

CARPATHIAN LIFE Strategic Nature Project – info note

Background

In October 2023, all Parties to the Carpathian Convention adopted the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework (CBF), which seeks to facilitate the implementation of both the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 within the Carpathian region. It translates the goals and targets of the KMGBF into eight Strategic Objectives and helps align Carpathian countries' national efforts with global and European biodiversity targets.

The CBF's eight Strategic Objectives cover sectors related to biodiversity and nature protection; sustainable forest management; sustainable tourism; environmentally friendly transport and related infrastructure; sustainable and traditional agriculture; climate change mitigation and adaptation; education and cross-sectoral cooperation; and sustainable development of the Ukrainian Carpathians considering the war.

To concretely implement the CBF, the CARPATHIAN LIFE project proposal was developed under the EU LIFE Strategic Nature Project (LIFE SNaP) Programme. The EU Member States and Ukraine are fully eligible as partners of the project consortium, while Serbia can participate as a third country (subject to specific conditions of eligibility). The EU LIFE SNaP Programme is a two-stage application process: a concept note was submitted on 4 September 2025, and successful applicants then submit a full proposal by 5 March 2026.

Carpathian LIFE SNaP Proposal

The overall aim of the CARPATHIAN LIFE project is to safeguard biodiversity in the Carpathian region by driving the effective implementation of the CBF through reinforced transnational and cross-border cooperation among the seven Carpathian countries. By harmonising national biodiversity conservation efforts, the project will deliver innovative, collaborative solutions that contribute to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030, and support the implementation of the EU Nature Restoration Regulation and the KMGBF.

The CARPATHIAN LIFE concept note was submitted in September with the following details:

- **Budget:** 50 million EUR
- **Duration:** 9 years, from 2027-2035
- **Consortium:** 52 partners from all Carpathian countries, including 1 coordinating beneficiary, 37 beneficiaries, 4 affiliated entities, and 10 associated partners

Thus far, the proposed consortium involves the following partners:

Coordinating Beneficiary: Eurac Research

International Partners:

- blue! advancing european projects (beneficiary)
- Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention (associated partner)
- Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (beneficiary)
- World Wide Fund for Nature Central Eastern Europe (beneficiary)

Czech Republic Partners:

- Czech University of Life Sciences Prague (beneficiary)
- Friends of the Earth Czech Republic (beneficiary)
- Mendel University in Brno (beneficiary)

- Ministry of the Environment (beneficiary)
- World Wide Fund for Nature – Czechia (beneficiary)

Hungary Partners:

- Bükk National Park Directorate (beneficiary)
- Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate (beneficiary)
- Ipoly Erdő State Forestry (beneficiary)
- Ministry of Agriculture (associated partner)

Poland Partners:

- Babia Góra National Park (beneficiary)
- Institute of Environmental Protection – National Research Institute (beneficiary)
- Jagiellonian University (beneficiary)
- Ministry of Climate and Environment (associated partner)
- Pieniny National Park (beneficiary)

Romania Partners:

- Iron Gates Natural Park (affiliated entity)
- Maramureşului Mountains Nature Park (affiliated entity)
- Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests (beneficiary)
- National Agency for Mountain Area (beneficiary)
- National Forest Administration-ROMSILVA (beneficiary)
- Piatra Craiului National Park (affiliated entity)
- Research and Development Institute for Wildlife and Mountain Resources (beneficiary)
- Rodna Mountains National Park (affiliated entity)
- World Wide Fund for Nature – Romania (beneficiary)

Serbia Partners:

- Djerdap National Park (associated partner)
- Institute for Nature Protection (associated partner)
- Ministry of Environmental Protection (beneficiary)

Slovakia Partners:

- Ministry of the Environment (associated partner)
- National Forest Centre (associated partner)
- Technical University in Zvolen (beneficiary)
- State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (associated partner)

Ukraine Partners:

- Boikivshchyna National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (beneficiary)
- Carpathian National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Cheremosky National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Gorgany Nature Reserve (beneficiary)
- Hutsulshchyna National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (beneficiary)
- Korolivski Beskydy National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Ministry of Economy, Environment and Agriculture of Ukraine (associated partner)
- Skolivski Beskydy National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine (associated partner)
- Synevyr National Nature Park (beneficiary)

- Synyogora National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Ukrainian National Forestry University (beneficiary)
- Uzhansky National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Verkhovynsky National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Vyzhnytskyi National Nature Park (beneficiary)
- Zacharovanyi Krai National Nature Park (beneficiary)

To concretise the CBF's eight Strategic Objectives into an action plan for driving tangible biodiversity outcomes on the ground, the CBF Implementation Plan with specific targets, actions, timeline and budget is currently being finalised. The CBF Implementation Plan will be implemented through the CARPATHIAN LIFE project, guiding the execution of priority actions identified by the Carpathian countries.

The Plan deliberately focuses on specific biodiversity challenges and territories deemed most feasible and of highest priority for implementation within the project's 9-year duration, ending in 2035. Thus, the planned activities under CBF Implementation Plan will be embedded within the following proposed CARPATHIAN LIFE work packages (WP):

- WP1: Project Management and Coordination
- WP2: Ecological connectivity and nature restoration
- WP3: Water retention management and resilience, including wetlands
- WP4: Large carnivore conservation
- WP5: Sustainable and closer-to-nature forestry and primary and old-growth forest conservation
- WP6: Agrobiodiversity conservation and management
- WP7: Governance and mainstreaming biodiversity
- WP8: Sustainability, replication and exploitation of project results
- WP9: Complementary funds monitoring, coordination and mobilisation

The CBF Implementation Plan activities focus on two types of cooperation:

1. Transnational cooperation, where biodiversity activities are coordinated and/or harmonised by all or most Carpathian countries;
2. Cross-border cooperation, where biodiversity activities are most needed in areas located across state boundaries or the wider border zones of neighbouring countries.

To empower the above two approaches, activities related to improving Carpathian Convention governance mechanisms and promoting best practice examples will be part of the CARPATHIAN LIFE and CBF Implementation Plan.

Firstly, the project can rely on existing Carpathian Convention governing bodies, networks, and platforms. These mechanisms will enhance transnational cooperation for implementing the CBF, and by extension, the Carpathian Convention's articles and protocols. Secondly, activities that will take place in a single area or country that are justified as best practice examples will be planned for replication or upscaling in other Carpathian areas. The project includes a wide range of actions that directly implement the CBF Strategic Objectives, as well as horizontal actions that facilitate its full implementation.

Both approaches are necessary for ensuring that transnational and cross-border cooperation on CBF implementation are not only realised, but also sustainable beyond the project duration.