



NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN MOLDOVA

7th Meeting of the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee followed by Thematic Workshop on Nature-based Solutions

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

25-26 April 2023 (Chisinau, Moldova)

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1. Proceedings

1.1. The National Policy Dialogue

The 7th Meeting of the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Integrated Water Resources Management took place in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova on 25 April 2023. An agenda and a list of participants of the event are presented in Annexes 1 and 2 to this report respectively.

During the NPD meeting participants discussed water policy reform priorities for Moldova and used the opportunity to share information on the implementation of the EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme and on synergetic projects in Moldova.

Chaired by Ms Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, the discussion built around the review of progress and priorities of the Government against the background of the first-ever contributions of the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter: Moldova) to the European Commission's annual enlargement package¹.

Minister lordanov stressed the progress that Moldova made in water management, which is largely due to Moldova's long-standing partnership with the EU, which enabled Moldova to improve water legislation and management practices. She also mentioned that as an EU candidate country, Moldova aims at scaling up the ambition and speed up the efforts to ensure clean water for all, strengthen institutions, restore rivers, lakes, and other ecosystems, improve water monitoring, and engage in effective cross-border cooperation.

Mr Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Moldova, also emphasized in his opening remarks the critical role of water for the health of people and ecosystems, and its importance for the economy. He also mentioned that, based on shared commitments, the European Union and its Member States would continue supporting Moldova's water sector for addressing modern challenges and people's needs.

On behalf of all Implementing Partners of the EU Programme, Mr Alexander Zinke, Environment Agency Austria, welcomed all participants and introduced the agenda of this meeting and the nature-based solutions (NbS) workshop.

Session 1 of the NPD was devoted to a dialogue on water resources management, particularly the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) implementation in Moldova, its challenges, needs and next steps, such as in linking with the EU's Urban Wastewater Treatment and Nitrates Directives. Also during session 1 the Programme's implementing partners (the Environment Agency Austria (UBA), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the International Office for Water (OiEau), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), presented progress on activities across various areas of the Programme in Moldova, and reviewed the achievements and planned work with the NPD participants.

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¹ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/strategy-and-reports_en

Session 2 focussed on Moldova's current progress on environmental data and open data issues, including water accounts, air quality, waste, land cover mapping and international reporting, as well as on the need for more open access to data, enhancing international sharing of data with the European Environment Agency. EU4EnvW&D Programme is helping Moldova to develop a demo version of a one-entry point for all environmental data, which will become the link to all the databases from the institutions which produce and keep data.

Session 3 facilitated a dialogue on coordinating with other international organisations active in Moldova on water and environmental data-related issues. The breadth of projects discussed during Session 3 ranged from infrastructure over finance to awareness raising, underlining the importance and benefits of enhancing communication between the different actors and the Government.

Highlights of the meeting

- The Ministry of Environment again become a standalone Ministry in 2021, and several institutional reforms and reorganizations are still underway. The priorities of the Government on the ongoing water sector reform include: financing the implementation of river basin management plans (RBMPs), updating legislation against agricultural pollution, rehabilitation of small rivers / lakes / wetlands, introducing the Regulation on Water Reuse², addressing the removal of obsolete dams and dykes, a stimulation of private-public partnerships, water retention and irrigation from surface and groundwater, a cooperation with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development on wastewater and with the Ministry of Agriculture and food industry on the reduction of diffuse pollution.
- In June 2022, the second cycle RBMP for the Danube-Prut-Black Sea River Basin District was approved. Since autumn 2022, the MoE introduced amendments to the Environmental Protection Law on the State Environmental Fund and approved the Regulation on the Water Cadastre. Several amendments to the Water Law on damage to natural resources and hydrotechnical facilities are being discussed.
- Moldova continues consolidating the transboundary integrated water resources management (IWRM) dialogue. The war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine challenges the current cooperation on the Dniester though some working groups under the Dniester Commission continue operating, and the two riparian countries plan a next meeting of the Dniester Commission in summer 2023. MoE has also had two meetings with Romanian colleagues on the Prut river since November 2022. A trilateral memorandum of cooperation with Ukraine and Romania on the Prut river is planned to be agreed and signed by the Ministers in the near future.
- The key issues which the Ministry faces are the limited budget and human capacity (incl. at local level). There is an urgent need for further education and capacity building. Low prestige and insufficient financial stimulus for joining the sector are among the root causes.
- There is a severe issue with the implementation of a WFD-compliant monitoring, i.e. the accreditation and quality assurance of the water monitoring laboratories, related human capacity and budget constraints, gaps in the observational network both in terms of water quality and quantity (notably for groundwater), the need for more modern field equipment and technologies and automation in data transfer as well as for better data interpretation, data bases and open access.

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² https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/water/water-reuse_en

- Moldova together with Hungary are lead countries on WASH under the Protocol on Water and Health. There is a need for a steering committee to monitor the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Moldova, as well as to work on updating the National Programme for Implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health for the years 2016-2025 – beyond its end date.
- An analysis of the implementation of the first cycle of RBMPs indicated that around 30% of the measures were not implemented or yet only implemented partially.
- The key issues of the work of the Prut and the Nistru basin and subbasin district committees are the financing of the programmes of measures (securing local budgets), the coordination with various local agencies at local level, and the needed capacity building to become WFD-compliant (e.g. via sharing experiences with EU member states).
- As this NPD has been long overdue (the last one held in November 2021), it has drawn big interest
 and brought together a wide range of participants. They stressed a strong need for more policy
 coherence and cross-sectoral cooperation, regular NPD meetings, e.g. to discuss and monitor
 progress on water and health, a closer dialogue with ministries accountable for infrastructure
 and agriculture, as well as with the Ministry of Finance, and the private sector. Donor cooperation
 during the NPD has also proofed relevant at this meeting.

1.2. A thematic workshop on nature-based solutions and a site visit

Moldovan experts are aware of NbS as a useful type of measure in impacted water bodies and were interested to learn about the further promotion of this concept for the water management in the country. Opening remarks were provided by Ms Karin Zaunberger from the European Commission's DG Environment via a video address and a scene-setting presentation was provided by Mr James Dalton from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Across back-to-back sessions, existing projects in Moldova were discussed, followed by a look at examples from other countries. The presentations spurred great interest from national participants about what qualified as an NbS, how they could be deployed, how they could be financed and what lessons learned are in their operation.

As part of the NbS workshop, a site visit was made by bus to the Orhei constructed wetland for treating urban wastewater, located north of Chisinau.

This event's agenda and list of participants are annexed.

2. Decisions and recommendations

The participants of the National Political Dialogue on integrated Water Resources Management in Moldova decided to:

- 1. Express gratitude to the European Union and international partners for their continuous support to Moldova, particularly through a Team Europe approach, including within the EU4Environment Water&Data Programme.
- 2. Continue addressing the issues of securing the financing of the adopted RBMPs, WFD-compliant monitoring, education and capacity building in the environment and water sector, the implementation of the Urban Wastewater Treatment and Nitrate Directives.

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- 3. Invite the Ministry for Environment to discuss with donors further support for the RBMPs implementation and provisions related to the water and health agenda (e.g. access to sanitation).
- 4. Encourage the MoE and the EU4Environment Water&Data Programme to continue the promotion of signing the trilateral Declaration of Cooperation on the Prut River basin with the competent authorities of Ukraine and Romania, in coordination with the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR).
- 5. Recommend that the MoE continue promoting the inclusion of nature-based solutions in the planning and implementation of programmes of measures under the RBMPs.
- 6. Recommend putting further focus on the thematic co-operation on technical requirements and future reporting obligations arising from EU accession, including on the participation of Moldova in advanced European spatial information programmes.
- 7. Invite the MoE to inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, the State Chancellery, DG NEAR, EUD to Moldova and other relevant stakeholders about the decisions and recommendations of this NPD meeting.
- 8. Hold the next NPD meeting in spring 2024.

3. Participation, visibility and evaluation

Across both days, over 60 participants joined the NPD and NbS workshop either in person or in online mode. 54% of participants were women, and 46% were men.

All meeting materials of the were placed at <u>https://unece.org/environment-policy/water/areas-work-convention_protocol/country-dialogues/republic-moldova</u>.

UNECE published several posts on their various social media channels, which added to the visibility to the event. A news article was also published by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, and a tied post was shared on their Facebook page. Key links are reproduced below.

- Twitter posts from UNECE:
 - o https://twitter.com/UNECE_Water/status/1652922405617057793
 - o https://twitter.com/UNECE Water/status/1653038517453201408
 - o https://twitter.com/UNECE Water/status/1654141853300670464
- Facebook post from UNECE: <u>https://www.facebook.com/UNECEWater</u>
- LinkedIn post from UNECE: https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7059910901348323328/
- News article on the website of the Ministry of Environment: <u>https://mediu.gov.md/ro/content/4272?fbclid=IwAR0u9Irc2E5MCBspDe0KaLK-h-WCWCX7CpHN1tOajx_2FCKyoDvHlldyVc</u>
- Facebook post from the Ministry of Environment: <u>https://www.facebook.com/MinisterulMediuluiMoldova/posts/pfbid0U7odpESDfv7tMUUnP455n</u> <u>bY3xvhn8GYxoRsnUn6BdPJmTY9c9m4mAJNNezaHbMwUl</u>

The NPD organizers distributed an online feedback questionnaire after the event. The participants responded that:

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- they found the NPD meeting useful,
- they were interested in the topics (descending order) of progress of the water sector reform, WSS, transboundary cooperation, monitoring, update of the EU4Water&Data Programme,

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- the biggest value added of the NPD meeting was in discussions of the progress, challenges and plans in the sector, as well as in new information, and networking,
- at the next NPD meeting the participants would like to discuss progress in environmental monitoring, on the Protocol on Water and Health, WSS sectoral policy, transboundary cooperation, implementation of the Nitrate and Urban Wastewater directives,
- there was a good balance of presentations and discussions,
- the presentations were relevant to their work, and they will for sure use obtained information.

On the NbS thematic workshops the participants told that:

- the event was useful,
- the most interesting were external case studies and the discussions,
- in future the participants would like to know more about ecosystem services, connection between NbS and water quality, more case studies, the process to identify NbS for the measures to restore waterbodies, comparison of NbS costs vs conventional measures,
- they would prefer to have a longer meeting,
- they found the site visit useful and interesting.

About National Policy Dialogues

National Policy Dialogues facilitates policy discussions where stakeholders meet to advance water policy reforms. NPDs are driven by the demand from the host countries and are usually chaired by heads of respective government agencies. A variety of stakeholders participate in the meetings, such as ministries and government agencies and institutions, as well as nongovernmental organisations, the business community, parliamentary bodies, academia. Participants typically include international organisations and EU Member States active in water policy reforms in each country. Under the EU-funded EU4Environment Water Resources and Environmental Data Programme, NPDs are supported in the five Eastern Partner countries.

About EU4Environment – Water Resources and Environmental Data

This programme aims at improving people's wellbeing in EU's Eastern Partner Countries and enabling their green transformation in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The programme's activities are clustered around two specific objectives: 1) support a more sustainable use of water resources and 2) improve the use of sound environmental data and their availability for policy-makers and citizens. The programme is implemented by five Partner organisations: Environment Agency Austria (UBA), Austrian Development Agency (ADA), International Office for Water (OiEau) (France), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The programme is principally funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation and the French Artois-Picardie Water Agency based on a budget of EUR 12,75 million (EUR 12 million EU contribution). The implementation period is 2021-2024.

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4. Annexes

4.1. List of in-person participants

	Name	Position, institution	Contact details
1.	Natalia Antoniuc	Ministry of Health	natalia.antoniuc@ansp.gov.md
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6.	Mariana Codreanu	Asociația de Actuariat din Moldova (AAM)	mariana.codreanu@apele.gov.md
7.	Angela Dogotari	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry	angela.dogotari@maia.gov.md
8.	Aurelia Donos	Hydrologist, State Enterprise Hydro - Geological Expedition from Moldova (EHGeoM)	apopuiac@gmail.com
9.	Gavril Gilca	Director, Environmental Agency	g_gilca@am.gov.md
10.	Victoria Gratii	Senior Advisor, Department for Integrated Water Resources Management Policy, MoE	victoria.gratii@mediu.gov.md
11.	Mihai Grigoras	Director, State Hydrometeorological Service	mihail.grigoras@meteo.gov.md
12.	lordanca-Rodica lordanov	Minister of Environment, MoE	iordanca- rodica.iordanov@mediu.gov.md
13.	Ana Jeleapov	Head of National Dniester River Basin Commission	anajeleapov@gmail.com
14.	Veronica Josu	Biodiversity Department, MoE,	veronica.josu@mediu.gov.md
15.	Veronica Briceag	MoE	Veronicabriceag.h@gmail.com
16.	Marina Lungu	Head of the Reference Laboratory, State Environment Agency	m_lungu@am.gov.md
17.	Gabriel Margineanu	Head, Biotica NGO	biotica.md@gmail.com

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	Name	Position, institution	Contact details
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21.	Ion Salaru	Deputy director NAPH	ion.salaru@ansp.gov.md
22.	Ana Sîrbu	Department of regulation, National Agency for Energy Regulation	ana.sirbu@anre.md
23.	Olesea Rusu	Water supply and sanitation	sergiu.tabacaru@midr.gov.md
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27.	Sitmaiter Rustam	State Enterprise for Geodesy, Engineering and Cadastre (IGSU)	inginer@dse.md
28.	Vuluta Anastasia	State Enterprise for Geodesy, ngineering and Cadastre (IGSU)	inginer@dse.md
29.	Sergiu Bors	EHGeoM	
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33.	Anna Cazacu	Legal adviser, EcoContact NGO	anna.cazacu@ecocontact.md
	Do	onors, IFIs, and EU4WaterData Implen	nenting Partners
34.	Dorin Andros	Project manager, Security of water supply and sanitation in Moldova (WB)	office@ondrl.gov.md
35.	Alexander Belokurov	UNECE	alexander.belokurov@un.org
36.	Corneliu Busuioc	Security of water supply and sanitation in Moldova, World Bank	cbu1957@gmail.com
37.	Diana Celac	Program manager, ADA	Diana.Celac@ada.gv.at

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	Name	Position, institution	Contact details
38.	Nadejda Chilaru	Team Leader, Supporting the authorities of the Republic of Moldova in the sustainable management of the Dniester River	nadejda.chilaru@undp.org
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41.	Justina Grigaraviciene	EU High-Level Adviser on Environment and Green Transition	justina.grigaraviciene@eu-advisers.md
42.	Adam Grodzicki	Deputy Head of Cooperation Section, EU Delegation to Moldova	Adam.GRODZICKI@eeas.europa.eu
43.	Matilda Halling	Programme Officer Environment, EU Delegation to Moldova	Matilda.HALLING@eeas.europa.eu
44.	Tudor Bostan	ApaSan+ Project	tudor.bostan@int.skat.ch
45.	Guy Halpern	OECD	guy.halpern@oecd.org
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50.	Adam Kadduri	UNDP	adam.kadduri@undp.org
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54.	Inga Podoroghin	Cluster lead, UNDP	inga.podoroghin@undp.org
55.	Andrei Ursache	EU4Water&Data, National Representative	andrei.ursache@ada.gv.at
56.	Cullo Maria	National Office for Regional and Local Development	natalia.veverita@ondrl.gov.md
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	Name	Position, institution	Contact details
		Environment and Climate Change Policies, UBA	
59.	Alberto Carlei	Head of EIB representative in Moldova	



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4.2. Agenda

7th Meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in the Republic of Moldova and a thematic workshop on Nature Based Solutions

Date: 25-26 April	Venue: Radisson Blu, 77 Mitropolit Varlaam str.	Time: 25 April: 09:00- 18:00
2023	<u>https://lcmagency-</u> eu.zoom.us/j/82546982009?pwd=RGp6ejIIbThzL1I0L2kvYIpzRnNEUT09 Meeting ID: 825 4698 2009 Passcode: LCM2023	26 April: 09:00- 13:00 26 April (pm): Optional site visit (registration required)

AGENDA

	DAY 1 - 25 APRIL 7 TH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATION	
Local Time	Item	Speaker
09:00-09:30 09:30-10:00	 Registration and welcome coffee Opening and welcoming statements Tour de table - Introduction from members of Steering Committee Adoption of agenda 	 Moderator: Ms Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova Iordanca-Rodica Iordanov, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova Adam Grodzicki, Deputy Head of Cooperation Section EU Delegation to Moldova Alexander Zinke, EU4Environment Water and Data Programme
10:00-11:30	Thematic session 1: Dialogue on water resources managementThe session is devoted to discussion of the planning and progress on River Basin Management Planning, Water Monitoring including COVID monitoring, Economic Instruments, Mobilising Finance, Water and Health, Legislative developments and Transboundary cooperation in the recent two years.The discussion will build around key questions: 	Moderator: Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Moldova National authorities: – Victoria Gratii, Head of IWRM Policies Dept., MoE (8 min) – Radu Cazacu, Deputy Head of Apele Moldovei (5 min)

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	 What needs to be done next? What are the current challenges for implementation? How can transboundary cooperation on water advance during war time? Results of the UN 2023 Water Conference and its meaning for future of the water sector in the Republic of Moldova Q&A and discussion 	 Mihai Grigoras, Head of the State Hydrometeorological Service of Moldova (5 min) Gavril Gilca, Director of Environmental Agency (5 min), Ion Salaru, Deputy Director, National Agency for Public Health (5 min) UBA, OiEau, UNECE, OECD (in total
		15 min)
11:30-12:00	Coffee Break	Madavatary Ministry of the
12:00-13:00	 Thematic session 2: Dialogue on environmental statistics and open data Session to include progress on Environmental Data and open data issues, including water accounts, environmental data, air quality, waste, land cover mapping and international co-operation. Questions for discussion: What is the progress made so far in each topic? What still needs to be done on top of planned work? What are the challenges for implementation? Q&A and discussion 	Moderator: Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Moldova UBA, OiEau, UNECE (15 min.) Marina Lungu, Head of the Reference Laboratory, Environmental Agency Eugen Belii, AAM Maria Ovdii, INGEOCAD
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
13:00-14:00 14:00-15:00	 Lunch Thematic session 3: Donor coordination Part 1 on challenges and opportunities for the water and environment sector The session will include presentations and a dialogue with relevant projects and donors active on water, environment, climate and DRR in Moldova. Keynote speech: Financing needs for the RBMP implementation and WSS implementation Roundtable, with the following key questions: What are your ongoing and future activities? What are the challenges you would like to raise with the government? Q&A and discussion 	 Moderator: Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova Keynote speech (5 min each): Viorel Miron, Head of DPBS basin committee Ana Jeleapov, Head of Dniester basin committee 5 min each: DG INTPAEU and Matilda Halling, EU Delegation to Moldova Diana Celac, Water and Environment programme manager, ADA Inga Podoroghin, UNDP Ludmila Gofman, PM, Dniester Project

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		 Corneliu Busuioc, World Bank, Consultant of the Security of Water Supply and Sanitation project in the Republic of Moldova
15:00-16:00	Thematic session 3: Donor coordination Part 2 on challenges and opportunities for the water and environment sector financing.	Moderator: Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova
	 Roundtable, with the following key questions: What are your ongoing and future activities? What are the challenges you would like to raise with the stakeholders? 	 5 min each: Alberto Carlei, Head of EIB representative in Moldova AFD
	Q&A and discussion	
16:00-16:30	Coffee Break	
16:30-17:00	Closing remarks and meeting summary (incl. key messages, decisions, next steps, and future NPDs)	Chair
	An introductory overview of Day 2	Tamara Kutonova
17:30-19:00	Networking Cocktail	

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Time	MANAGEMENT IN MOLDOVA Item	Speaker	
08:30-09:00	Registration & Welcome coffee/tea		
9:00-09:15	Opening remarks	 Victoria Gratii, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova Karin Zaunberger, EC DG Environment Tamara Kutonova, Manager of the National Policy Dialogue Programme, UNECE 	
9:15-09:30	Scene-setting presentation	James Dalton, IUCN	
9:30-10:15	 Experience from Moldova Ongoing or planned activities Examples by NGO Biotica Application of nature-based technologies in solving water supply and sanitation issues (ref. To Orhei constructed wetland / ApaSan) 	Moderator: V. Gratii, Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova - Aurel Lozan, WB - Gabriel Margineanu, Head of NGO Biotica - Veronica Josu, Senior Advisor, Biodiversity Dept. MoE, - Vitali Carp, Head of Apa Canal in Orhei SA	
0:15-10:40	Coffee Break		
0:40-11:30	 Experience from outside Moldova Managed aquifer recharge (new EU guidance) NBS for flood management – example from Big Lisbon Creation of buffer zones between water and agriculture Payment for forest management to reduce soil erosion and sedimentation in reservoirs. A mechanism by development co-operation partners to support NbS 	Moderator: OECD 10 min each - Andreas Scheidleder, UBA - José de Saldanha Matos, High Technical Institute of Lisbon University - Pierre Henri de Villeneuve, OiEau Moderator: Guy Helpbern, OECD All participants	
1:30-12:00	 Moderated discussion Guiding questions: What are existing and potential Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for river basin management in Moldova? How have existing NbS in the country been identified, developed and implemented? What are lessons learned? What are challenges to promoting and scaling up NbS in Moldova? What can the EU4Environment programme, together with development cooperation partners, do to support more NbS in Moldova? 		
2:00-12:15	Closing remarks and next steps	V. Gratii, Ministry of Environment	
	 Possibly to highlight/agree on key priorities (e.g. types of NbS, regions, landscape) that can be included in the "roadmap" to be developed under the EU4Environment programme. 	of Republic of Moldova	

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/13:15-17:00	Field trip to a constructed wetland in Orhei	Organized	by	the
		EU4Environment	Water&I	Data
		Programme		

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