

## Output Factsheet

**Output title:**

**T3.4 Knowledge transfer conference for PA professionals**

The Conference “Ecological connectivity and the way forward in the Carpathians” provided the platform for experience exchange on bio-corridor maintenance and restoration, mainly, but not only addressed to protected area professionals and related professions, not only from the Carpathians (CPA) but as well from adjacent mountain regions (Alps, Dinarides, whole Danube Region).

On 28-30 September 2021, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CPA) Steering Committee, WWF, CEEweb, and EURAC Research held the International Conference “Protected Areas - Cornerstones of Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians and Beyond” in Visegrád, Hungary and virtually via Zoom or a live stream on YouTube, so we could reach participants couldn’t attend the event any other way, we provided an active contribution possibility to on-line and off-line participants to ensure the maximum collaboration level.

The event addressed stakeholders working in and around protected areas at different levels to gain knowledge and share experiences on ecological connectivity. Furthermore, through a special session organized by the support of Centralparks project (“Building Management Capacities of Carpathian Protected Areas for the Integration and Harmonization of Biodiversity Protection and Local Socio-economic Development”), the event fostered collaboration between protected area professionals in the Carpathians and beyond. Representatives of related sectors like agriculture, spatial planning and forestry attended the conference. The conference aimed to generate cross sectoral discussions and aimed to enhance the cooperation between these sectors regarding protecting and restoring ecological connectivity.

**Contribution to EUSDR actions and/or targets (max. 1500 characters)**

The project main focus “biodiversity with a special focus on ecological connectivity” was discussed within the EUSDR PA (PA 06: preserving biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils) coordinators, and were embed to the cooperation between the macro-regions, as one of the most important focus of the next decade.

The project provided solutions and was published over the actual event for the required “know-how”, best practice collection and ready to use tools for the other macro-regions. Within the project the dissemination was started among the other macro-regions, namely with the Alpine and Adriatic-Ionian MRSs, creating new platforms of knowledge and experience sharing for the practical and policy approaches.

**Performed testing, if applicable (max. 1000 characters)**

Not relevant

**Integration and use of the output by the target group (max. 2000 characters)**

The final conference of the project involved all stakeholders of the project, even enlarged the reaches most importantly for spatial planners and nature protection experts, and started a pro-active conversation on the use of outputs by Central-Eastern and Southern Mountain Ranges and countries of Europe.

**Geographical coverage and transferability (max. 1500 characters)**

The conference aimed all Carpathian Countries, involved to active participation of 3 countries' ministerial representatives and 3 more authority level representatives, engaged the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas membership by as a final act of its revitalization process, supported the conversation between NGOs of the region on nature protection practice, management and policy levels, started new cooperations, especially for the spatial planning level protection of the High-Tatras in cooperation and support by the Carpathian Convention and the many NGOs, just introduced to each other over the event.

Besides the EUSDR level, which was represented by the PA6 Steering Committee Member, we reached the Alpine and Baltic Macro Regions' representatives, who forward the project outputs and mission.

**Durability (max. 1500 characters)**

The project results were embeded to CBD processes, in this way providing a long lasting, global effect through transformative change processes.

On regional level the results were adopted by the Carpathian Convention, making sure to be implemented by the member states.

On national levels, all PPs reached many ministries as the most important stakeholders of can act on ecological connectivity, meanwhile the countries could embed project results into already started national process on ecosystem mapping, landscape and land-use change mapping and in green infrastructure development. In Romania, Slovakia and Hungary a frequent consultation is going on about the project's topics, this way the project results and mission joined to the most effective ways of national policy approach.

One of the most important result of the project is the periodic ministerial level consultation series started by the Serbian partners and Romanian partners, providing a platform for the transformative change progress to Serbia and Romania.

**Synergies with other projects/ initiatives and / or alignment with current EU policies/ directives/ regulations, if applicable (max. 1500 characters)**

The project built a close cooperation with Centralparks Interreg and EuroLarge Carnivores Life project, interacting in many activities.

The project aimed a multi-sectoral cooperation involving the following institutions and projects to common discussions of the ecological connectivity, large carnivores and common topic:

- Alparc projects
- Park Dinarides projects
- Carpathian Parks (carpathianparks.org)
- CentralParks project
- Carpathian Primary Forest

In order to reach and deepen the targeted groups the project organized and took part in the following activities:

- Centralparks Kick-off event, 16 April 2019.
- Green Carpathians webinar on transnational cooperation to address the biggest threats to the biodiversity of the Carpathian Mountains, within EU Green Week, 25 September 2020.
- Carpathian Primary Forests Protection, International Meeting of the Activists, 4 October 2020.
- EU eco-corridors: a mountain to climb, within European Week of Regions and Cities, 13 October 2020

And invited all projects' representatives to the Final Conference, where they provided their opinions and gave valuable input to the finalization of the project results.

**Output integration in the current political/ economic/ social/ technological/ environmental/ legal/ regulatory framework (max. 2000 characters)**

The greatest success of the project is the adaption of the International Action Plan On Conservation Of Large Carnivores And Ensuring Ecological Connectivity In The Carpathians by the Carpathian Convention in November 2020, that ensure many further steps to implement the vision of the project, this document make sure the further dissemination of the knowledge sharing, that was started by the E-learning platform to spread the collected data and information about ecological corridors, large carnivores and their potential embedding to spatial planning.

The project supported the Macro-regional cooperation between the Alpine, Danube and Arian-IOanian regions, trying to bring the strategic result bring down to all national, and subnational levels to make sure the success of the strategies embedding to everyday policy process, reaching as many stakeholders as possible, over the joint event for the representatives of the Alpine, Carpathian and Dinaric regions the project provided implementation of the macro-regions' cooperation and knowledge sharing. The project provided valuable knowledge for big scale spatial planning, supporting the multi sectoral dialogue between transport infrastructure development, nature protection, spatial planning, authorities, and ministries.

For the newest EU Green Deal the project provided a pilot best practice solution for the enlargement of the protected areas, by the habitat suitability model, which provides the

potential and best sites for choose new areas to be protected, the appropriate and necessary sites to create new habitats for ecological connectivity, thus providing the practical solution for TEN-G enlargement, and supporting design tools to infrastructure development, on placing the new built elements, making the smallest damage possible.