

Summary report of training activities of Output 5.3 E-learning training course on eco-corridors

April 2021.

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1. Introduction and background

ConnectGREEN project aims to cope with the fast and increasing ecosystem and habitat fragmentation in the Danube region and to improve ecological connectivity between natural habitats, especially between Natura 2000 sites and other categories of protected areas in the Carpathian ecoregion of transnational importance.

The E-learning training course was developed for 2 target groups: one course on identification, management, monitoring of eco-corridors for conservationists and protected areas staff; the other course on integration of eco-corridors in spatial plans dedicated to spatial planners and related professional groups including authorities

One course with four modules on methodologies for identification, management, monitoring of eco-corridors along with stakeholder communication based on WP3 and 4 findings will be dedicated to PAs professionals mainly.

The other course with 4 modules is dedicated to train spatial planners on the methodology for integrating eco-corridors into spatial planning practices including a methodology of analysis of legislative provisions and practices in each target country.

The E-learning courses will be uploaded to CCIBIS and promoted among the protected area community, universities, local authorities and spatial planning practitioners as well as during relevant events.

The ConnectGREEN project

Started in June 2018 and running through May 2021, ConnectGREEN (Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin) is an Interreg Danube project aiming at increasing the capacity of ecological corridors identification and management and overcoming the conflict between infrastructure development and wildlife conservation. ConnectGREEN brings together 23 partners from multiple countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Montenegro, France, and Serbia) and various fields of activity and expertise (spatial planning, research, government, biodiversity conservation) to address the challenges of ecosystem fragmentation and degradation affecting the conservation of large carnivores in the Carpathian ecoregion.

The **main objective** of ConnectGREEN project is to maintain, respectively improve the ecological connectivity between natural habitats, especially between Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas of transnational relevance in the Carpathian ecoregion, namely in Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and Ukraine. More specifically, the project aims at:

- Developing innovative solutions and guidance to identify ecological corridors and connectivity gaps in a harmonized way across the Carpathian ecoregion to maintain long-term, cross-border wildlife movement, associated ecosystem services and a high level of biodiversity in the region.
- Engaging protected area and Natura 2000 site managers, conservationists, spatial planners and other key stakeholders in an integrated approach for strengthening the capacity for identifying and managing ecological corridors.
- Reconciling nature conservation and spatial planning and development in ecological corridors and Natura 2000 sites by identifying and implementing strategic directions and instruments and practices.

2. Transferable outputs through Training of trainers' events

- Methodology or identifying ecological corridors
- State of the Art Report on the existing planning systems and their application for ecological corridor identification and management
- GAP analysis report on the identification of the needs for improving the planning processes and tools
- Set of recommendations developed together with spatial planners to avoid/ minimise fragmentation of ecological corridors and Natura 2000 sites
- Ecological connectivity related database under the CCIBIS
- Database with all relevant spatial information in each pilot site
- Maps with the distribution of target species, core areas, ecological corridors and critical barrier sites in each pilot areas
- International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians

3. Main trainings held over the project implementation

Training of trainers' events:

Date of training	Place	Participants	Agenda
7th September	on-line	40 participants	
7th September	Budapest, Hungary	36 participants	
14th September	Herencsény, Budapest	42 participants	
7th October	Bratislava, Slovakia	39 participants	

All together we reached 157 participants.

All PPs contributed to the workout of the learning content through ToT events and commenting each material, translating tutorials to national languages, supporting the formulation of the materials by commenting, writing, proofreading, editing the embedding materials in all outputs and deliverables.

4. Agendas of the events

7th September online and off line trainings:

1st session on ecological connectivity and ecological corridors

8.15 – 8.45 On-line sign-in to zoom

8.45 – 9.00 Technical support and short tutorial for on-line use of webinar platform, chat-room and Q&A

9.00 - 9.15 Introduction and welcome to the 1st session

9.15 – 10.15 Presentation on ecological connectivity (SZIU) - HU, translation to EN

10.15 – 10.30 Coffee break

10.30 – 11.30 Presentation on green infrastructure system planning (SZIU) - HU, translation to EN

11.30 – 11.45 Presentation on actual European policy progress (CEEweb) - EN

11.45 - 12.00 Presentation on ConnectGreen e-learning platform on ecological connectivity (Spectra) - EN

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch break

2nd session on GIS mapping and modelling

12:15 – 12:45 On-line sign-in to zoom

12:45 – 13:00 Technical support and short tutorial for on-line use of webinar platform, chat-room

13.00 - 13.10 Introduction and welcome to the 2nd session

13.00 – 15.00 ArcGIS Linkage Mapper ecosystem analysis practical approach. (SZIU) - HU, translation to EN

14th September Herencsény trainings:

8:00 – starting from Budapest, a XI. ker. Villányi út 35-41.

9:20 – 10:00 visiting Börzsöny protected area next to Apc

9:20 – 11.20 visiting Hollókő Wold heritage site

13:00 Presentation of ConnectGreen project and SZIE university student's results on ecological connectivity and spatial plans for the region in Herencsény major office

~20.00 arriving back to Budapest

7th October online and off line trainings:

13:45-14:00 Registration to the event

14:00-14:10 Introduction and welcome

14:10-14:55 Presentation of methodology on eco-corridor identification

14:55-15:40 Presentation of guidelines on harmonizing the interests between ecosystem protection and different land uses

15:40-16:00 Presentation of tools for capacity building (e-learning platform, CCIBIS, library)

5. Final message of the meetings

ConnectGREEN project is providing professionals with methodologies, guidelines and innovative tools trying to support their work in the field. The future professionals – spatial planning students have witnessed newly produced knowledge in practice and were encouraged to continue their studies and future work in the field of biodiversity protection and ecological connectivity. Interesting topics can raise awareness for nature protection easily.