



# United Nations Environment Programme

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT · PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ



Distr.: General  
UNEP/CC/COP1/6  
25 October 2006

**Original: English**

## Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians

### First meeting

Kyiv, Ukraine, 11-13 December 2006

Item 6 (b) of the provisional annotated agenda

## Secretariat note on sustainable and integrated water/river basin management – Article 6 of the Carpathian Convention

### Introduction

1. Article 6 paragraph 1 of the Convention requests each Party to promote policies integrating sustainable use of water resources, with land-use planning, and aim at pursuing policies and plans based on integrated river basin management approach, recognizing the importance of pollution and flood management, prevention and control, and reducing water habitats fragmentation.
2. Article 14, paragraph 2 (e) includes a provision that the Conference of the Parties shall establish such subsidiary bodies, including thematic working groups, as are deemed necessary for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention.

### Implementation

3. The Conference of the Parties has before it an information note on the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative and its links to the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions contained in Annex I to the present note. The Initiative provides a supporting mechanism for the efficient management, a tool for sharing experience, exchange and co-operation with all national parks, nature parks, protected landscapes, biosphere reserves, Ramsar sites and other important protected areas in the region.
4. In Annex II, the Conference of the Parties has before it an information note on the UNDP/GEF project “Establishing Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisza River Basin” developed in cooperation with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), that aims at establishing a joined management of the shared water and river resources in the Tisza River basin. The activities under this project will promote the implementation of the Danube Protection Convention and the Carpathian Convention.

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5. The Carpathian Project is expected to produce an analysis on water management and risk prevention, prepare guidelines for a sustainable water management strategy in the framework of the Carpathian spatial development vision, and support the preparation of a water retention project in a selected area.

### **Possible action by the Conference of the Parties**

1. The Conference of the Parties may appreciate the concrete contribution of the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative to the Carpathian Convention process and take note of information submitted by the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (see Annex I).
2. The Conference of the Parties may take note of the submitted information on the UNDP/GEF project “Establishing Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisza River Basin” (see Annex II).
3. The Conference of the Parties may welcome the cooperation with ICPDR on sustainable and integrated water/river basin management – Article 6 of the Carpathian Convention, and request the interim Secretariat to continue to coordinate its activities with the ICPDR.
4. Based on the ongoing fruitful cooperation with ICPDR, the Conference of the Parties may request the interim Secretariat to develop and sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with ICPDR, and to submit it to the COP2 for endorsement.
5. The Conference of the Parties may decide to request the cross-sector Working Group on spatial development to deal with the issue of sustainable water management in the context of the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision.
6. The Conference of the Parties may decide to request the Working Group on Biodiversity to address the issue of Carpathian wetlands and Ramsar sites.

## **Annex I**

### **The Carpathian Wetlands Initiative and its links to the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and the Carpathian and Ramsar Conventions**

**Jan Kadlecik** – State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic,  
Velka Fatra NP Administration, Vrutky, Slovakia

*(Information was provided at the European Regional Meeting of the Ramsar Convention and was submitted for the consideration of the COP9 of the Ramsar Convention (Kampala, Uganda, 2005).*

#### **Introduction**

Regional initiatives are increasingly important part of the work of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands and for the promotion of the Convention and its Strategic Plan.

They can play a positive, catalytic, and decisive role in planning and providing technical and financial support for projects and activities.

The Carpathian mountains contain some of the least disturbed ecosystems such as forest complexes, numerous endemic and threatened mountain species and communities. The headwaters of major rivers and important wetlands can be found in the Carpathian biogeographical region, some of international importance. There are bio-geographic commonalities, shared wetland systems, shared wetland-dependent species, and common social and cultural links.

However, in the Carpathians, only Slovakia (5 sites), Hungary (2 sites) and Ukraine (1 site) have designated wetlands of international importance to the Ramsar List. Ramsar sites in other countries are in contact or are, to a large extent, dependent on water flowing from the Carpathians. Many wetlands of international importance have been identified in this region during the inventory of habitats and species for ecological networks in Europe (ECONET, Natura 2000, Emerald Network).

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians covers all aspects of protection, maintaining and sustainable management of natural resources of the Carpathians. The convention contains articles on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity and on sustainable and integrated water/river basin management, which are especially relevant also to other international obligations of the Carpathian countries.

#### **Carpathian Wetland Initiative**

The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic in Banska Bystrica, through the funding of a project in the framework of the Norwegian Government's Plan of Action for Candidate Countries to the EU supported in 2003-2005 activities for the establishment of a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) and the implementation of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) in the Carpathian region.

The network is a supporting mechanism for an efficient management, tool for sharing experience, exchange and co-operation with all national parks, nature parks, protected landscapes, biosphere reserves, Ramsar sites and other important protected areas in the region.

Besides the support of the Carpathian Convention a special Carpathian Wetland Initiative was developed and launched on the World Wetlands Day 2004 to help in implementation of the obligations of the Ramsar Convention and its Strategic Plan 2003-2008 and other resolutions adopted at the COP8, and to establish and promote collaboration of managers of protected or otherwise important wetland sites in the Carpathians in the implementation of both Conventions.

Even if Carpathian waters are flowing to two seas and four large river catchments (Danube, Dniester, Vistula, Oder), the habitats and challenges in their protection and use in the Carpathians are similar enough that common measures for their sustainable management and conservation could be developed and achieved. The development of river basin management plans and the protection and management of water sources for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in some Carpathian countries and EU members have also become priorities. Implementation of the Carpathian initiative for wetlands can help not only in information exchange for these obligations, but also in work for River Danube Protection Convention in other Carpathian countries.

**Our effort is aimed at promotion of**

Ramsar Convention Res. VIII.10 *Improving implementation of the Strategic Framework and Vision for the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (e.g. designation of new Ramsar sites in the Carpathians and their effective management);

Res. VIII.11 *Additional guidance for identifying and designating under-represented wetland types as Wetlands of International Importance*, to designate examples of, among others, peatlands, wet grasslands and other under-represented wetland types found in the Carpathians;

Res. VIII.12 *Enhancing the wise use and conservation of mountain wetlands* in order to promote the establishment of national networks of Ramsar sites which fully represent the diversity of wetlands in the countries, and to promote their key ecological and hydrological functions, and hydrological, biological, cultural and socio-economic importance. The initiative can help in developing the appropriate actions for improving awareness and understanding of their functions and values and to ensure that due attention is given to the role of mountain wetlands and the importance of their conservation and wise use in the preparation and implementation of river basin management plans, development of strategies and management plans, etc.

Res. VIII.19 *Guiding principles for taking into account the cultural values of wetlands for the effective management of sites*, some mountain wetland types have strong reflection in folk songs, poetry, stories and tales - mountain springs, brooks, lakes, waterfalls, mires.

The Carpathian Wetland Initiative invited all Carpathian countries and some other representatives of international organisations, including the Ramsar Convention and the Carpathian Convention and their Administrative Authorities, the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (MedWet) and Ramsar International Partner Organisations to co-operate in wetland conservation in this ecoregion.

**Results**

The meeting, devoted to the preparation of a long-term co-ordination of activities, sharing experience and collaboration in wetland conservation, was held in April 2004 in Slovakia. A questionnaire to Ramsar Administrative Authorities of Carpathian countries to identify their interests, needs and suggestions, and to nominate contact persons was distributed and evaluated. A conference with wider representation of governmental and non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental organisations and other international partners with a topic on the status, inventory and conservation of wetlands in the Carpathians should be planned (possibly in 2007).

Possible other future partners include the Danube Convention/Commission (draft Memorandum of Understanding between the ICPDR and UNEP Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention was prepared), Danube Environmental Forum, Tisza/Tisa Water Forum, UNECE Helsinki Convention on Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, River Basin Initiative, Alpine Convention and Alpine Network of Protected Areas, Council of Europe (PEBLDS, Emerald Network, Bern Convention), MaB Programme, Mountain Partnership / UN FAO, EUROPARC, EUROSITE, Environmental Partnership for Central Europe, CERI, ECNC, REC, etc.

It was agreed in the meeting that this initiative should be included in future protocols of the Carpathian Convention, it should be developed under the CNPA and the activities within this initiative should be based on the Ramsar Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

A Memorandum of Understanding between Ramsar and Carpathian Conventions should be prepared; the governments of Carpathian countries should provide existing database information, of identified wetlands of national and international importance and wetland protected areas as an initial background for future development of the wetlands network; the initial map and database was prepared in 2004;

The governments should identify relevant stakeholders with an interest in and directly or indirectly responsible for wetland issues and to support their participation in the Initiative; such stakeholders should include intergovernmental bodies, international organisations operating in the region, NGOs, academia, and economic actors;

the CNPA Steering Committee and Carpathian Convention Interim Secretariat should establish a Working Group on Wetland issues and to prepare terms of reference for such a Group in the framework of CNPA; the governments and all other stakeholders should identify funding sources for launching of the initiative, for preparation of the Conference on Carpathian Wetlands, and for long-term financing of this initiative.

### **Evian Encounters**

In cooperation with the Ramsar Secretariat and with the support of a Ramsar Convention project financed by the Danone Group (owner of the Evian mineral waters company) we prepared a meeting (the 6th Evian Encounters) of the Ramsar administrative authorities and experts (including WWF-DCP, CERI, EC) for 14-17 November 2006 in Evian, France, to discuss current approaches and challenges of the Ramsar Convention in the Carpathian countries.

The meeting aims to combine strategic vision and planning in formulating a work plan for the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative, so that it can be formally proposed as a Regional Initiative at the forthcoming Ramsar COP10 in October 2008.

At the same time we would like to achieve a formal recognition of the Initiative by the COP1 of the Carpathian Convention.

### **Tools for cooperation and conclusions:**

Memoranda of Understanding between governments or inter-governmental bodies (e.g. secretariats of conventions) are suitable base for legitimisation and formalisation of the cooperation;

Responsible governmental bodies are important to be involved from the beginning for providing information, contacts and organisational and legislative arrangements;

Identification of two or three main partners from political and scientific bodies in each country who will cooperate in the future development of the initiative is crucial. A meeting of stakeholders to state the common vision, ways of collaboration on local, national and regional activities and sunder of responsibilities is necessary at the early stage;

At least part-time coordinator is necessary from the beginning to keep the line and „keep the fire“, lead and coordinate the activities, contact other partners and make fund raising.

The initiative should be based on Guidance for the development of regional initiatives in the framework of the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Resolution VIII.30).

### **What we would like to ask you to help in:**

- agree with including of the Initiative to the Workprogramme of the Carpathian Convention at the COP1 and with establishment of a working group;
- identify relevant partners in national and international levels for the Initiative;
- identify national needs and priorities;
- ensure active involvement and participation in Evian Encounters (November 2006);
- identify funding sources.

## Annex II



## MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECT PROPOSAL REQUEST FOR GEF FUNDING

**AGENCY'S PROJECT ID:** 3339  
**GEFSEC PROJECT ID:**  
**COUNTRY:** Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Ukraine  
**PROJECT TITLE:** Establishment of Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisza River Basin  
**GEF AGENCY:** UNDP  
**OTHER EXECUTING AGENCY(IES):** UNOPS  
**DURATION:** 36 months  
**GEF FOCAL AREA:** International Waters  
**GEF OPERATIONAL PROGRAM:** OP9 Integrated Land and Water  
**GEF STRATEGIC PRIORITY:** IW 2 – Foundational Capacity Building for IW  
**ESTIMATED STARTING DATE:** April 2006  
**IMPLEMENTING AGENCY FEE:** US\$90,000

FINANCING PLAN (US\$)	
GEF PROJECT/COMPONENT	
Project	999,972,00
PDF A*	0
Sub-Total GEF	999,972,00
CO-FINANCING**	
GEF Agency	200,000
Government	400,000
Bilateral	
NGOs	
Others UNEP	50,000
ICPDR	
European Commission	200,000
<i>Sub-Total Co-financing:</i>	850,000
<i>Total Project Financing:</i>	1,849,972
FINANCING FOR ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY IF ANY:	

**CONTRIBUTION TO KEY INDICATORS OF THE BUSINESS PLAN:** The project will contribute to the following specific targets of the GEF IW focal area: a) expand global coverage of foundational capacity building (enabling activity equivalents) to a limited number of new transboundary systems with a focus on key program gaps; b) undertake innovative demonstrations and c) address water scarcity/competing water uses through IWRM, and protecting valuable groundwater supplies, including initiatives involving public-private partnerships and innovative financing as a contribution toward the MDGs and WSSD Targets.

**RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT:**

<i>Mr. Tibor Farago, GEF OFP, Hungary</i>	<i>Date: June 14, 2005</i>
<i>Mrs. Katarina Novakova, GEF OFP, Slovakia</i>	<i>Date: November 2, 2005</i>
<i>Mr. Silviu Stoica, GEF OFP, Romania</i>	<i>Date: November 21, 2005</i>
<i>Mr. Anatoliy Gritsenko, GEF OFP, Ukraine</i>	<i>Date: November 28, 2005</i>
<i>Mr. Boro Vucinic, GEF OFP, Serbia and Montenegro</i>	<i>Date: December 7, 2005</i>

This proposal has been prepared in accordance with GEF policies and procedures and meets the standards of the GEF Project Review Criteria for a Medium-sized Project.

Mr. Yannick Glemarec

Deputy Executive Coordinator

Date: (Month, Day, Year)

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## A - SUMMARY

The Tisza river system is an internationally significant river system, which is significantly degraded and continues to be threatened. The river and its tributaries flow from the Carpathian Mountains and a 157,200 square kilometer river basin which is home to some 14 million people. It begins in the territories of Ukraine with the White and Black Tisza. This river with its tributaries is the only water source for Transcarpathia region of Ukraine since 98% of its territory belongs to the Upper Tisza catchment area. It also flows from Romania and Slovakia via number of smaller tributaries fed by mountain streams and flows into the Great Plain of eastern Hungary and then south into Serbia and Montenegro where it joins the Danube. This river is the main water source for Hungary, a significant source for Serbia and Montenegro and an important source for western Romania and southern Slovakia. The floodplains of the river extend to some 30 thousand square kilometer, the majority of which can be found in the Hungarian Great Plain and the adjoining plains in Western Romania and Serbia.

The Tisza River Basin is in need of a coordinated regional effort to develop harmonized national and regional policies for integrated land and water management. This project will address the issues of flooding, pollution, loss of biodiversity, adaptation to climate change, and the need for sustainable development in the Tisza River Basin. The project *Establishment of Mechanisms for Integrated Land and Water Management in the Tisza River basin* will address these issues through the preparation of a scientifically based Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) which will form the basis for the development of coordinated National Integrated River Basin Management (NIRBMPs) which support a regional Integrated River Basin Management Programme (IRBMP). Both will establish regional and national priorities and coordinate policies throughout the region. Implementation and execution of small scale demonstration project will support these efforts towards environmental governance reform strategies and serve as a learning experience for other larger scale pilot projects to be conducted as the IRBMP is implemented.

This project will build on what has already been achieved through the EU accession process and the EU and GEF support of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) in particular the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) , with regard to the existing ad hoc Tisza Group of the ICPDR and the Tisza- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) “Towards a River Basin Management Plan for the Tisza River supporting sustainable development of the region” signed by all riparian countries in 2004. It will also build upon the numerous UNDP sustainable development initiatives and GEF biodiversity projects in the basin, and it will link with activities of the newly established interim secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. It will take the concept of Integrated River Basin Management beyond the water sector and co-ordinate the development, management and conservation of land and water resources, and embed rather than retrofit conservation and environmental policy into the national and regional planning framework.

A major product will be the development of a regionally owned Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Programme (equivalent of Strategic Action Programme), which will be meeting the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive, and incorporate a Flood Prevention and Risk Management Strategy, while at the same time addressing wider sustainability issues in the water, agriculture, energy, industry and navigation sectors, highlighted by the work of the UNDP in their Tisza Basin Sustainable Development Strategy. Thus the project will provide a bridge between these on-going initiatives in a single regionally owned and nationally coordinated planning document which will allow for deepening and widening the planning scope.

The project long-term objectives are:

- To ensure that the integrated land and water management throughout the Tisza River Basin meets the short and long-term requirements for optimum ecosystem function as well as the needs of the communities using the river.

- To ensure realization of a long-term Flood Prevention and Risk Management Strategy
- A subsidiary long-term objective is to reduce the nutrient load into the Danube and Black Sea and improve its water quality.

To achieve the overall objective, the outputs of the project are:

- Conduct a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and establish a shared vision for the Tisza sub-basin based on Ecosystem Quality Objectives resulting from the TDA findings and agreed by participating countries
- Develop or strengthen existing participatory frameworks for the cooperation between countries, sectors, communities and stakeholders on all levels in the basin.
- Develop and begin implementation of integrated management of water and land resources framework at the regional and national level. The framework will be oriented at the GEF TDA/SAP methodology and will be inclusive of the requirements of, and work in line with the EC Water Framework Directive implementation and will build on assessment work undertaken by the UNDP as part of the Tisza River Basin Sustainable Development Programme and the UNEP rapid environment assessment of the Tisza basin.
- Provide support to the ICPDR and its cooperating partner in flood issues, the Tisza Water Forum, for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding “Towards a River Basin Management Plan for the Tisza River.
- Through a transboundary demonstration project at the local and community level, demonstrate the economic, social and environmental advantages of water and land management integration approaches.
- Mobilize funding for tackling priority transboundary issues, identified by the TDA and agreed in the Integrated River basin management programme (IRBMP) in the next 5 to 10 years.

The long-term anticipated project outcomes will be:

- Established and functioning regional and national integrated land and water management mechanisms, in line with already existing structures.
- Basin wide harmonised water policies and land use policies that will reduce future detrimental human interference in the natural processes of the basin;
- Establish and test mechanisms for reversal or rehabilitation for damage done in the past due to human detrimental interference.
- Strong regional partnership, replication and dissemination of best practices and lessons learned.

The project will be closely linked to the activities of the ICPDR, the UNDP-GEF Danube Regional Project (DRP), the UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre and the interim secretariat of the Carpathian Convention located in Vienna. Together with these organizations the project will work with national authorities and stakeholders at the regional, national and local/oblast level and will form and support several advisory bodies. This also includes a Stakeholder Advisory Group made up of representative stakeholders throughout the region who will assist in the development of the TDA/IRBMP and demo project by providing feedback from those they represent. The purpose of these groups is to increase dialogue and collaboration among bodies in the Tisza River Basin to work most effectively together while avoiding redundancy of efforts.