

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CARPATHIAN ESD EXPERT NETWORK

Marta Vetier<sup>1</sup>

22 April 2022

## *Contents*

Aim and disclaimer	2
Status of ESD under the Carpathian Convention	2
Possible roles of the Carpathian ESD expert network	3
<b>Recommendations for the establishment of the ESD network</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Recommendations for operative times</b>	<b>8</b>
Annex 1: Methods and sources of information	11
Annex 2: Overcoming the challenges of existing networks	12



This report constitutes part of the project *Carpathian ESD: Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface*, and is funded by the German Federal Environment Ministry's Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union. It is supervised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and by the German Environment Agency.

---

<sup>1</sup> Contact details: Marta Vetier PhD, e-mail: [marta.vetier@gmail.com](mailto:marta.vetier@gmail.com)

## AIM AND DISCLAIMER

This document aims to give recommendations to actors working on establishing a network of experts on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)<sup>2</sup> under the umbrella of the Carpathian Convention. The recommendations spelled out in the document are not prescriptive and by no means “mandatory”, they are meant to guide actors and spark discussions. The recommendations should not be perceived as “all or none”, any selected number of the recommendations can be implemented or disregarded. Furthermore, there are other steps that the forming network can take beyond those described in this document.

The report is divided into four main sections. The first section *Status of ESD under the Carpathian Convention* gives an insight into what kind of ESD activities are already taking place in the Carpathians. The second section *Possible roles of the Carpathian ESD* expert network suggests some gaps the newly forming network can fulfil. Note that there have been ongoing discussions already among ESD experts on how they see the role of the network. The points raised in this report are meant to complement and underline those roles. The third section *Recommendations for the establishment of the ESD network* contains 10 points on what the actors could do to advance the formation of their network. This section is followed by the *Recommendations for operative times*, which outlines suggestions that can be implemented once the network is already in the operative phases. The *Annex* contain a description of methods, and sources of information; and also a section containing the outputs of the workshop that looked into learnings from existing networks.

## STATUS OF ESD UNDER THE CARPATHIAN CONVENTION

The following section gives a brief overview of the status of education for sustainable development under the Carpathian Convention. It is not aiming to list ESD activities, but rather to give a systemic and critical view of the current situation.

**Process already running for many years.** Building on Article 15 of the Carpathian Convention, the formation of the Carpathian Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) network is taking place intensively since October 2017. The key milestones in the ESD expert network formation are described in the *Briefing on Integration of ESD into the Carpathian Convention*<sup>3</sup>.

**ESD activities are regularly carried out under the Carpathian Convention.** For example, the following were presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) in November 2022:

---

<sup>2</sup> Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is recommended to be used (in contrast to environmental education, climate education, global education). The term *ESD* is in line with global guidelines and terminology used by the EU (EC proposal for a Council Recommendation: Learning for environmental sustainability), by UNESCO (ESD for 2030 framework), and UNECE (Steering Committee on ESD). ESD is also relevant for SDG 4.7. However, ESD experts in the Carpathian have already expressed that they do not want to be fixed on any specific term, but rather consider what the needs are of the Carpathian Convention with respect to education and awareness raising. The aim is to be content-oriented, and not bound to any specific definition.

<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/Awareness%20Raising/ESD\\_Briefing\\_Carpathian%20Convention\\_09.2020.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/Awareness%20Raising/ESD_Briefing_Carpathian%20Convention_09.2020.pdf)

- Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) presented its “Youth at the Top” (lead by ALPARC and co-organized together with other organizations) event targeting children and young adults,
- Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) presented the newly developed Carpathian Ecosystem Services Toolkit and introduced the practical professional training events they organized
- the project partners of SaveGREEN and CentralParks distributed booklets on project outcomes and suggestions.

**Current ESD activities target various groups from youth to professionals and decision-makers.** The above-mentioned ESD activities targeted several profoundly different stakeholder groups: from youth to adults, from less informed individuals to highly trained professionals. They used various tools and methods: from informal, through experience-based learning to formalized training sessions.

**ESD activities currently are not perceived as ESD by several actors.** Currently, the actors implementing ESD activities under the Carpathian Convention rarely speak about their actions as education for sustainable development. Rather they use the phrases “communication materials”, “professional training”, and “capacity building”. This may indicate a narrow view about the scope of ESD: perceiving only those activities as ESD, that explicitly target youth in formalized settings.

**The ESD activities are fragmented.** The ESD activities undertaken by Carpathian Convention actors are fragmented between different projects, countries and implementing organizations, and do not form a coherent ESD framework. This limits opportunities to form synergies, build upon one another, make use of lessons learned, and replicate best practices.

**ESD is not prioritised in projects and proposals.** ESD, in the form of communication, dissemination of project results etc. is part of nearly all projects. Interreg projects specifically need to have a work package dedicated to communication. However, in the case of at least one project presented at the CCIC meeting, the communication work package was talked about more as a “tick-box exercise” and less as a key element of the project. Even though attention should be given to designing and implementing the dissemination of project results in a way to achieve the full potentials of shaping views, perceptions and practices of the stakeholders.

## POSSIBLE ROLES OF THE CARPATHIAN ESD EXPERT NETWORK

The following section points out specific roles that the Carpathian ESD network could fulfil. Previous work of ESD actors has already identified some potential roles, see for example draft vision for the ESD network<sup>4</sup> developed at the ESD workshop that took place during the Science for the Carpathian’s (S4C) 2021 Forum Carpaticum conference<sup>5</sup>. The recommendations below build upon that document, structure its points and expand it with further ideas.

**Lead the development of a Carpathian strategy for Awareness-raising, education and public participation strategy<sup>6</sup>.** Similar to, for example, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

---

<sup>4</sup> The draft vision is a working document, currently in the form of a google document. The host of the document, Tamara Mitrofanenko should be contacted to gain access.

<sup>5</sup> <http://carpathianscience.org/forum/forum-carpaticum-2020/>

<sup>6</sup> See Article 13 of the Carpathian Convention

(UNECE) which has a strategy for ESD<sup>7</sup>, the Carpathian Convention could also largely benefit from having a vision for and approach to awareness-raising, education under the Convention. The newly formed ESD network, together with other actors of the Convention, could be leading the development of such a strategy. The Carpathian ESD strategy could also be the Convention's key contribution to several international processes and agreements, such as UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4.7, 12.1 and 13.1)<sup>8</sup>, European Commission proposal for a Council Recommendation: Learning for environmental sustainability<sup>9</sup>, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)<sup>10</sup>, Environment and School Initiative (ENSI)<sup>11</sup>, UNECE's Steering Committee ESD<sup>12</sup> etc. See also the point "Contribute to the implementation of international ESD initiatives, and establish international synergies" below.

**Enhance synergies across projects.** An ESD network under the Carpathian Convention could contribute to enhancing synergies between Carpathian projects and other activities carried out under the Convention. The ESD network could, among others:

- Share information across projects
- Help in translating and adapting outputs to local audiences and circumstances
- Collect and disseminate case studies of best practices

**Enhance the reach and non-tangible impact of activities.** Building upon recent advances in education science (including adult education) the ESD network could contribute to improving the quality and reach of communication activities of projects running under the Carpathian Convention. Getting right the audience, the message and the tool can maximize the impact of a project. The ESD experts of the network could, among others:

- suggest a wide array of appropriate ESD methods to move beyond websites and booklets, and provide input to dissemination tools and materials (e.g., style, language, layout);
- help in identifying target groups, and provide research input specific to the target audience on why and how people accept (or reject) something.

**Create a bridge between the Carpathian and national levels.** The ESD network could act as a bridge between the English-speaking international Carpathian meetings and their documents, and the diverse group of national-level actors. It could provide support to the National Focal Points to develop activities to inform, consult and involve stakeholders in the activities of the Convention. The actors of the ESD network can be to promote and distribute information within each country about the Convention, in cooperation with the Focal Point.

**Reach new actors.** The new ESD actors in the Carpathian Convention could create new ties that could connect the Convention to individuals and organizations they have not managed to reach previously, such as students, teachers, local NGOs, local businesses, and local administrations. This could contribute to loosening the core-periphery network structure currently characterizing the Convention.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://unece.org/esd-strategy>

<sup>8</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

<sup>9</sup> <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/green/education-for-environmental-sustainability>

<sup>10</sup> <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ensi.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://unece.org/steering-committee-esd>

**Contribute to the implementation of international ESD initiatives and establish international synergies.**

National ESD experts are usually involved in several international networks, organizations, and conferences specifically focusing on education for sustainable development. The Carpathian ESD network could make the Carpathian Convention and its activities more visible at other international fora. Furthermore, it could lead to the emergence of new international level synergies, and could galvanize the implementation of other international agreements and processes in the Carpathians: UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4.7, 12.1 and 13.1), EC proposal for a Council Recommendation: Learning for environmental sustainability, UNESCO, Environment and School Initiative (ENSI), UNECE's Steering Committee ESD etc.

**Raise awareness about ESD.** In some Carpathian countries education for sustainable development is not broadly understood, embraced, and implemented. An ESD expert network can contribute to raising awareness about education for sustainable development, and help more actors understand the relevance and importance of ESD.

**Enhance cross-sectoral cooperation.** The ESD expert network, which has members from several different sectors and fields (education and environmental experts, NGOs, decision-making bodies, local communities, academia etc., see also *Recommendations for the establishment of the ESD network*) can enhance cross-sectoral cooperation in the Carpathian region. Cross-sectoral cooperation is a challenging task – not only in this region but globally – yet it is a building block of sustainable development. All efforts that enhance cross-sectoral discussions and cooperation should be cherished and nourished.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ESD NETWORK

The following section details 10 points that can enhance the process of establishing an ESD network under the Carpathian Convention. As stated in the *Aims and disclaimer* section, these points are not meant to be seen as mandatory steps, but rather as recommendations that the actors should discuss, internalize, and adapt to their current circumstances and opportunities.

- 1. Engage actors early in the process.** The potential actors of the ESD network should be invited to contribute to the establishment of the network. Early engagement of actors aims to give ownership to actors, manage expectations and identify the added value of the network to the actors by developing a common vision and identity of the network (see point 3 further below).
- 2. Strive for a diverse mix of actors.** In the last years, there were several ESD events, reaching out to different groups of actors. Based on previous participation in ESD-related events and by reaching out to further actors, additional potential ESD members need to be identified. The ESD network should include:
  - Official delegates from Carpathian countries' education and environmental ministries<sup>13</sup>
  - ESD experts and practitioners from research-focused academic institutions (e.g. universities) and practice-focused formal and informal institutions (e.g. environmental education centers, protected area administrations, schools, kindergartens)

---

<sup>13</sup> This process is underlined also in the recommendation of the 12th CCIC meeting, the CCIC "requests the Parties to nominate ESD experts to the Carpathian ESD Expert network" and "encourages the S4C to propose and invite scientific ESD experts to join the Carpathian ESD Expert Network".

- experts in other fields (e.g. biodiversity, forestry, agriculture) who are involved in formal and informal education and awareness-raising activities, for example from protected areas, NGOs, tourism operators

Box 1: Added benefits of diverse networks

A role of the ESD network (see above) can be to allow constructive interaction between these different sectors, furthermore, as explained in Box 1, diverse networks have multiple added benefits.

- Sharing knowledge, experience, and approach leads to good mutual understanding
- Collaboration with organizations and entities outside the network bring new input to the network
- Help fight fragmentation and break down silos
- Creates a critical mass of impact and influence
- Combines “thought power”

**3. Develop a common vision.** Early on, the cornerstones of the vision, identity and operating framework of the ESD network should be defined together with the actors (see also points 4 and 5)<sup>14, 15</sup> Furthermore, a more short-term work plan or activity plan should be defined together with members of the network. This document set common “exciting”<sup>16</sup> and measurable goals with a concrete timeline and measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators. Having a concrete activity plan can serve as a low-level entry barrier, and thus help to manage expectations (see also point 1, above), provide an easy start and can give the motivation to contribute.

**4. Establish a Carpathian identity.** The Carpathian ESD network should develop its own *Carpathian* identity and focus on (1) issues that are relevant to the Carpathians, and (2) activities that serve the Carpathian Convention. The actors of the cultural heritage working group could also be invited into this process. Establishing a Carpathian identity can also distinguish the network from the UNECE and UNESCO initiatives that were successful to varying degrees in different countries.

**5. Discuss possible operating frameworks.** There are several different operating frameworks for the ESD network at the international level<sup>17</sup> (see Box 2). The network actors and other stakeholders, for example, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention need to thoroughly discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the various operating frameworks and agree on the most appropriate framework. The most desired operative framework should enable a “hybrid” structure under which the ESD network both functions as a formal entity within the Convention’s structures (i.e. working group) and as an independent network.

---

<sup>14</sup> The 2021 Forum Carpaticum’s ESD workshop developed a draft vision for the ESD network. This document can be used as a starting point for the vision development process.

<sup>15</sup> The ESD network’s vision development process should take into consideration the development of the Carpathian Convention’s 2050 vision.

<sup>16</sup> “Exciting” was the exact term used by one of the interviewees, referring to the fact that the vision should be interesting to actors, and should invite them to join the initiative.

<sup>17</sup> The operating frameworks discussed here look at the international level. At the national levels further channels should be established to connect national actors to the network.

Box 2: Possible operating frameworks

*Working group:* The ESD network is established under Article 13 of the Convention as a formal working group. Strong and operative connections to other working groups need to be established, since Article 13 is a horizontal article, relating to all other articles of the Convention. This could be achieved by, for example having representatives of other working group in the ESD group and vice versa.

*Informal independent network:* The ESD network, like CNPA, S4C, CWI exists independent of the Carpathian Convention structures, but without legal entity, permanent budget, and staff. An MOU with the Secretariat ensures there is formalized and regular connection between the ESD network and the Convention, ESD experts participate to the Conventions and working groups' meetings.

*Own legal entity:* The ESD network is established with a legal entity independent from the Carpathian Convention under the umbrella of an existing organization, like the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform.

*Fully independent organization:* The ESD network is established as a fully independent official organization (e.g. international NGO) with a legal entity, budget and staff, like other networks in the neighbouring mountain regions (ALPARK, Park Dinarides, Danube Parks).

*ESD network under the aegis of an existing network.* In the Alps and Dinaric mountains, ESD is integrated under other networks: ALPARC and Parks Dinarides, respectively. In the Carpathian CNPA and S4C could be possible hosts of the ESD network.

**6. Identify potential leaders.** The ESD network can be seen as an organization in its initial lifecycle stages. Research shows that in these early stages of organizational development success often depends on leaders' vision, commitment, and contributions<sup>18</sup>. Actors of the ESD network should be encouraged to take responsibilities and leadership roles. The emerging internal leaders of the ESD network should be supported by Carpathian Convention and national bodies.

**7. Establish cooperation with existing networks.** The newly forming ESD expert network should aim to establish connections with existing Carpathian-level and national networks and should already feed into emerging projects. The ESD events, workshops at S4C's Forum Carpaticum conferences, and the opportunities for ESD experts to present at CCIC meetings are great examples of establishing connections with and building upon existing networks.

**8. Take advantage of the international ESD processes.** ESD is addressed by many international processes, and Carpathian countries are already part of several of these. The Carpathian ESD expert network should continue to build upon these processes, since international (and national) ESD platforms, meetings, conferences, workshops etc. can be venues to invite further actors to the Carpathian network, and increase the visibility of the network and learn from others. The Carpathian ESD network has already been discussed at several Forum Carpaticum conferences, the 11th World Environmental Education Congress (14-18th March 2022) in Prague etc. Further ESD-related initiatives to look out for including Global Education Network Europe (GENE), climate change education initiatives (EU Climate Pact, Education for Climate Coalition, OECD's Global Teaching Insights on Climate Action), the recent EC proposal for a Council Recommendation: Learning for environmental sustainability.

**9. Develop internal training for Carpathian Convention actors.** Currently, there is a low level of awareness of ESD among Carpathian Convention actors. Training Carpathian Convention actors on ESD would have multiple benefits, including enabling actors to contribute better to the establishment of the ESD network and allowing actors to benefit more from the newly formed network. The training should include current perspectives on ESD and an insight into the cutting edge ESD methods. An inquiry-based or experience-based training is highly recommended (as compared to e.g., presentations or videos) since this cutting edge pedagogical method could provide the deepest understanding of what ESD is about.

---

<sup>18</sup> See for example: <https://www.aihr.com/blog/organizational-life-cycle/#Models>

**10. Prepare for challenges.** Based on the initial analysis it is likely that the ESD network will face several challenges. During the formation of the ESD network, it should learn from the experiences of other networks in the Carpathians (S4C, CWI, Carpathian Eco-Regional Initiative (CERI), CNPA), see Annex, and give its answers to the identified challenges. The actors have already identified the following challenges:

- How to become relevant and interesting for local groups and local actors?
- How to solve the language dilemma: English and/or national languages? The language barrier can be acting as a pre-filter already in the formative phases. Could the hierarchical network structure, of for example citizen science projects<sup>19</sup> and the European Environment Agency's (EEA) European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet)<sup>20</sup> serve as an example of how to overcome this dilemma? These networks both have a two-staged communication structure. At the first level, the national level coordinators communicate with each other and the international coordinator in English, and then at the second level between the national coordinator and national actors the communication language is their national language.
- How to ensure financial sustainability, compared to project-by-project based funding? Could the membership-fee based approach applied in ALPARC, Parks Dinarides be a way forward?
- How do prevent and overcome the workshop fatigue ("We've all been to too many workshops") that could be withholding some actors from participating?
- How do overcome the challenges of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral work, which is known to be very slow and cumbersome, albeit necessary to sustainable development?

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATIVE TIMES

The following section outlines 10 points that should be considered once the ESD network establishment is in more advanced stages, closer to operational times. However, these recommendations are good to keep in mind already during the founding times so that the established operating framework can embrace the recommendations.

1. **Organize regular events (seminars, workshops, meetings).** The ESD network should aim for having regular events. A good practice can be seen in the case of S4C, which organizes the Forum Carpaticum conference every second year. Potentially, ESD seminars, workshops, and meetings can be held back-to-back with other meetings, e.g. CCIC meetings, and Forum Carpaticum conferences.
2. **Utilize existing structures under the Carpathian Convention** (established working groups, regular meetings, information distribution channels, databases of organizations and individuals etc.). The ESD network should build upon already existing structures under the Carpathian Convention, for example, meetings, information distribution channels, and project development capacities. The ESD network should showcase its work and distribute information on its activities at Convention events.
3. **Cooperation with Carpathian Convention structures.** The Carpathian ESD network needs to stay connected to and relevant to Carpathian decision-makers. By participating in Carpathian Convention meetings (Conferences of the Parties (COPs), CCIC meetings, other working group meetings, project

---

<sup>19</sup> In several international citizen science projects, there is a coordinating international body that communicates in English language to national level contact points. The national contact points then adapt the information, materials, action to their national circumstances and pass it on to national partners in their own languages.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.eionet.europa.eu/>

conferences etc.) and inviting Convention actors to ESD meetings the connection can be developed and strengthened. The ESD network should aim for political endorsement and practical implementation of outputs (recommendations, action plans, strategic papers).

4. **Continuous funding and project funds.** Ideally, there should be continuous financial resources available to the ESD network, e.g. in the form of core funding for administration, project development etc. Membership fees, such as in the case of ALPARK and Park Dinarides should also be considered. Projects can be used to support concrete activities that the ESD network will be carrying out. The ESD network should aim to have a shared project as soon as possible, as working towards a project can be a tool that galvanizes the formation of the ESD network. The ESD Network could tap into some European funding systems dedicated to education and research (e.g. Erasmus, Horizon) to finance ESD activities in the Carpathians.

5. **Develop project administration capacities.** Pointing beyond the boundaries of the ESD network, the actors of the Carpathian Convention should develop tools to enhance project administrative and financing capacity among Convention actors. One way could be to strengthen the Secretariat and create a project officer position that can help all Carpathian Convention structures. This could also help in ensuring synergies between projects. Such a function could also develop a common database of funding opportunities, calls, and donors.

6. **Make internal and external communication a priority.** Establish communication channels for regular communication with actors and external stakeholders.

- Communicate, at least progress on the ongoing processes, successes, calls for action and input, and possibilities for engagement.
- Invest considerable time and effort into external communication: invest in communicating to the public, involve communication experts, and make connections with the leading press (e.g. invite interested journalists to events, workshops, and training events).
- Communicate with other interested actors: establish channels for regular communication with other networks, build and share expertise, and develop easily adaptable and shareable communication materials.
- Ensure at the national level the communication happens not in English, but the local languages. Take the example of transboundary citizen science projects, which usually have an international coordinating body that communicates in English to national focal organizations. From the national focal organizations, all other communication happens in national languages. EEA's Eionet network has a somewhat similar, albeit more complex structure.

7. **Actors, roles, leadership.** The network should strive to become (and remain) an open, multi-disciplinary international expert network. Roles need to be clearly defined and assigned to individuals.

- Leadership. One way to organize leadership could be as it is in S4c, where actors take turns in leading the network. In a rotating leadership system, each leader is aware that they need to hold this position for a few years, thus it is not a "life-long" commitment. Another approach is seen in networks in neighboring mountains, where paid staff members run the network.
- Coordination. Roles such as coordination, task management, and communication should also be distributed.
- Informal connections. The social network of the ESD actors itself needs to be catered for. There should be opportunities to establish informal contacts, which can that help to cooperate formally.
- Experts. To ensure recurring and high-level contributions from experts, the network should consider opportunities to pay people for their time spent on the ESD expert network and minimize

requests for volunteering and donating expert time. CERI is a good example, under which people were contracted to work on common goals.

8. **Network outputs.** The network outputs should be based on expert advice and useful in practice. For this reason, it is important to understand the local audience and prioritize and shape information to reach the target audience. The ESD network should not limit its target audience to children and youth, but adults and organizational-level actors should also be involved. Neither should the network limit itself to formal or informal education, both channels should be used.

Outputs should be shared, discussed, and distributed at Carpathian Convention meetings, ideally acknowledged, and endorsed officially by the Convention.

Currently, in other networks and projects, there is a challenge that the project outputs are not monitored and managed after the end of the project. Information is sparse on what happens to the documents after the project. This should change, the actors should learn to follow up and build upon ESD network outputs (as well as outputs from other activities under the Convention).

9. **Learn from others.** Invite other ESD networks' (and non-ESD but well-functioning transboundary and interdisciplinary networks') representatives to meetings of the Carpathian ESD expert network to share experiences and learn from each other's experiences.

10. Use the ESD network as a tool to **implement other international obligations.** Ensure the ESD network, like working groups and projects under the Carpathian Convention can contribute to the implementation of international agreements in the region. Make the ESD network's activities visible and ensure these activities and contributions are recognized in national reports to other relevant international agreements (related to education, biodiversity protection etc.)

## ANNEX 1: METHODS AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### 1. Document analysis.

The following documents were reviewed and integrated into this report:

- Public Participation within the framework of the Carpathian Convention Recommendations prepared by ANPED (June 2008):  
[http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/2.1.11%20ANPED%20recommendations%20for%20Public%20Participation.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/2.1.11%20ANPED%20recommendations%20for%20Public%20Participation.pdf)
- Briefing on Integration of ESD into the Carpathian Convention:  
[http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/Awareness%20Raising/ESD\\_Briefing\\_Carpathian%20Convention\\_09.2020.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/Awareness%20Raising/ESD_Briefing_Carpathian%20Convention_09.2020.pdf)
- Report from the Carpathian Convention Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development (April 2019):  
[http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl\\_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/Awareness%20Raising/CC%20Seminar%20on%20ESD\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/Awareness%20Raising/CC%20Seminar%20on%20ESD_Summary.pdf)
- Outcomes of Forum Carpaticum ESD Workshop (June 2021): Carpathian ESD Expert network - Challenges, Vision and Strategy, Recommendations
- Mitrofanenko, Tamara, Attila Varga, and Joanna Zawiejska. "Toward Stronger Integration of Education for Sustainable Development Into the Carpathian Convention Activities: Reflection on the Process and Outlook." *Mountain Research and Development* 40, no. 4 (2020): A1–14.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27029091>

### 2. Participant observation

The consultant participated in the 12<sup>th</sup> CCIC meeting and observed the presentations, discussions, and social events during the event. Several mini-interviews were conducted and detailed notes were taken. These were later analysed and included in this recommendation report.

### 3. Focus-group based workshop at CCIC meeting

Overview of the CCIC workshop: The workshop was held at the 12th CCIC meeting (Krakow, November 2021). The aims of the workshop were:

- Input to research feeding into ESD network establishment
- Identify lessons learnt from existing networks
- Identify good practices to carry forward
- Identify problems
- Suggest options to avoid problems in the ESD network

Participants answered four questions individually and in small groups

- Identify areas that work well in existing networks
- Which are the top 5 problem areas for the Carpathian networks
- Contextualize and explain how you experience each problem area in the Carpathian networks. Give a few concrete examples from the Carpathian networks for each problem area.

- Develop possible ways forward to avoid (overcome or mitigate) problems when establishing the ESD network

#### 4. Interviews

Interviews were carried out with key actors of the ESD network. The interviews were mostly online, via video conferencing, and lasted between 50 to 80 minutes. The consultant took detailed notes during the interviews, and these were analysed and included in the recommendations report.

## ANNEX 2: OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF EXISTING NETWORKS<sup>21</sup>

The workshop participants were asked to identify the main challenges existing Carpathian networks are facing. As shown in Figure 1 a total of eight challenges were listed, the leading ones being “Administrative and institutional problems” and “Financial issues”. These two were identified by all four groups of the workshop.

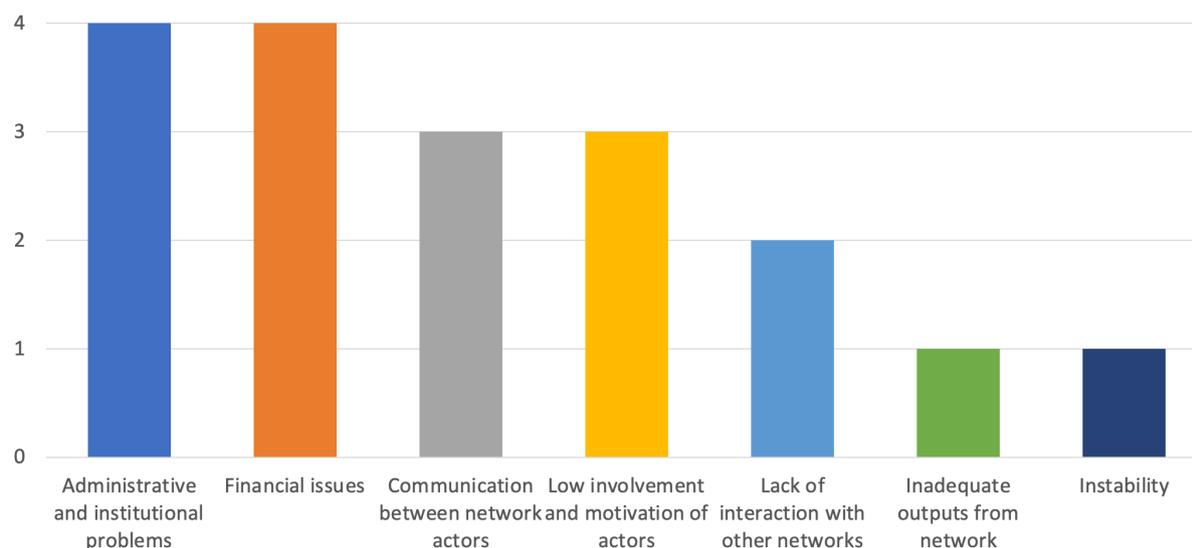


Figure 1: Main challenges of existing networks, according to workshop participants

---

<sup>21</sup> Findings are based on CCIC ESD workshop outcomes

The following table details the concrete manifestations of the problems in existing networks (left column) and the suggestions proposed by workshop participants to overcome these problems in the ESD expert network.

	Problems in current networks	The solution
Administrative and institutional problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of legal formalization, no legal personality</li> <li>- Lack of institutional structures</li> <li>- Limited administrative capacity</li> <li>- Absence of a central coordinating unit</li> <li>- Changing leadership</li> <li>- EU or other policy integration processes as a barrier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Integrate existing networks and ESD network development into emerging projects</li> <li>- Utilize existing Carpathian Convention structures</li> <li>- Establish a strong connection to and support from the Secretariat</li> <li>- Secretariat could help in administration issues, e.g., establish a “support unit” for the networks</li> <li>- Analyse the benefits and risks of networks becoming a legal identity</li> </ul>
Financial issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project-dependent financing, no predictable and stable income                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Networks are not able to constantly maintain the ideal level of activity</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Grants are scattered and not always accessible</li> <li>- Challenges to developing project proposals for the whole network                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not enough capacity to develop and run complex transboundary and multidisciplinary projects</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Some actors were excluded due to limited financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a common Carpathian Convention strategy for resource mobilization</li> <li>- Create a common database of available grants</li> <li>- Widen the scope of fundraising, for example, involving foundations, enterprises, and private businesses</li> <li>- Ensure continuous financial resources to improve the work                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Look for core funding towards administration for usable tools/product</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Lobby for more support from the EU to the whole Carpathians</li> </ul>
Patchy communication between actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No structure for communication</li> <li>- Messages not reaching the appropriate people</li> <li>- The personal commitment of individuals determines information sharing outside the network</li> <li>- Language problems within the network</li> <li>- At local levels: lack of people who speak English</li> <li>- Difficulties understanding technical expressions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regular communication with actors and external stakeholders                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Successes</li> <li>- Ongoing processes</li> <li>- Calls for action, asking for input</li> <li>- Possibilities for engagements</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Identify highly motivated people who could help in communicating in the field of their interest</li> <li>- Need to communicate in national languages too</li> </ul>

	Problems in current networks	The solution
Low involvement and motivation of actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- People are often involved in the networks voluntarily</li> <li>- Low level of priority of Carpathian Convention</li> <li>- Sporadic involvement</li> <li>- People don't respond to network needs</li> <li>- Public attention and priorities change and act against personal commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elevate the image of the network to "an expert cluster"</li> <li>- Explain the advantages of participating</li> <li>- Set common "exciting" goals</li> <li>- Define concrete roles and responsibilities</li> <li>- Give ownership to actors</li> </ul>
Low involvement and motivation of actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A top-down approach is not enough</li> <li>- "The further from formal government structures the bigger the motivation"</li> <li>- Barriers to involvement (financial, language, disciplinary)</li> <li>- "People coming from different fields need time to understand each other"</li> <li>- Not always the right people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reach out to and involve members of the whole network</li> <li>- Link experts to the network</li> <li>- Create opportunities to establish informal contacts that help to cooperate formally</li> </ul>
Lack of interaction with other networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited communication outside the network</li> <li>- Not enough information about other networks</li> <li>- Lack of cooperation and data sharing between existing networks results in the underuse of potential and expertise. For example:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sustainable Tourism WG and Climate WG</li> <li>- CNPA and Sustainable Tourism WG</li> <li>- Separate networks communicate and operate differently, and it's up to individuals' commitment and motivation to share information</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make communication one priority of the (annual) work plan of the network</li> <li>- Invest in communicating to the public</li> <li>- Involve communication experts</li> <li>- Make connections with the leading press</li> <li>- Invite interested journalists to events, workshops, training events</li> <li>- Build and share expertise</li> <li>- Develop easily adaptable and shareable communication materials</li> <li>- Establish channels and for a regular communication with other networks</li> </ul>
Inadequate outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Added value is perceived as limited</li> <li>- Lack of political involvement</li> <li>- Lack of political endorsement and practical implementation of outputs (recommendations, action plans, strategic papers)</li> <li>- "Something is produced and then let go at present without power on whether or not it's applied anywhere"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define a common vision together with members of the network to manage expectations</li> <li>- Plan to focus on specific goals, since efforts can get lost if they reach too far</li> <li>- Network outputs should be based on expert advice and useful in practice</li> <li>- Share, discuss and distribute outputs at official meetings</li> <li>- Understand the local audience</li> <li>- Prioritize and shape information to reach the target audience</li> </ul>

	<b>Problems in current networks</b>	<b>The solution</b>
Instability of network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Lack of strong coordination and leadership</li><li>- People meet at Carpathian Convention events and do not follow up on agreements and next steps</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assign specific individuals to coordinate the network on a day-to-day basis</li></ul>