

Report of the Republic of Moldova on the activities of implementing the objectives of the UNESCO “Man and Biosphere” Program for 2018-2021 period

The Republic of Moldova is included in the list of biosphere reserves of the UNESCO “Man and Biosphere” Program, with the objective: "Lower Prut" Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO decision, approved at the Conference of the Parties on July 25, 2018.

The “Prutul de Jos” biosphere reserve was created at national level under Law no. 132/2018 regarding the founding of the "Lower Prut" Biosphere Reserve and the amendment of Law no. 1538/1998 regarding the fund of natural areas protected by the state.

The creation of the first Biosphere Reserve was supported and funded by the EU, through the Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova (2007-2013), through the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, within the program: "Strengthening the network of protected natural areas for protection biodiversity and sustainable development in the Danube Delta and Lower Prut region - PAN "Nature".

In the period 2018-2021, the following measures were taken within the "Man and the Biosphere" Program:

1. The Regulation for the operation of the "Lower Prut" Biosphere Reserve was elaborated and approved by Government decision, in the Government meeting, of August 12, 2021. The Regulation establishes the state of the Reserve, the zones of the Reserve, the competence of the administration and the economic activities in the reservation areas. The Government Decision also approved the map of the Reserve and the territorial distribution of the “Prutul de Jos” Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the legal status of the lands.

2. Within the EU project (EUWI +) ENI / 2016 / 372-403, the draft document was elaborated: “Management plan for the Danube, Prut and Black Sea river basin, Republic of Moldova” for the second planning cycle (2022-2027) , which will also include information on the state of the water basins within the "Lower Prut" Biosphere Reserve.

3. The Institute of Ecology and Geography is implementing the application project: "Integrated assessment of anthropogenic impact on representative ecosystems in order to conserve and expand state protected natural areas in the context of the requirements of EU Directives", which aims to assess the state ecological impact of the Wetlands "Lower Prut Lakes", part of the "Lower Prut" Biosphere Reserve. The project estimated the impact of the quality of natural resources, determined the degree of pollution of soil, biota, surface and groundwater

and assessed the condition of valuable species of flora and fauna and geological elements in the area of the Reserve.

4. The European Union will start a project in the Republic of Moldova, within the EU4 Environment Program, on supporting activities for sustainable development and protection of natural ecosystems within the "Lower Prut" Biosphere Reserve.

5. The UNDP_GEF project "Conservation and sustainable management of wetlands with an emphasis on areas of high natural value in the Prut river basin" (2021-2026) was validated. The aim of the project is to strengthen the efficiency of the management of protected areas and to obtain positive changes in the population of key species of flora and fauna. The project will support the activities of restoration of wetlands in the Prut river basin. The final goal of the project is the designation by UNESCO of the tripartite biosphere reserve "Danube Delta - Lower Prut" for 3 states Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. The creation of the Tripartite Reserve will facilitate new opportunities to attract investment projects in this area.

6. The Romania project: "SEE River" - Integrated and Sustainable Management of International River Corridors within the South East European Area", includes common approach actions for development and conservation issues nature along six selected international rivers, including the Prut River. The first report covered the Strategy for the final communication of stakeholders involved in the management of the Prut River corridor in Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine as well as the report on the results of key issues regarding the management of the Prut River in the three states.