



OPERATIONAL Phase 8 (OP8)
COUNTRY PROGRAM STRATEGY (CPS)
Republic of Moldova,
2025 - 2028





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OPs Financial Resources- Country Program CPS (Estimated in USD)¹

Total CPS Grants to Date Since the Start of the Country Program (2012)	USD 2,840,000
OP8 GEF Core Funds	USD 456,818
OP8 GEF STAR Funds	USD 533,747
Other Funds (secured)	-
Other Funds (expected/to be mobilized)	USD 1,000,000 co-financing

1. INTRODUCTION

The eighth Operational Phase of the Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP OP8) builds on 30 years of successful experience in empowering local civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in designing and leading community initiatives that have improved household well-being, increased awareness and resilience to environmental threats, and generated global environmental benefits. With the intensification of economic development pressures in many parts of the developing world and the growing associated inequalities, local communities—particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged groups—are increasingly marginalized, unable to cope with the threats associated with ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change. The lessons learned and experience gained from previous SGP operational phases have shown that integrated land-marine landscape approaches are effective in mobilizing multi-stakeholder collaboration, linking local CSOs/CBOs with partners to achieve livelihoods and environmental outcomes that are mutually supportive at scale.

The objectives of SGP OP8 are to engage local CSOs/CBOs in land-marine landscape approaches globally, providing them with access to knowledge and information, empowering them through learning-by-doing, skills development, and offering technical assistance and grants for interventions that enhance well-being and socioeconomic conditions while generating global environmental benefits.

The objectives of OP8 reflect the key features of GEF Small Grants Programme 2.0, including new approaches to support youth, women, and indigenous peoples, linking with complementary mechanisms such as the Microfinance Initiative and the CSO Challenge Program, cooperation with other GEF agencies, and promoting opportunities with GEF strategies, including the delivery of GEF-8 Integrated Programs. Additionally, OP8 will facilitate opportunities for innovation and CSOs and, catalyze multi-stakeholder alliances to test new approaches through CSOs, and leverage its dialogue platforms for greater impact. OP8 will align with and contribute to the UNDP Strategic Plan (2023-2027).

The GEF Country Program Strategy for Operational Phase 8 (2025-2028) in the Republic of Moldova was developed by a group of experts (Dr. Viorel Miron, Dr. Iurie Bejan, Dr. Petru Bacal, Cătălina Cobzac, Marina Miron), recruited by the Tourism Development Association of Moldova (during the period of July - September 2024).

¹ The level of OP8 CPS resources is an estimated total of: (a) the base allocation of the GEF8 grant; (b) approved STAR resources; as well as (c) other sources of cost-sharing and co-financing (at the national, regional, and/or global levels). PSC countries with remaining balances from OP7 that have not been allocated are expected to use these balances in line with the OP8 strategic approach, ensuring coherence in PSC programming and expected outcomes.



2. COUNTRY PROGRAM SUMMARY: Key Results and Achievements

During the period 2020-2024, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme implemented its 7th operational phase, providing grants to NGOs for the implementation of 22 projects in the following strategic areas outlined in the OP7 Country Strategy: **Waste and Plastics** (8 projects, planned grants: USD 362,084.00, actual grants: USD 339,845.10, beneficiary co-financing and contributions attracted approximately 57% or USD 444,973.02), **Biodiversity** (7 ongoing projects, planned grants: USD 264,079), **Energy** (4 projects, planned grants: USD 182,757, actual grants: USD 156,490.60, beneficiary co-financing and contributions attracted approximately 58% or USD 213,699.12), and **Local Development and Engagement** (3 projects, planned grants: USD 127,988, actual grants: USD 126,467.92, beneficiary co-financing and contributions attracted approximately 69% or USD 285,921.24). The projects were relatively evenly implemented across all regions of the country.

Thus, **the GEF Small Grants Programme planned and allocated USD 936,908.00 in grants to civil society associations. In turn, NGOs managed to attract a total of USD 944,593.38 in co-financing (59.27%) from their own sources (USD 424,090.90) and from other donors (USD 520,502.48), as well as substantial in-kind commitments.**

The projects contributed to meeting the indicators stipulated in the OP7 Country Strategy and addressing global environmental issues targeted by the Global Environment Facility. As a result, 40,698 direct beneficiaries participated, over 50% of whom were women, as well as 5,825 young people and children. Twelve projects were led by women, and training sessions were conducted for 6,717 people. Over 4,750 tons of waste were collected, among other achievements. The innovative spirit and relevance of the fields addressed by the GEF Small Grants Programme projects created the foundation for scaling up and adopting best practices both nationally and internationally.

The experience gained and results achieved during OP7 are essential to ensuring the continuity and success of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) in OP8. The success of efficiently utilizing financial resources and achieving notable results was ensured by several key factors: personalized communication, careful training and informing of potential SGP beneficiaries; openness to continuously receive project concepts and proposals without a strict deadline; clear procedures and high-quality forms for project proposals; professionalism and strong involvement of the National Steering Committee (NSC) members, both during the conceptualization and evaluation phases; and the willingness of other donors to co-finance projects supported by the SGP.

However, the major challenges for NGOs, both in OP7 and the new OP8, remain the commitment to securing co-financing and the effective collaboration with local public authorities (LPA) in the process of accessing the grants offered by the GEF Small Grants Programme.



3. COUNTRY PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

3.1 Alignment with National Priorities

The Republic of Moldova demonstrates strong commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development by adopting and ratifying a significant number of international conventions and strategic documents. This commitment provides a solid foundation for collaborations and funding, ensuring that a well-established legislative and policy framework is in place to support environmental initiatives. Moldova has aligned its national policies with major global agreements on biodiversity, climate change, combating desertification, persistent organic pollutants, and ozone layer protection. The country has developed national programmes and action plans in key areas such as climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, sustainable management of chemicals and soil resources, energy efficiency, and forest expansion. In addition, these efforts are reinforced by the country’s EU accession alignment process, which integrates European directives on climate action, waste and chemicals management, energy efficiency, and biodiversity conservation into national strategies. Recent policies such as the National Environmental Strategy 2024–2030, the Program for Promoting Green and Circular Economy 2024–2028, and the Low Emissions Development Program until 2030 reflect this harmonization, ensuring Moldova’s transition toward EU standards and a green, resilient economy.

The adoption of the international and national documents, listed in the Table 1 below, reflects a deep understanding of environmental challenges and a clear political will to address them. However, effective implementation remains a challenge due to limited financial resources and the need for co-financing and close collaboration with local and international public authorities. This context provides environmental NGOs with a valuable opportunity to contribute to Moldova's sustainable development by implementing innovative projects and attracting additional funding to support the country’s ambitious goals.

Table 1. List of relevant conventions and national/regional plans or programs

Conventions and National Planning Frameworks	Date of Ratification/Completion
UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	Ratified on 23.06.1993
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)	Signed on 06.12.2011
UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	Ratified on 16.03.1995
UNFCCC National Communications	Ratified on 09.06.1995
UNFCCC Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMA)	Ratified in 2010
UNFCCC National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)	Ratified on 30.08.2023
Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for the Paris Agreement	Ratified on 04.05.2017
UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)	Acceded on 24.02.2004
Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)	Ratified on 19.02.2004
Minamata Convention on Mercury	Signed on 04.10.2013
UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs)	Adopted on 08.11.2018
Voluntary National Reviews for the UN SDGs	Ratified in 2020
Strategic Action Programs (SAP) for Shared International Water Bodies	SAP for the Dniester River Basin 2021-2035
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety	Entered into force on 11.09.2003



Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)	Ratified on 23.06.1993
Kyoto Protocol (Kyoto, 11 December 1997)	Acceded on 13.02.2003
Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna, 22 March 1985)	Acceded on 24.07.1996
Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Montreal, 16 September 1987)	Acceded on 24.07.1996
Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio de Janeiro, 5 June 1992)	Ratified on 23.06.1993
European Landscape Convention	Ratified on 21.11.2006
National Environmental Strategy for 2024-2030 and its Action Plan	Approved by Government Decision No. 409 of 12.06.2024
National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030"	Approved by Law No. 315 of 17.11.2022
National Climate Change Adaptation Program	Approved by Government Decision No. 624 of 30.08.2023
Energy Strategy of the Republic of Moldova until 2030	Approved by Government Decision No. 102 of 05.02.2013
Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for 2025-2030	Approved by Government Decision on 26.02.2025
National Strategy on Reducing and Eliminating Persistent Organic Pollutants and the updated in 2023 National Implementation Plan of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Approved by Government Decision No. 1155 of 20.10.2004
National Forest Expansion and Rehabilitation Program for 2023-2032 and its Action Plan for 2023-2027	Approved by Government Decision No.55 of 17.02.2023
Desaster Risk Reduction Strategy 2024 -2030	Approved by Government Decision No 804 of 04.14.2024
National Adaptation Plan – NAP- 2	Approved by Government Decision No 624 of 20.08.2023
Land Improvement Program for Sustainable Soil Resource Management 2021-2025	Approved by Government Decision No. 858/MADRM/2020
National Agricultural and Rural Development Strategy 2023-2030	Approved by Government Decision No. 864/MAIA/2022
Action Plan 2021-2025 for Implementing the Land Improvement Program for Sustainable Soil Resource Management 2024-2025	Approved by Government Decision No. 82 of 31.01.2024
Low Emissions Development Program of the Republic of Moldova until 2030	Approved by Government Decision No. 659/2023
Waste Management Strategy for the Republic of Moldova 2013-2027	Approved by Government Decision No. 248/2013
National Waste Management Program (2023-2027)	Approved by Government Decision No. 651/MM/2023
Program for Promoting the Green and Circular Economy in the Republic of Moldova for 2024-2028	Approved by Government Decision No. 495 of 10.07.2024



3.2 Gaps and Opportunities

Analyzing the priorities of the Republic of Moldova in the environmental sector reflected in Table 1, several gaps and key opportunities emerge, particularly in promoting more substantial involvement of communities and civil society organizations in the continuous implementation of national targets.

In this context, the following prominent gaps can be noted:

- **National Environmental Regulatory Framework Partially Aligned with European Directives:** Although Moldova has made progress in developing an environmental regulatory framework and approximating its environmental legislation to the EU acquis, the 2024 EU Enlargement Report highlights persistent gaps in areas such as waste management, chemicals control, and biodiversity protection. Alignment with directives on industrial emissions, waste framework, and nature conservation remains incomplete, and enforcement capacity is weak. The level of alignment and progress made towards it in some specific areas such as sustainable fisheries, for example, is still at a very early stage. The Green Transition Assessment Report (2025) also notes delays in implementing circular economy principles and climate adaptation measures. These discrepancies limit access to EU and other funds in general, and may affect the efficiency of environmental project implementation, underscoring the need for accelerated legislative reforms and institutional strengthening.
- **Discrepancies in the National Strategic Framework:** There are multiple inconsistencies among different national strategies, such as varying indicators for the same objectives and different approaches regarding the role of civil society organizations (CSOs). For example, CSOs are mentioned in some strategies but mainly for awareness and education, not for policy-making or implementation. EU assessments and CSO mapping reports confirm that civil society's role in environmental governance remains marginal and underfunded. Furthermore, there are differences in vision between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, mainly on land use and climate adaptation. Integration of climate adaptation into agriculture policies is still evolving, creating tension between economic and environmental goals. These aspects can create confusion and slow down the effective implementation of environmental initiatives. Despite active involvement in harmonizing environmental legislation and ratifying fundamental international agreements, including the Paris Agreement, environmental quality remains at the bottom of the list of priority problems and objectives in the National Development Strategy "Moldova European 2030" (NDS). The NDS includes environment as one of its pillars, but practical prioritization and funding are limited compared to economic and social objectives. Environmental indicators are less prominent, and climate adaptation is treated as a cross-cutting issue rather than a core priority.

The National Regional Development Strategy 2022–2028 and regional programs focus on infrastructure, competitiveness, and economic growth. Environmental protection is mentioned but not prioritized in funding or targets. Regional development programs rarely allocate significant resources for biodiversity conservation or climate adaptation, relying instead on external donor projects.



The National Environment Strategy 2024-2030 discloses and acknowledges the key problems such as weak environmental governance and enforcement of laws; poor integration of environmental objectives into sectoral policies (agriculture, energy, transport); limited institutional capacity and lack of coordination among ministries; insufficient public participation and CSO involvement beyond awareness campaigns.

- **Discrepancies in Approach Between National Strategies and SGP GEF Country Strategy:** While Moldova has made notable progress in aligning its environmental policies with EU standards, which resonates with the SGP GEF approaches and objectives, gaps remain. The 2024 EU Enlargement Report and the 2025 Green Transition Assessment confirm that integration of community-based conservation and participatory mechanisms is still limited, and enforcement capacity is weak.

However, recent reforms show improvement: the Low Emissions Development Programme, effective from January 2024, sets ambitious targets for decarbonization across energy, transport, and agriculture, and introduces measures for green urban development and circular economy principles. New programs such as the National Environmental Strategy 2024–2030 and the Program for Promoting Green and Circular Economy 2024–2028 incorporate EU Green Deal priorities, including low-emission urban planning and resource efficiency.

The country still lacks approved national framework on biodiversity, but a new National Programme on Biodiversity is under development. Despite these advances, the EU screening process under Chapter 27 highlights that practical implementation and financing for social inclusion and public-private partnerships remain insufficient. These aspects are often included only superficially, without adequate institutional backing, and lack financial commitments, which can undermine the practical implementations.

- **Local Public Authorities (LPAs) Left Alone with Local Contribution Issues for Community Projects:** An innovative solution could be the use of alternative funding through multi-financing platforms (crowdfunding). Moldova has crowdfunding platforms that allow diaspora involvement in improving local living conditions, and residents can contribute through personal donations or by reallocating 2% of their income tax to local NGOs addressing environmental challenges. These mechanisms could provide essential additional support for co-financing and developing public-private-NGO partnerships.
- **Challenges Identified by Relevant Stakeholders:** Consultations highlighted several challenges, such as the high level of co-financing required, lack of qualified personnel for attracting and implementing projects, low involvement of CSOs in environmental initiatives, ensuring project continuity, and the passivity of both the population and public authorities. Additionally, economic agents are often unprepared to engage and co-finance green initiatives, and factors such as migration and regional and national political instability add additional layers of complexity and uncertainty to environmental project implementation.
- **Priority Actions Proposed by Consulted Focus Groups:** Among the identified priority actions are optimizing co-financing from different donors, removing procedural barriers for beneficiaries applying to multiple donors, promoting joint projects or those located in the same regions, and involving donors in project evaluation committees for joint projects. These measures could significantly improve the



efficiency and impact of funded projects by facilitating cooperation and the effective use of available resources.

These gaps highlight the need for reforms and strategic adjustments to maximize the impact of environmental investments in the Republic of Moldova, ensuring better alignment with international standards and more effective implementation of projects.

Several opportunities are considered for the successful implementation of environmental projects managed by local environmental NGOs, including:

- **Opportunities Related to Moldova's Candidate Status for EU Accession:** Moldova's recent policy reforms and EU alignment process create a favorable environment for scaling community-based initiatives under OP8. The adoption of the Low Emissions Development Programme (2023–2030) introduces clear targets for decarbonization and incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency, while the Program for Promoting Green and Circular Economy (2024–2028) embeds circular economy principles and green innovation. Green urban development measures, integrated into national strategies, support sustainable mobility and climate-resilient planning. These advances, supported by with the National Environmental Strategy 2024–2030, open opportunities for SGP projects to leverage legal frameworks, co-financing mechanisms, and partnerships to accelerate biodiversity conservation, low-carbon energy access, waste reduction, and inclusive governance at the community level.
- **Opportunities Derived from OP7 Results and Prioritized:** The OP7 assessment highlighted several valuable lessons, offering opportunities for improving the project cycle in OP8. Continuous simplification of procedures, without compromising quality, and ensuring clear tools and forms for applying to the Small Grants Program (SGP) are just a few of the key areas identified. The positive results and exceeded indicators of NGOs demonstrate the scalable potential of these initiatives at the community level. Additionally, ensuring continuity in priority areas such as waste and chemical management, alternative energy, and biodiversity, along with a flexible approach to application submission and co-financing, provides a solid framework for the success of future projects.
- **Increased Demand for Drought Solutions and Innovative Agriculture:** In the context of climate change and increasingly frequent droughts, there is a growing demand for innovative solutions, such as the use of more adaptable plant varieties, implementation of agro-conservative techniques, rainwater harvesting, and differentiated consumption norms, especially in vulnerable areas. These requests present an opportunity for NGOs to develop and promote sustainable agricultural practices that are resilient to climate change.
- **Opportunities Linked to Growing Donor Interest in Civil Society Organizations and Local Communities:** The increasing interest from donor structures in civil society organizations and local communities provides a chance to ensure a more active and quality involvement of NGOs in facilitating and participatory actions, reorienting the necessary financial support at the local level, reducing current imbalances, and



strengthening the role of NGOs in addressing significant issues mentioned in national strategies. Pre-accession funds and cooperation with the EU will play a crucial role in this regard.

- **Opportunities Offered by the Regional Context for the New OP8 Period:** The current regional context provides new funding opportunities, including funds for cross-border cooperation at EU borders, especially on the Moldova-Ukraine dimension. Reorienting funding towards final beneficiaries who need co-financing, alongside the relaunch of significant internal funding programs, such as the National Fund for Regional and Local Development (FNDRL) and EU support, paves the way for greater and more effective involvement of NGOs in environmental projects.
- **Expanding Funding Sources by Engaging Other Donors:** Engaging new financial partners represents a strategic opportunity to enhance the impact of GEF initiatives. Collaboration with new financial partners can bring additional resources and expertise, thus supporting the successful implementation of environmental projects in the Republic of Moldova.

These opportunities reflect the favorable context in which the Republic of Moldova finds itself and provide environmental NGOs with a strong platform to initiate and develop projects with significant impact, supported by a robust financial and strategic framework.

3.3 Strategic Priorities of OP8 of the SGP Country Program

Table 2. Alignment of the SGP Country Program with the strategic Initiatives of SGP OP8 and the Country's Priorities

SGP OP8 Strategic Initiatives-Global	Priorities of OP8 of the SGP Country Program	Complementarity of the Country Program SGP with GEF, UNDP, and other projects and programs
<p>Community-Level Conservation of Ecosystems and Threatened Species</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the efficiency of conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystems through equitable governance systems by recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities. 2. Enhance community-led biodiversity-friendly practices and approaches, including promoting blue economy approaches (e.g., agriculture, fishing, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.). 	<p>Community-Level Conservation of Ecosystems and Threatened Species</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the efficiency of conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystems by implementing equitable governance systems that recognize and respect the rights of local communities. 2. Improve community-led biodiversity-friendly practices and approaches in key sectors (e.g., agriculture, fishing, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.). 3. Enhance community-led actions for the protection of threatened species. 	<p>National Environmental Fund National Fund for Regional and Local Development Agricultural and Rural Development Subsidy Fund (AIPA) Energy Efficiency Agency Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA, Sida, etc.</p>



<p>3. Strengthen community-led actions for the protection of threatened species.</p>		
<p>Agriculture, Sustainable Fishing, and Food Security</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of overall food production and the value chain, including in vulnerable ecosystems (mountains, island ecosystems, etc.). 2. Enhance diversification and improve livelihoods. 3. Eliminate deforestation from the supply chain and expand the restoration of degraded lands. 	<p>Agriculture, Sustainable Fishing, and Food Security</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance diversification and improve the value chain in food production while protecting vulnerable ecosystems. 2. Eliminate deforestation from the supply chain and expand the restoration of degraded lands. 	<p>Agricultural and Rural Development Subsidy Fund (AIPA) National Environmental Fund Energy Efficiency Agency Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA</p>
<p>Related Benefits of Access to Low-Carbon Energy Supporting the Implementation of the Paris Agreement and NDCs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote renewable and energy-efficient technologies that provide socio-economic benefits and improve livelihoods. 2. Promote the necessary off-grid energy services in rural and urban areas. 	<p>Related Benefits of Access to Low-Carbon Energy Supporting the Implementation of the Paris Agreement and NDCs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote renewable and energy-efficient technologies that provide socio-economic benefits and improve livelihoods. 2. Support decentralized and autonomous energy services based on local sources, necessary for the development of rural and urban areas. 	<p>Energy Efficiency Agency National Environmental Fund Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA, Sida</p>
<p>Local to Global Coalitions for Chemical and Waste Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce and promote alternatives to mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining. 2. Promote the management of plastic materials/solid waste and the circular economy. 3. Reduce/eliminate the use of chemicals in agriculture. 4. Improve local and global coalitions regarding the management of chemicals, waste, and mercury. 	<p>Local to Global Coalitions for Chemical and Waste Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the management of plastic materials/solid waste and the circular economy. 2. Reduce/eliminate the use of highly toxic chemicals in agriculture. 3. Enhance local and global coalitions for the management of chemicals, waste, and mercury. 	<p>National Environmental Fund Agricultural and Rural Development Subsidy Fund (AIPA) Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP</p>
<p>Catalyzing Sustainable Urban Solutions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve capacities to promote integrated, socially 	<p>Catalyzing Sustainable Urban Solutions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance capacities for resilient and low-emission urban development 	<p>National Fund for Regional and Local Development National Environmental Fund</p>



<p>inclusive, and community-led solutions to address resilient and low-emission urban development.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Demonstrate innovative, socially inclusive urban solutions/approaches (including waste and chemical management, energy, transportation, watershed protection, ecosystem services, and biodiversity). 3. Implement a public-private partnership approach for access to low-carbon energy for marginalized urban communities. 	<p>through integrated, socially inclusive, and community-led solutions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Demonstrate innovative, socially inclusive urban solutions/approaches (including waste and chemical management, energy, transportation, watershed protection, ecosystem services, and biodiversity). 3. Promote public-private partnerships for access to low-carbon energy for marginalized communities. 	<p>Energy Efficiency Agency Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, Sida etc.</p>
<p>Community-Based Adaptation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce vulnerability and enhance the adaptive capacity of communities. 2. Provide concrete local experiences from different countries for climate change adaptation and community-based approaches (CBA). 3. Offer clear policy lessons and integrate CBA into national processes. 	<p>Community-Based Adaptation (CBA)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce vulnerability and enhance the adaptive capacity of communities. 2. Promote concrete experiences and models for local communities' adaptation to climate change. 3. Encourage policies that integrate community-based adaptation into national processes. 	<p>National Environmental Fund National Fund for Regional and Local Development Energy Efficiency Agency Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA, etc.</p>
<p>Policies for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Government, and the Private Sector, and Planning Dialogue Platforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote/strengthen community voices and participation in global and national policies, developing strategies related to the global environment and sustainable development issues. 	<p>Policies for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Government, and the Private Sector, and Planning Dialogue Platforms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage community participation in global and national policies, focusing on the development of strategies relevant to the environment and sustainable development. 	<p>IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA, Sida etc.</p>
<p>Improving Social Inclusion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote targeted inclusive initiatives. 2. Integrate social inclusion into all projects (e.g., women/girls, indigenous peoples, youth, and persons with disabilities). 	<p>Improving Social Inclusion</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote targeted inclusive initiatives. 2. Integrate social inclusion into all projects. 	<p>National Fund for Regional and Local Development Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.)</p>



<p>Knowledge Management (KM) (Mandatory)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities. 2. Enhance the capacities of CSOs/NGOs. 3. Facilitate South-South exchanges to promote technology transfer and replicate best practices. 	<p>Knowledge Management (KM)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capture knowledge and lessons from projects and activities. 2. Enhance the capacities of CSOs/NGOs. 3. Facilitate South-South exchanges to promote technology transfer and replicate best practices. 	<p>UNDP, ADA, Sida etc.</p> <p>National Fund for Regional and Local Development Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA, Sida etc.</p>
<p>Results Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (M&E) (Mandatory)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer the new M&E strategy in the country program, develop and implement projects, and make decisions using participatory mechanisms. 	<p>Results Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (M&E)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administer the new M&E strategy in the country program, develop and implement projects, and make decisions using participatory mechanisms. 	<p>National Fund for Regional and Local Development Local Public Administration (LPA), Economic Agents, Beneficiaries IFAD and other development partners in the Republic of Moldova EU Funds (e.g., Interreg, etc.) UNDP, ADA, etc.</p>



4. PRIORITIZED LANDSCAPES/MARINE LANDSCAPES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

4.1 Grant Provision in Priority Land/Marine Landscapes

a) Selection Process for Priority Land and Marine Landscapes

The Republic of Moldova, lacking access to the sea, focuses its strategic efforts exclusively on land landscapes, including internal water basins and wetlands, naturally excluding marine landscapes. During the previous OP7 period, due to the small size of the territory, the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region, was treated as a single integrated landscape. This unified approach to the entire national territory has been maintained in most relevant environmental strategies in the country.

In June-July 2024, a series of consultation and communication actions were held with beneficiaries of the GEF OP7 funding. Most expressed a desire for the scope of future GEF projects under OP8 to continue covering the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova. Therefore, following online interviews with relevant beneficiaries (NGOs, local public authorities, representatives of environmental authorities, scientists, etc.), the need to maintain a "small country – unique landscape" approach for the Republic of Moldova regarding the criteria for selecting land and marine landscapes was emphasized. This approach reflects the need to continue the integrated strategy, which has already proven effective, and to maintain a unified perspective in managing environmental projects in our country.

Thus, the priorities for the Republic of Moldova concerning global GEF initiatives, adjusted to the local context, were ordered as follows:

- Community-level conservation of ecosystems and threatened species
- Sustainable agriculture, fishing, and food security
- Related benefits of access to low-carbon energy
- Local to global coalitions for the management of chemicals and waste
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions
- Community-based adaptation (CBA)
- OSC-Government-Private Sector policies and planning of dialogue platforms
- Improving social inclusion
- Knowledge management (KM)
- Results management, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E)

The initiatives of CSOs aimed at community-level conservation of ecosystems and threatened species seek to enhance the involvement of local communities in environmental actions and the protection of key local resources. Similarly, activities focused on sustainable agriculture, fishing, and food security will be supported to contribute to the conservation of agricultural and rural landscapes, sustainable development of local communities, and



improved soil protection practices. Additionally, all initiatives aimed at promoting collaboration among CSOs, government, and the private sector through planning and organizing dialogue platforms will continue to be encouraged in most projects as horizontal measures. This will allow for amplifying the positive effects of cooperation among key relevant actors to increase the effectiveness of environmental projects.

It is essential that up to 70% of the funds allocated through the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP GEF) are directed by beneficiaries towards concrete actions for restoring degraded or eroded sectors through afforestation and grassing, strengthening the system of protected natural areas, riverbanks, and wetlands, implementing local energy efficiency solutions based on alternative sources, reducing solid waste, plastics, and chemicals from various land-consuming economic sectors.

Furthermore, following the public discussions held, the need to focus on a compact set of indicators for the effective monitoring of projects promoted by CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) was highlighted. These indicators will ensure balanced coverage of the fundamental, specific, and horizontal aspects of territorial strategic initiatives.

In the process of selecting land landscapes for grant provision under OP8, objectivity, transparency, inclusiveness, and full participation of all relevant actors from across the country, including the Transnistrian region, will be guaranteed. This statement emphasizes the importance of an integrative and transparent approach in managing funds and environmental projects, thus ensuring a sustainable and beneficial impact for all involved communities.

b) Selected Land/Marine Landscapes for OP8

The development and updating process of the strategy for landscape management was based on scientific evidence and benefited from feedback from beneficiaries of previous projects, alongside online public consultations. This inclusive approach involved online contributions from stakeholders across various regions of the country and analyzed national commitments reflected in strategic actions aimed at improving specific landscapes.

Following this analysis, the OP8 Strategy was formulated, targeting specific interventions in a unique land landscape for the Republic of Moldova, taking into account local particularities. The need to expand landscapes with high ecological value, such as forests, floodplains, and pastures, has been scientifically justified. There are critical areas in the country where the expansion and strengthening of these landscapes are essential, including the planting of native species. Given that suitable land for afforestation is limited (approximately 8% of the national territory²), exploring alternative solutions to increase the ecological value of landscapes, such as expanding pastures through methods of grassing and intercropping, is recommended.

To address the need for the development of natural landscapes, the expansion of the national ecological network is promoted, especially at the local level, starting from state-protected natural areas. The Government's commitment to increase the forest cover to 15% and expand state-protected areas from 5.7% to 10% by 2030 is

² <https://www.eu4environment.org/app/uploads/2024/02/Report-Identification-of-High-Conservation-Value-Forests-in-the-Republic-of-Moldova-ENG.pdf>



favorable for involving local communities in these initiatives. Additionally, the creation of protection zones and strips for water bodies is necessary, thus providing each commune in the Republic of Moldova with the opportunity to contribute to the expansion of landscapes with enhanced ecological value.

Moreover, considering existing issues such as landslides and soil erosion (which affect approximately 8.6% of the territory, including 1,528 km² affected by landslides and 1,375 km² experiencing severe erosion³), it is imperative to involve local communities in the rehabilitation of these degraded lands. This organization emphasizes the importance and positive impact of the initiatives, offering a clear and motivating vision for potential donors, highlighting collaboration with local communities and the long-term benefits of these interventions.

c) Strategic Initiatives for Land/Marine Landscapes in OP8

Following public consultations with stakeholders, the need to prioritize 10 strategic initiatives (including 3 that are horizontal and mandatory) for implementation in the Republic of Moldova has been highlighted. This multifocal approach is justified by the need to support a significant number of environmental initiatives promoted by civil society organizations, to cover the territory of the country as thoroughly as possible, and to ensure the continuity of previous actions, with special attention given to areas that clearly meet the criteria for threatened landscapes. Additionally, the landscape approach will take into account the following specific needs of the Republic of Moldova:

- Improving natural habitats and biodiversity through friendly approaches in key sectors.
- Contributing to national forest cover and protected areas through local participatory actions.
- Restoring degraded lands in rural landscapes and reducing deforestation.
- Protecting ecosystems affected by agriculture and related industries.
- Involving the associative sector in the regionalization and decentralization of energy services in rural and urban areas.
- Reducing solid waste, plastic, chemicals, and mercury in the country's landscape.
- Decreasing the use of chemicals on agricultural lands.
- Improving the state of urban and rural landscapes through capacity development, innovative urban solutions, and demonstrated social inclusion.
- Ensuring access to low-carbon energy in local communities.
- Engaging the community to reduce vulnerabilities and improve capacities for adaptation to climate change.

In this context, grant beneficiaries will encourage broad and inclusive participatory engagement measures from the community and relevant stakeholders, including through co-financing, to maximize impact through an

³ <https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/nscs-documents/293.pdf>



integrated and multidimensional approach in each intervention for the selected land landscapes. Furthermore, co-financing initiatives supported by other sources will continue to be promoted to amplify the synergistic effect of interventions and address a wide range of environmental issues and commitments.

d) Grant Allocation Outside Priority Land/Marine Landscapes

A significant portion of the available resources will be strategically directed and supported towards projects targeting selected land landscapes that cover the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova, including the Transnistrian region. However, in addition to these priority interventions, concrete actions will also be encouraged, even if they do not specifically target certain landscapes, as they have the potential to amplify community engagement impact. These initiatives aim to create strategic partnerships, efficiently manage knowledge, utilize innovative technologies, and promote awareness of the importance of a protected environment.

Outside the selected land landscapes, innovative, inclusive actions with significant impact will be supported, oriented towards achieving horizontal indicators. Some of these initiatives will include Grantor+ type projects, which promote dialogue platforms between civil society organizations (CSOs), the government, and the private sector, social inclusion actions, and knowledge management, covering up to 30% of the available resources.

Grantor+ type initiatives will be subject to standard grant allocation regulations, according to the GEF framework or other co-financing sources, in partnership with relevant CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). This approach will ensure efficient use of resources and create opportunities for extensive and sustainable collaboration, thus maximizing the impact of environmental initiatives across a wide range of issues. Additionally, the strategic commitment of the donor to support both priority landscape projects and initiatives with the potential for large-scale impact is highlighted, thereby promoting an integrated and collaborative approach to environmental protection.

4.2 Platforms for Dialogue between NGOs, Government, and the Private Sector

The non-governmental sector plays an essential role in raising public awareness about environmental issues that sometimes do not receive the necessary attention from authorities. Through civil society organizations (CSOs), a vital link is created between the local level and national and local decision-makers, facilitating the influence on environmental policies, the adoption of best practices, and the strengthening of communication among various relevant actors. With better-prepared organizational and human resources, CSOs are capable of monitoring and supporting public authorities in fulfilling their environmental commitments, thereby acting as strategic partners.

The GEF SGP Program recognizes this unique capacity of CSOs in Moldova and supports them in their efforts to respond more effectively to community needs than the public sector can. Thus, the Program will fund diverse horizontal activities aimed at developing dialogue platforms between CSOs, the Government, and the private sector. These platforms are essential for jointly implementing actions that support national networks dedicated to environmental protection, such as the National Ecological Network (REN), the Emerald Network, River Basin Committees, the LEADER initiative, and Destination Management Organizations, among others. Support will include initiatives through which the non-governmental sector can influence community development and the



formulation of environmental policies, utilizing accumulated experiences and lessons learned. The following actions will be encouraged:

1. **Regular Meetings:** Periodic meetings between NGOs and local and central public authorities (LPA/APC) to ensure the exchange of information and opinions in the process of developing and monitoring environmental policies.
2. **Support for Platforms and Associations:** Supporting the platforms and associations of NGOs at the national, regional, and local levels, such as the NGO Council, River Basin Committees, and Destination Management Organizations, as well as creating working groups on various topics of interest.
3. **Capacity Building:** Strengthening capacities through training courses and informational seminars for public officials and NGO members to enhance their abilities in developing and monitoring environmental policies.
4. **Transparency and Accountability:** Developing and adopting clear measures to ensure the flow of information related to environmental activities at all government levels, from Parliament and Government to district, local councils, and mayors.
5. **Modeling Support Forms:** Creating forms of state support for civil society, the private sector, and citizens to increase the co-financing rate of projects supported by the GEF SGP.
6. **Encouraging Environmental Volunteering:** Involving civil society, state organizations, the private sector, and citizens in environmental volunteering efforts.
7. **Digitalizing Communication:** Using electronic tools, such as e-governance, online platforms, websites, social networks, shared event calendars, surveys, and evaluations of GEF SGP projects to digitalize communication between NGOs and local and central public authorities (APC/LPA).
8. **Promoting Intersectoral Dialogue:** Fostering collaboration between the fields of environment, agriculture, and resource-intensive economic sectors to ensure sustainable and integrated development.
9. **Capacity Development of Local NGOs:** Enhancing local NGOs' capacity to promote dialogue on major environmental issues, such as hydrological problems, the National Ecological Network, pre-accession commitments to the EU, and the development of local environmental policies.

This underscores the commitment of the GEF SGP to support a robust and influential non-governmental sector capable of playing a decisive role in environmental protection, strengthening intersectoral dialogue, and promoting the sustainable development of communities in Moldova.

4.3 Promoting Social Inclusion, Including Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

The GEF SGP is committed to promoting social inclusion through civil society organizations, supporting actions that ensure the visibility and integration of the needs of various social groups, including marginalized or vulnerable ones. These actions are essential to ensure equitable access to social interaction across multiple dimensions: economic, social, cultural, religious, and political, guaranteeing the respect of the rights of all involved citizens. It



is also vital to ensure non-discrimination in access to resources provided by actors involved in GEF-funded projects. GEF's policies regarding social and environmental safeguards will be rigorously applied across all projects supported by the GEF SGP. These policies include specific activities aimed at promoting gender equality, empowering women, indigenous populations, and youth, as well as encouraging the participation of persons with disabilities.

Recent analyses highlight the specific context of Moldova, an agrarian country with a large portion of its natural resources located in rural areas, where women represent a majority of the resident population⁴ (1.325 million women compared to 1.188 million men in 2023). Although there is a trend of migration among rural women, they continue to play a significant role in agriculture. In 2023, 72,500 women and 113,000 men were engaged in the agricultural sector, with both figures showing an increase compared to 2019. However, the gender wage gap persists in fields such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing, where in 2022, women earned on average 10.0% less than men—a slight improvement from 12.8% in 2019. Regarding labor force participation, out of a total of 929,500 working-age individuals in 2022, 474,900 were men and 444,400 were women. Yet only 0.4% of men and 0.2% of women held leadership positions, indicating a significant underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles. In 2022, 44.6% of leaders at all levels in Moldova were women, but only 33.3% held ministerial positions and 40.4% were represented in Parliament. This underrepresentation highlights a discrepancy between rights guaranteed by law⁵ and the reality of women's access to resources and positions of influence.

Research shows that if women had the same access to productive resources as men, agricultural productivity could increase by 20-30%, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and enhancing women's ability to support their families and sustainably manage natural resources. Therefore, the GEF SGP aims to actively support CSOs working to ensure this equality of access and to promote policies that improve the lives and opportunities of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups. These efforts are essential not only for social justice but also for sustainable development and the effective management of natural resources in Moldova.

Moreover, based on previous results regarding the inclusion of women in projects (out of 60 GEF SGP projects, 28 projects were led by women (47%), and 33 projects (55%) directly promoted gender equality and women's empowerment), GEF SGP will continue to support higher quotas than the national average in OP8, with a baseline indicator of 50% for projects led by women and/or integrating concrete mechanisms for increased participation of women.

The GEF SGP will support concrete measures to address gender inequalities and improve women's access to essential natural resources, with a strategic effort focused on the following intervention points:

1. **Improving Women's Access and Control Over Natural Resources:** Supporting actions to implement policies and norms that enhance women's access and control over land, water, forests, and other natural resources, including specific measures for raising awareness and providing legal assistance to women in

⁴ According to the methodology of the National Bureau of Statistics (BNS), the resident population is estimated based on data from the 2014 Population and Housing Census, while the present population is based on the 2004 Census.

⁵ Law No. 5 of 09/02/2006 on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.



exercising their legal rights and improving their capacity to participate in decision-making related to the use and management of the natural resources they utilize.

2. Promoting Women's Participation in Decision-Making Processes Regarding Natural Resources:

Increasing the active participation of women in community, rural, and urban planning processes, ensuring that women are recognized as agents of change and that they play an equal role in decisions affecting natural resource management. Addressing gender gaps in participation and leadership is essential for creating more representative institutions and policies that enable women to contribute significantly to the development of sustainable environmental solutions.

3. Gender Criteria in Project Approval Processes:

- GEF SGP, through the National Steering Committees (NC and NSC), will integrate gender considerations as an essential criterion in the project evaluation and approval process. Checklists and specific criteria will be used to analyze how proposed projects integrate gender perspectives and contribute to improving the status of women in communities.
- Proposals for projects will be encouraged to be submitted in both Romanian and Russian, to facilitate broad participation from women, vulnerable social groups, and youth, thereby providing them a platform to express their needs and actively participate in environmental initiatives.
- In all phases of development and implementation of projects funded through GEF SGP, the roles of men and women in communities and within the projects will be analyzed in detail. This assessment will include their participation in project design, approval, implementation, and monitoring.
- Needs assessments will be utilized as a key tool in the project development phase to clearly define the roles of women and men from the outset. This approach will help minimize conflicts among different stakeholders and ensure equitable sharing of the benefits resulting from the project.

Throughout the implementation of projects supported by GEF SGP, field assessments, including monitoring and evaluation of participation based on gender-focused indicators, will be utilized to track the integration of gender⁶ aspects across all projects.

4.4 Knowledge Management

The GEF Program (SGP GEF) will promote the inclusion of a robust and well-structured learning and knowledge management plan in each funded project, aimed at capturing, sharing, and disseminating lessons learned and best practices identified during project implementation. This approach will contribute to strengthening the capacities of beneficiary organizations and creating a lasting impact in the environmental field.

Each project will need to include clear learning objectives, the necessary resources to achieve them, and explicit methodologies for knowledge management. These methodologies will have detailed plans for collecting,

⁶ Reference to <http://lex.justice.md/md/315674/>



analyzing, and disseminating knowledge throughout the project and after its completion, ensuring continuity of positive impact.

In this context, SGP GEF will support a wide range of learning and knowledge-sharing activities, which will include face-to-face meetings, distribution of materials on web pages, online forums and thematic networks, knowledge fairs, peer exchanges, specialized training demonstrations, webinars, videoconferences, and the development of thematic case studies. These activities will be complemented by the creation and expansion of a digital library (OP8) that will serve as a centralized repository for all knowledge generated and shared within supported projects.

The country portfolio of SGP projects will include a systematic assessment of learning outcomes and knowledge generated in partnership with civil society, government, the private sector, and other relevant actors. These assessments will identify the types of knowledge products generated, facilitate peer experience sharing, and utilize demonstration sites to showcase best practices.

Furthermore, SGP GEF will explore efficient ways to amplify project impacts by scaling successful innovations, thereby contributing to a systemic transformation in environmental protection. One of the key objectives of SGP GEF is to encourage the replication and expansion of innovations identified within projects. This will be achieved by disseminating knowledge and best practices in an accessible and relevant manner to all stakeholders, ensuring that the positive impact of these projects is multiplied and sustained over the long term.

This underscores SGP GEF's commitment to integrating learning and knowledge management at all project stages, aiming not only to achieve environmental objectives but also to create a knowledge network that supports sustainable development and facilitates the replication of successful innovations in other contexts and regions.

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5. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Within the GEF SGP, communication is recognized as a strategic element essential for the success of supported environmental projects. The management and dissemination of information will be carried out through a well-defined strategy that actively involves collaboration with key stakeholders and civil society organizations in the Republic of Moldova. The goal of this strategy is to promote broad participation, develop effective relationships, and encourage strong partnerships throughout the entire duration of OP8 and at every stage of the project cycle, from the preliminary and informative phase to implementation and reporting.

The program and each grantor will clearly articulate the contribution of the SGP to achieving national priorities, GEF programming, and UNDP strategies. This will be achieved through a systematic and proactive approach to informing CSOs and the public. Communication methods will include the use of mass media, social networks, public consultations, information and awareness activities, as well as international relations, thus ensuring a wide dissemination of information.

The communication plan of the SGP program is structured into two main components: internal communication and external communication. This open, professional, and accessible approach will ensure information transparency, contributing to the program's visibility, credibility, and reputation. Internal communication will support the monitoring and evaluation process throughout the duration of the projects, while external communication activities will be aimed at ensuring the necessary transparency and efficiently managing key messages.

Implementing communication activities will increase the presence of GEF SGP projects in visual media, on websites, and on social networks, as well as through events, reports, publications, newsletters, and other innovative communication technologies. The key messages will be aligned with the global communication strategy of the SGP and will be adapted to the target audience in the Republic of Moldova. The communication plan aims to achieve clear objectives:

- Understanding global ecological challenges and sustainable development by raising awareness of environmental issues, sustainable livelihoods, poverty reduction, and integrating gender dimensions into environmental projects.
- Mobilizing resources and actions at national and local levels by strengthening efforts to address environmental issues and encouraging active community involvement.
- Promoting partnerships and engagement by facilitating collaboration between CSOs, government, and the private sector to achieve common goals.
- Harmonizing activities in the common interest by ensuring coherence and transparency in all actions carried out for the benefit of SGP target groups.
- Improving the perception of the SGP and grant procedures by promoting transparency and clarity in the grant process, thus facilitating broader access to resources and support for environmental projects.

This approach emphasizes the importance of a well-structured and results-oriented communication strategy that supports environmental NGOs and facilitates the efficient implementation of projects in the Republic of Moldova.



6. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

The OP8 partnership and resource mobilization plan aims to strengthen the impact and sustainability of grant awards under the SGP country program and the roles of Grantor+. It represents an important opportunity to maximize the impact of funding through a strategic and collaborative approach. This initiative aims not only to financially support environmental projects but also to ensure their sustainability through a 1:1 co-financing scheme. In this context, for every dollar allocated from GEF funds, beneficiaries must mobilize additional funds from other sources, emphasizing the importance of collaboration and attracting new resources. It is noteworthy that, although in-kind contributions are valuable (no more than 50%), at least 50% of project co-financing must be in cash, which strengthens the financial commitment of the involved parties.

In accordance with the financial results of the previous period and the results of the interviews, during OP8, a careful balance will be maintained between allocating resources to strategic initiatives and evaluating the co-financing potential of beneficiaries. This ensures that funds are used efficiently, in line with previous financial results and the potential to attract new resources. Additionally, small-scale projects and local CSOs without experience will benefit from capacity-building support. Experienced NGOs are invited to collaborate with local ones by forming consortia, thus facilitating knowledge transfer and the implementation of best practices. This collaborative approach not only improves the effectiveness of projects but also strengthens the capacity of local communities to manage and solve environmental problems.

a) Cash and In-Kind Co-Financing Planned and Secured

The GEF SGP for OP8 has secured a financial envelope of USD 456,818 (CORE Funds) and USD 533,747 (STAR Funds), to which a minimum mandatory co-financing amount (of which a maximum of 50% is allowed in-kind) from various sources will be attracted. At the project level, the grant will constitute up to USD 75,000 for simple projects and up to USD 150,000 for strategic projects. Additionally, it will be ensured that up to 70% of the total GEF SGP financial envelope is allocated to terrestrial landscape distribution.

b) Co-Financing Opportunities

Following consultations with relevant stakeholders and interviews with beneficiaries, specific activities and approaches have been determined to facilitate the necessary co-financing in projects promoted by civil society organizations. These sources may include: local public authorities (LPA), interested economic agents, development partners/donors (GIZ, SIDA, ADA, IFAD, Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova, UNDP, etc.), direct citizens/beneficiaries, government/state budget (National Environmental Fund, FNDRL, ODA, AEE), EU funds, and other sources (district councils, volunteers, broader collaboration with other projects, returning migrants, fundraising, NGOs, students, teachers).

The specific activities and approaches to facilitate project co-financing will be structured around the following dimensions:



- GEF resources (including those beyond SGP) and non-GEF resources (multilateral/bilateral donors, foundations, etc.) for implementing Strategic CPS Initiatives and supporting the UN SDG approach 2030.
- Cost recovery for co-financing a portion of the non-grant costs of the SGP country program (i.e., UNDP resources, national public budgets, government contributions, bilateral donors).
- The opportunity and flexibility of SGP GEF to serve as a co-financing instrument for other relevant projects and programs.

Potential funding from the private sector (e.g., support for successful sustainable enterprises for their expansion).



7. PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Mobilizing resources beyond GEF funding is essential for scaling up community-based environmental initiatives and ensuring long-term sustainability. The SGP through its team, the CNC, and possible Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs), represents an important element in strengthening the capacity of communities and CSOs to access additional funds from other donors and financing organizations. Although the funds may not go directly to the SGP, this activity can be considered part of resource mobilization, as the support provided results in an increasing flow of resources to SGP actors and their partnerships. To leverage resources, and to enhance the impact of the implemented projects, GEF SGP OP8 operational guidelines allow, and encourage, the co-financing of projects based on an “integrated project” approach. This facilitates access to different funding opportunities. For example, the association of two applicants who submit funding requests to two different funders under the umbrella of an "integrated project" can create valuable synergies and increase the chances of success. Additionally, co-financing based on an agreement between two different funders or the pooling of complementary activities that mobilize communities are effective strategies to maximize the impact of projects and attract additional resources.

The CPS will encourage Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) where public institutions (ministries, regional development agencies, local authorities) and private companies will contribute financial or in-kind resources to complement GEF SGP grants. Exploring digital crowdfunding platforms to mobilize small-scale contributions from communities is also an opportunity to create innovative partnerships and strengthen community cohesion. These methods not only diversify funding sources but also promote closer collaboration between different actors, increase visibility, enhance corporate social responsibility, and thereby strengthening joint efforts for environmental protection. From this perspective, supporting these initiatives is essential to ensure the sustainability and expansion of environmental projects in the long term.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The key risks anticipated in the implementation of the SGP Country Program Strategy (CPS) during OP8 are related to the following aspects: (i) social and environmental risks (with reference to UNDP Social and Environmental Standards); (ii) climate risks; (iii) other possible risks. The table below lists all identified risks, estimating the degree and probability of the risk, as well as relevant risk mitigation measures.

Table 3. Description of Identified Risks in OP8

Describe the identified risk	Level of risk (low, medium, high)	Likelihood of risk (low, medium, high)	Proposed risk mitigation measures
Difficulties Related to High Co-Financing (50%)	high	high	Support Agreements with Other Donors for Co-Financing Environmental Projects Promotion of actions in local strategies that would facilitate co-financing by local public authorities (LPA)
Decrease in the number of applicants and reduced involvement of NGOs	high	medium	More active promotion of SGP in "peer-to-peer" actions



			Dissemination of information in partnership with local public authorities about the implementation of environmental policies
Breaks and new grant awarding rules related to the transfer of financial management competencies from UNOPS to UNDP	high	high	Institutional Communication with beneficiaries Operational information for grantees Transfer of information from the web to a specialized platform for environmental NGOs
Apathy of the population and local public authorities (LPA)	high	high	Focus on promoting actions of urgent necessity
Risks related to the continuity of implemented project results	high	high	Focus on achieving sustainable indicators Promotion of the perpetuation of institutional memory
Shortage of qualified human resources for project attraction and implementation	medium	medium	Qualified assistance measures in the process of project development and implementation
Political instability	medium	medium	Lack of Involvement in Political Actions
Regional geopolitical instability	medium	medium	Lack of involvement in political actions related to the war in the region
Environmental risks	medium	medium	Flexibility of SGP actions to respond promptly to new challenges
Climate risks	high	medium	Flexibility of SGP actions to respond promptly to new challenges More frequent (semi-annual) assessment of risks related to climate change (which are harder to predict)

During the implementation of the SGP Country Program Strategy (CPS) OP8, risks will be monitored and, if necessary, revised during the annual strategy update and AMR preparation. Periodically, and in consultation with CSOs/CBOs and relevant stakeholders, a clear assessment of the degree and validity of the risk, as well as the effectiveness of the risk mitigation measures taken, will be conducted. Subsequent interventions will involve adjusting the probability of the risk, eliminating some risks, or the emergence of new risks, identifying new measures to reduce them. Based on the findings, the annual adjustment of the SGP GEF Strategy for OP8 will be proposed.

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

The monitoring and evaluation plan follows the SGP Country Program M&E Guidelines. It reflects monitoring approaches at both the country and project levels, as well as the projected results framework of the SGP Country Program Strategy (CPS).



9.1 Monitoring approaches at the project and country level

The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process of the GEF SGP program is essential to ensure the success and transparency of each funded project. This process includes a comprehensive set of horizontal actions, which are regularly applied at all stages of a project – from initial planning to proposal formulation and submission, implementation, reporting, and result analysis. M&E constitutes a fundamental pillar of the GEF SGP, with the main objective of measuring the progress and achievements of each project at the national level, using a clear and well-structured reporting system. This system allows for the rapid identification of any implementation difficulties and ensures continuous evaluation of the quality of achieved objectives and that allocated resources are managed efficiently, and that funded projects significantly contribute to the established environmental objectives. Continuous monitoring tracks how project activities lead to the achievement of planned results and indicators. This provides the opportunity to make necessary real-time adjustments to improve project performance and maximize positive environmental impact, ensuring that investments are used as efficiently as possible and oriented towards tangible results.

Periodic project evaluation plays a critical role in assessing the relevance, performance, effects, and impact of each project in relation to the established objectives and specific indicators of the GEF SGP. This evaluation provides a clear and objective picture of the effectiveness of funded projects, highlighting how they contribute to strategic environmental protection objectives. A particularly important aspect of the M&E process is ensuring data quality. In this regard, a systematic and rigorous process of recording projects and data at the national level in the SGP database is continuously maintained. This ensures that all relevant information is correctly collected, centralized, and updated, providing the necessary confidence in the veracity and integrity of the presented data.

Thus, the monitoring and evaluation process of the GEF SGP program represents a vital tool, ensuring not only transparent and responsible use of funds but also continuous improvement of funded projects. This robust M&E framework significantly contributes to achieving global environmental objectives, demonstrating the efficiency and long-term impact of supported initiatives.

At the project level, M&E will monitor the progress in achieving the committed results, for which the CSO is responsible. In its reports (progress, final), each project team will present a description of the activities carried out, the degree of achievement of program and project indicators, best practices and lessons learned from the difficulties encountered, the consumption of allocated resources, the evaluation of achieved results, etc. Similarly, in the information about the progress in the actions undertaken according to the project proposal plans, the successes and shortcomings encountered will be presented, to ensure the necessary corrections, as well as the regular exchange of opinions with the GEF SGP National Steering Committee for a continuous process of improvement and learning. Additionally, in the project monitoring and evaluation process, the CSO will involve the target groups and partners who participated in its development and implementation. The M&E reports should reflect the opinions and views of the partners.

At the country level, M&E of the results of all projects in the program portfolio will be aggregated and analyzed, especially on the following dimensions: achieving the targets and indicators of the SGP Country Program Strategy



(CPS), systematizing and amplifying best practices and lessons learned, improving relationships among involved actors, and reporting to the national management team of the GEF SGP.

The SGP projects will be periodically monitored through a system focused on: (i) obtaining information from reports about progress in relation to the expected results stipulated in the project proposal; (ii) identifying strengths and successes, as well as weaknesses and potential shortcomings by the project teams; (iii) ensuring regular feedback for a continuous learning and experience exchange process among SGP participants. Continuous communication (via email, phone, Skype, etc.) between project teams and the National Steering Committee (NSC) is essential in the project monitoring process, including those facing difficulties. Additionally, monitoring will serve as a tool for modifying activities to better achieve the expected results.

Monitoring visits will be scheduled at least 1-2 times for each project (usually correlated with the progress and final reporting process) carried out by the National Steering Committee (NSC), including the invitation of other relevant actors. Thus, in the field, the actual implementation of the reported project actions and the involvement of grant beneficiaries will be observed. The CN will document the achievement of country indicators and global GEF initiatives, the impact of the activities carried out, and best practices from the Republic of Moldova, as well as identify discrepancies or deviations from the grant contracts. Therefore, the monitoring reports will indicate the findings, observations, recommendations, and measures to be taken by the beneficiaries, NC, and NSC, who will be duly informed.

Monitoring visits can target several projects united in a cluster to scale the performance of GEF SGP assistance. The organization of joint monitoring visits with other co-financing donors (grantors, foundations, academic institutions, etc.) of GEF SGP projects is encouraged.

The evaluation of projects at the end of the term will focus on analyzing the performance and results of the project based on the objectives of each project, as well as the country-level indicators, the activity of CSOs, and the possibilities for improving the capacities of communities to engage in solving environmental problems. The plans for evaluating the GEF SGP project portfolio will corroborate the different types of reports that will help the program maintain accountability, sustainability, allow replicability, and provide the opportunity to identify and communicate best practices.

Participatory monitoring and adherence to ethical guidelines are important features of SGP M&E. Thus, each grantor will present methods for conducting community-led monitoring (joint meetings and workshops, participatory data or studies, etc.), local actors, community members, including vulnerable individuals, periodically involved in defining the progress and results of the reported project.

The involvement of project beneficiaries in the M&E process will enhance the mutual understanding necessary for project implementation, ensure participatory, representative, and credible data, and strengthen the capacities of the actors involved in developing joint activities. The widespread application of stakeholder involvement in the



evaluation and self-monitoring process will scale the experience gained within the program and improve the understanding of lessons learned.

Table 4: Country Program-Level M&E Plan

M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Funding Source	Time Period
Development of the Country Program Strategy	The framework for actions, including the identification of community-level projects	NC, NSC, national stakeholders, grant beneficiaries	A PMG planning grant for engaging consultants will be used to update the OP8 CPS	At the start of OP8
Annual review of the CPS and project results analysis at the CNC meeting	Evaluation of the effectiveness of projects, the country portfolio; learning, adaptive management	NC, NSC, UNDP Country Office (Climate, Environment, Energy Cluster), Central Program Management Team (CPMT).	Staff time, country operational budget.	At least an annual review ⁷ to ensure that the OP8 CPS is achieving the expected results and making timely, evidence-based changes to the CPS as needed ⁸ .
Study on the Annual Monitoring Report ⁹	Facilitating efficient reporting to the CPMT and GEF. It serves as the primary tool for recording and analytically presenting results to donors.	NC/PA in close collaboration with the NSC. The CPMT provides technical guidance and support and receives the final country request for subsequent actions.	Staff time	Once a year in June-July.
Country Portfolio Review	Capturing methodological results at the portfolio level at a specific point in time to assess impact-level change and broader adoption. The objective is to support reporting to stakeholders, facilitate learning, and provide support for strategic planning/implementation of the CPS.	NC, NSC	A SGP planning grant for consultant engagement will be used to conduct a review of the impact of previous operational cycles and utilize the lessons learned for the development and implementation of the CPS OP8. Global M&E technical support may be provided.	Once per operational phase

⁷ It is recommended that the annual review of the CPS be conducted around the AMR submission period for both processes to leverage benefits from one process to the other (the suggested period is May-July).

⁸ Please note that the OP8 CPS will be regarded as a dynamic document and may be periodically updated by the SGP country team and the CNC to reflect any necessary adjustments to ensure maximum impact. This CPS update process should be part of the annual CPS review.

⁹ Timely and quality presentation at the country level for the Annual Monitoring Process is mandatory. As a Global Program, it facilitates aggregated reporting from the CPMT to the GEF, UNDP, and other stakeholders.



M&E Activity	Purpose	Responsible Parties	Funding Source	Time Period
SGP Database	Ensuring the registration of all contributions from the country program and projects in the SGP database.	NC, PA,	Staff time	Throughout the operational phase. Quality assurance and completeness of data prior to the annual monitoring cycle (May-June each year).
Audit	Ensuring compliance with project implementation/management standards and norms.	UNOPS / External Contractor. NC/PA for providing requested support	Global operational budget.	Annually for selected countries based on risk assessment.

9.2 Results Framework CPS

Table 5: Results Framework for the SGP Country Program Strategy OP8

<p>Alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals that the CPS will contribute to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being • Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation • Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy • Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities • Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production • Goal 13: Climate Action • Goal 15: Life on Land • Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals
<p>Synergies with the UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD 2023–2027):</p> <p>OP8 actions on sustainable agriculture, circular economy, and waste management reinforce CPD Outcome 3: “Inclusive, competitive and sustainable economic development and equal access to decent work and productive employment.”</p> <p>OP8’s emphasis on social inclusion, gender equality, and multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms aligns with CPD Outcome 2: “More accountable, transparent, human rights-based and gender-responsive governance empowers all people of Moldova to participate in and contribute to development processes.”</p> <p>Overall, the OP8 Country Programme Strategy complements the UNDP CPD (2023–2027) by contributing to its four strategic outcomes under the UNSDCF: (i) advancing green development and climate resilience through community-led biodiversity conservation, land restoration, and low-carbon energy solutions; (ii) promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development via circular economy and green jobs; (iii) strengthening participatory governance and social inclusion through multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms and gender-responsive approaches; and (iv) enhancing knowledge management and partnerships to scale innovation and systemic change. OP8 serves as a catalytic mechanism for localizing CPD priorities by empowering civil society and communities to implement integrated, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable solutions.</p>



Program Objective OP8 SGP: Engaging local CSOs/NGOs in landscape-marine space approaches worldwide by providing them access to knowledge and information, empowering them through hands-on learning and skills development, and offering technical assistance and grants for interventions that enhance well-being and socioeconomic conditions while generating global environmental benefits.

1 Strategic Initiatives OP8 SGP CPS	2 Indicators and Targets CPS	3 Means of Verification
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 1:</u> <i>Community-Level Conservation of Ecosystems and Threatened Species</i> <u>(GEF core indicators 1; 3; 4).</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing the efficiency of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation and management by implementing equitable governance systems that recognize and respect the rights of local communities. 2. Improving biodiversity-friendly community-led practices and approaches in key sectors (e.g., agriculture, fishing, forestry, tourism, infrastructure, etc.). 3. Enhancing community-led actions for the protection of threatened species. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 hectares of terrestrial landscapes with improved management practices (e.g., new forest plantations, grassland restoration) for benefits to biodiversity • 40 hectares of fortified natural protected areas (including core areas, ecological corridors, and buffer zones for water bodies). • Studies or management plans for 3 natural areas and protected zones. 	<p>Individual project reporting by country teams under the SGP (as part of intermediate and final progress reports). Comparison variables for initial assessment (using conceptual models and partner data, as applicable). Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Country program review. National sector statistics.</p>
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 2:</u> <i>Sustainable Agriculture, Fishing, and Food Security</i> <u>(GEF core indicators 3; 4)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase diversification and improve the value chain in food production while protecting vulnerable ecosystems. 2. Eliminate deforestation from the supply chain and expand the restoration of degraded land. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 hectares of land and ecosystems undergoing restoration, including land in production systems. • 5 partnerships to promote sustainable agriculture and fishing and/or food security (e.g., diversification, sustainable intensification, agroecological practices, climate-smart agriculture, certification programs, local sourcing initiatives, waste reduction and circular economy, sustainable fishing management, etc.). • Thematic studies for soil quality protection. 	<p>Individual project reporting by country teams under the SGP (as part of intermediate and final progress reports). Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Country program review. Socio-ecological resilience indicators for production landscapes (SEPL). National sector statistics.</p>
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 3:</u> <i>Co-benefits of Access to Low-Carbon Energy</i> <u>(GEF core indicator 6).</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,000 tons of CO2e mitigated/avoided • 150 kW of installed renewable energy capacity in community-scale systems (e.g., based on small-capacity 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of mid-term and final progress reports). Annual monitoring report (AMR),</p>



<p>Supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement and NDCs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote renewable and energy-efficient technologies that provide socio-economic benefits and improve livelihoods. 2. Support decentralized and autonomous energy services based on local sources, necessary for the development of rural and urban areas. 	<p>photovoltaic or wind technologies, biomass, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 locally adapted solutions promoting low-carbon technologies (e.g., locally developed energy-efficient stoves, innovative uses of solar/wind energy, new/modified biogas technology, etc.). • 5 hectares of energy crops (forests and non-forest lands with restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks initiated). • 30 households benefiting from access to locally produced energy. 	<p>SGP global database. Review of the country program strategy (CNC contributions). National sector statistics. Reports from relevant development partners. Inputs from NDCs.</p>
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 4:</u> Local to Global Coalitions for Chemical and Waste Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote the management of plastic materials/solid waste and the circular economy. 2. Reduce/eliminate the use of highly toxic substances in agriculture. 3. Enhance local and global coalitions for the management of chemicals, waste, and mercury. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 tons of pollutants and waste removed or eliminated. • 3 policy recommendations or advocacy initiatives related to land pollution as a result of the SGP project. • 2 local to global coalitions for strengthened and/or established management of chemicals and waste. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of mid-term and final progress reports). Strategic partnership with IPEN and Mercury GOLD country partners. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program. Socio-ecological resilience indicators for production landscapes (SEPL). National sector statistics. Reports from relevant development partners.</p>
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 5:</u> Catalyzing Sustainable Urban Solutions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhancing capacities for resilient, low-emission urban development through integrated, socially inclusive, and community-led solutions. 2. Demonstrating innovative, socially inclusive urban solutions/approaches (including waste and chemical management, energy, transportation, watershed protection, ecosystem services, and biodiversity). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 community-based sustainable solutions in urban landscapes (e.g., transportation, biodiversity conservation, chemical and waste management, energy efficiency, watershed protection, etc.). • 2 projects focused on urban solutions (e.g., innovative centers, small-scale urban revitalization, smart city elements, smart specialization, etc.). • 2 projects implemented in green (parks) and blue (lakes) infrastructure within localities. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams (as part of mid-term and final progress reports). Strategic partnership with IPEN and Mercury GOLD country partners. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program. Socio-ecological resilience indicators for production landscapes (SEPL). National sector statistics. Reports from relevant development partners.</p>



<p>3. Promoting public-private partnerships for access to low-carbon energy for marginalized communities.</p>		
<p>Strategic Initiative 6: Community-Based Adaptation (CBA)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reducing vulnerability and enhancing the adaptive capacity of communities. 2. Promoting concrete experiences and models of local community adaptation to climate change. 3. Encouraging policies to integrate community-based adaptation into national processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 local communities with enhanced capacities for adapting to extreme climate conditions. • 2 concrete models of local community adaptation to climate change. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program. National sector statistics. Reports from relevant development partners.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 7: CSO-Government-Private Sector Policies and Dialogue Platform Planning</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouraging community participation in global and national policies, contributing to the development of global strategies relevant to the environment and sustainable development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 dialogues established or strengthened between CSOs, government, and the private sector. • 2 high-level policy changes associated with increased community participation in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms. • 100 representatives from social inclusion groups (women, youth, people with special needs, farmers, other marginalized groups) fully engaged in dialogue platforms. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program.</p>
<p>Strategic Initiative 8: Enhancing Social Inclusion (Horizontal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting inclusive targeted initiatives. 2. Integrating social inclusion into all projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 people benefiting from GEF-funded investments, disaggregated by sex (GEF core indicator 11). • 10 projects with focused interventions promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. • 10 projects demonstrating engagement models for (a) ethnic minority groups, (b) youth, and (c) persons with special needs. • 10 grants with targeted support for 1) women or women's groups, 2) youth or youth-led groups, 3) ethnic minority groups. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program.</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of the total grant portfolio accessed by 1) women or women’s groups, 2) youth or youth-led groups, 3) ethnic minority groups. 	
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 9:</u> Knowledge Management (KM) (Horizontal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capturing knowledge and lessons from projects and activities. 2. Improving the capacities of CSOs/CBOs. 3. Facilitating South-South exchanges to promote technology transfer and replication of best practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 projects involving local CSOs/CBOs or communities in project results monitoring meetings, impact evaluation, and lessons learned. • 10 knowledge-sharing events with the participation of local communities. • 1 online knowledge database developed as a result of the SGP project. • 2 South-South exchanges between communities, NGOs/CSOs, or other partners within or between countries to transfer knowledge, replicate technology, tools, or approaches on global environmental issues. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program.</p>
<p><u>Strategic Initiative 10:</u> Results Management, Monitoring, and Evaluation (M&E) (Horizontal)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing the new M&E strategy in the country program, developing and implementing projects, and decision-making using participatory mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 impact evaluations conducted at the national level with evidence of SGP impact and lessons learned. 	<p>Individual project reporting by SGP country teams. Annual monitoring report (AMR), SGP global database. Review of the country program.</p>



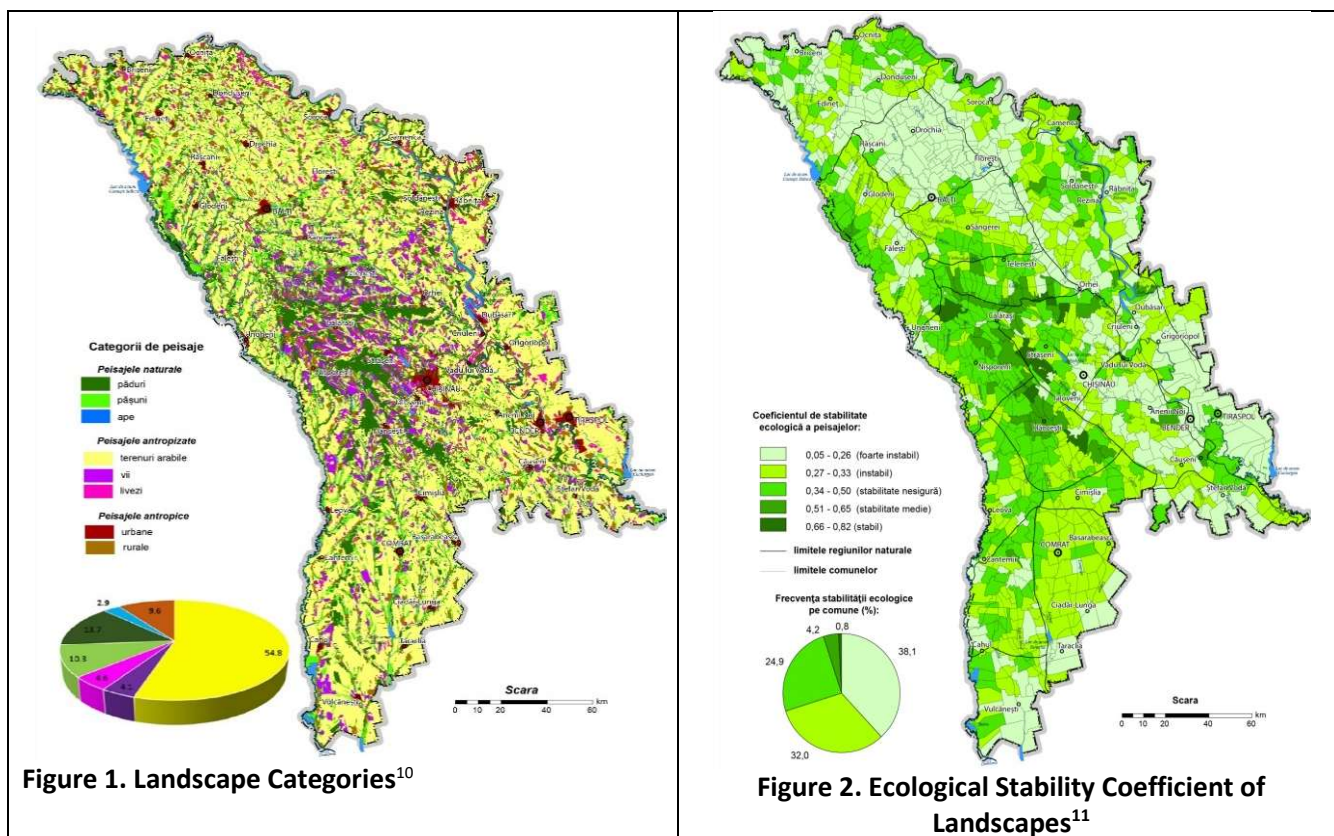
10. APPROVAL BY THE NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE (NSC)

Members of the CNC involved in the development, revision, and approval of OP8 CPS	Signature
Silvia Pană-Carp, UNDP Moldova	
Călin GHEORGHITĂ, Ministry of Environment	
Mihai Lupu, Energy Institute of MECC	
Rodica Frecăuțanu, NGO "Caroma Nord"	
Iurie Bejan, Institute of Ecology and Geography	
Silvia Bicenco, ALDA Moldova	

ANNEXES

Annex 1

Supporting Materials for the Typology of Terrestrial Landscapes in the Republic of Moldova for Interventions in OP8



¹⁰ <https://ieg.md/laboratorul-geografia-peisajelor>

¹¹ <https://ieg.md/laboratorul-geografia-peisajelor>

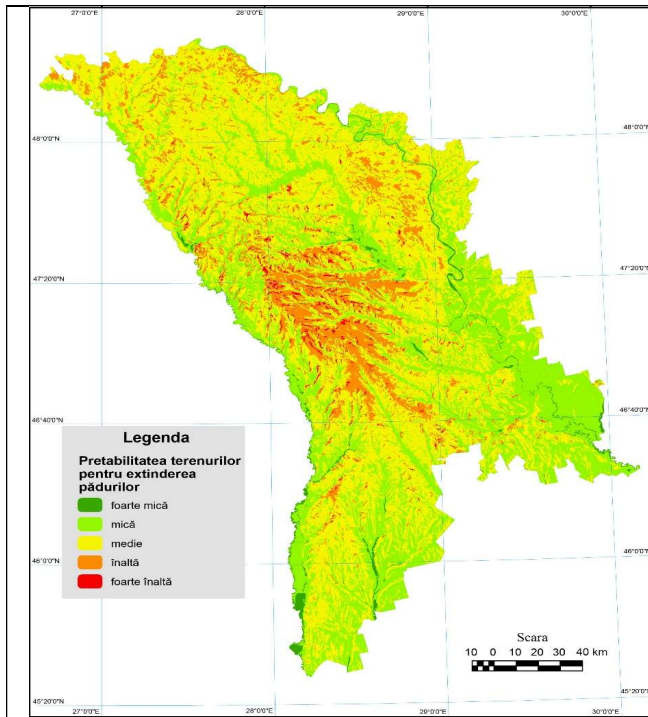


Figure 3. Lands Suitable for Afforestation ¹²

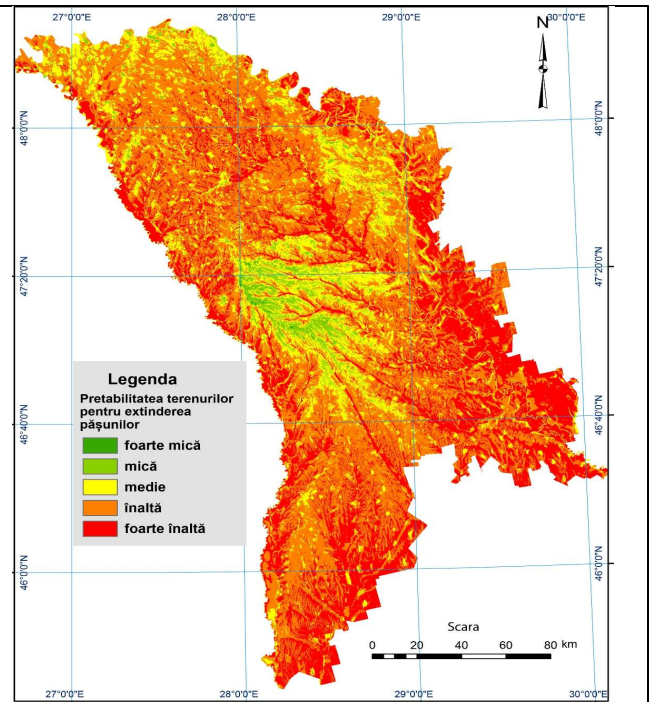


Figure 4. Lands Suitable for Greening ¹³

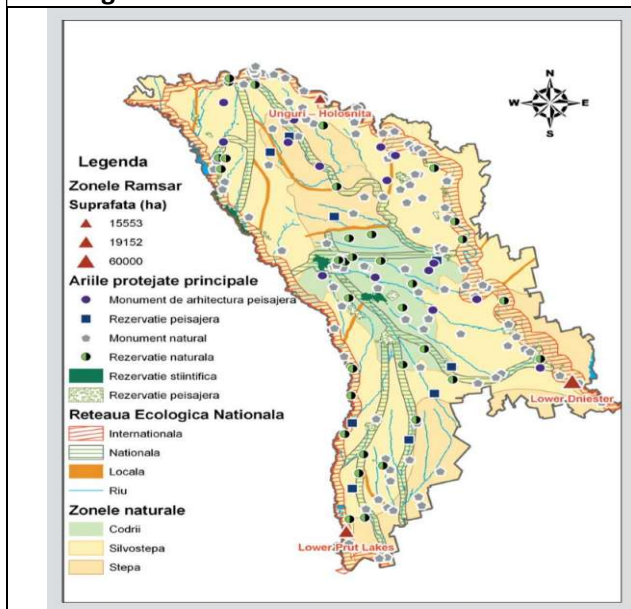


Figure 5. National Ecological Network ¹⁴

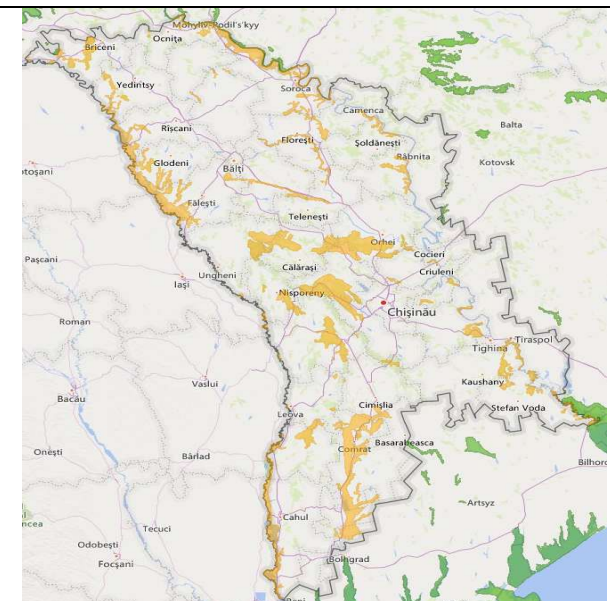


Figure 6. Emerald Network ¹⁵

¹² <https://ieg.md/laboratorul-geografia-peisajelor>

¹³ <https://ieg.md/laboratorul-geografia-peisajelor>

¹⁴ <https://mediu.gov.md/ro/content/republica-moldova-al-vi-lea-raport-na%C8%9Bional-cu-privire-la-diversitatea-biologic%C4%83>

¹⁵ <https://mediu.gov.md/ro/content/republica-moldova-al-vi-lea-raport-na%C8%9Bional-cu-privire-la-diversitatea-biologic%C4%83>

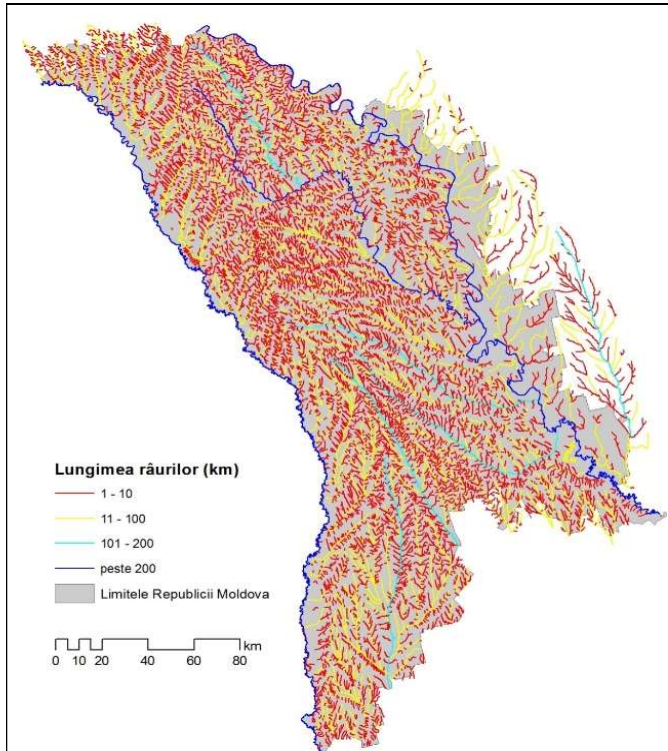


Figure 7. Areas and Buffer Zones for River and Water Basin Protection¹⁶

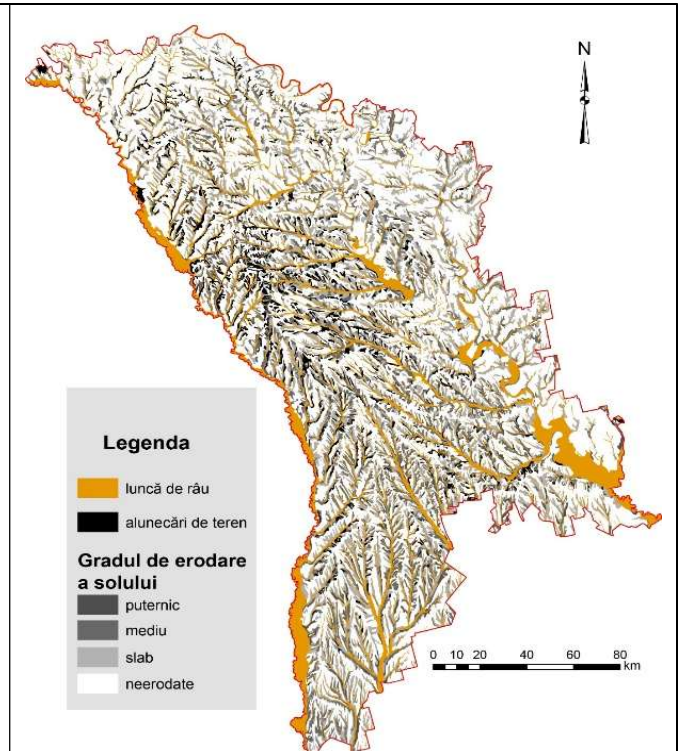


Figure 8. Degraded Lands for Improvement through Afforestation¹⁷

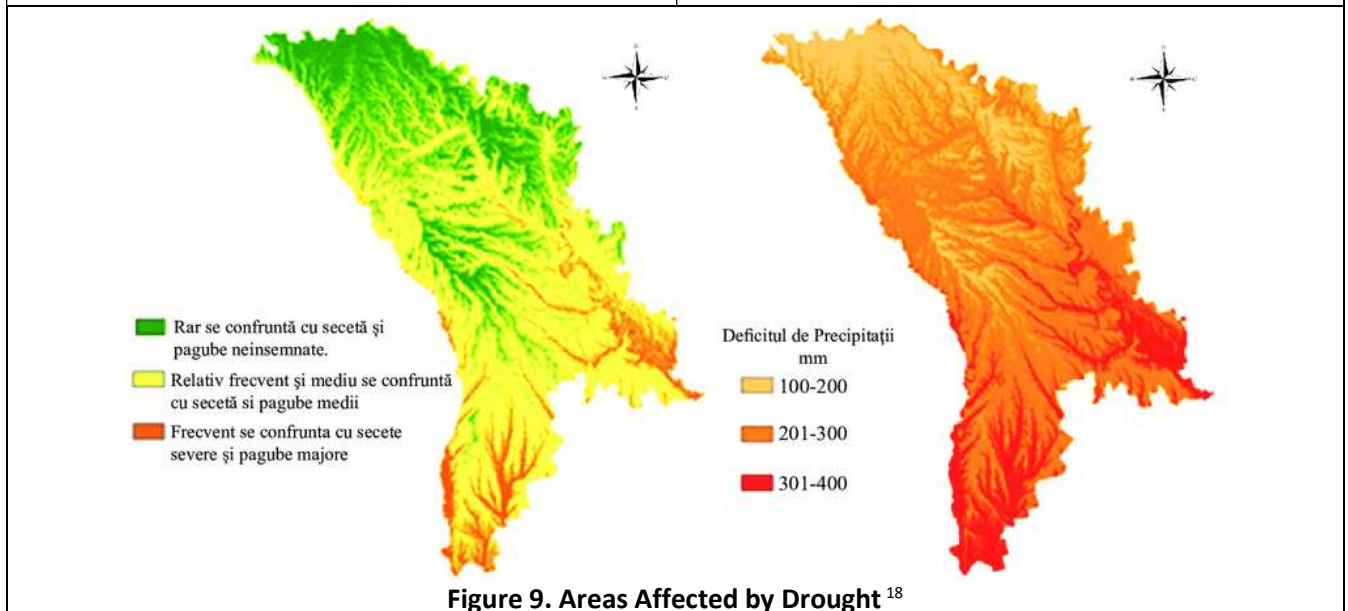


Figure 9. Areas Affected by Drought¹⁸

¹⁶ geoportal.md

¹⁷ geoportal.md

¹⁸ National Drought Plan for the Republic of Moldova. 2020

Figure 12. Wind Potential in the Republic of Moldova ²¹

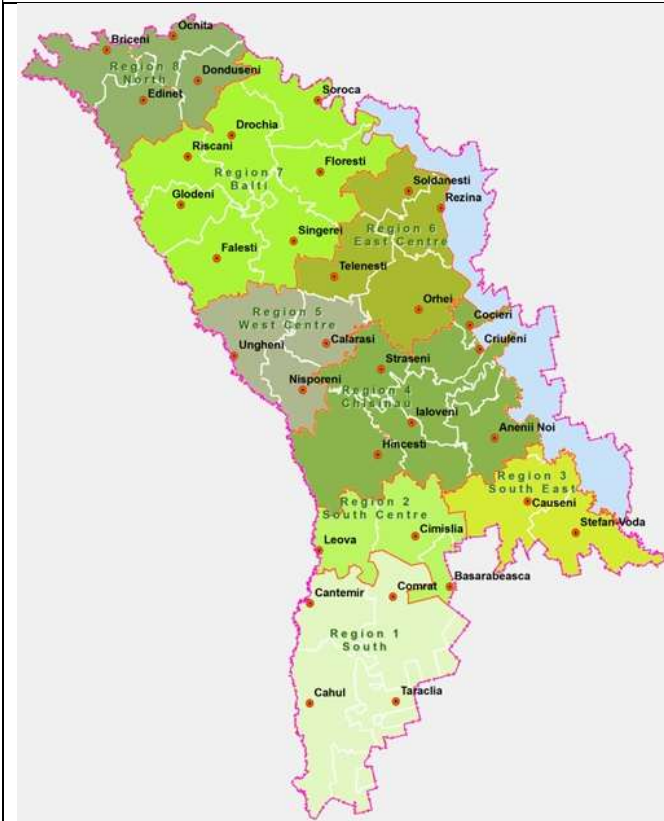


Figure 14. Regional Landfills for Waste Collection ²³

Figure 13. Solar Potential (Photovoltaic) in the Territory of the Republic of Moldova ²²

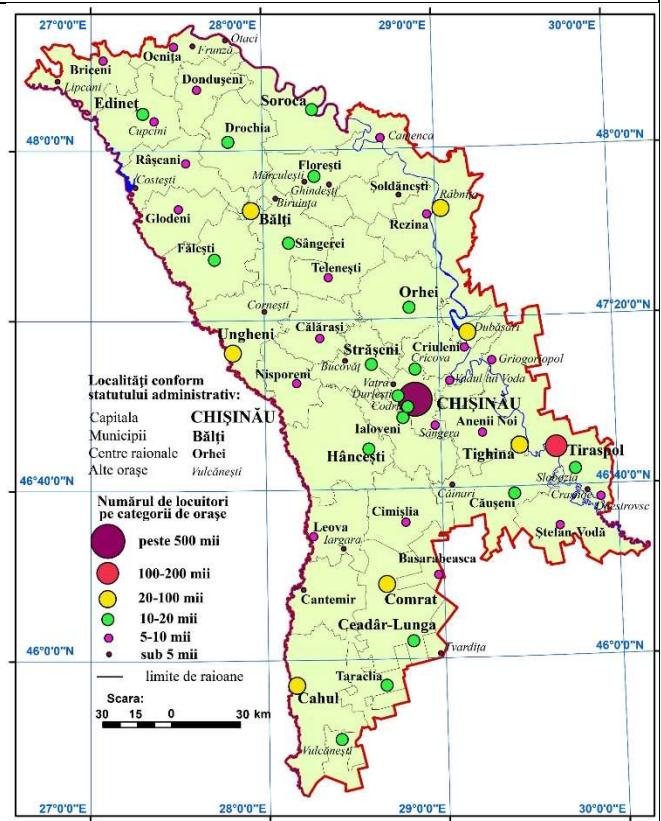


Figure 15. Cities in the Republic of Moldova ²⁴

²¹ Source: „Digital Climatic Atlas of Republic of Moldova”, 2011

²² Source: <https://solargis.com/resources/free-maps-and-gis-data?locality=moldova>

²³ Source: Waste Management Strategy 2013-2027

²⁴ Source: According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (BNS), the number of residents with permanent residence at the beginning of 2023



innovative uses of solar/wind energy, new/modified biogas technology, etc.)	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
5 hectares of energy crops (forests and non-forested land with initiated restoration and enhancement of carbon stocks)	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
30 households benefiting from access to locally produced energy	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
50 tons of pollutants and waste removed or eliminated	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
2 local to global coalitions for strengthened and/or established management of chemicals and waste	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2 sustainable community-based solutions in urban landscapes (e.g., transportation, biodiversity conservation, chemical and waste management, energy efficiency, protection of watersheds, etc.)	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2 projects focused on urban solutions (e.g., innovative centers, small-scale urban revitalization, SMART city elements, and smart specialization, etc.)	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow
2 projects implemented in green infrastructure (parks) and blue infrastructure (lakes) within localities	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
5 local communities with enhanced capacities for adapting to extreme climate conditions	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2 concrete models for local community adaptation to climate change	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
2 dialogues formed or strengthened between civil society organizations, government, and the private sector	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow
100 representatives of the social inclusion group (women, youth, people with disabilities, farmers, and other marginalized groups) fully engaged in dialogue platforms	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow
<i>Training and capacity-building sessions.</i>	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
<i>Thematic studies and research</i>	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green
<i>Promotional events</i>	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow



Eligible Actions in the GEF's Strategic Programming for Moldova over the Next 4 Years

Indicative Eligible Actions
<p>Strategic Initiative 1: Community-Based Conservation of Ecosystems and Threatened Species</p> <p>Landscape Protection: Expanding landscapes with enhanced ecological value (forests, pastures, floodplains, wetlands), ecological reconstruction of eroded or landslide-prone lands, increasing eco-protective and bioproductive potential, conserving rural landscapes, protecting watersheds, rehabilitating/renaturalizing riverbeds, conserving biodiversity, and restoring aquatic habitats, protecting calcareous areas (including landscapes, flora, and fauna).</p> <p>Afforestation: Afforesting degraded lands (ravines, lands affected by landslides, eroded lands), ensuring sustainability for afforested lands and maintaining new plantations, planting indigenous tree species (including creating nurseries and seed banks), technology transfer projects, and best practices for innovative forestry approaches, forest plantations with enhanced added value (restoration and rehabilitation of wetlands, afforestation for water protection, silvopastoral plantations, honey-producing corridors²⁵, experimental plantations for producing mycorrhizal planting material with valuable species such as truffles, porcini, and shiitake, etc.), increasing forest planting material, including containerized seedlings, involving the community in forestry reconstruction activities, and planting in rocky areas.</p> <p>Grassland Restoration: Actions to increase the share of pastures, grassing with perennial honey-producing/medicinal plants, and improving degraded pastures.</p> <p>Strengthening the Network of Protected Areas: Expanding the national ecological network (especially at the local level), creating protection zones and strips along rivers and water basins, improving the management of natural protected areas, creating small infrastructure to enhance the value of protected natural landscapes (e.g., implementing sustainability practices, developing ecotourism trails, viewpoints, visitor information centers, phenological collections in local museums, etc.).</p> <p>Rehabilitation of Agricultural and Rural Landscapes: Promoting integrated management of agro-ecosystems, promoting organic farming technologies (conservative practices, the use of effective microorganisms and organic fertilizers, including composting biodegradable waste, rehabilitating and returning degraded lands to productive use, stopping the advancement of ravines and erosion, etc.), and environmentally friendly practices (agro-terracing, hedgerows, anti-erosion mounds/strips, permaculture, agroforestry systems, geoplastic interventions in degraded areas, etc.), developing spring/well facilities, technologies for impermeable water basins using natural materials, rainwater reservoirs, creating/restoring protection strips, and mitigating the degradation of agricultural lands through crop rotation.</p> <p>Promoting Relevant Thematic Studies (Applied): Ensuring the execution of specific technical-scientific studies, evaluating the quality status of soil cover in areas designated for afforestation, conducting design work for forestry crops, promoting forestry/pastoral management and developing plans for forest/pasture development, actions to increase the benefits from biodiversity and ecosystem services, developing management plans for protected natural areas and water basins, mapping flora and fauna, applying remote monitoring technologies for forest resources (satellite, drones, lidar, etc.), including automated processing and interpretation systems for large data sets, and assessing the effects of planting</p>

²⁵ **Honey-Producing Corridor:** Planting a significant area (starting from 10 hectares) dedicated to various honey-producing tree and shrub species, as well as honey-producing herbs, to achieve continuous flowering that covers the entire growing season. These masses are extremely important for preserving and developing pollinator populations.



new tree species that are more adapted to drought and climate change, etc. (Studies may be financed by SGP GEF if at least some recommendations from the studies are implemented within the same project.)

Protecting Threatened Species: Identifying and improving habitats for endangered species, increasing visibility of endangered species issues, inventorying nests of rare species, improving living conditions for animals (e.g., actions to install nests for endangered species), consolidating habitats (uniting isolated habitats) and ecological corridors.

Promotion, Information, and Awareness: Training local public authority personnel and relevant institutions about the diversity of fauna and flora in the country or region, informing and involving various social groups in activities to expand areas with forest/pasture vegetation (afforestation, greening, restoration, landscape conservation, biodiversity preservation, etc.), promoting, developing, and piloting new nature-friendly concepts, advocating for adjustments to penalties for environmental violations, training local public authority staff on how to carry out forestry/pasture maintenance and management, promoting technological modernization and best practices for the multiple uses of landscapes to meet ecological, economic, social, cultural, and ecotourism needs, valuing the use of forest and landscape resources for recreational purposes, promoting funding mechanisms for landscape management or stimulating access to funds provided by the government and other donors, safeguarding and enhancing the tourism potential of natural and cultural landscapes, training on the importance of endangered species, informing landowners, managers, and the public about the presence of endangered species within the community, developing ecotourism trails, ecological education hours in schools, etc.

Strategic Initiative 2: Sustainable Agriculture, Fishing, and Food Security

Restoration and Rehabilitation of Lands and Ecosystems: This includes those involved in production systems.

Partnership Actions: Promoting sustainable agriculture and fishing and/or food security through activities such as diversification, sustainable intensification, agroecological practices, climate-smart agriculture, certification programs, local supply initiatives, waste reduction, and circular economy practices, as well as sustainable fisheries management, etc.

Conducting Thematic Studies: Focused on soil quality protection.

Strategic Initiative 3: Co-Benefits of Accessing Low-Carbon Energy

Promoting New Technologies: Encouraging environmentally friendly technologies, promoting solutions for improving energy efficiency, and harnessing renewable energy sources (such as photovoltaic panels, solar collectors, thermal insulation, wind energy, biofuels, biomass, and biogas installations for rural households). This also includes the implementation of LED technologies and dimming systems, promoting concepts based on "energy communities" and "smart villages," scaling innovative models, utilizing secondary agricultural and forestry waste, supporting decentralized and autonomous energy services based on local sources, and applying the concept of distributed generation at the local level.

Energy Plantations: Creating and expanding energy plantations (including willows and acacias), particularly in river floodplains.

Engaging the Population: Implementing solutions to save energy and thermal heat consumption, promoting the use of high-energy-efficiency products, encouraging energy-efficient technologies (e.g., cogeneration, heating/cooling), promoting concepts of eco-friendly rural houses, and establishing regulations among community organizations, NGOs, and local public authorities for partnerships and commitments relevant to energy efficiency solutions.

Strategic Initiative 4: Local to Global Coalitions for Chemical and Waste Management



Waste Management: Implementing the principles of the green economy and extended producer responsibility, promoting the separate collection of waste, composting, reusing waste, reducing the use of plastic packaging, creating local partnerships, and involving the community in developing local integrated waste management programs. This includes engaging recycling companies, launching integrated waste prevention campaigns, developing and using smart waste management applications, ensuring waste traceability, scaling innovative waste prevention and management models, contributing effectively to regional solutions for waste management, providing training to improve waste management, implementing eco-sanitation toilets, and applying solutions for composting organic waste and using sludge from ponds/rivers as fertilizer.

Chemical Management: Promoting actions to ensure sustainable local management of chemicals, advocating for the use of eco-friendly detergents, raising awareness about the dangers associated with pesticide storage, undertaking land decontamination actions to address pollution, educating the public about consumer safety, and reducing risks associated with the use of chemicals. This also includes developing collection points for hazardous waste (batteries, waste from electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), expired medications, etc.) from households, collecting mercury thermometers and expired lamps, centralized collection of expired reagents from school laboratories, collecting expired pesticides/herbicides, and conducting baseline studies on integrated waste and chemical management while monitoring harmful emissions.

Strategic Initiative 5: Catalyzing Sustainable Urban Solutions

Urban Development: Restoring degraded landscapes within urban areas, rehabilitating urban, peri-urban, and rural green spaces, promoting environmentally friendly technologies in urban planning, and implementing community-driven smart solutions (including management of chemicals and waste, energy, transportation, ecotourism, protection and management of watersheds, ecosystem services, and biodiversity). This includes establishing green infrastructure (parks) and blue infrastructure (lakes) within municipalities, enhancing springs/wells, and promoting urban mobility solutions and eco-friendly transportation (e.g., cycling).

Urban Planning: Promoting actions for biodiversity conservation in local environmental protection plans, advocating for SMART City, ECODRIVE, and GREEN City concepts, urban revitalization, smart specialization, and promoting rainwater harvesting for technical purposes. This initiative also includes advocating for the incorporation of green area development in General Urban Plans (both rural and urban) for residential neighborhoods, streamlining passenger flow, and promoting connections for the population to existing sewage systems.

Strategic Initiative 6: Community-Based Adaptation

Enhancing Adaptive Capacity: Promoting practices and technologies to mitigate the effects of climate change, facilitating local adaptation to these effects, and encouraging the development of Associations for the Management of Local Resources (e.g., municipal and/or private forest managers, water users, etc.).

Flood Adaptation: Promoting best practices for proper flood risk management, developing wetland areas, adjusting regulations for the exploitation of water basins to local conditions, delineating and reforesting protective riparian strips around water bodies within the community, inventorying the condition of protective dikes and dams within the community, constructing/repairing bottom and fire drainage systems for water bodies, converting/liquidating ponds, and reinforcing damaged dams.

Drought Adaptation: Promoting best practices and measures to combat drought/water shortages, increasing the growth of native species resistant to new climatic conditions in nurseries, implementing solutions for forest protection against fires and pollution, creating new impermeable accumulation lakes, developing wetland areas and rainwater harvesting, promoting water-efficient agricultural crops, advancing technologies to reduce water loss, and encouraging technologies that allow the use of wastewater for irrigation, etc.



Strategic Initiative 7: Policies for CSOs-Government-Private Sector and Planning Dialogue Platforms

Promoting Established or Strengthened Dialogues between CSOs, Government, and the Private Sector: Proposals for adjustments/changes/replacements of public policies, ensuring community participation in multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms, and engaging local research institutions.

Actions to Involve Representatives of Social Inclusion Groups (Women, Youth, Persons with Disabilities, Farmers, and Other Marginalized Groups) in Dialogue Platforms.

Strategic Initiative 8: Strengthening Social Inclusion

Increasing the Role of CSOs in the Community: Actions to strengthen and directly engage residents, contributions to enhancing local capacities, facilitating collaborative work in the development of local environmental strategies/plans/regulations aligned with national ones, actively developing and implementing environmental projects in collaboration with local public authorities (LPAs), the community, and potential funders, conducting opinion surveys among beneficiary populations at all stages of project implementation with environmental impact, including older adults, improving the institutional capacity of local NGOs, developing associations and partnerships between NGOs, LPAs, and the community, engaging youth in volunteer actions, and supporting ecological circles for young people.

CSO Expertise in Analyzing the Implementation of Strategic Documents/Regulations/Environmental Projects: Informing the public and engaging society in national/local actions related to environmental protection, etc.

Horizontal Strategic Initiatives: Monitoring and Evaluation, as well as Knowledge Management

Informing and Raising Awareness about Environmental Issues: Educating and raising public awareness about relevant OP8 actions, training staff, preparing personnel, facilitating public participation in the decision-making process regarding environmental issues, including environmental impact assessments, utilizing new technologies for information dissemination, training, and inclusive communication, facilitating access to environmental information, developing geographic information systems such as "Report an Environmental Issue," promoting public interest actions (e.g., advocating for the integration of environmental protection provisions, green economic development, and climate change adaptation into sector policy documents and relevant legislation, developing relevant local institutional frameworks, legislation on the establishment of community forests, introducing insurance in forestry, etc.).

Thematic Trainings: (e.g., participatory planning, knowledge management, and strengthening relevant legislative and institutional capacities related to the natural environment, ensuring project sustainability, raising awareness of necessary techniques for conserving water and other local natural resources, biodiversity conservation and biological security, integrating ecosystem services into agriculture and other socio-economic sectors, reducing food waste, integrated institutional management of chemical substances, enhancing NGOs' capacities in project promotion through partnerships, training for public officials to strengthen capacities in the development and monitoring of environmental plan implementation, etc.), and non-formal ecological education.



Ineligible actions in the SGP CPS of the GEF for Moldova in the next 4 years

- Feasibility studies/technical projects for landfills
- Technical projects and ecological approval (on various aspects established in environmental legislation)
- Ecological expertise in the development of general urban plans for localities
- Business plans/strategies for sustainable urban development
- Financial support for entrepreneurs
- Creation of waste management systems in localities
- Authorized landfills or common waste disposal sites for several localities
- Regional waste collection platforms
- Household waste management (*except when there is a functional waste collection service*)
- Procurement of bins (*except when there is a functional waste collection service*)
- Extension of sanitation services (*except when there is a functional waste collection service*)
- Collection of medical/pharmaceutical waste
- Storage and use of toxic substance packaging
- Tractors, utilities (*depending on project objectives*)
- Mini briquetting factories
- Infrastructure for access to drinking water
- Major actions in case of natural disasters
- Rehabilitation of dams
- Creation of water basins on local streams
- Desilting of lakes/ponds and rivers
- Installation of "flow-free" mini-hydropower plants on small rivers
- Organization of wetland areas for wastewater drainage
- Sewerage system for new neighborhoods
- Floral arrangement of public institutions
- Playgrounds for children
- Construction/conservation of houses
- Construction of private guesthouses/hotels
- Mapping of urban sites in advanced deterioration for rehabilitation solutions

Note: Even though they are not eligible for GEF SGP funds, **these actions can still be supported through the co-financing of Applicants to the GEF SGP** or can be funded by other Donors in the Republic of Moldova.



Co-financing Potential for SGP SGP of OP8

1. National Environmental Fund²⁶

The National Environmental Fund is a financing instrument for projects that contribute to achieving the objectives set by state policies in the field of environmental protection, climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources. The National Environmental Fund operates under Law no. 1515/1993 on Environmental Protection, Government Decision no. 711/2022 on the approval of the Regulation on the administration of the National Environmental Fund, and the Operational Manual (2023).

The funding priorities approved for different calls are aligned with National Development Strategy "European Moldova 2030" (Law 315/2022), Environmental Strategy 2014-2023 and its Implementation Action Plan (GD 301/2014), National Development Plan 2023-2025 (GD 89/2023), the Government's Action Plans, and the related normative acts.

The National Environmental Fund is established within the state budget and is intended exclusively for financing projects in the field of environmental protection, climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources. The number of financial resources of the NEF is approved by the annual state budget law, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Finance and Budgetary-Fiscal Responsibility Law no. 181/2014. The funding of the Fund's activity can also be carried out from other sources that do not contravene the legislation. The financial resources of the Fund are managed by the Ministry of Environment through treasury accounts. The NEF is administered by the Supervisory Committee of the Public Institution National Office for the Implementation of Environmental Projects based on a regulation.

The funding priorities of the National Environmental Fund, announced in the project calls for the current budget year, are determined in the previous budget year during the process of developing the medium-term budget framework and the state budget law. The funding priorities must derive from the strategic public policy documents in the field of environmental protection, climate change, and sustainable management of natural resources, so that the funded projects contribute to achieving the objectives set by these documents. Any legal entity of public or private law registered in the Republic of Moldova in the appropriate manner can apply for project funding from the Fund. At the same time, for project calls, the exact categories of eligible applicants for each intervention measure are described in the Project Call Guide. The financing of project implementation from the financial resources of the Fund is carried out by providing grants under the conditions of the Regulation on the administration of the National Environmental Fund and the Operational Manual. The amount allocated for financing a project can cover a maximum of 90% of the total project budget, with the difference being covered by the grant beneficiary from their own sources or other financial means. Project duration is up to 36 months. The main areas for the 2025 Call for Projects were integrated water resource management, integrated waste management, forest protection and sustainable forestry arrangements.

The synergy between the priority areas of the fund and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8 can be achieved through a wide range of initiatives and projects in accordance with the themes established in the NEF for each year. Overall, NEF priorities strongly align with GEF SGP themes:

- Community-based adaptation

²⁶ <https://onipm.gov.md/finantare>



- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy
- From local to global coalitions for chemical management and waste management
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions

2. National Center for Sustainable Energy (NCSE)²⁷

The National Center for Sustainable Energy (NCSE) is a public institution under the Ministry of Energy, established by Government Decision No. 1060 of 21.12.2023, resulting from the reorganization of the Energy Efficiency Agency. The institution manages the Residential Energy Efficiency Fund, a financing mechanism for public sector institutions, as well as a series of public registers regarding statistics in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy, and professional entities active in the field. The Fund's financing is permanently ensured by the "energy efficiency obligations scheme," from contributions paid by energy market operators, while non-reimbursable resources or low-cost loans from development partners are also attracted.

In addition to investments in energy efficiency for residential and public buildings, NCSE also manages EcoVoucher Program for replacing old appliances with new, energy-efficient ones. NCSE has taken over the Rabla Appliances Program, with financial support from the European Union and UNDP. Casa Verde Program provides energy efficiency subsidies for households.

Additionally, the institution manages an information system in the field of energy efficiency, which includes statistics on the energy efficiency of buildings in the country and the impact of the implemented measures. At the same time, NCSE is responsible for the qualification and record-keeping of energy auditors and the verification of the quality of their services; the qualification of energy evaluators who will issue energy performance certificates for buildings, the management of the electronic register of energy performance certificates for buildings, the inspectors of ventilation and air conditioning systems, the installers of biomass boilers and stoves, photovoltaic and solar thermal systems, geothermal systems and heat pumps, as well as other registers.

Projects in Moldova focused on promoting energy efficiency (EE) and harnessing renewable energy sources (RES), which have a positive impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, can be supported by CNED. The main objective of NCSE is to attract and manage financial resources for financing and implementing projects in the field of energy efficiency and harnessing renewable energy sources in accordance with the strategies and programs developed by the Government. NCSE achieves its objectives by promoting and financing projects that are economically, technically, and environmentally feasible, ensuring the sustainability of energy consumption and steering the economy towards a reduction in energy intensity, as well as reducing pollutant or greenhouse gas emissions.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Co-benefits of access to the low-carbon energy system
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions

3. Consolidated Unit for the Implementation of IFAD Programs (CUIP IFAD)

The institution was created by the Government of the Republic of Moldova for the implementation of IFAD programs, following the Republic of Moldova's accession to the International Fund for Agricultural Development in 1996. The components of the IFAD Programs are implemented in accordance with the procedures established and approved by IFAD in agreement with the Government of the Republic of Moldova. CUIP-IFAD is responsible for the administration, implementation, and monitoring of the Programs' activities, as well as coordinating activities with the institutions and organizations participating in the Programs.

²⁷ <https://cned.gov.md/ro/content/programe-de-finantare>



The activities provided within the programs are implemented by CUIP-IFAD in collaboration with and/or through accredited service providers and participating financial institutions, depending on the specifics of the implemented activities. In the ongoing project "Improving Capacities for Rural Transformation" (IFAD VIII) until 2027, CUIP IFAD has the following types of grants²⁸:

The project "Improving Capacities for Rural Transformation" (IFAD VIII)

- Grants for financing equipment for efficient irrigation in rural areas vulnerable to climate change.
- Grants for financing demonstration plots to disseminate water management practices within agricultural holdings (efficient irrigation technologies) in rural areas vulnerable to climate change.
- Grants for financing public infrastructure projects (irrigation infrastructure).
- Loans with a conditional GRANT portion for young and women entrepreneurs.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy
- From local to global coalitions for chemical management and waste management
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions
- Community-based adaptation

4. Agency for Payments and Agriculture Interventions²⁹

APAI is a self-managed public institution, established alongside the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, with the mission of managing the resources of the National Fund for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Environment and the resources of development partners allocated for administration. Thus, it implements state policies regarding the development of agriculture and the rural environment through subsidies and other forms of financial support for agricultural producers.

From February to May, AIPA receives applications for advance subsidies to improve the living and working conditions in rural areas, aimed at improving and developing rural public infrastructure and reducing trends of social and economic decline in rural areas.

According to the Regulation, eligible for obtaining advance subsidies are: first-level administrative-territorial units (villages and communes, as well as towns with a population of up to 10,000 residents, according to the latest population and housing census) and legal or natural persons registered in rural areas who create or develop non-agricultural activities.

Support measures are as follows:

Measure 1. Improvement and development of rural public economic infrastructure,

Measure 2. Renovation and development of the rural locality,

Granted Value: For measures 1 and 2, the granted subsidy will constitute 80% of the eligible investment value but will not exceed the amount of 3,000,000 lei.

Eligibility: Applicants for subsidies under these two measures will be Level I Local Public Authorities. Measure 3. Diversification of the rural economy through non-agricultural activities.

Granted Value: For measure 3, the granted subsidy will constitute 50% of the eligible investment value but will not exceed the amount of 1,000,000 lei.

Eligibility: Applicants for subsidies under this measure will be both legal and natural persons, registered in accordance with national legislation and who create or develop non-agricultural activities.

The project implementation period will not exceed 24 months.

²⁸ <https://www.ucipifad.md/granturi/>

²⁹ <https://aipa.gov.md/ro/prezentare-aipa>



Since 2022, the state has been piloting the LEADER³⁰, which allows Local Action Groups (LAGs) to access up to 5% of the National Fund for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Environment. Thus, the Republic of Moldova is the first and, so far, the only country in the non-EU space to implement the LEADER approach as a public policy instrument. The mission of the Fund is to strengthen local development in the Republic of Moldova by co-financing development projects implemented by local partners.

Local Action Groups (LAGs) from the Republic of Moldova that adhere to the basic principles of the LEADER approach and have a Local Development Strategy approved by the General Assembly (Council) of the LAG are eligible to participate.

The general objective is economic development and improvement of the living standards of the rural population in the Republic of Moldova through the consolidation of the LEADER approach.

The specific objectives are:

- Supporting GALs in implementing projects and initiatives that support the realization of the GAL's Local Development Strategy.
- Institutional development of LAGs.
- Strengthening the experience of implementing the LEADER approach in the Republic of Moldova.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy
- From local to global coalitions for chemical management and waste management
- Sustainable agriculture
- Community-based adaptation

5. Solidarity Fund PL in Republic of Moldova³¹

In the Republic of Moldova, it has been active since 2012 based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Poland and the Republic of Moldova. The fund's activity is oriented towards creating synergy to support community development, functioning based on the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. Through the fund, sustainable local partnerships are created, and systemic solutions are developed together with rural and urban communities in the Republic of Moldova. It supports local development processes by applying international tools, sharing learned experiences, and promoting best practices.

The fund's activity directions are oriented towards supporting local development: Urban development based on the Urban Revitalization³² approach is carried out in several cities across the country. The main idea is the positive transformation of those parts of cities that are in crisis and need social, architectural, economic, environmental changes, etc. The Urban Revitalization process is conducted comprehensively, through territorially integrated actions and carried out by local administrations through efficient local, regional, and national partnerships based on an Urban Revitalization Program of the city.

The call is co-financed from the funds of the Polish development cooperation program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland – Polish aid. Its objective is to support the implementation process of Urban Revitalization Programs as instruments of urban policy - the main means of stimulating sustainable urban development of city areas, including social, economic, environmental, spatial, and cultural aspects. Solidarity Fund PL also supports rural development through LEADER and SME development initiatives.

Synergy between the priority areas of the Foundation and the priority areas of the GEF SGP:

³⁰ <https://leaderin.md/gal-moldova/>

³¹ <http://solidarityfund.md/cine-suntem/>

³² <http://solidarityfund.md/dezvoltare-urbana/>



- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions
- Community-based adaptation.
- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy

6. Romanian Embassy in Moldova

The Government of Romania, through the Department for Policies for Relations with Romanians Abroad (DRRM), carries out a technical assistance program for Romanians abroad, including those in the Republic of Moldova. DRRM develops and implements the Romanian state's policy in the field of relations with Romanian communities abroad, including in Moldova, focusing on cultural, educational, media, civil society, and identity preservation programs.

Funding Programs:

- Culture – "Constantin Brâncuși"
- Mass-media – "Mihai Eminescu"
- Education – "Nicolae Iorga"
- Spirituality and Tradition – "Andrei Țaguna"
- Civil Society – "Dimitrie Gusti"

These programs were announced in the latest 2025 funding session, which supports NGOs, associations, and institutions in Moldova to implement projects in these areas.

Auction Calendar: twice a year, usually February-March and October-November

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Community-based adaptation (often including rural communities, e.g., eco-cultural tourism, sustainable practices)
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions. (some cross-cutting projects at intersection of culture, heritage, and nature)
- Civil society engagement, education and awareness (environment advocacy, education, sustainability promotion)

7. Austrian Development Agency³³

The Cooperation Partnership between the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) is based on the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Republic of Moldova on Cooperation and Development, signed on 21/10/2008, in Vienna. The activity objectives are focused on poverty reduction, ensuring peace and human security, and environmental protection. The assistance provided to Moldova is carried out according to the Austria-Moldova Cooperation Strategy.

Priority areas:

- Sustainable rural development with a particular focus on water management, environmental protection and climate change adaptation and mitigation (70%)
- Equal opportunity in labour market inclusion (30%)

Other important additional areas are:

³³[Moldova - Austrian Development Agency](#)



- Confidence Building Measures, strengthening the capacities of public administration, support for civil society, special focus on women;
- Older persons, women and youth inclusiveness.

Submission deadline: There are no formal procedures or deadlines for submitting project proposals. They can be submitted at any time throughout the year.

The allocated amount is expected to be up to 10,000 EUR.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Community-based conservation of ecosystems and threatened species.
- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy.
- Agriculture, Sustainable Fishing, and Food Security
- Community-based adaptation.
- Strengthening social inclusion.

8. Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova³⁴

The Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova (SCO-M) represents the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Embassy of Switzerland. The assistance provided to Moldova is carried out according to the SDC Strategy 2025 -2028 in the Republic of Moldova.

The priority areas for the small grants program are:

- Projects that address democratic processes, human rights, and the development of civil society in general, as well as specific issues related to social inclusion, gender equality, good governance and anti-corruption, migration, and development in the main areas of activity of Switzerland in the Republic of Moldova – health, governance, economic development, and employment.
- Cultural projects that promote cultural diversity and contemporary artistic expression, create spaces for dialogue, and support professionals and their organizations in their efforts to play a more active role in cultural development.
- Green development and awareness on environmental protection.

SDC has an emphasis on climate change adaptation, resilience, and inclusive development, with a strong focus on dialogue, governance, and local empowerment, including vulnerable groups and rural areas.

Allocated amount: up to 50,000 CHF for small grants and grants up to 100,000 CHF for projects submitted by regional or national organizations, or by a consortium of organizations, focused on one or more of the eligible themes described below, and which include an additional component of institutional development. SDC contribution covers max 80% of project costs; applicants must co-finance at least 20%.

Project duration does not exceed 18 months.

Auction calendar: The grant program is announced by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Chisinau. Project concepts and application forms for selected concepts can be submitted throughout the year, without submission deadlines. Those received are reviewed every two months.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Community-based adaptation.
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions.
- Strengthening social inclusion.

³⁴ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/moldova/en/home/international-cooperation/strategy.html>



- Monitoring and evaluation, as well as knowledge management.

9. The Swedish Embassy in Moldova

The Swedish Embassy in Chişinău implements development cooperation through Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) under the Strategy for Sweden's Reform Cooperation with Eastern Europe 2021–2027.

Priority Sectors in Moldova are:

- Democracy, human rights, and gender equality
- Sustainable infrastructure (Energy)
- Market development – support for trade facilitation, SME development, and green economy initiatives.
- Environment and climate resilience – Sweden funds projects on biodiversity conservation, renewable energy, and climate adaptation

The general objective of development cooperation between Sweden and Moldova is to support Moldova's efforts to reduce poverty by promoting democratic governance, sustainable economic growth in favor of the poorest, preventing social marginalization, and improving public health.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Community-based conservation of ecosystems and threatened species.
- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy.
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions.
- Community-based adaptation.
- Strengthening social inclusion.

10. UE Delegation in Moldova

The European Commission has several grant programs for civil society in Moldova in various fields, which are announced on the official website of the EU Commission.³⁵ Grants are awarded via calls for proposals for civil society, local authorities, and thematic projects in governance, social inclusion, and sustainable development. There are recent funding initiatives such as INSPIRED Moldova Project, Green Transition Project, LIFE Programme.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Community-based conservation of ecosystems and threatened species.
- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy.
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions.
- Community-based adaptation.
- Strengthening social inclusion.

11. Embassy of the Slovak Republic in Moldova³⁶

Cooperation between Slovakia and Moldova is governed by the Medium-Term Strategy for Development Cooperation of the Slovak Republic. The previous strategy (2019–2023) has been extended and updated for 2025–

³⁵ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publi.welcome&nbPubliList=15&orderby=upd&orderbyad=Desc&searchtype=AS&pgm=&finpub=&ZGEO=35503&debpub=&ccnt=7573876&aoet=36538>

³⁶ <https://www.mzv.sk/web/kisinov-en/slovakaid>



2030, maintaining Moldova as a priority country for SlovakAid. The Embassy of Slovakia in Chişinău implements SlovakAid Small Grants Program, which remains active and is one of the main tools for bilateral development cooperation. directly targets small-scale projects, which represent a more flexible, operational, and efficient financial support for developing countries. The submitted projects must be related to sectors such as clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, agriculture, food security and climate actions. There also cross-cutting themes such as environment and climate change, gender equality which aligns SlovakAid priorities to SGP's.

The allocated amount is expected to be up to 10,000 EUR.

The project implementation duration is between 6 and 12 months.

Eligible applicants are NGOs, non-profit organizations, local authorities, schools, etc.

Synergy between the priority areas of the funding agency and the priority areas of the GEF SGP OP8:

- Co-benefits of access to low-carbon energy
- From local to global coalitions for chemical management and waste management
- Catalyzing sustainable urban solutions
- Chemical management and waste management (as part of infrastructure and sustainable use of natural resources)
- Community-based adaptation
- Strengthening social inclusion