Actions
In 2008, the Carpathian Convention was signed, calling for the development of coordinated spatial planning policies aiming at the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian region. The project covers an area of 1.09 million square kilometers, including 38 countries, and it is expected to have a significant impact on the economic, social, and environmental development of the region.

The project will focus on the following actions:
1. Building a comprehensive database of spatial data and information on the Carpathian region.
2. Developing a strategic vision for the Carpathian region, including a spatial development vision.
3. Identifying and prioritizing key areas for spatial planning and development.
4. Establishing partnerships and cooperation among stakeholders.
5. Developing guidelines and best practices for spatial planning and development.

Expected results and follow-up
1. The Carpathian Project will contribute to the implementation of the work programme of the Carpathian Convention for the period of its duration from 1st September 2009.
2. The Carpathian Project will contribute to the implementation of the work programme of the Carpathian Convention for the period of its duration from 1st September 2009 to 31st August 2008.
3. The Carpathian Project will contribute to the implementation of the work programme of the Carpathian Convention for the period of its duration from 1st September 2009 to 31st August 2008.
4. The Carpathian Project will contribute to the implementation of the work programme of the Carpathian Convention for the period of its duration from 1st September 2009 to 31st August 2008.
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Agenda and Strategic Approach of the Carpathian Project

1. Background

The Carpathian region – which spans the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic and Ukraine – is one of Europe’s largest mountain ranges, harbouring a unique natural and cultural heritage, providing a haven for wildlife and acting as an ecological link within Europe. The diversity of the natural heritage is one of the biggest assets of the Carpathian region with a view to sustainable development. The Carpathians are a living environment for millions of people in the heart of Europe. Yet their biodiversity and natural heritage are subject to a variety of threats and adverse impacts from land abandonment, habitat fragmentation, deforestation, large-scale migration, and the threat of industrialisation, pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources on the other.

For the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians enshrines a common vision, integrates development and environmental goals, provides objectives for action and constitutes the strategic framework for cooperation to address these challenges in a transnational context.

The Carpathian Project has been developed in 2005 by UNEP Vienna - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and RITI Polonia together with Carpathian Convention Secretariat and the broad project consortium of partners from 11 countries. The project builds on the intergovernmental cooperative platform of the Carpathian Convention. UNEP Vienna - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention leads the project with the support of the seven Carpathian Convention Parties and Signatories. In establishing priorities and elaboration of the project, the aims and objectives of the EU Neighbourhood Programme have been taken into consideration. The main objectives are:

- promoting sustainable economic and social development in the border areas;
- working together to address common challenges, in fields such as environment, public health, and the prevention of and fight against organised crime;
- ensuring efficient and secure borders; promoting local "people-to-people" type actions.

The Carpathian Project follows a strategic approach in order to build consensus and develop strategies and policies according to the principles of the Carpathian Convention aiming at achieving higher territorial and economic integration within the co-operation area, and promoting a more balanced and harmonious protection and sustainable development of the "Carpathian Space".

A comprehensive preparatory process was conducted by the Carpathian Convention as well as the Vision Platform and European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/ Spatial Planning (CEMAT) cooperation networks. The preparations include assessments, preparatory research, governmental consultations, participatory stakeholder meetings and international conferences, drawing upon the resources of a wide range of organizations and partner institutions.

The Carpathian Project is an INTERREG III B Project, supported by the EU Community Initiative INTERREG III B CADES®. The Planning and Market Development project (CEMAT) has been elaborated. The Carpathian Development Region was identified as a transnational development area for future actions.

2. Integration of the EU spatial development policies: Carpathian Space vision

The Long-term objective of the project is to strengthen the protection and to accelerate the sustainable development of the Carpathian region by improving its status as well as European cohesion of the area and by preserving its natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

3. Objectives, actions, expected results and follow-up

For the project builds on the existing structure of the Carpathian Convention, providing a transnational framework for the application of EU standards across EU borders.

The project aims at the development of an innovative Carpathian area – the Carpathian Space with a common strategic vision of environmental protection and sustainable development. In this context, the project will analyze and consolidate the information base, develop strategies and policy instruments, implement and test pilot activities in continuous cooperation with local and regional stakeholders.

Experiences e.g. of the Alpine Space clearly demonstrate that mountains can offer considerable potentials for development respecting the value of rich natural and cultural heritage and its preservation for the future.

Overall objective: The project will develop the Carpathian Convention into an operational and truly transnational platform, allowing for the implementation of the most relevant EU policies across the Carpathian region. The project will demonstrate that environmental and developmental objectives can be achieved in a coordinated manner.

Full participation and the involvement of mountain communities in the development of policies implemented on local, regional, national, international and European levels will be crucial to balance the interests of stakeholders involved. The Carpathian Project will provide an interface between top-down and bottom-up approaches.