

# Can the Emerald Network Serve as a Foundation for Natura 2000?

*Poate rețeaua Emerald servi drept fundament  
pentru Natura 2000?*

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NGO „Arnika“



# Introduction

May 2024: short presentation held in this building



(Emerald or Natura 2000 in Moldova – time for change?)

2025: title change – as “Emerald, or Natura 2000” was an incorrect question

# Why?

As the right question would be:

„How to best use of Emerald for Natura 2000 in Moldova“

This presentation:

- attempts to critically evaluate Emerald in Moldova
- identifies its elements that can be used for Natura 2000
- provides several recommendations on how to fill the gaps and how to continue

# Rationale behind this intervention

- a lot of work has been done on Emerald already
- the RENATA LIFE Project - some additional input for Emerald
- the official EU pre-accession negotiations began in 2024
- a bilateral screening in June 2025 = **start of “real” *preparation* for EU accession**
- once EU screening report is published – **real *implementation* of Natura 2000 needs to start**

# Rationale behind this intervention

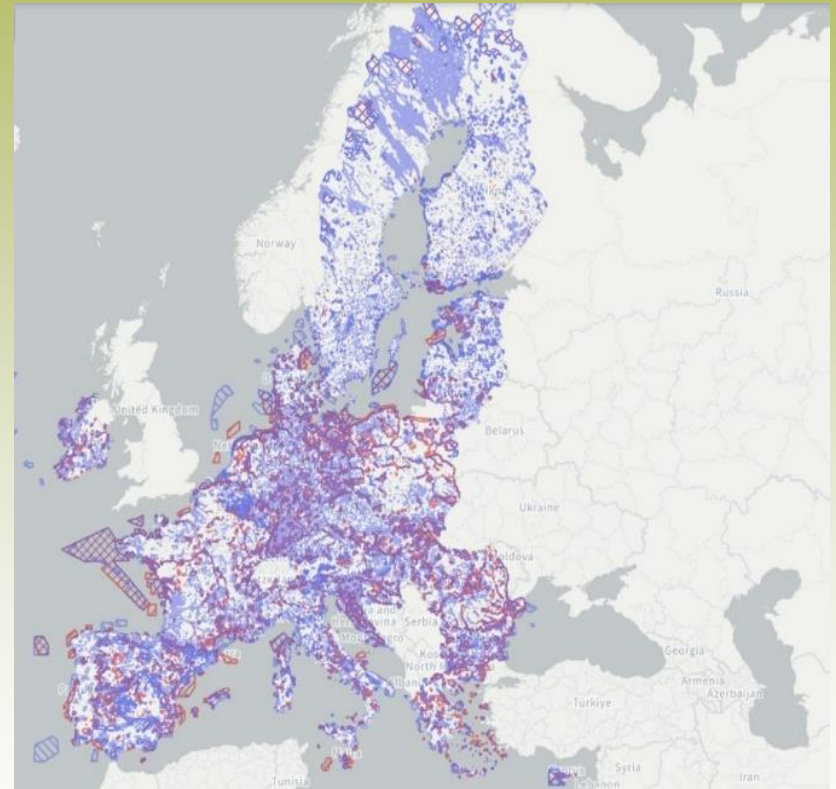
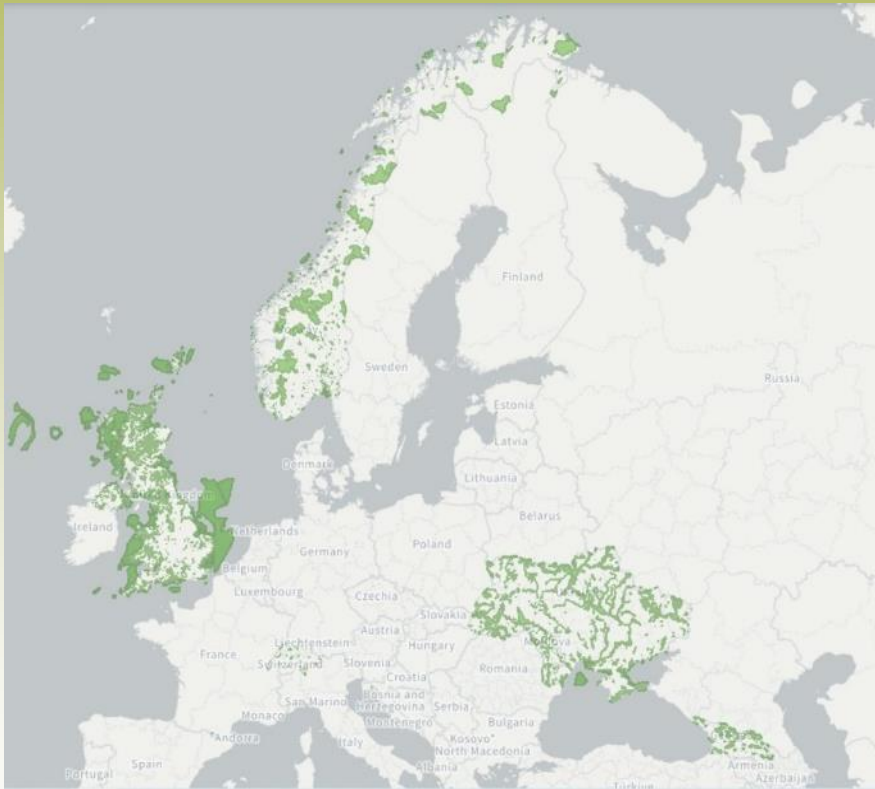
...but time is short...

...as contrary to Emerald, Natura 2000 has no timetable: only once Natura 2000 is prepared, Moldova can enter the EU

- **Natura 2000 is not just renamed Emerald**
- Natura 2000 preparation may take many years

How not to lose time and not to waste limited resources?

# Emerald and Natura 2000 networks – complementary, not identical



# Identical principles of Emerald and Natura 2000

- a network of special *protected areas* established in a unified manner
- supra-national scale (EU, Europe)
- clearly defined habitat types and species (“target features”) justifying each protected area
- each site – map, Standard Data Form, management rules (the latter in the future)

# Identical principles of Emerald and Natura 2000

- national site proposals – subject to international appraisal → requirement for “network sufficiency”
- lists of Emerald/Natura target species highly overlapping (habitat types not )



# What is **not** a goal?

Map of sites?

Designation of individual sites?

Standard Data Forms?

Management plans?

Report to Strasbourg/Brussels?

# What **is** a goal?

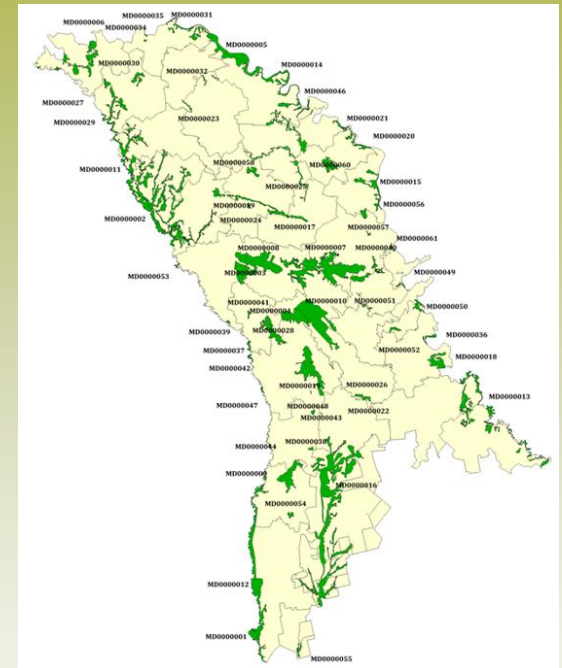
*Sufficient* number and area of sites **maintaining target habitat types and species in a good condition in a long-term**

Sites must be:

- **protected** from adverse impacts (biodiversity assessment in MD)
- **actively managed** according to ecological needs of habitats/species

# How is Moldova doing?

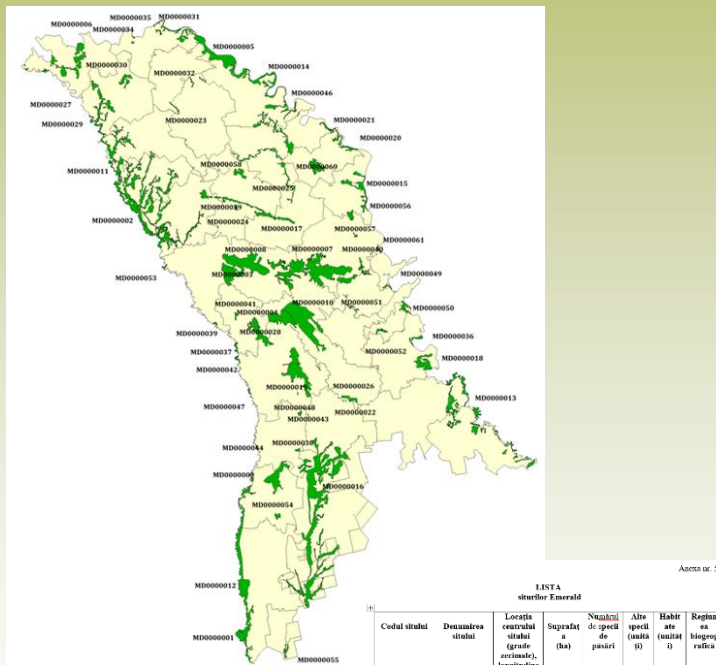
- 2000-2018: 61 sites legislatively recognised  
(Law on ecological network 2022)
- biogeographical seminar 2019:  
sufficiency index of MD = ~ 24 %,  
i.e., 76 % of sites still missing
- plan to 2030: to reach 80 % - but how?



But – sufficiency is not the main problem

# How is Moldova doing?

## Legislative perspective:



ANEXA  
situație Emerald

Codul sitului	Denumirea sitului	Locația centrală sitului (grădini, longitudine / latitudine)	Suprafața (ha)	Numărul de specii de păsări	Alte specii (miliard)	Habitat (unități)	Regiunea biogeografică
MD0000001	Prutul de Jos	28.0724 45.0156	1721.0	53	18	8	STE*
MD0000002	Păcură	27.4141 47.5847	6113.0	45	19	3	CON**
MD0000003	Prutul Făgăruș	28.0726 47.3909	5850.0	20	14	3	CON
MD0000004	Codri	28.3358 47.0831	6485.0	19	16	4	CON
MD0000005	Ungureni-Holmuri	28.0458 48.3864	11180.0	23	21	7	CON
MD0000006	Corăceni	28.3248 48.2873	6992.0	7	14	3	CON
MD0000007	Codri Oltului	28.733 47.3111	28640.0	15	10	3	CON
MD0000008	Bălănești	28.1387 47.3111	11760.0	19	6	3	CON

Emerald MD0000001: dataforma  
<https://times2010.esa.europa.eu/EMerald/EDF.aspx?site=MD0000001>

### EMERALD - STANDARD DATA FORM

For proposed Emerald Sites (Areas of Special Conservation Interest, ASCI),  
 Candidate Emerald Sites and,  
 For Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) - Emerald Sites

SITE: MD0000000  
 SITE NAME: Dobrușa

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. SITE IDENTIFICATION
- 2. SITE LOCATION
- 3. BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION
- 4. SITE DESCRIPTION
- 5. SITE PROTECTION STATUS
- 6. SITE MANAGEMENT
- 7. MAP OF THE SITE

Print Standard Data Form

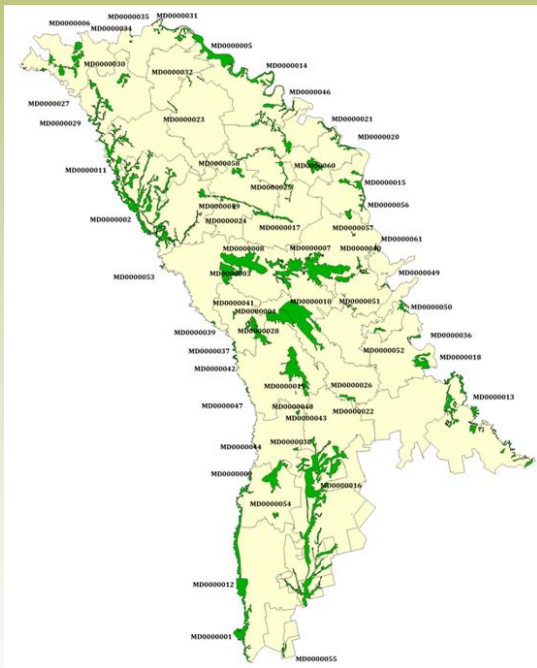
#### 1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

##### 1.1 Type

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# How is Moldova doing?

Legislative perspective:



Real perspective:



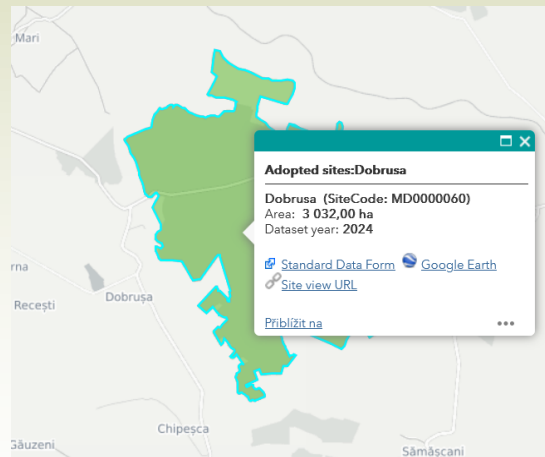
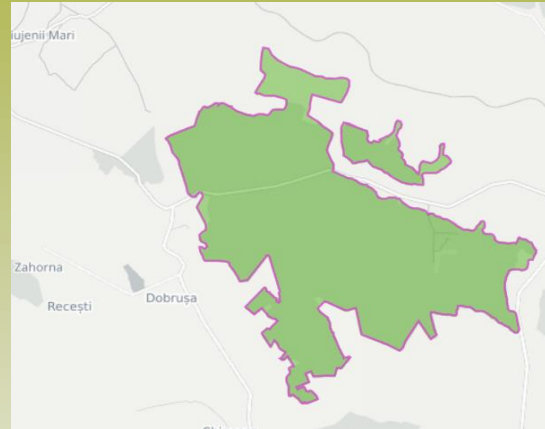
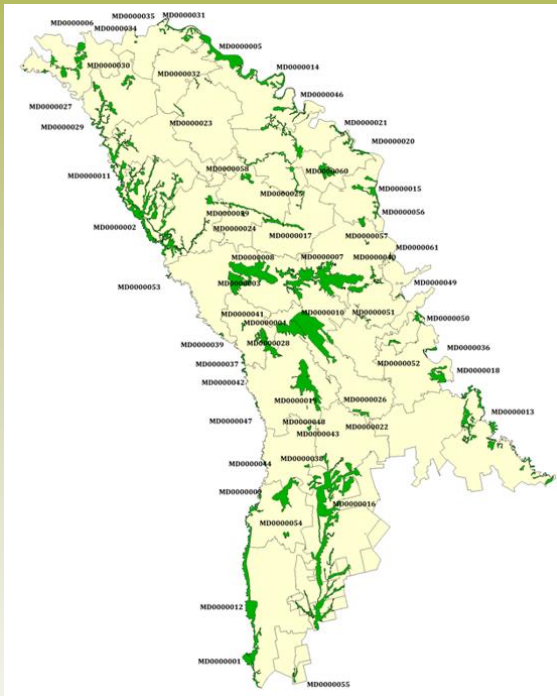
# Why?

Emerald network = network of *protected areas*

Any protected area must be:

- legally recognized
- identifiable in the field
- all property owners be aware they are inside a protected area
- subject to **active conservation management**

# Reality?



# Reality?

Not a single citizen, property owner, businessman has ever heard of Emerald...

Why?

PARLAMENTUL

**LEGE** Nr. LP94/2007  
din 05.04.2007

**cu privire la rețeaua ecologică**

## **Articolul 12<sup>1</sup>. Constituirea rețelei Emerald**

(3) Constituirea rețelei Emerald implică etapele de:

- a) identificare și evaluare științifică a speciilor și a habitatelor protejate la nivel european, prezente pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova;
- b) aprobare a siturilor identificate de Comitetul permanent al Convenției de la Berna;
- c) desemnare națională a siturilor Emerald aprobate și de aplicare a măsurilor de gestiune, monitorizare și informare pentru fiecare sit.



# Reality?

But they should *agree* with site designation and be subordinated to the protection regime imposing restrictions to them:

## **Articolul 16.** Terenurile rețelelor ecologice

(4) Includerea terenurilor în rețeaua ecologică națională se efectuează cu acordul deținătorilor și beneficiarilor acestora, care, ulterior, sînt obligați să respecte prevederile legislației privind regimul de gestiune și de protecție a rețelei.

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But above all....protected areas should be **managed as this is the main aim of their establishment!**



MD0000016 Stepa Bugeacului





# MD00000004 Codru





# Reality?

Objection: no management plans exist yet – no management possible...

According to law, Emerald management plans are due by 2032.

But in 2032, sites such as Stepa Bugeacului will no longer exist!

# Reality?

To make the sites survive, they need to be managed **now!**

**This** is nature conservation, not maps, lists, reports...

# Management plans – an issue *per se*

Site management plan = instruction for the site manager on  
**what and when to do in the protected area**

Thus, the instructions contained in the MP must enable **meaningful  
practical actions and interventions**

# Management plans – an issue *per se*

Law on ecological network, Art. 12<sup>4</sup> para 6 correctly lists the main points of MP in the right order

(6) Planul de management include următoarele informații obligatorii:

a) descrierea teritoriului, inclusiv datele de inventar ale habitatelor naturale și ale speciilor de floră și faună sălbatică specificate în anexele nr. 1-4;

b) obiective de conservare a speciilor de floră și faună și a habitatelor acestora, ținându-se cont de condițiile economice, sociale și culturale, precum și de caracteristicile regionale și locale;

c) evaluarea și determinarea sarcinilor și a măsurilor necesare pentru atingerea obiectivelor de conservare;

d) strategii de gestionare a habitatelor naturale și a speciilor de floră și faună sălbatică;

e) planuri de acțiune, care includ, printre altele, informații despre activități, rezultatele așteptate, resursele umane și financiare necesare, intervalul de timp pentru implementarea activităților planificate;



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But in 2024, guidelines for Emerald management planning were approved - which do not respect the law

Based on these guidelines, no meaningful management plan can be drafted...



# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

4 fundamental differences between Emerald and Natura 2000

# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

## A. Different habitat classification

38 Emerald habitat types identified in MD by now (Annex 1 of the Law 94/07)	Possible corresponding Natura 2000 habitat types (when more than one option, scientific check is needed of their presence/absence in MD)
C1.222-C1.226	3150
C1.25	3140
C1.32	3150
C1.33	3150
C1.3411	no counterpart exists
C1.3413	3150
C1.4	3160
C2.33	3260
C2.34	3260, 3270
C3.4	3110, 3130, 3260
C3.51	3130
D2.226	no counterpart exists
D4.1	7210, 7230, 7220 (occurrence of the latter unlikely in MD)
D5.2	7210
E1.11	6110, 8230
E1.2	6190, 6210, 6240, 62C0
E2.2	6510
E3.4	6440
E3.5	6410
E5.4	6430
E6.2	1310, 1340

# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

A. Different habitat classification: one Emerald habitat type may include more than 1 Natura habitat type

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# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

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# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

B. Sufficiency: what is „sufficient“ for Emerald may not be sufficient for for resulting Natura 2000 habitat types

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# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

C. Additional habitat types/species for Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is to be established also for several species/habitat types not listed in Bern Convention resolutions

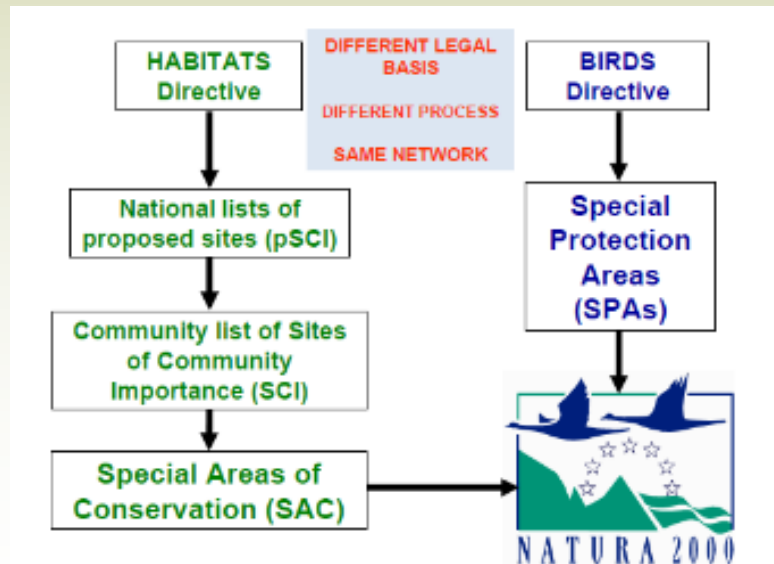
Additional field research needed

# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

## D. Different methodology for sites for birds

Emerald – each site identified for habitat types, species and birds together

Natura 2000 – sites for habitat types/species separated from those for birds



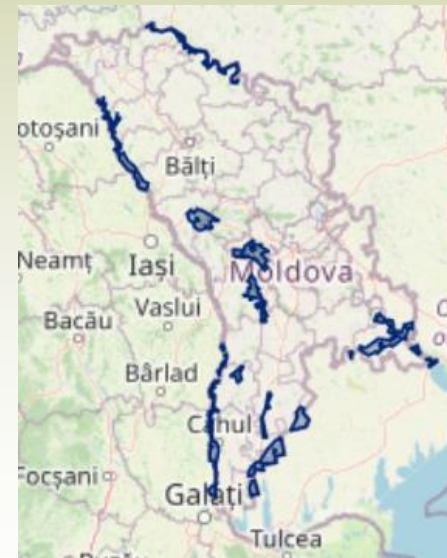


# From Emerald to Natura 2000: challenges of transition

## D. Different methodology for sites for birds

Special Protection Areas for birds are identified independently  
based on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) methodology

MD data unreliable (11 or 12 IBAs?)  
and outdated (data from 2011)



# Positive contribution of Moldovan Emerald

- species list easily convertible to the Natura 2000 list
- habitat list mostly convertible, too
- 61 valuable sites already identified
- certain data on habitats/species from outside Emerald exists
- partly transposed EU law (biodiversity assessment procedure)
- certain level of knowledge of EU requirements
- small but important group of devoted people
- scientific community potentially willing to contribute

**... a good starting point for working on Natura 2000**

# What to do?

# Key „horizontal“ step

Complete transposition of EU Nature Directives - but not in a „statistical“ manner:

Directive 92/43/EEC	1 (a), 1 (c), 1 (d), 1 (e), 1 (h), 1 (i), 1 (j), 1 (k), 1 (l), 6.4, 10, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 13.2	Is lacking
	1 (f), 1 (g), 1 (m), 3.1, 3.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 11, 12.1, 13.1, 14.1, 14.2, Annex I, Annex II, Annex III, Annex IV, Annex V	In part
	1 (b), 15, 16.1, 18.1, 18.2, Annex VI	Fully

A **functional** transposition is needed:

# Key „horizontal“ step

Statistical...



... functional:



# Key „horizontal“ step

And... provisions of EU Directives to be transposed in **relevant** pieces MD law

Example: Law on ecological network 94/07: Art. 12<sup>9</sup> is transposition of Art. 16 and Annex VI of the Habitats Directive which deals with *species protection* – there is no relationship to Emerald/Natura – thus this is **zero transposition** of that Art. 16 and Annex VI...

**Articolul 12<sup>9</sup>.** Extragerea din natură a speciilor

de floră și faună sălbatică

(1) Extragerea din natură a speciilor incluse în anexele nr. 2-4, dacă nu există alte soluții, se permite:

# Key steps to be done towards Natura 2000

0. Legislation – mentioned already

A. Organizational and policy tasks

B. Expert tasks

# Key steps to be done towards Natura 2000

## A. Organizational and policy tasks

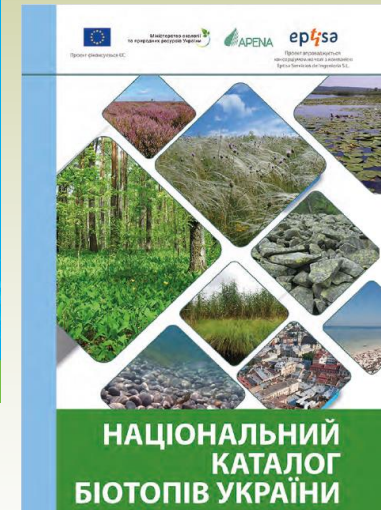
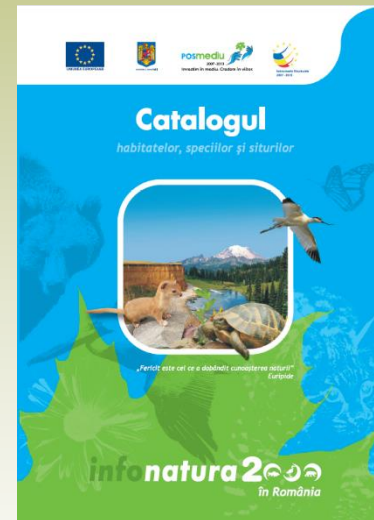
- Ministry of Environment – main body in charge of **policy**
- **newly planned nature conservation agency** – expert body (its role cannot be substituted by the Environmental Agency!)
- new agency must have appropriate staff and resources
- Moldovan scientific community and nature NGOs to be put together and **continuously educated together with civil servants**
- informing public – transparency is a must



# Key steps to be done towards Natura 2000

## B. Expert tasks

- Conversion of list of habitat types into Natura 2000, amendments of Natura habitat types
- Romanian and Ukrainian habitat catalogues may be helpful
- Check of species list, additional Natura 2000 species to be added



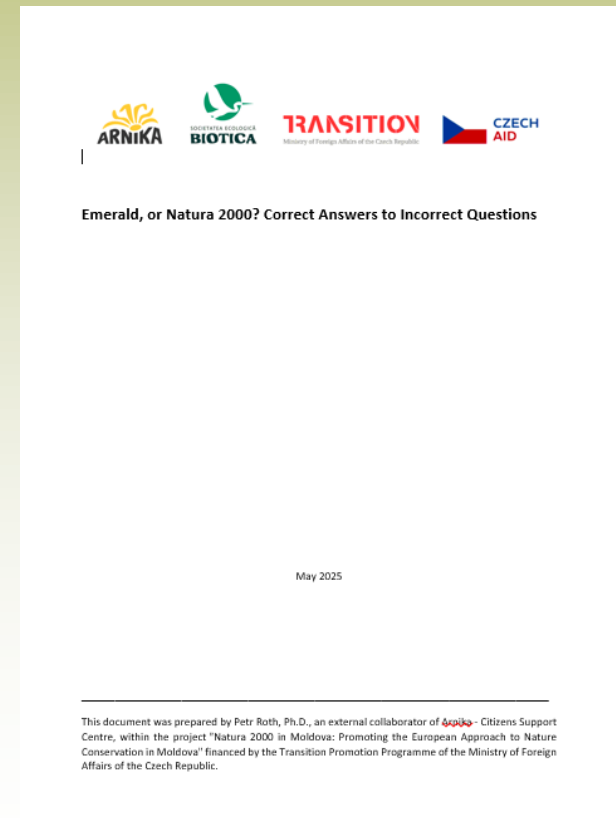
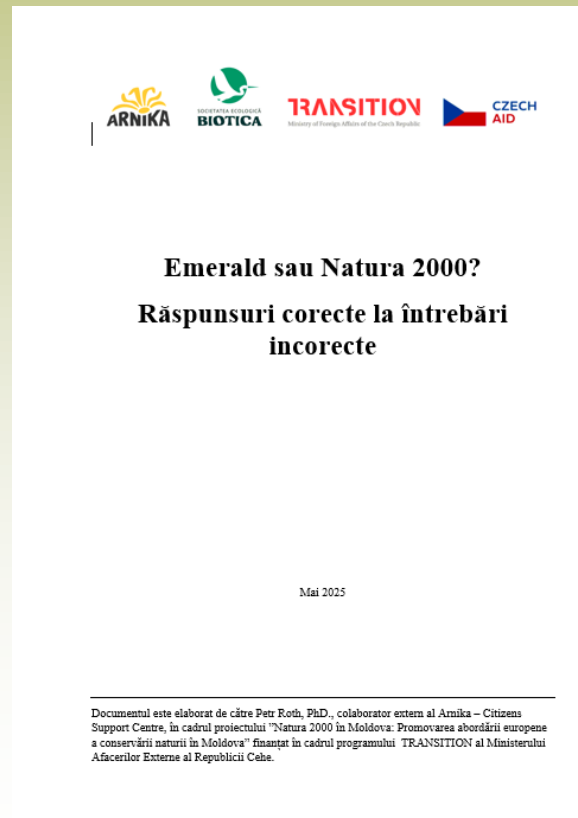
Only species **really occurring in the country** to be listed

# Key steps to be done towards Natura 2000

- updating IBAs – using EU criteria in order to get proposals of SPAs for birds
- developing field methodology for habitat and species data gathering
- gathering of additional habitat and species data from all MD territory
- identification and selection of Natura 2000 sites according to EC sufficiency criteria

# Key steps to be done towards Natura 2000

For detailed description, see the paper:



Thank you very much for your attention.

Vă mulțumim foarte mult pentru atenție.