

CARPATHIAN CONVENTION GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR STREAMLINING THE CARPATHIAN BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK INTO NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS (NBSAPs)

This Guidance Document is prepared by the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to support streamlining the objectives and policy actions of the Carpathian Convention and its Carpathian Biodiversity Framework into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) for the Carpathian countries.

This document is meant to be a resource for the Carpathian countries to consider as they revise their NBSAPs to align with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Countries may adapt and use this resource, depending on their own unique national circumstances and other national mountain regions they should consider. This is one of many potential methodologies or processes for target alignment and joint implementation of the Carpathian Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity.

This Guidance Document presents a suggested technical process for incorporating policy measures and actions, as well as objectives from the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework that are recommended for implementation and scaling to each Carpathian country's national targets and NBSAPs.

This document builds upon and is meant to be integrated with the "<u>Technical Guidance to support the</u> <u>alignment of national biodiversity targets with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework</u>," produced by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, funded by the Global Environment Facility. The Carpathian Convention Guidance Document is also a living document that will be updated periodically based on new experiences and feedback. Please contact the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention with any comments or suggestions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mountain ecosystems are hotspots for unique species and provide essential ecosystem services, playing a crucial role in biodiversity conservation and global climate regulation. However, mountain ecosystems are particularly sensitive to climate change impacts and are affected at a faster rate than other terrestrial habitats. Thus, prioritizing mountain biodiversity and supporting mountain communities on the global agenda is crucial for securing healthy ecological systems and meeting the needs of all people within the means of the planet.

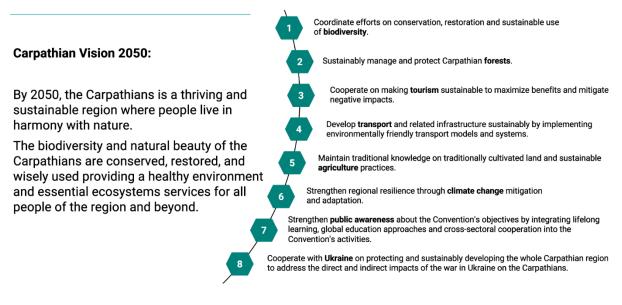
The Carpathian Convention serves as a key mechanism for promoting mountains within the global agenda, while actively supporting the environmental protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian mountain region.

In December 2022, countries adopted the <u>Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework</u> (GBF) at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15). The mission of the GBF is to take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery. It has 4 overarching goals, under which are 23 targets that aim to reduce threats to biodiversity, meet people's needs through sustainable biodiversity management, and provide tools and solutions for implementation.

As a multilateral environmental agreement, the <u>Carpathian Convention</u> acts as a regional instrument for enhancing implementation of global and European policies. The GBF explicitly encourages Parties to work with existing mechanisms and processes at varying levels and invites biodiversity-related conventions to contribute to implementing the GBF (<u>CBD/COP/DEC/15/4</u> Annex paragraph 7q, see BOX 2). The Carpathian Convention fulfills these provisions by becoming the first region in the world to apply the GBF at the regional level through the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework.

The <u>Carpathian Biodiversity Framework</u>, adopted at <u>the 7th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to</u> <u>the Carpathian Convention</u> in October 2023, is a comprehensive instrument that supports implementing the GBF by translating global goals and targets into tangible, transformative actions at the Carpathian level. The Carpathian Biodiversity Framework is accompanied by the Carpathian Vision 2050, which mirrors the global vision of living in harmony with nature and includes a set of 8 Strategic Objectives for the Carpathian region that correlate with the thematic articles and protocols of the Carpathian Convention (see BOX 1).

The Carpathian Biodiversity Framework is a tool to implement the Carpathian Convention and GBF by supporting transformative actions across and within sectors



The implementation of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, including the Carpathian Vision 2050 and its Strategic Objectives will greatly contribute to achieving the goals and targets of the GBF, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

By regionally implementing the GBF, the Carpathian Convention enhances synergies with other biodiversity-related conventions, furthers the promotion of mountain biodiversity, and mainstreams the Carpathian Convention into both global reporting mechanisms and national strategies and actions. To empower the Carpathian countries in implementing the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, the Carpathian Convention Secretariat created the present document for streamlining the Framework into countries' implementation and reporting obligations for the GBF: specifically, the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

BOX 1

Carpathian Biodiversity Framework Strategic Objectives and Carpathian Vision 2050

Carpathian Vision 2050: By 2050, the Carpathians is a thriving and sustainable region where people live in harmony with nature. The biodiversity and natural beauty of the Carpathians are conserved, restored, and wisely used, providing a healthy environment and essential ecosystems services for all people of the region and beyond.

In order to achieve the Carpathian Vision 2050 and halt and reverse biodiversity loss, holistic actions across and within sectors must be taken in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. Towards this, the Parties shall pursue the following comprehensive Carpathian Strategic Objectives by 2050, in line with the Convention and its Protocols:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: Conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Carpathians is enhanced, by harmonized and coordinated efforts and cooperation on conservation, maintenance and sustainable use of natural and semi-natural habitats and securing habitat continuity and connectivity; restoration of degraded habitats; conservation and sustainable use of species of flora and fauna characteristic to the Carpathians, especially endangered or endemic species and large carnivores; and conservation and restoration of wetlands and fresh water ecosystems.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: The Carpathian forests are sustainably managed and protected by, inter alia, improving the health and vitality of the forests; improving the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity; identifying and protecting natural, especially virgin forests; promoting the restoration of close-to-nature forests; and enhancing the role of the forest-based sector in mitigating climate change.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: Tourism in the Carpathians is sustainable, thanks to enhanced cooperation that maximizes the positive benefits of tourism for biodiversity, ecosystems, and economic and social development, while mitigating negative ecological, environmental and socio-economic impacts from tourism.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: Transport and related infrastructure in the Carpathians is developed sustainably with the objective to contribute to the overall sustainable development of the region while avoiding, minimizing and, where necessary, mitigating or compensating negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of transport and related infrastructure development, including through, inter alia, development and promotion of environmentally friendly transport models and systems, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 5: The agriculture sector in the Carpathians, including traditionally cultivated land, is maintained and developed sustainably. Traditional knowledge and sustainable agriculture practices are maintained, enabling rural communities to flourish while preserving the natural resources and cultural heritage of the Carpathians.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 6: The resilience of the Carpathian region is strengthened through climate change mitigation and through increased regional adaptation actions within the Carpathian Convention activities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 7: Awareness about the objectives and main sustainable development aspects of the Carpathian Convention is strengthened among the general public in the Carpathians. Lifelong learning and global education approaches are integrated into the Carpathian Convention activities and cross-sectoral cooperation and synergies across projects are enhanced, bridging together local and regional actors and strengthening partnerships towards sustainable development of the Carpathians.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 8: Cooperation with Ukraine on protecting and sustainably developing the whole Carpathian region is strengthened to better address the direct and indirect impacts of the war in Ukraine on the Carpathians, particularly on the natural environment and nature protection services.

II. STREAMLINING THE CARPATHIAN BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK WITH NATIONAL TARGETS

National biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) are the main vehicles for nationally implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are requested to revise and update NBSAPs by the CBD COP16 in 2024 in light of the new GBF, according to the CBD COP15 decisions (CBD/COP/DEC/15/6).

In addition to aligning NBSAPs with the GBF, Parties should include relevant actions for implementing other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements in their revised NBSAPs (CBD/COP15/DEC/15/6 paragraph 23; see BOX 2). Therefore, relevant Carpathian Convention biodiversity actions should be integrated into Carpathian countries' NBSAPs. Such integration will foster synergies and mutually strengthen the implementation of both the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity by avoiding isolated approaches and maximising limited financial and human resources.

Not only does the Convention on Biological Diversity encourage Parties to implement other biodiversity commitments and recommendations under agreements such as the Carpathian Convention, but Parties to the Carpathian Convention have also committed to consider the Carpathian Convention in their NBSAPs. Pursuant to the Carpathian Convention COP7 Decisions (CC COP7/1/8), the Parties are encouraged to make "further efforts in establishing a comprehensive and practical reporting system for the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and all its Protocols, taking into consideration already existing or incoming reporting under the revised National Biological Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), assuming the inclusion of the Carpathian Convention relevant provisions in the NBSAPs."

Thus, incorporating policy actions from the Carpathian Convention and the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework into each Carpathian countries' GBF-aligned NBSAPs fulfills both decisions described above.

To empower this process, the Carpathian Convention Secretariat created the present document to prompt Carpathian countries to consider the unique Carpathian environmental and sustainable development objectives and contexts as they formulate their national targets, indicators, policy measures and means of implementation.

A compilation of example policy measures and actions derived from the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, its annex and Carpathian Convention protocols is included in Annex I to this document. While the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework's annex is a living document that aims to comprehensively list Carpathian policy measures and actions against the GBF targets, Annex I to this document is a more curated list for Carpathian countries to consider as they revise their NBSAPs, which is recommended to be done according to the template provided by the Convention on Biological Diversity template (see Annex II). Thus, Annex I is more relevant to the NBSAP revision process than the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework annex, as it largely includes example policy measures and actions that are best suited to be adapted on a national scale (for example, Annex I does not include some specific Carpathian Conventionrelated processes from the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework annex that are relevant for facilitation by the Secretariat).

The Carpathian Convention Secretariat conducts this process in close consultation with both the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity Focal Points, ensuring a collaborative and informed approach.

BOX 2

Key Decisions Relevant to the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

Relevant decisions from the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15):

- <u>CBD/COP/DEC/15/4 paragraph 5:</u> calls the Parties to cooperate at the transboundary, regional and international levels
- <u>CBD/COP/DEC/15/4 paragraph 4:</u> and with the support of intergovernmental and other organizations in implementing the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework
- <u>CBD/COP/DEC/15/4 Annex paragraph 7q:</u> enhanced collaboration, cooperation and synergies between the CBD other biodiversity-related conventions, other relevant multilateral agreements and international organizations and processes, in line with their respective mandates, including at the global, regional, subregional and national levels, would contribute to and promote the implementation of the global biodiversity framework in a more efficient and effective manner
- <u>CBD/COP15/DEC/15/6 paragraph 23:</u> inclusion of relevant actions to implement commitments and recommendations under each of the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements into NBSAPs

The above CBD COP15 decisions identify the Carpathian Convention, a multilateral environmental agreement, as a regional instrument for enhancing implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The following Carpathian Convention COP (CC COP) decisions and other commitments provide clear mandates for aligning with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

- <u>CC/COP6/6 paragraph 1:</u> recognized the Carpathian Convention as the regional mechanism for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its new global biodiversity framework in the Carpathians.
- <u>CC/COP6/6 paragraph 2:</u> welcomed the revision of the trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention in light of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which shall be considered as a useful instrument for enhancing synergies and initiating common activities for the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- <u>CC/COP6/6 paragraph 5:</u> welcomed the idea of developing the Carpathian Commitments for the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in the form of a Political Declaration.
- <u>Carpathian Ministerial Conference/Carpathian Commitments for the new post-2020 global</u> <u>biodiversity framework implementation:</u>
 - examine the possible contribution of the Carpathian region to the implementation the new global biodiversity framework
 - develop and implement a strategic document/Carpathian Biodiversity Framework reflecting the Kunming –Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its goals and action targets, which shall be a comprehensive and ambitious instrument to implement transformative actions by various stakeholders

- sign and implement the revised Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention, and the Carpathian Convention in the light of the new GBF
- mainstream biodiversity within and across sectors by using the integrated approach of the Carpathian Conventions
- <u>CC/COP7/1 paragraph 3:</u> adopted the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework and the accompanying Carpathian Vision 2050, translating the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the regional level to achieve a vision to live in harmony with nature in the Carpathians by 2050.
- <u>CC/COP7/6 paragraph 1:</u> requested the Parties to use the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework as a key tool to implement the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols and requested the Secretariat to facilitate the implementation process.
- <u>CC/COP7/6 paragraph 2:</u> invited the Parties to include the relevant aspects of the Carpathian Convention activities within the revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD.
- <u>CC/COP7/6 paragraph 3:</u> welcomed the signing of the renewed trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation between the CBD, the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention in light of the Global Biodiversity Framework, to support common activities for biodiversity implementation and experience and knowledge sharing with other mountain regions.

III. SUGGESTED PROCESS FOR STREAMLINING THE CARPATHIAN BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK WITH NATIONAL TARGETS

Drawing from the Convention on Biological Diversity's NBSAP template, below is a suggested series of steps for integrating the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework into the process for revising national targets in light of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

1. Preliminarily assess existing national biodiversity goals and targets in the NBSAP and other national biodiversity policies against the GBF and Carpathian Biodiversity Framework;

2. Identify and engage relevant sectors, government agencies, and stakeholder groups, including those engaged in Carpathian networks, to assess the alignment of national biodiversity targets with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework;

3. Revise and update national targets with relevant policy measures and actions from the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, determine indicators and identify implementing groups;

4. Consider using the Convention on Biological Diversity's NBSAP Template for Submitting Updated National Targets.

1. Preliminarily assess existing national biodiversity goals and targets in the NBSAP and other national biodiversity policies against the GBF and Carpathian Biodiversity Framework

This step is meant to be done internally among a small group of experts to conduct an initial assessment of the degree of alignment between existing national biodiversity targets and the GBF and Carpathian Biodiversity Framework.

The following could be suggested sub-steps:

- a) Collect the country's recent national biodiversity targets and other biodiversity-related national goals that should be considered.
- b) Crosscheck the collection with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework's objectives and policy measures and actions.
 - a. Identify which national targets are aligned with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework's objectives.
 - b. Identify which objectives from the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework are not reflected in the country's existing national targets.
 - c. Identify which policy actions under the national targets are aligned with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework's policy actions.
 - d. Determine potential new targets that should be developed to cover gaps, considering current unfulfilled national targets.

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention has already crosschecked the 8 Strategic Objectives of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework with the GBF. The degrees of alignment for each Strategic Objective are based on the identified policy actions derived from adopted Carpathian Convention articles, protocols and strategic action plans. See the matrix below for an overall look at where these overlaps occur, based on the potential Carpathian policy actions. The specific policy actions can be found in Annex I.

Note: As countries potentially adapt these Carpathian-related policy actions and objectives, the degree of alignment to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework may change, because the alignments are based on the policy actions listed in the full table of Annex I.

	CBF Strategic Objectives							
GBF Target	Biodiversity, Connectivity, Restoration	Forests	Tourism	Transport	Agriculture	Climate Change	Education, Cooperation	Support to Ukraine
		Torests	lounsm	manapore	Agriculture	change	cooperation	okraine
1 2 3								
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21								
22								
23								

Legend

No alignment

 1 element from GBF target aligned

 More than 1 element from GBF target aligned

 All elements from GBF target aligned

2. Identify and engage relevant sectors, government agencies, and stakeholder groups, including those engaged in Carpathian networks, to assess the alignment of national biodiversity targets with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework

The expert group should determine and engage with relevant stakeholders that can further advise on updating or revising the national targets in alignment with the GBF and the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework.

The Convention on Biological Diversity advises Parties to involve relevant government ministries, biodiversity focal points, non-governmental organizations, academic and research organizations, youth,

local communities, businesses and other institutions. It is important to include representatives from diverse sectors and perspectives.

Involving a broader network from the country will help Parties identify synergies and gaps between the national targets and both biodiversity frameworks. They may also help inform realistic implementation strategies or indicators for achieving each national target.

We encourage Parties to include representatives from various Carpathian Convention networks. Carpathian countries could engage representatives from the following networks or projects who also reside in the respective country including:

- The country's National Focal Point(s)
- Members from each Carpathian Convention Working Group
- Members from the Science for the Carpathians Network (S4C Network)
- Members from the Carpathian Education for Sustainable Development Expert Network (ESD Network)
- Members from the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA)
- Members from the Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI)
- Coordinators from key projects in partnership with the Carpathian Convention

The Secretariat can assist each Party with making connections with these networks.

3. Revise and update national targets with relevant policy measures and actions from the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework, determine indicators, and identify implementing groups

As stated by the Convention on Biological Diversity, NBSAPs should create synergies with other biodiversity-related agreements and conventions. Rather than create additional reporting mechanisms, the Carpathian Convention Secretariat seeks to capitalise upon the NBSAP revision process to facilitate the implementation of both the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework and the GBF.

The Carpathian Convention Secretariat crosschecked the 8 Strategic Objectives of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework with the GBF. The compiled policy actions are derived from adopted Carpathian Convention articles, protocols and strategic action plans.

The following could be suggested sub-steps:

- a) Collect the country's policy actions under the recent national biodiversity targets and other biodiversity-related policy actions that should be considered.
- b) Identify which example Carpathian policy measures and actions from the full table in Annex I are applicable to national targets.
- c) Adapt the Carpathian policy measures and actions to the country's national context and adapt them to the current, revised and/or new national targets.
- d) Develop indicators for meeting national targets based on Carpathian needs or conditions.
- e) Identify existing means of implementation and gaps to implementation.

BOX 3

Supplementary documents and tools for helping contextualize relevant Carpathian objectives, policies and indicators for the Carpathian countries

Biodiversity

- <u>Carpathian Convention Protocol on Biodiversity</u>
- Action Plan on conservation of large carnivores and ensuring ecological connectivity in the Carpathians
- <u>Handbook of Best Practices for Planning and Implementing Mitigation Measures regarding</u> <u>Landscape Connectivity</u> (SaveGREEN)
- Carpathian strategy for enhancing biodiversity and landscape conservation outside and inside protected areas: <u>Full document | Factsheet</u> (Centralparks)
- <u>Guidelines on communication between protected areas and local communities in the Carpathians</u> (Centralparks)
- <u>Methodology for Identification of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Countries by Using Large</u> <u>Carnivores as Umbrella Species</u> (ConnectGREEN)
- Methodology for Standardised Monitoring of Ecological Corridors

Forest

- <u>Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management</u>
- <u>Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Forest Protocol</u>
- <u>Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem</u>
 <u>services</u>

Climate Change

- <u>Implementation Framework 2030</u> accompanying the <u>Long-term Vision 2030 towards combating</u> <u>climate change in the Carpathians</u>
- <u>Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystem</u>
 <u>services</u>

Transport

- <u>Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Transport</u>
- Joint Strategic Action Plan 2021 2026 for the implementation of the Protocol on Sustainable <u>Transport</u>
- <u>Wildlife and Traffic in the Carpathians: Guidelines how to minimize the impact of transport</u> <u>infrastructure development on nature</u> (TRANSGREEN)
- <u>TRANSGREEN Policy Recommendations on integrated road and rail transportation planning in the</u> <u>Carpathians</u>
- <u>State of the Art Report and Gap Analysis in the field of environmentally-friendly transport</u> <u>infrastructure development</u> (TRANSGREEN)

Tourism

- <u>Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Tourism</u>
- Strategy for local sustainable tourism development based on natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathians: <u>Full document</u> | <u>Factsheet</u> (Centralparks)

Other

- <u>Carpathian Convention Protocol on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development</u>
- <u>Carpathian Ecosystem Services Tool</u> (Centralparks)
- <u>Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime in the Danube-Carpathian Region</u>
- <u>Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System</u>

4. Consider using the Convention on Biological Diversity's NBSAP Template for Submitting Updated National Targets

Because NBSAPs are the main vehicle through which Parties determine and communicate their national goals and targets for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, using a common template will be useful for ensuring coherent planning across other environmental agreements, such as the Carpathian Convention.

The Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat created a template for revising NBSAPs, the "<u>Template for submission of national targets as part of NBSAPs toward the implementation of the</u> <u>Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework</u>" (see Annex II). The template includes the following components:

- National Target
- Alignment with Global Goals and Targets
- Degree of Alignment
- Policy measures to achieve target (optional)
- Indicators to Monitor National Target
- Non-state Actor Commitments (optional)
- Means of Implementation and Barriers to Implementation (optional)

This template not only provides an opportunity for the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework to be incorporated but provides a model for how the Framework can be streamlined. The Carpathian Convention Secretariat compiled comprehensive policy actions and objectives included in the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework Annex to be applied to the NBSAP template, as noted above (see Annex I).

ANNEX I

Comprehensive table with compilation of example policy measures and actions relevant for the Carpathians

ANNEX II

Template for revised NBSAPs provided by the Convention on Biological Diversity