



UNITING FOR LAND RIGHTS IN

MOLDOVA

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Formulated in 2017, the National Engagement Strategy on Land Governance in Moldova served as a key space for various stakeholders- including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), government agencies, and research institutions- to formulate solutions to land-related problems in the country. Over its three-year operating period¹, the platform and its partners contributed to the realisation of equitable, inclusive and participatory land rights at the local and national levels, namely by improving the legal framework on land through its contributions to the Regulations on Land Rights Infringement Resolutions (2019) and the Law on Organic Agriculture (2018); as well as by strengthening the capacities of local and national authorities in sustainable ecosystem management, eradicating errors in agricultural land ownership, and by supporting small and medium-sized farmers and enterprises.

Platform members also contributed to notable changes in land governance practices at the local level- namely the wider consultation and inclusion of civil society actors in land-related policy developments, and the integration of environmental protection principles in local, regional, and national development plans by both local and national government bodies.

At the global level, the platform's approach in solving land rights infringements garnered attention at the 14th UNCCD Conference in 2019 (COP 14), where the NES was able to influence the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 15) "Life on Land" in the Moldovan 2030 National Development Strategy (2019).

CONNECT

organisations reach to 880 change-makers, including Local Public Authorities from over 20 communities



¹ The platform was discontinued in 2020. The lead organisation of the NES, NGO BIOS, withdrew its membership from the Coalition in 2021.

MOBILISE



Moldova

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LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON LAND IN MOLDOVA

The Republic of Moldova is among the most disadvantaged countries in Europe and Central Asia with approximately 22% of the population living below the poverty line. Political confrontations, widespread corruption, bureaucracy in state structures, and deep social divisions are among the greatest challenges in the democratic development of the country. The legal framework on land is contradictory in its normative regulations and suffers from a lack of inclusive decision-making, data on land transactions, as well as the functional capacities to adjust, coordinate and implement the relevant frameworks.

Moldova is also highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including extreme weather phenomena such as droughts, floods and frosts. This vulnerability is exacerbated by the lack of environmental protection measures and capital for agricultural modernization, illicit logging, and other exploitative land use practices which further drive the degradation, fragmentation and erosion of soil and grasslands.

NOTABLE OUTCOMES

TOWARDS AN IMPROVED LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON LAND GOVERNANCE IN MOLDOVA

At the national level, key activities of NES members included conducting periodic dialogues with relevant national-level actors on the access to and control over natural resources; managing land owned by Local Public Authorities; integrating environmental issues into community development plans in pilot communities; formulating guidelines and solutions for land-related issues based on best practices; and lobbying for the improvement of the legal framework through the active participation of the general population.

Through the platform's assistance to local and central authorities, communities, and other land-related stakeholders, the Platform had notable contributions to the development of numerous laws, regulations, and legal codes. Among these was the *2018 Law on Organic Agriculture* that directly incorporated NES members' inputs by the request of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (MARDE).



MOLDOVA

The NES platform also had a significant contribution to the *Regulations on Land Rights Infringement Resolutions (2019)*, as the State Chancellery and the Agency of Land Relations and Cadastre (ALRC) included the platform in the Working Group tasked with drafting the regulation, and further incorporated NES members in the mandated trainers of Local Public Authorities (LPA) on actions for land rights infringements. Further trainings were co-organised by the NES and the ALRC for LPAs in five districts that also promoted PCLG principles and influenced district level authorities to incorporate PCLG principles in their own implementation initiatives.

NES Moldova Platform members furthermore contributed inputs and supported the advocacy actions of its partners around the following national public appeals, petitions and regulations:

- » Petition on ensuring media access to information of public interest
- » Public call on compliance for decision-making transparency and inclusion in draft law on Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- » Public appeal on COVID-19 provision in education
- » Regulations on Greening Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
- » Regulation on correcting errors in land ownership registrations²
- » Regulation on control of emissions of volatile organic compounds
- » Public appeal on provision by the President of the Audiovisual Council

The NES was also able to prevent the passing of inadequate policy proposals and documents through its lobbying activities, namely regarding the *Draft Land Code, Flood Risk Management Plans, and the Use of Drinking Water from Underground Irrigation*.

² The NES identified over 24900 errors in land ownership registrations, and conducted consultations with the relevant stakeholders to ensure their resolution.

ATIVE
OMMIT

MOBILISE

STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES IN SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

TRAININGS ORGANISED BY NES MOLDOVA AND PARTNERS

Thanks to efforts by the NES and its partners, land owners and Local Public Authorities in the districts of Straseni, Edinet, Leova, Criuleni and Laloveni are now implementing sustainable land practices covering 4350 hectares of land as a result of trainings on formulating community development plans and on implementing sustainable land management practices.

Land rights infringements were also solved across 528 households thanks to workshops organised by the NES and its partners on the registration of land plots in the Cadastre database. The workshops sought to correct erroneous land ownership registrations and to sensitise participants on the implications of the novel regulation. The activity contributed to securing access to land for farmers, land owners and agricultural entrepreneurs who faced lawsuits, the abusive sale of private plots by local authorities, and errors in land property documents.

RESEARCH AND GOOD PRACTICES

NES Moldova members formulated analyses on the integration of environmental issues in local and national development plans; produced case studies on solving Land Rights Infringements and other land-related issues, in addition to an assessment on people-centred land governance and adherence to land property rights. The platform has also set-up an online platform to exchange good practices on land governance and to encourage model-based learning on people-centred land governance and sustainable ecosystem management.

The NES also collected data at the national-level to feed the *Land Matrix*, a global and independent land monitoring initiative that promotes transparency and accountability in land and investment decisions.

THE 14TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD COP 14, 2019)

The NES host, NGO BIOS, served as a member of an inter-ministerial working group that together with various Civil Society Organisations, *contributed to the inclusion of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 on "Life on Land" in the Moldovan 2030 National Development Strategy in 2019, as well as its relevant position papers.*

Thanks to the inputs of the COP's CSO Panel that NGO BIOS is a member of, the *COP also agreed to include land tenure as a new thematic area under the Convention, while the UN General Assembly*

(UNGA) adopted a resolution reaffirming the role of Land Degradation Neutrality as a vehicle for achieving the SDGs and the potential of land-based solutions to address climate change. The NES Moldova experience was also presented as a case study on "Integrating land tenure security to achieve land degradation neutrality" in the UNCCD/FAO technical guide on CoP14 decisions.

GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES CONSULT THE NES AND CIVIL SOCIETY ON LAND-RELATED ISSUES

The work of NES members contributed to wider consultation of civil society actors, particularly in the country's rural areas where local authorities have started to work with communities in identifying land-related problems. Previously, the standard procedure saw the mayor and select council members state their views on problems without community consultations. The change in practice was noted in the Zubresti and Siret communities (Straseni district); Pitusca and Bravicea communities (Calarasi district); and in the Rudi village (Soroca district).

The NES Host NGO BIOS and its partners have also been invited various government meetings and committees on national land-related matters, such as the Evaluation Committee of Soil Conservation and Restoration; and co-organised numerous events together with government actors, including a Session on PCLG in the International Conference on Black Soils in 2019 together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment (MADRE).

SECURING WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS IN MOLDOVA

Despite women having the same land rights as men in Moldova, the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deeply rooted stereotypes on gender roles are driving women to be disproportionately affected by land-related problems such as in the access and control over land.

The NES platform and its partners have integrated gender and youth as cross-cutting issues in their strategy, and implemented activities with a specific focus on women's land rights. Among these was a study on *Protecting Women's Land Rights in Moldova (2019)*; the set-up of meetings for young and women farmers on funding opportunities in the agricultural business sector for women and young farmers together with the Swedish Cooperative Center We Effect. The NES' internal governance furthermore explicitly addresses Gender justice by encouraging women to engage in NES activities, as well as through the collection of disaggregated data on women's participation.



CONNECT

MEET THE PLATFORM AND KEY PARTNERS

The NES platform was composed of over 70 organisations working directly with local communities, farmers, small and medium enterprises, research institutions, Local Public Authorities, among others. Through the linkages of NES members with their respective partners, the platform was able to reach over 880 change-makers, including Local Public Authorities from over 210 communities; various Government Working Groups drafting land-related laws; the CSO Alliance network; as well as international researchers. The platform's Steering committee acted as a governing body and included nine representatives³ of civil society, public administrations, academia, and the private sector.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

At the local-level, NES members worked with communities to support innovative systems of land administration. This includes over 20 Local Public Authorities (LPAs), among others.

CIVIL SOCIETY STAKEHOLDERS

These included NGOs and Social Movements involved in Land Governance activities in both urban and rural areas.

THE GOVERNMENT OF MOLDOVA

Through a variety of departments and levels, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment (MARDE), the Agency for Land relations and Cadastre, and the State Forestry Agency.

RESEARCH/TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Key platform partners included the State Agrarian University of Moldova (SAUM); Institute of Forest Research and Planning; and the Research Institute of Field Crops "Selectia".

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (IGOs)

Several intergovernmental organisations assist the Government of Moldova to develop the agrifood sector, rural areas, improve economic and social conditions of people while protecting the environment. Together with members of NES Moldova, they promote best practices in land related issues and lobby for change of policies and strategies in the country, and include the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the World Bank; and the Swedish Cooperative Center We Effect.

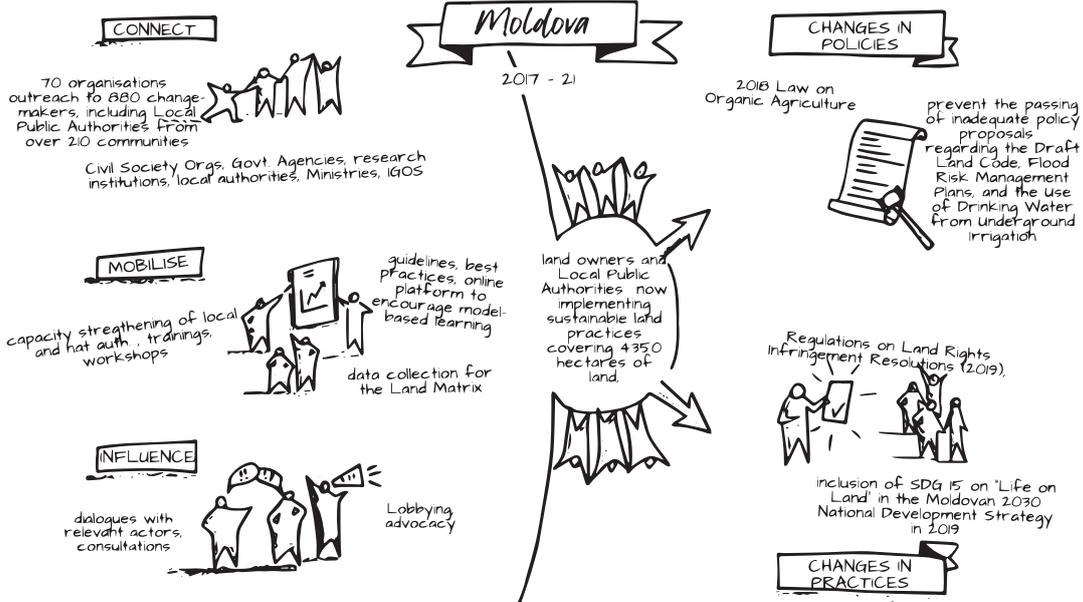
³ MoARDE, National Farmers Federation of Moldova, the Congress of Local Authorities, the Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, Small Business Association, and 3 farmers.



NES MOLDOVA PLATFORM COMPOSITION

ORGANIZATION	DESCRIPTION
NGO BIOS	An ILC member from 2013 to 2021, NGO BIOS served as the host organisation of the NES platform. BIOS works to improve the living conditions of Moldovans based on the principles of sustainable development, through research, and trainings on the implementation of sustainable rural development and other environmentally friendly practices.
Agency of Land Relations and Cadastre (ALRC)	ALRC, a central authority implementing state policies in land relations, cadastre, geodesy, cartography, and computer mapping, worked with the NES on policy developments including the Regulations for Land Rights Infringements.
National Farmers Federation of Moldova (NFFM)	NFFM assisted the NES in organizing meetings and farmers affected by land issues and in organizing events for women and youth.
Forestry Agency MoldSilva	MoldSilva cooperated with the NES in matters related to forests, including land delimitation, encroaching on private farming land, and to support in policy development for community-owned forests.
Small Business Association of Moldova (SBA)	NES Steering Committee member; promoted issues related to land conflict resolution.
Institute of Pedology, Agrochemistry and Soil Protection "N. Dimo" (IPASP)	IPASP cooperated in the implementation of NES Activities, particularly regarding Soil quality assessments.
District Council Agricultural Departments	Agricultural Departments within District Councils from Calarasi, Hincesti, Leova, Singerei, Ialoveni were members of the NES Platform, while others participated in NES meetings.
Local Public Authorities (LPAs)	LPAs active in the following districts were part of the NES platform: Cazangic, Tigheci, Filipeni, Hanasenii Noi, Colibabovca, Orac communities, Leova district; Antonești village Cantemir district; Sadova, Pitusca, Bravicea, Horodiste, Niscani communities Calarasi district; Balceana, Bujor, Buteni, Ciuciuleni, Mirești, Nemțeni, Stolniceni communities Hincești district; Jora de Mijloc, Mitoc, Susleni communities Orhei district; Coscodeni, Copaceni, Prepelita, Biliceni Noi, Singerei Noi, Izvoare communities, Singerei district; Rudi, Darcauti, Bulboci communities Soroca district)

Moldova



From 2017 to 2021, the National Engagement Strategy on Land Governance (NES) in Moldova worked towards the realisation of the following ILC Commitments on People-Centred Land Governance:

- » **Commitment 1.** Secure Tenure Rights
- » **Commitment 2.** Small-scale Farming Systems.
- » **Commitment 3.** Diverse Tenure Systems
- » **Commitment 4.** Equal Land Rights for Women
- » **Commitment 6.** Locally Managed Ecosystems
- » **Commitment 7.** Inclusive decision-making
- » **Commitment 8.** Transparent and Accessible Information

STRATEGIC PARTNERS & CORE DONORS



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Sverige



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and Cooperation SDC

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