LIFE Carpathian Strategic Nature Project
–a unique opportunity for the Carpathians

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Mandate by the Carpathian Convention COP7

7th Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP7):

➢ requested the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention to facilitate the CBF implementation process (Decision COP7/6 paragraph 1).

➢ encouraged consideration of relevant EU funding opportunities [...], including, development and implementation of a Carpathian strategic project (e.g. LIFE Strategic Nature Project (SNaP)) to tackle challenges of the Carpathian region, while enhancing the cooperation process for the purpose of the harmonious and sustainable development of the region and Europe (Decision COP7/3 paragraph 9).
Integrate activities into national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs)

Promote mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors by using the integrated approach of the Carpathian Convention

Establish national and/or regional intersectoral committees

Organize on a regular basis intersectoral meeting within the frame of the Carpathian Convention

Synergies and cooperation with other relevant MEAs and regional and European process and partners and stakeholders

Develop and implement Carpathian strategic projects (e.g. LIFE Strategic Nature Project (SNaP))
Consultation by the Secretariat

Consultations with on possible funding opportunities with:

- European Commission, DG Environment
- European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA)
LIFE Strategic Nature Project for the Carpathians - strategic importance

- Possible source of **long-term large-scale funding** for some activities planned in the Carpathian region, envisioned in the **Carpathian Biodiversity Framework**, and possibly **inscribed into the NBSAPs**

- SNAP project would be particularly important for **transboundary and transnational activities**, which for different formal and/or legal reasons, cannot be financed from the national/ in-country funding sources of the involved Parties

- **Almost all Parties to the Carpathian Convention are eligible** (contrary to e.g. Interreg Central Europe or Danube Transnational Programmes), while Serbia can participate as a “third country”

- Not a single transnational LIFE SNaP has been implemented so far, which can constitute the competitive advantage and strength of the joint Carpathian application
Types of activities supported under LIFE SNaPs

➢ institutional support and capacity building actions
➢ best practice elements to be combined with pilot, demonstration and information, awareness raising and dissemination elements
➢ mainstreaming of nature and biodiversity priorities into different other sectors
➢ concrete conservation and restoration measures, in particular where these cannot be supported through other EU funding programmes
➢ mandatory stakeholder involvement (only “expected” in traditional LIFE project)
➢ mobilization of complementary funds (at least one other relevant EU, national or private funding source) for the implementation of complementary activities, within the same plan or strategy, is compulsory
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – overview

SNaPs can support the implementation of:

- Prioritized Action Frameworks the EU Habitats Directive
- but also implementation of other plans or strategies adopted at international, national, regional or multiregional level by nature and biodiversity authorities that implement EU nature and/or biodiversity policy or legislation and include specific and measurable actions, or targets, with a clear timeline and budget

The Carpathian Biodiversity Framework can be perceived as other strategy adopted at the international level by nature and biodiversity authorities that implement EU nature and/or biodiversity policy or legislation (consulted with CINEA)

Need to develop an action plan for CBF/ revise CBF Annex with “specific and measurable actions, or targets, with a clear timeline and budget” to meet the requirements and guide the implementation of the joint transnational Carpathian LIFE SNaP
Carpathian LIFE Strategic Nature Project – thematic focus

1) align with the EU environmental policies and to contribute to EU Birds and Habitats Directives, and of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

2) align with the CBF objectives, particularly Strategic Objective 1 on biodiversity and Strategic Objective 2 on sustainable forests

3) mainstreaming biodiversity objectives to the other relevant sectoral policies

- extension of the network of protected areas (CBF SO1)
- enhancing the protected area network coherence by setting up ecological corridors (CBF SO1)
- implementation of EU nature restoration targets for species and habitats (CBF SO1)
- ecosystem restoration (CBF SO1)
- enhanced protection of the primary and old-growth forests (CBF SO2)
- improving the health and resilience of managed forests (CBF SO2)
- bringing nature back to agricultural land (CBF SO1 + SO5)

CBF SO8 (Cooperation with Ukraine) can also be duly considered under the above activities.
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – overview

- indicative total eligible budget (including 60% EU co-funding) ranges from 15 to 50 million EUR with the implementation period between 5 and 10 years

- current call for proposals open until September 2024, next one potentially in Spring 2025

- two-step application process

- possibility for applying first for the LIFE Technical Assistance for the preparation of a SNaP
Carpathian LIFE Strategic Nature Project – strategic benefit for the region

The LIFE SNaP project is crucial for the Carpathian Convention, offering financial, collaborative, and strategic support to tackle regional environmental challenges.

By leveraging EU support, fostering transnational cooperation, and integrating biodiversity into broader policies, it helps the Carpathian Convention in achieving its conservation goals and contribute to global biodiversity targets.

Harmonizing NBSAP revisions, streamlining GBF and CBF, and preparing transnational proposals will avoid isolated efforts and efficiently utilize resources, creating strong synergies.
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – Who is blue! advancing european projects

• Small company with highly individualised approach to strategic project development; specific consideration of respective strategic needs of the partners.

• Experienced with comprehensive, strategic LIFE projects (development and management of largest LIFE Integrated Project in DE): Living Lahn

• Programme knowledge: Programme developer, Programme secretariat, Programme evaluator for Interreg, LIFE.

• 90% success rate, but turning a lot of requests for support down :-(

• Supporter in one of the first Interreg projects of the Carpathian Convention, the "Carpathian Project"
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – What speaks for a SNaP?

• Very strong starting point: Carpathian Biodiversity Framework

• Good and sound preparatory work already done

• Strong and experienced network

• Good connections to the donor who already expressed interest

• Strong foundation: Meaningful projects taking place in the partner countries.

• Unique Selling Point: Are we the first to "pull off" a transnational SNAP?
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – Our success factors in a SNaP

• Making a difference and delivering measureable success in Nature development: strong KPI-list to be filled.

• Constructive connection to the existing projects: How to connect (to) them?
  o Not possible: Abstract "Umbrella-Project"
  o Better: Activities that are only possible BECAUSE of transnationality
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – Preparation is a lot of work, how to handle it??

• 1st stage: Application for a SNaP Preparatory Project (TA = Technical Assistance - SNaP)
  o Deadline in September 2024
  o Overall budget approx. 100,000 EURO
  o One applicant on behalf of the consortium
  o 1 year of room to prepare the large project

• 2nd stage: Prepare a large SNaP for the call in 2025
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – Content of the TA & Preparation of the SNaP

1. Identification of thematic aspects to be covered by the transnational SNaP under the umbrella
2. Process for every partner to formulate own strategic needs: Bilateral meetings, assessments, mutual visits, questionnaires
3. Formulating every individual interest into a consistent and harmonised project approach.
4. Presentation and discussion on large plenary event
5. Refinement back in individualised working groups / bilateral sessions: Agreement on KPI/Agreement on connection to existing projects/etc.
6. Budget agreements: Overheads/Cost categories/Joint expenses
7. Presentation of final project application
8. List of additional supporters
9. Formal aspects and submission: partner presentation, declarations
10. Lobbying
LIFE Strategic Nature Project – What can you expect concretely

Before Summer:
- Draft application for the little TA project for your consideration
- List of questions that would help us to improve the TA project

September - December
- Submission of the little TA project
- Start of initial activities to prepare the large SNaP

2025
- Hopefully: approval of TA-Project
- Start of in-depth preparation of large, transnational SNaP