

Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development

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Background and mandate

The Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (WG SARD) was **established by the decision COP1/7 para 3** of the First Conference of the Parties¹ (COP1) to the Carpathian Convention (Kyiv, 2006).

The Fifth Conference of the Parties² (COP5, Lillafüred, 2017) adopted the [Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development to the Carpathian Convention](#) (hereinafter SARD Protocol) by its **decision COP5/7**.

The Sixth Conference of the Parties³ (COP6, online, 2020), in its **decision COP6/12 para 1**, welcomed the ratification of the SARD Protocol and by the **decision COP6/12 para 2** requested the WG SARD to further prioritize strategic actions for the implementation of the SARD Protocol, considering the table “Towards Implementation of the SARD Protocol” developed at the 4th WG SARD meeting, and encouraged closer cooperation with other WGs in this respect.

Moreover, the COP6 invited the Parties and the WG SARD to consider the new EU Common Agriculture Policy while implementing the SARD Protocol.

Strategic objectives

WG SARD shall aim at supporting the Parties to the Carpathian Convention towards their cooperation for the implementation of Article 7 on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development and other related Articles of the Carpathian Convention. WG SARD will steer and guide activities of the Carpathian Convention towards implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, relevant COP Decisions and related Carpathian Convention Programme of Work.

Finally, WG SARD shall cooperate with other working groups of the Carpathian Convention in order to encourage the consideration of sustainable agriculture and rural development in other sectors, enhance synergies and facilitate exchange of information.

Global and European policies and processes

While conducting its activities, WG SARD will take into account and support implementation of relevant global and EU policies and processes, particularly the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as

¹ [COP1 Decisions](#)

² [COP5 Decisions](#)

³ [COP6 Decisions](#)

well as the goals of achieving food security, improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Composition and organization of work

WG SARD is composed of the National Focus Points for the Carpathian Convention and/or persons nominated by them. In accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties, the meetings of WG SARD are open for observers. In conducting its business, WG SARD will apply the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties.

The Chair will be appointed by the Party taking the leading role for WG SARD in line with DECISION COP6/1 para 7 and will be responsible for convening and chairing all meetings. The Chair will also seek interaction with Chairs from other Working Groups established by the Conference of the Parties to foster exchange of information and explore possible cooperation.

WG SARD meets on a regular basis as determined by the Working Group to discharge of its duties in an agreed format (physical or online meetings).

Meeting agendas and relevant documents will be provided at least two weeks prior to the meeting. The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention is responsible - in cooperation with WG SARD Chair - for preparing and organizing the meetings and provide minutes of those meetings, including its outcomes.

Parties hosting WG SARD meetings bear the costs of meeting rooms and equipment related to organization of a meeting, unless otherwise decided.

WG SARD meeting participants cover their respective travel and accommodation expenses, unless otherwise decided.

Responsibilities

Members of WG SARD will have the following general responsibilities:

- to share relevant information, knowledge and experience in relation to sustainable agriculture and rural development in their countries with a particular focus on mountain areas;
- to actively contribute to agreed activities and gather information from colleagues, if needed;
- to consult on the activities of WG SARD with their national, regional and local stakeholders (public administration, NGOs, private sector, etc.), share the stakeholders' view with WG SARD when necessary and to ensure the stakeholders involvement in the implementation;
- to undertake tasks as requested by WG SARD respecting agreed timelines;
- to report to the Conference of the Parties through the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee.

Activities

Further to the strategic objectives of the WG SARD, the following activities and task shall be undertaken and supported by the WG SARD:

- Proposing and undertaking strategic actions for the implementation of the SARD Protocol,
- Supporting identification and involvement of key actors (including national, regional and local stakeholders) for exchange and collaboration regarding sustainable agriculture development in the Carpathians,
- Supporting project development and cooperate on resource mobilization with relevant stakeholders and donors for the implementation of the SARD Protocol,
- Sharing best practice and expertise supporting activities on sustainable agriculture development in the Carpathian region and beyond for exchange of knowledge with other mountain regions,
- Promoting activities of the Carpathian Convention on sustainable agriculture and rural development at various fora;
- Collaborating on developing ideas to raise awareness of the importance of sustainable agriculture and rural development for the Carpathian region in terms of economy, social aspects, environment, natural and cultural heritage
- Enhancing transnational and cross-border cooperation on sustainable agriculture and rural development in the region,
- Considering cooperation with and exchange with relevant working groups on cross-cutting issues and activities of common interest, including the, WG on Climate Change, WG on Sustainable Forest Management, WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, WG on Sustainable Tourism and WG on Biodiversity.
- Providing recommendations to the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) on further implementation of the Sustainable Agriculture Protocol and its priority actions.
- Providing inputs such as guidance, recommendations and policies for CCIC, COP of the Carpathian Convention and other WGs, if requested.

Coordination and cooperation with other WGs and stakeholders

The WG SARD shall exchange information and foster communication with other relevant WGs of the Carpathian Convention and might seek cooperation with other interested institutions and stakeholders within or beyond the Carpathian Convention. Special emphasis shall be given to development of cross-border partnerships and cooperation. In this respect, the WG SARD shall:

- Establish close cooperation and exchange with the other thematic Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. through regular meetings of the Chairs of the WGs to be possibly organized back to back with the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee and COP meetings) in order to:
 - ensure regular communication and exchange of strategic information between WGs, which will allow for enhancing synergies, consideration of common activities, providing relevant inputs and avoiding isolated approaches while implementing the activities of the Carpathian Convention;
 - support organization of joint meetings of interested WGs, if relevant;

- discuss and agree on a timeframe for proposing and implementing activities.
- Collaborate with other regional frameworks/platforms/initiatives and related institutions and organizations, especially from mountain and neighbouring regions, for knowledge exchange and learning.

Term

This Terms of Reference is effective upon approval of the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee and continues at least until end of 2023.

Amendment, Modification or Variation

This Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by the CCIC together with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.