



Centralparks: draft Carpathian strategy for enhancing biodiversity and landscape conservation outside and inside protected areas

Centralparks project and its approach

The draft Carpathian strategy for enhancing biodiversity and landscape conservation outside and inside protected areas has been prepared under the thematic Work Package No 1 (WPT1) of the project CE1359 'Centralparks - Building management capacities of Carpathian protected areas for the integration and harmonization of biodiversity protection and local socio-economic development', supported by the Interreg Central Europe Programme, implemented in 2019–2022 by the consortium of 8 project partners from Italy (Lead Partner: Eurac Research), Austria and 5 'Carpathian' countries (CZ, HU, PL, SK, RO). For more information on the project consortium please visit the [Centralparks website](#).

The main WPT1 objective is to facilitate the implementation, at the local and regional levels, of the Carpathian Convention and its two thematic protocols:

- Protocol on conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity (Bucharest, 2008)
- Protocol on sustainable tourism (Bratislava, 2011)

in support of one of the priorities of the current Polish Presidency of the Carpathian Convention (concerning closer cooperation with the local and regional level).

WPT1 basic assumption and intervention logic was that the reconciliation, linking the conservation of biological and landscape diversity to sustainable local socio-economic development, and raising the support of local communities for protected area operations is possible

- if well protected natural and landscape values (→ related draft strategy)
- are properly used as the driver and asset for the local sustainable tourism development (→ related draft strategy)
- while conservation objectives, and benefits arising from the above synergy are effectively communicated to the local stakeholders (→ Guidelines on communication between protected areas and local communities)



How the draft strategy was prepared

Following the above concept, 3 multinational expert groups (Thematic Transnational Task Forces, TTTFs) were established under WPT1, each tasked with a development of 1 out of the 3 mutually reinforcing Outputs (→ synergy of outputs). Such transnational networking approach allowed to:

- pool and share knowledge and expertise from different countries, enhance transnational cooperation
- capitalize on the exchange of information, experience, and best practices identified in the Carpathians
- involve different target groups (protected areas, universities / research institutions, NGOs) in project activities.

WPT1 TTTFs met in person once (in 2019), later the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak made subsequent physical meetings impossible. The adopted emergency solution was to intensify electronic communication and organize many more online meetings (which allowed team work in shared screen live mode) than originally planned. However, each TTF tested a different approach and team work mode.

In this case the TTF involved 21 PPs' representatives and external experts from 7 countries (incl. UA volunteer), had 3 meetings (instead of 2 planned), and prepared 3 subsequent drafts, accommodating comments and contributions by experts from all involved countries, and results of in-country consultations.

Target groups and intended use of the draft strategy

The target audience of the draft strategy are the local and regional stakeholders, including protected area administrations, nature conservation and landscape protection agencies and other nature and landscape conservation bodies and authorities, as well as local communities, and their municipal and regional authorities.

The draft strategy can serve as the guidance for preparing or updating protected area management plans, local or regional planning documents, concerning nature and landscape conservation, land-use, and spatial development (in line with BD Protocol Article 17).

Strategic and operational objectives of the draft strategy:

The draft strategy encompasses four equally important strategic objectives (SOs):

- SO1. Preservation, protection, recovery and sustainable use of plant, animal and fungi **species** (BD Protocol, Articles 11 and 12)
- SO2. Preservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use of natural and semi-natural **habitats** (BD Protocol, Articles 8 and 10)
- SO3. Preservation, protection, restoration, revitalization, and sustainable use of **landscapes** (BD Protocol, Article 4)
- SO4. Ensuring **continuity and connectivity** of natural and semi-natural habitats, landscapes, strengthening the **ecological network** in the Carpathian region (BD Protocol, Article 9).

As emphasized in its title, the draft strategy aims at enhancing conservation and sustainable management also in the areas **outside of protected areas** (in line with BD Protocol Article 15).

Each strategic objective (SO) is divided into three operational objectives (OOs), corresponding to the logical sequence of actions:

- data collection, analysis, and assessment of the current status
- planning protective measures and activities necessary for the achievement of particular strategic objective (incl. identification of local priorities)
- implementation of protective measures and activities.



Structure of the document:

The document begins with the list of acronyms used in the text, and the preface (containing welcome addresses by the Presidency and the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Centralparks Lead Partner, and WPT1 Leader), followed by 6 chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Correspondence with international legal acts in force and strategic documents, synergy with other projects
3. Goal and the intervention logic of the Strategy - strategic and operational objectives
4. Recommended measures and activities (under all strategic and operational objectives)
5. Checklist for planning the implementation
6. Monitoring of effectiveness

How to use the strategy

The draft Strategy indicates some specific measures and activities which:

- are most relevant for application inside protected areas (while remaining ones can be applied both inside and outside protected areas)
- can successfully be implemented also at the transboundary scale, in transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) and in cooperation between the local and regional authorities, and other stakeholders from the two or more bordering countries (in line with BD Protocol Article 16).

The implementation of the Carpathian strategy for enhancing biodiversity and landscape conservation outside and inside protected areas shall be supported and enhanced by the application of:

- Centralparks strategy for the local sustainable tourism development, which also recommends measures and activities which can prevent or mitigate possible adverse effects of tourism and related infrastructure developments
- Centralparks guidelines on communication between protected areas and local communities, aimed at communicating the conservation objectives, raising the sense of the common ownership and responsibility for protected areas among the local residents.

Next steps

Test implementation of the draft strategy is planned under 2 separate pilot actions (to be launched in spring 2021 in Hungary and Poland, inside and outside two national parks), each involving Carpathian protected areas and local communities. The reports on lessons learned from the test implementation will be submitted in early 2022 to the Carpathian Convention.

Simultaneously, the Parties are kindly requested to consult the draft strategy internally, and provide comments.

The proposed draft, elaborated under the Centralparks project, is expected to be formally endorsed by the Parties (no earlier than at the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in 2023 in the Republic of Serbia).

Once endorsed under the Carpathian Convention, the Carpathian strategy for enhancing biodiversity and landscape conservation outside and inside protected areas shall be made available for the relevant stakeholders.