**Fourth Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group**

**on Adaptation to Climate Change**

**Szolnok, Hungary**

**STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**

**for DEVELOPMENT of PROJECT IDEAS in the CARPATHIAN REGION**

**BASED on the STRATEGIC AGENDA**

**on ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE in the CARPATHIAN REGION**

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**Introduction**

The geographical situation serves as the origin of several climatological phenomena and mosaic pattern of climate change tendencies, affecting the natural and anthropogenic characteristics, therefore, the adaptation actions are more difficult at the Carpathian Mountain Region. At a regional level, linking different policies and strategies of nature conservation, river basin management and sustainable farming, could significantly strengthen the Carpathian region and its resilience to the negative impacts of climate change. Regional cooperation platforms, like the Carpathian Convention, could be a critical vehicle to mainstream this in different countries. Countries in the Carpathian region can increase their resilience and tap into European resources by mapping out a path towards a climate-proof future which draws upon, and conserves, the unique natural and cultural values of the Carpathian region. The added value of increased transnational cooperation and joint activities is especially strong when planning for climate change adaptation, as much of the predicted impacts of climate change relate to seasonal and geographical shifts. This is true for plant and animal species, communities (forests, tree-lines, northern limits) as well as for socio-economic aspects (tourism, jobs, food security). Many of the possible measures are thus best planned using a geographical scale of the eco-region, rather than the nation-state. Further, many of the tools and capacities required for climate change adaptation which are currently missing, such as the capacity for designation and mapping of future refuge habitats for wetlands and grasslands, are either only possible at the transnational level, or are equally missing in each country, meaning that joint initiatives with external funding could fill these gaps and build cooperative capacity at the same time. Financial resources are limited. A key action is to create flexible and equitable financial instruments that facilitate benefit - and burden-sharing, and that support a diverse set of potentially better-adapted new activities rather than compensate for climate impacts on existing activities. To succeed, cooperation between and among governments, civil societies, research and education institutions, private sectors and international organisations will be essential. Key components of such partnerships will be capacity building and information sharing, climate-proofing of infrastructure and investments, climate-cross compliance, and design of eco-system based adaptation measures to make biodiversity management more dynamic[[1]](#footnote-1).

Since their accession to the EU, the Carpathian States have been participating in different European projects, which confirm their strong motivation in the field of integration and cooperation. According to the Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathian Area[[2]](#footnote-2), further projects and policies should be developed in the priority area of adaptation to climate change.

**This document is aim**ing at collecting a list of possible actions in order to facilitate project developments in the Carpathian Region.

**Mandate**

Decision COP2/3 paragraph 5 requested “the Interim Secretariat to consider in consultation with the Parties the further development and joint programming in the area of integration of water resources and land use planning, in particular concerning wetlands, natural water resources, springs, lakes and ground water resources, as well as biodiversity conservation and adaptation to climate change, taking into account experiences made in sustainable and integrated water/river basin management and land use planning of the relevant river basins of the Black Sea and Baltic Sea catchment areas in the Carpathians”.

In May 2011 the European Commission – DG Environment, requested the Secretariat during Third Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP3) to consult with the Parties and Observers of the Carpathian Convention a proposal for the establishment of a Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change under the Carpathian Convention supported by the projects CARPIVIA (Carpathian integrated assessment of vulnerability to climate change and ecosystem-based adaptation measures, [www.carpivia.eu](http://www.carpivia.eu)) and CarpatClim (Climate of the Carpathian Region, <http://www.carpatclim-eu.org/pages/home/>, that were funded by the European Commission under the above mentioned preparatory action.

The Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the Carpathian Convention (Bratislava, Slovakia, 25 – 27 May 2011) by its Decision COP3/15 para 3 decided to establish the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change and adopts its Terms of Reference.

The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP4) to the Carpathian Convention (Mikulov, the Czech Republic, 23 – 26 September 2014) by its Decision COP4/10 para 1 adopted the Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region.

Therefore, it is suggested that the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change considers developing and recommending a Strategic Action Plan based on following draft prepared by the Secretariat:

**Welcoming** the aim of the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change to support the Parties to the Carpathian Convention in their cooperation for the implementation of relevant articles of the Convention and its Protocols, including the Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management and its Article 1 on General objectives and principles, and Article 14 on Forestry and Climate change, and Article 21 on Education, information and public awareness.

**Welcoming** the “Potential Priority Climate Change Adaptation Actions” recommended by the Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region on 1) Capacity Building Programme which Draws on, and Enhances, the Connectivity of the Region; 2) Information management and Awareness Raising; 3) Climate-Proofing of Infrastructure, Investments and Climate-Cross Compliance; 4) Development of Forestry Measures for Climate Change Adaptation; 5) Making Biodiversity Management More Dynamic; 6) Evaluation of Carpathian Ecosystem Services; 7) Capacity-Building on Proposal-Writing for Adaptation Funding; 8) Working Group on Climate Change.

**Recalling** the Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement On Adaptation to Climate Change[[3]](#footnote-3) and pursuant the Recommendations of the Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathian Area.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Following** the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change, endorsed by the Parties to the Convention, based on the Priorities for the Signatures[[5]](#footnote-5) and Project Platform [[6]](#footnote-6) of the Carpathian Convention.

**Mandated** by the above Terms of Reference, letter e)[[7]](#footnote-7) to carry out the function to consider, develop and recommend strategies for the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, in order to ensure implementation of the provisions of the Protocol.

The Fourth Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group (30 September – 2 October, 2015, Szolnok, Hungary), **recommends** to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee the following Strategic Action Plan for consideration.

**Level 1 Policy responses**

**OBJECTIVE 1.1 Public policy to facilitate adaptation to climate change**

**Action 1.1.1** Reducing vulnerability and increasing adaptive capacity of people and infrastructure, providing information on risks for private and public investments and decision-making, and protecting public goods such as habitats, biodiversity and culturally important resources.

**OBJECTIVE 1.2 Mainstream the climate change adaptation objectives into policy and funding framework**

**Action 1.2.1** Provide leadership and coordination for developing a united, comprehensive, regional approach to adaptation activities in key economic sectors, such as water, agriculture, transport and health.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3 Ecosystem management**

**Action 1.3.1** Harmonise transnational cooperation on joint spatial planning, resilience of natural (ecosystem based) resources, designation and management of protected areas to act as refuges for habitats and species, thus focus on ecosystem-based adaptive approaches to climate change adaptation in the Carpathian region.

**OBJECTIVE 1.4 Improvement of transnational cooperation and joint activities**

**Action 1.4.1** Encourage transnational cooperation, support joint activities in order to fill the gaps of funding and build cooperative capacity at the mean time.

**OBJECTIVE 1.5 Development of workplans and decision-making**

**Action 1.5.1** Develop workplans and decision-making practise documents to be built into future activities, which is highly relevant for the Carpathian Space especially in term of policy synergies and funding priorities and opportunities.

**Level 2 Institutional and organisational responses**

**OBJECTIVE 2.1 Designated pan-Convention policy-, funding-, coordination and communication**

**Action 2.1.1** Pan-Carpathian approaches to increase the effectiveness of “preventative” and “preparatory” measures, since the information gaps, research and monitoring together with capacity-building and awareness-raising have the optimal cost benefit if carried out on a broad ecoregional scale.

**OBJECTIVE 2.2. Comparable datasets between countries systemized**

**Action 2.2.1** Constant updating and review of data, especially comparable set of climatological and climate impact related datasets are essential in order to set context for future projections and scenarios.

**Action 2.2.2** As an alternative to classical data intensive environment reporting methods, strengthen the “Expert Elicitation methodology”, which may prove very useful to allow make most use of existing expert knowledge in regions where environmental data has not been recorded and reported in a systematic way.

**OBJECTIVE 2.3 Establishing a logical monitoring and evaluation system**

**Action 2.3.1** Provide information, articles and scientific knowledge on climate change impacts and adaptation in the Carpathian, including sources of information published or unpublished in local languages.

**OBJECTIVE 2.4 Avoid duplication of adaptation measures between the Carpathian and Danube processes**

**Action 2.4.1** Take into account adaptation requirements to mitigate or prevent consequences of climate change. By using step-wise and cyclical approach of the planning process, to encourage harmonized river basin management in line with the EU Water Framework Directive.

**OBJECTIVE 2.5 Integrate Carpathian objectives into the River basin management plans of the catchments containing parts of the Carpathian Conventionplanning**

**Action 2.5.1** Encourage the liaison with river basin management planning bodies for other major rivers draining form the Carpathians, namely the Dniester, Tisza and Vistula.

**Action 2.5.2.** Increase the joint activities between the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) Tisza Group and the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change, based on the Joint Declaration.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**OBJECTIVE 2.6 Support cooperation in mountainous areas under the Alpine and Carpathian Convention**

**Action 2.6.1.** Enhance co-operation among local institutions and stakeholders aiming to the creation of a common knowledge on consequences and risks related to climate change, based on the Joint Alpine-Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**OBJECTIVE 2.7 Create flexible and equitable financial instruments**

**Action 2.7.1** Support the facilitation of benefit – and burden-sharing, social learning, as well as a diverse set of potentially better adapted new activities rather than compensate for climate impacts on existing activities.

**OBJECTIVE 2.8 Cooperation with relevant stakeholders**

**Action 2.8.1** Strengthen the scientific cooperation, support research activities and its dissemination. In order to facilitate the coordination across disciplines and national boundaries, the importance of cooperation among governments, national and local stakeholders, civil society organizations and the private sector.

**Level 3 Cross-Cutting opportunities**

**OBJECTIVE 3.1 Climate-cross compliance [[10]](#footnote-10) applied to climate change adaptation**

**Action 3.1.1** Instigate the principle, that all EU and national funding can be made contingent upon demonstrated consideration and adaptation to climate change variations. This would very rapidly mainstream adaptation measures into many sectors including agriculture, transport, small and medium sized enterprise development, and public sector procurement.

**OBJECTIVE 3.2 Strategic environmental assessment**

**Action 3.2.1** Strengthen the implementation of the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) to identify and evaluate the planned impacts on a number of environmental issues, including climatic factors; and, where appropriate, put measures in place to minimise and respond to significant impacts identified.

**Level 4 Project and programme oriented responses**

**OBJECTIVE 4.1 Steer the Region`s development towards a climate-proofed Carpathian space, related to the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-20 (MFF 2014-2020)**

**Action 4.1.1** Focus on investments in green economic sectors that lead markets of the future including renewable energies, energy savings, sustainable agriculture, and biodiversity management. As well as spending through phasing out of subsidies that are environmentally harmful and economically ineffective.

**Action 4.1.2** Phasing out of subsidies that are environmentally harmful and economically ineffective in order to secure a climate-proofed, low carbon future for Europe.

**OBJECTIVE 4.2 Steer the region`s actions to meet with the Pillars and Priority areas of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)[[11]](#footnote-11).**

**Action 4.2.1** Strengthen cooperation activities to secure transboundary groundwater resources and water supply with water retention measures, Managed Aquifer Recharge.

**Action 4.2.2** Concentrate on promotion of innovative technologies to improve environmental protection, regarding soil and flood risk prevention

**OBJECTIVE 4.3 Coordinate the Region`s Projects for joint proposals to the EU Life Action Grants, LIFE Climate Change Adaptation and LIFE Climate Governance and Information sub-programme for Climate Action.**

**Action 4.3.1** Promote awareness raising on climate matters and knowledge on sustainable development; that support communication, management, and dissemination of information in

the field of the climate and to facilitate knowledge sharing on successful climate adaptation actions, including education and public participation.

**Action 4.3.2** Increase the recognition of citizen science, involve the public in the collection of information about the state of the environment are rapidly evolving around the world.

1. Project handout, conclusions of the three EU projects (CARPIVIA, CarpathCC and CARPATCLIM) assessed the vulnerability of the Carpathian region to climate change in combination with other anthropogenic pressures. Presented at the Third Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change with participation of experts of Carpathian Region and Alpine Convention; 12 – 13 March 2014, Vienna, Austria.

   Available via: <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/Working%20Groups/Adaptation%20to%20Climate%20Change/20140312_WG%20meeting%20_Vienna/20140214_Projects%20Handout.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathian Area: <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/02%20Activities/2.1.2%20Strategic%20Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Carpathian%20Area.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Welcoming the enduring cooperation between the Alpine and Carpathian countries, in the frame of the Alpine – Carpathian partnership, towards the promotion of sustainable development in mountain regions [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathian Area: ”More coherent approach in implementation of policies by considering territorial specificities; Stronger territorial cooperation; and Better coordination and dialogue between relevant actors based on multilevel governance.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Priorities for the Signatures stated in the Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Project Platform: Gives an overview on projects ideas to develop in cooperation with Ministries, Regional authorities and NGOs in the different fields of the Carpathian Convention activities (given along the Working Groups and other core activities. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee: “Serviced by the Secretariat, the Committee shall carry out the following functions: e) To consider, develop and recommend new and additional Protocols, strategies, or other measures and recommendations for the achievement of the objectives of the Convention” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Joint Declaration of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, Tisza Group and the Framework Convention on the Protection and the Sustainable Development of the Carpathians on the sustainable development of the Tisza River Basin within the Carpathian Region. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Joint Alpine-Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change, because a dialogue has been started between the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions recognising the need to promote capacity building at the local level for designing and implementing coherent local adaptation measures and sharing the regional experience developed in the field. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. A working definition of cross-compliance in its more usual use, accessed from the European Commission Agriculture and Rural Development webpages: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/envir/cross-compliance/index_en.htm> as follows: “Cross-compliance is a mechanism that links direct payments to compliance by farmers with basic standards concerning the environment, food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare, as well as the requirement of maintaining land in good agricultural and environmental condition. Since 2005, all farmers receiving direct payments are subject to compulsory cross-compliance.” (Accessed 07 September 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.danube-region.eu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)