



**ForestConnect: Towards a Climate-smart
Forest Connectivity for
Large Carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian
Region**

9th Meeting of the Carpathian Convention, WG Forest

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ForestConnect – Danube Region Interreg Programme



- ForestConnect is designed to address common challenges and needs to **protecting and preserving forest ecological corridors of large carnivores in the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains**
- Although climate change effects are recognized by management authorities, this **is not translated into resilience-enhancing forest management practices and clear guidance for managers of the territories**
- ForestsConnect is focusing on **providing cross-border and regional solutions that could be adapted not only nationally but regionally** – i.e. the Balkan-Carpathian region, the Alps or the Dinarides.
- More than **10 partners from Slovakia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Austria are involved**. Carpathian Convention Secretariat will also support the project.



ForestConnect: pilot solutions



- **Climate-induced habitat fragmentation can impede LC range shifts and displace individuals from mountainous areas towards more populated settlements increasing the risk for human-wildlife conflicts;**
- **Insufficient non-timber forest products may affect the diet to a more carnivorous one, additionally increasing the conflicts with cattle farmers and beekeepers**

ForestConnect will pilot solutions along forest corridors aiming at demonstrating **positive transnational effects of mosaic habitats as climate microrefugia and important foraging areas**



ForestConnect Expected Results



- **Upscale existing technological tools:** a shared Balkan-Carpathian GIS database, an online viewer “human-wildlife conflict hotspots” and a digital Twin Model to help forest and protected areas managers to visualise complexity of ongoing processes (ecological, social, etc.) and implement climate-resilient measures to facilitate large carnivores’ movements in forest corridors.
- **A new Strategic Action Plan to give a harmonized answer to the climate change challenges** faced by the Protected areas/Natura 2000 managers at the Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans regions. The SAP will represent a new dynamic conservation planning framework for Protected Areas aiming at adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing management practices that facilitate LCs range shifts and minimize the climate change induced human-wildlife conflicts.
- **Study the ecosystem services** provided by forest-grassland mosaic ecosystem and develop guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in LCs sensitive areas and assess the role of ecological corridors in the local economies
- **Increased institutional capacity** to meet the future challenges related to the preservation and conservation of large carnivores in the target areas in the context of climate change, and to uptake and sustain the project results.



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