in premises provided by the MoE. All office costs were covered, except internet and telephone, which were paid from the project budget. To carry out specific project workplan activities, the project contracted various organizations and individuals, including national and international experts. Experts were contracted through standard UNDP procurement procedures.

57. The main project field site, Orhei Rayon, was within a short driving distance of Chisinau (approximately one hour), which meant that it was not necessary for the project to have separate and specific field staff. The project manager stated that he visited the Orhei region once or twice a month as necessary, though other project contractors were active in the region, for example when conducting education and awareness activities. Overall, project management

was professional and well-organized. As discussed below, there were some delays in execution of some project activities, but these were managed within acceptable time frames. Project reporting was completed in a comprehensive and timely manner. Other aspects of project documentation, such as PSC meeting minutes were also complete.

58. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) was set up as the main project oversight and consultation body, and was the management decision-making body for the project. According to the project inception report, the PSC's main responsibilities included approving project annual workplans and budgets, approving any major changes to project activities, ensuring commitment of resources to support project implementation, and other project oversight responsibilities. PSC membership was to be made up of representatives from the main relevant stakeholders: MoE, State Environmental Inspectorate, Forestry Agency Moldsilva, Academy of Sciences, Agency of Land Relations and Cadastre, local public authority (e.g. Orhei), civil society and UNDP. The PSC was active, with 10 meetings (including the final meeting in November 2013) during project implementation not including the project inception workshop or other activity-specific meetings. However, in practice, often only four or five of the eight stakeholders were able to attend each PSC meeting.

59. As further highlighted in the later Section VI.A, stakeholders commended the Moldova PAS project for its cooperative and open approach, emphasizing the good communication and transparency. This effective and management approach is validated by the successes of the project, punctuated by the establishment of Orhei National Park with strong local community support. In addition, the project clearly worked effectively with the two main government stakeholder institutions, Moldsilva and MoE.

## **ii. Financial Planning by Component and Delivery**

60. Project financial management was conducted through the UNDP ATLAS system, in accordance with UNDP procedures and requirements, and in-line with requirements of the government. The PSC approved the annual workplans and budgets. Annual budgets were developed based on progress of the project implementation plan during the previous year, and the planned project activities for the coming year. In addition, revisions to the annual budget were carried out during the year, as necessary. For example, a revision to the planned 2010 budget was approved June 28, 2010 to reflect an updated schedule of input delivery for 2010.

61. Table 2 below provides an overview of proposed and actual expenditures by component, including project management. As highlighted in Section III.B.iv above on project milestones, the project's first disbursement was in May 2009, although the main activities did not start until the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2009 (following the inception workshop in July 2009). Project implementation was initially slower than originally planned, resulting in the necessity for a no-cost extension to ensure consolidation of project results; the original planned project completion date was May 31, 2013, and actual completion will be December 31, 2013. Figure 3 below shows the planned vs actual expenditure for each of the project components, based on the same data used for Table 2. Figure 4 and Figure 5 below show planned and actual disbursement by component by year.

62. As of September 30, 2013, 90.2% of the total budget has been disbursed, leaving the remaining 9.8% (~\$94,000 USD) for the final three months of the project. Approximately half of

this balance is allocated for supporting the start-up of the Orhei National Park administration; the project is waiting as long as possible to provide this support to give Moldsilva as much time as possible to take the necessary steps toward establishment of the national park administration.

**Table 2 Project Planned Budget and Actual Expenditure Through September 30, 2013 (USD)**

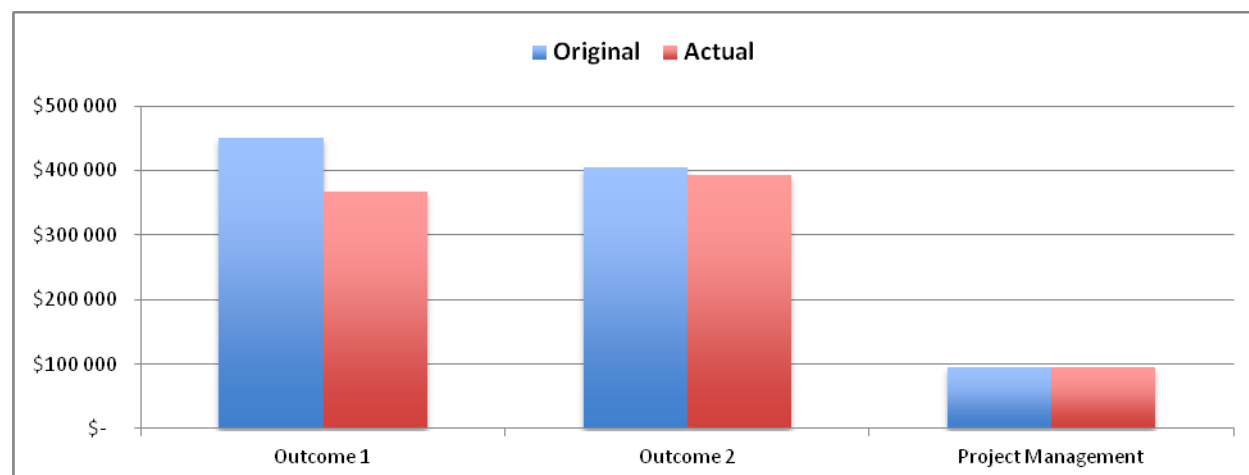
	GEF amount planned	% of GEF amount planned	GEF amount actual	% of GEF amount actual	% of originally planned
<b>Outcome 1: The representativeness and coverage of the protected area system is improved</b>	\$0.450	47.4%	\$0.368	42.9%	81.7%
<b>Outcome 2: The capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system is strengthened</b>	\$0.405	42.6%	\$0.394	45.9%	97.2%
Monitoring and Evaluation*	\$0.077	8.2%	N/S	N/A	N/A
Project Coordination and Management	\$0.095	10.0%	\$0.096	10.1%	100.7%
<b>Total†</b>	<b>\$0.950</b>		<b>\$0.857</b>		<b>90.2%</b>

Sources: Project Document for planned amount; UNDP Combined Delivery Reports, PIRs, and project team confirmation for actual GEF amounts.

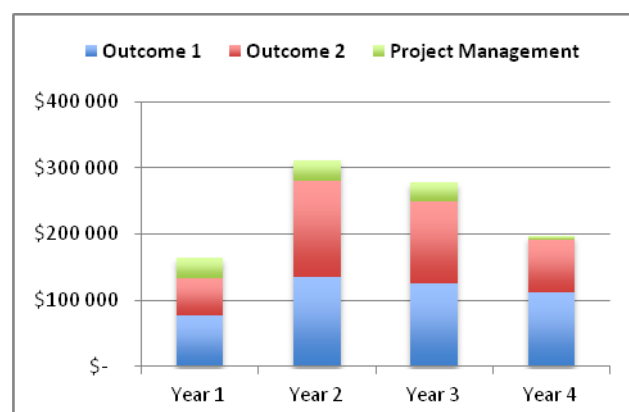
\*The M&E budget is drawn from all components of the project budget, and is not additional to the amounts shown for project components and management.

† The breakdown of co-financing was not specifically tracked by component because it was disbursed by the project partners rather than channeled through the project, except for the cash co-financing provided by UNDP, which primarily supported project management costs.

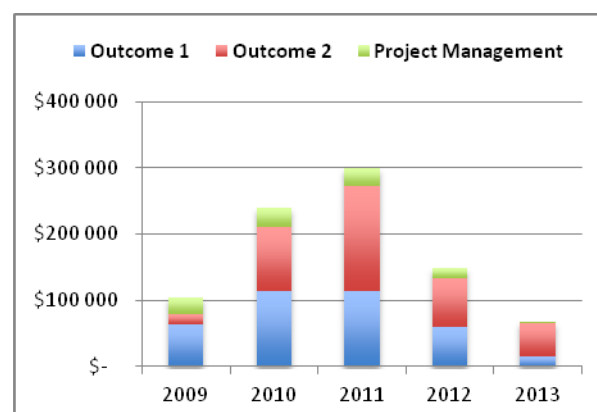
**Figure 3 Moldova PAS Project Planned vs. Actual Total Expenditure by Component**



**Figure 4 Planned Disbursement by Component**



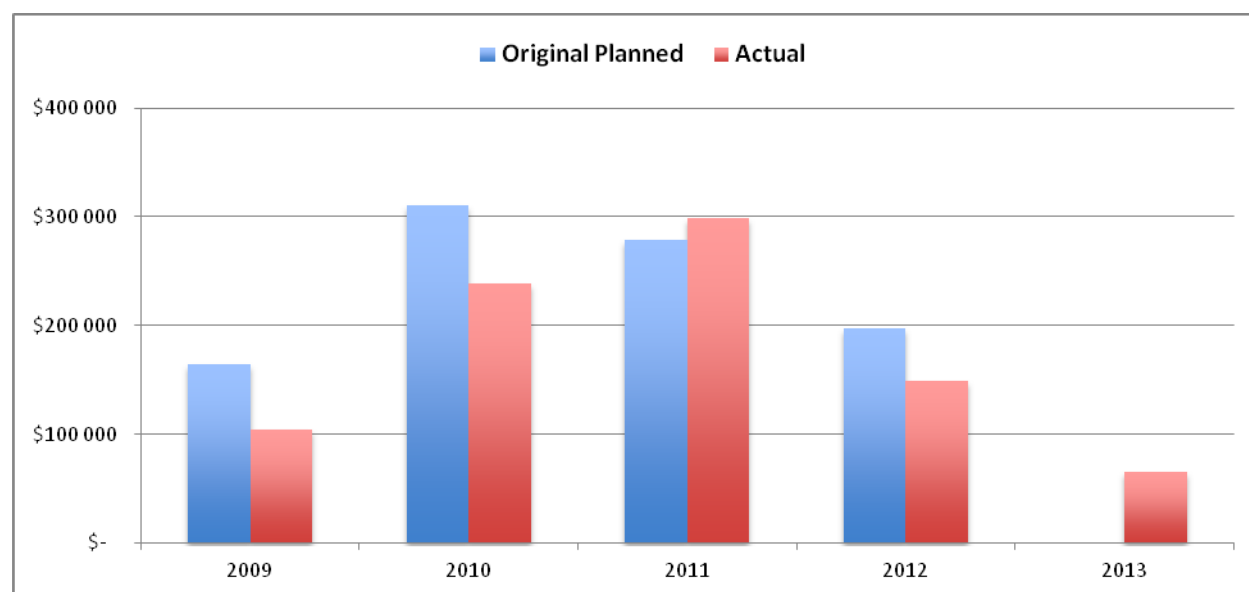
**Figure 5 Actual Disbursement by Component**



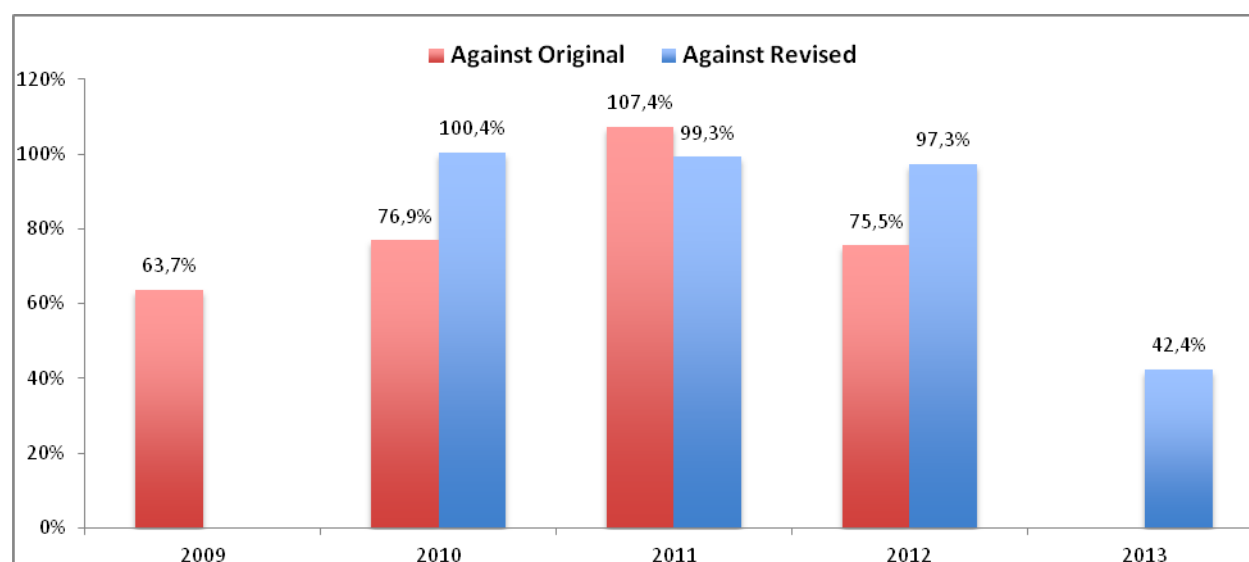
63. As can be seen in Table 2, Figure 4, and Figure 5, total disbursement for Outcome 1 has been less than originally planned (81.7% of the originally budgeted amount for activities under Outcome 1), disbursement for Outcome 2 has been approximately as originally planned (97.2% of the originally budgeted amount). The majority of the project funds to be disbursed in the last three months will come under Outcome 1, which will leave the actual expenditure under Outcome 1 approximately in-line with original expectations. Expenditures under the “project management” activity budget line in the ATLAS financial management system have been almost exactly as originally planned, at 10.1% of total GEF resources. The GEF and UNDP have set a threshold of 10% for project management expenditures, but have not clearly defined what constitutes management costs, or how they should be accounted for. In the case of the Moldova PAS project, the project management budget line includes the salaries of the project manager and project assistant, communication costs, PMU equipment and supplies, participation in workshops, and some travel costs. Approximately 40% of the project manager’s time is spent on technical activities, above and beyond administrative, reporting and management activities. Keeping this in mind, the “project management” expenditures for the Moldova PAS project are in-line with or below the management costs for the average GEF project. Further, in the view of this evaluation, it is clear that the PMU took all necessary and appropriate measures to ensure efficient use of project resources, and to direct as great a percentage of resources as possible to project activities.

64. Figure 6 below shows planned vs. actual total disbursement by year, and Figure 7 shows project financial delivery by year against the originally planned (project document) budget, and against the annual project budget revisions. Delivery during the first year of implementation was somewhat low, at 63.7%, but it should be pointed out that since disbursement only started in May 2009, the planned “Year 1” disbursement actually only covered eight months. Delivery for 2010, 2011 and 2012 was roughly in-line with the annual budget revisions following the first year, though this meant the total delivery remained below the originally planned amount.

**Figure 6 Moldova PAS Project Planned vs Actual Disbursement by Year**



**Figure 7 Financial Delivery Against Original Planned and Against Annual Budget Revisions**



### iii. Project Planned and Actual Co-financing

65. The Moldova PAS project's planned and actual co-financing are shown in Table 3 below. Planned co-financing was \$1.09 million USD, and actual co-financing has been assessed as \$1.37 million as of June 30, 2013. This includes both in-kind and cash co-financing. A majority of the co-financing received has been in the form of in-kind support from both Moldsilva and MoE. For example, this includes staff time, and management costs of protected areas under Moldsilva's jurisdiction (especially the scientific reserves such as Codrii and Plaiul Fagului, which have their own staff), as well as the forest management activities in the Orhei National Park area. According to project documentation, co-financing calculations have included the costs of the



following: a) guarding and protecting the activities of “Moldsilva” Agency in the Orhei National Park area during the reporting period; b) rental of office space (including utilities), place for meetings provided by the MoE, consultancy provided by the staff of the MoE; c) cost of activities supported from National Ecological Fund related to forest year plantations in the national park area, and education activities; d) costs of environment projects developed in national park area and Local Public Authorities’s support of awareness raising activities. The fact that co-financing has exceeded the originally planned amount is a positive indication of project stakeholder ownership, and has supported project cost-effectiveness.

**Table 3 Project Planned and Actual Co-financing Through June 30, 2013 (USD)**

Co-financing (Type/Source)	UN Agency		Government*		NGOs		Other Sources		Total Co-financing		% of Expected co- financing
	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	Proposed	Actual	
Grant	0.02	0.04							0.02	0.04	
Credits											
Loans											
Equity											
In-kind			1.07	1.33					1.07	1.33	
Non-grant instruments											
Other types											
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>1.33</b>					<b>1.09</b>	<b>1.37</b>	<b>122.9%</b>

Sources: Project Document for planned amount; data from PIRs and provided by project team for actual amount.

\* Planned government co-financing was to come from Moldsilva (\$638,667), MoE (\$300,153), and Local Public Administrations (\$130,000). Actual government co-financing was Moldsilva (\$899,242), MoE (\$300,952), Local Public Authorities (\$130,000).

66. In addition to the co-financing received, the project has helped leverage additional resources supporting the project objective, and which will contribute to the sustainability of project results. Perhaps the most significant and directly relevant of the leveraged resources is the EU funded Clima-East project, which is budgeted for 500,000 euros from 2013-2017. Additional information about the Clima-East project is included in Box 1 below. Other leveraged resources have included cash co-financing of \$24,150 USD from UNDP (beyond the originally planned cash co-financing amount). Associated financing has also been implemented in the Orhei area of more than 10 million euros related to waste water infrastructure, which is expected to have environmental benefits in the region.

## Box 1 Clima-East Project Summary

### **Clima-East: Sustainable management of pastures and community forests in Moldova's first Orhei National Park to demonstrate climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits and dividends for local communities**

The project aim is to demonstrate a natural resource management model in the pastures and forests of Moldova, which increases ecosystems' capacity to sequester carbon under pending climate risks, while at the same time retaining biodiversity and economic values. The project targets the pastures and forest degraded lands located in the Orhei National Park area (33,792.09 ha) and its buffer zone. The project will develop innovative pasture and community forest management systems on the whole territory of the park, including rehabilitation of 500 ha of pastures and afforestation of 150 ha of eroded and non-productive lands. The project will help avert further deterioration of natural resources (biodiversity, land, forest), sequester the carbon and reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, improve local pasture and forestry resources, promote better understanding of problems related to climate change impacts and contribute to local/regional sustainable development.

The project includes three main components:

- Component 1: Designing pasture and community forest restoration plans
- Component 2: Implementation of the forest and pasture restoration projects
- Component 3: Carbon assessment and monitoring and results sharing

(Source: Clima-East Project Document)

## **iv. Flexibility and Adaptive Management**

67. Flexibility is one of the GEF's ten operational principles, and all projects must be implemented in a flexible manner to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and to ensure results-based, rather than output-based approach. Thus, during project implementation adaptive management must be employed to adjust to changing circumstances.

68. All evaluative evidence indicates that the Moldova PAS project has been implemented under a flexible results-based approach, and the PMU, PSC, and UNDP have taken appropriate decisions and responded to changes in circumstances and context in an effective and timely manner.

69. One critical, though perhaps not explicit, adjustment to the project strategy was to increase the emphasis on the partnership with Moldsilva, as it became clear that Moldsilva was the most critical and capable partner in Moldova for protected areas management, and as Moldsilva became more amenable to the project's objective. The project likely would have been less successful and become mired in government instability and gridlock had the project relied only on MoE as the main project partner, and not established a positive working relationship with Moldsilva. As it is, as further discussed in Section V.A on project results, the project outputs that are dependent on government decision-making (e.g. institutional reform of the MoE, adoption of a revised protected areas law) have not progressed as far as originally hoped.

70. As previously discussed, budget revisions were undertaken as necessary and appropriate during the year, with approval from all required parties. There were no major changes to the project strategy and activities, and no change at the objective or outcome level. Also as previously highlighted, the project has had a seven-month no-cost extension, to December 31, 2013. Changes to project activities were made following the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation, including:

- Investigation of alternative livelihood options for local people in Orhei region;
- Supporting project development for further resource mobilization to support biodiversity-friendly activities in Orhei region;
- Assisting national and local stakeholders to identify priorities for PAS future development, participate in developing new project proposals, and intensify collaboration with other ongoing projects;
- Organizing dedicated workshops for local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to train them in project development activities and present the possible directions for biodiversity related projects and possible donors;
- Facilitate Local Public Authorities and future Orhei National Park administration in establishment of partnerships with other national parks from neighboring countries.

71. In addition, revisions to the project logframe were made, including clarification of the responsibilities of the project vs. responsibilities of the government. Other specific adjustments to project activities are discussed later in Section V.A on project results.

72. Revisions to the project risk matrix were also made at the project inception phase, which can sometimes be an indication of inadequate risk assessment during the project development phase. However, in the case of the Moldova PAS project, it is clear that the national political turmoil and global economic turmoil that occurred just at the start of project implementation fully warranted a revised risk assessment.

73. Perhaps the single most indicative overall testament to the project's adaptive and results-oriented approach is the fact that the project has been successfully implemented over a period when Moldova has experienced significant political turmoil. The disputed elections in April 2009 (the same time as project start-up) lead to civil unrest (e.g. burning of the parliament and other government buildings) and political deadlock until the presidential election in December 2011. Such circumstances can easily derail a nationally executed project (such as this one, with the MoE as the national executing organization), but the Moldova PAS project has not only persisted, but also persevered.

#### **v. UNDP Project Oversight**

74. UNDP is the responsible GEF Agency for the project, and carried general backstopping and oversight responsibilities, as well as handling the financial accounts. As stated in the project inception report, "The UNDP is responsible for: (i) providing financial services and audit; (ii) overseeing financial expenditures against project budgets approved by PSC; (iii) appointment of independent financial auditors and evaluators; and (iv) ensuring that all activities including procurement and financial services are carried out in strict compliance with UNDP procedures."

75. UNDP provided excellent oversight and project support, helping to guide the project to success through somewhat tumultuous political circumstances. As previously stated, financial management procedures (budget management, workplanning, procurement) were carried out according to UNDP policies and procedures. Procurement was also handled in a timely manner without significant problems. One particular highlight was the quick and smooth transition between project managers when the first project manager resigned his position during the first half of the project.

## V. Moldova PAS Project Performance and Results (Effectiveness)

### A. Progress Toward the Project Objective and Achievement of Outcomes

76. The Moldova PAS project has achieved a number of important results, including reaching some expected outcomes and making important progress toward others in support of the overall objective of strengthening Moldova's protected area system. According to the project document, the project objective is *"to develop an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems in Moldova"* and the project strategic results framework states that the project "goal" is *"To build the capacity of protected area institutions in Moldova to establish and administer a more representative system of protected areas."* The objective and goal are in support of the overall expected global environmental benefit, of conserving Moldova's globally significant biodiversity.

77. Based on the assessment of results framework indicators targets, and the overall results produced under the project (which are not all adequately captured in the results framework), the overall effectiveness of the project is rated **satisfactory**. Key results are highlighted below, and key outputs and outcomes are reviewed in the subsequent sections covering the two outcomes. The Moldova PAS project results framework indicators and targets for each of the outcomes are assessed in the later Section V.B below.

78. The project results framework included four objective level indicators, though this evaluation does not consider these indicators to be sufficient for fully assessing the key results of the project. The objective level indicators were:

- Financial sustainability scorecard for national systems of protected areas
- Total operational budget (including human resource and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management
- Capacity development indicator score for protected area system
- Coverage (ha) of the protected area system

79. Overall, the objective-level results framework targets have been achieved. The project did not have a primary focus on financial sustainability of the protected area system, though some project activities did address this issue, such as working with Moldsilva on internal accounting related to protected areas, and producing an overview paper of protected area financing and financing mechanisms in Moldova. The project had a more significant focus on capacity strengthening at the individual and systemic level, through training, policy or legislative reforms, and generation of data on protected areas in Moldova. The other specific primary focus was the establishment of the Orhei National Park, the first national park in Moldova. The indicator targets were reached for the first two objective-level indicators (target of greater than 30% for the financial sustainability scorecard, and operational budget of greater than \$2 million USD), but it is unclear to what extent this had to do with activities of the project. The target for the capacity development scorecard was also achieved (score of 57 against a target of 33), and it is believed that the increase from the baseline was related to the training activities of the Moldova PAS project, as well as other project activities. The establishment of the national park helped achieve the target for the final objective level

indicator, by increasing protected area coverage in Moldova by ~1% of national territory, to an overall level of 5.6%. This is still well below the global standard of 10%, or the European standard of more than 18%, but it represents a major achievement for the project.

80. Overall key results of the project include:

- Establishment of Moldova's first national park, Orhei National Park, covering 33,792 ha, including extensive consultation processes from community to national levels;
- Complete re-assessment of all 312 protected areas in Moldova, with information consolidated into a database;
- Multiple policy and legislative amendment proposals supporting strengthening of the protected area system;
- Training modules and courses held with participation of a majority of protected-areas related professionals in Moldova, and subsequent incorporation of the training modules in Moldsilva's professional development program;

81. While significant progress in support of Moldova's protected areas has been made, there are a number of additional urgent steps needed for consolidation of the project results and strengthening of the overall system, many of which are dependent on government action and decisions. A number of these steps are further discussed below, but key actions include issuance of the government resolution outlining the regulations and by-laws of Orhei National Park; institutional restructuring of the MoE and Moldsilva to improve the institutional framework for protected area management; and adoption of a new protected areas law that provides a sound policy basis for effective management and future expansion of the protected area system.

**i. Outcome 1: The representativeness and coverage of the protected area system is improved**

82. Outcome 1 was successfully achieved, and completion is rated **satisfactory**.

83. **Output 1.1: Validation of the current system of protected areas:** The project's work under Output 1.1 is one of the key results of the project, which is expected to strengthen and catalyze future effective management of Moldova's protected area system. There were a number of steps involved in this output, including developing an informational template that would serve to collate all relevant information on protected areas (such as ecological values, size, management regimes, land tenure, etc.), desk-based information gathering, gap analysis, and field-based verification of protected area boundaries and characteristics. To fill in the necessary data in all fields, seven working groups involving 24 people were established, drawing on the expertise of many of the best technical experts in the country in the respective fields: botany, zoology, geology, archeology, paleontology, hydrology, and pedology. Drawing on orthophoto satellite images and field verification, the boundaries of the protected areas were digitally demarcated and documented, using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). In addition to the orthophoto data with resolution of 40 centimeters, the land cadaster maps with resolution of 1:10000 were used as the mapping basis. This was completed for all 312 protected areas in Moldova. 258 protected areas were also classified according to IUCN criteria, with the balance belonging to other national categories of protected areas. To conduct the main

validation work the project contracted the national NGO “Protecția Biodiversității” (Biodiversity Protection). To support this activity and the boundary demarcation of proposed Orhei National Park boundaries the project also contracted a national GIS mapping expert. The GIS database of protected areas was developed using OpenGIS, and has been submitted to the NBSAP project, which is developing a national database. The data for each protected area was consolidated into an individual “passport” file. This information will be linked with the national biodiversity database supporting the Clearing House Mechanism under development. It is not clear exactly what form this will take, as the individual protected area passport files, originally completed in Microsoft Word, have also been scanned into PDF files that will be linked to individual protected areas in the geospatial database. This evaluation recommends that further steps be taken to improve the functionality and utility of this valuable resource by entering the passport files into a text-based searchable database. In this way it would be possible, for example, to search for all protected areas in the range of a certain Red List species, or that have certain ecological characteristics. Under the currently envisaged system it would only be possible to see the data for a specific protected area if the user clicks on its polygon in the geospatial database.

84. It had originally been anticipated that as part of the validation process protected areas would be formally registered with the office of the land cadaster, which would have been possible on the basis of the orthophoto plans (the purchase of which was co-financed from MoE, drawing more than \$50,000 from the National Environmental Fund), but after further discussions with the cadaster office the necessary bureaucratic steps turned out to be considerably too costly for the project to afford (estimated at more than \$11 million dollars, not including \$1.4 million for Orhei National Park, based on a minimum per ha cost of \$70 USD). Generally speaking the project stakeholders do not consider the lack of formal cadastral registration to be a major issue for the protected areas, since the boundaries for most protected areas are generally well-understood and accepted by local stakeholders and other relevant parties. However, there would presumably be some issues in the case of a legal challenge involving a specific boundary of any given protected area.

85. Based on the data collected, “Protecția Biodiversității” worked with other project experts to analyze the conservation status of each protected area, and where appropriate and necessary to recommend modifications on the conservation status. This includes, for example, changes in management regimes, level and category of protection, and boundaries. A series of regional workshops was held to validate and agree on the final recommendations for each of the protected areas. Based on the overall analysis, the project proposed a rationalization and expansion of the protected area system that would reduce the number of protected areas by 23 but increase the protected area territory by 1,108.2 ha. This work is directly linked with the following output. However, the project outputs also proposed to establish 26 new protected areas covering 628 ha of steppe and meadow vegetation. This will be figured into the protected areas Consolidation and Expansion Master Plan that is developed by the project, and which will be incorporated in the new NBSAP.

86. Although on the whole the protected areas revalidation was a major and valuable result of the project, there still remains some discrepancy regarding the management approach for the four so-called “scientific” reserves managed by Moldsilva, which are the only protected

areas prior to Orhei National Park that had their own administrations. As stated in the 2013 Project Implementation Report (PIR), *“The major project and PAS challenge still remains - disagreement between the Ministry of Environment, Academy of Sciences and the ‘Moldsilva’ Agency regarding the management of the so called ‘Scientific Reserves’.”* There are multiple forces at play on this issue, both political and economic in nature. Under Moldova’s current protected areas legislation, “scientific reserves” are supposed to be areas set aside strictly for scientific research, with no timber extraction. In the present situation, some limited “sanitary” cutting does take place in the reserves,<sup>9</sup> but this is necessary to finance their management, as the management is not otherwise financed by the central government. Thus in actuality the reserves are managed in a way that is more in line with what would be considered “natural reserves” under Moldovan legislation. Some stakeholders are reluctant to “officialize” the current management approach thereby reducing the stated protection regime for the reserves, while others see the current conflicting management mandates as problematic and would like to secure a formal mandate for the current management approach. Further, as the 2013 PIR indicates, *“The problem persists because of interests for controlling the administration of the reserves by some officials from the Ministry. [It should be further] mentioned that the Ministry does not have neither capacities nor resources to directly manage the reserves.”* From the perspective of biodiversity conservation, the current situation is not particularly problematic, as the scientific / natural reserves are the best managed protected areas in the country, and according to available information, harbor the most significant biodiversity in the country, and species population trends are mainly stable or positive. One important issue is the question is the extent to which the reserves could be increasingly focused on biodiversity conservation, or physically expanded under the current policy foundation.

87. *Output 1.2: Development of a strategy and implementation plan to direct the ongoing expansion of the protected area system in Moldova:* This output was directly linked to Output 1.1 above. The analysis of the revalidation of the protected area network also fed into and provided a basis for further analysis on the proposed strategic development and expansion of the protected area system. A “Master Plan” for the Consolidation and Expansion of the Protected Area System in Moldova was drafted. However, the full gap analysis drawing on the data from the revalidation process remains to be completed. The original contractor was not able to complete the analysis and the activity had to be reprogrammed for the final few months of the project. The Master Plan will be an integral part of the new NBSAP, which is currently under elaboration with GEF support and shall be finalized by end 2013. The strategic protected area development expansion plan can also be considered as strongly linked with the draft protected areas law (developed with project support) to be considered by the government in 2014. According to the 2013 PIR, the revalidation of the protected areas network was *“the main basis for redrafting the Law on Protected Areas, which is now aligning the national categories to*

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<sup>9</sup> For example, according to Moldsilva sources, ~10,500 cu m of wood was extracted from Codrii Reserve (which covers 5176 ha) in 2013, although the approved management plan allowed for up to ~12,000 cu m. A 2012 report estimated that wood and biomass consumption in Moldova is approximately three times the amount of authorized forest extraction, but this is unlikely to be occurring in the relatively well-managed scientific reserves. See IUCN, 2012. “Illegal Logging in Moldova: Analytical Study 2010-2011,” Authors: Dumitru Galupa, Anatol Ciobanu, Marian Scobioală [et al.]; Agency Moldsilva. - Ch.: Agency Moldsilva, 2011. - 40 pp. (International Year of Forests - 2011).

*IUCN standards and aligning the category and management objectives assigned to each Protected Area with its biodiversity significance.”*

88. Output 1.3: Establishment of the Orhei National Park: The Orhei National Park was approved by the Moldovan parliament on July 12, 2013, and this is perhaps the signature achievement of the project. Orhei is the first national park in Moldova, successfully established with support of the Moldova PAS project after two previous attempts to establish a national park in Moldova had failed. The park territory covers 33,792 ha, and the protection regime will be consistent with an IUCN category V protected area. Moldsilva is formally designated as the management authority for the national park, as the ~55% forested area of the park is part of the national forest estate, and is currently managed through four forestry districts in the region.

89. The idea for establishing a national park in Orhei originated in the early 1980s, and the first attempt to establish the national park was in the 1989-1991 period. This attempt was not successful, according to project stakeholders, partly because of the intense political changes occurring at that time but also because the process was not adequately participatory and consultative at the local level. A second attempt to establish a national park was in the Lower Dniester region, supported by a World Bank-implemented GEF project (GEF ID #1600) from 2002-2005. This attempt was also not successful due to political difficulties and political turnover following the elections of February 2001, when the Communist Party of Moldova took power.

90. Reaching establishment of the national park required a long series of steps and procedures, including actions such as preparing a detailed assessment of national park establishment options and scenarios, securing formal endorsements from all relevant institutions and bodies (e.g. National Academy of Sciences, etc.), developing a proposed zoning system (based on community consultations and scientific data), defining the institutional roles and responsibilities of the national park management authority, and drafting the national park regulations including coordination with all relevant local and national authorities. The project also provided the resources for the necessary technical documentation for establishment of the national park, which included flora and fauna surveys to update and confirm previous information about the plant and animal communities in the proposed national park territory. Following the mid-term evaluation, the project also added further support for socio-economic analysis of opportunities, options and recommendations for biodiversity-friendly activities, and the generation of alternative livelihoods for local populations to decrease the pressure on natural resources in and around the park.

91. The process for establishing Orhei National Park was actually driven from the local level, and was a participatory, community-based process. The project served as a vehicle to help elevate the regional initiative for a national park into national governmental decision-making. All 18 Local Public Authorities in the vicinity of the park endorsed the creation of the national park, and numerous stakeholder meetings were held to discuss the national park proposal and various aspects of its potential management, such as zoning. The highly consultative and participatory process for establishing the national park was frequently cited as one of the highly positive aspects of the project, and is now considered the model for establishment of future national parks in Moldova.



92. The establishment of the national park was the first significant expansion of Moldova's protected area system in the post-Soviet era, and extended the national territory under protection from 4.6% to 5.6%, and increase of more than 20%. While Moldova is a small country, the fact that a GEF-supported MSP was able to catalyze a more than 20% expansion of the national protected area estate should be considered a major achievement. It should be noted that the "national park" was established as an IUCN Category V protected area, rather than the Category II protected area envisioned in the project document; however, a Category V level of protection is the only practical approach given the range of land uses and land tenure in and around the park boundaries. As it is the protection regime established includes a strictly protected core zone of less than 1,000 ha, or less than 3% of the park territory.

93. While the national park has been established, there are still a number of steps to actually implement and operationalize the national park. It was originally expected that further progress on these aspects would take place during the life of the project, but the government action for actually establishing the national park came so late (after the originally planned closing of the project), that operationalization of the park was not feasible before the extended project ending of December 31, 2013. By law the government (in fact, Moldsilva, as the designated authority) is required to establish the national park administration within six months of creation of the park, which will be January 12, 2014. In addition, although the national park has been formally established by parliament, a government decision (issued through MoE) is still required to define the national park regulations and bylaws; the project has developed a draft of this decision and provided it to the ministry. The project also still has unspent funds budgeted for supporting start-up of the national park administration (approximately \$40,000 USD), and is waiting as long as possible to actually provide this support to give Moldsilva as much time to take the necessary steps to establish the administration. The project support will help go toward equipment and facilities for the national park management authority.

94. Although Orhei National Park has been officially established, there remain at least a few risks going forward, relating to operationalization of the national park and associated protection regime. While the concept of the national park has enjoyed strong community-level support to date, partly thanks to the project's extensive outreach and awareness raising efforts, the potential benefits of the national park need to be quickly evident to the local communities to avert disillusionment and backlash against the national park as some of the protection measures come into effect. As further discussed in Section VI.B.i on financial sustainability, the EU has provided support through a Clima-East project implemented by UNDP to focus on pasture management in the Orhei region, which should help kick-start some local level benefits during the 2014 summer season. The project also assisted Moldsilva and local communities from the Orhei region in developing and promoting a project proposal for sustainable tourism development in the future national park; this proposal has been submitted to Moldova's Regional Development Agency, which has given preliminary positive feedback though it appears the proposal requires further development before funding will be allocated. Moldsilva, MoE, UNDP and other stakeholders need to ensure that local-level benefits continue to develop and expand in the national park area; this is a focus of one of the key recommendations of this evaluation.

95. A second issue for attention is Moldsilva's capacity for protected area management. Moldsilva is a traditional forest management institution, and more than 95% of its 330 million MDL (~\$25.5 million USD) budget comes from forestry activities. In some respects, such as monitoring and enforcement, there are clear similarities between forestry and protected area management, but in other aspects effective protected area management requires a fully different set of skills and management capacities. Key areas under this umbrella are elements such as community relations, biodiversity conservation research, and education and awareness. Numerous Moldsilva staff participated in the project's training program on protected area management, but developing a professional, effective protected area management staff takes time, and does not occur simply through a single three or four day course. At the same time, Moldsilva does have the experience of managing the scientific reserves (the only protected areas in the country with dedicated administrations), and Moldsilva staff have participated in all steps of the process of establishing Orhei National Park. According to local stakeholders, Moldsilva has good working relationships with the communities in the area. Thus there are positive indications that Moldsilva is capable of taking up this new line of work as a national park manager, but there is likely to be a learning curve during the initial phases of operationalizing Orhei National Park.

**ii. Outcome 2: The capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system is strengthened**

96. The achievement of Outcome 2 is considered **satisfactory**. The Moldova PAS project made some important progress under this outcome in raising the profile of protected areas, especially within Moldsilva. The training programs and the many analytical outputs helped increase the capacity for protected area management, and the education and awareness programs in the Orhei region were another highlight. At the same time, the project produced a number of proposals for reforms and changes to the protected area system that have yet to be taken up by the government. These include proposed institutional reforms, and legislative and policy amendments to protected area legislation.

97. **Output 2.1: Reforming the institutional arrangements for protected area management:** This has been one of the less successful elements of the project, due to the slow and limited movement of government bureaucracy, and not any shortcoming of the project. In the early stages of the project the MoE had indicated a willingness and anticipation to undertake an institutional reform to better align the institutional framework in support of managing Moldova's system of protected areas. However, this expressed willingness has yet to be transformed into some concrete action, presumably partly due to the extensive national political turmoil that took place during the period of project implementation.

98. The project supported extensive analytical work on protected areas governance, with inputs from the main international protected areas expert assisting the project. The project produced extensive reports on protected area finance, governance, and legislation. A proposal has been put forth within government relating to institutional reform within the MoE, which envisions creation of a national "environmental protection agency", under which would be a protected areas division of some kind. In practical terms, establishment of a functioning body of this nature appears to be quite a ways off. In 2011 the MoE indicated two additional staff

positions would be allocated to establish a protected area management unit within the ministry, but this did not take place. As of the terminal evaluation field mission it was anticipated that the ministry would be allocated seven new staff positions for 2014, but it appeared unlikely that any of these would be specifically focused on protected areas.

99. Proposals on institutional reform within MoE also see the potential for some linkage with Moldsilva, as Moldsilva is the main body managing protected areas in the country. One of the project successes under this output was the establishment within Moldsilva of a “protected areas unit”, created in January 2012. Through this unit Moldsilva is monitoring and reporting on the status of protected areas from the forest fund to MoE. This unit currently only has one staff member, but having at least one staff member devoted solely to protected areas is a positive step for Moldsilva, which, as previously mentioned, is a traditional forestry-focused public enterprise.<sup>10</sup> This staff position should help to continue strengthening the profile of protected areas within Moldsilva.

100. There is likely to remain disagreement within higher levels of government about what form any institutional restructuring should take. Carving out some portion of Moldsilva as a protected areas agencies to be housed under MoE would have the unfortunate effect of divorcing protected areas management in Moldova from its only significant source of financing – Moldsilva’s forestry operations. As previously indicated, Moldsilva has calculated that it spends more than \$2.7 million USD annually supporting protected areas, and other sources of financing (e.g. national budget allocations, or from the National Environmental Fund) are extremely limited. Institutional reforms may be limited until the central government is prepared to finance a specific protected area management authority. For the time being the path forward appears to be Moldsilva retaining responsibility of management for protected areas, with some oversight from MoE to ensure adequate implementation of management measures. At present however, even limited oversight appears to be beyond MoE’s capacity, due to the small number of staff working on protected areas and biodiversity conservation issues.

101. Output 2.2: Preparing ‘directions’ for the national protected area system: The Moldova PAS project contracted an environmental NGO, the Romania-based ProPark, as an expert institution to carry out this project activity. The purpose was to support the MoE in establishing management norms and standards for various categories of protected areas, in-line with international best practices. A set of six comprehensive guidelines documents were produced, documenting best practices and recommendations for management of Moldova’s protected areas. The guidelines documents constitute more than 500 pages of technical material, and should be considered an excellent basis and foundation for supporting effective protected area management in Moldova in the future. Propark also provided inputs to the project’s training activities (see Output 2.3 below), linking documentation of best practices with actual implementation. The guidelines documents were published and disseminated to Moldsilva’s forestry enterprises and forest reserves through a workshop on September 27, 2013. Nonetheless, there is a need for further institutionalization and implementation of these

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<sup>10</sup> The institutional framework of a forestry public enterprise managing protected areas may appear questionable, but there are multiple other examples of such an arrangement in the region, including in neighboring Romania, and in Serbia.

guidelines. Considering the density and technical nature of these documents, this evaluation recommends a program be put in place to ensure the uptake and implementation of the guidelines by the relevant staff involved with protected area management. This could be linked with Moldsilva's incorporation of the project training courses into its annual professional development curriculum.

102. Output 2.3: Strengthening the operational capacity of the protected area institutions:

Under this output the project undertook a comprehensive program to identify and address capacity needs for protected area management in Moldova. A capacity needs assessment was conducted, and based on the results an international expert (from neighboring Romania) developed short-course training modules, and carried out a training program. A first training course was held in May 2012 for 33 people from Moldsilva, MoE and other central government institutions dealing with protected areas. A second training was held in September 2012 and engaged 52 field staff from Moldsilva and other relevant stakeholder institutions. The courses were approximately three and a half days long, including a half-day of site visits for practical field study. An excellent result of the Moldova PAS project is that Moldsilva is incorporating the training course modules into its professional development program. This should contribute to the sustainability of this aspect of the project. The project indicator for this activity focused on the number of people trained, which is a output-focused indicator instead of an outcome indicator that provides more relevant information regarding the later steps of the results chain. To properly assess the effectiveness of this project output a tracking survey should be instituted to assess over time how individuals who participated in the training program are integrating the material into their work. One of the other relevant indicators applied was UNDP's capacity development scorecard, as related to Moldova's protected area system, which was most recently completed in May 2013 by representatives of the MoE, Moldsilva, and Academy of Sciences. The scorecard did show an increase from the baseline of 24 to a score of 57 at the end of the project; presumably some of this increase was directly related to the project's inputs.

103. The project's work for capacity strengthening also can be seen to have contributed to strengthening the management effectiveness of the key protected areas in Moldova. As required for all projects under the GEF's biodiversity Strategic Priority 1, the project applied the protected area METT. METT scores were calculated for all of Moldova's protected areas, though it may be more relevant to consider the management effectiveness for various classes of protected areas in Moldova (e.g. small protected areas under the authority of Local Public Authorities vs. those under the oversight of Moldsilva), as well as the four protected areas that already had their own administration and staff (e.g. the scientific reserves), plus Orhei National Park. One of the project logframe indicators related to the number of protected areas that had a METT score of greater than 30; without a clear rationale for this target this indicator is not particularly useful, although it was reported in the 2013 PIR that the average METT score for all 313 protected areas was 57. Table 4 below summarizes the individual METT scores for the four scientific reserves, Lower Dniester Ramsar site and Orhei National Park; these are the main protected areas that have had multiple individualized METT assessments. As can be seen in the table, the METT scores increased for all of the protected areas except Lower Dniester, with an average overall increase of 10% from the already high average baseline of 66 to an average level of 73.

**Table 4 METT Scores for Key Moldovan Protected Areas**

Protected Area	Baseline (Year Calculated)	End of Project Assessment
Codrii	73 (2008)	85
Padurea Domneasca	72 (2008)	84
Plaiul Fagului	72 (2008)	85
Prutul de Jos ("Lower Prut")	73 (2008)	74
Nistrul de Jos ("Lower Dniester")	55 (2008)	54
Orhei National Park	52 (2010)	55

104. Another one of the key results of the project came under this output through the project's success in working with Moldsilva to institute an internal accounting system that would facilitate assessment of expenditures on protected area management. Following the implementation of these accounting procedures, Moldsilva was able to document that it spent \$2.62 million on protected areas management in 2011, and \$2.75 million in 2012. Moldsilva manages ~90% of the protected area system (by area), and thus having this insight into the financing of management for this part of the protected area estate is critical for the future development of Moldova's protected areas. According to Moldsilva and project stakeholders the accounting system very specifically analyzed various management activities and practices to identify those linked to management of the protected areas under Moldsilva's authority. At the same time, since Moldsilva does not have a separate internal division for protected area management (although a one-person protected area unit has now been instituted) it is not clear how accurately distinctions can be made between activities focused on protected area management vs. general forestry management activities.

105. In addition, the project supported the development of a university two-semester course outline and bibliography on protected area management, in consultation with the State University of Moldova, Agrarian State University of Moldova, and Free International University of Moldova. The course concept was initially discussed in November 2011 with the professors teaching related courses at the three universities, and the final materials were presented in March 2012. The course is targeted at the masters level, but is intended to be potentially useful to undergraduates interested in the subject as well. The draft curricula was submitted to the MoE for further promotion, and for integration in the university curricula by the Ministry of Education.

106. Also under this output the project conducted a study tour to Romania July 5-9, 2010 for key individuals directly involved in protected areas management in Moldova, and especially for local government officials from the Orhei region. This included 17 representatives from MoE, Orhei ecological inspection, Academy of Sciences, Moldsilva, Orhei Rayon Council, mayors from Orhei region, the NGO ProRuralInvest (which was supporting the project's awareness raising and outreach work in Orhei), and journalists. The study tour visited two national parks in Romania – Maramureş Mountains, and Calimani – and a nearby town Vişeu de Sus, which was particularly useful for the mayors of Orhei to better understand the role of national parks in regional development.

107. Output 2.4: Implementing an education and awareness programme in Orhei: The project initially supported development of a national biodiversity education and awareness strategy, and an associated action plan was developed following consultation with various stakeholders,

including MoE, the Academy of Sciences, and civil society organizations. The strategy and action plan were approved by the MoE, and are being incorporated in the new NBSAP.

108. A Moldovan civil society organization, ProRuralInvest, was contracted to implement education and awareness activities in the Orhei area. The first event took place May 20, 2010, in the framework of the “2010: International Year of Biodiversity” conference organized by the MoE. Activities included the publication and dissemination of brochures and printed materials about the new Orhei National Park (with the park logo), and other elements such as public information boards (see Figure 8). Materials were disseminated through community events, such as etno-music festivals (e.g. GUSTAR festival in Orhei, August 2010, 2011, and 2013), as well as sent to outlets such as mayors’ offices, schools, and libraries. The outreach programs were implemented within communities, as well as primary and secondary schools from the 18 villages of the Orhei National Park. In total it is estimated the campaign directly reached at least 700 residents (~2% of the Orhei region population) and likely more than 2500, as well as 600

**Figure 8 Information Board in Orhei National Park**



school children. The Orhei National Park was consistently promoted in local and national media (printed, TV, radio) during project implementation, and the project helped establish a website for the national park. The project provided subscriptions to a national environment newspaper to 30 schools from national park area. 37 persons attended one experimental learning seminar on environmentally friendly agriculture. Three summer camps were organized and attended by 50-60 pupils from the area.

## **B. Achievement of Logframe Indicator Targets**

109. The Moldova PAS project results framework is provided in Table 6 below, with an assessment of the achievement of indicator targets. As can be seen from the table, not all of the indicators and targets meet SMART criteria (also as discussed in Section VI.D below on monitoring and evaluation), but for those indicators that could be appropriately assessed the project achieved nearly all of the targets planned.

**Table 5 Moldova PAS Logframe Indicators and Progress Toward Targets**

Red = Limited or no progress	Yellow = Partially Achieved	Green = Fully or Substantially Achieved	Gray = Indicator not relevant for assessing end-of-project results or not clearly linked with project activities.
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**Table 6 Moldova PAS Project Results Framework Level of Achievement**

Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2013	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
Objective: To develop an enabling framework for the expansion of the protected area system to include under-represented ecosystems	Financial sustainability scorecard for national systems of protected areas	21	>30	Total Score for Moldova PA System is 74 out of 233 or 31.8%. The scorecard was completed in June 2013. Previously the score was completed in June - July 2011 and November 2011.	Concur with self-reported assessment. However, influencing the financial sustainability of the PA system was not a major focus within the project objective, and any change from the baseline level is not clearly linked as a result of the project. The project outputs did include an assessment of PA financing options in Moldova, completed in late 2013.
	Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management	<us\$1.5m annum<=</us\$1.5m>	>US\$2m/annum [target reduced from >US\$4m/annum as per MTE recommendation - 2012]	> US\$ 2m/annum. There are almost no state budget allocations (US\$ 0.03m/annum) for protected areas based on 2012 data. According to the Moldsilva forest agency financial evidence, the total expenditures in 2012 for PA's from forest fund (90% of total) was US\$ 2.75 m/annum with an increase compared to 2011 (2.62m/annum) and the baseline. The expenditures were covered mostly from forest works and medicinal plants/berries collection (94%) and 5% from additional activities (donor support, tourism etc.)	Concur with self-reported assessment. The fact that Moldsilva has instituted an accounting system that includes documentation of PA financing is an important result of the project; though there are still some open questions about the accounting of financing protected areas, considering that Moldsilva has only one staff person with solely PA-specific responsibilities. It is not clear to what extent the project may have actually influenced Moldsilva's internal financing for protected areas, though it is clear the project helped raise attention to the issue within Moldsilva.
	Capacity development indicator score for protected area system	24	>32	57 The capacity development indicator scorecard was completed in May 2013 by representatives of Ministry of Environment, Moldsilva and Academy of Sciences. The score increase compared to the 2011 data is the result of implementation of a training programme in PA planning and management.	Concur with self-reported assessment. System-level scorecards have proven tricky to apply effectively in some countries, but the size of the overall system in Moldova may make use of this scorecard more relevant and feasible.
	Coverage (ha) of the protected area system	157,227 ha	176,000 ha	191,019 ha. The coverage increased in the result of Orhei National Park establishment (33,792 ha) in July 2013.	Concur with self-reported assessment. The current level of coverage equates to 5.6% of the national territory, an increase of 1.0% from the baseline. This is a significant achievement of the project.
Outcome 1: The representivity and coverage of the protected area system is improved	Number of IUCN Category I – VI protected areas whose classification, and management objectives, are aligned with their biodiversity significance	8	289	255. No change since 2012. According to the PA assessment, 255 existing PAs of the country's PAS were classified according to IUCN classification. To achieve completely the indicator the Parliament should approve a new version of the protected area law,	Concur with self-reported assessment. Unclear what the basis for the target value was, as it does not correspond to the total number of protected areas in the country, which was 312. Through the PA system re-evaluation process the project reclassified all

Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2013	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
				which was developed by the project and submitted to the Ministry of Environment at the end of 2012. According to the Ministry's agenda, submission of the new PA Law to the Government is planned for the 4th quarter of 2013.	PAs that could be classified according to IUCN categories, which equated to 255 out of 312. The balance includes the three Ramsar sites of international importance, and other sites classified to national categories that do not correspond to IUCN categories.
	Extent (ha) of additional areas of under-represented habitat types incorporated into the formally proclaimed protected area network: (see (a) and (b) below)	(see below)	(see below)	(see below)	(see below)
	(a) Forest	59,495 ha	72,495 ha	78,046.4 ha. The surface of forest PA's increased by 18,551.4 ha following the creation of the Orhei National Park.	Concur with self-reported assessment. The total area of Orhei National Park is 33,792 ha, of which approximately 55% is forest zone. However, this is another indicator that essentially specifically relates to the establishment of Orhei National Park, and therefore is a strictly "supply-driven" indicator based on the planned activities of the project, rather than a "demand-driven" indicator based on the needs and priorities for the desired normative situation in the country in terms of protected forest area.
	(b) Steppe (including meadows)	1,187 ha	1,405 ha	1262 ha. 75 ha of steppe vegetation were proclaimed as protected area in the south of Moldova in 2011 (expansion of the Medicinal plants steppe reserve Bugeac to 63 ha, and expansion of the area with steppe vegetation in the north of Bugeac from 8 ha to 12 ha). Following the PA re-validation exercise, 26 new PAs (628 ha) containing steppe and meadow vegetation were proposed for creation. To completely achieve this indicator and increase the coverage of steppe PAs the Parliament should approve a new version of the protected area law, which was developed by the project and submitted to the Ministry of Environment at the end of 2012.	Concur with self reported assessment. However, the project did not specifically have activities focusing on steppe PAs, or the concrete practical steps for creation or expansion of steppe PAs. As part of the PA system re-evaluation activity the project did identify sites for potential new steppe PAs.
	Extent (ha) of formally proclaimed IUCN Category V National Park [indicator change from IUCN Category II to IUCN Category V as per MTE recommendations - 2012]	0 ha	20,000 ha	33,792 ha Orhei National Park was established by Parliament decision on 12 July 2013.	Concur with self-reported assessment. The change at the mid-term from a Category II to Category V "National Park" is significant, as Category V represents a significantly lower level of protection, and there is only approximately 1,000 ha of highly restricted core zone. However, in the context of



Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2013	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
					Moldova and the Orhei region, which was the most likely site for establishment of Moldova's first national park, classification as Category V was the only practical and realistic approach given the range of land-use in the region. The interesting question is whether this has established a precedent of national parks in Moldova being classified as Category V, or if other future national parks could be classified at a higher level of protection – such as Codrii Natural/Scientific reserve, which already has a much more restricted land-use.
Outcome 2: The capacity to effectively manage a representative protected area system is strengthened	Number of protected areas with a formally delegated management authority	4	289	313 Orhei National Park was added to the list of PAs from the previous year. According to the Parliament decision it will be managed by the Moldsilva Forest Agency. Of the total of 313 PAs in the PA system, 145 PAs are directly managed by the Moldsilva Forest Agency. The remaining 168 PAs are under authority of Local Public Authorities (LPA).	Concur with self-reported assessment. However, as can be inferred, little has actually changed from the baseline status. The baseline value of four apparently represents the four natural/scientific reserves, which actually have their own administration, in addition to being under the general oversight of Moldsilva.
	Number of protected areas with a capacitated management institution	5	>6 [Target changed from >15 to >6 as per MTE recommendation - 2012]	5 Since the establishment of the Orhei National Park took quite a long time, it is highly unlikely that the park's administration will be formed during the project life. The project developed the Park Regulation and submitted it to the Ministry of Environment. By adopting it, the Government will establish the park administration. According to the previous practice the process takes from 4 to 6 months. Nevertheless, the project will provide all the equipment necessary for park management to its management authority (Moldsilva Forest Agency) and will facilitate trainings in park sustainable management for key stakeholders that will be involved in park management.	Concur with self-reported assessment. Also see notes above. Essentially this relates to the establishment of Orhei National Park, as this is the only PA that will have a newly established management institution as a result of the project.
	Number of protected areas exceeding a METT score of 30	1	>15	296. The METT scorecards were completed in May-June 2013 for all 312 PAs making the PAS, of which 296 existing PAs have a score of more than 30 points. The average METT score is 57 points for the entire system. The METT scores were based on the PA re-assessment sheets.	Concur with self-reported assessment. It is on the one hand impressive that METT scorecards were completed for all 312 PAs. On the other hand, a majority of these PAs are under essentially the same management regimes, either under Moldsilva's general oversight, or under the supervision of Local Public Authorities. The exceptions are the natural/scientific reserves that have their own administrations, plus the newly created Orhei

Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2013	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
					<p>National Park.</p> <p>Further, it is not immediately clear that the project actually influenced the overall level of METT score for the system, other than through the training program (see below). In other words, any change in the overall system-wide average METT score likely has little to do with the results of the project, so far. If the policy and legislative amendments proposed by the project are adopted, this is expected to contribute to an overall longer-term increase in the effectiveness of management of PAs in Moldova.</p> <p>In addition, the rationale for the target value of 30 is completely unclear in terms of what reaching this level would mean in terms of achievement or overall effectiveness of management of Moldova's PAs. If the average METT score of 57 for the system is valid, this represents an impressive level of management effectiveness for a system with relatively low overall level of PA management capacity.</p>
	Number of operational protected area management staff completing specialised training and/or skills development programs	0	30	85 A short-course training programme was developed by the project and included in the Moldsilva Forest Agency learning programme. Two sessions for 52 protected area staff were facilitated in September 2012. 33 persons from central authorities dealing with PA were trained in May 2012.	Concur with self-reported assessment. Although the rationale for the target value is not clear and this is an output-level indicator, the level of participation is actually quite a notable achievement, as it represents a significant share (likely a majority) of people potentially involved in PA "management" (or at least oversight) in Moldova. More importantly, however, is the question of how (or if) these individuals are applying in their jobs any of the information gained during training; this is a follow-up issue that is within the responsibility of Moldsilva.
	Number of residents in and around Orhei that are directly involved in the outreach activities	0	>1000	>1000 Implementation of the outreach programmes in local communities and primary and secondary schools from 18 localities of the NP Orhei started in September 2010 and is on-going activity. At the beginning of 2012, the project subscribed 30 schools from National Park Area to a national environment newspaper for 2012-2013 period. Also project printed and disseminated calendars, posters, brochures, booklets, participated in radio and TV shows at the national level and	Concur with self-reported assessment. The rationale for the target value is not clear, and it is not fully apparent what the level of engagement and participation represents in terms of overall reach for the Orhei area.

Description	Description of Indicator	Baseline Level	Target Level at end of project	Level at 30 June 2013	Terminal Evaluation Assessment
				on Orhei NP area. According to the completed lists of participants 418 pupils attended lessons dedicated to the establishment of the Orhei National Park in the reporting period.	
	Number of residents in and around Orhei that are directly involved in experimental learning activities	0	200	306 One experimental learning programme in the domain of environmental agriculture was implemented during the year (4 in total from the project start) with participation of local agriculture leaders (37 persons). One summer camp was organized for the pupils from the area, attended by 10 girls and 9 boys.	Concur with self-reported assessment. See comments on above indicator.

### C. Remaining Barriers to Effective Management of a Representative System of Protected Areas in Moldova

110. The Moldova PAS project has made a major contribution to the overall foundation for Moldova's protected area system, and its future development and effective management. The results highlighted above are expected to continue contributing positively to the situation of protected areas in Moldova for years to come. At the same time, from the present point of view there remain a number of important issues and barriers that require continued attention and further progress on the path to a national system of effectively managed and representative protected areas. The below list is not comprehensive, but seeks to highlight some of the key areas for priority ongoing work for Moldova's protected area system:

111. Legal Framework – The policy amendments developed and proposed by the project are still to be adopted; approval of the revised law on protected areas would be an important step for strengthening the legal foundation for the protected areas system. This also needs to be further integrated with other relevant legislation, such as the forestry and agriculture laws.

112. Individual and Institutional Capacity – The project made an important contribution to capacity development for effective protected area management, but bringing a fully capable cadre of protected area management staff will require time, and much institutional strengthening work for protected area management is required as well, considering there is no stand-alone protected area management authority.

113. Financing – Financial resources for protected area management in Moldova remain an open question in lieu of the current ad-hoc situation whereby the majority of protected area financing comes through timber extraction. The project developed an options paper on this issue, but an integrated comprehensive approach by the government to ensure sustainable protected area financing has not been developed.

114. Protected areas under Local Public Authority Jurisdiction – While the majority of territory in Moldova's protected area system is managed by Moldsilva, the protected areas under the authority of Local Public Authorities are an important part of the overall protected area system, and are currently lacking a cohesive management approach. There is a need to

further develop effective management approaches for protected areas under the jurisdiction of Local Public Authorities.

115. Consolidation, Expansion, and Representativeness of Protected Area System – The revalidation of the protected area network undertaken by the project produced a set of recommendations for strengthening and expanding the protected area system, but those recommendations remain to be implemented. Moldova's protected area system still only covers 5.6% of the national territory, far short of international and European norms for protected area coverage. In addition, some critical ecosystems, such as wetlands and steppes remain under-represented.

116. Wetlands of International Significance (Ramsar Sites) – Moldova has three key designated Ramsar sites, which are currently lacking a management framework. It is not clear that these sites need their own administrations, but as they represent critical biodiversity areas in Moldova, a structured management arrangement of some nature that supports the biodiversity conservation goals of these areas is required.

## **VI. Key GEF Performance Parameters**

117. Please note that the required discussion of mainstreaming of UNDP program principles is included in Annex 8 to this report.

### **A. Stakeholder Participation**

118. The Moldova PAS project has been characterized by excellent stakeholder participation. All stakeholders met during the terminal evaluation mission expressed their strong appreciation for the work of the project, and were supportive of the project's objectives. Highlights are the depth of engagement and cooperation in the Orhei region at the level of local government, as well as the good working relationships developed with national institutions such as MoE, Moldsilva, and the Academy of Sciences. In addition, civil society has been actively engaged and has contributed to the project in meaningful ways. The involvement of different stakeholder groups is briefly summarized below.

119. *National Government* – MoE was the national executing organization, and Moldsilva was perhaps the most critical project partner. MoE was limited by internal capacity, and political instability, but has been strongly supportive of the project. Moldsilva has been open to and supportive of the project, and has through the project implementation become a willing if not active supporter of Moldova's protected areas – a notable stance for a traditional forestry institution. Since Moldsilva has been designated as the managing authority for the new Orhei National Park, the roles and capacities of these two institutions should continue to develop.

120. Other national government institutions were also engaged in the project through the PSC, such as the agency for Land Relations and Cadastre. Other national government line agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, were not actively engaged, but were not considered critical partners within the scope of this project. Future biodiversity conservation efforts in Moldova, such as the potential future GEF-funded biodiversity mainstreaming project, will need to effectively engage these partners however.

121. *Regional Government* – Orhei Rayon Council was represented on the PSC, and was a supportive stakeholder for the project’s goal of establishing Orhei National Park.

122. *Local Government* – The project actively reached out to and engaged the mayors of the 18 communities in the Orhei region, and good communication and working relationships were developed. This was particularly important in deciding critical issues such as the proposed boundaries of the national park, and developing the draft national park regulations.

123. *Private Sector* – The private sector did not have a large role to play in the scope of this project, though the project did include discussions with private enterprises and entrepreneurs in the Orhei region regarding potential economic development opportunities linked to establishment of the national park, such as ecotourism development and organic agriculture. The project did undertake several seminars on environmentally friendly agriculture in the Orhei region with participation of more than 50 farmers.

124. *Civil Society* – Civil society organizations were actively involved in multiple aspects of the project. The NGO “Ecological Movement of Moldova” participated as a member of the PSC, and also provided inputs to the various public discussions and debates in the framework of the project, such as process for establishing Orhei National Park, and the protected area revalidation process vis-à-vis the “scientific” reserves. The project contracted other NGOs to carry out specific project activities, including the Romania-based ProParks, and the NGO ProRuralInvest, which carried out the project-supported education and awareness activities in the Orhei region in support of establishing the national park.

125. *Local Communities* – The engagement of local communities was mainly relevant in the context of establishing Orhei National Park. Many public meetings were held to gather local community feedback on issues related to establishing the national park. The project’s biodiversity conservation education campaign also directly worked with a majority of schools in the Orhei region. Following the recommendation of the mid-term evaluation, the project undertook additional work to research the socio-economic situation in the Orhei region, and identify potential opportunities for regional development linked to the national park.

126. *Research Institutes* – The Academy of Sciences was represented on the PSC, and numerous experts from the Academy of Sciences provided their inputs to multiple project activities, but especially the protected areas revalidation process (Output 1.1).

127. *Academia* – The project worked with at least three universities to develop curriculum materials on protected areas management.

## **B. Sustainability**

128. While a sustainability rating is provided here as required, sustainability is a temporal and dynamic state that is influenced by a broad range of constantly shifting factors. It should be kept in mind that the important aspect of sustainability of GEF projects is the sustainability of results, not necessarily the sustainability of activities that produced results. In the context of GEF projects there is no clearly defined timeframe for which results should be sustained, although it is implied that they should be sustained indefinitely. When evaluating sustainability, the greater the time horizon, the lower the degree of certainty possible.

129. Based on GEF evaluation policies and procedures, the overall rating for sustainability cannot be higher than the lowest rating for any of the individual components. Therefore the

overall **sustainability** rating for the Moldova PAS project for this terminal evaluation is **moderately likely**.

**i. Financial Risks to Sustainability**

130. The most significant financial risk to the sustainability of the project results relates to the future funding for management and operation of the Orhei National Park, which will be the responsibility of Moldsilva. According to Moldsilva representatives, they have established a specific budget line for Orhei National Park, and have made their request to the Ministry of Finance for approximately 4.7 million MDL (~\$363,000 USD) for 2014 (to be secured in the government mid-term budget framework for the coming three years). Moldsilva has also indicated that of the planned annual budget for Orhei National Park, Moldsilva will itself make up the balance of required funding out of its own annual budget. However, this latter option will likely mean raising funds through forestry activities, possibly within the boundaries of the national park, in the non-core zones, through sanitary cutting, etc. At present it is not anticipated that there will be any increased allocation of funding from the National Environmental Fund or Regional Development Fund. Thus the key question is if, and to what extent, the central government (e.g. Ministry of Finance) will allocate funds for management of the national park. The outlook on this, according to Moldsilva and other project stakeholders, is cautiously optimistic, however issues related to the election in 2014 are already dominating the political agenda. The result may be known before actual project completion, since the parliamentary vote on the annual government budget is expected in November 2013. The project also has retained approximately \$40,000 USD planned for national park administration start-up and support that will be used prior to project completion.

131. There are no significant other aspects of the project results that are heavily dependent on financial aspects. In addition, there are multiple other initiatives starting up or already underway that should support the continuation of some of the project results, such as the Clima East project on grassland management for climate change adaptation, the current project to produce a new NBSAP, and the potential upcoming UNDP-GEF project on mainstreaming biodiversity in territorial planning (for which the PPG has been approved). Therefore, overall sustainability in this respect is considered ***moderately likely***.

**ii. Sociopolitical Risks to Sustainability**

132. The successful engagement of stakeholders from the local to central levels has been one of the strengths of the project, and thus sociopolitical risks to sustainability are limited, and sustainability in this regard is assessed as ***moderately likely***. The first significant concern is the degree to which local support for Orhei National Park will endure, depending on the rapidity with which some benefits from the park become visible, and the extent to which benefits are balanced with new limitations from the national park. Some activities should be seen in 2014 as UNDP implements the Clima East project in the Orhei National Park area, as well as possibilities related to the GEF SGP, and new initiatives funded by other donors. At the central level, although parliament has established the national park, it is still necessary for the government to issue a “decision” that outlines the national park regulations and by-laws, providing the nuts

and bolts of management; the project has produced a draft of this decision and shared it with the government.

133. The second concern is the willingness and capacity of MoE and Moldsilva to take up the project outputs, and integrate them into their work. This includes a wide range of outputs from the project, but specifically the draft law on protected area, and various guidelines and tools for strengthening protected area management. It is hoped that the new National Environmental Strategy can be adopted before elections in 2014 put the government on hold, and the draft law on protected areas could be adopted following approval of the New Law on Environment and National Environmental Strategy for the period 2013-2023. Moldova has had a good deal of political turmoil in recent years, and elections are anticipated again in late 2014; the hope is that the project's results will be consolidated and ensured before political turnover creates any major disruption. The signing of the EU Association Agreement (expected in November 2013) could play a role as well, as approximation of EU Directives in the environment realm (e.g. Habitats and Birds Directives, Water Framework Directive) is foreseen, and implementation actions have to be carried out in the next three to six years.

### iii. Institutional Framework and Governance Risks to Sustainability

134. Moldova's institutional framework related to protected areas is in the midst of an evolution. There is no national protected areas institution, and MoE has extremely limited capacity, with only four people in the division for biodiversity and natural resources, only two of which have some responsibilities related to protected areas. Moldsilva, by default and by logical extension, is the main institution bearing responsibility for actually managing protected areas in the country. Similar situations, with the national forestry agency managing protected areas, are seen in a number of other Eastern European countries, such as Romania and Serbia. Moldsilva is slowly accepting the role of protected area manager, and has internally created a unit (with one person...) for oversight of protected area management. At the field level, forest rangers and forestry engineers assigned to each forest district have responsibility for managing any protected areas within their jurisdiction. In addition, the so-called "scientific reserves" have their own respective administrations under Moldsilva, and are legally registered (including for fiscal purposes) as forest enterprises/companies. Moldsilva also has been given (and accepted) the mandate to manage the newly created Orhei National Park, though a park administration has not yet been created (there is a government deadline of January 12, 2014 for this). Given this situation, the institutional and governance risks to sustainability in the near term are not significant. However, one of the main areas of focus for the project was related to institutional reform of MoE, linked with the institutional structure of Moldsilva. No reform was achieved during the life of the project, but there are multiple proposals in government related to this potential reform; it is not known when or if such reform will take place, and if it does, what the end result will be. Oversight of environmental management at the local level is also a concern, as there are no specific institutional structures among Local Public Authorities at the rayon or community government levels for managing environmental issues, and at present the agricultural division of Orhei Rayon Council is mainly dealing with environmental actions in Orhei region. Considering all of these factors, sustainability of the project results in this respect is considered ***moderately likely***.

#### iv. Environmental Risks to Sustainability

135. There are no acute environmental risks to sustainability, and the remaining threats to biodiversity are much the same as described in the project document. In the Orhei National Park area there are no critical environmental threats, though poaching, climate change, and inefficient water management are issues to be addressed. In addition, there is the issue of some limited woodcutting in the national park territory (based on Moldsilva's historical practice in the four forest districts that make up portions of the national park territory), though this is excluded from the national park core zones. Some forestry activities also take place in the nature / scientific reserves, and throughout all of Moldova's forestlands managed by Moldsilva. This is necessary to provide firewood to the population and secure the resources necessary for forest management. According to project stakeholders, work has started for environmental certification for Moldova's forests, which, once achieved, should help reduce negative environmental consequences of forestry activities. Given this overall situation, environmental aspects of sustainability of the project's results are considered ***moderately likely***.

#### C. Catalytic Role: Replication and Scaling-up

136. The project has at least a few specific catalytic effects, and there is significant replication potential of certain aspects of the project as well. Perhaps the most significant catalytic effect from the project is that Moldsilva is incorporating the project training curricula on protected areas and protected area management into its institutional professional development program, which is available for all Moldsilva staff. This is an excellent result, and will ensure sustainability of this part of the project. Having Moldsilva staff participating annually in training programs specifically on protected areas will help to continue increasing protected area management capacity in Moldova, and should bring continued prominence to protected areas within Moldsilva's overall responsibilities that are primarily focused on forestry activities.

137. Another critical result that should have catalytic effects is the extensive work in re-evaluation of the protected area network (see results Section V.A.i, above), which will inform Moldova's future national protected areas system development strategy. Although the government has not yet taken up the project's proposals on institutional reform and governance for protected areas, and not yet passed a new protected areas law, the project inputs on these elements will inform the eventual government outcomes.

138. The project did have an active or "direct" replication plan, as outlined in the project document, though this has proven to be far too ambitious, and no specific aspects of the project have yet been replicated. The project document replication target was that *"By year 4, it is anticipated that national park establishment processes will be at varying stages of replication in four priority areas for PA expansion in Moldova, at least two of which would have the scientific reserves forming the core area of these national parks."* Although it could be said that the national park establishment process is at "varying stages" of replication for four other priority areas, in reality few practical steps have been taken. According to government plans and strategies however, it is expected that the process for establishing another national park will get underway in 2014 (likely for the Lower Dniester), and a third will follow in 2015 (Codrii Reserve). In the establishment of these national parks, the community-based, highly participatory and communication-driven approach pursued in Orhei should be replicated.



## **D. Project Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation**

139. The Moldova PAS project monitoring and evaluation plan is outlined in the project document (Part IV, pp. 32-35), and describes the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to monitoring and evaluation activities, including project oversight and reporting. The monitoring and evaluation plan includes the standard summary table of monitoring and evaluation activities, indicating timeframes and indicative budgets for each activity. Overall the M&E plan is based on standard UNDP-GEF project M&E procedures, and conforms to UNDP and GEF minimum standards and norms for project M&E. The M&E plan includes: inception workshop and report, Annual Progress Report/Progress Implementation Report (APR/PIR), PSC meetings and minutes, technical reports (particularly for informing progress toward indicator targets), supervision field missions, independent mid-term and terminal evaluations, a terminal report, and an annual audit. The total indicative cost of the M&E plan is \$77,850, which is adequate for a project of this size, equating to 8.2% of the total GEF allocation; however, the project document does not indicate if the entire M&E budget will be covered by GEF resources or also partly funded by partner co-financing. In addition, many of the M&E costs overlap with other basic project management and technical activities, and thus many M&E activities do not constitute a separate budget line; however, costs associated with the independent mid-term and terminal evaluations do.

140. The M&E plan does not include a specific line item on lessons learned, though lessons are covered in the mid-term and terminal evaluations, and in the “knowledge management” section of the annual PIR. However, it would be helpful if a comprehensive set of lessons identified by the project team and stakeholders were clearly articulated and documented in the project terminal report or specific lessons notes.

141. The M&E plan has mostly been implemented as planned, with key activities taking place at the expected timeframes. For example, the PSC meetings have been regularly held, and project reporting (i.e. PIRs, annual reports, PSC minutes) has been timely and comprehensive. UNDP supervision missions have taken place as appropriate. The mid-term evaluation was slightly delayed to accommodate the change in project managers that took place at that time. The project has not had an annual audit, but this is in-line with UNDP Moldova Country Office procedures: The country office is audited annually, and specific projects may be selected for audits within the context of that audit. As such, the Moldova PAS project has actually only been audited once, and this audit found no major issues in the project financial management.

142. The project mid-term evaluation included four main recommendations, and 15 additional specific recommendations. In the assessment of this evaluation the project fully and adequately followed-up on the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation. A detailed assessment of this element is included as Annex 6 of this evaluation report.

143. A key element of the project M&E system is the project logframe with indicators and targets supporting a results-oriented implementation approach. According to GEF and UNDP guidelines, logframe indicators are supposed to meet “SMART” criteria. The design of the Moldova PAS logframe indicators and targets are not fully adequate to meet SMART criteria, or to support the results-oriented execution of the project, though fortunately the project team has nonetheless pursued a results-oriented approach. For example, multiple indicators under

Outcome 2 are “output-based”, which do not give sufficient insight into the achievement of actual changes at the outcome level or beyond: the number of staff trained, and the number of residents involved in outreach and learning activities. Further, under both Outcome 1 and 2 there are indicators that attempt to be results-based (e.g. hectares of steppe ecosystem under protection) but which are not directly relevant to project activities.

144. The logframe does include the GEF Tracking Tool for Strategic Priority 1 of the biodiversity focal area, the Protected Areas METT. METT scores were calculated for 312 protected areas, based on the data collected during the project’s protected area network re-evaluation. The logframe target relating to the METT is for more than 15 protected areas to have a METT score greater than 30, though the rationale for this target is completely unclear in terms of what it means or represents as an achievement for the project or for Moldova’s protected area system as a whole. Based on the METT score calculation exercise, 296 out of 312 protected areas have a METT score greater than 30, with the average score being 57.

## **E. Project Impacts and Global Environmental Benefits**

145. For the GEF biodiversity focal area project impacts are defined as documented changes in environmental status of species, ecosystems or genetic biodiversity resources. Global Environmental Benefits in the biodiversity focal area have not been explicitly defined, but are generally considered to involve sustained impact level results of a certain scale or significance. In the Moldova PAS project document the specific global environmental benefits to be achieved are not specifically summarized, but broadly focus on the conservation and sustainable use of Moldova’s globally significant biodiversity. According to the project document, the project’s overall goals in this regard include “mitigating the threats to the biodiversity contained in at least 176,000 ha of protected areas of Moldova” and “extending and enhancing protection status to at least 15,000 ha” of terrestrial ecosystems.

146. The project logframe did not include specific impact-level indicators, such as species-based indicators, or ecosystem extent/quality indicators. The logframe does include outcome level indicators such as overall protected area coverage and protected area coverage of specific ecosystems such as forests and steppes. According to project stakeholders, there is adequate biodiversity monitoring data to provide an overall picture of trends in biodiversity in Moldova. Further collection, collation, and analysis of this data is currently being undertaken for the next publication of the Red List of Moldova, expected in 2014. According to project stakeholders, there are some positive trends, such as increases in certain bird populations, although the overall number of species on Moldova’s Red List is expected to increase (though this may be partially due to increased availability of data and research conducted). In some of the protected areas there are specific bright spots – for example, Codrii Reserve supports 20 individuals in its population of European wild cat, though the theoretical carrying capacity of the reserve is only ~12 individuals.

147. There are few, if any, specific impact-level results from the project at this point in time. The project strategy focused on strengthening the overall system of protected areas and supporting their effective management, and under this strategy the theoretical results chain dictates that impact-level results would only be produced once the project outcomes have been reached and improvements in management have been seen over time. The project did not

invest in specific small-scale field-based biodiversity conservation activities, which could easily generate some site-based impact-level results, but which would have little strategic or systemic value. Based on the fact that key project outcomes have been achieved (e.g. establishment of a protection regime covering 33,792 ha in Orhei; increased capacity for management of protected areas), it is anticipated that with time the project will contribute to the generation of biodiversity conservation impacts, and associated global benefits. At the same time, there are still a number of barriers in Moldova for a well-managed effective system of protected areas that conserves biodiversity, as briefly summarized in Section V.C above.

148. Ultimately the project's impact will need to be assessed years in the future to appropriately consider how the results produced by the Moldova PAS project have contributed to Moldova's protected area system, and if this system is adequately supporting biodiversity conservation.

## **VII. Main Lessons Learned and Recommendations**

149. Note that the main conclusions of this evaluation are contained in the discussions under each of the main evaluation criteria in the earlier sections of the report.

### **A. Lessons from the Experience of the Moldova PAS Project**

150. Below are lessons considered by the evaluation team to be some of the more significant lessons drawn from the project experience, but should not necessarily be considered comprehensive. The project team and stakeholders should continue analyzing and drawing on the project experience to identify additional or more comprehensive lessons, and support dissemination of these lessons through documentation in knowledge products.

151. **Lesson 1:** One of the important elements for the success of the Moldova PAS project was working with non-traditional partners, like Moldsilva, that are somewhat more insulated from political instability than line agencies like MoE. GEF projects are country-driven, and must have a government institution as a national executing partner, but some government institutions suffer from weak institutional capacity, and their work can be significantly disrupted by political turmoil, which is almost guaranteed over the three to four year life of the average GEF project, since such timeframe usually span at least one election cycle. Thus to increase the chance of achieving practical results on the ground, it is important to diversify the range of project partners and to be prepared to work opportunistically with those partners best positioned to contribute to results at a given point in time.

152. **Lesson 2:** Broad local support necessary for establishing national parks in Moldova, and a well-developed strategy is required early on in the process for successfully securing local support. A strong information and communication campaign is necessary, as local communities often get information internally, and it can be difficult to identify local opinion leaders. It is important to come with positive examples and success stories that are relevant to the local situation to support an information campaign for national park establishment. For additional information on this lesson see Box 2 below, from the internal project documentation.

## Box 2. Key Lesson: The Importance of Working with Local Communities

For the first time, after more than 20 years after the country's independence and two failed initiatives, a National Park was established in Moldova. The success was achieved in close collaboration with local public authorities and the local population, assisted by a targeted awareness programme. The major challenge at the beginning of the project was a weak understanding of the concept of national park by the local public authorities and local population. The bottom-top approach (from local people to politicians) was a success in the establishment the Orhei National Park, compare to the top-down approach applied in the previous two attempts. During the implementation period, the project supported several biodiversity friendly activities in the area (e.g. tree planting in one of the landslide zones in one village and contribution to a community park creation), activities that increased considerably the trust of communities in the park. With the support from the project, the Local Public Authorities and Central Public Authorities (Forest Agency "Moldsilva", the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction and the Tourism Agency) developed and started implementation of a regional project for sustainable tourism development in the Orhei National Park area. Also, an EC funded project was launched in support of biodiversity friendly activities in the national park area, triggered by the ground work of the GEF project: "Clima-East - Sustainable management of pastures and community forests in Moldova's first Orhei National Park to demonstrate climate change mitigation and adaptation benefits and dividends for local communities".

Source: 2013 PIR

153. **Lesson 3:** The Moldova PAS project was able to involve media representatives in some project activities, including having them participate in the study tour to Romania. This involvement was critical to garner favorable media exposure for establishing the Orhei National Park. Media in various forms and at various levels can be an important ally, and projects need to establish positive relationships and communication channels to support their objectives.

154. **Lesson 4:** It was originally foreseen that through the protected area system revalidation process the Moldova PAS project would be able to secure official land cadastre registration for the boundaries of Moldova's protected areas. However, it was discovered that the anticipated cadastre work is expensive and is generally not realistic for a project to undertake except at very small scales. While the specifics of each country and circumstance may vary, similar experiences have been found in other GEF projects in the region in countries such as Russia. Thus, while official land cadastre registration is critically important in the long-term, it would be preferable for projects to find alternative practical means of achieving similar goals rather than to plan to secure official cadastre registration beyond very small scales and high priority sites.

## B. Recommendations

155. The recommendations from this terminal evaluation are provided below, with the targeted audiences included in brackets after each recommendation. Although the project is ending, there is still scope for recommendations to be followed-up by the project partners and UNDP. In addition to the recommendations relating to the sustainability and results of the project, there are a number of opportunities for future work building on the successes of the project. This evaluation highlights a number of opportunities below, immediately following the recommendations.

156. **Recommendation 1:** As the Government of Moldova is in the process of considering an institutional restructuring of the Ministry of Environment and Moldsilva with the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency as a subdivision of the MoE, based on the positive process and results achieved under the PAS project, UNDP should continue supporting the

government to identify an institutional structure that fully supports the needs and priorities of the protected area system, and that will ensure sustainability of the results of this project in the near term. In this line, the Government of Moldova should within one year of completion of this project seek the support of UNDP and other key partners in identifying pros and cons of various institutional structures, as well as identifying any critical issues with respect to protected areas management. [Government of Moldova, MoE, Moldsilva, UNDP]

157. **Recommendation 2:** To ensure the sustainability of the historic establishment of Orhei National Park, the Government of Moldova should immediately take the necessary steps to fully support establishment and operationalization of the national park. These include: 1.) Adopting the draft government decision outlining the national park regulations and by-laws; 2.) Approving the necessary government financing for start-up and functioning of the national park administration (as requested in Moldsilva's requested specific budget line); 3.) Adopt the draft National Environmental Strategy 2013-2023 to provide a sound overarching policy framework; and 4.) Subsequently adopt the draft legislation on protected areas to provide the specific policy basis for the management context for the national park. [Government of Moldova]

158. **Recommendation 3:** Now that the Orhei National Park has been established with strong community-based support, it is imperative that the park begins quickly fulfilling its mission as part of a vision of sustainable development for the communities in the region, to ensure that the community-level support earned thus far remains strong. As such, it is critical to establish the national park administration by the January 2014 government deadline, and for all key stakeholders (Moldsilva, UNDP, MoE) to prepare to implement some initial on-the-ground activities in the 2014 summer season that will demonstrate the environmental and economic benefits to which the national park can contribute. This should be feasible with implementation of the Clima East project (funded by the EU and implemented by UNDP), as well as the possible tourism development project submitted to the Regional Development Fund, but should also be taken up by the national park administration that is to be established. Activities in the area could be further supported, for example, through financial incentives for organic agriculture. [UNDP, Moldsilva, MoE, Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, Regional Development Agency (central office), Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry]

159. **Recommendation 4:** Relating to the previous recommendations, there must a continuation of the multi-stakeholder approach for management of Orhei National Park. Broad engagement at the local level and bottom-up support has been the key for successful establishment of the national park; now that this historic moment has been reached, this community-based approach, ensuring cooperation and communication, must be continued; the management structures proposed for the national park appear to support such an approach, and management must be undertaken in this spirit. This collaborative approach should also be disseminated and replicated to serve as a model for future potential national parks in Moldova, including for the Lower Dniester and Codrii sites. [Moldsilva, MoE]

160. **Recommendation 5:** UNDP should support the GEF SGP in Moldova to take advantage of new opportunities for small grant support in the Orhei National Park region. While the SGP does not need to have a specific national geographic focus, it appears that the establishment of the national park will lead to increased opportunities and absorption capacity for small grants support. SGP should take advantage of this opportunity to synergize and link with the range of

other initiatives connected with the establishment and implementation of the national park. This will also strengthen the local environmental or community development NGOs and bring the national park area into the focus of national NGOs, which could bring additional capacities and resources. [UNDP, GEF SGP in Moldova]

161. **Recommendation 6:** To support sustainability and consolidation of the PAS project results prior to project completion, the main project partners should pay particular attention to the following items of the project workplan:

- a. Develop a plan for more detailed data entry of the protected area “passport” PDF files into the protected areas database to develop a fully text-searchable geo-spatially linked resource. This could be potentially further supported under the potential upcoming biodiversity mainstreaming/territorial planning PPG (or later the project itself) to ensure that the protected areas data can be integrated with the territorial planning process. [Project team, MoE]
- b. Develop an exit strategy relating to the protected area guidelines produced by the project, in collaboration with the protected areas unit of Moldsilva. The project produced a set of six guidelines documents relating to various aspects of protected area management, which are an excellent resource. There are plans to disseminate these materials to relevant stakeholders in Moldsilva and elsewhere, but considering the density and technical nature of these documents (covering more than 500 pages in total) there needs to be a program in place to ensure the uptake and implementation of the guidelines by the relevant staff involved with protected area management. This could be linked with Moldsilva’s incorporation of the project training courses into its annual professional development curriculum. [UNDP, Project team, Moldsilva]
- c. Develop a training monitoring program for follow-up on the trainings conducted under the project to assess the long-term uptake and application of the project trainings. [UNDP, Moldsilva]
- d. UNDP (at the regional/global level) should also work to improve capacity development indicators to move beyond simple output indicators (e.g. number of people participating in a training) to a results-based approach that more effectively assesses the uptake and application of individual-level capacity development activities. [UNDP]
- e. Ensure production, publication, and dissemination to government and other key stakeholders of the protected areas gap analysis and future strategic prioritization. Planning for future development of the protected area system should be a consultative process in any account, and a national workshop to discuss the outputs of the PAS project in this regard could be useful. [Project team]

162. **Recommendation 7:** The key project partners should work with Ministry of Education to ensure the incorporation of Orhei National Park into educational publications to be printed in the 2015 cycle, especially for Orhei area, but also nationally. The educational materials to be produced in the 2015 cycle can incorporate both in the curricula and in manuals relevant content from the education and awareness materials previously produced by the project. This should be feasible considering that there has already been some cooperation between education-sector representatives and the project during project implementation. Steps will

need to be taken in the first half of 2014 to ensure incorporation in the 2015 cycle. [Project Team, Moldsilva, MoE, Ministry of Education]

163. **Opportunity 1:** There is an excellent opportunity to develop a working partnership between the MoE, Moldsilva, and the Regional Development Authority to include the existence of protected areas in the criteria applied to allocate regional development funding. UNDP's expertise may be of use in establishing such a partnership. This approach would increase the value communities see in protected areas, and would help catalyze some concrete benefits for sustainable development in the vicinity of protected areas. PAS project stakeholders also highlighted the potential need for information exchanges/study tours to municipalities in neighboring countries that have experience working protected areas within or at the margins of their jurisdictions. Examples of this arrangement (in sites from previous UNDP-GEF projects) can be found in the towns and villages around Macin Mountains National Park in southeastern Romania, and in Pripyat-Stokhid Nature Reserve in northern Ukraine. This issue could also be highlighted at the meetings of the Sector Coordination Council, composed of major governmental agencies and development partners. [MoE, Moldsilva, Regional Development Authority, UNDP]

164. **Opportunity 2:** With the establishment of Orhei National Park, there is an opportunity to initiate a feasibility study for a Orhei National Park-specific local eco-label for products produced in the region in an environmentally friendly manner. Such a licensing/certification scheme could be a valuable component of the overall strategy to generate increased economic benefits related to the establishment of the national park. There are numerous examples of such schemes in Eastern Europe, including from previous UNDP-GEF projects. These include:

- a. "Barycz Valley Recommends" Regional Brand and Trademark (Barycz River Valley, Poland) - <http://www.dbpoleca.barycz.pl/>.
- b. "Beskydy Original Product" Regional Brand and Trademark (Moravia, Czech Republic) - <http://www.regionalni-znacky.cz/beskydy/>.
- c. "Living Tisza" Regional Brand and Trademark (Tisza River Valley, Hungary) - <http://www.elotisza.hu/>.
- d. Additional information and examples on regional branding in Europe can be found at <http://www.regional-products.eu/>.

165. **Opportunity 3:** The Orhei National Park is fortuitously positioned with a number of functioning monasteries on its boundaries. This circumstance presents an excellent opportunity for the development of a partnership between faith organizations and the Orhei National Park to support nature conservation. There are a number of international initiatives that could provide information and guidance on developing such partnerships, and realizing the potential synergies. Examples include WWF's Sacred Earth initiative - <http://worldwildlife.org/initiatives/sacred-earth-faiths-for-conservation>, and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) - <http://www.arcworld.org/>.

166. **Opportunity 4:** Access to capital is a significant issue for community-driven local sustainable development in Moldova, and there is an important opportunity to stimulate sustainable development through access to capital programs. UNDP, international donors, and the government should explore development of such programs – the Green Business Support

Program (GBSP) of the recently completed UNDP Croatia COAST project provides an excellent example of a successful partial loan guarantee and interest rate subsidy program. See [http://www.hr.undp.org/content/croatia/en/home/operations/projects/environment\\_and\\_energy/COAST/](http://www.hr.undp.org/content/croatia/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/COAST/).

167. **Opportunity 5:** There is a need to continue increasing local awareness about the nature values of Orhei National Park, as well as to increase the data available about ecological status and trends of the nature in the national park. A good mechanism supporting both of these objectives is community-based monitoring. Community-based environmental monitoring programs are often done in relation to water quality monitoring, but can also be developed for a wider range of factors. Such programs can be a cost-effective means for education and awareness building, as well as gathering some useful ecological data. However, successful startup and implementation of such a program does require significant logistical and organizational effort. Two examples of such programs are:

- a. Georgia (USA) Adopt-a-Stream program, which currently has more than 3,000 volunteers monitoring waters across the state - <http://www.georgiaadoptastream.com/db/Default.asp>
- b. The Cook Inletkeeper Citizen's Environmental Monitoring Program (Alaska, USA) - <http://inletkeeper.org/clean-water/citizen-monitoring>.

**Opportunity 6:** Now that the PAS project has identified and re-evaluated the protected areas throughout Moldova, there is a need to move toward more active management of some areas. This includes those areas under the jurisdiction of Local Public Authorities, which often do not have the priority or capacity to manage such protected areas. In some countries (e.g. Romania) an approach has been developed whereby a "custodial" organization that does have the interest and capacity (such as an NGO, or university) is identified, and entrusted with the responsibility of managing the protected area. According to the PAS project stakeholders, such an approach is provided for in the current draft of the new legislation on protected areas. This model could be supported and implemented, even ahead of the adoption of the legislation (which may take some time). Presumably implementing such an arrangement could be accomplished on an individual protected area basis through written agreements between Local Public Authorities and respective custodial organizations.



## **VIII. Annexes**

Annex 1: Evaluation Terms of Reference

Annex 2: GEF Operational Principles

Annex 3: Evaluation Matrix

Annex 4: Interview Guide

Annex 5: Final GEF SO-1 Tracking Tools

Annex 6: Follow-up of Mid-term Evaluation Recommendations

Annex 7: Evaluation Itinerary and List of Persons Interviewed

Annex 8: Assessment of Mainstreaming of UNDP Program Principles

## Annex 1: Terminal Evaluation Terms of Reference

*Note: For space considerations and to avoid repetition Annexes A, C, E, F, and G of the TORs have not been included.*

### INTRODUCTION

In accordance with UNDP and GEF M&E policies and procedures, all full and medium-sized UNDP support GEF financed projects are required to undergo a terminal evaluation upon completion of implementation. These terms of reference (TOR) sets out the expectations for a Terminal Evaluation (TE) of the project *Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System of Moldova* (PIMS 4016)

The essentials of the project to be evaluated are as follows:

### PROJECT SUMMARY TABLE

Project Title:		Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the Protected Area System of Moldova		
GEF Project ID: UNDP-GEF PIMS:	3675 4016		<u>at endorsement (US\$)</u>	<u>at completion (US\$)</u>
UNDP proj. num.: Atlas Project ID: Atlas Output ID:	50699 62742	GEF financing:	950,000	950,000
Country:	Republic of Moldova	IA/EA own:	22,850	45,000
Region:	Europe and CIS	Government:	882,820	935,620
Focal Area:	Biodiversity	Other (Local Public Authorities):	130,000	130,000
FA Objectives, (OP/SP):	SP1	Total co-financing:	1,035,670	1,110,620
Executing Agency:	Ministry of Environment	Total Project Cost:	1,985,670	2,060,620
Other Partners involved:	"Moldsilva" Forest Agency, Local public Authorities	ProDoc Signature (date project began):		14.04.2009
		(Operational) Closing Date:	Proposed: 31 May 2013	Actual: 31 December 2013

### OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The project was designed to: build the capacity of protected area institutions in Moldova to more effectively establish and administer a representative system of protected areas in Moldova. It will seek to achieve this by: (i) reviewing, revising and reforming the conservation management tenure of the current protected areas; (ii) developing a strategic and operational decision-support tool to support the ongoing consolidation and expansion of the national protected area system; (iii) piloting the establishment of a national park, the first in Moldova, in the Orhei district as a mechanism to rationalize and expand existing, but spatially and institutionally fragmented, protected areas; (iv) reforming and restructuring the governance of, and institutional arrangements for, protected areas; (v) developing national norms and standards, operational guidelines and financing mechanisms for the PAS; (vi) developing protected area planning and management competence and skills of professional and technical staff in the protected area institutions; (vii) designing a national strategic framework for coordinating the implementation of conservation education and awareness programmes; and (viii) implementation of a focused

outreach program in and around Orhei to support the piloted establishment of the National Park in the Orhei district.

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

The TE will be conducted according to the guidance, rules and procedures established by UNDP and GEF as reflected in the UNDP Evaluation Guidance for GEF Financed Projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achievement of project results, and to draw lessons that can both improve the sustainability of benefits from this project, and aid in the overall enhancement of UNDP programming.

## EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHOD

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An overall approach and method<sup>11</sup> for conducting project terminal evaluations of UNDP supported GEF financed projects has developed over time. The evaluator is expected to frame the evaluation effort using the criteria of **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact**, as defined and explained in the UNDP Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-supported, GEF-financed Projects. A set of questions covering each of these criteria have been drafted and are included with this TOR ([Annex C](#)). The evaluator is expected to amend, complete and submit this matrix as part of an evaluation inception report, and shall include it as an annex to the final report.

The evaluation must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful. The evaluator is expected to follow a participatory and consultative approach ensuring close engagement with government counterparts, in particular the GEF operational focal point, UNDP Country Office, project team, UNDP GEF Technical Adviser based in the region and key stakeholders. The evaluator is expected to conduct a field mission to *Chisinau, Republic of Moldova*, including the following project sites: *Orhei National Park area and other major protected areas (as required)*. Interviews will be held with the following organizations and individuals at a minimum:

- UNDP Moldova CO
- Ministry of Environment
- "Moldsilva" Forest Agency
- Academy of Science
- Local Public Authorities from Orhei Region at the District and Local levels
- NGO "Ecological Movement of Moldova" and/or other NGO's
- Administration of one of the major protected areas (e.g. Codrui Reserve)

The evaluator will review all relevant sources of information, such as the project document, project reports – including Annual APR/PIR, project budget revisions, midterm review, progress reports, GEF focal area tracking tools, project files, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the evaluator considers useful for this evidence-based assessment. A list of documents that the project team will provide to the evaluator for review is included in [Annex B](#) of this Terms of Reference.

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<sup>11</sup> For additional information on methods, see the [Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results](#), Chapter 7, pg. 163

## EVALUATION CRITERIA & RATINGS

An assessment of project performance will be carried out, based against expectations set out in the Project Logical Framework/Results Framework (see [Annex A](#)), which provides performance and impact indicators for project implementation along with their corresponding means of verification. The evaluation will at a minimum cover the criteria of: **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact**. Ratings must be provided on the following performance criteria. The completed table must be included in the evaluation executive summary. The obligatory rating scales are included in [Annex D](#).

Evaluation Ratings:			
1. Monitoring and Evaluation	rating	2. IA& EA Execution	rating
M&E design at entry		Quality of UNDP Implementation	
M&E Plan Implementation		Quality of Execution - Executing Agency	
Overall quality of M&E		Overall quality of Implementation / Execution	
3. Assessment of Outcomes	rating	4. Sustainability	rating
Relevance		Financial resources:	
Effectiveness		Socio-political:	
Efficiency		Institutional framework and governance:	
Overall Project Outcome Rating		Environmental :	
		Overall likelihood of sustainability:	

## PROJECT FINANCE / COFINANCE

The Evaluation will assess the key financial aspects of the project, including the extent of co-financing planned and realized. Project cost and funding data will be required, including annual expenditures. Variances between planned and actual expenditures will need to be assessed and explained. Results from recent financial audits, as available, should be taken into consideration. The evaluator(s) will receive assistance from the Country Office (CO) and Project Team to obtain financial data in order to complete the co-financing table below, which will be included in the terminal evaluation report.

Co-financing (type/source)	UNDP own financing (mill. US\$)		Government (mill. US\$)		Partner Agency (mill. US\$)		Total (mill. US\$)	
	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	Actual	Actual
Grants								
Loans/Concessions								
• In-kind support								
• Other								
Totals								

## MAINSTREAMING

UNDP supported GEF financed projects are key components in UNDP country programming, as well as regional and global programmes. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project was successfully mainstreamed with other UNDP priorities, including poverty alleviation, improved governance, the prevention and recovery from natural disasters, and gender.

## IMPACT

The evaluators will assess the extent to which the project is achieving impacts or progressing towards the achievement of impacts. Key findings that should be brought out in the evaluations include whether the project

has demonstrated: a) verifiable improvements in ecological status, b) verifiable reductions in stress on ecological systems, and/or c) demonstrated progress towards these impact achievements.<sup>12</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS

The evaluation report must include a chapter providing a set of **conclusions, recommendations** and **lessons**.

## IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this evaluation resides with the UNDP CO in the Republic of Moldova. The UNDP CO will contract the evaluators and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the evaluation team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the Evaluators team to set up stakeholder interviews, arrange field visits, coordinate with the Government etc.

## EVALUATION TIMEFRAME

The total duration of the evaluation will be 20 days according to the following plan:

Activity	Timing	Completion Date
<b>Preparation</b>	4 days	August 30
<b>Evaluation Mission</b>	6 days	September 16 – 21
<b>Draft Evaluation Report</b>	8 days	October 08
<b>Final Report</b>	2 days	October 31

## EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team is expected to deliver the following:

Deliverable	Content	Timing	Responsibilities
<b>Inception Report</b>	Evaluator provides clarifications on timing and method	No later than 2 weeks before the evaluation mission.	Evaluator submits to UNDP CO
<b>Presentation</b>	Initial Findings	End of evaluation mission	To project management, UNDP CO
<b>Draft Final Report</b>	Full report, (per annexed template) with annexes	Within 3 weeks of the evaluation mission	Sent to CO, reviewed by RTA, PCU, GEF OFPs
<b>Final Report*</b>	Revised report	Within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft	Sent to CO for uploading to UNDP ERC.

\*When submitting the final evaluation report, the evaluator is required also to provide an 'audit trail', detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final evaluation report.

## TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team will be composed of one international and one national evaluator. The consultants shall have prior experience in evaluating similar projects. Experience with GEF financed projects is an advantage. The international evaluator will be designated as the team leader and will be responsible for finalizing the evaluation report. The evaluators selected should not have participated in the project preparation and/or implementation and should not have conflict of interest with project related activities.

<sup>12</sup> A useful tool for gauging progress to impact is the Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) method developed by the GEF Evaluation Office: [ROtI Handbook 2009](#)

The Team members must present the following qualifications:

- Minimum 7 years of relevant professional experience
- Knowledge of UNDP and GEF
- Previous experience with results-based monitoring and evaluation methodologies;
- Technical knowledge in the targeted focal area(s)
- Fluent in English both written and spoken; Knowledge of Russian or Romanian will be a strong asset

## EVALUATOR ETHICS

Evaluation consultants will be held to the highest ethical standards and are required to sign a Code of Conduct (Annex E) upon acceptance of the assignment. UNDP evaluations are conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the [UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations'](#)

## PAYMENT MODALITIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

The consultants will be hired for maximum 20 days under Individual Contract (IC) with maximum 14 days of home-based work and maximum 6 days of mission to Moldova. DSA payments will be made based actual days spent in Moldova in according to local DSA rate. Fee payments will be made based on following milestones:

%	Milestone
10%	At contract signing
40%	Following submission and approval of the 1ST draft terminal evaluation report
50%	Following submission and approval (UNDP-CO and UNDP RTA) of the final terminal evaluation report

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants are requested to apply online (<http://jobs.undp.org> and [http://www.undp.md/jobs/current\\_jobs](http://www.undp.md/jobs/current_jobs)) by May 24. Individual consultants are invited to submit applications together with their CV for these positions. The application should contain a current and complete C.V. in English with indication of the e-mail and phone contact. Shortlisted candidates will be requested to submit a price offer indicating the total cost of the assignment (including daily fee, per diem and travel costs).

UNDP applies a fair and transparent selection process that will take into account the competencies/skills of the applicants as well as their financial proposals. Qualified women and members of social minorities are encouraged to apply.

Annex A: Project Logical Framework

Annex B: List of Documents to be Reviewed

1. Project document and its annexes;
2. MTE report
3. Project Inception Report;
4. Annual/Quarter work plans;
5. Project financial work plans and expenditure reports;
6. Annual/Quarter operational and progress reports;
7. 2010, 2011 and 2012 UNDP/GEF Project Implementation Reviews (PIR);
8. Minutes of the PSC meetings;
9. Minutes of the stakeholder meetings;
10. 2011 and 2012 Mission reports of the RTS on BD, UNDP RBEC;

11. Mission Reports of International Experts;
12. Reports of International and National Experts
13. Media information;
14. Research results, Maps;
15. Protected area legislation
16. METT and Financial scores for initially assessed PAs
17. GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policies;
18. Handbook on planning, monitoring and evaluating for development results;
19. Other upon request

Annex C: Evaluation Questions

Annex D: Rating Scales

<b><i>Ratings for Outcomes, Effectiveness, Efficiency, M&amp;E, Implementation and Execution</i></b>  6: Highly Satisfactory (HS): no shortcomings 5: Satisfactory (S): minor shortcomings 4: Moderately Satisfactory (MS): moderate shortcomings 3: Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU): significant shortcomings 2: Unsatisfactory (U): major problems 1: Highly Unsatisfactory (HU): severe problems	<b><i>Sustainability Ratings</i></b>  4. Likely (L): negligible risks to sustainability 3. Moderately Likely (ML): moderate risks 2. Moderately Unlikely (MU): significant risks 1. Unlikely (U): severe risks	<b><i>Relevance Ratings</i></b>  2. Relevant (R) 1. Not relevant (NR)  <b><i>Impact Ratings</i></b> 3. Significant (S): Large-scale impacts 2. Minimal (M): Site-based impacts 1. Negligible (N): Little or no impacts
<b><i>Additional ratings where appropriate</i></b> Not Applicable (N/A) Unable to Assess (U/A)		

Annex E: Evaluation Consultant Code of Conduct and Agreement Form

Annex F: Evaluation Report Outline

Annex G: Evaluation Report Clearance Form

## Annex 2: Evaluation Criteria and Matrix

### Primary GEF and UNDP Evaluation Criteria<sup>13</sup>

<b>Relevance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.</li> <li>The extent to which the project is in line with the GEF Operational Programs or strategic priorities under which the project was funded.</li> <li>Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it will be achieved.</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible; also called cost-effectiveness or efficacy.</li> </ul>
<b>Results</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen changes to and effects produced by a development intervention.</li> <li>In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs, short to medium-term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other local effects.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion.</li> <li>Projects need to be environmentally, as well as financially and socially sustainable.</li> </ul>

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<b>Evaluation Criteria: Relevance</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project's objective align with the priorities of the local government and local communities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of local stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local stakeholders</li> <li>Document review of local development strategies, environmental policies, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local level field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project's objective fit within the national environment and development priorities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of coherence between project objective and national policy priorities and strategies, as stated in official documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National policy documents, such as National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Capacity Self-Assessment, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>National level interviews</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> Source: UNDP. 2012. "Project-level Evaluation: Guidance for Conducting Terminal Evaluations of UNDP-Supported, GEF-financed Projects."



Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project concept originate from local or national stakeholders, and/or were relevant stakeholders sufficiently involved in project development?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of involvement of local and national stakeholders in project origination and development (number of meetings held, project development processes incorporating stakeholder input, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Local and national stakeholders</li> <li>Project documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project objective fit GEF strategic priorities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of coherence between project objective and GEF strategic priorities (including alignment of relevant focal area indicators)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GEF strategic priority documents for period when project was approved</li> <li>Current GEF strategic priority documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did the project's objective support implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity? Other relevant MEAs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linkages between project objective and elements of the CBD, such as key articles and programs of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBD website</li> <li>National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Criteria: Efficiency</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the project cost-effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality and adequacy of financial management procedures (in line with GEF Agency and national policies, legislation, and procedures)</li> <li>Financial delivery rate vs. expected rate</li> <li>Management costs as a percentage of total costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were expenditures in line with international standards and norms?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of project inputs and outputs relative to norms and standards for donor projects in the country or region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the project implementation approach efficient for delivering the planned project results?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequacy of implementation structure and mechanisms for coordination and communication</li> <li>Planned and actual level of human resources available</li> <li>Extent and quality of engagement with relevant partners</li> <li>Quality and adequacy of project monitoring mechanisms (oversight bodies' input, quality and timeliness of reporting, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>National and local stakeholders</li> <li>Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> <li>Interviews with national and local stakeholders</li> </ul>

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was the project implementation delayed? If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project milestones in time</li> <li>Planned results affected by delays</li> <li>Required project adaptive management measures related to delays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of cash and in-kind co-financing relative to expected level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amount of resources leveraged relative to project budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Desk review</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the project objectives likely to be met? To what extent are they likely to be met?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of progress toward project indicator targets relative to expected level at current point of implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What were the key factors contributing to project success or underachievement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of documentation of and preparation for project risks, assumptions and impact drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the key risks and barriers that remain to achieve the project objective and generate Global Environmental Benefits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence, assessment of, and preparation for expected risks, assumptions and impact drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the key assumptions and impact drivers relevant to the achievement of Global Environmental Benefits likely to be met?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actions undertaken to address key assumptions and target impact drivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Criteria: Results</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have the planned outputs been produced? Have they contributed to the project outcomes and objectives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of project implementation progress relative to expected level at current stage of implementation</li> <li>Existence of logical linkages between project outputs and outcomes/impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the anticipated outcomes likely to be achieved? Are the outcomes likely to contribute to the achievement of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of logical linkages between project outcomes and impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Method
objective?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are impact level results likely to be achieved? Are the likely to be at the scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental indicators</li> <li>Level of progress through the project's Theory of Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are project results likely to be dependent on continued financial support? What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial requirements for maintenance of project benefits</li> <li>Level of expected financial resources available to support maintenance of project benefits</li> <li>Potential for additional financial resources to support maintenance of project benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do relevant stakeholders have or are likely to achieve an adequate level of "ownership" of results, to have the interest in ensuring that project benefits are maintained?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of initiative and engagement of relevant stakeholders in project activities and results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do relevant stakeholders have the necessary technical capacity to ensure that project benefits are maintained?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level of technical capacity of relevant stakeholders relative to level required to sustain project benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of socio-political risks to project benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of institutional and governance risks to project benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of environmental risks to project benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field visit interviews</li> <li>Desk review</li> </ul>

### Annex 3. GEF Operational Principles

<http://www.gefweb.org/public/opstrat/ch1.htm>

#### TEN OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GEF'S WORK PROGRAM

1. For purposes of the financial mechanisms for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the GEF will **function under the guidance of, and be accountable to, the Conference of the Parties (COPs)**. For purposes of financing activities in the focal area of ozone layer depletion, GEF operational policies will be consistent with those of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its amendments.
2. The GEF will provide new, and additional, grant and concessional funding to meet the agreed **incremental costs** of measures to achieve agreed global environmental benefits.
3. The GEF will ensure the **cost-effectiveness** of its activities to maximize global environmental benefits.
4. The GEF will fund projects that are **country-driven** and based on national priorities designed to support sustainable development, as identified within the context of national programs.
5. The GEF will maintain sufficient **flexibility** to respond to changing circumstances, including evolving guidance of the Conference of the Parties and experience gained from monitoring and evaluation activities.
6. GEF projects will provide for **full disclosure** of all non-confidential information.
7. GEF projects will provide for consultation with, and **participation** as appropriate of, the beneficiaries and affected groups of people.
8. GEF projects will conform to the **eligibility** requirements set forth in paragraph 9 of the GEF Instrument.
9. In seeking to maximize global environmental benefits, the GEF will emphasize its **catalytic role** and leverage additional financing from other sources.
10. The GEF will ensure that its programs and projects are **monitored and evaluated** on a regular basis.

## Annex 4: Interview Guide

*Overview: The questions under each topic area are intended to assist in focusing discussion to ensure consistent topic coverage and to structure data collection, and are not intended as verbatim questions to be posed to interviewees. When using the interview guide, the interviewer should be sure to target questions at a level appropriate to the interviewee. The interview guide is one of multiple tools for gathering evaluative evidence, to complement evidence collected through document reviews and other data collection methods; in other words, the interview guide does not cover all evaluative questions relevant to the evaluation.*

### Key

**Bold** = GEF Evaluation Criteria

*Italic* = GEF Operational Principles

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## I. PLANNING / PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

### A. **Relevance**

- i. Did the project's objectives fit within the priorities of the local government and local communities?
- ii. Did the project's objectives fit within national priorities?
- iii. Did the project's objectives fit GEF strategic priorities?
- iv. Did the project's objectives support implementation of the relevant multi-lateral environmental agreement?

### B. *Incremental cost*

- i. Did the project create environmental benefits that would not have otherwise taken place?
- ii. Does the project area represent an example of a globally significant environmental resource?

### C. *Country-drivenness / Participation*

- i. How did the project concept originate?
- ii. How did the project stakeholders contribute to the project development?
- iii. Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project?
- iv. Do the local communities support the objectives of the project?
- v. Are the project objectives in conflict with any national level policies?

### D. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan / Design (*M&E*)

- i. Were monitoring and reporting roles clearly defined?
- ii. Was there either an environmental or socio-economic baseline of data collected before the project began?

## II. MANAGEMENT / OVERSIGHT

### A. Project management

- i. What were the implementation arrangements?
- ii. Was the management effective?

- iii. Were workplans prepared as required to achieve the anticipated outputs on the required timeframes?
- iv. Did the project develop and leverage the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- v. Were there any particular challenges with the management process?
- vi. If there was a steering or oversight body, did it meet as planned and provide the anticipated input and support to project management?
- vii. Were risks adequately assessed during implementation?
- viii. Did assumptions made during project design hold true?
- ix. Were assessed risks adequately dealt with?
- x. Was the level of communication and support from the implementing agency adequate and appropriate?

**B. Flexibility**

- i. Did the project have to undertake any adaptive management measures based on feedback received from the M&E process?
- ii. Were there other ways in which the project demonstrated flexibility?
- iii. Were there any challenges faced in this area?

**C. Efficiency (cost-effectiveness)**

- i. Was the project cost-effective?
- ii. Were expenditures in line with international standards and norms?
- iii. Was the project implementation delayed?
- iv. If so, did that affect cost-effectiveness?
- v. What was the contribution of cash and in-kind co-financing to project implementation?
- vi. To what extent did the project leverage additional resources?

**D. Financial Management**

- i. Was the project financing (from the GEF and other partners) at the level foreseen in the project document?
- ii. Were there any problems with disbursements between implementing and executing agencies?
- iii. Were financial audits conducted with the regularity and rigor required by the implementing agency?
- iv. Was financial reporting regularly completed at the required standards and level of detail?
- v. Did the project face any particular financial challenges such as unforeseen tax liabilities, management costs, or currency devaluation?

**E. Co-financing (catalytic role)**

- i. Was the in-kind co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
- ii. Was the cash co-financing received at the level anticipated in the project document?
- iii. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated cash support after approval?
- iv. Did the project receive any additional unanticipated in-kind support after approval?

**F. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**

- i. Project implementation M&E
  - a. Was the M&E plan adequate and implemented sufficiently to allow the project to recognize and address challenges?
  - b. Were any unplanned M&E measures undertaken to meet unforeseen shortcomings?
  - c. Was there a mid-term evaluation?
  - d. How were project reporting and monitoring tools used to support adaptive management?
- ii. Environmental and socio-economic monitoring
  - a. Did the project implement a monitoring system, or leverage a system already in place, for environmental monitoring?
  - b. What are the environmental or socio-economic monitoring mechanisms?
  - c. Have any community-based monitoring mechanisms been used?
  - d. Is there a long-term M&E component to track environmental changes?
  - e. If so, what provisions have been made to ensure this is carried out?

*E. Full disclosure*

- i. Did the project meet this requirement?
- ii. Did the project face any challenges in this area?

**III. ACTIVITIES / IMPLEMENTATION**

**A. Effectiveness**

- i. How have the stated project objectives been met?
- ii. To what extent have the project objectives been met?
- iii. What were the key factors that contributed to project success or underachievement?
- iv. Can positive key factors be replicated in other situations, and could negative key factors have been anticipated?

**B. Stakeholder involvement and public awareness (*participation*)**

- i. What were the achievements in this area?
- ii. What were the challenges in this area?
- iii. How did stakeholder involvement and public awareness contribute to the achievement of project objectives?

**IV. RESULTS**

**A. Outputs**

- i. Did the project achieve the planned outputs?
- ii. Did the outputs contribute to the project outcomes and objectives?

**B. Outcomes**

- i. Were the anticipated outcomes achieved?
- ii. Were the outcomes relevant to the planned project impacts?

**C. Impacts**

- i. Was there a logical flow of inputs and activities to outputs, from outputs to outcomes, and then to impacts?
- ii. Did the project achieve its anticipated/planned impacts?
- iii. Why or why not?

- iv. If impacts were achieved, were they at a scale sufficient to be considered Global Environmental Benefits?
    - v. If impacts or Global Environmental Benefits have not yet been achieved, are the conditions (enabling environment) in place so that they are likely to eventually be achieved?
  - D. Replication strategy, and documented replication or scaling-up (*catalytic role*)
    - i. Did the project have a replication plan?
    - ii. Was the replication plan “passive” or “active”?
    - iii. Is there evidence that replication or scaling-up occurred within the country?
    - iv. Did replication or scaling-up occur in other countries?
- V. LESSONS LEARNED
  - A. What were the key lessons learned in each project stage?
  - B. In retrospect, would the project participants have done anything differently?
- VI. SUSTAINABILITY
  - A. Financial
    - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on continued financial support?
    - ii. What is the likelihood that any required financial resources will be available to sustain the project results once the GEF assistance ends?
    - iii. Was the project successful in identifying and leveraging co-financing?
    - iv. What are the key financial risks to sustainability?
  - B. Socio-Political
    - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on socio-political factors?
    - ii. What is the likelihood that the level of stakeholder ownership will allow for the project results to be sustained?
    - iii. Is there sufficient public/stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project?
    - iv. What are the key socio-political risks to sustainability?
  - C. Institutions and Governance
    - i. To what extent are the project results dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance?
    - ii. What is the likelihood that institutional and technical achievements, legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes will allow for the project results to be sustained?
    - iii. Are the required systems for accountability and transparency and the required technical know-how in place?
    - iv. What are the key institutional and governance risks to sustainability?
  - D. Ecological
    - i. Are there any environmental risks that can undermine the future flow of project impacts and Global Environmental Benefits?



## **Annex 5: Final GEF SO-1 Tracking Tools**

Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool scores were calculated for all 313 protected areas in Moldova. This evaluation reviewed the specific METT scorecards for the four scientific reserves, Lower Dniester Ramsar site, and Orhei National Park. One of the project logframe indicators related to METT scores for the system, and additional information on individual protected area METT scores is discussed in the Results section of this report. The UNDP Moldova Country Office has these documents on file, and the electronic files should accompany this report, as necessary. It is not logistically feasible to integrate the Microsoft Excel-based scorecards into an annex of this Microsoft Word document.

## Annex 6. Moldova PAS Project Follow-up on Mid-term Evaluation Recommendations

Recommendation	Follow-up
<b>Main Recommendations</b>	
1. To develop a programme on alternative income for local people living in and around the proposed Orhei National Park.	The project undertook additional specific research on socio-economic aspects, and supported the development of an ecotourism proposal to be submitted to the Regional Development Authority.
2. To identify potential protected areas for neglected habitats and ecosystems <sup>SEP</sup> (under-represented in the current PAS) and initiate securing their legal conservation status	Addressed under the project protected areas revalidation activity, and development of the “Master Plan” for development and expansion of Moldova’s PA system.
3. To put better focus on the governance of non-forest areas.	Initiated project concept for mainstreaming biodiversity project to be funded by the GEF.
4. To assist the government to identify additional financial resources for translating the results of the project into concrete conservation on the ground.	Clima-East project developed and implementation begun.
<b>Specific Recommendations For the Project Steering Committee and the Project Management Unit</b>	
To develop an exit strategy with special reference to impact and sustainability. The exit strategy shall make sure that all necessary measures are taken and that project measures are handed over to the relevant institutions and followed up by them.	All key actions supporting sustainability of the project results have been carried out.
To develop a permanent exchange training programme involving similar sites/areas, e.g. National Parks, from neighbouring Romania. This can build on a successful visit organised by the PAS Project and would enhance the operational capacity for the PAS in Moldova, including its expansion phase.	Remains an open option for the future, pending appropriate context and resources.
To remove from the project document the part of the clause (i) of the sub-component 1.1., i.e. “...ensuring the registration of the cadastre with the relevant territorial cadastral office”. This is a project design shortcoming as it does not seem achievable by the project due to the costs of several million US\$. It was and should, unless additional serious funding provided, be removed from activities. In our opinion, it should become a prerogative of the two Governmental agencies to negotiate and fulfill the task. This is already under discussions by involving the National Ecologic Fund in supporting it.	Completed.
To remove from the project document those clauses which would make the project responsible for issues for which the responsibility actually lies at political level: Replace in 2.1/xii the expression “ensuring Governmental commitment and finance provision...” by “to assist the Government to commit and to provide funding for...” and in 2.1/xiv “Ensuring the delegation of management authority” by “supporting the delegation of management authority”.	Completed.
To remove from the project document the clause (iv) from the sub-component 2.3 “Collaboration with the Personnel Improvement and Qualification Center to draft and develop short-term courses and refresher programs within the National Academic and Research Institutions”, as it was never created and	Completed.

Recommendation	Follow-up
it has never operated and clause (vi) "Issuance of the authorized certificate as a result of completing the training and refresher courses in protected areas' management and planning" as this is impossible due to lack of an authorized certification mechanism in the area.	
To adequately reveal the conservation objective of every particular PA in the "PA evaluation template" (PAS revalidation). The purpose of conservation and conservation objective should be clearly stated and should include information such as species, habitat requirements, etc.	Addressed.
To propose a real solution for the ambiguity in existing legislation on 'Nature' versus 'Scientific' reserves, so that speculations and uncertainties among stakeholders to be resolved. For example, the existing four reserves include both strictly protected or untouched areas (equivalent to 'Scientific' reserve of what some part of the public used to call or/and under- stand) and buffer zones equivalent to other types/categories of PA (e.g. Landscape Reserve under ordinary, but special conservation regime, of a forest unit) by taking into consideration the needs of population in products from the forests.	Completed, resolution still pending.
For the revalidation of nature monuments, the land around veteran trees should also been included in PA's boundaries (taking into account the crown span).	Addressed.
To correct in the PIR and in the Project Document the target value for the indicator "Total operational budget (including HR and capital budget) allocation (US\$) for protected area management" as per Inception Report.	Completed.
To adapt indicator 3 of this outcome to "Extent (ha) of formally proclaimed IUCN Category V National Park" (formerly "...IUCN Category II National Park").	Completed.
To replace the project targets of establishing 15 Protected Areas with a capacitated management institution by 6 PA, which is more real figure to be achieved by the project.	Completed.
<b>Recommendations for UNDP and Project Planners</b>	
To make sure that project planning follows a systemic approach and project planning does not pick out some components of a system and leave other untouched.	Integrated.
To make sure that no commitments are made in the project planning phase which are beyond the project impact. The PAS project cannot take responsibility e.g. for the legal establishment of Orhei NP or the reorganisations of government structures. The project can only support these processes, while the responsibility for implementation is on political level.	Taken into consideration.
To adapt the general structure of evaluation reports so that they easily reflect OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.	Addressed.
To apply a consistent rating for all GEF operations (4-points scale versus 6-points scale).	Addressed.

## Annex 7. Itinerary and List of Persons Met and Interviewed During Evaluation Mission

Day	Time	Institution	Participants/content
Monday, September 16	09.30 – 10.30	Meeting at UNDP Office	UNDP Programme Manager
	11.00 – 12.00	Meeting with Vice-minister of Environment	Vice-minister of Environment Maria Nagornii, Head of Policy and foreign relations division (responsible for collaboration with UNDP)
	12.00 – 13.00	Lunch	
	13.00 – 14.40	E&M team session at the PAS Office, discussions with PAS's project staff	E&M work, UNDP PAS Project Manager etc.
	15.00 – 16.30	Meeting at the Ministry of Environment	Representatives of Division of Natural Resources and Biodiversity (the main counterpart in the Ministry)
	16.45 – 18.00	E&M team session at the PAS Office, discussions with PAS's project staff	E&M work, UNDP PAS Project Manager etc.
Tuesday, September 17	09:00 – 10:00	Meeting with the management of the Governmental Agency "Moldsilva"	General Director / Deputy General Director of Moldsilva (institution that is managing 80% of the PAS in the country. Delegated authority for Orhei NP management)
	10:00 – 12:00	Meeting at Moldsilva with Divisions	Division of Forest Fund, Guard and Protection of Agency "Moldsilva", UNDP PAS Project Manager, E&M team,
	12:00 – 13:00	Lunch	
	14:00 – 15:00	Meeting at the Botanical Institute (Garden) of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova	Director of the BI and Biodiversity Office
	16.00 – 17.00	Meeting with Environmental Movement of Moldova, NGO	Project Board member, Active participation in project implementation
Wednesday, September 18	08:00 – 12:00	Visit to Nature/Scientific Reserve "Plaiul Fagului", a beach forestland	Management of NR "Plaiul Fagului" (Radenii Vechi, Calarasi) (Director, Chief Forest Officer), UNDP PAS Project Manager, E&M team
	12:30 – 13:30	Lunch	at RN "Codrii" (Lozova) or other place (TBD)
	14:00 – 16:00	Visit to Nature/Scientific Reserve Codrii", a oak forestland	Management of NR Codrii" (Lozova, Straseni) (Director, Chief Forest Officer), UNDP PAS Project Manager, E&M team
	16:00 – 17:00	Way back to Chisinau	
Thursday, September 19	09:00 – 10:00	Meeting at the Orhei district Council	Orhei district local authority, UNDP PAS Project Manager, E&M team
	10:00 – 12:00	Trip to Orheiul Vechi (=Old Orhei), the Cultural Reserve (UNESCO)	LPA of Orhei district, CR's management, UNDP PAS Project Manager and expert (flora), E&M team
	12:00 – 13:00	Lunch	at the Trebujeni village's pension (tourist infrastructure and local business development)
	13:00 – 18:00	Trip to a number of sites/core areas of the future Orhei Park. Meeting with several mayors from the region	Ivancea majority Monastery Curchi ( Vatici majority) Landscape Reserve Tiganesti Codreanca majority

Friday, September 20	18:00 – 19:00	Meal in the area of Orhei NP	
	19:00 – 20:00	Way back to Chisinau	
	09:30 – 10:45	E&M team session at the PAS Office, First conclusions	E&M work, UNDP PAS Project Manager etc.
	11:00 – 11:45	Debriefing at UNDP	UNDP Office in Chisinau, UNDP PAS Project Manager, E&M team
	11:45 – 12:00	Debriefing UNDP DRR	E&M team, UNDP PAS Project Manager etc.
	12:05 – 13:00	Lunch	
	15:00	Departure	Flight to Munich

## List of Persons Met and Interviewed

Nr	Name	Function, institution	Contact or other relevant data
1	Nadja VETTERS	UNDP Assistant Resident Representative, Environment & Energy Programme Manager	United Nations Development Programme 131, 31 August 1989 Str. 2012 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova <a href="mailto:nadja.vetters@undp.org">nadja.vetters@undp.org</a> Tel: +373 (22) 269 213, 220 045 Fax: +373 (22) 220 041 Skype: nadja.vetters <a href="http://www.md.undp.org">www.md.undp.org</a>
2	Alexandru Rotaru	UNDP/GEF PAS Project Manager	131, 31 August St.2012 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova <a href="mailto:alexandru.rotaru@undp.org">alexandru.rotaru@undp.org</a> Tel/Fax: (+373 22) 843101Mob: (+373) 69162798 <a href="http://www.undp.md">www.undp.md</a>
3	Olga Taran	UNDP/GEF PAS Project Assistant	156A, Mitropolit Dosoftei street, Chisinau, <a href="mailto:Moldovaolga.taran@undp.org">Moldovaolga.taran@undp.org</a> Office tel: (373 22) 843101, Fax: (373 22) 843101
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5	Tudor BOTNARI	Deputy General Director, Forestry Agency "Moldsolva"	124, Stefan cel Mare, Chisinau, MD-2001, +373 22 27 77 95 79510380 <a href="mailto:msilva@moldsilva.gov.md">msilva@moldsilva.gov.md</a>
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9	Eladii Lilia	Consultant, Section on protected areas, biodiversity and biosecurity	+373 22 20 45 37 <a href="mailto:eladii@mediu.gov.md">eladii@mediu.gov.md</a>
10	Petru Rotaru	Head, Division of Forest Fund, Protected areas, Guard and Protection, Agency "Moldsilva"	+373 27 24 25 <a href="mailto:petru.rotaru@moldsilva.gov.md">petru.rotaru@moldsilva.gov.md</a>
11	Ghenadie Grubii	Head, Section of Forest Fund and	+373 22 27 72 88

Nr	Name	Function, institution	Contact or other relevant data
		Protected areas, Agency "Moldsilva", Member of project board	<a href="mailto:ghenadie.grubii@moldsilva.gov.md">ghenadie.grubii@moldsilva.gov.md</a>
12	Alexandru Teleuta	Director of the BI and Biodiversity Office, Botanical Institute (Garden) of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Member of Project Board	+ 373 22 52 38 98 <a href="mailto:director@gb.asm.md">director@gb.asm.md</a>
13	Alecu Renita	President, Environmental Movement of Moldova, NGO, Member of Project Board	+373 22 23 26 54 <a href="http://www.mem.md">www.mem.md</a>
14	Anton Galusca	Chief Forest Officer/Engineer, Management of Scientific/Natural Reserve "Plaiul Fagului"	Radenii Vechi village, Calarasi Rayon
15	Vitalie Gogu	Director of the Scientific/Natural reserve "Codrii"	Lozova village, Strasenii Rayon
16	Stefan Manic	Chief of Science section of the Scientific/Natural reserve "Codrii"	Lozova village, Strasenii Rayon
17	Ion Nasalciuc	Head, Agricultural Division, Rayon Council Orhei, District local authority, responsible for agriculture and environment	Orhei
18	Ala Benzing	Old Orhei Landscape and historical reserve, Trebujeni village's pension (tourist infrastructure and local business development)	Trebujeni Village
19	Viorica	Old Orhei Landscape and historical reserve Museum and sites	Old Orhei
20	Petru Dogocher	Mayor of Vatici Village, Chairman of Mayors association of Orhei Rayon	Vatici Community, Orhei Rayon
21	Mihai Coteala	Mayor of Codreanca village	Codreanca village
22	Isidor Savin	Mayor of Romanesti	Romanesti village
23	Gheorghe Gondiu	Mayor of Isacova	Isacova village
24	Dumitru Cebotaru	Mayor of Paharniceni	Paharniceni village
25	Prist Nil	Curchi Monastery	Curchi Monastery
26	Marina Mindru	National Coordinator, GEF SGP Moldova	tel. (37322)999703, mob.(373)79504677,68840408 e-mail:mindrumarina@gmail.com 17, Sfatul Tarii Str. of.302
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30	Ion Talmaci	Technical Director, ICAS	+373 22 59-33-51 <a href="mailto:icaspiu@starnet.md">icaspiu@starnet.md</a>
31	Mike Appleton	International Consultant of the project	By Skype
32	Aurel Lozan	MTE evaluator (local consultant)	By Skype

Nr	Name	Function, institution	Contact or other relevant data
33	Diana Loznea	Translator	+373-69370864

## Annex 8. Moldova PAS Project's Mainstreaming of UNDP Program Principles

<b>UNDAF / CPAP / CPD Linkage</b>	<p>The project is in-line with the 2013-2017 United Nations-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework, of which the third of three pillars is "Environment, Climate Change, and Disaster Risk Management". Under this pillar, Outcome 3.1 is "Improved environmental management in increased compliance with international and regional standards". This outcome specifically states that the UN will continue to support "reform and modernization of the environmental management system, including strengthening institutions and enhancing enforcement capacities at central and local levels." The project's work on strengthening protected area management effectiveness, and reform of the protected area system and related institutions specifically supports this outcome. In addition, the partnership framework states "the successful work in the field of biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation will be continued."</p> <p>Further, the Moldova PAS project directly supports the results indicators and targets included in the Partnership Framework Results Framework Matrix. These include "institutional reform" including the establishment of an Environmental Protection Agency, and an increase in surface area (% of territory) managed in compliance with international requirements from a baseline of 4.65% to 7%.</p> <p>The previous UNDAF document was the 2007-2011 UNDAF (based on the 2005 Common Country Assessment), which including Country Program Outcome 1.4 "Management of environment and natural resources is improved in compliance with international/EU standards", although this did not include additional sub-outcomes specifically related to biodiversity conservation.</p>
<b>Poverty-Environment Nexus / Sustainable Livelihoods</b>	The project clearly considered the poverty-environment nexus and sustainable livelihoods, as this was a main focus of the work relating to the establishment of Orhei National Park. The project worked to support local communities in developing sustainable livelihood opportunities linked with the establishment of the national park.
<b>Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change Mitigation/Adaptation</b>	This was not particularly relevant in the context of the project, but broadly, the work to strengthen the protected area system should support climate resilience as healthier ecosystems are less susceptible to environmental stresses like drought, flood, etc.
<b>Crisis Prevention and Recovery</b>	This was not particularly relevant in the context of the project.
<b>Gender Equality / Mainstreaming</b>	<p>This was not highly relevant in the context of the project, although some project activities did work to support gender equality. According to the 2013 PIR, some relevant data include:</p> <p>Trainings related to protected area management: Participation from 57 men, and 28 women.</p> <p>Facilitators in schools: 3 women</p> <p>Pupils attending lessons: ~50% girls</p> <p>Summer camp: 10 girls, 9 boys</p> <p>Ecological agriculture workshop: 7 women, 30 men</p> <p>The PIR concludes that in general, the engagement of men in project activities is 2-2.5 times higher than for women.</p> <p>This may be due to the relative gender distribution among professionals working in the field of protected area management and biodiversity conservation.</p>

<b>Capacity Development</b>	This was an important focus of the project, and is discussed previously in the report in the results section. In particular, the project included a training program for improving protected area management effectiveness.
<b>Rights</b>	This was not particularly relevant in the context of the project.