



Enhancing Cooperation Among Central and Eastern European Countries on Climate Change and Nature-Based Adaptation Solutions

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

There is ample evidence that climate change has become one of the most significant drivers of biodiversity loss. According to the Third National Communication under the UN Convention on Climate Change (2013), impacts of climate change on economic, social and environmental aspects are expected to intensify in the future. The thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP 13) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, in its Decision XIII/4, encourages Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to integrate ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and disaster risk reduction, into their strategic planning across sectors.

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) countries are highly vulnerable to climate change and accompanying natural hazards such as drought, floods, hail or landslides. This is a traditionally rural region and agriculture continues to play an important role in its economy. However, over-exploitation driven by inappropriate land use practices has led to the degradation of ecosystems. For example, pastures, which have limited productivity, are considerably degraded beyond productive tipping points because of overgrazing. Other serious challenges impeding progress in biodiversity management include pollution, fragmentation and loss of habitats, and increased urban encroachment.

The region's relevant strategic documents at the national level stress the need to take urgent measures to mitigate climate change effects on vulnerable ecosystems and biodiversity through ecosystem-based approach techniques. Nature-based adaptation solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change hold significant promise. In this respect, it is recognized that the long-term solution would be to build national capacities for reducing non-climatic stresses; to push for wider adoption of conservation and sustainable use practices including ecosystem-based and risk reduction techniques; and to facilitate adaptive management through strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems.

However, a number of barriers prevent the effective implementation of ecosystem-based approach techniques in the region, including:

- i. Insufficient cross-cutting mainstreaming policies;
- ii. Inadequate scientific collaboration and cooperation among key institutions to identify a common approach and joint efforts towards prioritizing promising solutions across the region and specifically, within the agricultural sector.
- iii. Lack of specific legal and institutional framework. In particular, there is no efficient mechanism in place for planning and management at the local level and no adequate monitoring and evaluation system in place to prevent climate change threats to biodiversity;



- iv. Inadequate practical experiences in application of ecosystem-based approach in natural ecosystems. Generally speaking, special measures to use and benefit from traditional knowledge associated with climate change adaptation are absent; and
- v. Weak capacities to effectively implement CBD provisions.

Rationale

The long-term objective of this project is to support the region in protecting biological diversity by introducing mechanisms that will ensure ecosystem-based adaptation and risk reduction of climate change. New mechanisms and procedures within a systemic ecosystem-based approach will provide solutions to mitigate negative climate change effects and increase resilience and adaptability of biodiversity to climate change effects in the region.

To address existing limitations and barriers, BBI's seed funding will be used to enhance CEE regional collaboration to promote a common approach and joint efforts to develop adequate capacity building in this regard.

Moldova, which has previous experience implementing a number of capacity building initiatives related to integrating biodiversity conservation and climate change, will take the lead on this project. Following consultations during the Regional Bio-Bridge Initiative Round Table in February 2018, seven other countries have expressed interest in strengthening collaboration and developing a common approach and joint actions in the field of ecosystem-based adaptation. The project will complement previous initiatives, and will notably be linked with the Emerald Network of areas of special protection interest, as well as Natura 2000 to provide continuity and connectivity in a bio-geographic regional context.

Objectives

Under the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment of Moldova, through its Biodiversity Office, the overall objective of this Project is to foster cooperation among key institutions from CEE countries, namely Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, on protecting the biodiversity of the region through ecosystem-based adaptation and risk reduction of climate change.

Specifically, the immediate Project objectives are as follows:

- i. *Objective 1:* Mainstreaming of biodiversity and nature-based climate change adaptation solutions in cross-sectorial policy.
- ii. *Objective 2:* Development and implementation of nature-based adaptation solutions to climate change at national and/or regional level, with the support of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes are as follows:

- i. *Outcome 1:* Improved institutional capacity in each target country to mainstream biodiversity and climate change adaptation in cross-sectorial policy.
- ii. *Outcome 2:* Greater appreciation and application of nature-based adaptation solutions within the region articulated.



- iii. *Outcome 3:* Agreement from National Designated Authorities and Accredited Entities for the submission of complete project proposals to the GCF for funding.

Main Activities to Deliver the Outcomes

The activities to be carried out by MARDE, through its Biodiversity Office and in collaboration with national partners from the target countries, and with the support provided under this Agreement, are the following:

- i. *Activity 1:* Convene a four-day regional workshop for CEE countries to train key stakeholders (decision-makers, regulators and/or academia) on nature-based adaptation solutions in the context of climate change.
- ii. *Activity 2:* Develop a suite of concept notes with a clear nature-based adaptation rationale to be elaborated into complete submissions to the GCF, either individually or in groups of countries.
- iii. *Activity 3:* Develop a roadmap, involving the appropriate National Designated Authorities and Accredited Entities, detailing the next steps for each concept note to be turned into submissions to the GCF.

Technical and Scientific Cooperation

Several participants at the Regional Bio-Bridge Initiative Round Table for CEE countries, held in February 2018, have expressed their interest and commitment to contribute and participate in long-term cooperation. A multi-sectorial group of stakeholders from eight countries will be involved in this Project. They represent central governments on nature conservation, forest, academia, education sectors, as follows:

- i. *Moldova:* Biodiversity Office within the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment), and National Designated Authority for GCF;
- ii. *Armenia:* Ministry of Nature Protection and National Designated Authority for GCF;
- iii. *Azerbaijan:* Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources and National Designated Authority for GCF;
- iv. *Georgia:* Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and National Designated Authority for GCF.

Reporting

Tracking and Reporting: Mid-term progress and final output will be reported to BBI team. Participation to BBI meeting and presentation of output would be delivered upon request of BBI team.

Measurable Indicators: The project will be monitored using the following indicators:

- i. *Indicator 1:* List of participants showing regional representation (approximately 15 people, including decision-makers, regulators and/or academia).
- ii. *Indicator 2:* Training materials available.
- iii. *Indicator 3:* Evidence of discussions/ negotiations among representatives of different target countries.



- iv. *Indicator 4:* Evidence of discussions/ negotiations with appropriate National Designated Authorities and Accredited Entities.
- v. *Indicator 5:* Proof of commitment/ agreement (letters, e-mails, and/or signed declaration) of key partners.
- vi. *Indicator 6:* All reports submitted and approved by donor.