

Effectiveness and relevance of recent environmental assessments for policy-making and public information in Moldova

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European Environment Agency
Kongens Nytorv 6
1050 Copenhagen K
Denmark
Tel.: +45 33 36 71 00
Web: eea.europa.eu
Enquiries: eea.europa.eu/enquiries

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1 Introduction

This report synthesises the results of a survey among the users of environmental assessments in the Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova). The direct objective of the study, which was funded by the EU within the project “Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the European neighbourhood regions (ENI SEIS II)”, was to better understand how users perceive the quality and usefulness of environmental assessments published in their countries. The end goal was to then identify how the countries’ capacities for regular environmental assessment and reporting could be further enhanced in order to better support their policy-making, public awareness and, in the end, environmental performance.

The study, designed and commissioned by the European Environment Agency (EEA) and carried out by Zoï Environment Network, was conducted through a series of interviews with the users of environmental assessments in Moldova. The interviews were based on a standardised questionnaire from the EEA to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental assessments. The interviews and the initial analysis were carried out by Zoï field staff in Kyiv for Moldova. Attempts were also made to collect data about the dissemination and use of environmental assessments, both directly and through the available channels. The work was coordinated with and to the extent possible assisted by the national focal points for the ENI SEIS II project in Moldova.

The integrated and thematic environmental assessments used for review are described below.

[National state-of-the-environment report of the Republic of Moldova](#), 2007-2010, in Romanian. This 194-page document provides general information about the environment in Moldova; economic impacts on the environment; the protection of air, water, biodiversity and soil; waste; technological threats; policy; and references and annexes. The conclusions and recommendations are incomplete, and key messages are not always highlighted. The document has a number of visuals.

[National state-of-the-environment of the Republic of Moldova, 1990-2014 \(http://mediu.gov.md/index.php/starea-mediului/rapoarte\)](http://mediu.gov.md/index.php/starea-mediului/rapoarte), in English. This 37-page document is

the first indicator-based SoE (8 indicators). The document contains information on the key findings, policy responses and key environment issues. Each thematic area contains information about DPSIR (a causal framework for describing the interactions between society and the environment), targets, assessment of trends, key messages, data coverage and sources, and methodology. The report is rich in high-quality visuals.

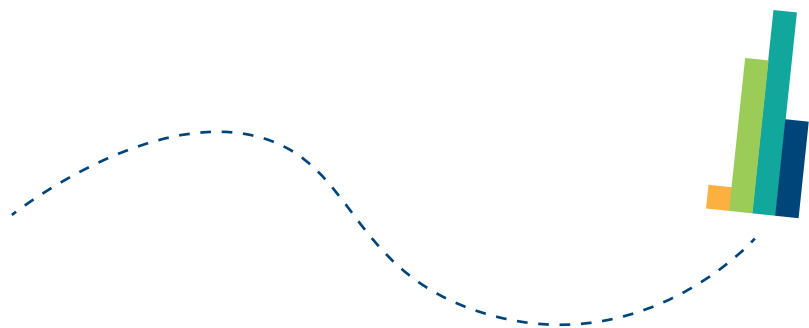
[National Fifth Report of the Republic of Moldova to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#), 2015, in English. This 61-page document, prepared according to the CBD requirements, provides baseline information and trends, monitoring, threats to biodiversity, links with socioeconomic development, ecosystem services, conservation objectives and measures, integration of conservation into sectoral policies, assessment of effectiveness of previous measures, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, lessons learned, conclusions and annexes. The report includes a few visuals.

[Third National Communication of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change](#), 2013, in Romanian. This 398-page document, prepared according to the UNFCCC, contains a summary, baseline information about the country, the national GHG inventory, mitigation policies and measures and their possible effects, assessments of vulnerability and adaptation and other information on education, technology transfer, research, cooperation, constraints and needs, along with a list of references and annexes. The report is rich with visuals.

The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova (MoE) is responsible for these reports. The 2007-2010 SoE report was funded by the state and the 2007-2014 SoE report was funded by the European Union via EEA (the latest SoE report was the first SoE report prepared based on 8 indicators). The CBD report was prepared with support of the GEF-UNDP Biodiversity Office in Moldova. The Third National Communication to the UNFCCC was developed within the Project, “Republic of Moldova: Enabling Activities for the Preparation of the Third National Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”, implemented by MoE and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with financial support from GEF.

As detailed in Annex 1, out of 28 invited organisations, 20 took part in the interview process.

The intended respondents included policy-makers from the environmental as well as non-environmental sectors of the government, selected representatives of research, academia and business as well as civil society (Annex 1).



2 Findings and key messages

This chapter analyses the cumulative responses for all the reviewed assessments. Annex 2 presents more detailed data.

Effectiveness

Key messages

- Assessments meet the needs of stakeholder and environmental policy
- Analytical quality is medium to high with room for improvement
- Some stakeholders are not aware if assessments impact on policy or provide added value

About 80 per cent of the responses indicated that the reports mostly do meet or probably meet the **needs of stakeholders**. More than 10 per cent of the responses were negative and a similar percentage of interviewees was not able to answer.

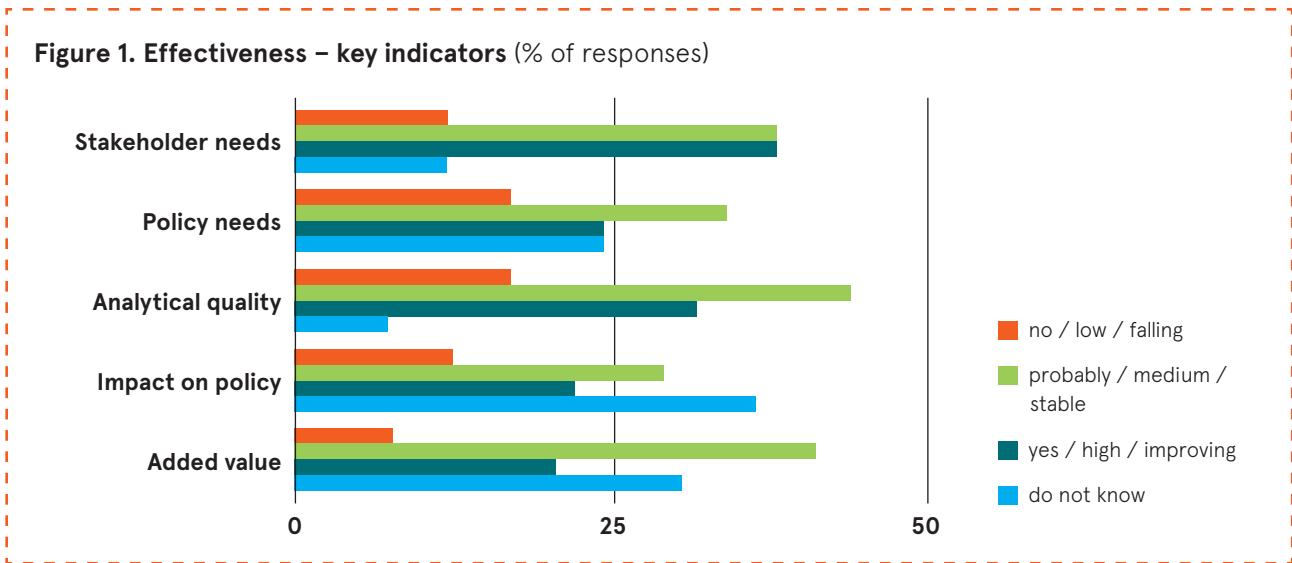
The assessments probably or do respond adequately to **environmental policy needs** according to about 55 per cent of the responses, and about 20 per cent declared that the

assessments do not meet policy needs, while the rest didn't answer this question.

Seventy-five per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments have medium to high **analytical quality**, and about 20 per cent said the quality was low. Some respondents commented that the reports are overloaded with information of little interest, while a proper analysis is missing (UNFCCC) and the information is outdated (CBD, SoER).

Around 40 per cent of the respondents couldn't answer whether the assessments have an **impact on environmental policy-making**, and 50 per cent indicated that they probably have or do have an impact.

Sixty per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments probably or do provide **added value** at the national level. Still a large number of respondents (30 per cent) were not able to answer.



Quality

Key messages

- Assessment quality is good and improving over time
- Topical coverage is medium to high
- Timeliness and reliability are medium to high, but could be improved
- Independence is medium to high

The **overall quality** of assessments is medium to high. Some respondents mentioned the lack of analysis, and some commented that the reports are developed to some extent according to the requirements of the conventions and/or international methodology, and that the data do not always reflect the reality. According to some respondents, adding more visuals could improve the CBD report.

The **sufficiency** of the reports is evaluated as medium (65 per cent of the responses) or high (30 per cent). Respondents noted that the State Emergency and Civil Protection was not involved in the report development, and that some assessments take a narrow approach to proposing solutions and fail to analyse the actions implemented in the country.

Timeliness is medium to high according to 80 per cent of the responses, while 20 per cent ranked the timeliness as low.

Topical coverage is medium to high in the view of 95 per cent of the responses, but the absence of discussions of emergency situations was noted.

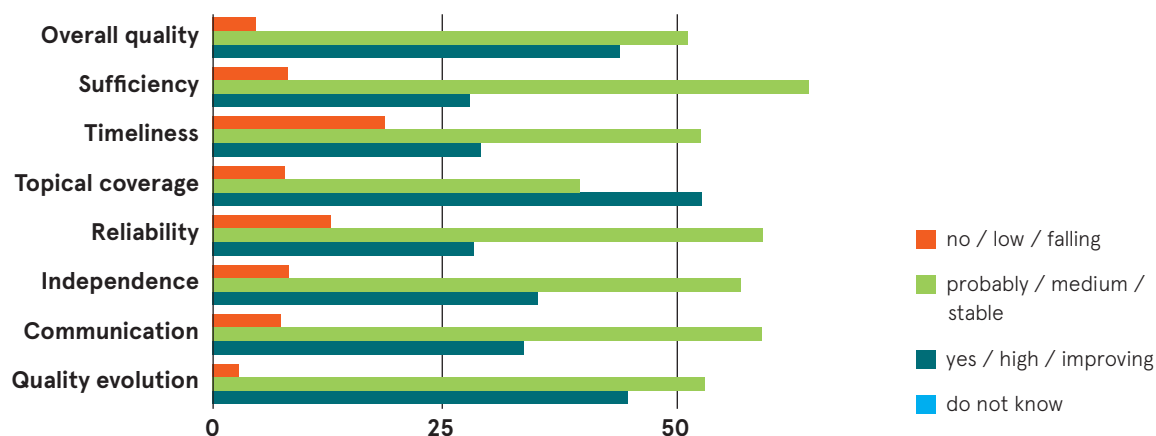
About 85 per cent of the responses indicated the **reliability** as medium to high, and about 15 per cent ranked reliability as low. Some stakeholders commented that there are mistakes in the reference sources and that the assessments only partially reflect the reality.

Independence of data and analysis is medium to high according to almost all of the respondents. On the other hand, some respondents assert that no report prepared by the offices of MoE is independent, and that independence depends on the statistical information and data fully corresponding to the real situation.

Around 90 per cent of the responses indicated that the documents are **communicated** at a medium or high level, while some responses indicated that the communication is not sufficient.

A majority of the respondents ranked the **quality** of the reports as stable, and some indicated that the quality is improving.

Figure 2. Quality of assessments (% of responses)



Efficiency

→ **Key messages**

- Assessments provide relevant information and play a role in environmental policy
- The knowledge of the stakeholders about the benefits of the assessments compared to the costs is limited
- There is a potential for optimisation

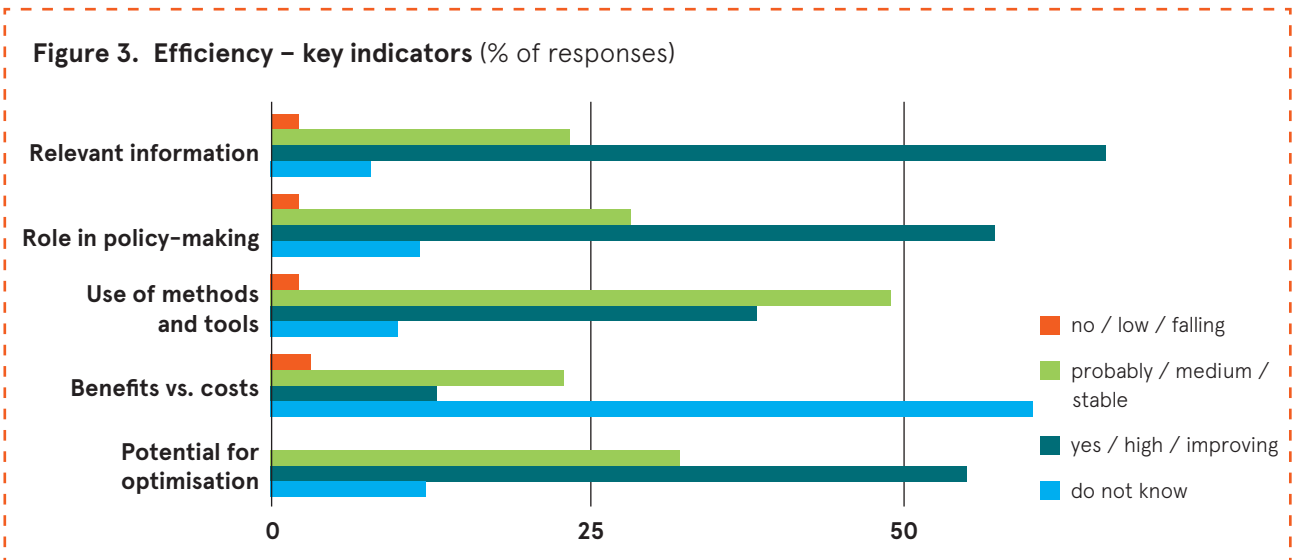
The use of **analytical methods and tools** in the environmental assessments is probably appropriate and sufficient (85 per cent of the responses), although some stakeholders pointed out that hiring the same consultants for preparation of the reports leads to the use of the same analytical tools. Some respondents commented that the methodologies used, especially those under the conventions, should be more relevant to the country, and that there are not enough indices on biodiversity-related issues within UNFCCC reporting.

About 85 per cent of the responses said that the assessments probably or do deliver **relevant information**, although some commented that some information varies in different editions of the state-of-the-environment assessment. Some stakeholders reported that they do not use the assessments.

Most of the respondents (60 per cent) did not know whether the **benefits** of the reports justified the **costs**, and 25 per cent said they probably did.

About 85 per cent of the respondents indicated that the assessments probably or do **play a role in environmental policy-making** in the country, while 15 per cent could not answer the question.

There is or probably is a **potential for optimisation** of the reports with regard to a modern and efficient operational work flow according to 85 per cent of the responses.



Policy impact

Key messages

- The role of the assessments in policy interventions and in their scope and scale is not major
- Assessments moderately to significantly help in choosing and developing policy instruments
- Assessments insignificantly or moderately help in implementing and evaluating policies

According to 70 per cent of the responses the environmental assessments help identify **policy interventions** moderately to significantly. About 10 per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments do not help identify policy interventions.

About 85 per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments moderately to significantly help determine the

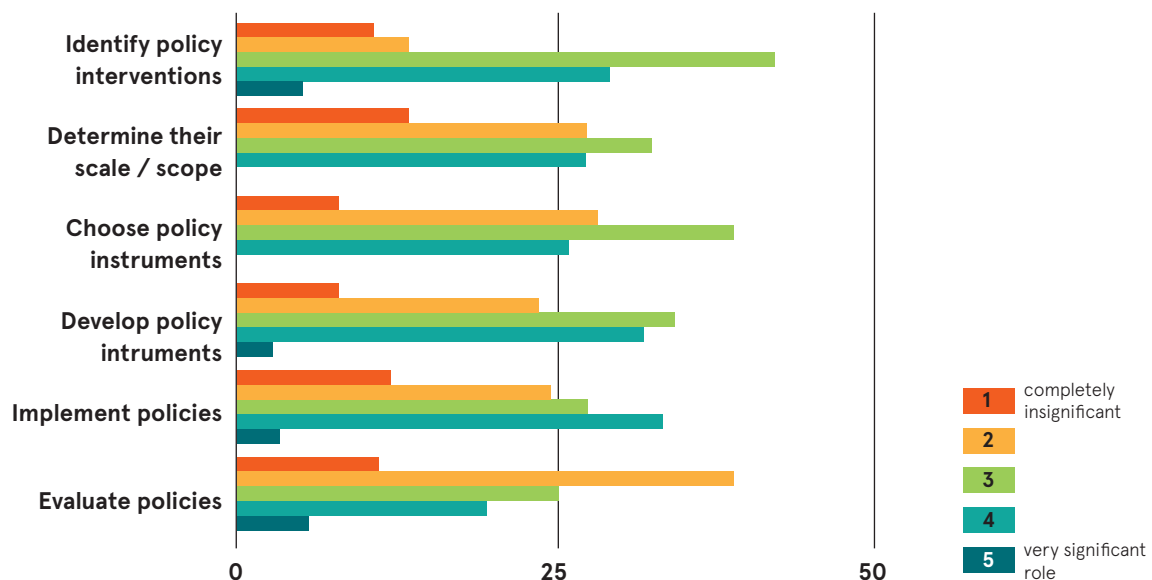
scale and scope of policy interventions and **choose policy instruments** (legal, awareness raising etc.), while about 10 – 15 per cent of the responses ranked the assessments as completely insignificant on these indicators.

According to 85 per cent of the responses, the assessments moderately to significantly **help in developing policy instruments**, including the setting of targets and indicators.

About 85 per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments moderately to significantly **help implement policies**, and 15 per cent ranked the contribution as completely insignificant.

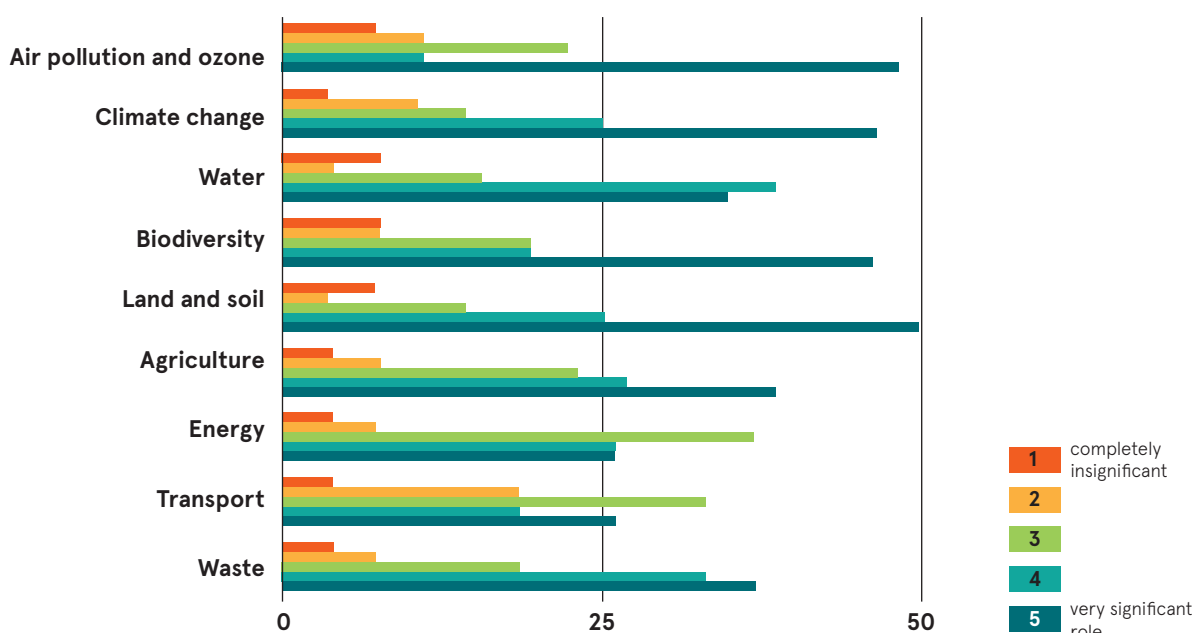
Forty per cent of the responses indicated that the assessments insignificantly **help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policies**, and a bit more than 10 per cent ranked the contribution as completely insignificant.

Figure 4. Policy relevance and impact (% of responses)



Overall, the demand for assessments is very high. These and similar environmental assessment reports **are particularly needed** in order to help improve the country's environmental performance. All covered topics were identified with a very high need for improvement.

Figure 5. Future demand for assessments (% of responses)



Awareness and outreach

Key messages

- All assessments are available to the general public
- Involvement of NGOs is not high
- Assessments are not widely distributed or promoted

All assessments are available to the general public, though use is not high.

About 30 active NGOs are aware of the reports, although the level of involvement of NGOs in commenting on the reports is low.

It was impossible to collect data on the number of visitors or downloads from the MoE website, while the Climate Change office reported 1,468 downloads of the Third UNFCCC National Communication between 2013 and 2017.

A Google search for SoE (10 pages looked through) turned up eight results, including two at the Ministry's website and one on the site of the National Library of Moldova.

The reports are not widely distributed or promoted to other ministries and stakeholders, thus there is a room for improvement.

3 Conclusions and considerations

Overall the reports mostly meet the needs of the respondents, have an impact on environmental policy-making and rank as high-quality documents with value added at the national level. Some reports contain low-quality and outdated data, lack analysis, present information of little interest, and fail to specify proper actions and recommendations for different sectors and target groups

→ **Considerations**

- The content of analytical chapters in the assessments should be improved
- Higher quality and more reliable data should be ensured
- Recommendations should be clearly and concretely formulated

The overall quality of the reports is medium to high. Additional visuals would help communicate key messages to users and policy-makers (especially in the CBD report).

→ **Consideration**

- Development of more visuals should be considered (CBD)

To improve the status quo and comprehensiveness of the reports more attention should be paid to the institutions engaged in the process of their preparation.

→ **Considerations**

- Emergency authorities should be involved in the development of assessments
- NGOs should be involved in commenting on the assessments

The reports provide for medium sufficiency, timeliness, reliability, and communication. The topical coverage and independence are ranked medium to high. Sometimes the reports contain mistakes that stem from the reference sources, and the data from various authorities are not always comparable.

→ **Considerations**

- Data and the reference sources should be verified
- Data presentation provided by various organisations should be harmonised across assessments

The reports provide relevant information and play a role in environmental policy-making, and analytical tools are probably appropriate and sufficient. More than half of the respondents are generally unaware of the relevant costs, while another big share of the respondents believe that benefits probably outweigh costs. In many cases the reports are funded by donors, thus sustaining funds for future reports is vital. More optimisation is still possible.

→ **Consideration**

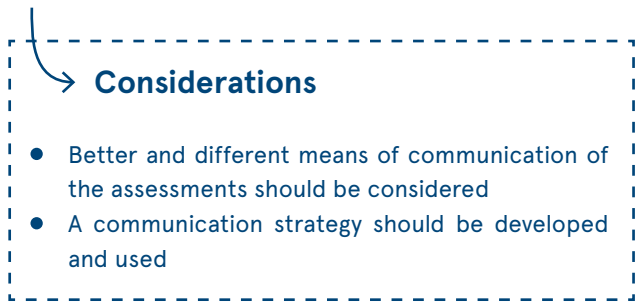
- Optimisation of costs and sustainable financing for preparation of the assessments should be ensured

The reports play a modest role in delivering information for policy interventions, and in the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policies and in policy implementation. There is a very high demand for these and similar assessment reports to improve the country's performance. The analysis should propose solutions to decision makers.

→ **Considerations**

- Development of more detailed chapters within SoE report should be considered
- The recommendations to the different target groups should be prepared

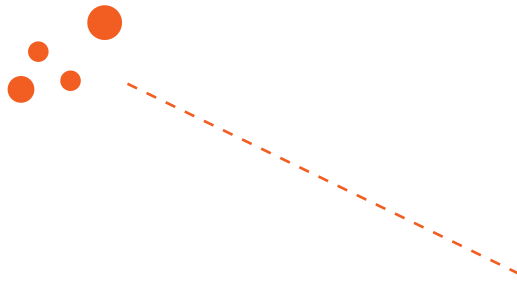
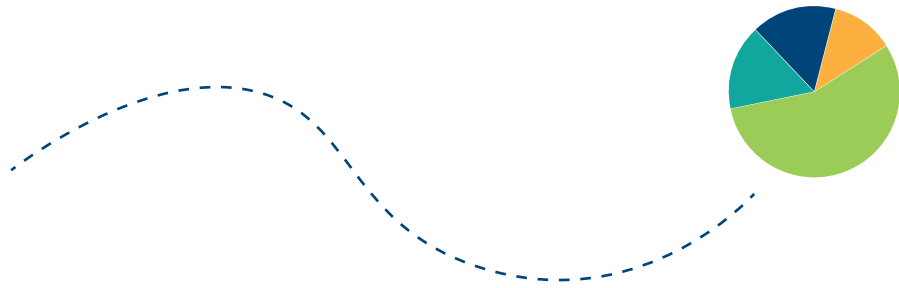
The reports are not widely communicated, distributed or promoted to other ministries and stakeholders.



Considerations

- Better and different means of communication of the assessments should be considered
- A communication strategy should be developed and used

ANNEXES



Annex 1 Interviewed organisations

Ministry of the Environment
Ministry of Economy
Ministry of Finances
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry
Ministry of Transport and Road Infrastructure
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Healthcare, via the Centre for Preventive Medicine
Service for Civil Protection and Emergency
Agency "Moldova Silva" (forestry)
Agency "Apele Moldovei"
Climate Office
Institute for Ecology and Geography of the Academy of Science
Tiraspol State University in Chisinau, Geography Faculty
Arhus Centre in Chisinau
The Regional Environmental Centre – Moldova
Association of Rivers Keepers "Eco-TIRAS"
National Ecological Centre
Bios NGO (member of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum)
Biotica NGO
Eco-Contact NGO

Annex 2 Summary of responses to the survey

I. Effectiveness

1 Key indicators of effectiveness

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No
1.1 Did the EA match the needs and requirements of the stakeholder?	16	16	5	5
1.2 Did the EA respond adequately to environmental policy needs?	10	14	10	7
1.3 Is the EA's analysis of consistently high quality?	13	18	3	7
1.4 Do the EA findings have an impact on environmental policy-making or likely to have such impact in the future?	9	12	15	5
1.5 Did the EA provide added value at the national level?	8	16	12	3

2 Overall quality of the Environmental Assessment reports

	Low	Medium	High
2.1 How would you evaluate the overall quality of Environmental Assessment reports	2	21	18

3 Overall, how would you rate the quality of the information provided in the Environmental Assessment reports by the following criteria?

	Low	Medium	High
3.1 Sufficiency	3	23	10
3.2 Timeliness	7	20	11
3.3 Topical coverage	3	15	20
3.4 Reliability	5	23	11
3.5 Independence	3	21	13
3.6 Well-communicated	3	23	13

4 Development of the Environmental Assessment reports quality

	Falling	Stable	Improving
4.1 How would you evaluate the development of quality of the Environmental Assessment reports in recent years?	1	19	16

II. Efficiency

1 Key indicators of efficiency

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No
1.1 Did the EA deliver relevant information?	25	9	3	1
1.2 Did the EA play a role in environmental policy-making in the country?	24	12	5	1
1.3 Is the use of analytical methods and tools in the EA appropriate and sufficient?	15	19	4	1
1.4 Did the EA represent value for money comparing the costs and benefits?	4	17	18	1
1.5 Is there any potential for optimisation of the EA with regard to a modern and efficiently operational work flow?	22	13	5	0

2 Did the EA reports deliver information to...

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
2.1 help identify necessary policy interventions?	4	5	16	11	2
2.2. help determine the scale and scope of policy interventions?	5	10	12	10	0
2.3 help choose policy instruments (legal, awareness raising etc.)?	3	11	15	10	0
2.4 help develop policy instruments (including setting their targets and indicators)?	3	9	13	12	1
2.5 help implement policies?	4	8	9	11	1
2.6 help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policies?	4	14	9	7	2

(1) Some of them have narrow approach in proposing the solutions

(2) The reports do not provide any analyses of the actions implemented in the country with analysing

3 These and similar Environmental Assessment reports are particularly needed in order to help improve the country's environmental performance with respect to

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
3.1. Air pollution and ozone depletion	2	3	6	3	13
3.2. Climate change	1	3	4	7	13
3.3 Water	2	1	4	10	9
3.4 Biodiversity	2	2	5	5	12
3.5 Land and soil	2	1	4	7	14
3.6 Agriculture	1	2	6	7	10
3.7 Energy	1	2	10	7	7
3.8 Transport	1	5	9	5	7
3.9 Waste	1	2	5	9	10

Annex 3 Evaluation tool (the questionnaire)

EEA Evaluation tool:

Scope and key questions of the evaluation of recent national Environmental Assessments (EA)

NOTE: the tables below are to be filled for all the publications selected for review. Please put publication symbols in cells corresponding to the respondent's opinion about these publications. Example:

	Low	Medium	High	Comment
2.1 How would you evaluate the overall quality of Environmental Assessment reports	B	S	W, A	

S: SoE report; W: Thematic reports on water; A: Thematic reports on air / climate; B: Thematic reports on biodiversity

Effectiveness and efficiency – the two dimensions of the evaluation:

✓ I. Effectiveness

1 Key indicators of effectiveness

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No	Comment
1.1 Did the EA match the needs and requirements of the stakeholder?					
1.2 Did the EA respond adequately to environmental policy needs?					
1.3 Is the EA's analysis of consistently high quality?					
1.4 Do the EA findings have an impact on environmental policy-making or likely to have such impact in the future?					
1.5 Did the EA provide added value at the national level?					

2 Overall quality of the Environmental Assessment reports

	Low	Medium	High	Comment
2.1 How would you evaluate the overall quality of Environmental Assessment reports				

3 Overall, how would you rate the quality of the information provided in the Environmental Assessment reports by the following criteria?

	Low	Medium	High	Comment
3.1 Sufficiency				
3.2 Timeliness				
3.3 Topical coverage				
3.4 Reliability				
3.5 Independence				
3.6 Well-communicated				

4 Development of the Environmental Assessment reports quality

	Falling	Stable	Improving
4.1 How would you evaluate the development of quality of the Environmental Assessment reports in recent years?			

✓ II. Efficiency

1 Key indicators of efficiency

	Yes	Probably	Do not know	No	Comment
1.1 Did the EA deliver relevant information?					
1.2 Did the EA play a role in environmental policy-making in the country?					
1.3 Is the use of analytical methods and tools in the EA appropriate and sufficient?					
1.4 Did the EA represent value for money comparing the costs and benefits?					
1.5 Is there any potential for optimisation of the EA with regard to a modern and efficiently operational work flow?					

2 Did the EA reports deliver information to...

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
2.1 help identify necessary policy interventions?					
2.2. help determine the scale and scope of policy interventions?					
2.3 help choose policy instruments (legal, awareness raising etc.)?					
2.4 help develop policy instruments (including setting their targets and indicators)?					
2.5 help implement policies?					
2.6 help evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental policies?					

3 These and similar Environmental Assessment reports are particularly needed in order to help improve the country's environmental performance with respect to

	Completely insignificant role (1)	2	3	4	Very significant role (5)
3.1. Air pollution and ozone depletion					
3.2. Climate change					
3.3 Water					
3.4 Biodiversity					
3.5 Land and soil					
3.6 Agriculture					
3.7 Energy					
3.8 Transport					
3.9 Waste					

