

Preliminary ideas for potential topics for collaboration of the Working Group on Climate Change with other Carpathian Convention Working Groups

The following preliminary ideas for potential cooperation of the Working Group on Climate Change (WG CC) with other thematic Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention present an initial collection of topics that could be followed-up pending on mutual interests and available human and financial resources for undertaking specific joint activities. Topics identified to follow-up could be integrated into the WG's Workplan (to be elaborated for the next implementation period 2021-2023) and further defined in collaboration with each respective other thematic Working Group. This could also include contributions of the WG CC to already ongoing or planned activities of other thematic Working Groups in the sense of mainstreaming climate change considerations in all workstreams under the Carpathian Convention. Given the short timeframe of the implementation period of 3 years, it is expected that the WG CC will realistically only be able to undertake one or two concrete "projects" of collaboration towards elaborating a study or undertaking an assessment. Therefore, ideas for collaboration on sustainable forestry and biodiversity are given priority due to already ongoing discussions with the respective WGs^{1,2}, are presented first in the following. Further ideas shall remain in the collection and be extended and investigated further pending on available capacities.

¹ The 7th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management (June 2019, Zvolen, Slovakia) recommended that one of the priority activity for the implementation of the [Carpathian Convention Forest Protocol](#) and its [Strategic Action Plan](#) shall be focused on climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Carpathian forests. The idea of developing an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services was appreciated and supported by the WG Forest.

² The Carpathian Convention Working Group on Biological and Landscape Diversity (WG Biodiversity) is currently developing the International Action Plan for the Conservation and Sustainable Management for the Carpathian populations of Large Carnivores, which in its Strategic Objective 7 foresees a development of a study on impacts of climate change on the Carpathians' large carnivores and their habitats.

Priority Topics

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

Possible collaboration with the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management

Developing an assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem services

- Collecting information is proposed to follow a similar process supporting the elaboration of the Carpathian report on large carnivores monitoring, i.e. each Party should **nominate a contact person** who would **assemble information on the topic of climate change impacts on the Carpathians forest in their country** (10-15 pages).
- Further to gathering information on climate change impacts, the assessment should also **include existing and new forest management techniques with regard to their expected impact on the protective function related to co-benefits in the field of climate change** (adaptation & mitigation).
- A **common structure** for compiling country information shall be provided **to receive comparable, editable contributions** (e.g. forest composition, tree condition, pests, vectors, non-native species etc.).
- All the country reports will be then analyzed and edited by an expert in the field, producing **one comprehensive report for the Carpathian region**. The report shall also include best practices and experiences on climate change adaptation.

CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL AND LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY

Possible collaboration with the Working Group on Biodiversity

Collaborating on specific contributions of the Carpathian Convention to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework process towards, inter alia:

- Providing concrete suggestions to the proposed framework to ensure that the final wording takes dully into account the specific mountain context.
- Possibly elaborating and suggesting **specific mountain-related 2030 action targets that effectively safeguard biodiversity** in mountains, especially in the face of climate and global land-use changes.
- Possibly elaborating and suggesting explicit **2030 action targets towards the adoption of ecosystem-based approaches to conservation**, which are consistent with efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to impacts of climate change and other socio-economic pressures.

Contributing to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 through investigating on pathways to align restoration efforts with national planning processes, including nationally determined contributions, and provide additional commitments and financial resources

- Restoration of ecosystem is fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, mainly those on climate change, poverty eradication, food security, water and biodiversity conservation. While many initiatives are underway, **success of restoration efforts** is often **hindered by a lack of finance and difficulties in accessing knowledge about nature-based solutions**.
- Collaboration on **suitable pathways and actions for restoration** to be **incorporated into national and sub-national policies and planning** (including those requested by the UNFCCC) could be beneficial for all Carpathian countries.

Developing a study on the impacts of climate change on large carnivores and their habitats in the Carpathians, including related recommendations and adaptation measures

- The Study could be a part of a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian ecosystems that is linked to the assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests (see Possible collaboration with the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management).

Further topics to explore and extend

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Possible collaboration with the Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

Developing indicators for the promotion of sustainable and climate smart value-chains for products from Carpathian agriculture taking an integrated approach (considering both climate change mitigation and adaptation needs) (links to SARD Protocol, Article 13: Marketing of typical agricultural and rural products and services)

- Identification of **proper indicators for climate smart and sustainable farming** that include **mitigation and adaptation dimensions** (e.g. use of renewable energy, GHG emissions, water use, use of chemicals, use of locally produced animal feed, use of traditional crops, organic farming practices etc.); referring to both farmer and product level. Establishing a compact indicator system could represent a **first step towards exploring possibilities for labeling and certifying Carpathian climate-friendly products**.
- Also links to **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Common Result Indicator R.23: Environment-/climate-related performance through investment: Share of farmers with support in investments related to care for the environment or climate:**
An indicator system could also help with reporting on actions taken at farmer's level related to care for the environment or climate (e.g. investments focused on water saving, decrease in the use of energy and CO₂-intensive methods in mountain farming, ecological packaging, regional distribution, waste reduction, etc.).

Joint elaboration of a list of the biggest problems in the field of agriculture and rural development in the Carpathian area the Parties are facing (linking to SARD Protocol, Article 17: Coordinated scientific research and trans-boundary exchange of information and experience)

- This activity towards implementation of the SARD Protocol could be specifically supported in a joint effort to include **key challenges related to climate change in agriculture and rural development** (e.g. direct effects due to higher CO₂ levels including increased biomass production and water use efficiencies; indirect effects related to climatic components such as temperature, precipitation, extreme events (heat, drought, storm), radiation and humidity which in turn influence crop growth and occurrence of weeds, pests and diseases).
- For EU Member States' Parties: The list of the major problems should furthermore consider the national assessments to be undertaken as part of the preparations of

the new CAP based on a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of their territory and agri-food sector.

Developing a study and subsequent policy recommendations on the interrelation of agriculture and biodiversity under climate change and effective adaptation actions in the Carpathians

- This study could help highlight where adaptation actions proposed, inter alia, through Climate Adapt could be best implemented in the region to **support the work of both SARD Protocol and the Working Group on Biodiversity**. The COVID-19 Pandemic has highlighted the importance of human-wildlife relationships and therefore a need for greater understanding of how agri-food systems can better support biodiversity is necessary.
- The study could **focus on adaptation actions** such as:
 - Adaptation measures for grasslands including sustainable grazing practices, delayed haying practices and supporting agri-environmental measures.
 - Adaptation measure for agriculture including regenerative agriculture, agroforestry and sustainable livestock production.
 - Adaptation measures for wetlands management with regards to agricultural practices.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Possible collaboration with the Working Group on Sustainable Tourism

Conducting a survey on existing practices on climate-friendly and climate-resilient tourism in the Carpathian countries focusing on new and innovative approaches

- The survey should include **information on climate change impacts and risks tourism is facing** in the Carpathians (e.g. changing weather patterns and seasonality, more frequent and intense extreme events and related natural hazards, decreasing snow cover) **coupled with data on tourism demand factors** (tourists motivation as well as touristic distribution patterns and behavior, linked to climate change).
- Vice-versa the study should additionally investigate on the current impacts of tourism on climate change³ as a baseline for developing pathways for sustainable tourism development.

³ The methodology could be based on the ETIS – The European Tourism Indicator System and the indicators included in section D: Environmental Impact:
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators_en.

This survey could build the **basis for further activities** towards e.g.:

- Ensuring **common high-quality standards for sustainable tourism development** in the Carpathians.
- **Managing tourist traffic and tourist destinations** in the Carpathians, especially in areas highly vulnerable to climate change.
- **Enhancing the contribution of tourism to the preservation and promotion of local products** (linking to climate smart farming and promotion, labeling and certification of local products and local producers' networks), cultural heritage and of traditional knowledge.
- **Channeling part of the tourism revenues towards supporting the conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity** of the Carpathians.
- Supporting the **synergies between sustainable tourism development and sustainable agriculture and forestry** in the Carpathians.

Assessment of the viability of the creation of a unified Carpathian Region Tourism website

- The assessment could support the work of the survey of existing practices on climate-friendly and climate-resilient tourism in the region (proposed above). The COVID-19 Pandemic has increased awareness of the importance of ecological connectivity yet has decreased opportunities for foreign travelers into the region.
- As the tourism industry changes and localized travel becomes more common, the Carpathian region has an opportunity to **showcase the mountain range as a sustainable tourist destination** for the future, and a **common website** could help to gain interest in the region.