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# The Codru Quest:

## Public Policy Proposal

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Protection and improvement of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in the Codru forest in Moldova through better management of ecosystem services.



# Public Policy Proposal

## 1. Initiating Institution

Moldovan Environmental Governance Academy (MEGA).

## 2. Problem Description

The problem addressed is the degradation of the forest ecosystems in the Republic of Moldova, especially the Codru forest, and consequently the loss of biodiversity and the valuable natural capital of the country, which negatively affects the socio-economic situation of the Moldovan citizens.

The problem is caused mainly by inefficient planning of how natural resources and forest land are used and environmental policy that offers insufficient protection of the natural environment, as it prioritizes short-term economic gains over long-term economic and social values of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in them. This situation stems from the lack of awareness of the values and importance of these ecosystems for society and nature and their insufficient prioritization in strategic planning and policy making.

In addition, the existing governance and management system of forest ecosystems is based on the control of state agencies that lack sufficient resources and motivation to protect and manage these ecosystems in a sustainable manner. At the same time, social groups, such as rural residents living near forests, who depend on forest ecosystem services and value them the most, are not included in decision-making and policy making, and their collective voice is rarely heard.

Page | 2

## 3. Policy Title

Protection and improvement of forest ecosystems and biodiversity in the Codru forest in Moldova through better management of ecosystem services.

## 4. Scopul propunerii

Effective and sustainable protection and improvement of forest ecosystem values in the Codru forest, especially indirect use and non-use values, which have no observable monetary value on the market and in decision-making, but which are particularly valuable in the long term (for ex., biodiversity, pollination, carbon sequestration, water purification, recreation, etc.) and no less important than obvious use values (for ex., timber harvesting).



## 5. Specific Objectives

1. Presentation of the results of "The Codru Quest", the study on the economic valuation of ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation in the Codru forest, to the main stakeholders of the project.
2. Information and education of stakeholders on the importance and value of ecosystem services and biodiversity in the Codru forest.
3. Organization of meetings and public consultations for main stakeholders and local communities aimed to stimulate the establishment of collaborative governance and sustainable management of ecosystem services in the Codru forest.
4. Establishment of collaborative governance and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services in the Codru forest between the Codru Nature Reserve administration and local communities.

## 6. Beneficiaries of the Policy

Beneficiaries consist of two main groups and several sub-groups:

1. Direct users of the Codru forest:

These are frequent visitors, who use forest ecosystems for personal non-recreational purposes; occasional tourists, who come for recreation; researchers studying the natural environment and biodiversity; Codru Nature Reserve administration; and the residents of the villages surrounding the forest, who are directly affected by any change in the state of ecosystems and provisioning of their services.

2. Beneficiari indirecți a pădurilor Codrii:

These include environmental organizations that are concerned about the state of the natural environment and generally citizens of the Republic of Moldova, who indirectly benefit from ecosystem services and have bequest and altruistic values associated with the Codru forest.

## 7. Consultation Methods

- Public presentation of the research results of "The Codru Quest" and public policy proposal at conferences and meetings established with main stakeholders.
- Organization of the programme / course with practical workshops on the topic of ecosystem services, values of biodiversity, and collaborative governance as a separate follow-up project.



- Setting up of meetings and public consultations on collaborative governance and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services.
- Continuous support provided during the negotiation process for establishing collaborative governance and sustainable management of the Codru forest between main stakeholders and local communities.

## 8. Solution Options

### *Option 1:*

Collaborative governance and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services in the Codru forest done by the Codru Nature Reserve administration and local communities based on understanding and knowledge of the socio-economic values of these services and of biodiversity in the forest.

### *Option 2:*

Strictly private management of natural resources and ecosystem services in the Codru forest with limitation of access to it and introduction of visitor fee, which will become a source of funding for biodiversity and ecosystems conservation activities.

### *Option 3:*

Command-and-control governance of the Codru forest ecosystems by state agencies with limitation of access to forests, acquisition of land by the state, its reforestation, and increase of income tax or local taxes to finance these activities.

## 9. Recommended Solution Option

### *Selected option:*

Option 1: Collaborative governance and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services in the Codru forest.

### *Benefits:*

This scenario offers the opportunity to protect and improve forest ecosystems and biodiversity in the Codru forest without reducing the welfare of local communities, while using their practical knowledge in nature conservation to secure indirect use and non-use benefits and values in the long term.

### *Risks:*



There are risks of continuation of conflicts between the Codru Nature Reserve administration and the local communities, which may prevent the implementation of the chosen scenario and may lead to inefficient management of the Codru forest ecosystems.

*Target Group:*

30 representatives of main stakeholders, local communities, and other direct users.

*Methods and timeline for monitoring and evaluation:*

Implementation and monitoring will take place in the period between October, 2017 and August, 2019.

Monitoring will be based on direct observations, as well as on surveys and data collected through MEGA Game: The Game with Impact, the gamified web platform for environmental education and project management to be offered to the beneficiaries.

*Performance indicators:*

- Number of activities (workshops, meetings, public consultations) realized;
- Number of beneficiaries involved and their retention rate throughout the project;
- Number and quality of strategic and legislative documents on collaborative governance and sustainable management of the Codru forest;
- Performance of the first steps taken to establish this governance and management system.

*Estimated budget:*

For the period of 2017 – 2019 the budget is estimated at 195 500 MDL (10 270 EUR).

This amount is planned for presentation of the results of "The Codru Quest" project, translation of all materials into the state language, preparation and delivery of the programme / course, organization of meetings and public consultations, stimulation of negotiations between main stakeholders, and offering support for collaborative management of the Codru forest.

## 10. Contacts

For more information please access [www.megaimpact.md/the-codru-quest](http://www.megaimpact.md/the-codru-quest)

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# Playing for Impact

