Bilim alliance on Agroecology in Eastern Europe

and West-Central Asia

Bilim forum 2025

We shared on our connection with the land which makes this land a territory.

We shared on our cultural identity and its related knowledge, diet and seeds that is often threatened by rural exodus or by imposed transformation of our territories

We talked a lot about the preservation of our seeds and seedlings, but also our animal breeds; We shared our seeds, which we are proud of as they are the expression of our place, our know how and our autonomy.

We shared on our collective Rights to be rural communities and Indigenous People with our innovations, our way of life and our relation with our land.

We have been happy to relate to each other, to experience mutual care, learning and solidarity.



Outcomes

The Bilim alliance , during the forum 2025, set up a General Assembly with two co-chairs, and a Secretariat.

Bilim organisations envision a strengthened collaboration amongst its members, including through sub regional projects in the Balkans, Central Asia and the Caucasus, on:

Agricultural Biodiversity **Territories** **Markets**

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Agricultural Biodiversity

- Enhance the collaboration on legal frameworks to protect and develop farmers seed systems and on the improvement of the relevant policy documents (NBSAPs,…)
- Continue to share on our agroecology practices as important for protecting, maintaining and recovering biodiversity

Territories

- Enhance the sharing on strategies and tools for strengthening our territories (LEADER GAL, Biodistricts, GIAHS, others,…) enhancing robust participation of civil society in the governance of local food systems

Markets

- Enhance the sharing of experiences to strengthen our capacities to diversify incomes and control better markets, involving consumers.

The next Bilim forum will take place in Kazakhstan (July 2026) hosted by Zher-Ana Astana

Bilim forum as a place to connect people and organisations

In-person forums are the place of the feelings, care and solidarity; where genuine relationships are being built amongst the individuals representing their organisations. It's the place where trust and mutual understanding can be built. Non-factual knowledge, such as wisdom, emotions, the entire human being with its soul, heart and deep motivation and aspiration can enter in connection with others only through physical presence in the same space. Bilim relies on such spaces for the alliance to be real.



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How do we work?

Beyond the human connections, the forum has been an opportunity for every organisation to **share on their activities** in plenary, with English and Russian interpretation. All participants got a sense of every organisation's priorities, current activities and plan for the future.

The contributions have been displayed under two important thematic sessions: Agricultural biodiversity, and Territories.

In the *formal* session of experience sharing, powerpoint presentations were very helpful for understanding the contribution and were limited to 5 minutes; active listening and **interactions** have been prioritized. The audience engaged in meaningful collective dialogues with the contributors and the other participants

The plenary discussion was intended to give a tone of **horizontality** and peer sharing without hierarchy, it contributed to build the group and the sense of alliance. Each session brought together different Bilim experiences on the session topic, enabling a mutual strengthening process and giving a chance for a collective development of (regional, sub regional, local) future activities.



Bilim region, where red dots represent the location of a Bilim organisation.

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OPENING

21st of May, 2025

The Opening of the forum took place at the Technical University of Moldova (UTM), Faculty of Sciences for Agriculture, Forestry and Environment (Chisinau). Bilim grassroots organisations' representatives are on the University panel today.

The opening session included various speeches and presentations and we report some of them in this report.

First round table facilitated by Maedeh Salimi (CENESTA Iran)

With RUSHNOI and Okvir Zivota

Mirzoshoh Akobirov, RUSHNOI, Tadjikistan

Orchards
Seed library
Teaching

→ Community projects around orchards.
Facing a loss of biodiversity, RUSHNOI organization set up, with local farmers, 64 orchards with local varieties of peers, peach, grapes,… within a national reserve. They collect and distribute seedlings for traditional planting and grafting.

→ Seed foundation. RUSHNOI set up a seed library with the support of the FAO where 220 crop varieties are saved. The seeds are given to the farmers who have to give back the same amount of seeds at the end of the season to maintain the seed library.



RUSHNOI organizes farmers schools to learn how to diversify the production and value local varieties
Photo credit: RUSHNOI

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Sladana Savic, Ecological movement “Frame of Life” (Okvir Zivota), Serbia

Elders knowledge
Seed library
Link with Scientists

→ **Seed library and seed network exchanges**. The elders are considered as a valuable source of knowledge, knowhow and seeds. The preserved seeds of the library are given around and the users are expected to give back a small amount. The organization set up exhibitions and trainings; experiment new species and adapt varieties.

→ **Collaboration with agricultural schools** in Serbia for field experiments and multiplication. The organization seeks to develop varieties resistant to insects and climate change,…
→ Experimental orchards
→ Citizen science project, to support the identification of species in danger

Second round table facilitated by Rozeta Gradeci (COSPE Albania)

With Elkana, Ekoder and CENESTA

Mariam Jordjaze,
Biological Farming Association Elkana, Georgia

Happy to see that Bilim is growing, Greetings from Georgia to your countries !

Consumers & nutrition
Wheat and vegetables seeds. Farmers training.

→ **Agricultural biodiversity:** Elkana is putting efforts to bring back biodiversity after the Soviet period in farmers field: first old varieties wheat, and the, later on, of vegetables,… They preserve seeds and give them to farmers who are asked to give back *more than what has been taken*.

→ Markets: Elkana is working on the development of markets and on **raising awareness of the consumers** on the importance of local food using old varieties for the nutrition, this is where industries are not marking.

→ **Agroecology schools.** Elkana is providing trainings on How to grow old varieties; How to cook them and How to conserve them.

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Arca Atay, Ekoder (Ecological life organization), Türkiye `

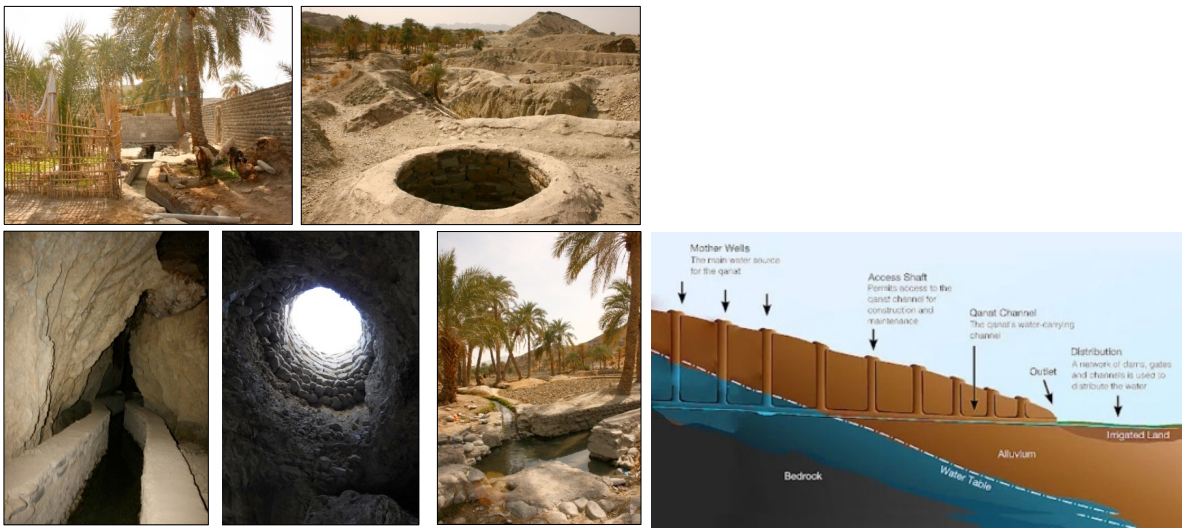
→ **Seed library.** In the municipality of Nilüfer, since 2009 the public land is used for growing food and producing seeds (the seeds being multiplicated have been collected also from abroad Bulgaria, Greece, Cuba, Phililppines, USA, Mexico, there are all non hybrid and adaptable to our soil and climate). In 2015, the municipality set up the Seed library.

→ **Pedagogical garden.** Nilüfer set up an urban garden, in 2015, on 5000m2 of public land. Thanks to the work of volunteers, it shows that urban organic agriculture is possible ; and provide farming opportunity and knowledge to urbans.
→ Seed exchange festivals, every year. Now expanding to new cities.
→ School gardens are also expanding.



Maedeh Salimi, CENESTA, Iran

→ Ancient Persian traditional water management systems show that solutions (to climate change e.g.) can be found in traditional systems, based on Indigenous knowledge, shaped over time by climate, geography, and community collaboration and still living (these systems are still used, and still evolving). These three examples are recognized as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems.



Qanats—an ancient Iranian heritage and a traditional system for groundwater harvesting. Qanats are underground tunnels that carry water from the mountains to arid lands. This local innovation has played a key role in developing qanat-based farming systems, even in the heart of the desert. These systems are deeply rooted in traditional knowledge. Many of them are still in use today, and two have been recognized as GIAHS sites by FAO. Qanats are not just irrigation systems—they make it possible to sustain life and grow food in one of the harshest environments, in a sustainable way.

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Flood-harvesting system in one of Iran's GIAHS sites, called **Baghestan**, located on the southern slopes of the Alborz Mountain range in Qazvin. Here, communities turned the threat of floods into an opportunity to grow gardens. **The orchards are designed to be flooded: as one fills, water flows to the next, and so on—creating a chain of orchards**. Water gradually **soaks** into the soil, providing **moisture** during the hot months, while also **recharging groundwater and lowering flood risk in nearby homes**. The water distribution system is highly sophisticated and has been recognized as part of Iran's intangible cultural heritage.

Runoff harvesting system in **Estahban**, where farmers grow rainfed figs with only about 200 mm of annual rainfall. This is also a GIAHS site. A special variety of fig tree is planted **on steep slopes, 1–2 meters deep in hand-dug pits**. Rainwater either flows naturally **into these pits** or is guided by small channels built by farmers. This **keeps** water available to the roots longer, reduces **evaporation**, conserves **soil and water**, and prevents **erosion**. The trees rely entirely on rainfall, and the figs dry naturally on the tree. This 250-year-old system sustains 2.6 million fig trees across 26,000 hectares.



« The GIAHS initiative reminds us that protecting these systems means recognizing the people who built and maintain them, the knowledge that sustains them, and the ecosystems they care for » Maedeh Salimi, CENESTA



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Third round table facilitated by Hanna Hronska (Global Ecovillage Network, Ukraine)

With Union of Women of Indigenous Peoples of Russia, Zher Ana Astana, ANDR and Schola Campesina



Hanna Hronska, a representative of the Global Ecovillage Network Ukraine is facilitating the discussion between Zher-Ana Astana, the Albanian Network for Rural Development, Schola Campesina and Union of Women of Indigenous Peoples of Russia

Amina Akhpasheva,
Union of Women of Indigenous Peoples of Russia

Our culture, our community is being affected by **unrooting changes.** My parents used to raise sheep's and now the coal mining started and our way of life has been transformed. The challenge is on how to **transfer our way of living to the new generations;** our relation with the land, our national dishes, our traditional cooking, the ustensils used to cook, how to cook,… The importance of the intergenerational knowledge transfer not very well understood. The young people are forced to leave native places; this move is also a move of culture. Extraction of mineral resources is at the root of the loss of our nation. For many this is a minor issue.

The young people are forced to leave native places; this move is also a move of culture.

Indigenous people Way of Life, Food, Culture and **Land**

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Gulmaira, Zher Ana Astana, Kazakhstan

Grateful to Bilim, I want to gain knowledge all the time, from other farmers. I got a lot of experiences from this group, on seed banks for example, … The visit in Türkiye has been amazing, seeds sharing, from many countries,…

I live close to the mountains and created **big gardens of seeds**; we did not know about seed libraries, now yes ; and we do research with farmers. Today I learnt from RUSHNOI,

We work a lot on soil degradation, erosion, permeability, … Through Bilim, we set up a 3 days **agroecology school on water saving.**

We also organized a Roundtable with farmers, Ministry of labor, Ministry of agriculture, Deputy of the region,… they came and listen to the farmers, they visited farms and thought about how to support this work.

We need more **communication** means, journalists. Who will share these experiences ?



Evelina Eazizaj, Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANDR)

ANDR is an umbrella organization of 40 civil society organisations members, located all across rural Albania and active in agriculture and rural development. ANDR works for better policy making involving local people and adequate for / understandable by them. Policy making that are encompassing the different dimensions and the complex challenges of our rural areas.

→ **Rural parliament**. (https://anrd.al/rural-albanian-parliament/) ANDR organizes this event that brings the voices of the communities and their everyday concerns up at policy level and make it heard by diverse actors, bridging institutions and local communities; and articulating their needs in term of policies. ANDR works at unifying perspectives and at providing a joint manifesto with the most important priorities.

We work at putting Rural at the core of rural policies. That voice should come from rural people, not carried out by someone else.

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In the next Rural parliament edition, we will assess progress on joint priorities of the past Rural parliament and we will identify coming challenges.

Rural parliament is the most sustainable model that we have; it works without subsidies and is based on the will of smallscale farmers to be heard.



Providing people to stand for themselves.
Give people hope that something can change.

Representativity?
We work at strengthening the network identity in order to be representative of our rural areas. To be legitimated by smallholders, we consult a broad network of people, organisations,…
When we suggest an opinion , we consult with more than 400 participants to make it legitimate.
We also built a partnership with Tirana agriculture University, to give another kind of credibility to our bottom up practices.

Andrea Ferrante, Schola Campesina, Italy

Knowledge is our strength, it's why Bilim (*Kowledge* in Turkic languages) is named as such. In Agroecology, knowledge is intensive, and the **control on our knowledge** is a major asset. Agroecology schools are the place where the dialogue amongst different knowledge happen; and where farmers' knowledge is recognized as central.
→ Knowledge for Biodiversity. Our seeds are knowledge and need to be protected as such.
→ Knowledge and Territories. Our cohesion as a community and the vitality of knowledge shared there is what enable us to protect and give value to our territory.

*Farmers are the **innovators**; they are those to tell other actors of the territory how to build sustainability; based on long term conservation of our **territories**. In Agroecology **farmers build an economic model;** not the other way round; and to do this, we build alliances with institutions, local authorities,… (Example of the Biodistrict)*



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FAO REU, Anna Kanshieva

◊ **Biodiversity in Action series**. Biodiversity, climate change and nutrition are interconnected. Traditional agricultural practices increase the resilience toward climate change and agroecology helps conserve biodiversity and climate adaptability. Biodiversity for food and agriculture, including associated biodiversity, is fundamental to food security. More information in the series of "Biodiversity in Action": https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc3397en https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cc8834en and https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd2825en

◊ **Farmers' seed systems.**
Regional work for a better recognition of farmers' seeds system as holders of a unique heritage (tangible (seeds) and intangible (associated traditional knowledge). This work is done with many Bilim organisations, including through the E-School for paralegals on "Farmers' Seeds for Food and Livelihood Security" hosted by ADI.
The challenge is to skill civil society organizations to advocate for farmers' seeds systems, to speak common language with policymakers as well as to push for the recognition of traditional knowledge and make use of the Access & benefit sharing mechanism (Nagoya Protocol).

◊ **GIAHS** - Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
The criteria to be considered a GIAHS is, amongst others, to have local food production and processing systems; traditional knowledge systems; important agricultural biodiversity; important social organisations; unique landscape or seascape, and a plan for the area's Active Conservation.

◊ **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**. Each country is supposed to update its National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Only Moldova updated the NBSAP out of 17 countries (past year deadline). There is an opportunity to still engage to influence the update process of the NBSAPs.
This process refers to a whole-of-society approach, where civil society organisations (CSOs) can claim to be involved.

◊ FAO REU 3d regional dialogue on Biodiversity will happen in November 2025.
◊ The UNCBD COP17 will be held in Armenia, in our region !

The opening of the forum also included speeches from :

- **Ana Coutinho**, Leading Coordinator, NGO Gradina Moldovei, Republic of Moldova
- **Vasile Sarban**, State Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Republic of Moldova

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- **Sergiu Turcanu,** Board member and PGS CERT Coordinator EcoLocal, Republic of Moldova
- **Tudor Robu**, Adjunct Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Representative, Republic of Moldova
- **Sergiu Popa**, Associate Professor-Dean, Faculty of Agricultural, Forest and Environmental Sciences, Technical University of Moldova (UTM)

After this Public event, opening the Bilim forum, we gathered in the garden of the University and started our internal Bilim time.
We made a round of presentation and shared some updates:

- Arca reported on his participation at to the AEF workshop on public authorities & Agroecology in Cuba
- Rozeta and Mariam shared on their participation to the AEF Asia learning in Indonesia, where RUSHNOI and ADI representatives also took part.



Thematic session 1: Agricultural biodiversity

REVIVE PRACTICES & REVIVE VARIETIES

RUSHNOI: "Growing and recovering a diversity of apples (52 varieties), pears, grapes, rhubarb,… We work at maintaining in cultivation, varieties that have been wild before. Future: Collect more varieties to grow from the wild mountains; Train women to grow them; Create space for intergenerational learning and skill youth."

ZZ EkoLinden: **"**Variety of melon , very sweet,… We search on how to mix cultivated alphapha and other legumes. We have endemic species for which we want to advocate to our Ministry of Environment to save them".

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Global Ecovillage Network Ukraine: "Traditional cereals varieties like amaranth (you can take sweet out of it,…). We recover and maintain crops cultivated in ancient time. Gluten free old varieties. Difficult to find seed banks."

Frame of life / Okvir Zivota "People used to know how to graft and make seedling. Now the villages are empty and the **know how is gone.** The trees will die and so we made connection with grafting people to train other people to graft. We provide grafted seedling and so we preserve the tree. We established some orchards, aslo to save the fruits variety."

"Before, people could have great yield on small plots; we want to revive these practices." Suzana Dimitrievska

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A focus on : ZZ EkoLinden (North Macedonia) : the role of the cooperative to find viable markets



« We need to learn from Bilim how to fight for our work. I would not have said that at the beginning. Now yes ».

Suzana Dimitrievska

The cooperative Eco Ilinden is in the village of Mustafino in the central part of North Macedonia. Until a few years ago, it was a village exclusively engaged in agriculture.

Today's average of land per farmer is 10 hectares, but this means that a large number of farmers have given up and now agriculture is an additional business for them.
The village is located in a very dry region with a very dry climate. Although in the past a lot of vegetables were produced, now the main products are fodder and cereals. Each family still plants vegetables for themselves and some for the green markets.

The cooperative produces fodder and alfalfa pellets (in larger quantities), vegetables such as beans, peppers and tomatoes in (smaller quantities).
We are facing problems in production, irrigation, and the storage of raw materials is a big problem too.

The goal of the cooperative is to convert the village into a successful example of a sustainable way of living in the rural environment through our activities of organic production and care for biodiversity, use of old varieties of seeds, etc. But due to the lack of storage facilities, farmers sell raw materials very cheaply and many of them decide to remain in conventional production and use artificial fertilizers, etc. for higher yields.

As organisation and cooperative, ZZ Eko Linden seeks to **create viable markets** for farmers in a country where *agroecology* is not at all a governmental priority. The strategy of the cooperative to develop our region and support food producers is to diversity the products to be marketed and to process crops into products of excellence to be sold in the local markets but also abroad. They now found an external market for this kind of high quality and tasty products, still relying -and wishing to keep relying- on the local market. « *Our neighboors are the most secured market for us.* »

The cooperative gathers organic farmers using rotational system. Eventhough livestock keeping turned to be less important than before, we seek to preserve the endemic fodder crop alphalpha (cfr : workshop in 2022 on Alphalpha in circular economy).

A focus on : Ecological movement "Frame of life" / Okvir Zivota (Serbia)

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To save agricultural biodiversity is the focus of the Ecological movement "Frame of life". Old varieties are very well adapted to climate conditions and their fruits are of very high nutritional quality.
Okvir Zivota organizes:

- Seed network exchanges.
- Exhibitions.
- Trainings.
- New species development.
- Awareness raising on danger from dam buidling.
- Community seed bank (from 2019) where seeds are distributed around and it is asked to the farmers to give some seeds back the year after. We look for varieties **resistant** to insects, climate change, We talk to **elders** to get seeds ; we experiments. Elders are reluctant to give seeds ; we managed to collect small amount.
- **Collaboration with agricultural schools** in Serbia: they multiplicate seeds for our seed bank.
- Experiment orchards (thanks to FAO)
- Citizen science project and identification of species in danger

Other Bilim experiences to save biodiversity?

- Ukraine. Agriculture public parks in cities to save biodiversity where people (often unconnected to agriculture) walk and rest. There are small orchards and small gardens; information about insects and plant.

- Kazakhstan. Training and collaboration with researchers on Rotation in pastures, Soil erosion, seed conservation, specificities of soil, Diversity in livestock breeds; fodder species and fodder quality, Food growing and nutrition.

- Georgia. Training for farmers, Interviews of elders. We work on a methodology on how to collect this information, and disseminate in social media. We collaboration with young people who make video. In the future we will work more on wilde fruit.

POLICY WORK on Agricultural biodiversity
How to communicate with third parties, policy makers, in advocacy efforts?

Special attention to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 10 and 4
https://www.cbd.int/gbf

Global Biodiversity Framework Target 10
Enhance Biodiversity and Sustainability in Agriculture , Aquaculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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Global Biodiversity Framework Target 4 Halt Species Extinction, Protect Genetic Diversity, and Manage Human-Wildlife Conflicts

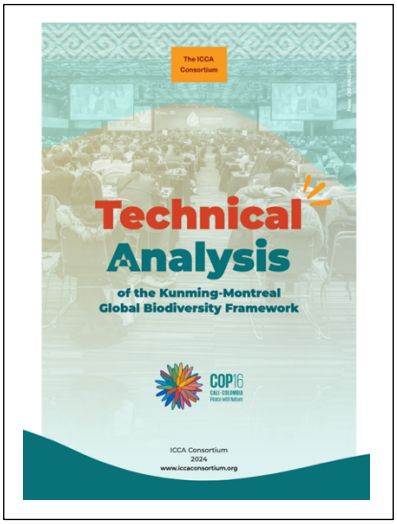
« The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted during the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) following a four year consultation and negotiation process. This historic Framework, which supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and builds on the Convention's previous Strategic Plans, sets out an ambitious pathway to reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. Among the Framework's key elements are 4 goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030.

The implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework will be guided and supported through a comprehensive package of decisions also adopted at COP 15. This package includes a monitoring framework for the GBF, an enhanced mechanism for planning, monitoring, reporting and reviewing implementation, the necessary financial resources for implementation, strategic frameworks for capacity development and technical and scientific cooperation, as well as an agreement on digital sequence information on genetic resources.

In adopting the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, all Parties committed to setting national targets to implement it, while all other actors have been invited to develop and communicate their own commitments. At the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the world will take stock of the targets and commitments that have been set. » https://www.cbd.int/gbf

Useful resource:

1. Check the webinar recording « Is Agroeoclogy in COP's agenda ? » (held on March 20, 2025) to support civils society to push for Agroecology to be in the agenda of the Conference of the Parties of the three Rio Conventions. With the contributions of Gordana Duric, Madina Sadirdinova, Hanieh Moghani and Oliver Oliveros.
2. Guidance for Developing and Updating National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (2024) Global Alliance for the Future of Food, Biovision Foundation, WWF International, Alliance of Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, and the Agroecology Coalition
3. Agroecology Coalition policy brief Agroecology: Connecting People, Land, Climate and Biodiversity.
4. ICCA Consortium Technical Analysis of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework https://www.iccaconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/en-technical-analysis-2025.pdf



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Field visit to Mariana's (founder of Gradina Moldovei and seed saver) garden



Evening chatting at the hotel, Chisinau
Photo credit: Barbara Kurek

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Thematic session 2: Territories

Agroecology is happening at territorial level, with supportive national and international policies. A territory is a complex entity without clear borders and is the place where communities live their connections with the land and live their cultures.

Bilim organisations are all active in preserving and protecting their territories, through diverse actions and different approaches. This session is aimed at strengthening this work through mutual inspiration.

In Italy, the Biodistrict is allowing municipalities to work with organised farmers. The involvement of local authorities is of great support for farmers and agroecology.

In Iran, CENESTA and the ICCA consortium emphasizes that territories are places managed by rural communities and indigenous people through their culture and their dynamic knowledge systems. It's important to move beyond the concept of landscape (used in GIAHS) and consider the complex territories where different rural communities and indigenous people live there with different livelihood and cultural systems (diverse groups of pastoralists, farmers, foresters, …) combining these systems under customary rules. CENESTA has been working for decades to value the customary and peaceful articulation of these diverse systems to the authorities.
Still, GIAHS is an interesting tool to value a territory and defend it at higher policy levels, through the recognition by the UN of the value of it and the importance to preserve it. It also enable civil society groups to enter in dialogue with the Governments, when this is possible.

In Türkiye, Ekoder worked with the municipality and cooperatives to set up four farmers' markets as well as food production on a public, non used, land. The municipality, pushed by the civil society organisations implemented a processing unit and bought a composting machines at the use of the cooperatives. This experience shows the power of well organised civil society and consumers groups when well organised to work hand in hand with the local authorities to develop agroecology in their territory.

In Ukraine, local communities seek to maintain their traditions and be recognized and consulted by the Governments. The Union of Women of Indigenous Peoples of Russia uses social media (video, posts) to share their concerns and reach the authorities and the general public (e.g. raising awareness on the extractive activities of gold mining taking out the water from the ground); it's a way to speak out and defend their Rights as a minority, systematically put aside and intimidated.

Local Action Groups (supported by the European Union) are also interesting tools to engage for our territories. The ANDR, organise LAG in Albania, it's a way to gather different actors to engage for the preservation and development of the place where they live and work; it's a space for joining forces to address common challenges, generate appropriate services, etc. Successful LAG requires trust, social capital, local leadership and time. LAG creation car start from festivals, and friendly group discussion on *What you like/dislike in your village?* to lead to in-depth multiactor conversation where perspectives of challenges, strength and opportunities are shared.

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FAO can support Bilim organisations to legitimise their role in their territory, and facilitate their active participation in governmental decisions on rural areas, entering in discussion with the legal representatives and argues for a Rights approach to the conservation.




In Tudora, agriturism and natural reserve. Photo credit : Gradina Moldovei

The Territory of the Dolgan

"I am a representative of the small-numbered people of the North - Dolganin. We live on the territory of Russia in the Arctic is the Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets Municipal District. The total number of Dolgans in Taimyr is somewhere up to 6000 people. On our territory there are polar bears, wild reindeer, wolves, Arctic foxes, musk oxen, brown bears, moose and swim different kinds of fish, as well as marine animals such as walrus, seals. There are a lot of wild plants, berries - blueberries, blueberries, cloudberries, different mushrooms, wild onions. When spring comes to us on Taimyr from the southern countries of the world come different birds and by the fall, having gained strength they with their grown chicks fly back to the southern countries of the world. The food flora and fauna of the Taymir gives such fast and strong growth to the chicks that they quickly grow up and fly back to the southern countries of the world. Taymyr is also home to the small peoples of the North: the Dolgans, Nenets, Evenks, Enets and Nganasans.

We conduct hunting, fishing and reindeer breeding, as well as collecting wild plants. On the territory of Taimyr, there are about 24 settlements where these peoples live compactly. There is also the city of Dudinka and the city of Norilsk, where the mining company MMC Norilsk Nickel is located. The oil company Rosneft also came to our lands. With the arrival of non-mining companies, hunting and fishing are becoming more and more difficult, and people rely more on financial compensation from these companies rather than on the power of nature.

Especially there are a lot of mosquitoes and mashkara, which are the food base for fish fry. The entire territory of Taymyr is located on permafrost (ice under the ground). Due to climate change towards warmth, the ice under the ground begins to melt and ravines appear, small lakes and rivers disappear.

That's short about our territory. I have a question **how to preserve our wild flora and fauna** in the form of seeds?"

Anonymous Amyaksin participant from Northern Russia

Our Indigenous people live in the Amyaksin territory along with the white bears, in Northern Russia. Our Way of life, our Language (Dolgan), our food culture is severely threathened by recent changes and cultural domination.

Report drafted by Schola Campesina, in consultation with Bilim organisations, on June 2025

With FAOREU and Agroecology Fund support. Disclaimer :Agroecology Fund and FAO's contribution should not be considered as an endorsement of this products.

Bilim governance

The last day of the forum (May 24th, 2025), the first formal General Assembly of Bilim took place. The General Assembly brought modifications and validated the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding of Bilim and its two annexes. It also discussed and agreed on a Common pathway for the coming year (to be found at the beginning of this report > Outcomes).





The Bilim Memorandum of Understanding and its two Annexes (Secretariat Terms of Reference and Co-Chairs Terms of Reference) received some proposal of modifications that have been discussed within the General Assembly (GA).

Validation of the two volunteers to the role of Co-Chairs the General Assembly, until -at least- the next forum in July 2026.

- Mariam Jorjadze, Elkana
- Gordana Duric, Alica Foundation

Secretariat: the adopted solution is to have a transitional secretariat, until the next forum in July 2026, where Schola Campesina is still formally in charge of the Secretariat while hiring someone from a Bilim organization to do the job.

This community exists to bring our knowledge in common, to have bigger impact; let's build local projects, bilateral and subregional collaborations; we cannot do without each other, we need eachother, it's for a better improvement of each of us and to make our world better.

Co-chair Mariam Jorjadze's closing remark

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We concluded the forum with a visit to the EkoLocal farmer's market with Sergiu Turcanu

Bilim organisations attending the forum: Agency of Development Initiative, Alica Foundation, ANDR, CENESTA, Community of indigenous minority Dolgan "Amyaksin", Cospe Albania, Ecological movement "Frame of life", EKODER, Elkana, Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) Ukraine, Gradina Moldovei, RUSHNOI, Schola Campesina, Slow food Ukraine, Tomiris, Ukrainian Rural Development Network, Union of Women of Indigenous Peoples of Russia, Zher Ana – Astana, ZZ Eko Linden. Excused organisations: Hungarian Agroecology Network Association, Stina.

Notes : Gradina Moldovei hosted the forum and provided all the logistical arrangements. Schola Campesina had a role of facilitating, building connections and reporting. The forum has been funded by FAO REU and Agroecology Fund.

The forum also welcomed :

Anna Kanshieva, from FAO REU, who attended the forum as an external self-funded participant. She shared her valuable insights on Agricultural Biodiversity processes and FAO work on Agroecology.
Gabriela Bucini from the Institute for Agroecology of the Vermont University (Ifa) who attended the forum as an external self-funded observer. The IfA, and Gabriela in particular, has observing the evolution of the alliance and is preparing a publication on Bilim, in close collaboration with Schola Campesina.



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