

Networks in the Carpathians

Overview of findings of network analysis

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CCIC Meeting, 18-19 November 2021, Krakow

The Workshop 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.



Research methods

- Network analysis
- Qualitative data analysis
 - Interviews
 - Participant observation
 - Archival document analysis

Findings

Networks before the Carpathian
Convention



Key Carpathian networks in the 1990s

- ACANAP: Association of the Carpathian Protected Areas (1991-CNPA)
- CERI: Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative (1999-dormant)
- Carpathian Euroregion (1993-)
- ANPED: Northern Alliance for Sustainability (1991-2014)
- Eastern Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (1992-)

Role of Carpathian networks before the Convention

- Connections between people and organizations spanning
 - National borders
 - Types of organizations (authorities, local governments, NGOs, research institutions, protected area administrations etc.)
 - Sectors
- Umbrella organizations
 - Consultation and cooperation bodies (science, management practices, reports)
 - Channel Carpathian interests to fora outside of the Carpathians

Role of Carpathian networks before the Convention

- Paving the way for the Carpathian Convention
 - Familiarity among actors
 - Shared understanding
 - Shared (and diverging) motivations

Findings

Network of the Carpathian Convention



Network of Actors Structure

47 meetings

346 organizations

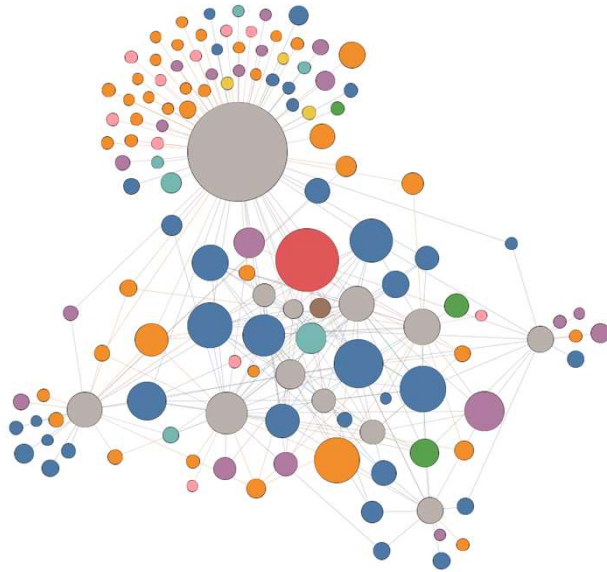
Certain network-weaving events

Diverse network

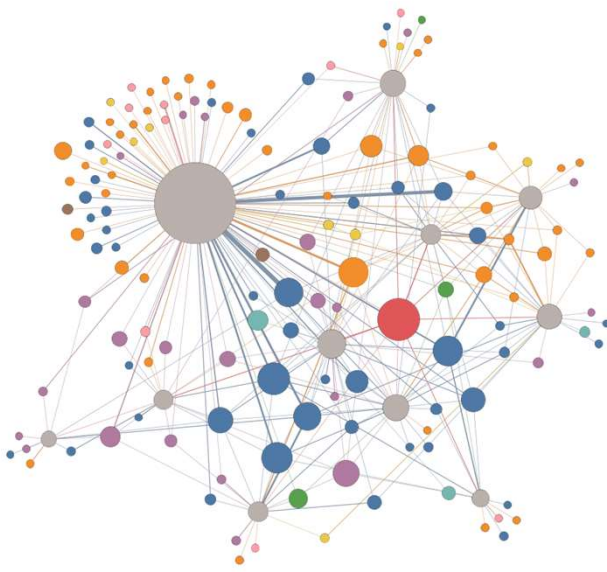
Single connected component



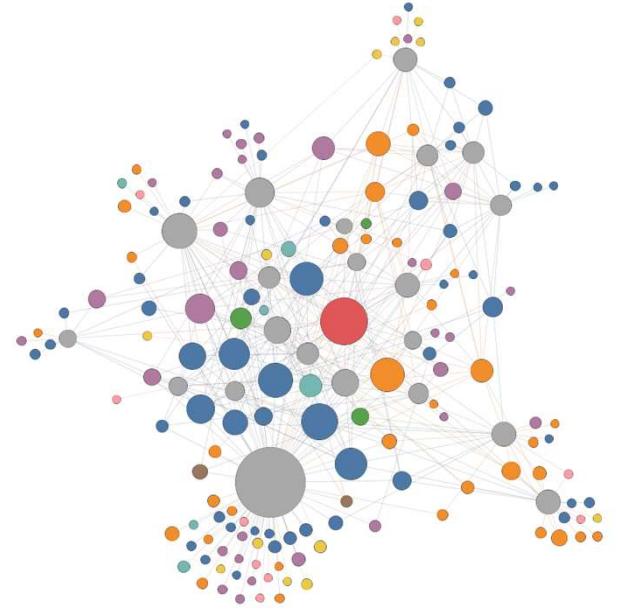
COP2 to COP3



COP3 to COP4



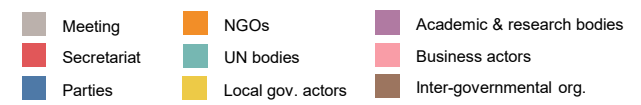
COP4 to COP5



Core-periphery network structure

Larger number of WG meetings
 Group of organizations that have attended a larger number of meetings together and thus are likely to have gotten to know each other

Two communities among the organizations that tend to attend different types of meetings together



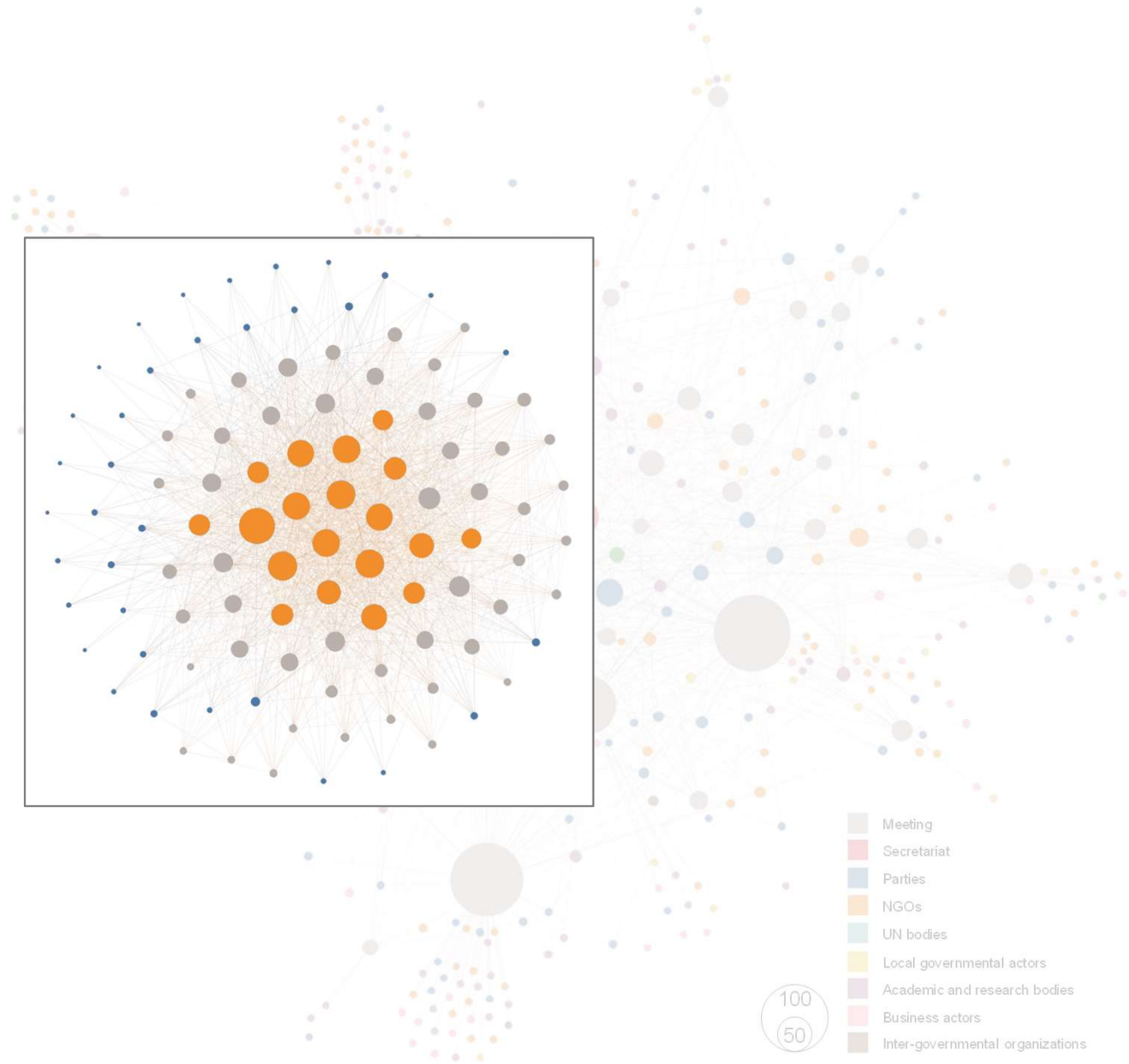
Network of Actors Structure



Network of Actors Structure

Core-periphery network structure

- 19 organizations in core



Network of Actors Structure

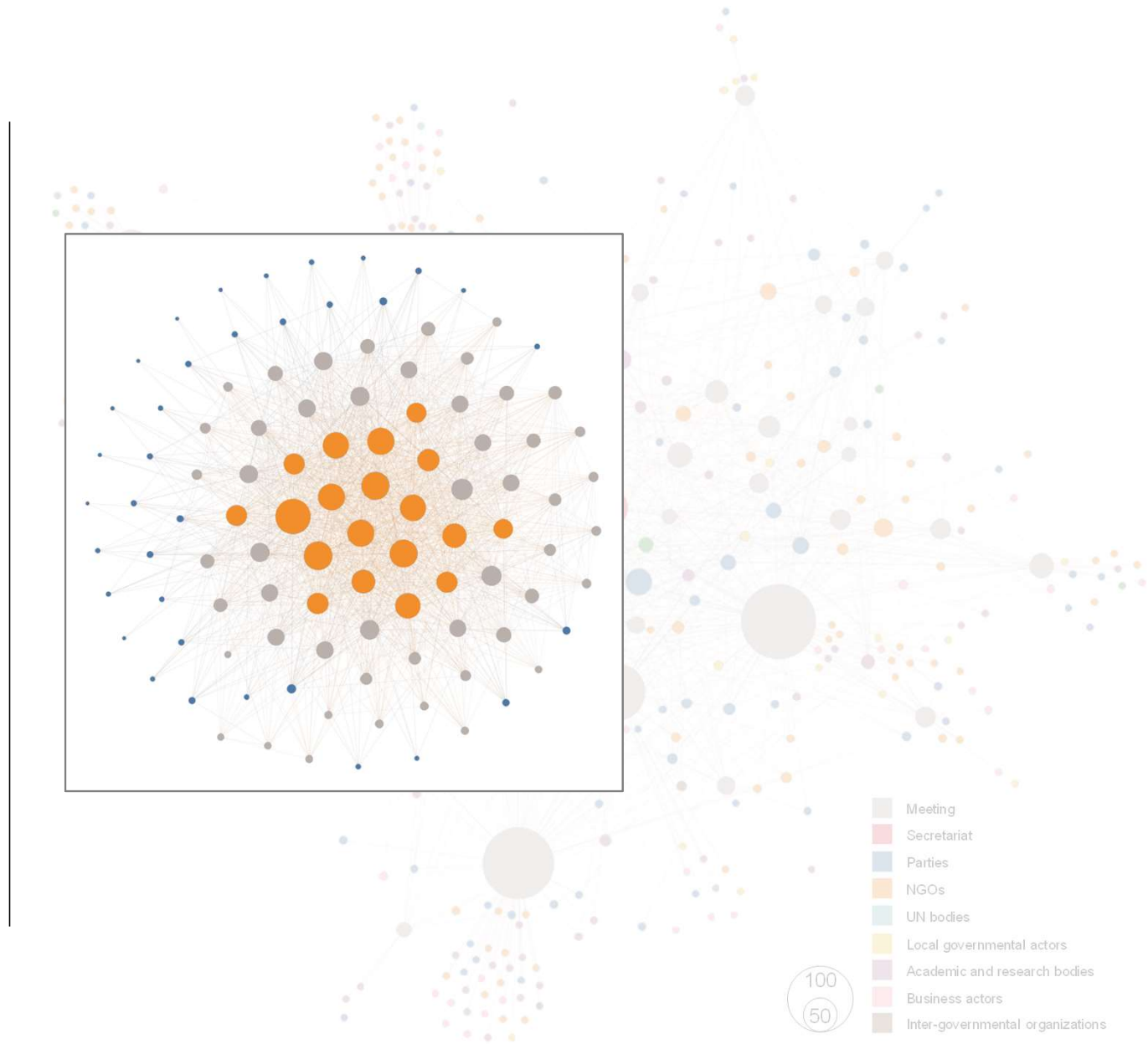
Implications

Beneficial for

- Social cohesion, trust
- Consensual, shared knowledge generation

Harmful for

- Accessing new knowledge
- Diversity and inclusivity



Findings

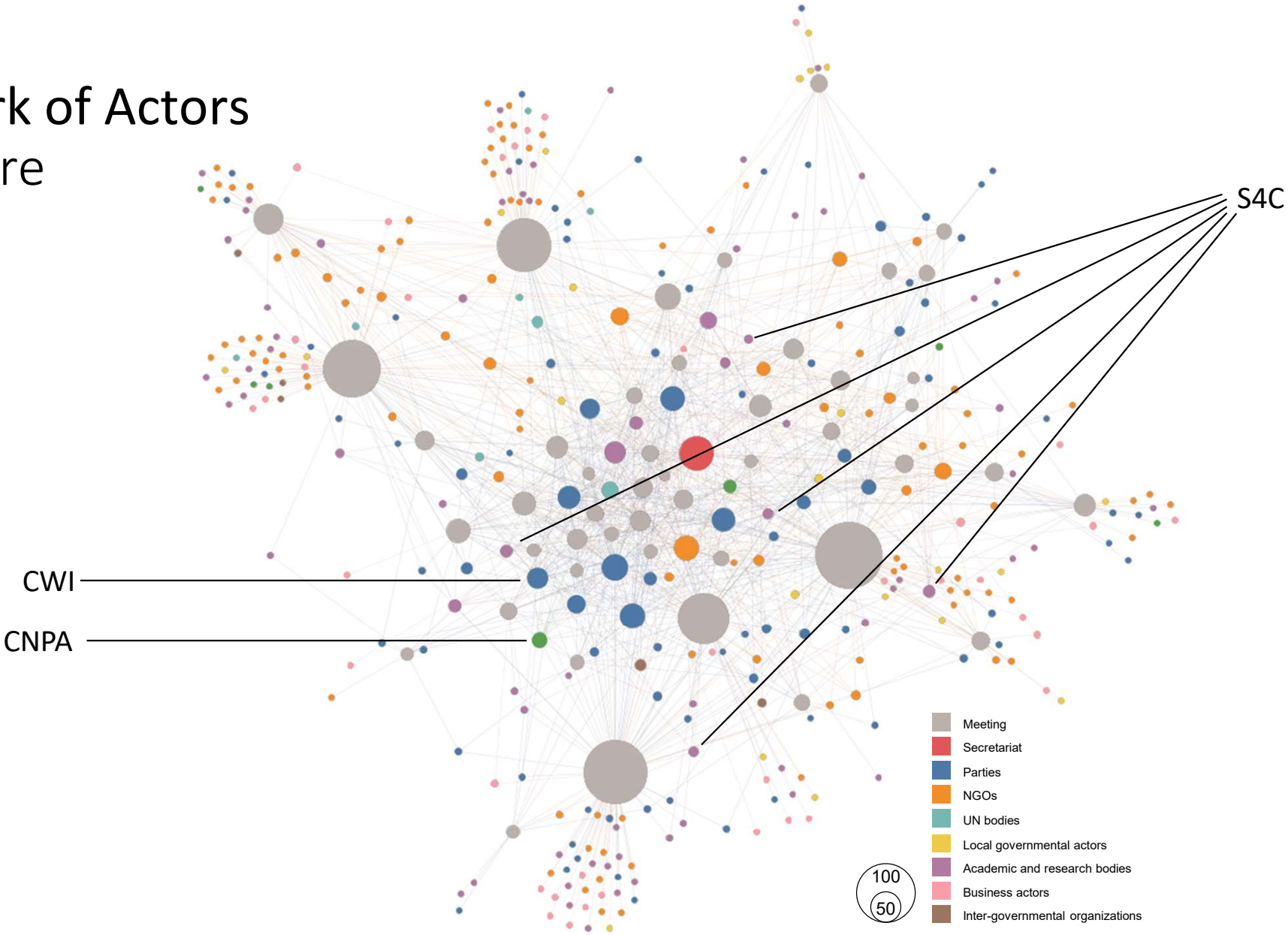
Thematic Networks



Thematic networks

- Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) 2006-
- Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) 2006-
- Science for the Carpathians (S4C) 2008-

Network of Actors Structure



Characteristics of thematic networks

- Formalized tie to Carpathian Convention
 - Active participation at Convention meetings
 - Participating to and initiating projects
- Connecting to international fora and organizations
- Bridging all Carpathian countries
- Facilitating network development
- Enabling information exchange
- Personal commitment of individuals
- Low level of legal formalization

Future Network for Education for Sustainable Development

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**Umwelt
Bundesamt**

Workshop on strengthening networks within the Carpathian Convention

Researcher and facilitator Dr. Marta Vetier,
with input from Tamara Mitrofanenko

CCIC Meeting, 18-19 November 2021, Krakow

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Aims

- Input to research
- Identifying *lessons learnt* from existing networks
 - Identify good practices to carry forward
 - Identify problems
 - Suggest options to avoid problems in ESD network
- NOT a strategy development workshop

Role of focus groups

- Researcher will prepare internal report and recommendations
 - Anonymous input
 - For internal use only, not shared publicly
 - Carpathian Convention actors and project donor will get access
- Feed into ESD network establishment process

Agenda

The solutions

- Individual work (2-3 minutes)

The problems

- Individual work (2-3 minutes)
- Group discussion (2x15 minutes)

The solutions

- Group discussion (15 minutes)

- Report back (voluntary)

Attitudes for focus group

- Participation is voluntary
- All contributions are highly valuable and appreciated
- No right and wrong answers

- Embrace diversity
- Openness to others
- Active and constructive contribution
- Equal participation
- Anonymity, confidentiality (“what is said in the group, stays in the group”)

Link to online document for online participants

<https://tinyurl.com/CarpathianESD>

Task 1 / individual exercise

Identify areas that work well in existing networks.

- List at least 4-5 concrete examples of things that work/worked well in the existing networks.
- Think of the time spectrum starting at the founding of the networks until today.
- Be as concrete and specific as possible.

Task 2 / Group discussion

Identify the top 5 problem areas for the Carpathian networks.

- You may use the cards if you find them helpful.
- Identify first which is the biggest problem, and work backwards from here.
- If something is missing from the cards, add a new card.
- If something is not relevant from the cards, put the card aside.

Task 3 / Group discussion

Contextualize and explain how you experience the top problem areas in the Carpathian networks.

- Start with the biggest problem area, and note down its relevance to the Carpathian networks.
- Be as concrete as possible.
- Try not to get stuck on one problem area.

Task 4 / Group discussion

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

- For each problem area develop concrete suggestions to avoid the problem occurring.
- Think at the meta level.
- Stay realistic.

Report back

Any points you would like to share from your group?

- Eye-opening solutions.
- Innovative suggestions.
- Consider confidentiality when sharing from your group.

Problem areas

- Financial issues
- Administration problems
- Low involvement and motivation of actors
- Inappropriate diversity of actors
- Inadequate quality and quantity of outputs delivered by the network
- Communication problems between network actors
- Issues with communication outside of the network
- Network closed to new participants
- Instability of the network
- Lack of identity of the network
- Lack of interaction with other networks
- Unevenly shared responsibilities