

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022



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str. Vlaicu Pîrcălab 27/1,  
mun. Chişinău

+373 22 996 162

office@ecocontact.md

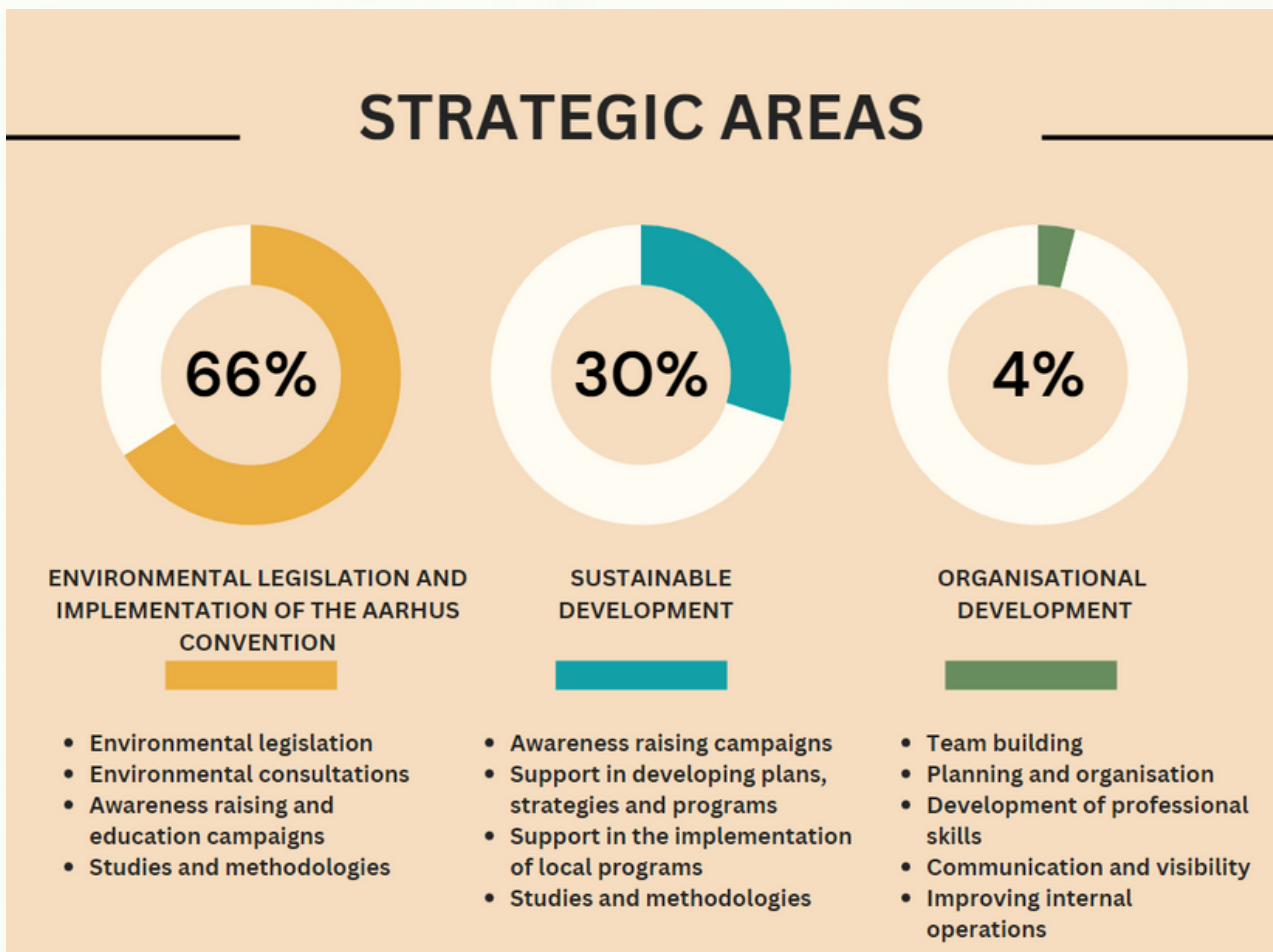
## INTRODUCTION

The Activity Report of EcoContact NGO provides information on the organisation's work and achievements during 2022 and aims to monitor and evaluate the organisation's performance, offer details on its performance, as well as its sources of funding and expenditure.

At the same time, the purpose of reporting is to inform the general public about the importance of environment and sustainable development, addressed by the organisation, and the progress made in this area.

According to the 2018-2022 Communication and Visibility Strategy of EcoContact and the Results Assessment Framework (EcoContact RAF), there are three strategic areas of work:

- *Environmental legislation and implementation of the Aarhus Convention*
- *Sustainable development*
- *Organisational development*



# I.

## ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AARHUS CONVENTION

In 2022, EcoContact NGO continued its efforts to promote and implement the Aarhus Convention in the Republic of Moldova, driven by the desire to live in a cleaner and sustainable environment. The efforts focused on establishing an active dialogue between the Government, NGOs and the general public, promoting access to environmental information and justice and encouraging public participation in decision-making. The communication objectives focused on protecting biodiversity, improving the air, water and soil quality, managing the waste, reducing pollution and conserving natural resources.



The results achieved in this strategic area include the following: issued **18 opinions and views on legal amendments**, EcoContact representatives delegated and participated in **10 Working Groups (WG)**, held **6 public consultations on legislation**. Participated in **20 consultation events organised by third parties**. In addition, developed **5 studies and roadmaps** to improve the environmental regulatory framework and transpose the EU environmental acquis. Developed three videos for a more effective communication on legal issues, and EcoContact experts participated in **3 TV and radio programmes** with a visual impact of **2,121,979 views**.

## Environmental law

According to the organisational RAF, EcoContact focused in particular on improving the environmental law (18 opinions were provided on a number of draft laws and policy documents subject to public consultation).

EcoContact also worked on the draft **Regulation transposing Regulation (EC) 66/2010 on the EU Ecolabel**, as well as on the development and registration of the future **national eco-label**.

EcoContact participated as a member of the WGs set up by the Ministry of Environment and other relevant institutions with expertise in environmental fields such as: development of the new **Environmental Strategy 2023 -2030**, creation and management of state protected areas, development of the **Aarhus Convention Action Plan**, development of the **draft Law on Meteorological Activity**, revision of the **National Plan on Persistent Organic Pollutants**, revision and finalisation of the **Forest Code**, as well as participation in sub-basin management committees, etc.

Through the *Green Justice* project, funded by Sweden, EcoContact contributed to the amendment of four regulatory documents, namely: **Law on Industrial Emissions**, **Law on Environmental Impact Assessment**, **Law establishing the Lower Nistru National Park**, **Law on Waste**.



- **8 opinions on environmental legislation and policy documents;**
- **Delegation of the organisation's members to 10 Working Groups including Committees;**
- **Changes to 4 regulations (through amendments).**

## Environmental Consultations

EcoContact carried out activities to review the methodologies for calculating environmental damage caused by breaches of legislation. Thus, IEP pre-selected **10 methodologies** within the framework of the Green Justice project and has initiated their modifications. In order to ensure a proper approach in modifying the methodologies, EcoContact organised consultation meetings with experts in various fields such as air, soil, subsoil, water, green spaces, etc.

Another significant result of EcoContact's work was the establishment of the **Lower Nistru National Park** and the organisation of public consultations on it. As part of *Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Measures and Institutional Development in the Lower Nistru Ramsar Area Project*, funded by the Austrian Development Agency, two regional consultations were held in Ştefan Vodă and Căuşeni to discuss the draft **Regulation on the management of Lower Nistru National Park**.

In addition to taking part in consultations on draft legislation and other documents developed by EcoContact, the organisation has been actively engaged and involved in consultation on policy documents, instruments and proposals initiated both by the Ministry of Environment and its subordinate institutions and by partners and other national and international organisations.



- **10 methodologies for calculating environmental damage in the process of being updated and modified;**
- **6 public consultation events organised;**
- **Participation in 20 public consultation events.**

## Awareness and education campaigns

In 2022, when creating the content of its awareness and education materials, EcoContact took into account the most acute environmental problems and common violations, such as **illegal logging, sewage dumping and unauthorised dumping of waste in areas adjacent to settlements**. In this context, **3 videos** were produced as part of the "Countering Environmental Crime for a Clean Environment" project funded by the Soros Foundation Moldova. The topics covered in these videos were also discussed in **3 TV and radio shows**.



- **3 videos;**
- **3 TV and radio shows;**
- **2,121,979 views.**

## Studies and methodologies

In 2022, EcoContact undertook activities to strengthen the legal framework for environmental protection, which included developing **analyses and assessments** as well as **action plans** for its improvement. Thus, **two gap analyses** of the environmental regulatory framework were carried out and **two Roadmaps** with **action Plans** were developed. These documents focused on the establishment of an eco-labelling mechanism, the investigation of environmental crime and the barriers to their investigation.

Another important product was the publication dedicated to the defenders of the right to a healthy environment. The EU-funded project *Shields for Human Rights Defenders – Supporting Human Rights Defenders in the Republic of Moldova* developed a guide describing both the legislative framework and its implementation mechanism, emphasizing the special role of the associative sector. The Guide contains examples of applications and petitions that can be filled out by the activists advocating for a healthy environment.



- ***Evaluation of the current eco-labelling scheme in the Republic of Moldova;***
- ***Development of the Roadmap for the transposition of EU Ecolabel Regulation 66/2010;***
- ***Assessment of the current situation with environmental crimes investigation;***
- ***Development of the Roadmap for overcoming the existing barriers to investigating environmental crime;***
- ***Publication of the Guide for defenders of the right to a healthy environment.***

This strategic area focuses in particular on the following sustainable development activities: green economy, capacity building of authorities and interest groups, integration of environmental protection measures into local development plans, development of surveys on public perception of environmental issues, including the creation of an enabling environment for the effective management of protected areas such as the **Lower Nistru National Park** and the **Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve**, support for the development of environmentally friendly businesses in regions adjacent to protected areas and the development of tools to guide the application of environmental legislation.



### Education and awareness-raising campaigns

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the changing perception of the people living in the Lower Nistru National Park, a **perception assessment survey** was conducted. The survey results showed that the implementation of *Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Measures and Institutional Development in the Lower Nistru Ramsar Area* project activities strengthened people's knowledge of the necessity and benefits of establishing the Lower Nistru National Park.

In addition, a digital **dine&wine** map and publications with photos and attractions to visit have been developed to effectively promote the protected area. On 29 May 2022, Nistru Day was celebrated, promoting the newly established National Park and defining plans for the implementation of new activities by the relevant institutions and local communities.





Another event with an educational effect was the support to the mobility campaign launched by the European Union – *"Our Planet, Our Home. Let's make it clean"*. It produced **3 leaflets, 3 animated videos, 14 social media cards and a video**.

To ensure the maintenance of the **Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR)**, **5 events** were organised for PRTR-reporting economic operators to discuss the functionality of the online register and the challenges they face in ensuring the effective functioning of the pollutant release accounting mechanism.



Sustainable development was also addressed in the context of chemicals management. As part of the *"Be Eco-Responsible"* campaign, **3 videos** dedicated to the safe handling of chemicals and substances were produced, covering various topics such as: **Safe handling of chemicals by type of chemical; Safe handling of chemicals depending on where they are stored; Safe handling of chemicals by pregnant women and children.**

As part of this activity, EcoContact organised an event with partners from Lithuania about the **deposit-refund system for single-use packaging (DRS)**. The initiative included a high-level event hosted by the Lithuanian Embassy in Moldova. The purpose of the event was to discuss the experience of the European Union, including Lithuania, in implementing DRS and to share knowledge and best practices in the field.

- **A survey assessing the perception of the people living in the Lower Nistru Ramsar area;**
- **A communication campaign (from concept to promotion);**
- **5 trainings on the PRTR reporting system for users, the Environment Agency (EA) and NGOs;**
- **3 videos on the safe handling of chemicals;**
- **100 users, EA and NGO representatives trained on the PRTR reporting system;**
- **An event on the DRS system for packaging;**
- **3 events for women on leadership, climate change impact, etc.**

## Support in Developing Environmental Plans, Strategies and Programs

One significant activity was the development of the draft *Environment Strategy 2023 - 2030*. The *Green Justice for a Protected Environment and Sustainable Communities in the Republic of Moldova* project initiated the necessary activities to develop the strategy, such as the formation of the WG, the presentation and approval of the Concept and the development of content for the 8 specific objectives.

Another important document in the field of sub-basin management is the *Frumoasa-Crihana Sub-basin Management Plan*, which was developed as part of the project Strengthening climate change adaptation measures in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve (LPBR). The management plan has undergone the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) procedure, i.e. the Preliminary Assessment, to ensure that the measures included in it will not have a negative impact on the environment and the health of the population living in the LPBR area.



In 2022, EcoContact, in cooperation with the State Hydrometeorological Service (SHS), started work on reporting to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, collecting the basic indicators required for national reporting to the Convention.

- *Development of the Frumoasa-Crihana Sub-basin Management Plan, cycle I (2022 - 2027);*
- *A preliminary assessment of the SEA for the Plan;*
- *Environmental Strategy Concept for 2023-2030;*
- *A cooperation agreement with SHS.*

## Support in the Implementation of Local Programs

In 2022, several local activities on sustainable use of natural resources and adaptation to climate change were launched. As part of the project *Strengthening climate change adaptation measures in the Lower Prut Biosphere Reserve*, tenders have been issued for infrastructure projects. These projects are aimed at **expanding the aqueduct in Văleni village**, and at **acquiring, installing and commissioning photovoltaic stations for three kindergartens in Slobozia Mare, Giurgiulești and Manta**. The **technical design** for the reconstruction of the old LPBR office, which will be partially repaired from project sources, has also been completed. The infrastructure projects will be completed in 2023. The total cost of the **five infrastructure projects** amounts to approximately **EUR 250,000**, including a 20% contribution from the mayoralties and the Reserve.



In addition, **three more pilot projects** were launched in the Frumoasa-Crihana sub-basin area, each worth around **EUR 10,000**, including a 20% contribution from local authorities. These projects aim to implement the measures included in the Frumoasa-Crihana Sub-basin Management Plan and will be implemented in **Andrușul de Jos, Vadul lui Isac and Crihana Veche**.



Another achievement is the establishment of the **Secretariat for the Lower Nistru Ramsar Area Management Board** – an information center of the Lower Nistru National Park. To this end, Palanca Mayoralty allocated a room in the House of Culture for the establishment of the **Information Center**. In order to make it operational, equipment was purchased and an information point was set up for anyone interested in the opportunities offered by the National Park.



Another important focus in 2022 was support for green business initiatives, especially in protected areas. Under the project *Adaptation and Resilience Measures and Institutional Development in the Lower Nistru Ramsar Area*, **three additional initiatives** related to women-led and managed economic activities in the communities of the Lower Nistru National Park were supported through a competition. The three ideas, which received funding of **EUR 2,000**, include the creation of an **outdoor oven for the development of ecotourism** in the Lower Nistru area, the organisation of **cultural gastronomic workshops** in a guesthouse, the purchase of accessories needed to maintain a **plum orchard** in the village of Crocmaz and the development of culinary services for another guesthouse in the region.



In the context of the war in Ukraine and the significant influx of refugees, including the provision of humanitarian aid in border settlements at the entrance to the Lower Nistru National Park, Sweden funded an activity dedicated to **efficient waste management in Palanca**. Thus, the **purchase of a baler for plastic and paper** was initiated, as well as the setting up of a space for their sorting and pressing. The center could then work with other communities to collect plastic waste.



- **5 infrastructure projects initiated;**
- **3 pilot projects in biodiversity conservation and management of the Frumoasa-Crihana sub-basin launched;**
- **An information point (secretariat) of the Lower Nistru National Park opened and provided with equipment and furniture;**
- **3 business initiatives founded and managed by women from the communities of the Lower Nistru National Park;**
- **A plastic waste management project in Palanca;**

## Studies and methodologies

In 2022, *EcoContact conducted three environmental audit studies* for forensic institutions at the request of the UNDP *Access to Justice project*. These studies focused on assessing the internal operating practices of institutions and are also known as environmental auditing in a more simplified form. The approach taken consisted of assessing institutions in terms of environmentally friendly work and internal working procedures implemented in the offices, waste management, including the availability of internal documentation for record keeping and reporting, and the identification and promotion of good laboratory practices.



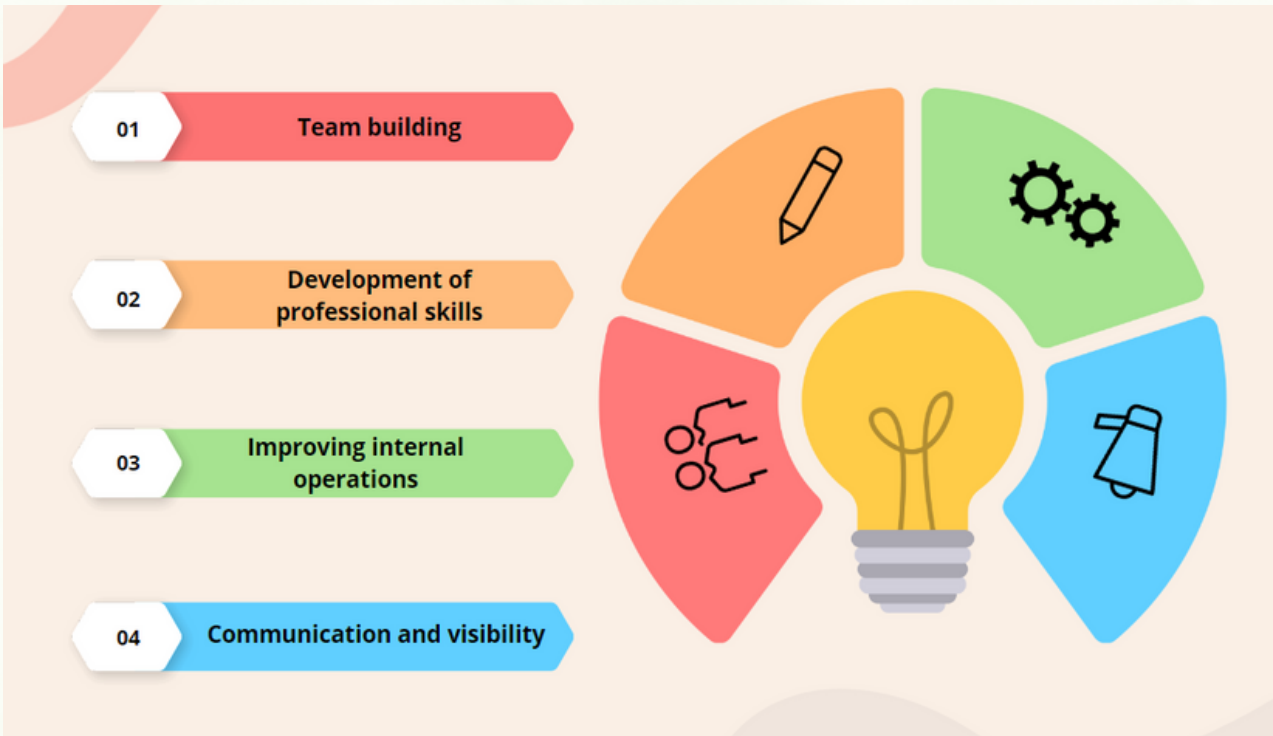
- *3 Environmental audit reports of forensic institutions*

## Partnership Building

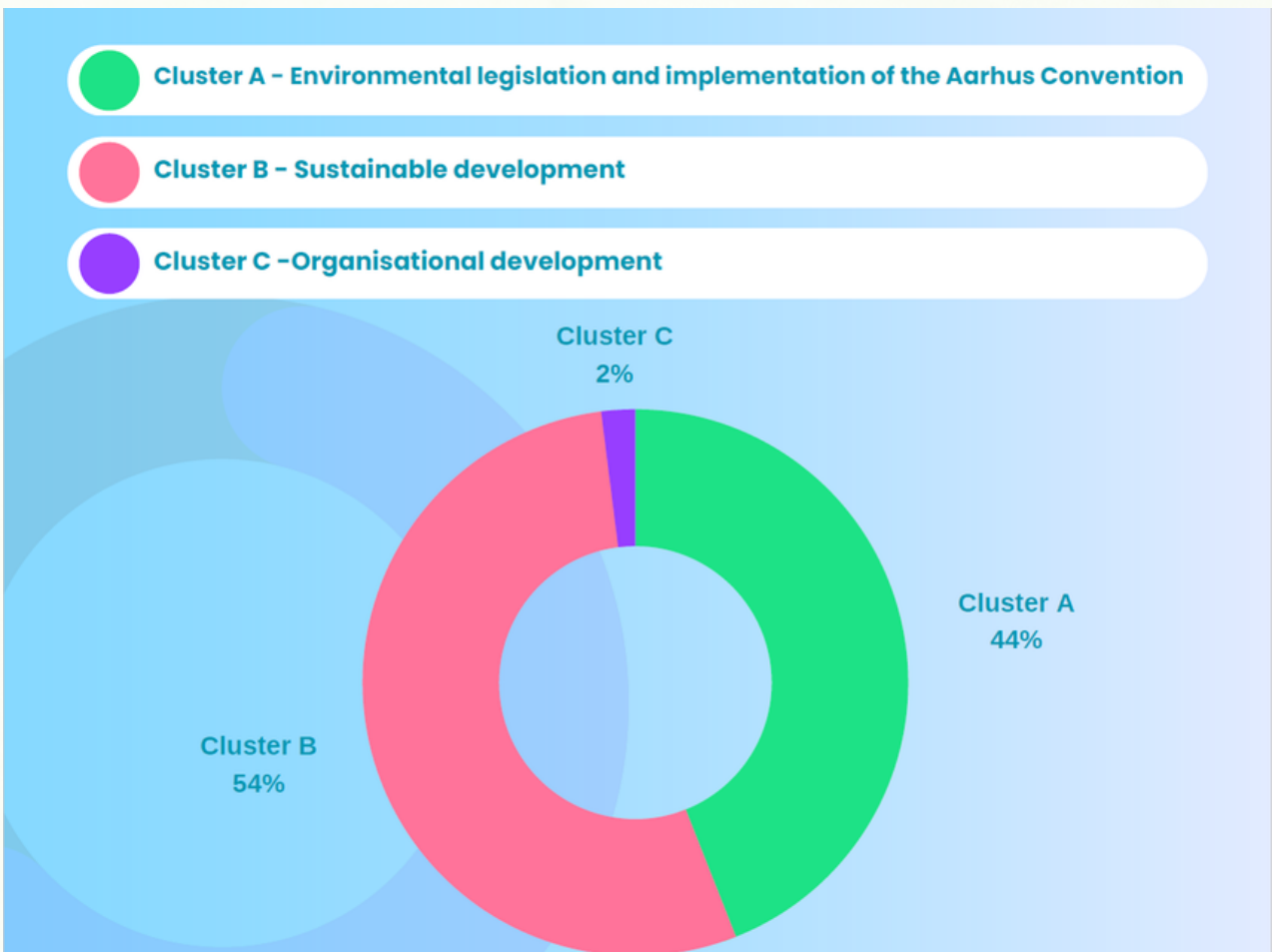
Partnerships and communication with other NGOs take the form of participation in various national and international platforms. The organisation is part of the Eastern Partnership Platform, a member of GUTA Environmental Law Association, of the community of beneficiaries of the NGO sector programs of the Swedish Embassy, the National Aarhus Centres in the CEE.

# III.

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



### Financial management



## Gratitude and appreciation for support and trust



With funding from



Funded by  
the European Union

**EU4Environment**  
Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries



Embassy of the Republic  
of Lithuania to the  
Republic of Moldova

