

## **Background note for the moderated discussion on the implementation of the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework (CBF), to be held at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the CC Working Group on Biodiversity on 17 June 2024**

### **Introduction**

In December 2022, Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) at CBD COP15. The GBF's mission is to urgently halt and reverse biodiversity loss, aiming to put nature on a recovery path. It outlines four overarching goals and 23 targets to reduce biodiversity threats, meet people's needs through sustainable management, and provide tools for implementation.

As a multilateral environmental agreement, the Carpathian Convention enhances the implementation of global and European policies. The GBF encourages Parties to collaborate with existing mechanisms and processes, inviting biodiversity-related conventions to contribute to its implementation. The Carpathian Convention is the first region to apply the GBF at a regional level through the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework.

Adopted at the 7th meeting of the Carpathian Convention COP in October 2023, the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework translates global goals into tangible actions for the region. It is supported by the Carpathian Vision 2050, which aligns with the global vision of living in harmony with nature and includes 8 Strategic Objectives for the Carpathian region.

The moderated discussion on the implementation of the CBF, scheduled to take place in the afternoon on 17 June 2024, aims to provide space for an open exchange on plans, ideas and initiatives supporting the implementation of the new strategic documents at various levels.

It will focus on 4 main topics currently relevant for the implementation of the CBF:

- 1) Ensuring Synergistic Implementation of the GBF and CBF at the National Level
- 2) Development of the LIFE Carpathian Strategic Nature Project
- 3) Support to Ukraine
- 4) Other Opportunities and Ideas for CBF Implementation

The CBF is a key tool to implement the Carpathian Convention and its Protocols and thus reaches beyond the mandate of the WG Biodiversity. However, the contribution and guidance provided by the WG will be instrumental in its implementation.

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### **1) Ensuring Synergistic Implementation of the GBF and CBF at the National Level**

The CBD COP15 decision (CBD/COP15/DEC/15/6, paragraph 23) requests Parties to include actions for implementing other biodiversity-related agreements in their revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs), and the Carpathian Convention COP7 decision (DECISION COP7/6 paragraph 2) encourages the Parties to integrate relevant provisions into their NBSAPs aiming to foster synergies and strengthen the implementation of both the Carpathian Convention and the CBD. This approach will avoid isolated efforts and maximize limited financial and human resources.

To support this integration, the Carpathian Convention Secretariat has prepared a comprehensive [Guidance Document for Streamlining the Carpathian Biodiversity Framework into National](#)

[Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans](#) including [Annex I, which provides a table of example policy action relevant for the Carpathians](#).

During the discussion, WG Biodiversity members and observers will be asked the following questions:

1. What is the current status of the NBSAP revision in your country, and have Carpathian Convention-related matters been included or considered?
2. What are the gaps and limitations of this process, and what can be done to address them to enhance the implementation of the Carpathian Convention at the national level?

## 2) Development of the LIFE Carpathian Strategic Nature Project

The Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, mandated by the Parties to facilitate the CBF implementation process, consulted the European Commission DG Environment and the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA) and identified a possible source of long-term, large-scale funding for jointly implementing the CBF through the EU LIFE mechanism – LIFE Strategic Nature Project (LIFE SNaP). According to the programme requirements, SNaPs should support implementation of the plan/strategy/action plan on a large territorial scale, meaning regional, multi-regional, national or transnational; thus, the CBF fits this requirement.

In this regard, some activities planned in the Carpathian region as envisioned in the CBF and possibly inscribed into a respective Party's NBSAP (as per the point above) can financially be supported by the EU under a transnational LIFE SNaP, jointly implemented by the Parties.

Importantly, the possible LIFE co-funding would be particularly important for **transboundary and transnational activities**, which for different formal and/or legal reasons, are not usually financed from the national/in-country funding sources of the involved Parties.

It should be noted that not a single transnational LIFE SNaP has been implemented so far. Therefore, the **first ever joint application for a transnational LIFE SNaP** submitted by several Parties resolved to act together will probably be **convincing and relevant for the LIFE Programme**. Additionally, it has the potential to significantly enhance the common identity of the Carpathian region and offer valuable resources to address the deficiencies in the Carpathian area that arise from the absence of EU-level instruments (such as the Interreg Alpine Space Programme accessible for all countries of the Alpine macro-region).

Securing funding through the EU LIFE Programme, particularly under the SNaP mechanism, provides substantial financial resources critical for long-term conservation projects. The **LIFE SNaP's budget, ranging from 15 to 50 million EUR over 5 to 10 years**, far exceeds the scope of traditional LIFE projects or typical project supporting the Carpathian Convention activities, enabling the implementation of large-scale, impactful initiatives.

When deciding on the thematic focus of the joint transnational Carpathian SNaP, it should be considered that the application is expected to contribute to EU objectives for the protection, maintenance and restoration of natural capital, particularly under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

CINEA suggested that the LIFE SNaP for the Carpathians should focus the proposed joint project on the nature and biodiversity aspects, including mainstreaming them into other policies. Therefore, the joint SNaP proposal should include activities corresponding to the priorities of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (simultaneously also to the relevant CBF Strategic Objectives), including:

- extension of the network of protected areas (CBF S01)
- enhancing the protected area network coherence by setting up ecological corridors (CBF S01)
- implementation of EU nature restoration targets for species and habitats (CBF S01)
- ecosystem restoration (CBF S01)
- enhanced protection of the primary and old-growth forests (CBF S02)
- improving the health and resilience of managed forests (CBF S02)
- bringing nature back to agricultural land (CBF S01 + S05)

CBF SO8 (Cooperation with Ukraine) can also be duly considered under the above activities.

Regarding the potential project consortium, it should include the national authorities competent for nature and biodiversity from each Member State involved in the project implementation, or at least to provide clear commitment letters from such authorities. In addition, LIFE SNaP requires an active involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation of the project.

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).

Regarding the timeline for the potential project development, the Secretariat suggests applying first for the Technical Assistance Project Preparation, offered by LIFE Programme, which aims at preparing a concept note and a full proposal for SNAP. The deadline for the TA-PP submission is 18 September 2024. **In this respect, the submission of the full proposal for the transnational LIFE Carpathian Strategic Nature Project is foreseen for 2025.**

Overall, the LIFE SNaP project is strategically crucial for the Carpathian Convention as it provides the necessary financial, collaborative, and strategic framework to address the region's unique environmental challenges. By leveraging EU support, fostering transnational cooperation, and mainstreaming biodiversity into broader policy frameworks, the project supports the Carpathian Convention region in achieving its conservation goals and contribute to global biodiversity targets.

**During the discussion, WG Biodiversity members and observers will be asked the following questions:**

1. The LIFE SNaP should contribute to EU objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, as well as address the environmental challenges of the Carpathian region.  
**What do you believe should be the top priority areas for the LIFE SNaP project in the Carpathian region? List 3 concrete top priorities areas/activities that the project should undertake.**
2. The project consortium should include the national authorities competent for nature and biodiversity from each Member State, as well as key stakeholders.  
**Which national authorities competent for nature and biodiversity should/could be involved in the project from your country?  
Who do you think are the key stakeholders that should be involved in the LIFE SNaP project?**
3. What specific challenges do you foresee in implementing a transnational project like the LIFE SNaP in the Carpathian region, and how can we address them?

Engaging with these questions will help shape a comprehensive and effective LIFE SNaP project that addresses the key concerns and priorities of stakeholders while leveraging their insights and expertise.

### **3) Support to Ukraine**

Following the [Ministerial Declaration of the Carpathian Convention on the environmental impact of the war in Ukraine and the need for cooperation and assistance](#), adopted in November 2022 in Rzeszow, Poland, and the CC COP7 Decision on support for Ukraine, the CBF includes support for Ukraine as one of its Strategic Objectives (CBF SO8). This objective focuses on strengthening cooperation with Ukraine to protect and sustainably develop the entire Carpathian region, addressing both the direct and indirect impacts of the war on the Carpathians, particularly concerning the natural environment and nature protection services.

The Carpathian Convention COP7 welcomed the [Set of measures to address the environmental consequences of the direct and indirect impacts of the war in Ukraine](#), as a possible, at the given time, response to the needs for cooperation and assistance to Ukraine to be potentially undertaken within the Carpathian Convention framework and with support of the Parties and stakeholders to the Convention.

The Working Group will have a chance to exchange and discuss ongoing or initial initiatives for providing the support to Ukraine.

1. Do you know any ongoing or initial initiatives for supporting Ukraine relevant for the Carpathian region and the cooperation?
2. What specific support measures could be implemented to assist Ukraine in the context of the CBF?
3. How can we enhance cooperation with Ukraine to address the environmental impacts of the war on the Carpathian region?

#### **4) Other opportunities and ideas for CBF implementation**

Besides the above-mentioned points, there might be other opportunities and ideas for the CBF implementation that can be considered and developed in collaboration with the Carpathian Convention, potentially extending more to the local level.

The Working Group might discuss these opportunities by answering the following questions:

1. How can we better involve local communities and stakeholders in the implementation of the CBF to ensure more effective and sustainable outcomes?
2. What are some emerging opportunities or challenges in implementing the CBF that you foresee in the next 5-10 years?
3. How can we foster greater collaboration among stakeholders at different levels (local, national, cross-border, transnational) for more effective CBF implementation?
4. What other funding opportunities are available for new projects under the CBF, and how can stakeholders access these funds?