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## REC Moldova Profile

REC - Moldova was created by the Decision of Government of Moldova no.1071 from October 22, 1998 according to the agreement signed on July 15, 1998 in Brussels by the Government of Republic of Moldova and the European Commission. It is an independent, international, non-profit and non-political organization.

### **Mission:**

The Regional Environmental Center-Moldova (REC-Moldova) was established to assist in solving environmental problems in Moldova and neighboring countries through the promotion of co-operation between NGOs, Governmental bodies, local communities, the business sector and all other environmental stakeholders at both national and regional level. The REC aims to increase public participation in environmental decision making process.

### **Structure:**

*Board of Directors:* responsible for deciding on the policy and programs of the REC. The Board has 7 members: 3 NGO representatives, one member from each founding signatory, one from the USA and one member from both the academic and the business community. The Board reviews the work of the REC every three months.

*Advisory Council:* made up of members of the academic, business, NGO and donor community, the Council provides overall policy guidance to the Board.

*Executive Director and Executive Consultants:* responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the REC work programs

### **Staff and equipment:**

REC Moldova has 14 full time staff: 11 at headquarters and 3 representatives in our branches in Balti and Cahul. REC Moldova is hiring part-time consultants on project basis. REC is keeping a database of consultants and experts in different fields.

REC Moldova headquarters is based in the capital city of Moldova – Chisinau. REC is renting 150 m<sup>2</sup> in the office building in centre of the town. REC headquarters is well equipped with 11 computers, Xerox machine, printers, scanners, high speed Internet connection. REC has an Information Centre equipped with 8 computers connected to Internet and library. REC has two branches in North part of the country – Balti and in South part in Cahul. Branches are well equipped as well having a high speed Internet connection and all necessary office equipment.

### **Activities:**

REC Moldova's main programmes are the following:

- **Environmental Policy Programme**
- **Local Initiatives Programme**
- **Co-operation with NGOs and Local Partners Programme**
- **Information and Communication Programme**

Since 1998 REC has implemented a lot of activities within the above mentioned programmes in order to fulfil its mission. It is worth mentioning a range of projects implemented by REC Moldova, which mainly aimed to:

- Raise public participation in environmental decision-making process
- Assure access to environmental information of all the environmental stakeholders of the country (state environmental authorities, local public administration, environmental NGOs, scientists, private sector, agricultural sector and large public)
- Strengthen partnerships between all the environmental stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels
- Solve local, national and transboundary priority environmental problems through real actions
- Harmonize the national environmental legislation to the EU environmental legislation
- Promote sustainable development principles

Amongst them we notice:

- “Transboundary co-operation at international level between the NewRECs from Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine”
- “Strengthening public participation in Local Environmental Action Plan development and implementation in the Ungheni county”
- “Preparatory EU approximation work of the Republic of Moldova in Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control and Waste Management”
- “Strengthening Local Governments II”, REC-Moldova was the partner within the project
- “Basics for the NIS Sustainable Development Strategy: NGOs perception”, REC Moldova was the partner within the project
- “Development of the Local Environmental Action Plan for the communities of Otaci (RM) and Mogiliov-Podolskii (Ukraine)”
- “Strengthening public participation in Local Environmental Action Plan development and implementation in the Edinet county”
- “Cleaner Production in three NIS countries: Georgia, Moldova and Kazakhstan”, REC is the partner within the project
- “Towards strengthening local environmental governance in the EECCA countries”
- “Evaluation of the environmental state in the basins of the Prut river tributaries in the North-West of Moldova”
- “Environmental Public Awareness and Communication Program in the Stefan Voda District”
- “Strengthening Public Participation in the Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) Development and Implementation in the Stefan Voda District”
- “Save our streams”

Over its existence, REC Moldova’s priority was to support real environmental protection actions and build the civil society in the country, thus REC, with the support of the European Commission, US EPA

and Danish EPA financed over 250 small and medium sized projects which were implemented all over the country.

However, as it was mentioned already, REC was and continues to be actively involved in the implementation of the national and international environmental policies, co-operating strongly in this sense with the Ministry of Ecology, Constructions and Territory Development and other organisations involved in this process.

### **REC Moldova projects:**

- **“New Regional Environmental Centers (NRECs) – Support for Regional and Transboundary Activities and Networking – Countries of Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine”** financed by the European Commission.

#### ***Implementation period: April 2000 - June 2001***

The goal of the project was to promote the sustainable development and the Aarhus Convention principles in the Newly Independent States among different environmental stakeholders.

The objectives of the project were the following:

- Raising awareness of environmental stakeholders and especially environmental NGOs on public participation issues
- Promoting public participation in environmental decision-making process in the NIS countries
- Improving the dialogue between the Government and environmental NGOs
- Facilitating the participation of the most active NGOs in the “Environment for Europe” Conference in Kiev, Ukraine, in 2003.

During the year of 2000, 11 seminars on the Aarhus Convention principles were held in all the counties of the country, with the participation of the NGO leaders, representatives of the ministries and other state institutions, local public authorities and journalists. Around 300 people participated in those seminars.

A range of publications on public participation in environmental decision-making process were published within the project and disseminated among the environmental NGOs, state environmental organisations, teachers, students, journalists and members of the civil society.

- **“Strengthening Public Participation in Local Environmental Action Plan Development and Implementation in the Ungheni County”** financed by DG Environment, European Commission.

The project dealt with developing a Local Environmental Action Plan for the Ungheni county and carrying out a strong public information campaign of the existing environmental problems of the county and possible ways of the solving.

#### ***Implementation Period: December 1999 - February 2001***

**Overall Objectives:**

- To conduct in-depth assessment of needs, proceeding from the social, economic and environmental features of the Ungheni County
- To raise public environmental awareness and commitment and strengthen public participation in environmental decision-making process
- To motivate local community to get involved in LEAP development and implementation

**Outputs:**

- The comprehensive survey of the current situation was completed and basic needs were defined
- The financial needs were assessed, priority projects were elaborated and potential financing sources for a long term were identified
- The LEAP Public Advisory Council was established, gathering local public authorities, NGOs, scientific society, business circles, mass media, etc.

- **“Strengthening Public Participation in Local Environmental Action Plan Development and Implementation in the Edinet county”** financed by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

**Implementation Period: August 2002 - August 2003**

The objectives and planned outputs of the project are similar to the previous project.

- **Development of a Joint Local Environmental Action Plan for the communities of Otaci (Republic of Moldova) and Moghilev Podolskii (Ukraine)** financed by US Environmental Protection Agency and implemented by REC Moldova and REC Kyiv.

**Implementation Period: January - December 2001**

**Project objectives:**

- To provide support to the mayoralties of Otaci and Moghilev-Podolskii towns (settlements placed on opposite banks of the Dniester River) for the transboundary environmental protection of the Dniester River
- To define the common transboundary environmental issues for Otaci and Moghilev-Podolskii towns and elaborate a Joint Environmental Action Plan for the common transboundary environmental issues
- To raise environmental public awareness and facilitate access of the public to environmental information
- To strengthen the public participation in environmental decision-making
- To facilitate transboundary collaboration between the settlements and the collaboration between the local authorities and the local community towards environmental protection.

**Project outputs:**

- A group of interested inhabitants and experts was set up to identify the local environmental issues of the settlements
- A Joint Environmental Action Plan, highlighting the actions towards the protection of the Dniester

River was developed

- An Environmental Information Centre was established in Otaci Town
- A Memorandum of Collaboration in the field of environmental protection was signed between Otaci and Moghilev-Podolskii settlements
- The environmental NGO “Spaseco” was established in Otaci with the assistance of REC Moldova.

➤ **“Strengthening Local Governments II”** – the project was implemented by the United Nations Development Programme Moldova, REC Moldova was the partner within the project.

**Implementation period: December 2000 – February 2001**

The goal of the project was to develop the Strategy for the sustainable development of the Soroca county. REC Moldova developed the component of the strategy related to the environmental protection of the Soroca county.

➤ **“Preparatory EU Approximation Work of the Republic of Moldova in Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control and Waste Management”** financed by DG Environment. The Ministry of Environment and Territory Development of RM was the main partner in the project.

**Implementation period: May 2000 – April 2001**

The project aimed to develop recommendations for the harmonization of the Moldovan environmental legislation with the provisions of the EU legislation in the field of Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control and Waste Management.

The following outputs were achieved within the project:

- Detailed legislative gap analysis in IPPC and waste management sectors was carried out on the basis of the tables of concordances
- Seminars for the key stakeholders involved in the elaboration and implementation of the national legislation in the field of IPPC and waste management were organised
- Modifications and completions to the existing legislation were developed and further EU approximation work was prioritised.

➤ **Developing the Basics for the EECCA countries Sustainable Development Strategy (Common New RECs project)**, financed by the European Commission,

**Implementation period: December 2001 – November 2002**

The overall project objective was to involve the NGOs and the experts in the field of sustainable development from the EECCA countries in the process of developing of a new vision on sustainable development in the EECCA countries.

*The results of the project included:*

- Analysis of long-term objectives in the EECCA countries and their correspondence to sustainable development objectives

- A wide spectrum of NGOs from the EECCA countries involved in the preparatory process to the World Summit in Johannesburg
- Increased public awareness on sustainable development issues in the EECCA countries
- Co-operation established between the organizations working in the area of sustainable development in the EECCA countries
- A publication published on the basics of sustainable development in the EECCA countries and disseminated among different environmental stakeholders of the EECCA countries
- Meetings and seminars on sustainable development principles held with the participation of different environmental stakeholders from the EECCA countries

➤ **“Implementation of the Aarhus Convention: Practical Tools for Insuring Public Participation in environmental decision-making process”**, financed by the Italian Government. REC for Central and Eastern Europe was the main implementing agency of the project, REC Moldova was the partner within the project.

***Implementation period: March - June 2003***

*The project had the following objectives:*

- Promoting the implementation of the Article 6 of the Aarhus Convention;
- Training for the environmental decision-makers in the field of public involvement in the process of launching certain economic activities;
- Disseminating and promoting the most successful practices on public participation in environmental decision-making.

*The results achieved within the project are the following:*

- A seminar on „Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)” was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Ecology, Constructions and Territory Development. The main goal of it was to initiate a dialogue between the parties interested in GMOs before the entrance into force of the Law on Biological Safety of the Republic of Moldova. The seminar was attended by the international experts who shared the experience accumulated by the Central and Eastern European countries in this field.
- The two training organised within the project referred to „Public Participation in the Environmental Decision-making Process”. Those were particularly designed for the new representatives of the local public administration. The main accent was put on the implementation of the article 6 of the Aarhus Convention.

➤ **“Strengthening the local environmental governance in the EECCA countries”**, financed by the Dutch Government.

***Implementation period: December 2002 – November 2003***

The main objective of this regional project was to promote the best practices in environmental decision-making at the local level and identify methods of strengthening the local environmental democracy and public participation in environmental decision-making in the EECCA region.

*The project had the following specific objectives:*

- Dissemination of environmental decision-making practices at the local level in the EECCA countries and identification of follow-up activities aimed to strengthen the local public authorities dealing with environment protection in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Republic of Moldova, Russia and Ukraine;
- Exchange of experience concerning the local environmental policies among the EECCA countries;
- Promoting public participation in environmental decision-making at the local level;
- Strengthening the new RECs capacities to promote LEAPs in the EECCA region.

The new RECs from the Caucasus, Central Asia, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine were the main organizations, involved in the project implementation, while REC Moldova coordinated the project and provided managerial support for it.

*The results of the project are the following:*

The project constituted the first activity on local environmental planning jointly implemented by the RECs, and its results can serve as an example for future similar activities. The Project accomplished the following results:

- The large public was informed about the most successful practices of the local environmental decision-making in the EECCA countries, as well as about the role of the civil society in local environmental planning;
- Regional cooperation between experts on local environmental planning from the EECCA countries and RECs was established;
- The Strategy for LEAP promotion in the EECCA countries and several project concept papers in the given area were developed;
- Training materials on the LEAP development and implementation in the Caucasus and Central Asia were prepared;
- A Conference on the “Local environmental planning in the EECCA countries” was organized, gathering representatives of the RECs, local public administration and NGOs from the EECCA countries.

➤ **“Cleaner Production in selected countries of the NIS – Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Kazakhstan”** – financed by TACIS, launched in February 2003, will be completed in 2005.

The project is implemented by the consortium of three companies: British “IMC Consulting Limited”, Irish “Project Management Ltd.” and Polish Clean Production Technology Centre. The main local partner during the project implementation in Moldova is REC Moldova.

The project relates to the promotion of the cleaner production principles in these three countries as well as initiation of the demonstration projects in the field of cleaner production.

➤ **“Evaluation of the environmental state in the basins of the Prut river tributaries in the northwest of Moldova”** financed by the European Commission.

***Implementation period: December 2002 – December 2003.***

The main goal of the project was to increase the environmental awareness of the population from the basins of the northwest tributaries of the Prut River, especially on the issues related to water protection.

The project also initiated a study on the opportunities of the implementation of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment adopted in Kiev in 2003.

*The results of the project are the following:*

- Seven environmental expeditions were organized along the streams Larga, Vilia, Lopatnic, Draghiște, Racovat, Ciuhur and Camenca – tributaries of the Prut River;
- An inventory of the pollution sources was carried out and an assessment was performed of the current environmental situation in the basins of the aforementioned rivers as well as of the natural monuments and protected areas; a chemical testing of the water from the Prut River tributaries was performed in the region of project implementation;
- Information was selected on possible eco-tourist routes and the most attractive places for tourists in this region;
- Informational seminars were organized for the general public on current environmental issues affecting water quality and, implicitly, people's health;
- Informational materials (flyers, brochures, etc.) were published and disseminated on project results and the analytical summary was issued on the environmental state of the Prut tributaries in the northwest of the country and the natural, historic and cultural heritage of this region; the album "Picturesque Moldova" was published within the project;
- A study was initiated on the ways and possibilities of implementing the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment in the Republic of Moldova (through the organization of a national seminar on implementation of the aforementioned Protocol).

➤ **Environmental Public Awareness and Communication Program in the Stefan Voda District** financially supported by the European Commission.

**Implementation Period: March 2004 - February 2005**

*Project Objectives:*

- Informing citizens about the environmental problems and possible solutions;
- Seeking a wide range of views among community residents to address the environmental problems;
- Convincing the citizens that their opinions and feelings are valuable and reflected in decisions made by the authorities;
- Convincing citizens that, what they can do on a level of individual persons and household is important and can make a difference for the overall quality of the environment and quality of their lives;
- Creation of citizens' commitment towards LEAP implementation.

*Expected results:*

- Four issues of Stefan Voda Monitor to be published and distributed in the settlements of the Stefan Voda District
- Flyers and leaflets on environmental topics to be issued and distributed in all settlements of the Stefan Voda District
- Radio and TV programmes on project activities and environmental problems in Stefan Voda District to be broadcasted
- Trainings and seminars for different target groups to be organized

- Meetings with various environmental stakeholders to be organised
- Public opinion poll on local environmental problems to be conducted in the settlements of the Stefan Voda District
- Drinking water survey from rural wells to be conducted
- Several local environmental initiatives to be supported.

➤ **Strengthening Public Participation in the Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) Development and Implementation in the Stefan Voda District** financially supported by the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment.

*Implementation Period: July 2004 -June 2005*

*Overall Objective:* Strengthening public participation in LEAP development and implementation by involving key local environmental stakeholders and public into the process of LEAP development in the Stefan Voda District.

*Expected project results:*

- Developing a comprehensive survey of the present environmental situation and assessing basic needs in the Stefan Voda District
- Evaluating and highlighting potential participants for the LEAP elaboration
- Providing informational and educational support to the local environmental stakeholders
- Assessing financial needs and identifying potential financing sources for a long term
- Establishing a Public Advisory Council in the Stefan Voda District (gathering NGOs, scientific society, business community, mass-media, volunteers) involved in the LEAP development and implementation
- Issuing and disseminating a guideline addressing public participation in local environmental planning.

➤ **“Save our streams”**, financed by the Little River Foundation (United States).

This is an educational project having as purpose the streams protection through the promotion and application of biological monitoring. The project contributes also to raising the public awareness on the importance of the streams’ protection. The Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) is the main partner within this project. This organization is the initiator and the promoter of the programme “Save our streams” (SOS) in the United States.

*Implementation period: April 2004 – December 2005*

*The results of the project are the following:*

- REC Moldova in cooperation with IWLA organized train-the trainers’ course on “Biological monitoring”. 32 participants, representatives of NGOs, students and teachers were certified in the field of biological monitoring.

- 16 demonstrations of biological monitoring were organised in different settlements, which were attended by the students, teachers and representatives of the NGOs, and on the whole 300 persons have practiced biological monitoring.
- The project was widely highlighted on TV and radio programmes as well as in written press.