Progress Report

Progress Report No. 4

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List of Abbreviations

ADCP – Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler
AWP – Annual Work Plan
AA-EQS – annual average environmental quality standard
CSO - Civil Society Organizations
EHGeoM - Enterprise Hydro - Geological Expedition from Moldova
EQS – environmental quality standard
EU – European Union
GD – Government Decision
GNSS- Global Navigation Satellite System
GPR - Ground Penetrating Radar
FRMP – Flood Risk Management Plan
ICOLD -– International Commission on Large Dams (
LiDAR – Light Detection and Ranging ()
LOD – limit of detection
MAC-EQS – maximum allowable environmental quality standard
MMI – multimetric index
MoEnv – Ministry of Environment
NAAM – Public Institutions National Administration “Apele Moldovei”
RIA – Regulatory Impact Assessment
RBMD – River Basin Management District
RBDMP – River Basin District Management Plan
RTK – Real-Time Kinematic
SIA CSA -– Automated Information System “State Water Cadastre”
SHS -– State Hydrometeorological Service
ToR – Terms of Reference
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
WFD – Water Framework Directive

Summary of progress in project implementation

The reporting period highlights the progress achieved in implementing the Project “Supporting the Moldovan authorities in the sustainable management of the Dniester River”. (hereinafter referred to as Dniester 2 Project) during 2025. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Government of the Republic of Moldova to manage the Dniester River Basin sustainably at national and transboundary levels. During the reporting period, substantial progress was made toward this objective through reinforcement of regulatory frameworks, enhancement of institutional and technical capacities, improvement of the evidence base for decision-making, and implementation of practical measures consistent with the principles of the EU Water Framework Directive.

At the national level, the project significantly improved Moldova’s ability to plan, regulate, and implement sustainable water management. Key interventions focused on dam safety and the management of high-risk hydrotechnical structures, ensuring greater resilience and security of water infrastructure. These actions strengthened policy coherence, improved alignment between planning and monitoring processes, and equipped national authorities with legally sound, technically robust, and operationally practical tools for effective basin-wide water management.

COMPONENT 1. Enhancement of water related regulatory framework

The Project advanced implementation of Activity 5 (1) by providing targeted regulatory support to national authorities under the “Expert on Demand” facility. During the reporting period, progress was achieved in updating Flood Risk Management Plans and in completing preparatory work for the development of a national Methodology for establishing water use limits.

Updated Flood Risk Management Plans for the 2026–2030 period were developed for both river basin districts in line with national legislation and Directive 2007/60/EC. The updated plans strengthened coherence with the River Basin District Management Plans and supported evidence-based flood risk planning through revised risk assessments, objectives, and priority measures.

In parallel, the Project completed key preparatory and procedural steps for the development of a national Methodology for establishing water use limits. These included extensive institutional consultations, refinement of the technical approach in the Terms of Reference to reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the assignment, revision of the activity budget to ensure realistic costing, and the launch of an RFP procurement process in December 2025.

COMPONENT 3: Support provided to Moldovan water management authorities in sustainable management of Dniester River, both at national and transboundary / international levels

Under Activity 10, the Project supported the preparation of the 2024 National Report on the Condition of Surface and Ground Water in the Dniester River Basin District (Republic of Moldova), responding to the revised bilateral reporting template agreed between Moldova and Ukraine under the 2012 Dniester Treaty. The updated report introduced a more analytical approach, including assessment of water quality data against national standards, representing an important step towards Water Framework Directive–compliant reporting and strengthening the regulatory relevance of national water status assessments.

Under Activity 11 (3), the Project organized a study visit to Romania (27–31 October 2025) for members of the Dniester River Basin District Committee and key institutions involved in water resources management. The visit enabled direct exchanges with Romanian counterparts on the management and safety of cross-border hydrotechnical infrastructure, hydrological monitoring and data exchange, ecological flow management, flood prevention, and emergency response coordination—providing practical insights relevant to Moldova–Ukraine cooperation and the management of the Dniester Hydropower Complex.

Under Activity 12 (1), the project supported national authorities in implementing targeted awareness-raising and communication actions on Dniester River issues. This included supporting Dniester Day 2025 (25 May, Răscăieți) and outreach around World Water Day 2025, as well as contributing to a high-level public policy event at Parliament (17 June 2025), increasing public and stakeholder visibility of sustainable water management and related policy reforms.

In the framework of Activity 15, the project delivered a Training on Strategic Communication and Technical Diplomacy on 28 November 2025 in Chisinau engaging key water and environment authorities. The training focused on strengthening strategic communication, diplomatic protocol, and professional representation skills relevant for water governance and transboundary cooperation. The activity contributed to improved institutional capacities supporting Moldova's engagement in national, EU, and transboundary water governance processes.

The project also contributed to enhanced capacity of the National Administration "Apele Moldovei" under Activities 16, 16 (1), 16 (2), 16 (3), and 17. Key results included: (i) development of a draft policy package enabling transparent, cost-based service delivery by the institution (methodology, service catalogue, draft Government Decision and supporting documents); (ii) support to procurement of GPR equipment to strengthen dam safety technical assessment capacity; (iii) completion of an inventory of approximately 1,600 hydrotechnical constructions (dams) in the Dniester River Basin District, integrated into the State Water Cadastre; (iv) upgrading and legal finalisation of the national methodology for identifying and controlled liquidation of ponds/reservoirs at high risk of collapse, with the approval package submitted for Government consideration in December 2025; (v) advancement of procurement for a training curriculum for reservoir owners; and (vi) procurement of RTK-equipped drones and delivery of operator training (1 December 2025), strengthening high-precision geospatial monitoring capacities for water bodies and hydrotechnical infrastructure.

COMPONENT 4: Implementation of the on-the-ground activities to improve current ecological conditions of the Dniester River

Under Activity 23 (1) the project advanced by securing international hydrological expertise to support procurement of real-time water level monitoring stations, including bidder clarifications and technical evaluation of offers.

Under Activity 23 (2), six automatic real-time water level monitoring stations were procured for key locations along the Dniester River (Unguri, Sănătăuca, Soroca, Criuleni, Vadul lui Vodă, and Răscăieți), accompanied by installation support and staff training for the State Hydrometeorological

Service. As a result, the availability of real-time hydrological data and the operational capacity of the national monitoring network were significantly improved, reinforced through an official handover ceremony in August 2025.

In parallel, under Activities 23 (3)–23 (4), detailed specifications were developed to enable procurement of an ADCP and current meters to further strengthen discharge measurement capacity.

The project completed Activities 24, 25 and 26, through delivery of Eco-Tiras' final research report consolidating multi-year investigations (2022–2024) on spring ecological discharges from the Dniester Hydropower Complex. The study provided practical, evidence-based recommendations on the timing, volume, and duration of ecological releases, promoting a shift toward adaptive discharge planning guided by biological and hydrological triggers to better support fish reproduction and ecosystem functioning.

Under Activity 27, the Project strengthened national capacity for WFD-aligned assessment by providing support towards groundwater status assessment and methodology development, resulting in the formal adoption of a national methodology via Government Decision No. 227/2025.

In addition, under Activity 27, in November 2025 the training was delivered on water quality data processing, analysis, and status assessment with Microsoft Excel Pivot Table/Chart functionality. The training was attended by 19 trainees (16 women and 3 men) from the Ministry of Environment, National Administration "Apele Moldovei", the Water Quality Laboratory and the Enterprise Hydro - Geological Expedition from Moldova.

Under Activity 27, also in November 2025, a meeting took place about Alignment of the national surface water monitoring system with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. The meeting aimed at identifying and discussing the major discrepancies between the current surface water quality monitoring programmes and the requirements under the Water Framework Directive. The meeting was attended by 13 participants (11 women and 2 men) from the Ministry of Environment, National Administration "Apele Moldovei", Water Quality Laboratory, State Hydrometeorological Services, and EU4Green Recovery East.

Under Activity 27(2), Terms of Reference were prepared for a Hydrobiology International Consultant to prepare and conduct a training on ecological potential/status classification. Generally, the Consultant is to compile relevant background information and to prepare and conduct a training to practise applying the so-called Multimetric Index (MMI) for benthic invertebrate fauna with the surface water quality monitoring data for the Moldovan River Basin Management District. The procurement procedure will be kicked off early 2026.

Through Activity 29, the Environment Institute from Koš, Slovak Republic was contracted for sampling and laboratory analysis under the "Research Monitoring Programme for Identification of WFD 'Priority and certain other pollutants' in the Moldovan Dniester River Basin District". Water samples were taken at 9 sites in April, July and October 2025. Out of the 62 (individual) Priority substances analysed, only twelve (12) substances are of short/medium interest for further capacity building of the Water Quality Laboratory, for design of the routine surface water quality monitoring programmes and for

management of the surface water bodies inside the Moldovan Dniester River Basin Management District.

Under Activity 29 furthermore the Research monitoring programme for groundwater was designed, being approved by the Project Board during the 7th meeting on 17 November 2025. Procurement procedures will start early 2026. Implementation of the groundwater research monitoring programme is expected during summer or (early) autumn 2026.

Under Activity 32, the project strengthened the Water Quality Laboratory's readiness for national accreditation through targeted ISO/IEC 17025 training.

Under Activity 32 (1), procurement of essential equipment and consumables enabled operational readiness for implementing the methodology for determining fats, oils and greases (FOG), further strengthening routine monitoring capacity and reliability of laboratory results.

The project completed Activity 35 (2) by equipping the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection with modern tools for surveillance and evidence collection and delivering targeted training (including drone operation). The intervention strengthened the operational readiness of inspectors to prevent and detect poaching and to respond more effectively to environmental violations in the Dniester River Basin District.

The project initiated the Activities 36–37 by contracting research and design work to establish an evidence base for future ecological rehabilitation of the Lower Dniester oxbow (baseline assessment and data synthesis ongoing).

Under Activity 38, a Low Value Grant mechanism was operationalised and a grant agreement signed to implement a 15-month package of biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, and community engagement measures in the Lower Dniester National Park.

Under Activity 39, the Project completed afforestation of 41 hectares of former pastureland in Talmaza, contributing to increased forest cover and improved ecological conditions, supported by technical supervision and sustainability measures for follow-up monitoring and maintenance.

Collectively, these results demonstrate clear progress toward the project's overall objective. Moldova's institutional, regulatory, technical, and analytical capacity to sustainably manage the Dniester River Basin has been measurably strengthened, laying a solid foundation for continued implementation of integrated river basin management, improved ecological outcomes, and resilient cross-border cooperation in the years ahead.

Under The Project management component 5, the project maintained effective governance, coordination, and operational oversight throughout 2025, ensuring the timely implementation of strategic objectives and key activities in line with the approved Annual Work Plan.

The project team was strengthened through the recruitment of a Project Analyst, enhancing technical support for institutional capacity development, field-level interventions, stakeholder engagement, and results-based monitoring and reporting.

Financial management, procurement, and communications functions continued to operate effectively, supporting compliant delivery of project activities and visibility of results.

Project governance was ensured through three Project Board meetings held during the year to review progress and provide strategic guidance.

The description below provides a more detailed overview of the key achievements under each of the project components.

I. Key achievements during the reporting period

COMPONENT 1. Enhancement of water related regulatory framework

In 2025, Component 1 supported the strengthening of Moldova's water-related regulatory framework through targeted assistance to national authorities, with a focus on flood risk management and water allocation regulation in line with EU acquis. Progress was achieved in advancing the update of Flood Risk Management Plans for 2026–2030 for both river basin districts, which were developed to draft stage and submitted for public consultations in accordance with the EU Floods Directive. In parallel, the project advanced preparatory, institutional, and procurement processes for the development of a national Methodology for establishing water use limits under the Water Law, laying the foundation for improved, transparent, and sustainable water allocation in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.

Outcome 1. Better management and protection of water towards prevention deterioration and enhancement status of aquatic ecosystems

Output 1 National water related regulatory framework towards compliance with the EU WFD–is developed, consulted and handed over to the relevant state institution for adoption / approval.

Activity 5 (1). To provide ad-hoc support to national authorities for improvement of the water related regulatory framework based on the "Expert on Demand" facility

Several activities were initiated under Activity 5 (1), including:

1) Updating the Flood Risk Management Plans

Following a competitive procurement process, based on RFP procurement modality, AO EcoContact was contracted for the period 10 July 2025 – 30 June 2026 to support the Ministry of Environment and its subordinated institutions in updating the Flood Risk Management Plans in line with national legislation and the EU Floods Directive.

Between July and December 2025, the contractor carried out a comprehensive review and analysis of the existing FRMPs, including the collection and assessment of updated hydrological, meteorological, socio-economic, and flood risk data for both river basin districts. This work also encompassed a systematic review of annual progress reports prepared by the Public Institutions National Administration "Apele Moldovei" (NAAM), enabling an evidence-based assessment of

progress achieved under the 2020–2025 action plans, as well as the identification of remaining gaps and emerging flood risks. In addition, the analysis examined synergies between the River Basin District Management Plans (RBDMPs) and the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), strengthening coherence between water management and flood risk planning instruments.

Building on this analytical foundation, draft updated FRMPs for the period 2026–2030 were developed for both river basin districts. The updated plans include revised flood and flash flood risk assessments, updated flood risk management objectives, prioritised structural and non-structural measures, and revised budget estimations. The draft FRMPs were aligned with the provisions of Directive 2007/60/EC and submitted to the Ministry of Environment for review. By September 2025, the updated plans were delivered to the Department of Integrated Water Management Policies of the Ministry of Environment (MoEnv) and formally cleared, marking the completion of the second contractual deliverable.

2) Developing of the Methodology for establishing water use limits

During the reporting period, the project advanced preparatory and procedural work for the development of a national Methodology for establishing water use limits, a key regulatory instrument aimed at strengthening Moldova's water allocation framework in line with the Water Law No. 272/2011.

Extensive consultations were conducted with key institutional stakeholders, including MoEnv and NAAM, to clarify methodological needs, regulatory gaps, and institutional responsibilities related to special water use authorization. These consultations confirmed the complexity and multidisciplinary nature of the assignment, which requires integrated hydrological, ecological, legal, economic, and institutional expertise.

Based on consultations with stakeholders, the project team concluded that the engagement of an individual consultant would not sufficiently address the scope and technical complexity of the assignment. Consequently, a Request for Proposals (RFP)procurement modality was selected instead of an IC modality, allowing for the recruitment of a multidisciplinary expert team capable of delivering both a scientifically robust methodology and a practical implementation roadmap. As part of this refinement, the Excel-based implementation tool initially requested by NAAM to be integrated into the Terms of Reference (ToRs) was excluded, as the associated costs cannot be reliably estimated prior to the development of the methodology.

Market research further demonstrated that the original budget allocation of USD 10,000 was insufficient to deliver a comprehensive, policy-ready methodology and associated implementation roadmap, including institutional alignment and cost estimates. The budget for this activity was therefore revised to USD 42,000, ensuring realistic costing and safeguarding the quality and applicability of the expected outputs.

Following UNDP internal approvals, RFP25/03192 was launched on 22 December 2025, with a submission deadline of 19 January 2026.

COMPONENT 3: Support provided to Moldovan water management authorities in sustainable management of Dniester River, both at national and transboundary / international levels

At the transboundary level, the project reinforced Moldova's engagement in joint management of the Dniester River Basin with Ukraine. Technical support to bilateral reporting, analytical upgrades to national water status assessments, capacity building for negotiation and technical diplomacy, and applied research on ecological flow regimes contributed to more informed, credible, and constructive dialogue on shared water resources. The ecological discharge study provided a scientifically grounded basis for adaptive flow management, supporting both ecosystem protection and transboundary cooperation.

Outcome 3. Support provided to the water management authorities in sustainable management of Dniester River resources at -national and international levels

Activity 10. Support in organizing and participating in meetings of the Dniester Commission and its Working Groups

Under Activity 10, the project provided technical support for the preparation of the 2024 National Report on the Condition of Surface and Ground Water in the Dniester River Basin District (Republic of Moldova).

In line with the Treaty between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on Cooperation in the Field of Protection and Sustainable Development of the Dniester River Basin, signed in Rome in 2012, the two countries exchange annual reports on the condition of surface water and groundwater within their respective parts of the Dniester River Basin. For the 2024 reporting cycle, a revised reporting template was introduced by mutual consensus of both countries, requiring adjustments to both the structure and the analytical approach of the national report.

During the mission of Mr. Paul Buijs in November 2025, the project received a request from the Ministry of Environment to support the preparation of the National Report on the Condition of Waters of the Dniester River Basin within the Republic of Moldova for 2024 using the updated template. In response, Mr. Buijs prepared a draft report applying the revised approach for data assessment, which was subsequently completed with inputs provided by representatives of MoEnv, NAAM, and Environment Agency. The final version of the report is included as *Annex 1*.

The revised report represents, to some extent, a departure from the traditional national reporting practices applied by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine under the bilateral treaty, which have historically been largely descriptive in nature. The updated report introduces a more analytical approach, including the explicit assessment of water quality data against national water quality standards. As such, the document constitutes an important step towards Water Framework Directive–compliant reporting, enhancing both the analytical rigor and regulatory relevance of national water status assessments.

Activity 11 (3). Support in organizing a study visit of the Dniester River Basin District Committee to Romania and France

Under Activity 11 (3), the project supported the organization and implementation of a study visit to Romania from 27 to 31 October 2025 for members of the Dniester River Basin District Committee and representatives of key national water management institutions. The study visit aimed to strengthen institutional capacities through exposure to international best practices in the management of cross-border hydrotechnical infrastructure and transboundary water cooperation

The delegation comprised representatives of the MoEnv, NAAM, State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS), General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations, and research institutions. The study visit facilitated direct exchanges with Romanian authorities and operators responsible for the management, monitoring, and safety of large-scale hydrotechnical infrastructure and river basin management systems.

During the visit, the delegation held technical meetings and site visits with the following institutions: Hidroelectrica S.A. – Iron Gates Branch (Danube River), the Jiu River Basin Water Administration under the National Administration Apele Române, the National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management, and the General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations (*Annex 2*). Particular emphasis was placed on Romania's experience in the joint operation and environmental management of the Iron Gates Hydropower Complex, hydrological monitoring and data exchange, ecological flow management, flood prevention, and emergency response coordination.

The study visit enabled participants to examine institutional and legal arrangements governing transboundary hydrotechnical infrastructure, including mechanisms for joint monitoring, data sharing, coordinated flow regulation, and environmental risk management. The Romanian experience provided practical insights relevant to the management of the Dniester Hydropower Complex and other shared water infrastructures, particularly in the context of Moldova–Ukraine cooperation.

The study visit contributed to strengthening institutional capacities of Moldovan water management authorities through the exchange of best practices in the operation, monitoring, and environmental management of international hydrotechnical infrastructure, as well as in cross-border cooperation on environmental protection and transboundary river basin management. The knowledge and lessons learned during the study visit will inform ongoing policy dialogue and technical work related to flood risk management, ecological flow regulation, and transboundary cooperation in the Dniester River Basin and are reflected in the Study Visit Report (*Annex 3*).











Photos from the study visit study visit to Romania, 27-31 October 2025

The information on the study visit was published on the UNDP Moldova Facebook page, including highlights of the programme and key outcomes (*Annex 36).*

Activity 12 (1). To provide support to national authorities for awareness raising and communication on Dniester River issues

Under Activity 12 (1), the project supported national authorities in implementing targeted awareness-raising and communication actions on Dniester River issues, combining cultural, public policy, and media-based outreach at local, Dniester River District and national levels.

1) **Dniester Day "Dniester that inspires us"**

Traditionally celebrated on the last Sunday of May, in accordance with Parliament Decision No. 116/2008, Dniester Day is one of the most significant annual events dedicated to the Dniester River—the main water artery of the Republic of Moldova. On this occasion, the Ministry of Environment, in partnership with local public authorities and subordinated institutions, and with the financial support of Sweden provided through the UNDP Moldova project "Supporting the authorities of the Republic of Moldova in the sustainable management of the Dniester River", organized on 25 May 2025 a series of local events highlighting the socio-economic and cultural importance of the Dniester River

In 2025, the theme of Dniester Day was "Dniester that inspires us", emphasizing the river's role as a source of inspiration in a broad sense—for economic, touristic, and environmental initiatives, as well as a cultural bridge connecting people, communities, and countries across the region.

On 25 May 2025, the riverbanks in the village of Răscăieți became the stage for choreographic performances by youth dance troupes from Romania, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Moldova, alongside artisans and folk artists (*Annex 4. Agenda Dniester Day Festival).* The event brought together communities from both riverbanks, tourists, local entrepreneurs, and creators, showcasing regional traditions, gastronomy, cultural heritage, and the living spirit of the Dniester area. More than a festival, the event served as an invitation to rediscover the Dniester River as a shared source of

identity, creativity, and cooperation.



Photos from choreographic festival in Rascaieti village, Stefan Voda district, 25 May 2025

Within the framework of this event, the project partially covered accommodation for international participants, catering and transportation costs, as well as stage rental and visibility materials.

The event enjoyed both national and international visibility, being broadcast live on local and national television channels and promoted through social media platforms. In total, more than 50 media items related to the festival were documented across mass media outlets and the social media pages of partners and beneficiaries. UNDP Moldova further promoted the event through a press release, a video reportage, and dedicated posts on its social media platforms.

The media coverage of Dniester Day Fest 2025" Dniester that inspires us", held on 25 May 2025, is provided in the *Annex 35*.

2) Public policy event "Quality of Life in a Green Moldova – Turning Environmental Policies into Benefits during 2021-2025" at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova,17 June 2025

On 17 June 2025, the project contributed to the organisation of the public policy event "Quality of Life in a Green Moldova – Turning Environmental Policies into Benefits (2021–2025)", held at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, by supporting the provision of catering services for the coffee break. The event convened Members of Parliament, representatives of key line ministries, development partners, civil society organisations, and the private sector to review progress in environmental legislation and policy implementation over the 2021–2025 period.

During the event, national authorities presented Moldova's achievements in the green transition between 2021 and 2025, including advances in environmental protection policies, energy efficiency, environmental programmes and projects with local and national impact, measures supporting the adaptation of the economic sector to green regulations, and the contribution of development partners to these efforts (Annex 5).

In recent years, UNDP, in partnership with the European Union, Sweden, Austria, and the Green Climate Fund, has supported the alignment of national legislation with international and European standards and the strengthening of environmental and energy institutions. This support has included the establishment of a national climate change coordination mechanism, the drafting of the Climate Action Act, the launch of the National Climate Change Adaptation Programme, the preparation of amendments to the Water Law to align it with EU requirements, and the development of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy.

The event highlighted amendments to Water Law No. 272/2011, aimed at strengthening the sustainable management of water resources through further approximation of national legislation to the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive. These amendments were developed with the support of the Dniester 2 Project.

Through high-level discussions, the event facilitated policy dialogue and increased legislative awareness of environmental reforms and their socio-economic benefits.

In addition, the event hosted a photo exhibition dedicated to the Dniester River, contributing to enhanced public visibility and awareness of the river's environmental value.



Photos from the public policy event "Quality of Life in a Green Moldova – Turning Environmental Policies into Benefits (2021–2025)" at the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, 17 June 2025

The media coverage of the Public policy event "Quality of Life in a Green Moldova – Turning Environmental Policies into Benefits (2021–2025)", 17 June 2025, is provided in the *Annex 36*.

3) Raising public awareness on the role of sustainable water management on occasion of the World Water Day 2025 (22 March 2025).

On the occasion of World Water Day (22 March), celebrated globally in 2025 under the theme “Water for Peace”, the project supported two targeted awareness-raising actions, including the following:

- Renewed dissemination of the video spot on the protection of small rivers on the UNDP Facebook page, originally produced in 2024, reinforcing key messages on safeguarding local watercourses and ecosystems.
- Supported the production of a video spot on sustainable water resources management, developed in close cooperation with national water authorities. The video conveyed key messages on the protection and sustainable use of water resources, emphasizing water as a shared resource that requires cooperation, responsible governance and long-term stewardship.

Disseminated through public channels of the Ministry of Environment and Apele Moldovei National Administration, the video contributed to raising public awareness on the role of sustainable water management in supporting environmental protection, social cohesion and resilience, in line with national priorities and international commitments.

Media coverage highlighting the role of sustainable water management on the occasion of World Water Day 2025 is presented in the *Annex 36*:

Activity 15. Strengthening of negotiation skill by organizing workshops, trainings

As part of the activity, a training session on Strategic Communication and Technical Diplomacy was held on 28 November 2025 in Chișinău. The activity was delivered by the contracted service provider Protocol Group and engaged 18 participants (10 women and 8 men), including civil servants from the MoEnv, NAAM, and Environmental Agency, as well as representatives of the academic sector and civil society organizations. The training focused on strengthening strategic communication, diplomatic protocol, and professional representation skills relevant for water governance and transboundary cooperation. The intervention contributed to strengthening institutional, technical, and representational capacities relevant for engagement in national, EU, and transboundary water governance processes. The detailed agenda and the list of participants are provided in Annex 6 and Annex 7, respectively.



Photos from the Training on Strategic Communication and Technical Diplomacy

The media coverage related to the Training on Strategic Communication and Technical Diplomacy is provided in the Annex 36.

Outcome 5. Capacities of the AAM as a key national water management institution enhanced

Activity 16. Support in the formation of the Directorate for Hydraulic Structures

Under Activity 16, the project provided targeted support to the National Administration "Apele Moldovei" (ANAM) aimed at strengthening the institutional, regulatory, and technical foundations required for the effective establishment and functioning of the Directorate for Hydraulic Structures. Support focused on two complementary streams: (i) development of a regulatory and methodological framework for service delivery by NAAM, and (ii) enhancement of technical capacity for dam infrastructure assessment.

1) Development of a regulatory and methodological framework for service delivery

During the reporting period, the project initiated targeted support to NAAM for the development of a regulatory and methodological framework aimed at enabling transparent, cost-based service delivery and strengthening the institution's financial sustainability and operational effectiveness, in the context of a gradual increase in reliance on service-based revenue planned in the future.

Two national consultants were selected through a competitive process and contracted to provide complementary legal and economic expertise:

- Ms. Irina Punga, National Legal Consultant (30 September 2025 – 30 April 2026)
- Mr. Viorel Gîrbu, National Economist Consultant (30 September 2025 – 31 May 2026)

Through close coordination with the NAAM technical staff, the consultants jointly delivered a complete draft policy package, including:

- Draft Methodology for tariff calculation based on transparent allocation of direct, indirect and operational costs;
- Draft Catalogue (nomenclature) of services with associated tariffs;
- Draft Government Decision approving the methodology and service catalogue;
- Draft Information (Explanatory) Note; and
- Draft Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) report.

The developed documents aim to provide a unified and transparent framework for calculating and applying tariffs for services delivered by ANAM, addressing long-standing institutional gaps related to the absence of standardized pricing, limited cost recovery, and fragmented service provision. The methodology aligns with national public finance requirements and EU best practices, including principles of the WFD, and supports Moldova's broader public administration and water sector reforms. The activity will continue in 2026, focusing on the finalisation and submission of the complete package of documents to the State Chancellery for approval by the Government of the Republic of Moldova. In

addition, the consultants will deliver a targeted training for NAAM staff to support the practical application of the methodology and service catalogue.

2) **Contribution to the procurement of equipment for dam safety technical survey (GPR radar)**

In parallel, the project contributed to strengthening the technical capacity of NAAM in the assessment of dam safety through support to the procurement of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) equipment for advanced, non-invasive technical surveys of dam infrastructure. This intervention enhanced NAAM's ability to independently conduct detailed, non-destructive assessments of dams and hydraulic structures, enabling early detection of internal defects and structural weaknesses, improved evidence-based and risk-informed decision-making, and strengthened prevention of dam failure risks.

The support directly contributes to compliance with national dam safety requirements and aligns with EU best practices in infrastructure safety and disaster risk reduction, thereby increasing the resilience of critical water infrastructure in the context of growing climate-related pressures. The procurement of the equipment was implemented in coordination with the project Hydro-infrastructure Rehabilitation to Mitigate Vulnerability to Climate-Driven Extreme Events in the Republic of Moldova, financially supported by Austria, ensuring complementarity and efficient use of resources.



Photos from the GPR radar testing event at Ghidighici Reservoir, 20 May 2025

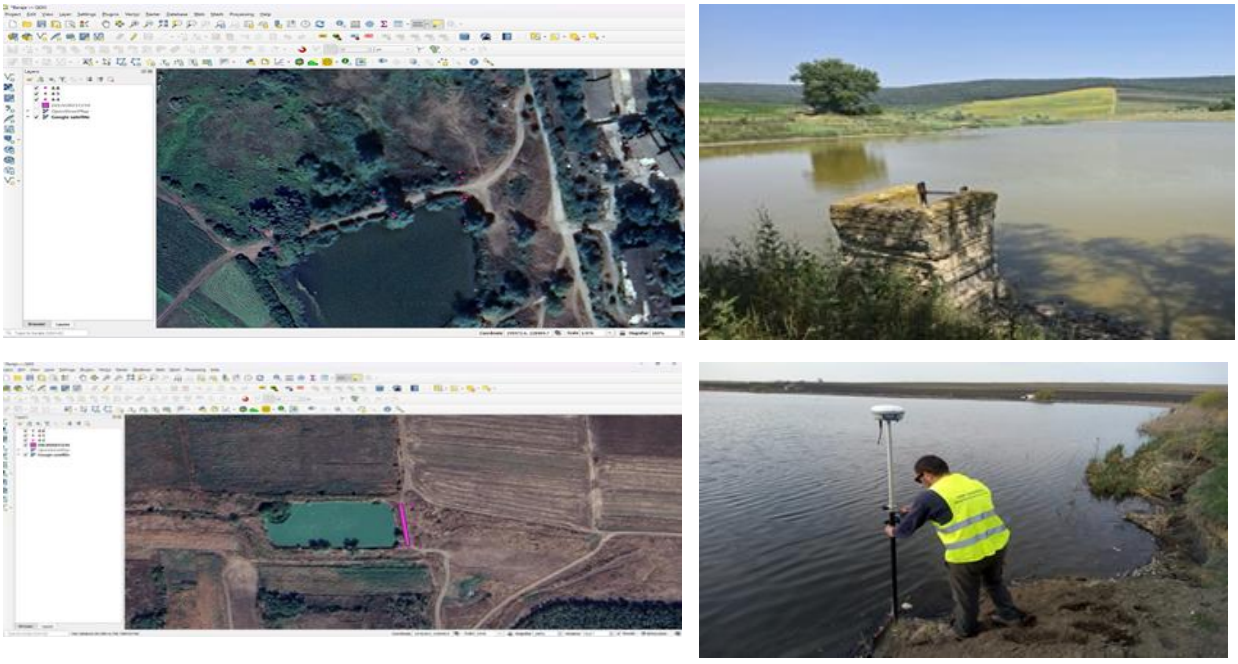
Activity 16 (1). To conduct the Inventory of the Hydrotechnical Infrastructure within the Dniester River Basin District

During the reporting period, the project completed a comprehensive inventory of hydrotechnical infrastructure within the Dniester River Basin District through a competitively contracted national company, Cart Engineering SRL (contract period: 27 December 2024 – 31 December 2025). The assignment focused on completing and updating the national inventory of dams and related structures, addressing gaps identified in previous assessments.

Under the contract, Cart Engineering SRL conducted extensive desk-based analysis and field surveys, collecting standardized field and high-precision topographic data for approximately 1,600 hydrotechnical constructions (dams). Data collection was carried out in line with the data attributes and technical requirements of the Automated Information System "State Water Cadastre" (SIA CSA),

using modern geospatial technologies, including Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) and Real-Time Kinematic (RTK) measurements, total stations, and Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR)-equipped drones. All validated spatial and attribute data, including georeferenced photographs and schematic documentation for each structure, were successfully uploaded and integrated into the State Water Cadastre.

The activity substantially strengthened the institutional and operational capacity of the NAAM by establishing a comprehensive, up-to-date, and digital inventory of hydrotechnical infrastructure in the Dniester River Basin District. The availability of standardized and reliable data for approximately 1,600 dams enables improved asset management, enhanced risk assessment and prioritization, informed planning of maintenance and rehabilitation measures, and more robust, evidence-based decision-making at river basin district level. The results also provide a critical technical foundation for flood risk management.



Images collected during the inventory of hydrotechnical infrastructure wihin the Dniester River District

Activity 16(2). To up-grade the already developed draft Methodology of controlled liquidation of ponds under a high risk of collapse and provide support for its official approval

During the reporting period, the project advanced the upgrading and legal finalisation of the national Methodology for the identification and controlled liquidation of ponds and reservoirs at high risk of collapse, addressing a critical gap in Moldova's dam safety and water infrastructure governance framework.

Two consultants were selected through a competitive process and contracted to provide complementary technical and legal expertise:

- Mr. Ionel Sorin Rîndașu-Beuran, International Technical Consultant (09 April – 31 December 2025)
- Mr. Alexandru Cojocari, National Legal Consultant (09 April – 31 December 2025)

The international consultant led a comprehensive technical revision of the previously developed (2019) methodology, aligning it with the updated national legal framework (including the Water Law and the Construction Code) and EU and international best practices under WFD, Floods Directive, and International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) principles. Key technical improvements included the refinement of multi-criteria analysis for decision-making, enhanced emphasis on dam safety and cascade-failure risks, integration of sediment quality and environmental restoration considerations, and the introduction of clearer administrative and procedural flows for controlled liquidation.

In parallel, the national legal consultant ensured full legal conformity of the methodology and coordinated the preparation of the complete approval package, including the draft Government Decision, Explanatory Note, including a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA), and a consolidated report on public consultations. The endorsement process involved consultations with central and local public authorities and sectoral institutions. Accepted and partially accepted comments resulted in improvements to legal terminology, clarification of institutional mandates, alignment with urban planning, construction, cadastral, environmental, and crisis-management legislation, and strengthened procedural clarity, while maintaining the core safety and environmental safeguards of the methodology.

Inter-institutional consultations on the draft Methodology for the identification of ponds and reservoirs at high risk of collapse were conducted on 18 September 2025.



Photos from the Inter-institutional consultations on the draft Methodology for identifying ponds and reservoirs at high risk of collapse,18 September 2025

The activity delivered an upgraded, legally compliant methodology for the identification and controlled liquidation of ponds and reservoirs at high risk of collapse, supported by a complete and robust approval package Annex 8. The methodology provides national authorities with a standardized, transparent, and enforceable instrument to manage unsafe hydrotechnical infrastructure, reduce public safety and environmental risks, and support climate-resilient water management. In December 2025 the package was officially submitted by the Ministry of Environment for Government approval and subsequent application at national and local levels.

Activity 16 (3). Develop the curricula on management of water reservoirs and train owners of water reservoirs within the Dniester River Basin.

During the reporting period, the project initiated the procurement process for the development of a training curriculum on the management of lakes and water reservoirs for public and private owners within the Dniester River Basin. The activity is implemented in close coordination with the Ministry of Environment and the Public Institution National Administration “Apele Moldovei”, ensuring alignment with national priorities in water resources management.

The first procurement round, conducted during June–August 2025, was cancelled after the financial offers received significantly exceeded the budget allocated for this activity. In response, the project reviewed and adjusted the scope and technical requirements of the assignment with the objective of improving cost-efficiency while maintaining the relevance and quality of the expected deliverables. Following these adjustments, the project launched a second procurement round under RFP25/03179, with the submission deadline set for 23 December 2025. The revised solicitation resulted in the receipt of six offers, reflecting improved market response following the revision of the Terms of Reference.
At the end of the reporting period, the activity is at the proposal evaluation stage, in accordance with UNDP procurement procedures. The activity remains ongoing and is expected to contribute to strengthening the management capacities of water reservoir owners and to supporting the sustainable management of lakes and water reservoirs within the Dniester River Basin.

Activity 17. Support for the formation of the Directorate for Water Resources Management

Under this activity, the project supported the procurement of two drones equipped with RTK technology and the organisation of a training session for their operation, aimed at strengthening the technical capacities of the responsible water management institutions. The selected drone model provides centimetre-level positioning accuracy, enabling the collection of high-precision geospatial data essential for advanced mapping and monitoring of water bodies and hydrotechnical infrastructure. Rapid Link SRL was competitively selected for the delivery of the equipment.

A dedicated training on the operation of RTK-equipped drones was organised for the NAAM” on 1 December 2025, ensuring the effective and safe use of the equipment by designated staff (Annex 9). In the training participated 14 representatives of NAAM, including 4 women and 10 men (Annex 10).

In addition, the project envisages the organisation of a follow-up training in 2026, focused on the advanced application of RTK technology for geospatial data processing and analysis.

The RTK-equipped drones will be used for detailed mapping of rivers, lakes, reservoirs, dams, and channels, including in areas that are difficult to access by conventional means. They will support the development of high-resolution digital terrain and surface models (DTM/DSM) for flood risk simulations, sedimentation assessment, and planning of rehabilitation works. The equipment also enables systematic monitoring of riverbank erosion, water level variations, and morphological changes of riverbeds, while providing a reliable topographic database to support technical planning, risk assessment, and evidence-based decision-making, in line with international best practices and the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.



Photos from the Training on operating RTK drones for the National Administration "Apele Moldovei", 1 December 2025

The media coverage related to the Training on operating RTK drones for the National Administration "Apele Moldovei", 1 December 2025 is provided in the *Annex 36*:

COMPONENT 4: Implementation of the on-the-ground activities to improve current ecological conditions of the Dniester River

Outcome 6. Capacity Building for Transboundary Water Quality Monitoring

Activity 23 (1). Prepare the Technical Specifications for automatic stations of water level monitoring

Under this activity, the project contracted Mr. David Zumr, International Consultant in Hydrology, for the period from 29 May 2024 to 30 May 2025, with a subsequent contract amendment extending the assignment until 1 June 2026. The consultant provided technical support for the preparation and validation of technical specifications for automatic water level monitoring stations, as well as for the selection and procurement process. This included addressing technical clarifications from bidders and conducting the technical evaluation of offers to ensure compliance with project requirements.

In 2026, the consultant will further support the project by preparing a hydrological data report based on data collected from the installed real-time water level monitoring (RTWLM) stations.

Activity 23 (2). Purchase of automatic stations for water level monitoring

Under this activity, the project supported the procurement and installation of automatic real-time water level monitoring stations along the Dniester River to strengthen national hydrological monitoring capacities. OTT HydroMet GmbH was contracted for the supply of six real-time monitoring stations for automatic water level monitoring at the following locations: Unguri, Sănătăuca, Soroca, Criuleni, Vadul

lui Vodă, and Răscăieți. The contract was implemented during the period 21 March–15 September 2025 and included installation works at Unguri and Răscăieți, as well as training of staff from the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS) on station installation, operation, maintenance, calibration, troubleshooting and software use.

To support the implementation process, Ms. Aliona Isac was contracted as a national consultant (29 April–30 August 2025), providing coordination and technical assistance. Installation works at the remaining locations—Unguri, Sănătăuca, Soroca, Criuleni, and Vadul lui Vodă—were carried out by Mr. Alexandr Dalta and SHS representatives during July–August 2025.




Images from the equipment installation works at Unguri station, July 20205






Photos of the installed equipment at Unguri station, July 2025

The equipment installed at **Unguri** station includes the following:

- Pressure water-level sensor (PLS) mounted on a metal tube
- Radar water-level sensor (RLS), mounted and calibrated
- Data logger with integrated power supply unit
- Solar panel system ensuring autonomous operation of the station
- Air temperature and relative humidity sensor
- OTT Pluvio precipitation gauge installed on a dedicated foundation



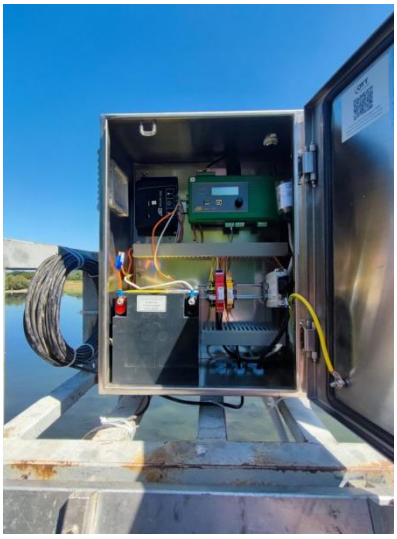


Photos of the installed equipment at Rascaieti station, July 2025

The equipment installed at **Rascaieti** station includes the following:

- Pressure water-level and temperature sensor (PLS) mounted on a metal tube
- Radar water-level sensor (RLS), mounted and calibrated
- Data logger with integrated power supply unit
- Solar panel system ensuring autonomous operation of the station
- Air temperature and relative humidity sensor
- OTT Pluvio precipitation gauge installed on a dedicated foundation





Photos of the equipment at Soroca station, August 2025

The equipment installed at **Soroca** station includes the following:

- Pressure water level and temperature sensor (PLS) mounted and calibrated
- Data logger and power supply system
- Solar power supply module.





Photos of the equipment at Sanatauca station, August 2025

The equipment installed at **Sanatauca** station includes the following:

- Pressure water level and temperature sensor (PLS) mounted and calibrated
- Radar water level sensor (RLS) mounted and calibrated
- Data logger and power supply system
- Solar power supply module.





Photos of the equipment at Vadul lui Voda station, August 2025

The equipment installed at **Vadul lui Voda** station includes the following:

- Radar water level sensor (RLS) mounted and calibrated
- Data logger and power supply system
- Solar power supply module.






Photos of the equipment at Criuleni station, August 2025

The equipment installed at **Criuleni** station includes the following:

- Pressure water level and temperature sensor (PLS) mounted and calibrated
- Radar water level sensor (RLS) mounted and calibrated
- Data logger and power supply system
- Solar power supply module.

As a result, real-time hydrological data availability and the operational capacity of the national monitoring network were significantly improved.

An official handover ceremony of the hydro-meteorological stations to the State Hydrometeorological Service was organised on 7 August 2025 jointly with the Enhancing human security in Moldova through agri-food resilience to intensifying external and climate shocks, financially supported by Japan, marking the formal transfer of the equipment and supporting its integration into the national hydrological monitoring system (Annex 11).



Photos from the Official Handover Ceremony of hydro-meteorological stations to the State Hydrometeorological Service, on 7 August 2025

The media coverage of the Official Handover Ceremony of hydro-meteorological stations to the State Hydrometeorological Service, on 7 August 2025, is provided in Annex *36*.

Activity 23 (3) Procurement of an Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler for measurements at depths greater than 5 meters
Activity 23 (4) Procurement of current meters

Under Activity 23 (3) and Activity 23 (4), Mr. David Zumr, International Consultant developed the detailed technical specifications to support the procurement of the listed hydrometric equipment for the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS).

Thus, during the reporting period, Mr. Zumr carried out the following key tasks:

- Conducted a technical assessment of hydrological monitoring needs in small and medium-sized rivers, with specific focus on discharge measurements under varying hydraulic conditions, including high-flow and non-wadeable situations.
- Reviewed and applied relevant WMO standards and guidelines for discharge and velocity measurements to ensure international compliance and data comparability.
- Held technical consultations with the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS) to align the specifications with national operational practices, existing monitoring infrastructure, and staff capacity.
- Developed comprehensive technical specifications for:
    - One Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) suitable for discharge measurements at depths exceeding 5 meters, including requirements for sensors, measurement accuracy, deployment modes, software, accessories, warranty, and calibration.
    - Five mechanical (propeller-type) hydrometric current meters, including specifications for measuring range, accuracy, accessories, calibration certificates, deployment rods, and maintenance kits.
- Prepared an indicative cost estimation for both the ADCP system and the mechanical current meters, based on market analysis of comparable professional hydrometric equipment, to support procurement planning and budgeting.

Outcome 7. Dniester River Spring Ecological Discharge Optimization Study

Activity 24. Sampling during the spring period, **Activity 25.** Laboratory analysis of the samples collected and **Activity 26**. Report on optimal timing and optimal amount of spring discharge preparation

Under Activities 24, 25, and 26, Eco-Tiras, contracted for the period 24 July 2023 – 31 December 2025, prepared the Final Research Report on Spring Ecological Discharge from the Dniester Hydropower Complex. The report consolidates the results of hydrological, meteorological, and ichthyological investigations carried out during the 2022–2024 study period (*Annex 12*). It integrates field sampling, laboratory analyses, long-term monitoring data, satellite imagery, and hydrodynamic modelling to assess the effectiveness of existing spring ecological discharge regimes and their influence on fish reproduction and ecosystem functioning in the Middle and Lower Dniester.

The study concludes that current spring ecological discharge practices only partially replicate natural spring floods and frequently fail to ensure sufficient duration and spatial coverage of flooded spawning habitats. It also finds that fixed discharge schedules are increasingly ineffective under conditions of high inter-annual hydrological variability and ongoing climate change. The results demonstrate that successful reproduction of phytophilic fish species is strongly dependent on the synchronization of ecological releases with biological indicators, in particular water temperature thresholds and spawning readiness.

Based on these findings, the report recommends shifting from calendar-based discharge planning to an approach guided by biological and hydrological triggers. Spring ecological discharges should be initiated in accordance with water temperature and spawning migration dynamics, and designed to provide adequate discharge volumes and stable inundation periods to support spawning, egg incubation, and early larval development. The study further recommends applying an adaptive, year-

specific discharge planning framework that reflects prevailing winter and spring hydrometeorological conditions, and integrating hydrological forecasts with ichthyological monitoring results into operational decision-making. The findings should also be used to inform the establishment of seasonal fishing prohibition periods and to support ecological flow negotiations at both national and transboundary levels. Continued regular monitoring and data collection are recommended to further refine ecological discharge regimes and strengthen long-term sustainability.

As a result, the activities delivered an evidence-based approach and a set of practical recommendations defining the optimal timing, volume, and duration of spring ecological discharges, supporting ecological requirements, informed operational decision-making, and sustainable river flow management in the Dniester River Bmasin.

Outcome 8: Chemical status of water bodies in the Dniester River Basin District

Activity 27. Refinement of the basin approach (plan) for study the chemical status of surface and groundwater bodies

27.1 Support to Groundwater Status Assessment through engagement of a National Expert

During the reporting period, Ms. Maria Titovet, Groundwater National Expert, was engaged through a competitive selection process for the period from 10 February to 31 December 2025 to support national authorities in strengthening the assessment and classification of groundwater bodies in line with EU requirements. Her assignment focused on addressing institutional, regulatory, monitoring, laboratory, and methodological gaps related to groundwater quality management in the Republic of Moldova.

Ms. Titovet carried out a review of the institutional and legal framework for groundwater quality monitoring and capacity constraints in the context of ongoing institutional reforms. The analysis highlighted the need to better align national legislation and institutional mandates with the requirements of WFD and Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration, particularly regarding groundwater chemical status assessment and reporting.

One of outputs of the assignment was the development of a Methodology for the assessment and classification of groundwater bodies status, prepared in line with based on the requirements of the WFD and Groundwater Directive. The methodology establishes criteria for chemical and quantitative status assessment, supports trend analysis, and provides a harmonized framework for national implementation. The methodology was formally adopted through Government Decision No. 227/2025, marking a significant milestone in aligning Moldova's groundwater management framework with EU standards.

Ms. Titovet also assessed the current groundwater monitoring programme, including parameter selection, monitoring network coverage, and compliance with EU monitoring principles. The review identified significant gaps in parameter consistency and threshold values, as well as the need to redesign the monitoring approach to ensure representative coverage of groundwater bodies, including those most relevant for drinking water supply and vulnerable to pollution pressures.

A substantial component of the assignment focused on laboratory capacity and accreditation. Ms. Titovet evaluated the analytical capacity of the Environmental Agency laboratory, identifying gaps related to equipment, methodologies, quality management systems, and accreditation for the groundwater matrix. She provided detailed recommendations and technical annexes to support the extension of national accreditation in accordance with ISO/IEC 17025:2018 and MOLDAC requirements, including a phased roadmap for accreditation, staff training, and investment needs

Overall, Ms. Titovet's work delivered a coherent and practical package of analyses, methodologies, and recommendations that together establish an enabling framework for strengthening national capacity to assess and classify the chemical status of groundwater bodies.

27.2 Support towards WFD-compliant surface water quality monitoring and assessment through engagement of an International Surface Water Quality Consultant

During the reporting period, Mr. Paul Buijs, International Surface Water Quality Consultant, provided technical assistance to the project under two contractual modalities, supporting national authorities in advancing EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)-compliant monitoring and assessment of surface and groundwater bodies in the Dniester River Basin District.

From 22 August 2024 to 23 July 2025, Mr. Buijs was contracted under an Individual Contract (IC) modality. During this phase, he carried out needs assessment for WFD-compliant monitoring and assessment of the status of surface water bodies, identifying methodological, institutional, and data-related gaps (*Annex 31. Minutes of the 6th Project Board Meeting*). He also conducted the technical evaluation under RfQ-24/02963 for the Surface Water Quality Research Monitoring Programme, ensuring alignment with EU requirements and international best practice. In addition, Mr. Buijs provided technical supervision during the initial implementation of the research monitoring programme, supporting quality assurance and methodological consistency.

The Ministry of Environment formally requested additional project support to strengthen monitoring data processing, analysis, and status assessment, as well as to improve the design of the monitoring network in line with delineated surface water bodies in the Dniester River Basin District. This request was reviewed and subsequently approved at the 6th Project Board Meeting in June 2025 (*Annex 31. Minutes of the 6th Project Board Meeting*), enabling an extension and expansion of expert support.

Accordingly, Mr. Buijs was engaged under a short-term IPSA 11 modality from 24 July to 31 December 2025. During this period, the consultant developed the Approach to the Groundwater Quality Research Monitoring Programme. Mr, Buijs continued to supervise the implementation of the Surface Water Quality Research Monitoring Programme, providing expert guidance on data quality, and interpretation.

Capacity development formed a key component of this phase. Mr. Buijs designed and delivered a two-day **Training on surface and groundwater quality data processing, analysis, and status assessment**.

At present, the Ministry of Environment (MoEnv) primarily receives raw monitoring data and generic summary reports. However, for the effective preparation and implementation of River Basin District

Management Plans (RBDMPs), the Ministry requires operational, decision-oriented information derived from monitoring and assessment activities. For example, a surface water body may be classified as having a “poor” status for both biological and chemical parameters. Further analysis may reveal that this status results from upstream discharges of untreated urban wastewater, thereby indicating the need for appropriate wastewater treatment measures to improve water body status.

In general, reporting under routine surface water quality monitoring programmes remains largely limited to annual average concentration values, without clear conclusions regarding water quality status at individual monitoring sites. This can be partly attributed to established reporting practices, the structure of data storage templates, and limited familiarity with advanced functionalities of Microsoft Excel.

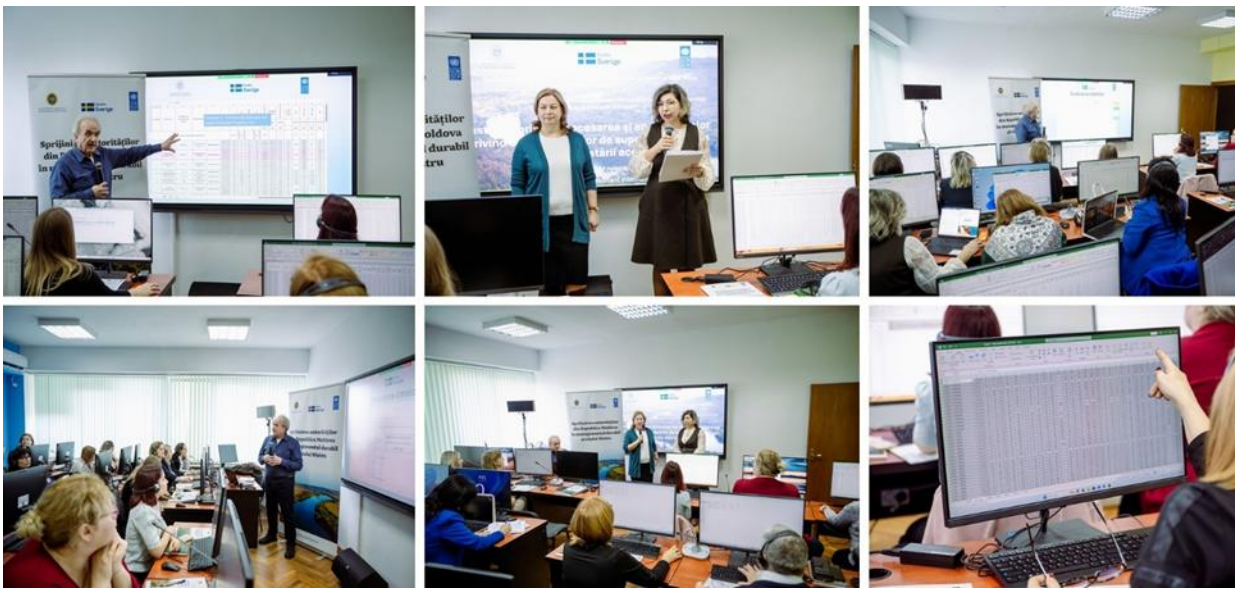
To address these gaps, the training focused on the use of Pivot Table and Pivot Chart functionalities in Microsoft Excel for processing, analysing, and synthesising water quality monitoring data. These tools enable efficient handling of large raw datasets and allow rapid generation of analytical tables and visualisations with minimal effort.

Accordingly, the main objective of the training was to familiarise participants with the practical use of Pivot Tables and Pivot Charts as a means to transform raw monitoring data into meaningful analytical outputs that support water management decision-making.

The training was delivered on 13 November (full day) and 14 November (morning) at the Academy of Economic Studies. It was attended by 19 participants (16 women and 3 men) representing the MoEnv, NAAM, Water Quality Laboratory, and the Enterprise Hydro-Geological Expedition of Moldova (EHGeoM) (*Annex 13)*.

Training materials included datasets containing actual surface and groundwater monitoring data, reflecting the interests of the participating institutions. The training was predominantly practice-oriented, with participants working directly on these datasets through guided exercises. In addition, the broader policy context was addressed, including the critical role of monitoring and status assessment for water management under the EU Water Framework Directive.

By the end of the training, participants were able to independently create Pivot Tables and Pivot Charts without further guidance, demonstrating that the intended basic knowledge and analytical capacity had been successfully achieved.



Photos from training on processing and analyzing surface water quality data, on 13-14 November 2025

The files with the PowerPoint presentations in Annex 14 and Annex 15 give a decent impression about the training.

A Reference Guide will be prepared and issued early 2026, describing the various steps in working with Pivot Tables/Charts as practised during the training.

Further support for the processing, analysis, assessment, and reporting of water quality monitoring data will be continued in 2026, with a more targeted focus on staff directly responsible for these functions. During missions to Moldova, Mr. Paul Buijs will provide hands-on, in-person technical guidance. Between missions, remote support will be delivered through structured email exchanges.

In Autumn 2024, the Ministry of Environment submitted a request for receiving additional support regarding:

- Monitoring data processing, analysis, and status assessment.
- Design of a monitoring network aligned with delineated water bodies in the Dniester River District.

This request was rewarded during the during the 6th Project Board Meeting in June 2025.

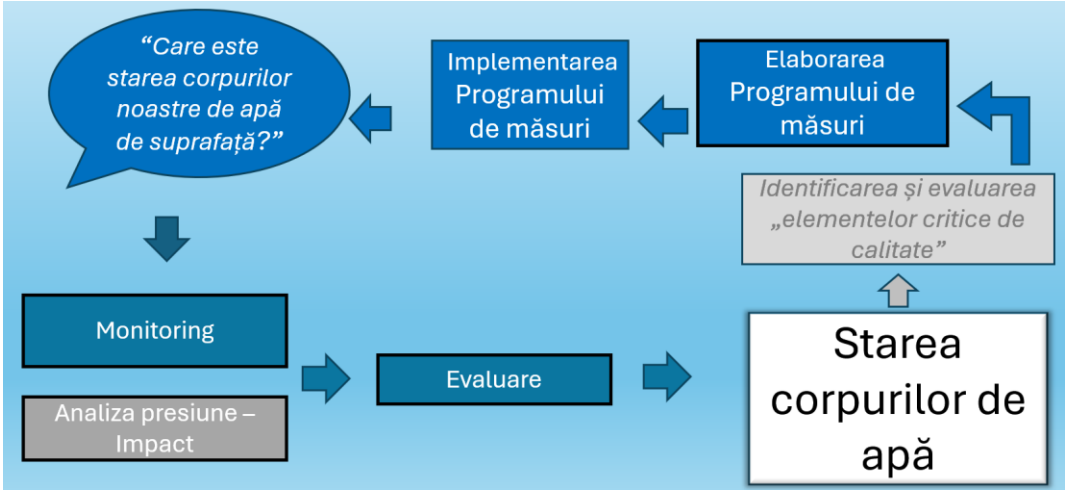
Alignment of the national surface water monitoring system with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive

The second component of the MoEnv request included support for the design of a monitoring network aligned with delineated water bodies in the Dniester River Basin District, will be addressed within a broader, system-level framework.

Adjustments to the current surface water quality monitoring programmes relate not only to the spatial distribution of monitoring sites, but also to the selection of monitoring parameters, as not all parameters are required to be monitored at every site. In addition, monitoring data must be processed, assessed,

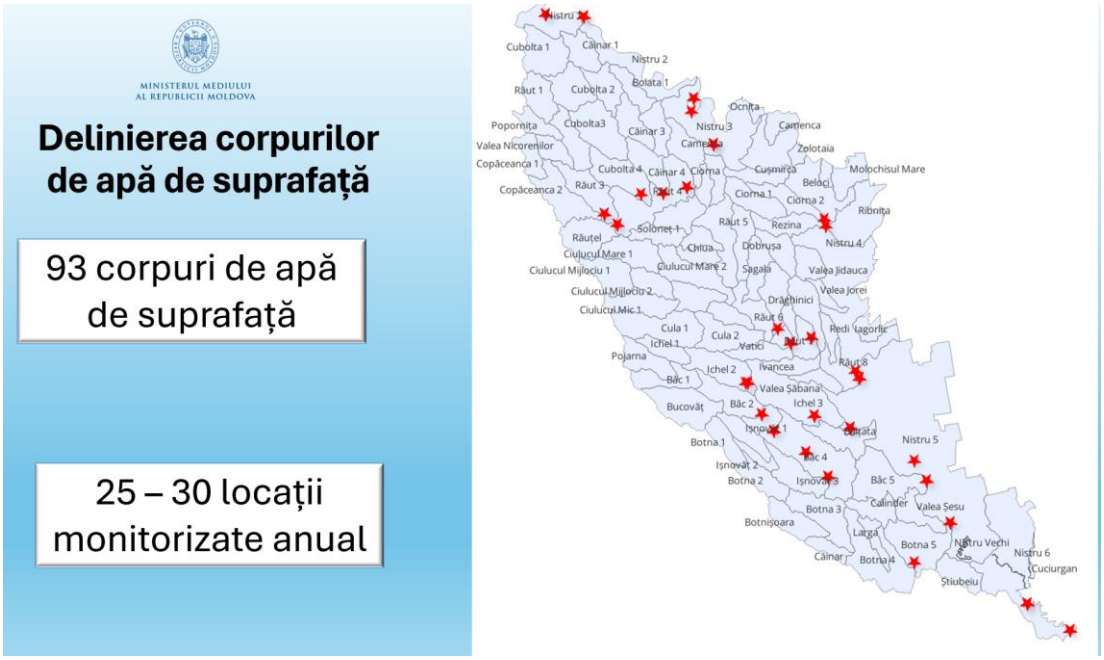
and reported in a manner that allows their effective use in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of River Basin District Management Plans (RBDMPs).

The figure below summarises the overall settings. the achievement of “good status” for all water bodies. Where water bodies are classified as having a less-than-good status, targeted measures must be designed and implemented to achieve improvement. Monitoring and assessment therefore play a central role, as they form the evidence base for determining water body status and for identifying appropriate measures. Further details are provided in Annex 31. *Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Project Board Annex xx Towards WFD-compliant monitoring of surface waterbodies.pdf*.



This topic was addressed during a meeting on 19 November 2025 in the MoEnv with 13 participants (11 women and 2 men) representing the Ministry of Environment, NAAM, Water Quality Laboratory, State Hydrometeorological Services, EU4Green Recovery East and UNDP (Annex 16). The presentation used during the meeting is included in Annex 17.

The meeting focused on identifying and discussing the main discrepancies between the existing national surface water quality monitoring programmes and the requirements of the WFD. It was noted that the current monitoring network (see the figure below) does not adequately cover the delineated surface water bodies in the Dniester River Basin District. While this does not imply that all water bodies must be monitored, a clear rationale for the selection of monitoring sites has yet to be developed. At the same time, some existing monitoring sites may be excluded from future annual programmes.



In selecting monitoring parameters, the following principles will need to be applied::

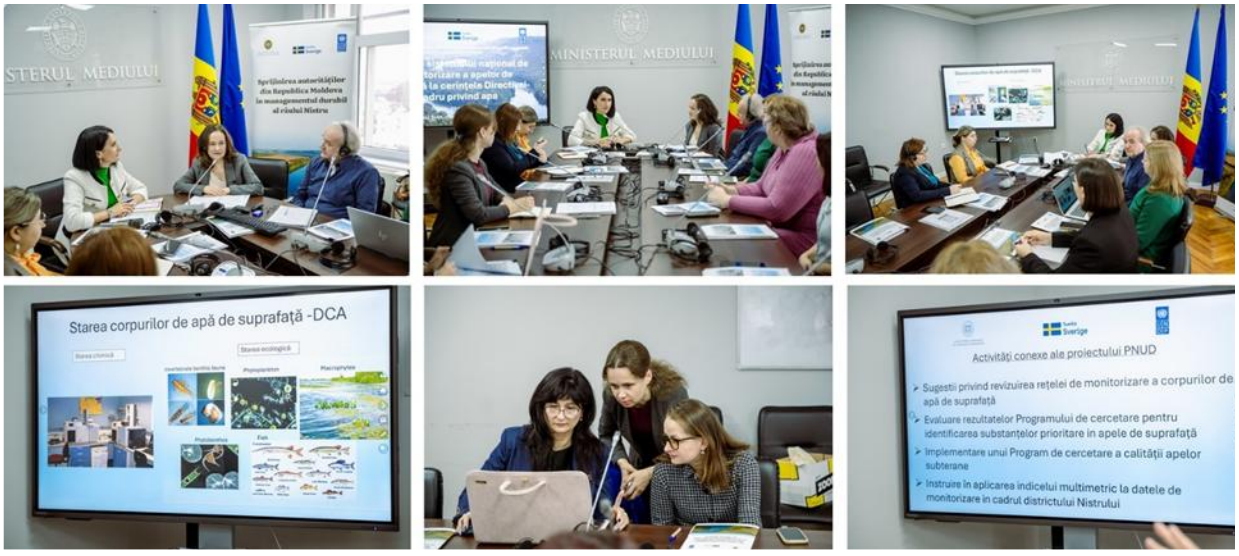
- the full range of WFD-relevant quality elements is required to be monitored only once within the six-year River Basin Management Plan cycle (surveillance monitoring), and only at a limited number of sites;

- for water bodies classified as having a less-than-good status, monitoring must be conducted annually, but only for those parameters that are indicative of the causes of the degraded status (operational monitoring).

The findings of Activity 29, “Research Monitoring Programme for Identification of WFD Priority and Certain Other Pollutants in the Moldovan Dniester River Basin District”, illustrate this approach. Priority substances were detected at a limited number of sampling sites, with results that can partly be extrapolated to wider areas of the basin. Consequently, laboratory analyses for these substances can be focused on targeted sites, taking into account the existing analytical capacity of national laboratories.

Mrs. Victoria Gratii (MoEnv) concluded that the findings of the meeting are to be pursued in a working group.

Alignment of the national surface water monitoring system with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive will remain a recurring topic throughout the remainder of the project. Paul Buijs remains available to provide technical support and to actively contribute to this process..



Photos from meeting on aligning the national surface water monitoring system with EU Standards
19 November 2025

Activity 27 (2) Training on ecological potential/status classification

Training on ecological potential/status classification is an additional initiative, approved during the 6th Project Board Meeting in June 2025. It aims at strengthening the capacity for processing and interpreting surface water quality monitoring data through targeted training on ecological potential andstatus classification.

Assessment of the ecological status of surface water bodies is widely recognised as one of the most complex components of the monitoring and assessment requirements under the WFD. The use of generic indices for assessing biological monitoring results—currently applied in Moldova—does not meet WFD requirements. Limitations of the present indices are illustrated in *Annex 19.*

Under the WFD, ecological status classification is based on ecological quality ratios (EQRs), which must be tailored to the specific hydromorphological, geological, and regional characteristics of each surface water body. These characteristics may vary significantly, including within the Dniester River Basin District. A further complexity is that classification is referenced against near-natural (reference) conditions, against which ecological status or potential is determined as high, good, moderate, poor, or bad.

These and other aspects are reflected in the Governmental Decision HG 884/2024 *on the approval of the Methodology for the classification of the ecological status of water and ecological potential*, which came into force in January 2025. This Decision encompasses concepts, definitions, principles and pointers for classification of the ecological status/potential of surface waterbodies, based on WFD requirements.

Example of figure included in HG 884/2024

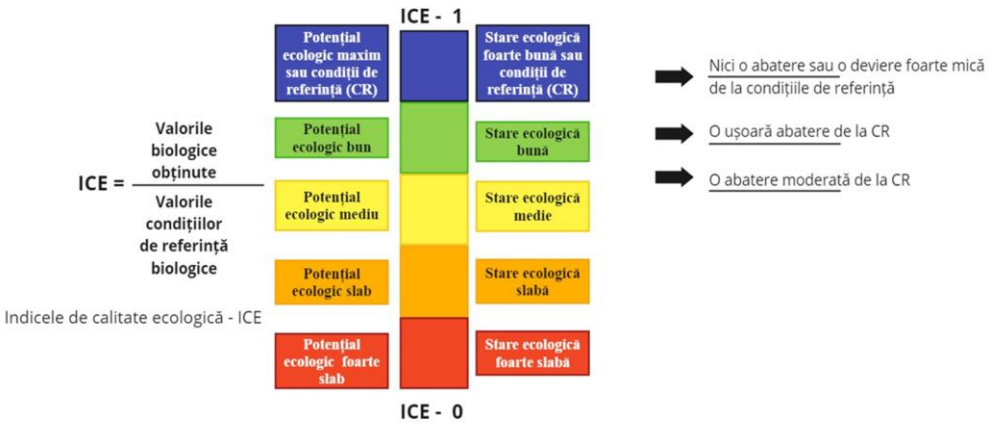


Figura 3. *Principii de bază pentru clasificarea stării ecologice/potențialului ecologic pe baza rapoartelor indicelui de calitate ecologică*

Notably, the staff of the Water Quality Laboratory within the Environmental Reference Laboratory of the Environment Agency have explicitly expressed the need for targeted training on the practical application of the approved methodology. In response, and in close consultation with the Water Quality Laboratory, Terms of Reference were prepared for the recruitment of an International Hydrobiology Consultant.

Generally, the Consultant will compile relevant background information and design and deliver a practical training programme focused on applying the Multimetric Index (MMI) for benthic invertebrate fauna, using surface water quality monitoring data from the Moldovan River Basin District.

The ToR are included in Annex 20. The tender will be launched early 2026.

Activity 29. Sampling of surface and groundwater, bottom sediments, biological tissues in accordance with the research program.

Surface Water Quality Research Monitoring Programme

The design of the Research monitoring programme for surface water was developed by Paul Buijs, International surface water quality consultant in September 2024 in close coordination with the MoEnv, Environment Agency and NAAM and approved by the Project Board during their 5th meeting on 18 October 2024.

An international tender for selecting and contracting an entity to conduct sampling and laboratory analysis under the Research Monitoring Programme was launched on December 6, 2024, with two deadline extensions, finalizing on January 14, 2025. A suitable offer was submitted by the Environment Institute from Koš, Slovak Republic.

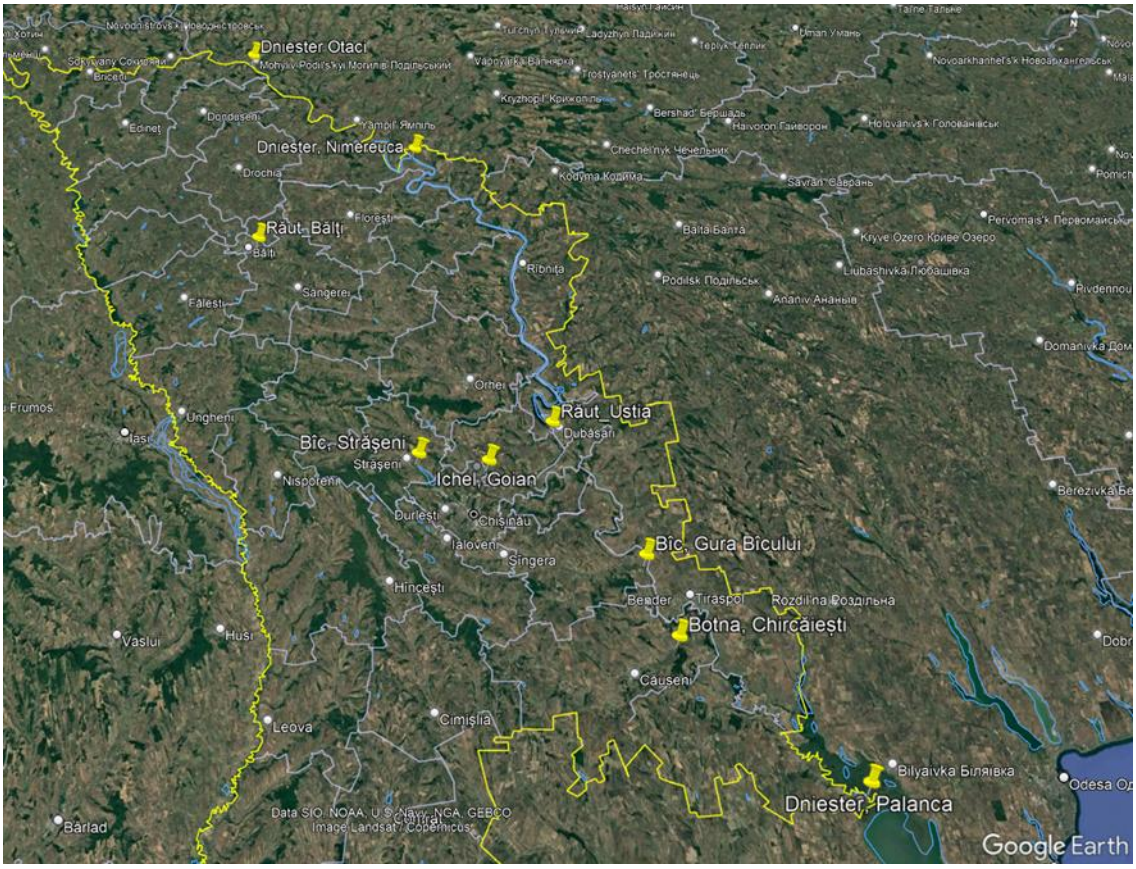
Water samples were taken at nine sites presumed to be representative for wider areas of the Moldovan Dniester River Basin Management District (RBMD). Most sites are included in the regular national surface water quality monitoring programme, except for Nimereuca. The samples were taken during 18-20 April 2025, 14-16 July 2025 and 16-18 October 2025.

Features of the sampling sites

River	Location	Features

Dniester	Otaci	Upstream border with Ukraine
	Nimereuca	End of stretch with shared MD-UA border; entry into Moldovan territory
	Palanca	Downstream border with Ukraine
Răut	Bălţi	Downstream large city
	Ustia	Downstream overall: combination of point sources and agriculture
Ichel	Goian	Downstream overall: combination of point sources and agriculture
Bîc	Străşeni	Downstream medium-sized city; agriculture *(and upstream Ghidighici Reservoir; kind of watershed)*
	Gura Bîcului	Downstream large city
Botna	Chircăieşti	Downstream overall: combination of point sources and agriculture

Overview of the sampling sites



The analysed substances cover all 'Priority substances and certain other pollutants' (hereinafter referred to as Priority substances) mentioned in the Directive 2013/39/EU, except for dioxins.[1]

AA-EQS, MAC-EQS

[1] [1] DIRECTIVE 2013/39/EU *amending Directives 2000/60/EC and 2008/105/EC as regards priority substances in the field of water policy*

The Directive 2013/39/EU contains two sets of environmental quality standards for assessment of the chemical status

- AA-EQS: annual average environmental quality standard
  - This EQS is to be applied to the arithmetic average/mean of a number of samples taken throughout the year. WFD Annex V. 1.3.4 indicates monthly sampling, thus 12 samples per year.
- MAC-EQS: maximum allowable concentration environmental quality standard
  - This is a figure not to be exceeded any time, thus in none of the samples.

In case the concentrations of all (detected) Priority substances comply with the AA-EQS and MAC-EQS, then a surface waterbody can be qualified as being of 'Good' chemical status.

Otherwise, the waterbody has to be qualified as 'Failing to achieve good' chemical status.

In total **62** (individual) Priority substances were analysed, out of which:

- **34** substances were **not detected**, i.e. not found in concentrations above the limited of detection (LOD) of the laboratory analysis;
- concentrations of **16** substances were safely **below the environmental quality standards** (EQSs) defined in the Directive 2013/39/EU;
- concentrations of **12** Priority substances were **near to or higher than the EQSs** defined in the Directive 2013/39/EU.

The **50** substances that were not detected or with concentrations safely below their EQSs do not require immediate attention, especially since resources for monitoring and laboratory analysis are limited.

As can be inferred from the table below, the **12** Priority substances requiring short/medium term attention are constrained to specific (stretches of) the tributaries, or in the case of tributyltin compounds to the Dniester River.

Detected Priority substances considered of short/medium term attention

	DNIESTER			RĂUT		ICHEL	BÎC		BOTNA
Substance	***Otaci***	***Nimereuca***	***Palanca***	***Bălți***	***Ustia***	***Goian***	***Străşeni***	***Gura Bîcului***	***Chircăieşti***
Mercury								√	√
Chlorpyrifos				√					
Tributyltin compounds	√	√	√						
Nickel						√	√	√	√
Heptachlor epoxide A (*)				√				√	
PFOS				√				√	
Nonylphenols				√				√	
Chlorfenvinphos								√	
Dieldrin								√	
Diuron								√	
Terbutryn								√	
Fluoranthene				√					

(*) Concentrations were just above the LOD, hence results should be interpreted with care.

√	one or more concentrations >MAC-EQS
√	one or more concentrations >AA-EQS
√	one or more concentrations >0.66 * AA-EQS

Some substances are analysed by the Environment Agency's Water Quality Laboratory, but not at highly sensitive detection limits. Several pointers are provided in the final reports for enhancing the capacity of the Water Quality Laboratory, but details will have to be elaborated by a dedicated working group. Refer to *Annexes 21 and 22* for more details.

The results are also relevant for designing the surface water quality monitoring programmes, which will be addressed by activities undertaken under Activity 27.

Overall, it can be concluded that the Research monitoring program has been successful. What was more or less kind of black box a year ago, now is better understandable and manageable.

Ground Water Quality Research Monitoring Programme

The proposal for the Groundwater Quality Research Monitoring Programme was prepared by Mr. Paul Buijs, International Surface Water Quality Expert in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Agency for Geology and Mineral Resources, Enterprise Hydro - Geological Expedition from Moldova (EHGeoM) and the National Agency for Public Health laboratory.

In total 32 quality elements were selected, based on the Governmental Regulations HG 931 and HG 932, the EU groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC, capacities for analysis by the laboratory of the National Agency for Public Health, and recent routine groundwater monitoring programmes. The selected quality elements are divided in two groups:

- Group 1: 25 parameters – including major ions, nutrients, heavy metals, aldrin and DDT – which are within the analytical capacity of the laboratory of the National Agency for Public Health.
- Group 2: 7 parameters – including specific pesticides and volatile organic compounds – which cannot be analysed by the laboratory of the National Agency for Public Health; an international laboratory will have to become involved in the analysis of the groundwater samples.

46 sites are selected for sampling, representing the main groundwater bodies delineated inside the Moldovan River Basin Management District and various anticipated human pressures.

The programme encompasses one round of sampling, taking one working week.

The budget is estimated at USD 51,800.

The proposed approach for Groundwater Quality Research in the Dniester District and the estimated budget has been approved in the 7th meeting of the project Board held on 17 November 2025 (*Annex 32*).

The procurement will be prepared and launched early 2026. Implementation of the programme is expected during summer or (early) autumn 2026.

Activity 32. Preparation of laboratories and a package of documents for national accreditation to perform analyzes of priority compounds relevant for the Dniester River Basin District

During the reporting period, the project supported the strengthening of the institutional and technical capacity of the Water Quality Laboratory of the Environment Agency through targeted ISO/IEC 17025 training.
In line with the national regulatory framework—Law No. 20/2016 on Metrology and Government Decisions No. 802/2017 and No. 996/2003—the project facilitated the delivery of ISO/IEC 17025 certification training services by the State Enterprise Center for Applied Metrology and Certification (CMAC), the only legally authorized institution in the Republic of Moldova to provide such training

A total of 11 training sessions were delivered during the period March–September 2025, in accordance with the approved training programmes and detailed schedules presented in the annexes. The training sessions were implemented through several thematic programmes covering core ISO/IEC 17025 requirements, including validation and verification of analytical and sampling methods, evaluation of measurement uncertainty, quality assurance of spectrometric and pH measurements, establishment of calibration and verification intervals in line with ILAC G-24, and inter-laboratory comparisons and proficiency testing under ISO/IEC 17043 (Annexes 23 and 24).

Three staff members of the Water Quality Laboratory of the Environment Agency participated in the training. As a result, the activity strengthened laboratory staff capacity to apply ISO/IEC 17025 requirements in practice, supporting the laboratory's preparedness for national accreditation and contributing to improved quality and reliability of water quality monitoring results.

Activity 32 (1). Support to implementation of Methodology for determining the content of fats, oils and greases in water

During the reporting period, the project team provided support to the procurement process for equipment and consumables required for implementing the Methodology for Determining Fats, Oils, and Greases (FOG) in the Water Quality Laboratory of the Environmental Agency. This process was implemented through two key procurement actions.

The first action involved the procurement of reagents and consumables required for FOG analysis through a micro-purchase procedure. To ensure competitiveness and value for money, twelve potential suppliers were contacted, and three offers were received and evaluated in accordance with applicable procurement rules. This action ensured the availability of the necessary consumables to support the application of the FOG methodology.

The second procurement action focused on the acquisition of essential laboratory equipment for the Water Quality Laboratory. A tender structured into six lots was launched on 23 January 2025 and closed on 12 February 2025, attracting a total of 15 registered bidders across all lots. Following completion of the evaluation process, contracts were awarded to selected suppliers for fume hood systems, a water still, a sample holding refrigerator, a Soxhlet solvent extractor and analytical balance, as well as laboratory consumables.



Photos of selected items procured for implementing the FOG Methodology

The table below presents the list of procured items and the corresponding contracted companies.

No	Equipment	Contracted company
1	Fumez Hood Systems	VMS-Companie srl
2	Water still	Lokmera SRL
3	Sample holding refrigerator	Kirantoni SRL
4	Sohxlet Solvent extractor, Analytical balance	Nitech SRL
5	Consumables	Biotechlab SRL

These completed procurement actions enabled the Environmental Agency's Water Quality Laboratory to strengthen its technical capacity and ensured the operational readiness for implementing the FOG methodology in routine surface water quality monitoring.

Outcome 9. Strengthening of Potential of Central and Local Environmental authorities in fishery policy

Activity 35 (2). Equipping the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection with means for recording of violations and detection of poachers on river Dniester (e.g. searchlights, night vision cameras, portable two-way radio transceiver etc.)

The Activity 35 (2) was implemented to strengthen the operational capacities of the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection (IEP) in the surveillance, supervision, and enforcement of environmental legislation related to water resources protection in the Dniester River Basin District by enhancing inspectors' ability to prevent and detect poaching, respond rapidly to environmental incidents, and carry out field inspections more effectively through the provision of modern technical equipment and targeted capacity-building measures.

The procurement process for the acquisition of specialized equipment was launched on 6 September 2024. Following two deadline extensions, the final submission date was 25 October 2024, and contracts with the selected supplier were officially signed on 6 February 2025.

To ensure the effective and sustainable use of the procured equipment, a three-day training on drone operation for staff of the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection was conducted on 11–13 June 2025. The training combined theoretical and practical components and covered key topics such as principles of drone operation, applicable national legislation, flight safety requirements, use of geozones, and hands-on flight exercises in field conditions nearby Danceni lake (*Annex 25*). A total of 39 environmental inspectors (4 women, 35 men) participated in the training, which focused on strengthening practical skills for surveillance, monitoring, and evidence collection during inspection activities (*Annex 26*).

No	Equipment	Quantity	Supplier
1	Thermal imaging drones	15	Drine Assistance SRL
2	Fish finder equipment	3	KVG LLC
3	4G Surveillance Camera	18	
4	Body Camera	15	
5	Binuculars	18	
6	Flashlights	25	
7	Life jacket	15	

The activity was completed with the official handover of equipment for poaching prevention to the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection on 18 June 2025 at the Ministry of Environment. The event marked the formal transfer of the equipment and highlighted its role in enhancing the operational readiness of environmental inspectors (*Annex 27*). The functionality and practical application of the equipment were presented during the event, emphasizing its contribution to improved surveillance, enforcement, and rapid response capacities.



Photos from the Training on drone operation for staff of the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection 11-13 June, 2025



Photos from the Official Handover Ceremony of equipment to IEP,

The media coverage of the Official Handover Ceremony is provided in the *Annex 36.*

Overall, Activity 35 (2) was successfully implemented and made a tangible contribution to reinforcing the institutional and operational capacities of the IEP. By combining the provision of modern equipment with targeted training, the activity strengthened the ability of national authorities to protect water resources and aquatic ecosystems in the Dniester River Basin District and supported the sustainability of enforcement actions against environmental violations and poaching.

Outcome 10. Ecosystem Services' capacity of Lower Dniester River enhanced

Activities 36 and 37. Research to update data on the current situation of the Lower Dniester oxbow, including ecosystems, and elaboration of the Feasibility Study, ESIA and technical design for the necessary interventions

During the reporting period, the project initiated the contracted research to update data on the current situation of the Lower Dniester oxbow, including ecosystems, and the elaboration of the Feasibility Study, Environmental and Social Impact Assessment, and technical design for the necessary interventions, with the objective of establishing an evidence-based foundation for future ecological rehabilitation measures.

A competitive procurement process was conducted between 31 July and 12 September 2025, resulting in the selection of AO SE Biotica as the contractor, with the contract signed for the period 03 November 2025 – 31 July 2026.

By the end of the reporting period, the contractor had established the expert team and commenced implementation, with work ongoing on the Baseline Assessment and Data Synthesis Report, scheduled for delivery on 23 January 2026. The activity remains ongoing and is progressing in line with the planned timeline.

Activity 38. Practical measures for biodiversity rehabilitation implemented (subgrants)

During the reporting period, the project advanced the implementation of biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration measures in the Lower Dniester National Park through the preparation and contracting of a Low Value Grant (LVG). On 18 June 2025, the Project Board endorsed the LVG implementation mechanism, including the eligibility criteria, selection methodology, and overall approach for managing LVG-funded interventions (*Annex 31*).

Subsequently, an Expression of Interest was launched on 11 August 2025, with a closing date of 1 September 2025. Based on the evaluation process, the Project Board endorsed on 17 November 2025 the Evaluation Committee's recommendation to select AO "Centrul Național de Mediu" as the grant recipient. (*Annex 32*). The Low Value Grant Agreement was signed on 26 December 2025 in the amount of MDL 2,521,635.66 (equivalent to USD 149,510) and will support a 15-month intervention focused on biodiversity conservation, ecological restoration, and community engagement in the Lower Dniester National Park. The intervention includes afforestation of five hectares with native species, selective desiltation of the canal between Talmaza and Grădinița near the Dniester oxbow, rehabilitation of springs and improvement of hydrological connectivity, installation of biodiversity-supporting and eco-tourism infrastructure, development of visitor information and awareness tools, enhancement of eco-tourism visibility through educational and communication materials, introduction of basic environmental management measures in visitor areas, delivery of training activities with teachers, youth, and community groups, community mobilization for habitat maintenance and monitoring, and the organization of Dniester Day and other awareness-raising events.

In parallel, additional technical support was provided through the contracting of Mr. Eugen Chiabur, Water Resources Management Analyst, for the period 25 April – 31 December 2025, to support the conceptualization of the grant call and to provide technical assistance to the Evaluation Committee throughout the grant selection process.

Activity 39. Planting works along the Dniester oxbow

During the reporting period, the project completed the afforestation of 41 hectares of former pastureland in Talmaza village, contributing to improved ecological conditions and increased forest cover. The afforestation works were carried out by ISIS Tighina under a contract covering the period 18 November 2025 – 30 June 2026, following a competitive procurement process. The decision of the Talmaza Local Public Authority regarding the allocation of the land for afforestation is provided in Annex X.

The Local Council of Talmaza village approved the allocation of former pasture land for afforestation in the meeting of the Local Council held on 04 September, 2025 (*Annex 28*).

To ensure technical quality and sustainability of the intervention, Mr. Victor Sfecla was contracted as National Forestry Consultant for the period 02 September 2025 – 30 November 2026. The consultant developed the technical requirements and undertook the supervision of land and soil preparation and planting works (*Annexes 29 and 30*). At the end of the reporting period, the planting activities had been fully completed, while follow-up monitoring activities remain ongoing. An additional field visit is planned

for autumn 2026, after one full vegetation period, to assess seedling establishment, survival rates, and maintenance of the afforested area by the local public authority. To ensure the sustainability of afforestation works, the project requested a guarantee letter from the service provider for the maintenance works (*Annex 31).*



Photos from the afforestation works in Talmaza village

The media coverage related to the afforestation works in Talmaza is provided in the *Annex 36*.

COMPONENT 5 (Project Management)

The Project Manager, Ludmila Gofman, continued to ensure effective project management and coordination, overseeing the implementation of project strategic objectives and key activities in line with the AWP 2024.

Project Analyst Oxana Arhip joined the project team on 28 July 2025 to provide technical support to institutional capacity development, coordinate on-the-ground interventions and grant-funded activities, support stakeholder engagement, and contribute to the monitoring and reporting of project results.

The Finance Associate, Maria Tcacenco, continued to provide financial and administrative support for the project.

The Project Associate, Daniel Laiu, continued to provide procurement support, ensuring the efficient and compliant acquisition of goods and services for project implementation.

The Communication Consultant, Nicoleta Paduret, continued to support project communication and outreach activities in line with the Project's 2025 Communication Action Plan.

Three Project Board meetings were convened in 2025. The 6th Meeting of the Project Board occurred virtually on 18 June 2025 (*Annex 32*. *Minutes of the 6th Project Board Meeting*), while the 7th Meeting of the Project Board was conducted on 17 November 2025 (*Annex 33*. *Minutes of the 7th Project*

Board Meeting). The 8th meeting of the project Board was held on 29 December 2025 (*Annex 34. Minutes of the 8th Project Board Meeting*).

In line with the decisions of the 8th Project Board Meeting, held on 29 December 2025, and taking into account approved changes to project activities and the reallocation of budget savings, the project team has initiated the revision of the **Project Results Framework** included in the Project Document. The revision aims to ensure continued alignment of outcomes, outputs, and indicators with the adjusted project scope, implementation feasibility, and priorities of key authorities involved in water resources management. Once finalised, the revised Results Framework will be submitted to Project Board members for consultation and formal approval, in accordance with established project governance procedures (*Annex 33. Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Project Board*).

Throughout 2025, the project maintained strong and constructive cooperation with key national authorities and a broad range of stakeholders in the field of water resources management. Close institutional collaboration with the MoEnv, the NAAM, SHS, the Environment Agency, the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, and other sectoral institutions ensured effective coordination, ownership, and technical alignment of project activities. The project also actively engaged civil society organisations, academic and research institutions, development partners, and local authorities through consultations, trainings, study visits, public awareness events, and joint implementation of field activities. This collaborative approach strengthened policy dialogue, facilitated knowledge exchange, supported evidence-based decision-making, and contributed to the effective delivery of regulatory, technical, and capacity-building interventions in line with national priorities and EU WFD requirements.

In parallel, close coordination was established with the GEF-UNDP-OSCE-UNECE regional project "Advancing Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin through the Implementation of the Strategic Action Programme", which assumed responsibility for logistical support to the Dniester Commission and its Working Groups. This coordination ensured complementarity and synergy between interventions, avoided duplication of efforts, and allowed the Dniester 2 Project to focus on its core regulatory, technical, and capacity-building priorities. In addition, effective collaboration was established with the EU4Green Recovery East programme to align and coordinate support towards the implementation of EU WFD–related requirements, ensuring consistency across policy, monitoring, and capacity-development actions.

II. Budget allocation and expenditure in 2025

The information on budget allocation and expenditures in 2025 per project components is presented in the table below.

Table 1. Planned and spent budget per project components, 2025

Project Components	Planned budget, USD	Spent budget, USD

COMPONENT 1: Enhancement of water related regulatory framework	21,344	21,344
COMPONENT 2. Elaboration of the 2nd Management Plan for the Dniester River Basin District	-	-
COMPONENT 3: Support provided to Moldovan water management authorities in sustainable management of Dniester River, both at national and transboundary / international levels	326,980	326,629
COMPONENT 4: Implementation of the on-the-ground activities to improve current ecological conditions of the Dniester River	660,250	659,122
COMPONENT 5: Project Management Costs	210,030	210,451
TOTAL	**1,218,604**	**1,217,546**

The Financial Report per project activities in 2025 is provided in the *Annex 35* of this report.

The Project Multi-Year Work Plan, reflecting the final verifications of expenditures that occurred in 2025, is available in the *Annex 3.3 to the Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Project Board*, held on 29 December 2025

Third Top-Up and Project Extension

In June 2025, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) approved a third contribution increase of SEK 8,000,000 to the Dniester 2 Project, together with an extension of the project implementation period until 30 April 2027. With this additional contribution, the total revised project budget amounts to SEK 42,900,000.

The third top-up aims to further strengthen national efforts to align Moldova's water resources management framework with EU legislation, enhance water quality and hydrological monitoring capacities within the Dniester River Basin District, increase public awareness and stakeholder engagement in river basin management, and pilot methodologies for the assessment of hydromorphological alterations and the identification of heavily modified or artificial surface water bodies. The additional funding supports the implementation of targeted activities, including amendments to national water legislation, development of a Directive-Specific Implementation Plan for the EU Water Framework Directive, public awareness campaigns, procurement of advanced hydrometric and flow-measurement equipment, and piloting of hydromorphological assessment methodologies on a tributary of the Dniester River.

III. Risks status monitoring

During the reporting period, the Project team regularly assessed implementation risks and updated the UNDP Risk Register in line with corporate requirements. Risks were monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to the UNDP Country Office, and no critical risks were recorded.

At the same time, implementation constraints persisted under Activities 9, 12, 13 and 14 of the Project Component 3 due to external factors beyond the Project's control, primarily related to the ongoing war in Ukraine. These constraints affected the development of transboundary methodologies requiring the involvement of both riparian countries and resulted in the continued postponement of activities related to the revision of the Agreement on the Functioning of the Dniester Hydropower Complex since the onset of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine. During the 8th Project Board Meeting, held on 29 December 2025, Project Board members agreed to reallocate the funds originally allocated for these activities (*Annex 34. Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the project Board, held on 29 December 2025, including its annexes 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3*).

With regard to the sustainability of the afforested area in Talmaza village under Activity 39 (Planting works along the Dniester oxbow), the Project requested, as a precautionary measure, a guarantee letter from the service provider covering post-planting maintenance works, in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the afforestation results (*Annex 31*).

Throughout the reporting period, the Project team maintained close coordination with the Project Board and other stakeholders to ensure timely decision-making, transparency, and alignment of project implementation with evolving regional conditions.

List of Annexes

Annex 1	National Report on Condition of Waters of the Dniester River Basin within the Republic of Moldova for 2024
Annex 2	Programme of the Study Visit on the Joint Operation of Cross-Border Hydrotechnical Infrastructure, 27–31 October 2025, Romania
Annex 3	Report on Study Visit on the Joint Operation of Cross-Border Hydrotechnical Infrastructure, 27–31 October 2025, Romania
Annex 4	Agenda of the Dniester Day Festival, 25 May 2025
Annex 5	Agenda of the Public Policy Event “Quality of Life in a Green Moldova – Turning Environmental Policies into Benefits (2021–2025)”, 17 June 2025
Annex 6	Agenda of the Training Session on Strategic Communication and Technical Diplomacy, 28 November 2025
Annex 7	List of participants, Training Session on Strategic Communication and Technical Diplomacy, 28 November 2025
Annex 8	Draft Methodology for the identification and controlled liquidation of ponds and reservoirs at high risk of collapse
Annex 9	Agenda of the Training on the operation of RTK-equipped drones, 1 December 2025
Annex 10	List of participants, Training on the operation of RTK-equipped drones, 1 December 2025
Annex 11	Agenda of the Official Handover Ceremony of the hydrometeorological stations to the State Hydrometeorological Service, 7 August 2025
Annex 12	Final Research Report on Spring Ecological Discharge from the Dniester Hydropower Complex
Annex 13	Agenda of the Training on processing and analyzing surface water quality data, on 13-14 November 2025
Annex 14	Presentation on Monitoring data training, 13 November 2025
Annex 15	Presentation on Monitoring data training, 14 November 2025
Annex 16	Presentation, Meeting on aligning the national surface water monitoring system with EU Standards, 19 November 2025
Annex 17	Agenda of the Meeting on aligning the national surface water monitoring system with EU Standards, 19 November 2025
Annex 18	List of participants, Meeting on aligning the national surface water monitoring system with EU Standards, 19 November 2025
Annex 19	Key Findings from the Review of Routine Surface Water Quality Monitoring Data for Hydrobiological Quality Elements

Annex 20 Terms of Reference for the recruitment of an International Hydrobiology Consultant

Annex 21 Environment Institute, Slovak Republic. (December 2025). Final Report on the Research Monitoring Programme for Identification of Water Framework Directive “Priority and Certain Other Pollutants” in the Moldovan Dniester River Basin District.

Annex 22 Final Report: Research Monitoring Programme for Identification of Water Framework Directive “Priority and Certain Other Pollutants” in the Moldovan Dniester River Basin District. Buijs, P. (December 2025).

Annex 23 E-CMAC Programme of courses “Ensuring the validation and quality of titrimetric measurements. Validation/verification of methods and evaluation of measurement uncertainty. Development of calibration intervals in accordance with ILAC G-24”, 24–28 March 2025.”

Annex 24 E-CMAC Course Programme “Fundamental concepts for the application of ISO/IEC 17043 in interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing”, 27–31 October 2025.

Annex 25 Agenda of the Training on drone operation for staff of the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, 11–13 June 2025

Annex 26 List of participants, Training on drone operation for staff of the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, 11–13 June 2025

Annex 27 Agenda, Official handover of equipment for poaching prevention to the Inspectorate for Environmental Protection, 18 June 2025

Annex 28 Decision of the Local Council of Talmaza village on allocation of former pasture land for afforestation, 04 September 2025

Annex 29 Act of Acceptance of Land and Soil Preparation Works for Afforestation in Talmaza Village

Annex 30 Act of Acceptance of Works for Afforestation Talmaza Village

Annex 31 Guarantee letter for afforested area maintenance works

Annex 32 Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Project Board, 18 June 2025

Annex 33 Minutes of the 7th Meeting of the Project Board, 17 November 2025

Annex 34 Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the Project Board, 29 December 2025

Annex 35 Financial Report 2025

Annex 36 Media coverage of project activities implemented in 2025