

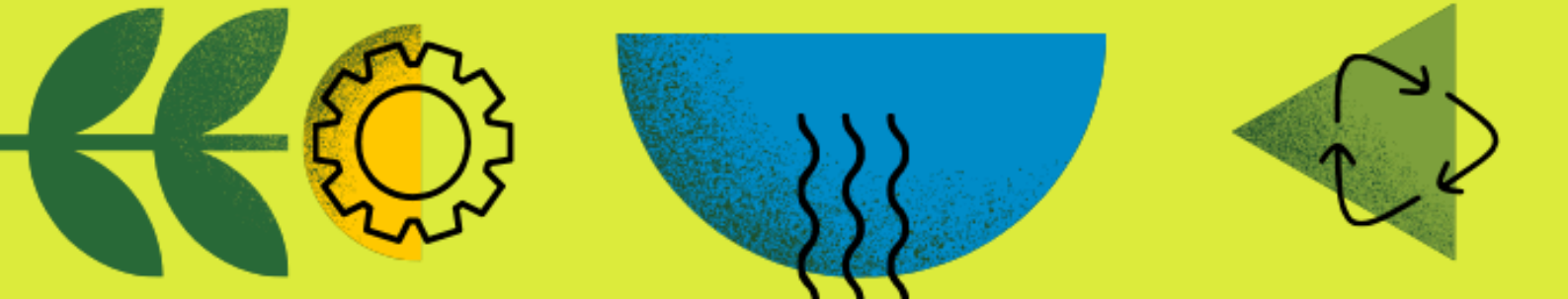


# THE RESOLUTION

**of the Environmental NGOs Forum  
from Republic of Moldova  
„Gândim sustenabil,  
acționăm responsabil”**

**21 MARCH 2025, CHISINAU**





The 2025 edition of the **Environmental NGOs Forum** was held on March 21, 2025, gathering 150 participants.

The event, held under the motto *Gândim sustenabil, acțiunăm responsabil* (Eng: Think Sustainable, Act Responsible), was organized by the Public Association EcoContact, with financial support from Sweden and co-funding from the Austrian Development Agency through contributions from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC).

### ***Participants of the Forum***

*voicing strong concern over:*

- The recent developments in the environmental sector in the Republic of Moldova, together with the increasing number of acts of corruption and environmental law violations, highlight shortcomings in the enforcement of existing rules, as well as the absence of effective monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms;
- Significant decrease in the number of environmental organizations active both on the right and left bank of the Dniester River, noting their withdrawal or considerable reduction of their activities, due to lack of resources, the ageing and professional exhaustion of members and leaders, as well as the broader unstable and challenging socio-economic context;
- Concern regarding the real risk of disproportionate influence of economic interests on environmental decision-making, to the detriment of public and environmental interests. During public consultations, authorities often demonstrate greater responsiveness to the views of economic actors, while the voices of communities and environmental organizations are frequently overlooked or treated as a mere formality;
- Insufficient coherent training and capacity-building programmes for environmental NGOs on the *acquis Communautaire*, compliance obligations, and the functioning of EU institutional mechanisms significantly limit the effective involvement of civil society in the European integration process;
- Lack of effective public communication strategies on environmental and European integration issues contributes to misinformation and public apathy regarding the necessary reforms and their potential benefits;
- The significant harmful impact of the military conflict in Ukraine on the environment, particularly on watercourses and transboundary areas.



*Appeals* to all stakeholders - public authorities, international institutions, development partners, academia, and the private sector - to unite and coordinate their efforts to ensure and respect the fundamental right of every citizen to a healthy environment, as provided in Article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of capacity building and active support for environmental civil society representatives as key players in the process of promoting sustainability, responsibility, and democracy in the management of environmental issues;

*Supporting* the implementation of national policy documents aimed at advancing the European integration of the Republic of Moldova, in light of its status as a candidate country for accession to the European Union. This process is considered essential for aligning the country with European standards in environmental protection, as well as for strengthening the rule of law, good governance, and the active involvement of civil society;

*Acknowledging* that a healthy environment, as well as the availability of unpolluted natural resources, have a direct and significant impact on the health of the population, the quality of life, and well-being of present and future generations;

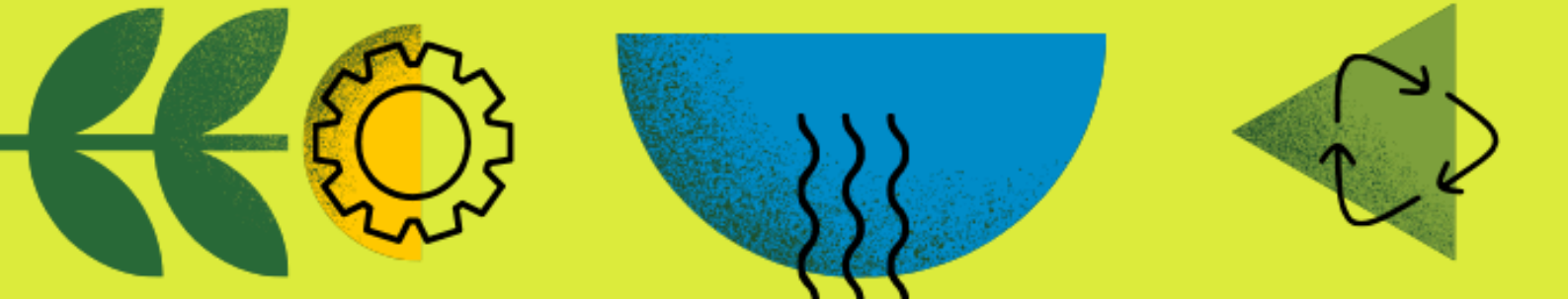
*Recognizing* that the condition of the environment directly influences the quality of life, determines the path of sustainable development, and conditions the green transition and sustainable economic growth;

*Understanding* that water and biodiversity are the most valuable and essential natural resources and that their quality is directly influenced by their management, the presence and management of pollution sources;

*Recognizing* water as a strategic resource of vital importance for national security, which requires that its protection and sustainable management should take precedence over short-term economic interests, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and public welfare;

*Being deeply concerned* by the alarming situation of the Dniester River – particularly the decreasing flow, the degradation of water quality, and the manner in which it is managed on the Ukrainian side – while emphasizing the importance of ensuring that the Government's actions are more clearly directed towards securing national interests without causing negative impacts on riparian ecosystems and the environment;

*Reaffirming* the relevance and effectiveness of climate services in managing the challenges posed by climate change, as well as the importance of developing and applying adaptation techniques and mechanisms, based on scientific data and weather forecasts, to support vulnerable sectors and contribute to reducing risks, increasing resilience, and ensuring long-term sustainable development;



*Worried* about the increased vulnerability of localities, population, and national development sectors to climate change and the intensification of extreme weather events occurring in the country;

*Acknowledging* the importance of, and the need for, joint and coordinated engagement in the implementation of the National Forest Expansion and Rehabilitation Programme 2023–2032, the Environment Strategy 2024–2030, the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy to 2030, and other relevant policy documents – including by ensuring their coherence and alignment with policies in related sectors such as agriculture, transport, energy, and regional development;

*Emphasizing* the importance and major role of the media, in particular environmental journalism, in informing, investigating, raising awareness, and educating the public about environmental issues;

*Expressing* their concern about the country's energy vulnerability, which is reflected in the low energy efficiency of most residential buildings, as well as inefficient and polluting systems for the production and distribution of thermal energy;

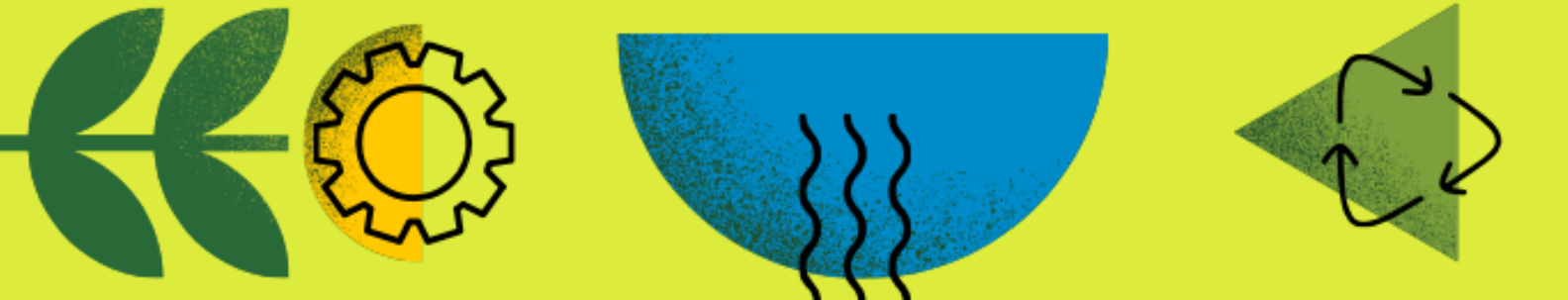
*Recognizing* the need for wider and more active involvement of civil society, as well as the need to build a sense of belonging and solidarity, and the importance of communicating with the public.

***Forum participants endorsed the following priority directions:***

- ▶ Support and empower environmental non-governmental organizations as key partners in promoting democracy, accountability, and sustainability in environmental decision-making processes;
- ▶ Promote joint efforts between public authorities, civil society, development partners, academia, and the private sector to guarantee every citizen's right to a clean and balanced environment, in accordance with Article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova.
- ▶ Recognize the direct impact of the environmental condition on public health, quality of life, and food safety, and promote integrated policies for the protection of soil, air, water, and biodiversity;
- ▶ Continue and intensify the process of monitoring violations of environmental legislation, documenting and reporting infringements to the competent authorities and members of civil society;



- ▶ Promoting sustainable and integrated management of aquatic resources, with a particular focus on the Dniester, Prut, and their tributaries, through firm actions aimed at protecting the national interest and preventing negative impacts on riparian ecosystems;
- ▶ Strengthen the climate change adaptation capacities of all actors, at both national and local levels, with a focus on increasing community resilience, reducing vulnerabilities, and ensuring long-term sustainable development;
- ▶ Integrate nature-based solutions into strategies for adapting to and mitigating the impacts of climate change, including desertification, with the goal of enhancing the sustainability of interventions and ensuring a more efficient use of financial and natural resources in managing climate risks such as droughts and floods;
- ▶ Developing and strengthening the field of forestry science and research, taking into account the impact of climate change and the need to conserve biodiversity, in close correlation with the objectives of the National Program for the Expansion and Rehabilitation of Forests for the period 2023-2032;
- ▶ Promote energy efficiency measures in the residential sector and improve the energy production and distribution infrastructure to reduce pollution and energy dependency;
- ▶ Active support of the press and environmental journalism as key actors in environmental education, public information, journalistic investigations, and raising public awareness of environmental issues;
- ▶ Develop and implement, in partnership with civil society, dedicated training, communication, and technical support programmes to strengthen the role of environmental NGOs as active partners in the process of legislative harmonization and public awareness;
- ▶ Contribution to the effective implementation of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention by organizing campaigns to inform, educate, and actively involve the public in environmental decision-making, thereby strengthening transparency, accountability of authorities, and the right of citizens to a healthy environment;
- ▶ Stimulating the active involvement of citizens in environmental decision-making processes, promoting the development of a sense of ownership, solidarity, and responsibility towards environmental protection as an essential element of a democratic and sustainable society;



- ▶ Developing partnerships between environmental organizations on both banks of the Dniester, between national and local ones, as well as collaborating with regional and international bodies and programs to facilitate access to funding, exchange of experience, technical and research expertise;
- ▶ Provide support to local public authorities, research and education institutions and other relevant actors to strengthen the capacity to implement the environmental regulatory framework at local level and to develop and implement projects in key areas such as climate change adaptation, sustainable waste management, energy efficiency, promotion of organic agriculture, integrated water resource management, biodiversity conservation, quality environmental education, access to environmental information and data, reforestation, ecosystem revitalization and green space expansion;
- ▶ Develop and promote efficient financial instruments, both national and international, to attract public and private investments in afforestation, forest protection, biodiversity conservation, revitalization of aquatic ecosystems and adaptation to climate change - including by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the National Environment Fund, European programs such as LIFE and Horizon Europe, and other funding mechanisms dedicated to the green economy.
- ▶ Ensure a consistent and informed presence of civil society organizations in decision-making processes, through the formulation of joint positions and recommendations, as well as active participation in public consultations, legislative working groups, and policy and strategy impact assessment processes.
- ▶ Revitalize the Council of Environmental NGOs by initiating a new election process for its members, strengthening its mandate, and establishing a functional support mechanism for the secretariat to ensure the continuity and sustainability of its activities, moving beyond the exclusively voluntary model. *(Until the new composition is elected, the secretariat will be temporarily managed by the NGO EcoContact.).*

***Forum participants request the authorities:***

**on transparency and public participation**

- ▶ Ensuring public access and active involvement of environmental NGOs, youth, women - including vulnerable groups - and their representative structures in the consultation process of all draft normative acts in the field of environment, efficient use of natural resources and climate change as well as related sectors (agriculture, energy efficiency, transportation, health, regional development, etc.), in accordance with national legislation and commitments undertaken by the Moldova-EU Association Agreement, ensuring inclusive and informed participation at all stages of the decision-making process;



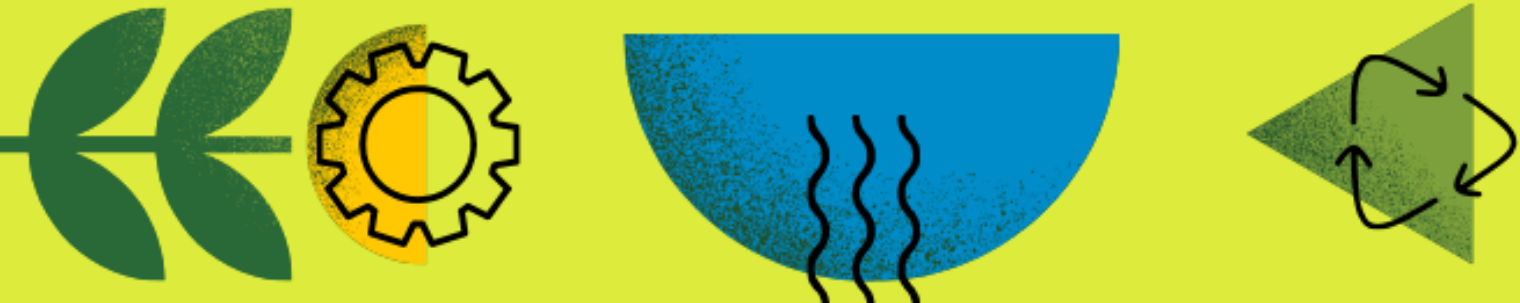
- ▶ Ensuring the right of environmental NGOs to interfere also in the parliamentary procedural stages of the legislative process in order to prevent key changes to draft legislation without further consultation.

#### **on implementation aspects of the Aarhus Convention on access to information, public participation, and environmental justice in environmental decision-making**

- ▶ Development, approval, and implementation of the National Plan for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention to ensure access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters;
- ▶ Ensure implementation of the recommendations of the Aarhus Convention's Supervisory Committee on facilitating public access to hydrometeorological information and environmental data, including by establishing reasonable, clearly justified, and transparently levied fees. Develop, modernize, and maintain functioning environmental information systems, ensuring their continuous updating and guaranteeing public access to environmental information and data in an open, transparent, and user-friendly format;
- ▶ Identification, negotiation with development partners of financial mechanisms to support civil society at the local and national level to: Strengthen their capacity to ensure active public participation in decision making, inclusively in environmental assessment procedures at the local level, promote the benefits of European integration on the environment and climate change component;
- ▶ Promotion and execution of capacity building programs for representatives of law enforcement bodies, environmental institutions, local public authorities, and representatives of the associative sector, focused on ensuring and guaranteeing the right to a healthy environment, implementation of the environmental regulatory framework, and the European integration process;
- ▶ Promote and conduct information and environmental education and public awareness campaigns, as well as include environmental education as an area eligible for funding from the National Environmental Fund.

#### **on biodiversity conservation, protected areas, and the Emerald network**

- ▶ Establishment of a specialized national structure for the coordination and efficient management of Protected Natural Areas, in order to ensure their sustainable management, ensure a coordinated process of expansion of protected areas up to 8% of the territory, and reduce the quality degradation of protected ecosystems;



- ▶ Institutionalization of the “Lower Dniester” National Park by adopting the relevant normative framework and setting up the necessary administrative structures in order to ensure efficient management, protection of the natural area, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources in the area;
- ▶ Changing the approach to the protection and conservation of wild ecosystems by drafting a new Law on Nature Protection in order to contribute to maintaining and restoring the natural balance of the landscape, protecting biological diversity, preserving natural values, promoting sustainable management of natural resources in the Republic of Moldova;
- ▶ The creation and functioning of the Automated Information System of Protected Natural Areas, with public and inter-institutional access, in order to strengthen the database on the national network of protected areas, including Emerald protected areas, and to facilitate the processes of planning, monitoring, and biodiversity conservation;
- ▶ Strengthening the collaboration of research institutions with environmental authorities and NGOs in order to adjust their research programs and activity plans to national environmental priorities, as well as in carrying out field research on mapping species and habitats of conservation interest, developing and updating management plans for protected natural areas in accordance with international requirements and standards for biodiversity conservation;
- ▶ Expansion of the area of protected natural areas in the Republic of Moldova, with a particular focus on strengthening the Emerald network and facilitating the progressive transition towards integration into the European Natura 2000 network, as part of efforts to preserve biodiversity and align with international and European environmental standards and commitments.

#### **on promoting green transition and energy efficiency**

- ▶ Active promotion of efficient use of resources and integration of green transition principles in the country's socio-economic sectors as part of a sustainable, competitive, and resilient development model;
- ▶ Motivate companies to adopt environmental practices, policies, and standards by creating economic and fiscal incentive mechanisms, facilitating access to green funds, and promoting environmental responsibility in the private sector as an integral part of the transition to a sustainable economy;



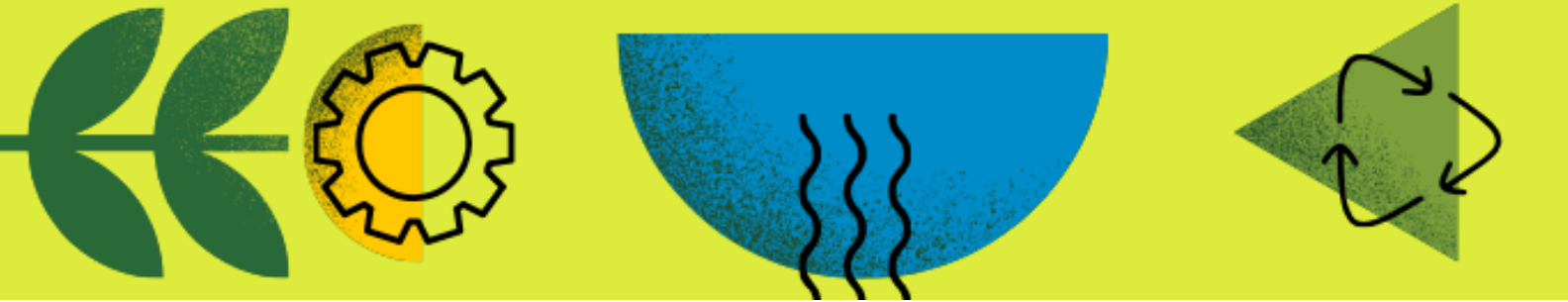
- ▶ Integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria into the decision-making processes of public institutions and companies by developing effective mechanisms for assessing and reporting performance in these areas. These mechanisms should promote transparency, respect for human rights, mitigate risks, attract sustainable investments, and strengthen institutional resilience to climate and socio-economic challenges.

#### **on sustainable afforestation and forestry studies: innovative approaches to forest conservation and management**

- ▶ Promote the active involvement of environmental non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the National Programme for the Expansion and Rehabilitation of Forests (PNERP) for the period 2023-2032 and the Action Plan 2023-2027, as well as the improvement of the relevant legal framework, by including issues related to high conservation value forests in the Republic of Moldova;
- ▶ Extending the direct applicability of the National Forest Expansion and Rehabilitation Program (PNERP) to the left bank of the Dniester and promoting the development of reliable partnerships between the banks of the Dniester for the implementation of joint afforestation and ecological rehabilitation projects;
- ▶ Create a favourable legal framework and dedicated funding mechanisms to support private forests, including their inclusion in the national forest fund, and private forest nurseries. Ensuring government support for the development of containerized (root-protected) forest seedling production through investments in infrastructure, training, and support for scientific research to increase the quality of planting material and the efficiency of afforestation and reforestation;
- ▶ Linking the national afforestation program with biodiversity protection and conservation objectives, including measures to reduce forest fragmentation.

#### **on water resources and river basins**

- ▶ Institutionalizing the secretariat of the basin, sub-basin, and transboundary committees and commissions in order to ensure integrated, efficient, and participatory governance of water resources;
- ▶ Implementation of the Prut River Basin Management Plan (2022) and the Dniester River Basin Management Plan (2025), with a focus on strengthening intersectoral collaboration, especially with the agricultural sector, for the protection of water resources and their sustainable use;



- ▶ Assessing the impact of reservoirs on inland watercourses and initiating the process of eliminating those that negatively affect ecosystems (e.g., Camenca River);
- ▶ Development of complex studies to assess the status of inland rivers as a basis for decision-making on their protection and sustainable use;
- ▶ Ensure the active involvement of the Ukrainian authorities and experts from the Transnistrian region in the mechanisms for joint management of the Dniester River, taking into account its geographical and transboundary character, with a view to ensuring integrated, sustainable, and equitable governance of water resources;
- ▶ Establish a comprehensive and functional system for monitoring water quality and quantity in the Dniester and Prut river basins that provides reliable and up-to-date data necessary for evidence-based decision-making and efficient and sustainable water resources management;
- ▶ Continue negotiations to revise the documents for the settlement and management of the Dniester Hydropower Node, with a focus on integrating ecological and hydrological criteria, in order to protect aquatic ecosystems, maintain the natural flow regime, and ensure a sustainable balance between economic uses and environmental protection;
- ▶ Recognizing the Dniester and Prut rivers as important European biological corridors and protecting rare bird species that depend on these habitats, in order to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable ecological management of aquatic and terrestrial resources in the river basin;
- ▶ Improving watershed management by expanding afforestation of river banks, thus contributing to soil conservation, protection of water resources, and strengthening biodiversity in the area;
- ▶ Establishing strict regulatory and control measures for sand and gravel extraction activities in the Nistru and Prut riverbeds, including a ban on uncontrolled extraction, given the essential role of these sediments in the natural water pre-treatment processes and maintaining the balance of aquatic ecosystems;
- ▶ Prevention of soil erosion processes through the promotion and application of sustainable methods of agricultural land tillage in order to maintain soil fertility, reduce environmental impacts, and ensure resilient agriculture in the context of climate change;
- ▶ Ensure the continuity of educational and awareness-raising programs on the ecological, economic, and cultural importance of the Dniester River, including through the allocation of dedicated financial resources, to support community involvement and long-term protection of this valuable ecosystem.

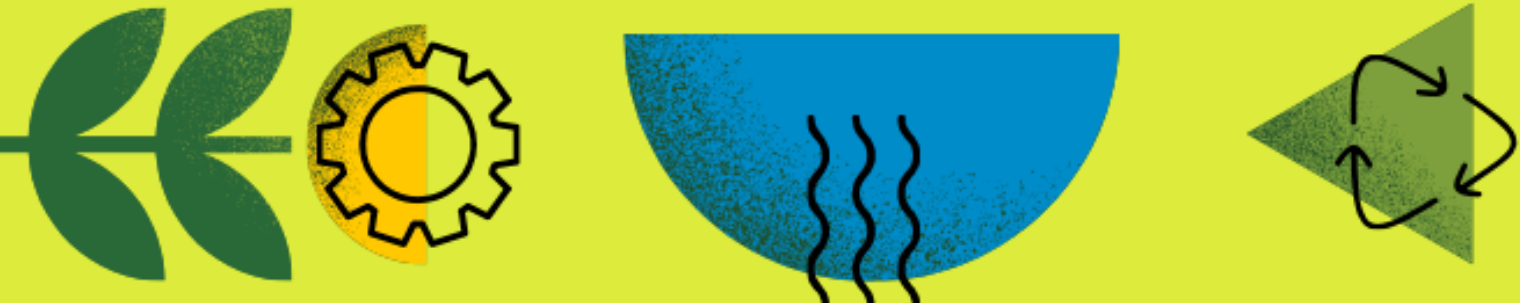


### **on the area of environmental journalism**

- ▶ Provide ongoing support for capacity building in the field of environmental journalism, including by facilitating training, access to relevant information and supporting the realization of investigations and materials that reflect local and national environmental problems and solutions;
- ▶ Expand dedicated media funding for the development of projects focusing on environmental journalism, with the aim of stimulating the development of informative and investigative content of public interest and promoting consistent and responsible coverage of environmental issues;
- ▶ Investing in environmental research and creating a public database, accessible to journalists and civil society actors, to support professional documentation and public education and outreach initiatives on climate change, resource conservation, and green transition;
- ▶ Protect journalists and environmental defenders from intimidation, pressure, or other forms of coercion by creating a climate enabling freedom of expression and access to information of public interest necessary for environmental journalism and civic activism.

### **on climate change adaptation**

- ▶ Building partnerships between the private sector, NGOs, and government institutions for the development of a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system adapted to climate change;
- ▶ Active involvement of NGOs in efforts to combat desertification by identifying and implementing appropriate measures to improve the situation caused by climate change;
- ▶ Facilitating the shaping of sustainable mindsets among young people requires the implementation of strategic measures at the educational level, by updating school curricula to ensure continuity and ingraining of environmentally responsible practices so that young people are adapted to climate change;
- ▶ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the agricultural sector by promoting agroecology, the use of renewable resources, and the adoption of specific measures to reduce the climate footprint of agriculture;



- ▶ Expanding the area under organic farming and implementing crop rotation as a key measure to preserve soil fertility and reduce the use of chemical inputs;
- ▶ Building partnerships between the private sector, NGOs, and government institutions to develop a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system adapted to climate change;
- ▶ Promoting sustainable agriculture by increasing the area under organic farming, especially with crops such as soybeans, and encouraging regenerative farming practices that help protect biodiversity, reduce environmental impacts, and maintain soil health.

***Forum participants suggest the following recommendations to donors:***

- To develop and implement dedicated funding instruments for environmental NGOs, ensuring that access mechanisms are inclusive and responsive to the needs of local organizations.
- To include organizational support and capacity-building components within funding mechanisms for environmental NGOs, allowing for extended implementation periods and increased grant amounts to ensure long-term impact and sustainability of environmental initiatives.
- To encourage active cooperation within bilateral and EU-funded programmes aimed at supporting the implementation of joint initiatives in environmental protection, natural resource management, and sustainable development, while promoting the exchange of best practices and the mobilization of resources for projects with regional impact.
- To provide more consistent support to locally active environmental NGOs across the country for small- and medium-scale environmental projects, including initiatives implemented on both banks of the Dniester River.