CC/COP8/15/DOC/1/FINAL

Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism Work Plan and Mandate 2027–2029

While conducting its activities, the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Tourism (WG Tourism) will follow its Terms of Reference and the strategic objectives established therein. As main reference documents, the WG Tourism will use the relevant decisions adopted at COP8, the Carpathian Convention Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians, while ensuring coherence with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework and its Implementation Plan 2027–2035.This Work Plan take into account the Policy Recommendations of the 11th WG Tourism Meeting. The WG Tourism will also contribute to the four strategic priorities of the Presidency of Ukraine (2027–2029) set out in Decision COP8/3 para 2: strengthening the position of the Carpathians at the European level; balancing economic development with environmental protection; advancing biodiversity conservation and ecosystem integrity; and strengthening climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction through sustainable water and land management.

Timeline: Unless otherwise specified, the envisaged activities are to be implemented continuously/completed by COP9 in 2029. The implementation of the Work Plan is subject to the availability of resources.

1) Implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians
Action: Support the implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians with the consideration of the CBF and its Implementation Plan
Mandate: **DECISION COP8/15 para:** 1. Encourages Parties to strengthen the implementation of the Tourism Protocol, taking into account national circumstances, with a view to ensuring that tourism contributes to sustainable development, environmental protection and the well being of local communities; 2. Encourages Parties, where appropriate, to integrate sustainable tourism principles relevant for the Carpathians into relevant national, regional and local strategies and policies, including those related to biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage and climate change; 7.a Requests the WG Tourism to guide the implementation of the Tourism Protocol and its Strategy during the period 2027–2029; 7.b Requests the WG Tourism to promote coherence between sustainable tourism and other thematic areas of the Convention, including biodiversity, cultural heritage and rural development.
Envisaged activities ➢ Support implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians. ➢ Promote integration of Tourism Protocol objectives into national and regional tourism strategies and policies. ➢ Strengthen cooperation among Carpathian countries and tourism stakeholders for effective implementation of the Protocol. ➢ Promote coherence between sustainable tourism, biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage, climate resilience, and sustainable rural development. ➢ Facilitate the exchange of good practices, knowledge and experiences related to sustainable mountain tourism. ➢ Contribute to the implementation of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework through tourism-related measures that support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

2) Sustainable Tourism Governance, Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships
Action: Strengthen governance mechanisms, stakeholder participation and strategic partnerships for sustainable tourism development
Mandate: **DECSION COP8/15 para 3:** Invites Parties to support the engagement of, and cooperation among, public authorities, tourism stakeholders and local actors, including destination management organizations (DMOs), municipalities, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and protected area authorities, society, academia, youth and local producer groups, in the development and implementation of sustainable tourism in the Carpathian region; Encourages contribution to and dissemination of results from the ENTURE-CE project. **DECISION COP8/5, COP8/7 and COP8/8:** Invite Working Groups to cooperate with scientific networks, stakeholder platforms and relevant international partners **Policy Recommendations of the 11th WG Tourism Meeting** - Strengthen and broaden stakeholder participation within the WG Tourism. - Enhance coordination among tourism, environment, cultural heritage, agriculture and rural development sectors. - Establish regular local dialogue platforms. - Apply participatory governance approaches. - Strengthen cooperation with regional and international initiatives supporting sustainable tourism.
Envisaged activities: ➢ Expand stakeholder engagement in the WG Tourism and CSTP activities. ➢ Facilitate regular dialogue among national authorities, DMOs, municipalities, protected areas, SMEs, NGOs, academia, youth and local communities. ➢ Promote participatory approaches in tourism planning and destination management. ➢ Support local-level cooperation mechanisms addressing visitor management, tourism infrastructure planning and sustainable resource use. ➢ Encourage meaningful participation of local communities and traditional land users in tourism development processes. ➢ Strengthen cooperation with Science for the Carpathians (S4C), CESDEN, CNPA, CSTP and other relevant regional and international networks. ➢ Support implementation and dissemination of results from the ENTURE-CE project and other relevant tourism-related projects. ➢ Promote exchange of knowledge, good practices and lessons learned with other mountain regions, including cooperation with the Alpine Convention and other relevant international frameworks. ➢ Develop and support project proposals contributing to the implementation of the Tourism Protocol and the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development in the Carpathians. ➢ Promote synergies with activities related to biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage, pastoralism, environmental education, climate adaptation and sustainable local development.

3) Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform (CSTP)
Action: Further operationalize and strengthen the Carpathian Sustainable Tourism Platform
Mandate: **DECISION COP8/15 para 6** Encourages further development and operationalization of the CSTP based on the Work Plan and Action Plan, including:

a) expanding CSTP Centres to other interested Parties, as a cooperation mechanism to support the effective implementation of the Tourism Protocol,

b) considering the CSTP Solutions: creating Carpathian Cross-Border Task Forces/ Working Teams coordinated by Carpathian Euroregion for the delimitating, organizing and developing of Carpathian cross-border functional areas - as a result and continuation of the Central Mountains project, as appropriate.

Envisaged activities:

- Support implementation of CSTP Work Plan and Action Plan.
- Promote establishment of additional CSTP Centres in interested Parties.
- Support the operation of CSTP thematic and cross-border working teams.
- Strengthen coordination among tourism stakeholders across the region.
- Mainstream outputs and lessons learned from the Central Mountains project into WG Tourism activities.
- Facilitate development of joint regional tourism initiatives and projects through CSTP.

4) Development of Sustainable Tourism Destinations and Tourism Routes

Action: Promote and develop eco-tourism destinations and tourism routes

Mandate:

DECISION COP8/15 para 5

Encourages Parties to consider the policy recommendations developed by the WG Tourism at its 11th meeting with a view to supporting sustainable tourism development and advancing the implementation of tourism-related provisions of the Convention, in particular by identifying the development of eco-tourism destinations and tourism routes as priority areas for the WG Tourism;

Policy Recommendations of the 11th WG Tourism Meeting

- Support development of eco-tourism destinations and tourism routes, including long-distance hiking trails, cycling routes and cultural routes.
- Promote the Carpathians as a shared and sustainable mountain destination.
- Develop monitoring mechanisms for tourism destinations and routes.

Envisaged activities:

- Support coordinated development of eco-tourism destinations across the Carpathians.
- Promote transboundary hiking trails, cycling paths and cultural routes.
- Encourage destination management approaches consistent with sustainability, circular economy and social inclusion principles.
- Support development of tourism quality and sustainability standards.
- Promote the Carpathians as a flagship European sustainable mountain tourism destination.
- Support relevant pilot initiatives and project development.

5) Biodiversity-Friendly and Resilient Tourism

Action: Promote tourism that contributes to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience

Mandate:

DECISION COP8/15 para 2:

Encourages Parties, where appropriate, to integrate sustainable tourism principles relevant for the Carpathians into relevant national, regional and local strategies and policies, including those related to biodiversity conservation.

DECISION COP8/1 and COP8/9:

Activities under all Protocols should be implemented coherently with the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework.

Policy Recommendations of the 11th WG Tourism Meeting

- Align tourism planning with biodiversity conservation objectives.
- Ensure tourism development respects ecological integrity.
- Strengthen coordination between tourism and environmental authorities.
- Align tourism development with safety, rescue and sustainability systems, including waste management and circular economy principles

Envisaged activities:

- Promote biodiversity-friendly tourism planning and management.
- Support implementation of tourism approaches contributing to conservation and restoration objectives under the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework.
- Promote sustainable visitor management practices in sensitive natural areas.
- Encourage tourism models supporting ecosystem services and nature-based solutions.
- Promote sustainable mobility, circular economy and waste reduction measures in tourism destinations.
- Strengthen cooperation with protected areas and biodiversity-related initiatives

6) Knowledge, Monitoring and Science-Based Decision Making

Action: Strengthen monitoring, knowledge exchange and evidence-based tourism policies

Mandate:

DECISION COP8/3 para 5:

Invites Parties, Working Groups and relevant stakeholders to closely consider and support implementation of recommendations from the Science for the Carpathians network, as relevant for the Programme of work and strategic priorities for the implementation period 2027–2029;

Policy Recommendations of the 11th WG Tourism Meeting

- Strengthen data collection and monitoring tools.
- Improve coordination between tourism, environmental and regional development policies.
- Ensure tourism-related developments are based on scientific recommendations, including those from S4C

Envisaged activities:

- Support development and application of sustainable tourism indicators.
- Promote exchange of tourism-related data and good practices.
- Strengthen cooperation with S4C and relevant research institutions.
- Encourage evidence-based tourism planning and policy development.
- Support capacity-building and peer-learning activities, including participation of Ukrainian stakeholders.
- Promote dissemination and use of project results, assessments and scientific recommendations relevant to sustainable tourism