

Project Update: May 2017

Brief summary:

The Codru Quest has developed further with the finalised analysis of the Phase I Willingness-to-Pay data on valuing ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation in the Codru Nature reserve and the Codru forest. At the same time the new version of the valuation survey for Phase II has been released and is going to be used to gather data from representative sample of population in Moldova. Last but not least, the Codru Quest now has a “public face” in the form of a website www.megaimpact.com. There visitors can discover the goal of the project, its process of doing research, results and impact achieved so far, as well as complete the new version of the survey and learn more about economic valuation of ecosystem services from the ever increasing list of resources.

I. Completed analysis of Phase I data on economic valuation of ecosystem services and biodiversity conservation in the Codru forest.

We have finalised the processing and analysis of Willingness-to-Pay (WTP) data on how Moldovan citizens value the indirect use and non-use benefits of ecosystem services and biodiversity in the Codru Nature Reserve and the Codru forest. These data were collected from 100 respondents through pilot choice modeling survey during the first phase of the project.

The WTP data were analyzed by using two estimation methods: conditional logit and mixed logit. The results of the estimation are available at the following links:

- Conditional logit: <https://goo.gl/k2VylN>
- Mixed logit: <https://goo.gl/zmHkfS>

When plotted to Diagram 1 these results show the dominant preference of preserving the plant biodiversity of the Codru forest, followed by notable valuation of insect biodiversity. The territory of the Codru Nature Reserve received the least attention from the respondents.

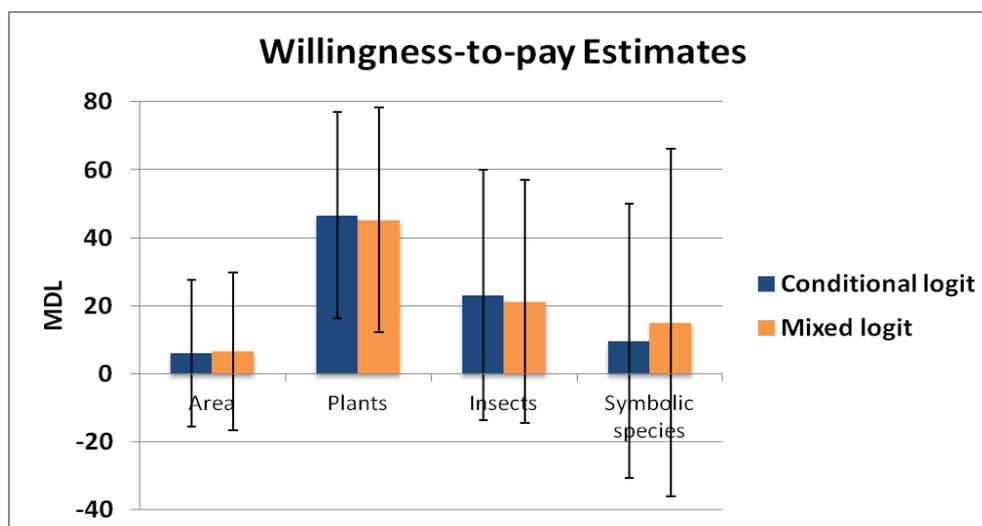


Diagram 1. WTP estimates from the pilot survey of Phase I of the Codru Quest.

The results of the analysis are not released yet, as they are only for the pilot phase of the project and do not reflect the representative sample of population. Nevertheless, they will be presented in the research article and methodology publication to visualise the effects of population sampling and survey design on the quality of data and further analysis.

The WTP data analysis in Phase I was performed with the help of two research assistants from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, Tim de Kruiff and Felipe Fausto. They joined the team of the Codru Quest as part of their practical master studies in order to gain experience in economic valuation of environmental goods and to contribute to the creation of positive change in biodiversity conservation in Moldova.

II. Finalized and tested choice modeling survey for Phase II.

The results of the Phase I surveying and feedback collected from the first 100 respondents allowed us to redesign, improve, and release the new version of the choice modeling survey. It is now available on-line in paper-based and on-line versions and in three languages: English, Romanian, and Russian. The new survey version has better distribution of cognitive workload on a respondent, more realistic and trustworthy description of the scenarios, and better formulation of follow-up questions.

During the following month the new survey is going to be used to gather the WTP data from already a representative sample of population, including the village residents near the Codru forest, and then conduct a more robust and reliable analysis.

III. Created and published website for MEGA Impact Championship and the Codru Quest.

With the help of a web development company we have created and released the official website for the entire initiative of our organization, MEGA Impact Championship, and the Codru Quest that emerged from it. The website is accessible at www.megaimpact.md in English, Romanian, and Russian, and serves the purpose of informing our stakeholders and the general public of the project, its progress, results achieved, and positive impact created. The section on the Codru Quest at www.megaimpact.md/the-codru-quest specifically describes the goal of the project, the process of research work within it, the results and impact achieved up till now, and relevant publications and resources. The section also includes the Phase II choice modeling survey for visitors to complete and thus offer us their WTP data for analysis. Information about the team of the Codru Quest, its partners, appearances in mass media, etc. is available in other sections of the website.