

Interreg Programme

Danube Region



Co-funded by
the European Union

DRP0200359

ForestConnect

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A - Project identification

A.1 Project identification

Project id (automatically created)	DRP0200359
Name of the lead partner organisation	ВВФ България
Name of the lead partner organisation in English	WWF Bulgaria
Project title	Towards a Climate-smart Forest Connectivity for Large Carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric Region
Project acronym	ForestConnect
Programme priority	A greener, low-carbon Danube Region
Specific objective	2.4: Protecting and preserving the biodiversity in ecological corridors and eco-regions of transnational relevance in the Danube Region
Project duration in months	30

A.2 Project summary

Please give a short overview of the project. (in case of PAC/DSP CALL): highlight the main characteristics, strategic direction(s) and envisaged main achievements. / (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): describe the followings:

- the common challenge of the programme area you are jointly tackling in your project;
- the overall objective of the project and the expected change your project will make to the current situation;
- the main outputs you will produce and those who will benefit from them;
- the approach you plan to take and why a transnational approach is needed;
- what is new/original about the project.

ForestConnect is designed to address common challenges and needs on protecting and preserving ecological corridors of large carnivores (LC) in the target area of the project - the Carpathians, Balkans and Dinarides. Specifically, it will focus on: the Western Balkan mountain on the territory of the Bulgarian North-Western State Forestry Enterprise and the Serbian nature park Stara planina (BG-RS border), the Romanian larger Apuseni-Maramures Carpathian region and the Ukrainian Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (RO-UA border); the Slovak Paradise National Park in SK as part of the Western Carpathians and the National parks Durmitor, Biogradska gora, and Prokletije in MN. The project involves 15 PPs and 8ASPs from 7 countries.

The functionality of the ecological corridors of LCs in the target area is endangered by unsustainable management practices and infrastructure developments in forest habitats and their surroundings,

which harms their structure. Climate change (CC) poses additional pressure on the ecosystems. Due to the prevalence of LCs cross-border distribution and the complex effects of CC, a multinational conservation planning accompanied by a holistic governance framework for biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction is required.

ForestConnect aims to secure climate-resilient forest corridors for LCs to move across borders in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region. To achieve this, the project has set 3 specific objectives (and relevant activities) that will tackle the identified issues in the ecological target regions:

- 1) SO1: New tools and technologies integrated in transnational monitoring of LCs' forests
 - Fill knowledge-gaps to inform a joint Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric technological application for forest ecosystems resilience and LCs monitoring and management
 - Mapping of safe corridors for LCs in the project transboundary forest areas under different CC scenarios
 - Capacity building and experience-sharing across the region and beyond to promote to stakeholders the developed tools
- 2) SO2: Heterogeneity, connectivity and climate resilience of LCs' forests is improved
 - Engagement of local community members in piloting measures to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes and reduce conflicts with LCs
 - Pilot key measures to demonstrate positive effects of climate-resilient forests microrefugia creation along transnational LCs' corridors
 - Develop guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in relevant ecological connectivity areas and assess the role of ecological corridors in the local economies
 - Develop guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats (forests, wood pastures and pastures between forests) beneficial to LCs in the context of CC
- 3) SO3: Promote capacity and cooperation for integrated LC climate-forest connectivity across eco-regions
 - Development of Strategic Guidelines to respond to CC challenges faced by the protected areas at the pan-Carpathian/Dinaric/Balkans level
 - Capacity building, exchanges and capitalisation activities to enable durability, cross-fertilisation and uptake of project results
 - Communication: Awareness-raising campaign and promotional activities showcasing the project results

The main project outputs are:

- Joint monitoring tools and technologies: shared GIS database, digital twins model and online viewer of human-wildlife conflict hotspots
- Pilot actions and guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services and on management of transnational mosaic habitats on key ecological corridors.
- Strategic Guidelines with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices for protected areas
- Capacity building and experience-sharing between PPs and stakeholders to enable increased capacity and uptake of results

The partnership is key to the project's success and lasting impact. Through the involvement of various types of actors on all levels as PPs, ASPs, and stakeholders (local, regional, national, sectoral, international) and with various complementing competences (ministries, park and forestry administrations, NGOs, universities, hunting association) the project addresses the need for a strong partnership and mobilization of resources to achieve a coherent climate-smart integrated approach to preserve the LCs' forest habitats on a transnational level.

Additionally, the project capitalizes on the results of other projects and has an added value in considering CC impacts and transferring experience from the Carpathians to the Balkans and the Dinarides. After the end of the project durability and transferability will be ensured by the PPs and their cooperation networks through existing information systems (CCIBIS), curricula (CUAS, USAMV) and management plans (e.g. Slovensky Raj). Ultimately, the project will result in better protection of the biodiversity in the ecological corridors in the Danube Region.

A.3 Project budget overview

Programme funding			Contribution					Total project budget
Funding source	Funding amount	Co-financing rate (%)	State contribution	Public contribution	Total public contribution	Private contribution	Total contribution	
Interreg Funds	2.362.188,24	80,00 %	286.363,34	156.729,10	443.092,44	147.454,63	590.547,07	2.952.735,31
Total EU funds	2.362.188,24	80,00 %	286.363,34	156.729,10	443.092,44	147.454,63	590.547,07	2.952.735,31
Total project budget	2.362.188,24	80,00 %	286.363,34	156.729,10	443.092,44	147.454,63	590.547,07	2.952.735,31

A.4 Project outputs and result overview

Programme Output Indicator	Aggregated value per Programme output indicator	Measurement Unit	Output	Output Title	Output target value	Programme result indicator	Baseline	Result indicator or target value	Measurement unit
Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects	5,00	pilot actions	01	Pilot testing of joint monitoring tools and technologies: GIS database, digital twins model and online viewer of human-wildlife conflict hotspots based on common methodology in the pilot areas	3,00				
			02	Pilot actions for positive biodiversity outcomes, reducing conflicts with large carnivores and creating climate-resilient forest refugia	2,00				
Jointly developed	5,00	solution	0	Jointly developed solutions for transnational monitoring: shared	3,00				

Programme Output Indicator	Aggregated value per Programme output indicator	Measurement Unit	Output	Output Title	Output target value	Programme result indicator	Baseline	Result indicator target value	Measurement unit
solutions		s	1 . 2	Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric GIS database, Digital twin model and Online viewer of "human-wildlife conflict hotspots"					
			2 . 2	Guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats along forest corridors and on preserving ecosystems and related services in eco-connectivity areas for the benefit of LCs and local people	2,00				
Organisations cooperating across borders	23,00	organisations	3	At least 23 organizations - from the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region - cooperating for cross-fertilization and uptake of results	23,00				

Programme Output Indicator	Aggregated value per Programme output indicator	Measurement Unit	Output	Output Title	Output target value	Programme result indicator	Baseline	Result indicator target value	Measurement unit
			2						
Strategies and action plans jointly developed	1,00	strategy/action plan	031	Strategic Action Plan with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices for Protected areas	1,00				
						Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across the borders	0,00	36,00	No. of organisations
						Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations	0,00	1,00	joint strategies/action plan
						Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations	0,00	5,00	solutions

Programme Output Indicator	Aggregated value per Programme output indicator	Mea sure men t Unit	O u t p u t	Output Title	Out put targ et v alue	Programme result indicator	B a s e li n e	Result indicat or target value	Meas urem ent unit
							0 0		

B - Project partners

Partners overview

Number	Status	Name of the organisation in english	Country	Organisation abbreviation	Partner role	Associated Strategic Partner	Partner total eligible budget
1	Active	WWF Bulgaria	Bulgaria (BG)	WWF BG	LP	Асоциация на парковете в България Управа за шуме, Ministerstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede	408.942,30
2	Active	Executive Forest Agency	Bulgaria (BG)	EFA	PP		126.050,00
3	Active	North-west State Enterprise	Bulgaria (BG)	NWSE	PP		151.700,00
4	Active	WWF Romania	România (RO)	WWF RO	PP	Ministerul Mediului, Apelor și Pădurilor	265.345,00
5	Active	University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Cluj-Napoca	România (RO)	USAMV CN	PP		216.160,00
6	Active	World Wide Fund for Nature Adria - Serbia	Serbia (RS)	WWF Adria-RS	PP	Zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije Ловачка комора Србије	186.922,00
7	Active	NGO "RakhivEcoTour"	Ukraine (UA)	NGO RET	PP	Рахівська міська рада	216.935,01

Number	Status	Name of the organisation in english	Country	Organisation abbreviation	Partner role	Associated Strategic Partner	Partner total eligible budget
8	Active	The Carpathian Biosphere Reserve	Ukraine (UA)	CBR	PP	Департамент екології та природних ресурсів Закарпатської обласної адміністрації	220.032,00
9	Active	Carinthia University of Applied Sciences	Österreich (AT)	CUAS	PP		284.950,00
10	Active	WWF Slovakia	Slovensko (SK)	WWF SK	PP	Ministerstvo životného prostredia Slovenskej republiky	277.865,00
11	Active	Slovak Paradise National Park Administration with headquarters in Spišská Nová Ves	Slovensko (SK)	Slovenský raj	PP		122.150,00
12	Active	Center for Protection and Research of Birds	Crna Gora (ME)	CZIP	PP		194.574,00
13	Active	Cluj Environmental Protection Agency	România (RO)	APM Cluj	PP		63.245,00
14	Active	Public enterprise for national parks of Montenegro	Crna Gora (ME)	JPNP	PP		124.365,00
15	Active	"Emblem" Civil Association	Serbia (RS)	Emblema	PP		93.500,00

B.1 Lead partner	
Partner number	1
Partner role	LP
Name of the organisation in original language	ВВФ България
Name of the organisation in english	WWF Bulgaria
Organisation abbreviation	WWF BG
Department / unit / division	
Partner main address	
Country	Bulgaria (BG)
NUTS 2	Yugozapaden (BG41)
NUTS 3	Sofia (stolitsa) (BG411)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Knyaz Boris I 147 1000 Sofia
Homepage	https://www.wwf.bg/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	
NUTS 2	
NUTS 3	
Street, House number, Postal code, City	
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	BG175054080 only when receiving services from EU
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Mrs Vesselina Kavrakova
Contact person	Mrs Nelly Papazova

Contact	
Email	npapazova@wwf.bg
Telephone no.	00359893028747
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>WWF Bulgaria is part of the global WWF Network, registered in 2006 to promote conservation, restoration and sustainable management of natural resources in Bulgaria. WWF Bulgaria works on national level through policy, advocacy, awareness raising, fostering stakeholder dialogue, education, capacity building and communications; as well as on local level through model restoration, restocking, engagement activities in protected areas and other valuable habitats. The main areas of focus of the office are: Forests, Wildlife, Freshwater and Climate. The organization works throughout Bulgaria, including in Western Balkan Mountains, which is the territorial focus of ForestConnect. Our Wildlife program works on the protection of large carnivores and since 2020 WWF Bulgaria is the most active actor in bear conservation in Bulgaria mainly through application of measures for conflict mitigation and prevention, public awareness actions and improving law enforcement. We have been working for more than 10 years on wildlife crime through policy-advocacy, training judiciaries and raising the awareness of the public. Our forestry program has worked for more than 10 years with the forestry authorities to improve forest habitats, combat illegal logging and introduce responsible forestry management.</p> <p>WWF Bulgaria's work is highly recognized – it has won two Natura 2000 awards by the European Commission: the "Partnership for protection of Bulgarian old-growth forests in Natura 2000" won in the category European Citizens Award in 2020, together with the Forestry Executive Agency and the project "For the Balkans and the people: Nature Protection and Sustainable Rural Development, implemented in the Balkan mountains, won in the category Socio-Economic Benefits in 2016. WWF Bulgaria was also a finalist for the Natura 2000 Award with the DTP LENA project in 2020, focused on sustainable economic activities in protected areas.</p> <p>WWF Bulgaria's wildlife team consists of the most renowned scientists in bear protection, using cutting edge technologies in their work. Our forestry team of renowned experts has developed the public Forest GIS Platform (https://gis.wwf.bg), available in Bulgarian and partly in English, with multiple layers with basic information for forests and more specialized layers like old-growth forests, high conservation value forests, all types of protected areas and logging permits. The organization has partnered with different forestry structures in Bulgaria on numerous projects and has developed sound cooperation with them, which will be essential for the successful implementation of ForestConnect.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>WWF Bulgaria is the Lead Partner of ForestConnect. It will be responsible for the overall project management and liaison with the DRP Program MA/JS and will be the signatory of the Subsidy Contract with DRP. 27% of the LP budget will be allocated to project management activities. WWF Bulgaria will appoint the following core team members: Project Manager of the whole project, Financial Manager, as well as Quality Assurance Manager. The role of WWF Bulgaria as LP is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor the overall execution of activities, the involvement of the PPs in each activity and the delivery of the deliverables and outputs; 	

Motivation

- ensure the efficient internal management of the project and the fluent communication within the partnership;
- organize and chair the project Steering Committee meetings;
- lead and monitor the financial management of the project, elaborate project progress reports and Applications for Reimbursement, and transfer the Interreg Funds to each PP;
- lead the Quality Assurance team and ensure the quality of project outputs;
- ensure the durability and transferability of the outputs;

WWF Bulgaria will lead the implementation of Specific Objective 2: Heterogeneity, connectivity and climate resilience of large carnivores' forests is improved. The organization will also lead activity 2.1. Engagement of local community members in piloting measures to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes and reduce conflicts with large carnivores and Activity 3.2 Capacity building: exchange visits between project partners to enable regional cross-fertilisation and uptake of results. In its role as lead, WWF Bulgaria will coordinate the common framework of pilot actions under Priority 2 and the resulting solutions, and will ensure the involvement of all PPs, as well as ASPs.

WWF Bulgaria will also coordinate the project work in Bulgaria, liaising with the Executive Forestry Agency and the North-West Forestry Enterprise. The partnership is based on a long-term collaboration between the organization and the forestry structures in Bulgaria.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

WWF Bulgaria has a highly experienced expert team of more than 50 conservation professionals, project managers, communicators and financial officers. Currently, WWF Bulgaria is implementing about 25 mostly large-scale multi-national and multi-stakeholder projects in both lead partner and project partner role. Our main donors are: EC LIFE program, Horizon 2020 program, the German EUKI program for climate, the European Climate Foundation, IKEA, which supports our forest program, COKE, which supports our freshwater program; as well as the international WWF network.

We are experienced both as leading large multi-national consortiums and being a partner in such projects. Currently WWF Bulgaria is leading the project LIFE SWiPE (LIFE19 GIE/BG/000846) aiming at a reduction of Wildlife Crime in Europe, and supporting the recovery of threatened European biodiversity and the health of ecosystems, with 14 partners from 10 European countries and a budget of 3 mil. EUR. Additionally, we are implementing 5 LIFE projects in the area of protection of wildlife, forests, climate as project partners. Currently, we are also leading a partnership of 5 Eastern European organizations for the project "Panda Labs Junior for Just Transition", financed by EUKI. We are a partner in the Horizon 2020 Waterlands project with 33 partners across Europe, in which we are restoring wetlands in Bulgaria.

WWF Bulgaria has extensive experience in the Danube Transnational Program. The organization has been the LP of the project LENA, which was successfully completed in 2019 and included 13 partners from 7 countries. The project was a finalist of the Natura 2000 award in the section "Socio-Economic Benefits" and received the Projekt Nachhaltigkeit 2018 award. WWF Bulgaria was also a partner of the MEASURES project, successfully completed in 2021.

The organization has sound financial management procedures and a team of highly qualified financial professionals. We have internal written financial rules and procedures, an internal system for recording

Motivation			
expert time, internal procurements procedures and a system of filing financial documents. The organization has an annual turnover of about 1.3 mil EUR.			
Co-financing			
Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage	
Interreg Funds	327.153,84	80,00 %	
Partner contribution	81.788,46	20,00 %	
Partner total eligible budget	408.942,30	100,00 %	
Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
WWF BG	Private	20.447,12	5,00 %
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	State	61.341,34	14,99 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total state contribution		61.341,34	14,99 %
Sub-total private contribution		20.447,12	5,00 %
Total		81.788,46	20,00 %
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 2	
Partner number	2
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Изпълнителна агенция по горите
Name of the organisation in english	Executive Forest Agency
Organisation abbreviation	EFA
Department / unit / division	
Partner main address	
Country	Bulgaria (BG)
NUTS 2	Yugozapaden (BG41)
NUTS 3	Sofia (stolitsa) (BG411)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Hristo Botev, blvd. 55 1000 Sofia
Homepage	www.iag.bg
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	
NUTS 2	
NUTS 3	
Street, House number, Postal code, City	
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Sectoral agency
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	BG121486802
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	Partly
Contact	
Legal representative	Mr Stoyan Toshev
Contact person	Mrs Nikoleta Dineva

Contact	
Email	dineva@iag.bg
Telephone no.	+359887566667
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The state policy in the forest sector in Bulgaria and the control over the fulfilment of the national legislation in the field of management and protection of forest resources is responsibility of the Executive Forest Agency (EFA) within the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests of the Republic of Bulgaria. The forest management and hunting policy of EFA (as responsible state forest administration) is oriented towards the conservation, maintenance and increasing of forest areas, their sustainable development and protection of the rich resources. In particular, EFA is responsible: for the monitoring and control over the implementation of the national and EU legislation in the forest sector, the supervision on the regeneration of forests, afforestation, anti-erosion activities and thinning, for the protection of biodiversity, the control over the hunting and game management, forest fire prevention and fighting, and protection of forests from pests and diseases, for extension services and stakeholders involvement, forest inventory and planning, increasing of the public awareness and others.</p> <p>EFA has implemented numerous projects, funded by the EU funding programmes and has rich experience in project management and international cooperation. For the period 2007-2013 EFA participated in the implementation of over 150 projects, most of them (co)funded by the funds of the European Union. EFA successfully participated in 57 projects under the Rural Development Program in Bulgaria (Measure 223 "Initial afforestation of non-agriculture land" and Measure 226 "Introduction of prevention activities and restoration of the forest potential") and many other programmes (Operational Programme "Environment"; PHARE programme; Regional Development BG-RO, BG-GR, BG-TR and BG-SB; INTERREG IV; South East Europe - 3 projects; LIFE+ projects and others). EFA implemented as a coordinating beneficiary one of the biggest initiatives for the conservation of the Lesser Spotted Eagle in Bulgaria – the EU funded project LIFE12/NAT/BG/1218 Life for Eagles Forests. In 2020, the project "Partnership for protection of Bulgarian old-growth forests in Natura 2000" (in which EFA partnered with also WWF Bulgaria), won the Natura 2000 award of the European Commission in the category European Citizens Award.</p> <p>The current project will support the mission of EFA for forest protection and species conservation building upon the experiences gained in previous projects thus continuing its efforts to preserve and enhance biodiversity of Bulgarian forests.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>The Executive Forestry Agency in Bulgaria will contribute to the overall implementation of the project with its expertise and competences in the field of forest management and biodiversity protection. First of all, EFA will contribute to Activities 1.1 and 1.2 which envisage data collection and mapping of functional corridors for large carnivores in the target region of the project in Bulgaria – the Western Balkans. EFA has substantial experience in GIS database and data analysis so it will work in cooperation with the other Bulgarian partners to fill in the information gap in order to reach the project objectives. The Agency will participate in the development of the methodologies for the envisaged dynamic tools for monitoring and management of forest ecosystems connectivity of large carnivores.</p>	

Motivation

Furthermore, it will be also involved in the capacity building and experience-sharing across the region to promote to stakeholders the developed tools and will participate in the workshops and the regional conference envisaged in Activity 1.3.

Although EFA will not execute directly the pilot actions on the ground, it will contribute through expertise in the implementation of the pilots in Bulgaria (Activity 2.1 and 2.2) in close cooperation with the North-Western Forestry Enterprise and WWF Bulgaria and also in the analysis of the results. Additionally, EFA can contribute with input and feedback in the development of the guidelines in Activities 2.3 and 2.4. and will be engaged in the meetings and consultations.

The contribution of EFA into the development of the Strategic Guidelines in Activity 3.1 will be very important as the Agency is competent to contribute with expertise and recommendations thus it will take part in the expert group meetings. EFA's role in the capacity building, exchanges and capitalisation activities will be crucial to enable durability, cross-fertilisation and uptake of project results. As the national authority to execute the state policy in the forest sector of Bulgaria, EFA is well-positioned to further apply and upscale the project results.

The Executive Forestry agency will also contribute to the communication and dissemination activities of the project and to the outreach to the general public, the local communities, the nature parks managing institutions and other decision makers.

The proportion of the total budget of EFA that is allocated to project management activities is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	100.840,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	25.210,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	126.050,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
EFA	Public	6.302,50	5,00 %
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	State	18.907,50	15,00 %

Total		
Sub-total public contribution	6.302,50	5,00 %
Sub-total state contribution	18.907,50	15,00 %
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Total	25.210,00	20,00 %
State Aid		
State aid relevant activities		

B.1 Project Partner 3	
Partner number	3
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Северозападно държавно предприятие
Name of the organisation in english	North-west State Enterprise
Organisation abbreviation	NWSE
Department / unit / division	Forestry activities, hunting activities and fire protection
Partner main address	
Country	Bulgaria (BG)
NUTS 2	Severozapaden (BG31)
NUTS 3	Vratsa (BG313)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Hristo Botev 2 3000 Vratsa
Homepage	https://szdp.bg/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	Bulgaria (BG)
NUTS 2	Severozapaden (BG31)
NUTS 3	Vratsa (BG313)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Hristo Botev 2 3000 Vratsa
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Enterprise, except SME
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	BG201617476
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	Yes
Contact	
Legal representative	Mr Veselin Ninov

Contact	
Contact person	Mr Stoyan Dzhevelevkov
Email	stoian.djevelevkov@abv.bg
Telephone no.	00359888705143
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The North-west State Enterprise (NWSE) is one of the 6 State Forest Enterprises which are established as per Article 163 of the Forestry Act of Bulgaria in 2011. The state enterprises manage wooded areas in state ownership that are not assigned to be managed by government agencies or legal entities. The main subject of activity of the state forestry enterprise include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - implementation of forestry plans within the wooded areas in state ownership; - the implementation of game stewardship plans in state game reserves and in state forest enterprises; - performance of maintenance and/or regenerative activities within wooded areas in state ownership as provided for in the protected areas' management plans; - organization and implementation of measures for the protection of wooded areas in state ownership; - organization and implementation of anti-erosion measures in forest areas; - maintenance of the diversity of ecosystems and protection of the biological diversity in them; - organization and commissioning of design and construction of facilities in forests lands within wooded areas in state ownership; - planting of new forests on agricultural lands; - protection of wooded areas in state ownership; - provision of public services. <p>The total area of the NWSE is 11 908.2 ha. The North-western State Enterprise through its 23 territorial divisions manages the state forest territories in north-western Bulgaria since 2011. Forestry activities carried out on the territory of the NWSE are carried out on the basis of forest management plans prepared in advance and approved by the Forestry Executive Agency. Three of the territorial divisions are certified under the FSC system for sustainable forest management, which guarantees management in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Forest Certification Standard. The total area of old-growth forests on the territory of the NWSE is 11,910.2 ha or about 5% of all state forests. A significant part of the state forest territories fall within the scope of the European ecological network "Natura 2000" and are managed according to the orders for the declaration of special regimes for the protection and restoration of the relevant species and habitats.</p> <p>NWSE has implemented numerous projects financed by the Operational Programmes in Bulgaria and European programmes. Currently, it is implementing project "Improving the environmental protection status of forest natural habitats and supporting the ecosystem services provided by forests through the application of forestry practices and afforestation on the territory of the North-West State Enterprise" financed by OP Environment with almost 10 mln BGN.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>The North-west Forestry Enterprise will take active part in most of the project activities. As an institution that manages the project target area on the territory of Bulgaria it will execute the following</p>	

Motivation

activities:

- Participate in the data collection and mapping of functional corridors of large carnivores with expert engagement on the ground and available information, as well as with analysis of the gathered data. NWSE will contribute to the development of the dynamic monitoring tools – the GIS database, the online viewer and the digital twin model. It will participate in the capacity-building and experience-sharing for these tools.
- NWSE will be strongly engaged especially in Activities 2.1 and 2.2. which envisage the implementation of pilot actions in the target territory. NWSE will help organise and carry out these activities on the ground and in cooperation with the other Bulgarian partners. It will also participate in analysis of the results and in the development of the 1) guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in relevant ecological connectivity areas and assess the role of ecological corridors in the local economies and 2) Develop guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats (forests, wood pastures and pastures between forests) beneficial to large carnivores in the context of climate change
- NWSE will contribute with stakeholder engagement, especially with local communities and local authorities engagement. Furthermore, it will participate in the capacity building, exchanges and capitalisation activities to enable durability, cross-fertilisation and uptake of project results.
- NWSE will also carry out communication activities in accordance with the project communication plan.

The proportion of the total budget of NWSE to be allocated for project management activities is 15.82%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	121.360,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	30.340,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	151.700,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
NWSE	Public	7.585,00	5,00 %
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	State	22.755,00	15,00 %

Total

Sub-total public contribution	7.585,00	5,00 %
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Total		
Sub-total state contribution	22.755,00	15,00 %
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Total	30.340,00	20,00 %
State Aid		
State aid relevant activities		

B.1 Project Partner 4	
Partner number	4
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	WWF Romania
Name of the organisation in english	WWF Romania
Organisation abbreviation	WWF RO
Department / unit / division	Wildlife and Landscape department
Partner main address	
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	Bucureşti-Ilfov (RO32)
NUTS 3	Bucureşti (RO321)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Tudor Vladimirescu 29, 3rd floor 050881 Bucharest
Homepage	www.wwf.ro
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	Bucureşti-Ilfov (RO32)
NUTS 3	Bucureşti (RO321)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Tudor Vladimirescu 29, 3rd floor 050881 Bucharest
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	18742789
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Mrs Orieta-Mihaela Hulea

Contact	
Contact person	Mr Remus-Cristian Papp
Email	cpapp@wwf.ro
Telephone no.	+40745891929
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>WWF Romania is a key player for the identification and management of ecological corridors in Romania and in the Carpathian Ecoregion, through its active involvement in the implementation of the Carpathian Convention's Biodiversity Protocol, in IENE, etc. The identification of ecological corridors by the organisation dates back in 2012 when it started the identification of the 1st network of ecological corridors in Romania, namely in the Maramures transboundary area (between Romania and Ukraine). Concrete data was collected from the field by using sound techniques and involving key stakeholders including hunters, protected area managers, institutions responsible for the management and/or protection of natural resources, etc.</p> <p>The work of the organisation related to ecological corridors continued in the South-Western Carpathians in Romania, where a methodology was developed for the identification of both wilderness and ecological corridors. Favourable habitats and ecological corridors have been identified for large carnivores and other key species in and between 6 large protected areas (4 national parks, 1 nature park and 1 Natura 2000 site) and other smaller Natura 2000 sites (covering over 600,000 ha). Furthermore, recently WWF Romania successfully contributed to the implementation of other connectivity related projects: e.g. the DTP TransGREEN (https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/transgreen), ConnectGREEN project (https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/connectgreen), SaveGREEN project (https://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/SaveGREEN) as well as HUSKROUA ENI CBC OBWIC project (https://openbordersforbears.com/). In these projects field work has been conducted to identify the favorable habitats for large carnivores and other key species as well as ecological corridors and in the Maramures area pilot conservation measures were successfully implemented. These measures aimed to: i) improve the mosaic of habitats serving as shelter habitats and food during the vegetative season for LC as umbrella species; (ii) increase the natural food diversification and iii) reduce human-wildlife conflicts. All these flagship initiatives included multiple partners, engaged various stakeholders and covered different areas in the Carpathians.</p> <p>WWF Romania's experience and expertise on ecological connectivity and wildlife conservation, its knowledge on EU and national relevant legislation, its grassroot work and practical experience in designing and implementing participatory processes in pilot sites across Romania will significantly contribute to all project's activities.</p> <p>In addition, the communication competencies acquired in the last 13 years in Romania will ensure a proper visibility of the project and its results. WWF Romania is the leading conservation organisation in Romania, highly experienced in communicating effectively the importance of biodiversity conservation.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	

Motivation

WWF Romania's experience will support the overall project implementation; specifically the organisation will mainly actively contribute to: co-development of the GIS database on forested corridors (Activity 1.1.), mapping of existing LC corridors in the project transboundary forest areas (Activity 1.2), test pilot key measures to demonstrate positive effects of climate-resilient forests refugia creation along transnational LC corridors (Activity 2.2.), develop a best practice guide for LC climate-wise connectivity in forest habitats (Activity 2.4). Based on its huge experience in data monitoring WWF Romania will be the responsible partner for the implementation of Specific Objective 1 and will oversee the execution of these activities in all partner countries. WWF Romania will lead the implementation of Activity 1.3 where capacity building and experience-sharing across the region is envisaged and will host the regional conference where the developed tools and methodologies will be presented.

Furthermore, WWF Romania will participate in all capacity-building, cooperation and networking, by co-developing the Strategic Guidelines to respond to climate change challenges faced by the Protected areas at the pan-Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans level (Activity 3.1); this is relevant especially because WWF Romania has wide experience and longtime cooperation with key stakeholders in the Carpathian Region (Carpathian Convention, UNESCO, Carpathian Network of Protected Areas etc).

WWF RO will play a role in dissemination of project results, mainly in promotion of the developed tools to regional stakeholders (A1.3) as well as regional cross-fertilization and uptake of results by supporting cooperation with key stakeholders in the capacity building programme (A 3.2).

Considering WWF RO experience in communicating effectively the importance of biodiversity conservation, the organization will actively contribute, throughout the project, to all communication related actions, ensuring information, education and mobilization of stakeholder groups and general public.

The percentage of the total budget for project management activities of WWF Romania is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	212.276,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	53.069,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	265.345,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
WWF RO	Private	5.306,90	2,00 %

Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration	State	47.762,10	18,00 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total state contribution		47.762,10	18,00 %
Sub-total private contribution		5.306,90	2,00 %
Total		53.069,00	20,00 %
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 5	
Partner number	5
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Universitatea de Științe Agricole și Medicină Veterinară din Cluj-Napoca
Name of the organisation in english	University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Cluj-Napoca
Organisation abbreviation	USAMV CN
Department / unit / division	Silvicultural and Agricultural Department
Partner main address	
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	Nord-Vest (RO11)
NUTS 3	Cluj (RO113)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Calea Mănăștur 3-5 400372 Cluj-Napoca
Homepage	https://www.usamvcluj.ro/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	Nord-Vest (RO11)
NUTS 3	Cluj (RO113)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Calea Mănăștur 3-5 400372 Cluj-Napoca
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Higher education and research organisations
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	4288381
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	Yes

Contact	
Legal representative	Mr Cornel Cătoi
Contact person	Mr Leon Muntean
Email	leon.muntean@usamvcluj.ro
Telephone no.	+40744692464
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine Cluj-Napoca (USAMV CN), Romania, has a long tradition in the life science higher education and research (since 1869), its mission being oriented to advanced scientific research and education. More than 2000 students specialized in agriculture, horticulture, animal science, veterinary medicine and food science graduate each year from our university. In 2012 the University was ranked in the 5th position among the "first class" universities of "advanced research and education" from Romania, place that was also confirmed by an external audit conducted by the European University Association (first place in the Romanian life-science area). In addition, in 2023, our university was included in the QS World University Rankings, for Life Sciences and Medicine, Agriculture and Forestry, ranked 251-300 (https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2023/agriculture-forestry?&countries=ro).</p> <p>USAMV CN main objectives refers to promoting excellence in the fields of education, research and innovation through initial graduate and postgraduate students. All along, two from our six faculties offer study programme and research accordingly with the main objectives of the project, such as the Faculty of Horticulture and Business in Rural Development and the Faculty of Forestry and Cadastre.</p> <p>The exchange of knowledge is continuously develop for students and teachers what so ever, due to Erasmus programme, thus offering besides the knowledge and experience shared abroad, also the long term collaboration with different institutes and universities all around the globe.</p> <p>In the last twenty years, the University developed extensive research that aims to increase the sustainability of forestry management and modern farming systems in Romania. Nevertheless, the Department of Grassland Culture offers support and consulting regarding the efficient pasture systems all around Romania.</p> <p>USAMV CN also has three research institutes: the Institute of Life Science Research, the Research Centre for Biodiversity and the Transylvanian Institute of Advanced Horticultural Researches, which are devoted to long-term sustainability of different forestry and pasture practices. These administrative structures provide technological transfer to farms, interested authorities and other institutes through the professional associations organised in the University and the spin-off companies. Being a leader in agricultural and forestry research and in technological transfer in Romania, USAMV CN will give extremely valuable expertise in collecting data for filling knowledge-gap regarding GIS database around Carpathian-Balkan-Dinaric area and mapping the existing large carnivores corridors. The results will be transferred to different stakeholders allowing them to adapt new technologies to assure resilience of forestry and pasture systems.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate	

Motivation**the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!**

Based on our experience and knowledge, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Cluj-Napoca will lead and conduct Activity 1.1 - Fill knowledge-gaps by linking professionals with complementary experiences and methodological approaches to inform a joint online Carpathian-Balkan-Dinaric GIS database creation by collecting the missing data to inform the climate modeling (e.g large scale forest and wooden pastures spatial data, LC distribution, distribution of LC prey and impact of climate change, anthropogenic/demographic data, climate stabilization areas, climate data, etc.) – different approaches – desk research, field activities, mapping with a professional drone, data analysis, etc. As chief responsible for this activity the University will supervise the data gathering in the other partner countries, provide advice and expert support throughout the process. USAMV CN will also participate in the execution of activities 1.2 by providing crucial support in preparing the digital twin model and in 1.3 by involvement in presenting and sharing of the gathered database and the developed new tools and methodologies.

USAMV CN will also contribute with its expertise in conducting the activities regarding the engagement of local community members (as volunteers) in piloting key measures to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes and reduce conflicts with large carnivores (Activity 2.1) and in the pilot key measures to demonstrate positive effects of climate-resilient forests microrefugia creation along transnational large carnivores' corridors (Activity 2.2).

Moreover, USAMV CN will play a key role in developing guidelines for the studied area, as revealed in Activity 2.3 „Develop guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in relevant ecological connectivity areas and assess the role of ecological corridors in the local economies” and Activity 2.4 „Develop guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats (forests, wood pastures and pastures between forests) beneficial to large carnivores in the context of climate change”. The University will be lead for these two activities and will coordinate the drafting of the guidelines.

Additionally, USAMV will also participate in Activity 3.1 and in the process of developing the Strategic Guidelines to respond to climate change challenges faced by the Protected areas at the pan-Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans level. The University will provide input and feedback in line with its competences and expertise. Certainly, as project partner UASVM will take part in all capacity-building events and travels, as well as in the exchange of experience with the other partners.

Lastly, the University will implement communication activities in line with the communication strategy and plan of the project as advised by WWF Adria-Serbia as leader of the communications for the project.

The proportion of the total budget of USAMV to be allocated for project management activities is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	172.928,00	80,00 %

Co-financing			
Co-financing source		Amount	Percentage
Partner contribution		43.232,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget		216.160,00	100,00 %
Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
USAMV CN	Public	4.323,20	2,00 %
Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration	State	38.908,80	18,00 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution		4.323,20	2,00 %
Sub-total state contribution		38.908,80	18,00 %
Sub-total private contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Total		43.232,00	20,00 %
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 6	
Partner number	6
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Svetska organizacija za prirodu Adria - Srbija
Name of the organisation in english	World Wide Fund for Nature Adria - Serbia
Organisation abbreviation	WWF Adria-RS
Department / unit / division	Wildlife Program
Partner main address	
Country	Serbia (RS)
NUTS 2	City of Belgrade (RS11)
NUTS 3	City of Belgrade (RS110)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Djure Jakšića 4a/8 11000 Belgrade
Homepage	www.wwfadria.org/sr/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	Serbia (RS)
NUTS 2	City of Belgrade (RS11)
NUTS 3	City of Belgrade (RS110)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Djure Jakšića 4a/8 11000 Belgrade
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	109334092
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	Yes
Contact	
Legal representative	Director Jasmina Marković

Contact	
Contact person	Wildlife Project Officer Iva Svilar
Email	isvilar@wwfadria.org
Telephone no.	+381652423935
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>WWF is one of the largest international non-governmental conservation organizations with a mission to stop the degradation of the natural environment and build a future where humans live in harmony with nature. WWF works with local communities to protect nature and the benefits it generates; governments, influencing policies/ legislations; businesses, to build an economy that preserves natural basis. As part of the WWF global network, WWF Adria was officially established in 2015 to work on the sustainable management of water resources, forests and protected areas, and the conservation of the sea, rivers and wildlife. Through our partner organizations, though, the organisation has been a conservation presence in the region since the beginning of this century.</p> <p>WWF Adria-Serbia is trying to achieve change on the ground: connect local communities with their protected areas, encourage those areas to have better management plans and focus on sustainable, low impact tourism and protection of iconic species. One of our organizational goals is to have stable iconic species of bears, wolves and lynx stable and recovering. Key strategies for achieving this goal include facilitating transboundary cooperation for biodiversity protection and management, improving practices for natural resources management and use. Activities planned in this project will help us to achieve these objectives. Nature Park Stara planina is in the process of designation as a national park. The measures of protection of the highest degree are already in place. This is the reason why we have selected this area for the project area. As part of the WWF network, WWF Adria has been implementing international projects in Western Balkans since 2007 and gained knowledge and built an expertise in large carnivores management and monitoring, conservation and management of protected areas, communications and cooperation with both local authorities and communities and national and regional institutions and scientific organizations.</p> <p>WWF Adria Serbia has experience in networking and advocating for sustainable protected areas management in the region therefore the project will benefit from the WWF Adria's experience gained during past work and projects. Within the project "Protected areas for nature and people (PA4NP)", funded by Sida, WWF Adria Serbia implemented a pilot project "Bear watching" in the National Park "Tara". Seven brown bear individuals have been collared and monitored throughout the course of the project in Serbia. The expert team produced valuable documents for managing poaching, traffic and human-bear conflict. Through this project, WWF Adria Serbia supported the development of the conservation of large carnivores with special focus on the engagement of relevant stakeholders on the national level and data collection about the human dimension.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>WWF Adria Serbia will execute Activities 1.1. and 1.2 which relate to the gathering of data and mapping of safe corridors for large carnivores in the target area in Serbia – western parts of the Balkan mountain. It will contribute with its knowledge and expertise in working for large carnivores'</p>	

Motivation

conservation and forest management. WWF Adria-Serbia is very well acquainted with the region from previous projects and field work thus building upon existing knowledge. WWF Adria Serbia will also take an active role in Activity 1.3 – the capacity building and experience-sharing across the region and beyond to promote to stakeholders the developed tools.

The organisation will also participate and support the pilot actions in the target area in Serbia (Activities 2.1 and 2.2). They will be mainly conducted by the association Emblema on the ground but WWF Adria-Serbia will participate in engaging the local communities and in overseeing the implementation of the pilots. WWF Adria-Serbia will participate in the development of guidelines within the project (Activities 2.3 and 2.4). Relevant input from the experiences gained and national perspective will be brought to the process of drafting the documents.

Furthermore, WWF Adria-Serbia will take part in the development of the Strategic Guidelines to respond to climate change challenges faced by the Protected areas at the pan-Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans level (Activity 3.1) and in the capacity-building and exchange events that will take place in Activity 3.2.

The organisation will also actively involve and coordinate the ASPs in Serbia for participation in all relevant project activities. Together with the partners from Serbia, especially with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (Forest Directorate), we will work on improving the legal framework for establishment and conservation of ecological corridors, habitat protection and biodiversity with special emphasis on large carnivores species (wolf, bear and lynx). With the support of the Institute of Nature Conservation and the Serbian Hunting Chamber we will analyze current measures for conservation of habitats and species and will prepare a new set of measures which will be a part of guideline.

WWF Adria-Serbia will lead Activity 3.3 and the overall project communication. The organisation will have a coordination role and will be responsible for engaging and advising all project partners on communication activities in all project countries. WWF Adria-Serbia will coordinate the preparation of the communication strategy and the communication plan of the project, will provide visuals and materials to the project partners for use and adaptation to local and national context. The organisation will observe the proper use of the project branding, will make sure that the DRP programme visibility rules are applied.

The proportion (%) of the total budget of WWF Adria-Serbia to be allocated for project management activities is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	149.537,60	80,00 %
Partner contribution	37.384,40	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	186.922,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
WWF Adria-RS	Private	37.384,40	20,00 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total state contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total private contribution		37.384,40	20,00 %
Total		37.384,40	20,00 %
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 7	
Partner number	7
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	ГО «РаківЕкоТур»
Name of the organisation in english	NGO "RakhivEcoTour"
Organisation abbreviation	NGO RET
Department / unit / division	
Partner main address	
Country	Ukraine (UA)
NUTS 2	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P)
NUTS 3	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P0)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Verbnyk 152/5 90600 Rakhiv
Homepage	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064506440524
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	
NUTS 2	
NUTS 3	
Street, House number, Postal code, City	
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	Unified Register of Legal Entities code 37020043
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Head of NGO's board Victoria Gubko

Contact	
Contact person	Head of NGO's board Victoria Gubko
Email	Victoria.gubko80@gmail.com
Telephone no.	+380672595996
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>NGO RakhivEcoTour (RET) is an organization founded in 2010 with the aim to work in the field of securing ecological stability and connectivity in the RO-UA transboundary region and the Carpathian Euroregion in general, to promote the ideas of sustainable development, to develop ecotourism activities and ecological education, support scientific research and wildlife monitoring and widely support nature protection efforts.</p> <p>NGO RET has a wide network of partners such as protected areas in Ukraine, Romania and other EU countries, ecological NGOs (both in Ukraine and abroad), local authorities and other relevant stakeholders, educational establishments, state forest management companies etc. WWF Ukraine and WWF-Romania are our long-time partners with whom we've implemented numerous projects and activities. Members of the NGO are experts with substantial experience in nature conservation, protected area management, scientific research, ecoeducation, tourism, communication, project management.</p> <p>NGO RET has already gained significant experience in all the abovementioned fields of activity by being part of a number of international and national projects, for example:</p> <p>2010 – 2011 - "Strategic management planning for the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve", joint project with CBR & the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (Germany)</p> <p>2011 – 2014 - "Open borders for bears in the Ukrainian and Romanian Carpathians" – WWF RO – NGO RakhivEcoTour (WWF UA) /as a partner/</p> <p>2014 – 2015 - "GoToCarpathia" – Transfer of tourism certification ideas from Poland to Ukraine (Carpathian region) /as an associated partner/</p> <p>2013– 2015 - "PI@neTour" – creation of a joint ecotourism product based on start watching in the Maramures area /as an associated partner/</p> <p>2019 – Scientific justification of expansion of the territory of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve funded by the project "Support to the nature protected areas of Ukraine" (phase 1) /as a sole executor/</p> <p>2019 – 2022 - Open Borders for Wildlife in the Carpathians /as a partner/</p> <p>2021-2022 - Scientific justification of expansion of the territory of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (phase 2) and the Gorgany Nature Reserve funded by the project "Support to the nature protected areas of Ukraine" /as a sole executor/</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>Based on the expertise and past experience the NGO RakhivEcoTour will be responsible for organizing the pilot actions in Maramuresh region, engaging the regional and local stakeholders, cooperating with partners on developing the monitoring tools and technologies, providing input for developing guidelines and strategies, conducting capacity building activities in the region.</p>	

Motivation

NGO experts will review available data, methodologies and best practices and will upscale existing technologies to help foresters be able to manage climate-resilient forest habitats. RakhivEcoTour will collect missing spatial data to inform modeling (e.g large scale forest and mosaic data – wood pastures, wooded meadows, demographic and climatic data). The experts will be involved to development of a common methodology for data collection to be integrated in the digital-based tools for transnational monitoring of large carnivores and forests, will validate the methodology for safe corridors also considering bottlenecks and potential conflict zones between LCs and people. Also NGO experts will contribute into development of the online viewer of “human-wildlife conflict hotspots”.

The NGO RakhivEcoTour will jointly develop and pilot a set of common actions in the pilot site within UA Carpathians to facilitate large carnivores’ movement along transnational forest corridors. The pilot actions involve restoration of wood pastures and meadows, planting of native trees or other vegetation (herbaceous plants or shrub), thus demonstrating the positive transnational effects of mosaic habitats as climate microrefugia and important foraging areas.

RakhivEcoTour will be involved in all joint pilot actions, the development of the joint solutions and in the preparation of strategic guidelines. Also, it will participate in transnational capacity-building and experience sharing during meetings, workshops and conferences thus participating in active cooperation and networking with partners abroad. The joint implementation of such a large-scale transnational project with high added value will strengthen the daily work of the organization, will improve its abilities to cooperate, empower our experts and researchers by providing shared knowledge, new tools and strategies. All of these will result in an increased institutional capacity for RakhivEcoTour to meet the future challenges related to the preservation and conservation of large carnivores in the Maramuresh region in the context of climate change, and to uptake and sustain the project results.

RakhivEcoTour will also implement active communication according to the communication strategy of the project and in accordance with the DRP rules in order to engage and raise awareness among the target groups of the project and the general public.

The proportion of the total budget of RakhivEcoTour which will be dedicated to project management activities is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	173.548,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	43.387,01	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	216.935,01	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
NGO RET	Private	43.387,01	20,00 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total state contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total private contribution		43.387,01	20,00 %
Total		43.387,01	20,00 %
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 8	
Partner number	8
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Карпатський біосферний заповідник
Name of the organisation in english	The Carpathian Biosphere Reserve
Organisation abbreviation	CBR
Department / unit / division	
Partner main address	
Country	Ukraine (UA)
NUTS 2	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P)
NUTS 3	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P0)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Krasne Pleso 77 90600 Rakhiv
Homepage	https://kbz.in.ua/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	
NUTS 2	
NUTS 3	
Street, House number, Postal code, City	
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Regional public authority
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	Unitary register of legal entities code 00276104
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Director Mykola Rybak
Contact person	Department head Iryna Yonash

Contact	
Email	ira_cbr@ukr.net
Telephone no.	+380931374577
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (CBR) is a nature protected scientific-research institution of international significance. In 1993 the reserve was included to the World Network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Ecosystems of the CBR are among the most valuable ones on Earth, part of which since 2007 became part of the Transnational Serial Site of UNESCO World Natural Heritage "Ancient and Primeval Beech forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe." The Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, the only one in Ukraine, has been awarded by the Council of Europe with a European Diploma for Protected Areas 5 times in a row, for the outstanding achievements in conservation of the historical, cultural and natural heritage of Europe. Also, several massifs of CBR were certified by the European Wilderness Society, as samples of untouched "wild" nature. In 2019, three objects of the reserve received the status of Ramsar wetlands of international importance.</p> <p>The biosphere performs the following tasks: Protection/conservation of natural ecosystems; Scientific research and monitoring; Ecological education; Ecotourism development; Implementation of sustainable development principles. As an institution the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve is very active in international cooperation, has a wide network of partners such as protected areas, ecological NGOs, both in Ukraine and abroad, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders. Employees of the CBR are professionals and scientists, experts with big experience in scientific research, nature conservation, protected area management, eco-education, tourism and recreation, communication, etc.</p> <p>Some of the relevant recent international projects include: 2017-2024 - Cooperation in Forest Research Ukraine-Switzerland (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI, Switzerland); 2018-2022 – Series of research and exchange projects with Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (Germany) financed by German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): - "Sustainably Securing Relevant Ecosystem Services through International Cooperation" - "Transboundary Cooperation in Teaching and Practice" - "Transboundary Learning in UNESCO Biosphere Regions for Sustainable Development and Global Change and Increasing Uncertainty" - "Transnational Biosphere Forests - Cooperative Learning in UNESCO Biosphere Regions for Conflict Prevention and Sustainable Transformation". 2021-2024 – LIFE PROGNOSSES "Protection of Old-Growth Forests in Europe: Natural Heritage, Outline, Synthesis and Ecosystem Services Protection of Old-Growth Forests in Europe: Natural Heritage, Outline, Synthesis and Ecosystem Services" (EU LIFE Program). - Ukrainian-Romanian project "Open borders for bears in the Romanian and Ukrainian Carpathians" and "Open borders for wildlife in the Carpathians" (OBWIC), within the framework of the Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine cross-border cooperation program for 2014-2020.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
Based on its knowledge and prior experience, the CBR will actively contribute to Activities 2.1 and 2.2	

Motivation

and will jointly create and test a set of common actions in the UA Carpathians pilot site, involving regional and local stakeholders. Additionally, it will also contribute to the creation of the guidelines envisaged in Activities 2.3 and 2.4 with input, expertise and experience from the pilot areas. In addition to restoring wood pastures and meadows and planting native trees or other plants (fruit trees), the planned communication activities and awareness-raising campaign, showcasing the project results and outcomes, will promote project activities and involve local stakeholders in solving the problems of climate change, man and wildlife conflict. CBR will also play a role in the process of improving local understanding of these problems and support communication with local communities.

CBR will actively participate in all activities under Specific Objective 1. The CBR specialists will analyze available data, techniques, and best practices and will upgrade existing technologies to assist in the construction and maintenance of climate-resilient forest habitats in order to close knowledge gaps regarding the resilience of forest ecosystems and safe corridors for large predators. CBR plans to develop GIS database with eco-corridors for large carnivores and description of problems, existing activities, land users, as well as organize a monitoring system for natural and anthropogenic processes occurring in them. CBR experts will be involved in the development of a common methodology for data collection to be integrated in the digital-based tools for transnational monitoring of large carnivores and forests, will validate the methodology for safe corridors also considering bottlenecks and potential conflict zones between LCs and people.

Furthermore, CBR will also take part in all cross-border capacity building and experience sharing activities envisaged to build better international collaboration with the project partners in Activity 1.3.

As a project partner with high expertise and relevant experience, CBR will play a role as co-contributor to the development of the Strategic Guidelines in Activity 3.1 and it will take part in all consultations and meetings to be able to give input and feedback. Furthermore, CBR will also take part in all cross-border capacity building and experience sharing activities envisaged to build better international collaboration with the project partners. CBR will share its expertise and knowledge but it will also benefit from the networking and the cooperation created by the project to improve its work and to be able to better upscale the project results.

The proportion of the total budget of CBR for project management activities will be 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	176.025,60	80,00 %
Partner contribution	44.006,40	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	220.032,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
CBR	Public	44.006,40	20,00 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution		44.006,40	20,00 %
Sub-total state contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total private contribution		0,00	0,00 %
Total		44.006,40	20,00 %
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 9	
Partner number	9
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Fachhochschule Kärnten - gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mbH
Name of the organisation in english	Carinthia University of Applied Sciences
Organisation abbreviation	CUAS
Department / unit / division	Engineering & IT /UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas
Partner main address	
Country	Österreich (AT)
NUTS 2	Kärnten (AT21)
NUTS 3	Klagenfurt-Villach (AT211)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Europastraße 4 9524 Villach
Homepage	www.cuas.at and www.cuas.at/unesco-chair
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	Österreich (AT)
NUTS 2	Kärnten (AT21)
NUTS 3	Klagenfurt-Villach (AT211)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Europastraße 4 9524 Villach
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Higher education and research organisations
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	UID: ATU77483224
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No

Contact	
Legal representative	Dr Claudia Pacher
Contact person	FH-Prof. Mag. Dr. Michael Jungmeier
Email	m.jungmeier@cuas.at
Telephone no.	00435905004314
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>Carinthia University of Applied Sciences (CUAS) is a college of higher education in Carinthia, Austria. CUAS is known for its high-tech orientation. Newest technology as well as many collaborations with industrial partners shape the image of the CUAS. The university currently has around 2200 students, annual turnover in the area of further education programs of € 580,000 and a research volume of € 5.4 million (2021). The UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas was established in 2020 at the school of Engineering and IT at CUAS. The interdisciplinary chair team consists of vegetation ecologists, biologists and human geographers with experience in vegetation monitoring, digital monitoring, data collection and analysis and interpretation of results. Two educational programs are offered at the UNESCO Chair: the international master's programme "Management of Conservation Areas" and the certificate course "Nature conservation engineer". In the COIN project BioMoniTech, which is led by the UNESCO Chair, traditional methods of conservation biology and new technologies are processed and brought together, a global framework for biodiversity monitoring is developed in cooperation with international experts, and a framework for configuring biodiversity monitoring is created in co-development with practical partners.</p> <p>The organizational unit FH Kärnten Research (FHKR) is a service unit for researchers at CUAS. FHKR supports researcher with bundled competences for project development, project submission, administrative project management, lead partner management, financial monitoring and research marketing.</p> <p>In addition, R&D controlling has been set up as an internal monitoring body and separate accounting groups for commercial and non-commercial R&D activities have been established. CUAS has experience in the management of third-party funded projects up to a volume of € 2 million as a project partner and/or lead partner in national (e.g. FFG, Federal Ministries, KWF, etc.) and international (Interreg SiAt, ItAt, Alpine Space, Central Europe, Horizon2020) funding programs.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>CUAS will be involved in all project activities with the general objective of strategic support in the project implementation. Biodiversity monitoring as well as its technologies and the management of ecosystem services are of special interests for the CUAS research group, where previously accumulated knowledge can be exchanged and shared within the project consortium.</p> <p>CUAS will lead Activities 3.1 due to its expertise in protected areas management and in drafting strategic documents. CUAS will organize and host the expert group which will compose of all project partners representatives along with the UNESCO Chair "Sustainable Management of Conservation</p>	

Motivation

Areas". The university will also liaise and involve the Carpathian Convention working groups to also take part in the process, but also other crucial stakeholders to whom the Guidelines will be presented.

Furthermore, CUAS will be very actively engaged in the capacity-building and experience-sharing activities of the project. The transfer of the project results into capacity building formats and the development of the strategic guidelines are essential core activities of CUAS, which build on the previous expertise and developed tools of former CUAS projects. CUAS has many years of expertise in participatory methodologies for the development of trans- and interdisciplinary projects to promote communication at eye level with all stakeholders. Based on the development of three educational programmes (Master programme: Management of Conservation Areas, Summer School: European Parks Academy, Certificate course: Nature Conservation Engineer), CUAS can draw on comprehensive expertise in the didactic and technological preparation of educational programmes, that are oriented towards the latest educational standards.

A strong focus of CUAS will also be the dissemination and communication of project activities and results in the UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme network, to strengthen the establishment of a transnational network to share knowledge, elaborate policy recommendations for transnational and national policy makers.

The proportion of the CUAS project budget which will be allocated to project management activities is 4,56%. This does not include the technical and financial support which will be provided by the University staff but will not be included as costs in the project due to internal procedural arrangements and processes (CUAS has excellent secretariat and financial services which will be at the disposal of the project needs).

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	227.960,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	56.990,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	284.950,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
CUAS	Public	56.990,00	20,00 %

Total

Sub-total public contribution	56.990,00	20,00 %
Sub-total state contribution	0,00	0,00 %

Total		
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Total	56.990,00	20,00 %
State Aid		
State aid relevant activities		

B.1 Project Partner 10	
Partner number	10
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	WWF Slovensko
Name of the organisation in english	WWF Slovakia
Organisation abbreviation	WWF SK
Department / unit / division	N/A
Partner main address	
Country	Slovensko (SK)
NUTS 2	Bratislavský kraj (SK01)
NUTS 3	Bratislavský kraj (SK010)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Medená 101/5 81102 Bratislava
Homepage	https://www.wwfsk.org/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	Slovensko (SK)
NUTS 2	Bratislavský kraj (SK01)
NUTS 3	Bratislavský kraj (SK010)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	N/A N/A N/A N/A
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	Organization ID: 52204430
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	CEO Miroslava Plassmann

Contact	
Contact person	Katarína Balíková
Email	kbalikova@wwfsk.org
Telephone no.	00
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>WWF Slovakia was legally established in March 2019 as part of the newly formed WWF Central and Eastern Europe, which has transformed from the former WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme (WWF DCP) established and based in Vienna, Austria since 1998. After 20 years of active involvement in conservation, policy and awareness raising in the Danube and Carpathian region, the organization has grown to its current presence in five countries in the region, except Slovakia also in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Ukraine. Much of the WWF's work focuses on transboundary issues, including protection and management of protected areas and its related biodiversity. Activities of WWF SK have also gradually developed and today they comprise 3 main programme areas: forests, freshwater and wildlife.</p> <p>WWF in CEE including WWF SK was a partner in numerous projects of various funding programmes and therefore has an extensive experience in project management and implementation. Past and current projects include those related to protection of large carnivores and their habitats including connectivity, such as LIFE Eurolargecarnivores, ENI OBWIC, Interreg TransGREEN, ConnectGREEN, SaveGREEN or current LECA. Protection, management or restoration of forests have also been part of various projects, funded not only from the public, but also from corporate partnerships. WWF Slovakia has run a successful campaign for the establishment of Old Growth Forests reserves in Slovakia (6400 ha) and systematically works in identifying High Conservation Value forests. Recently we also act as coordinating beneficiary for the CLIMAFORCEELIFE project, which aims to foster transition to climate-smart management of forests in Central and Eastern Europe.</p> <p>WWF SK staff is experienced in implementing and managing projects. Our expertise is in developing methodologies for field inventories and monitoring, organizing and executing biodiversity surveillance and monitoring, including inventories of natural habitats and species, GIS data analyses and processing. Team members have also experience in development of guidance and policy recommendations and stakeholder engagement. WWF is also known for its frequent and impactful communication activities towards the public. It communicates successfully its message through internet platforms, social media (Facebook, Instagram), radio and television broadcast.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>WWF SK will lead the project activity 2.2 where it will contribute with its field expertise to demonstrate the transnational relevance of the approach based on identification, management and connectivity of climate microrefugia (e.g. different types of open wooden areas) in order to facilitate LC range shifts cross-border and cross-regions. As a lead partner for this activity it will support and coordinate the project partners in all countries and will analyse and summarise the results from the activity.</p> <p>It will be also involved particularly in the project activities 1.3, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. It will also contribute to /</p>	

Motivation

participate in activities 1.1, 1.2 and 2.4. WWF SK experts will provide their expertise in data collection and interpretation, developing methodologies, setting up and executing monitoring of habitats connectivity and large carnivores, developing guidance and policy documents, organizing meetings, workshops and training, capacity building and communication. WWF SK will also ensure coordination of project actions on national level (with partners and ASP) and cooperate in organizing local activities in the pilot area. The organisation will provide expert assistance in preparation of the measures in the pilot site, strategic documents and management plans.

WWF Slovakia will also contribute to and participate in the capacity building and experience-sharing activities in order to exchange knowledge and expertise with the partners and the other stakeholders in the project. It will take part in the national and regional events who will build capacity and create opportunities for networking.

Furthermore, WWF Slovakia will also contribute to Activity 3.3 and the overall communication and dissemination of the project activities and results. Through its network and channels the organisation will reach the relevant target groups and the general public to raise awareness on the topic of the project and its achievements.

The proportion of project management activities of WWF Slovakia as compared to the total budget is 15,30%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	222.292,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	55.573,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	277.865,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
WWF SK	Private	22.229,20	8,00 %
Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic	State	33.343,80	12,00 %

Total

Sub-total public contribution	0,00	0,00 %
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Total		
Sub-total state contribution	33.343,80	12,00 %
Sub-total private contribution	22.229,20	8,00 %
Total	55.573,00	20,00 %
State Aid		
State aid relevant activities		

B.1 Project Partner 11	
Partner number	11
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Správa Národného parku Slovenský raj so sídlom v Spišskej Novej Vsi
Name of the organisation in english	Slovak Paradise National Park Administration with headquarters in Spišská Nová Ves
Organisation abbreviation	Slovenský raj
Department / unit / division	
Partner main address	
Country	Slovensko (SK)
NUTS 2	Východné Slovensko (SK04)
NUTS 3	Košický kraj (SK042)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Štefánikovo námestie 9 05201 Spišská Nová Ves
Homepage	www.npslovenskyraj.sk
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	
NUTS 2	
NUTS 3	
Street, House number, Postal code, City	
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Regional public authority
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	IČO: 54435412 DIČ: 2121695257
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Ing., PhD. Tomáš Dražil

Contact	
Contact person	Ing. Marek Leskovjanský
Email	marek.leskovjansky@npslovenskyraj.sk
Telephone no.	00421903298211
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The Slovak Paradise National Park Administration is a professional nature and landscape protection organization that provides tasks in the area of nature and landscape protection in the territory of the national park and its protection zone, as well as in other areas under the jurisdiction of the National Park Administration. The National Park Administration is a contributory organization established by the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic.</p> <p>The National Park was a partner or participated in another way in numerous projects of various funding programs including LIFE and national operational programmes. It has therefore an extensive experience in project management and implementation. Past and current projects include those related to protection of large carnivores and their monitoring and management measures in forests and non-forest habitats inspired by close-to-nature managements. The expertise of the National Park staff, which will be specifically important for the project implementation, is in developing the methodology and implementing close-to-nature forest management, restoration and management of high nature value grasslands, organizing and executing biodiversity monitoring, analyzing and processing of data as well as communication with stakeholders and general public to promote project activities.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>Slovak Paradise National Park will be participating in the project activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 (under Specific Objective 1), 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 (under Specific Objective 2), 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 (under Specific Objective 3). Slovak Paradise National Park has relevant GIS data for the whole territory of NP available (NP border, NP zones, roads, railways, waterways, settlements, layers of forests, meadows, fields, forest biotopes, non-forest biotopes, hiking trails, bike paths, etc.) which will be updated and complemented with other information through the implementation of activities 1.1 and 1.2 where the National Park will contribute for the development of the new tools for monitoring and management of large carnivores' forest habitats. The National Park will be responsible for the implementation of most of the measures on pilot sites, such as restoration and management of grassland and forest habitats.</p> <p>Staff of the park will also provide their expertise in developing and reviewing methodologies and guidelines in cooperation with the other project partners, setting up and executing monitoring of habitats connectivity and large carnivores and communication and participation on workshops and events. The park will also be involved in the capacity building, exchanges and capitalisation activities to enable durability, cross-fertilisation and uptake of project results.</p> <p>National Park Slovak Paradise will also contribute to improving of the capacity in the forestry sector by introducing their approach to close-to-nature forest management to other professionals and organizing some of the pilot actions with inclusion of local community. The National Park will also execute communication and dissemination activities according to the communication plan of the project.</p>	

Motivation			
<p>The proportion of the total budget of the National park which will be allocated to project management activities is 6,14%. The percentage is relatively low since the administrative and financial activities necessary for the project implementation will be provided at the expense of the Park due to the internal park administration procedural organization.</p>			
<p>Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.</p>			
N/A			
Co-financing			
Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage	
Interreg Funds	97.720,00	80,00 %	
Partner contribution	24.430,00	20,00 %	
Partner total eligible budget	122.150,00	100,00 %	
Origin of partner contribution			
Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
Slovenský raj	Public	0,00	0,00 %
Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic	State	24.430,00	20,00 %
Total			
Sub-total public contribution	0,00	0,00 %	
Sub-total state contribution	24.430,00	20,00 %	
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %	
Total	24.430,00	20,00 %	
State Aid			
State aid relevant activities			

B.1 Project Partner 12	
Partner number	12
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Centar za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica
Name of the organisation in english	Center for Protection and Research of Birds
Organisation abbreviation	CZIP
Department / unit / division	Large carnivore conservation programme
Partner main address	
Country	Crna Gora (ME)
NUTS 2	Crna Gora (ME00)
NUTS 3	Crna Gora (ME000)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Velje Brdo 35 81000 Podgorica
Homepage	www.czip.me
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	Crna Gora (ME)
NUTS 2	Crna Gora (ME00)
NUTS 3	Crna Gora (ME000)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Velje Brdo 35 81000 Podgorica
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	02323095 PIB
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Executive director Jovana Janjušević

Contact	
Contact person	Jasmin Murić
Email	jasmin.muric@czip.me
Telephone no.	+382 20 272 051
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The Center for Protection and Research of Birds (CZIP) is a prominent non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Montenegro, a country located in southeastern Europe. CZIP focuses on the conservation and research of birds and their habitats, as well as broader environmental issues in Montenegro.</p> <p>While the primary focus of the CZIP is on avian species and their habitats, the organization engages in activities related to the conservation of large carnivores in Montenegro. CZIP recognizes the importance of protecting the broader biodiversity of the country, including species such as wolves, bears, and lynx.</p> <p>CZIP actively participates in research and monitoring efforts to gather data on the populations and distribution of large carnivores in Montenegro. By studying their behavior, habitat requirements, and potential threats, CZIP contributes to a better understanding of these species and their conservation needs.</p> <p>In addition to research, CZIP advocates for the protection of large carnivores through environmental policy development and public awareness campaigns. The organization collaborates with relevant stakeholders, including governmental bodies, local communities, and other NGOs, to promote the implementation of effective conservation measures.</p> <p>CZIP also works towards reducing human-wildlife conflicts, which can arise when large carnivores come into close proximity to human settlements. By providing guidance and support, CZIP aims to find sustainable solutions that ensure the coexistence of these species with local communities.</p> <p>Due to the all abovementioned, CZIP should be considered as a relevant partner for the implementation of the project activities on the territory of Montenegro, having in mind that the project "Towards a Climate-smart Forest Connectivity for Large Carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian Region" addresses common transnational challenges on preserving ecological corridors of large carnivores (LC) in the Carpathian, Balkan and Dinaric Mountains - part of the European Mountain Forests.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>The experience of Center for Protection and Research of Birds in research, habitat protection, and environmental advocacy aligns with the project's objectives of protecting and preserving biodiversity in ecological corridors and eco-regions of transnational relevance in the Danube Region. CZIP's role and contribution in the project will be the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise in Conservation Planning: CZIP has extensive experience in conservation planning and research, including the identification of important bird areas and the implementation of habitat conservation strategies. This expertise will be applied to the data gathering, mapping of safe corridors 	

Motivation

for large carnivores and dynamic conservation planning tools required for transnational monitoring of large carnivores in response to climate change, more specifically in activities under Specific Objective 1 (Activities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

- **Advocacy and stakeholder engagement:** CZIP's work in environmental advocacy and collaboration with stakeholders can contribute to engaging relevant actors in the project. The organization's experience in working with governmental bodies, local communities, and other NGOs can be valuable in fostering cooperation and implementing climate adaptation measures to reduce human-wildlife conflicts. This is relevant for all project activities, especially for the ones involving pilot action of sites and preparation of guidelines. CZIP will assist in the pilot actions and will participate in analysing their results.
- **Capacity building:** CZIP's involvement in the project can contribute to building the capacity of nature management professionals. Their knowledge and experience in applying forest management practices and conservation strategies can help facilitate large carnivores' range shifts and ensure the establishment of climate-resilient forest corridors. Thus CZIP will be involved in all capacity-building and experience-sharing activities of the project, all project workshops and events at national and regional level thus contributing to the cooperation, networking and the capitalisation activities.
- **Communication:** Last but not least, CZIP has a wide network of supporters and will communicate and disseminate the project activities and results according to the agreed communication strategy and plan, to raise awareness but also to ensure the uptake and upscaling of project results

The proportion of the project management activities from the total budget of CZIP is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	155.659,20	80,00 %
Partner contribution	38.914,80	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	194.574,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
CZIP	Private	0,00	0,00 %
Ministry for public administration	State	38.914,80	20,00 %

Total		
Sub-total public contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total state contribution	38.914,80	20,00 %
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Total	38.914,80	20,00 %
State Aid		
State aid relevant activities		

B.1 Project Partner 13	
Partner number	13
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Agenția pentru Protecția Mediului Cluj
Name of the organisation in english	Cluj Environmental Protection Agency
Organisation abbreviation	APM Cluj
Department / unit / division	Calitatea Factorilor de Mediu (Environmental Factors Quality)
Partner main address	
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	Nord-Vest (RO11)
NUTS 3	Cluj (RO113)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Dorobanților 99 400609 Cluj-Napoca
Homepage	http://apmcj.anpm.ro/
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	Nord-Vest (RO11)
NUTS 3	Cluj (RO113)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	N/A N/A N/A N/A
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Local public authority
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	4288144
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Mrs. Adina Socaciu

Contact	
Contact person	Mr. Paul Beldean
Email	paul.beldean@apmcj.anpm.ro
Telephone no.	+40741178548
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The Environmental Protection Agency Cluj (Agenția pentru Protecția Mediului Cluj – APM Cluj) implements environmental policies, entailing a high responsibility in the regulating area of the activities of third parties.</p> <p>The main responsibilities of APM Cluj include the authorization of activities with environmental impact according to the powers established by law and local coordination process, developing and implementing action plans for environmental protection, cooperation with public authorities and institutions, with businesses and civil society to raise awareness, provide public information and education to ensure that environmental protection laws are in force.</p> <p>Furthermore, Environmental Protection Agency Cluj monitors the large carnivore's population development, synthesizing data and environmental information locally and transmitting the data to the National Environmental Agency; authorises relocation and hunting of large carnivores in case of human health and security threat to diminish the pressure on people while supporting local communities who live alongside them and also authorises activities with environmental impact in habitats of large carnivores.</p> <p>APM Cluj participates in international programs and projects and partnerships in projects of public interest, supports and involves civil society initiatives in environmental protection; ensures public access to environmental information, consultation and participation in environmental decision-making.</p> <p>Also, APM Cluj successfully contributed to the implementation of biodiversity conservation related projects: e.g. the Sustainable management of Natura 2000 site ROSCI0238 Suatu-Cojocna-Crairât, Development of the management plan for the site of community importance ROSCI0295 Dealurile Clujului Est.</p> <p>APM Cluj's experience regarding biodiversity conservation, wildlife conservation and climate change, its knowledge on EU and national relevant legislation will significantly contribute to the project's activities. In addition, the communication competencies and experience will ensure a proper visibility of the project and its results.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>Environmental Protection Agency Cluj will provide valuable consultations and expert opinion in the project through its staff. It will be involved in the co-development of the Carpathian-Balkan-Dinaric GIS database on forested corridors (Activity 1.1), mapping of existing LC corridors in the project transboundary forest areas (Activity 1.2), assessment of climate change impact on parks' food potential for herbivores species in Apuseni Nature Park (Activity 2.2), development of best practice</p>	

Motivation

guide for LC climate-wise connectivity in forest habitats (Activity 2.4).

Furthermore, APM Cluj will contribute to the development of the Strategic Guidelines to respond to climate change challenges faced by the Protected areas at the pan-Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans level (Activity 3.1) which will ensure management professionals to uptake and disseminate appropriate solutions.

APM Cluj will also play a role in dissemination of project results, mainly in promotion of the developed tools to regional stakeholders (Activity 1.3) as well as regional cross-fertilization and uptake of results by supporting cooperation with key stakeholders in the capacity building programme (Activity 3.2). Throughout the project, APM Cluj will contribute to communication related actions, ensuring information, education and mobilization of general public and also of stakeholder groups.

The proportion of the total budget allocated for project management activities is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	50.596,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	12.649,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	63.245,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
APM Cluj	Public	12.649,00	20,00 %

Total

Sub-total public contribution	12.649,00	20,00 %
Sub-total state contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Total	12.649,00	20,00 %

State Aid

State aid relevant activities

B.1 Project Partner 14	
Partner number	14
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Javno preduzeće za nacionalne parkove Crne Gore
Name of the organisation in english	Public enterprise for national parks of Montenegro
Organisation abbreviation	JPNP
Department / unit / division	Department for projects and international cooperation
Partner main address	
Country	Crna Gora (ME)
NUTS 2	Crna Gora (ME00)
NUTS 3	Crna Gora (ME000)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Trg Vojvode Bećir-Bega Osmanagića 16 81000 Podgorica
Homepage	www.nparkovi.me
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	Crna Gora (ME)
NUTS 2	Crna Gora (ME00)
NUTS 3	Crna Gora (ME000)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Trg Vojvode Bećir-Bega Osmanagića 16 81000 Podgorica
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	National public authority
Legal status	Public
VAT number (if applicable)	30/31-02-889-1
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	Yes
Contact	
Legal representative	Director Vladimir Martinović

Contact	
Contact person	Mrs Maša Vučinić
Email	masavucinic@nparkovi.me
Telephone no.	068892803
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro (JPNPCG) is a government organization responsible for the management, protection, and preservation of the national parks in Montenegro.</p> <p>The primary objective of the JPNPCG is to protect and conserve Montenegro's natural and cultural heritage found within its national parks. Montenegro is known for its diverse and stunning landscapes, which include mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, and coastal areas. The national parks under the purview of the JPNPCG are: National park Durmitor, National park Skadar lake, National park Biogradska gora, National park Prokletije and National park Lovćen.</p> <p>The JPNPCG is responsible for the development and implementation of conservation strategies, maintenance of infrastructure within the parks, enforcement of park regulations, and promotion of sustainable tourism. It collaborates with various national and international organizations to ensure the preservation of Montenegro's natural heritage.</p> <p>The national parks managed by the JPNPCG attract visitors who enjoy hiking, mountaineering, wildlife watching, and nature photography. These parks offer numerous trails, viewpoints, and visitor centers to enhance the visitor experience while preserving the ecological integrity of the areas.</p> <p>Through its efforts, the JPNPCG strives to protect Montenegro's national parks for future generations, promote sustainable tourism, and raise awareness about the importance of conserving these unique natural and cultural landscapes and its species.</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>JPNP recognizes the ecological significance of large carnivores and strives to protect their populations and habitats within the national parks of Montenegro. By implementing conservation measures, conducting research, and engaging with stakeholders, the JPNPCG contributes to the long-term survival and conservation of these iconic species. In the project JPNP will have the following role and contribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring and Research: The JPNPCG will conduct monitoring and research to gather data on the populations, habitats and behaviors of large carnivores (e.g. their numbers, distribution, and habitat use). The collected information will help in understanding the status and ecological requirements of these species, guiding conservation efforts. Thus the organisation will actively participate in Activities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 which envisage the development of transnational tools and technologies for monitoring of key large carnivore forest habitats and identification of species movement patterns in response to climate change. - Habitat Management: The JPNPCG focuses on maintaining and managing suitable habitats for 	

Motivation

large carnivores within the national parks. This involves activities such as habitat restoration, protection of critical areas, and minimizing human disturbances in core carnivore habitats. During project implementation, it will execute the pilot actions in the target areas in Montenegro envisaged in Activities 2.1 and 2.2. and will actively contribute to the development of the guidelines in Activities 2.3 and 2.4.

- Conflict Resolution: The JPNPCG works to mitigate conflicts between large carnivores and human activities. This includes implementing measures to prevent livestock predation by carnivores and providing support to local communities for adopting effective preventive measures. Thus, its support in engaging with the local communities will be crucial as JPNPCG is already in close contact with them.
- Awareness and communication: The JPNPCG will carry out public awareness activities to promote understanding and appreciation for large carnivores, as well as to promote the project activities and results. These initiatives will aim to raise awareness about the importance of conserving these species and their role in maintaining healthy ecosystems. JPNPCG will work in collaboration with the other partners on this and according to the communication plan of the project.
- Collaboration: The JPNPCG will collaborate with the other project partners for the development of the project tools, methodologies, strategic guidelines, and will take part in the capacity-building, exchange and capitalisation activities envisaged in Activities 3.1 and 3.2). It will also contribute to the dissemination and uptake of project results via connections to its partners: national and international organizations, researchers, and conservation experts.

The proportion of the total budget of JPNPCG which is allocated for project management activities is 20%

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	99.492,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	24.873,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	124.365,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
JPNP	Public	24.873,00	20,00 %

Total

Sub-total public contribution	24.873,00	20,00 %
Sub-total state contribution	0,00	0,00 %

Total		
Sub-total private contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Total	24.873,00	20,00 %
State Aid		
State aid relevant activities		

B.1 Project Partner 15	
Partner number	15
Partner role	PP
Name of the organisation in original language	Udruženje građana "Emblema"
Name of the organisation in english	"Emblem" Civil Association
Organisation abbreviation	Emblema
Department / unit / division	
Partner main address	
Country	Serbia (RS)
NUTS 2	Region Južne i Istočne Srbije (RS22)
NUTS 3	Pirotska oblast (RS226)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Balkanska Street 16/1 18320 Dimitrovgrad
Homepage	www.far.rs
Address of department / unit / division (if applicable)	
Country	
NUTS 2	
NUTS 3	
Street, House number, Postal code, City	
Legal and financial information	
Type of partner	Interest groups including NGOs
Legal status	Private
VAT number (if applicable)	109315104
Is your organisation entitled to recover VAT based on national legislation for the activities implemented in the project?	No
Contact	
Legal representative	Mr Slaviša Milanov
Contact person	Mr Sergej Ivanov

Contact	
Email	emblema@gmail.com
Telephone no.	+381694612071
Motivation	
Which of the organisation's thematic and territorial competences and experiences are relevant for the project?	
<p>The association Emblema was founded in 2015 in Dimitrovgrad, South East Serbia by a group of local agricultural experts, journalists from the field of agriculture, breeders of autochthonous breeds, ecologists and activists in the field of nature conservation and rural development.</p> <p>Even before the establishment of Emblema, the founders were individually engaged in various initiatives and projects in Stara Planina Nature Park and Special Nature Reserve "Jerma", starting with those concerning environmental protection, on-farm conservation of rare breeds, preparation of studies for the protection of geographical origin and branding of local products, organic production and rural development in general.</p> <p>The key references of Emblema in the field of environmental protection and rural development include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The "Treasures of Serbia / Riznice Srbije (in Serbian)" project, which aims to bring the importance of preserving natural and rural heritage to young people and children (special attention was given to endangered wildlife species and indigenous breeds of farm animals); 2. Establishment of the Old Breeds Park "Magilend" in partnership with the Breeding Organization Stado doo, with the aim to demonstrate the importance of autochthonous breeds of farm animals from the area of Stara Planina and their role in maintaining local landscape biodiversity; 3. Production of the bilingual series "The village has right too - I selo(to) se pita (in Serbian)" which will be realized from 2021 and which helps the media promotion of topics that are important for the local rural population, especially those in the field of environmental protection and rural development; 4. Organization of expert meetings and public discussions on the topic of environmental protection and local development (one example is ("Management and extent of forest exploitation in the area of the Stara Planina Nature Park", organization of the "Caribrod Forum"...)); 5. Cooperation with the ETH University from Zurich in the organization of the course "Management of terrestrial ecosystems, Dimitrovgrad" and the development of the "Rural HUB Caribrod" concept 6. In order to play a more active role in society, Emblema also launched the publication of the FARCE newspaper intended for children and young people, in which cultural and natural heritage is one of the key segments (https://far.rs/farce/blog/zelenocose/); 7. participation in the project "Ecosystem- Support to reform in environmental protection" and 8. Active participation in many other important initiatives in the field of rural development and environmental protection, close cooperation and information exchange with local farmers in the Stara Planina Nature Park etc <p>Association Emblema has 8 employees and it is owner of three local media outlets: Internet portal www.far.rs, monthly magazine "FARČE" (https://far.rs/farce/blog/zelenocose/) and FAR TV (https://www.youtube.com/@FarRsMultimedijalniPortal/videos)</p>	
What is the role (contribution and main activities) of your organisation in the project? Please indicate the proportion (%) of the total partner budget to be allocated for project management activities!	
<p>Emblema's main role in the project is to conduct the pilot key measures (activities 2.1 and 2.2) having potential to demonstrate positive effects of climate-resilient forests microrefugia creation along</p>	

Motivation

transnational large carnivores' corridors. Emblema association will organize planting of native climate-resilient trees or herbaceous species to diversify largely forested areas by providing early-successional habitat in the Stara Planina Nature Park. In addition, a restoration of overgrown wooded meadows and pastures by removing overgrown vegetation will be conducted inside the Stara Planina Nature Park. The association will work in collaboration with local farmers whose land will be used for the pilot actions and also with the other Serbian partners.

The role of Emblema will also include contribution to the communication and involvement of local communities and stakeholders, as well as participation in the related capacity-building activities. The association will give its input and feedback on the methodologies and guidelines developed in the project and will participate in the exchanges and capitalisation activities to enable durability, cross-fertilisation and uptake of project results.

Emblema will conduct public awareness and promotional activities in line with the communication plan of the project and with the requirements of the DRP programme.

The proportion of the total budget of Emblema allocated for project management activities is 20%.

Only for the LP, describe the organisation's experience in participating in and/or managing EU co-financed projects or other international projects.

N/A

Co-financing

Co-financing source	Amount	Percentage
Interreg Funds	74.800,00	80,00 %
Partner contribution	18.700,00	20,00 %
Partner total eligible budget	93.500,00	100,00 %

Origin of partner contribution

Name of the contributor institution	Type of contribution	Amount	% of total partner budget
Emblema	Private	18.700,00	20,00 %

Total

Sub-total public contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total state contribution	0,00	0,00 %
Sub-total private contribution	18.700,00	20,00 %
Total	18.700,00	20,00 %

State Aid

State aid relevant activities	
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Associated Strategic Partner

Number	Status	Name of the organisation in original language	Name of the responsible project partner
1	Active	Асоциация на парковете в България	WWF BG
2	Active	Zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije	WWF Adria-RS
3	Active	Ловачка комора Србије	WWF Adria-RS
4	Active	Рахивська міська рада	NGO RET
5	Active	Департамент екології та природних ресурсів Закарпатської обласної адміністрації	CBR
6	Active	Ministerul Mediului, Apelor și Pădurilor	WWF RO
7	Active	Ministerstvo životného prostredia Slovenskej republiky	WWF SK
8	Active	Uprava za šume, Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede	WWF BG

Асоциация на парковете в България А01	
Partner number	LP1
Name of the organisation in original language	Асоциация на парковете в България
Name of the organisation in english	Association of Parks in Bulgaria
Country	Bulgaria (BG)
NUTS 2	Yugozapaden (BG41)
NUTS 3	Sofia (stolitsa) (BG411)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Han Asparuh 26, app 1 1000 Sofia
Legal representative	Mr Simeon Arangelov
Contact person	Mr Simeon Arangelov
Email	simeon_arangelov@abv.bg
Telephone no.	+359885511011
Partner role	APB is an NGO established in 2003 to facilitate the implementation of national and international legal frameworks and best practices for the management

Асоциация на парковете в България АО1	
	<p>of protected territories, biological and landscape diversity. The APB is promoting state-of-the-art approaches related to the management of the nature parks in Bulgaria and designation of new protected areas. APB will participate with their expertise and through their network in dissemination and uptake of results with regards to protected areas in Bulgaria (nature parks). http://parks.bg/about/</p>

Zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije A02	
Partner number	PP6
Name of the organisation in original language	Zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije
Name of the organisation in english	Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia
Country	Serbia (RS)
NUTS 2	City of Belgrade (RS11)
NUTS 3	City of Belgrade (RS110)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Japanska 35 11070 Belgrade
Legal representative	BSc in Architecture Marina Šibalić
Contact person	BSc in Biology Vladan Bjedov
Email	vladan.bjedov@zzps.rs
Telephone no.	++381112093829
Partner role	The Institute is able to take part in the realization of activities in order to achieve the goals of the Project, since it is professionally engaged in activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initiation of the procedure for the establishment of legal protection of a particular area, i.e. the conduct of field research and the development of a study of protection as a professional basis for the adoption of the area's protection Act. • Field research and activities on the conservation of biodiversity as a starting point for the conservation and improvement of endangered and rare species • Monitoring of the state and assessment of the vulnerability of wild species and their habitats, habitat types, ecosystems, protected areas, ecologically important areas and ecological corridors of the ecological network of the Republic of Serbia • Expert supervision in protected areas including expert assistance and cooperation with managers • Keeping a register of protected natural areas and other data of importance for the conservation of nature • Publishing of scientific and professional publications, monographs, brochures, handbooks, guidelines and other informative materials on nature conservation, protected areas, biodiversity and the production of printed, audio and video materials • Public educational programs,

Zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije A02	
	<p>presentation and promotion of natural values and heritage of Serbia in order to develop public awareness of the necessity and significance of nature conservation • Establishment of international cooperation in the field of nature conservation through the linking and exchange of data and experiences with various professional institutions dealing with nature conservation and environmental protection, as well as participation in the work of international nature conservation organizations, engagement in the implementation of international conventions in the field of nature conservation and participation in the implementation of certain international programs and projects</p>

Ловачка комора Србије АОЗ	
Partner number	PP6
Name of the organisation in original language	Ловачка комора Србије
Name of the organisation in english	Hunting Chamber of Serbia
Country	Serbia (RS)
NUTS 2	City of Belgrade (RS11)
NUTS 3	City of Belgrade (RS110)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Kneza Višeslava 3 11030 Belgrade
Legal representative	President Milutin Đorđević
Contact person	Lawyer Radosav Karličić
Email	pravnik@lovackakomora.rs
Telephone no.	+381692446111
Partner role	The Serbian Hunting Chamber is an organization that brings together the most relevant experts from different fields who deal with wild species from various aspects. The Chamber will support the implementation of project activities with their expertise in different areas. The most important sector of the Chamber is the Expert Committee which is a part of several working groups responsible for developing proposals for the adoption of laws, by-laws and other legal acts in the field of hunting. Additionally, the Chamber is committed to improve sustainable management of hunting grounds, especially important for connectivity and LCs prey populations (game species). Project results will be used for inclusion of climate change impact in planning of hunting grounds (measures, recommendation) and training of professionals who are responsible for development of planning documents.

Рахівська міська рада A04	
Partner number	PP7
Name of the organisation in original language	Рахівська міська рада
Name of the organisation in english	Rakhiv Town Council (local public authority)
Country	Ukraine (UA)
NUTS 2	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P)
NUTS 3	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P0)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Myru 34 90600 Rakhiv
Legal representative	Mayor Victor Medvid
Contact person	Rakhiv TC Secretary Dmytro Brekhlichuk
Email	rakhiv.town.council@gmail.com
Telephone no.	+380673124187
Partner role	The Rakhiv Town Council is the governing body for the community of Rakhiv, located within the RO-UA border area, which is strategically important for the project implementation. Its role is essential for shaping public opinion and in terms of LC-human conflicts mitigation.

Департамент екології та природних ресурсів Закарпатської обласної адміністрації AO5	
Partner number	PP8
Name of the organisation in original language	Департамент екології та природних ресурсів Закарпатської обласної адміністрації
Name of the organisation in english	Department of ecology and natural resources of the Zakarpattia Regional State Administration
Country	Ukraine (UA)
NUTS 2	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P)
NUTS 3	Zakarpattia Oblast (UA0P0)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Narodna Square 4 88008 Uzhhorod
Legal representative	Mr. Yuriy Shpontak
Contact person	Mr. Dmytro Tomenchuk
Email	dmevtom@gmail.com
Telephone no.	+380507510894
Partner role	The Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Zakarpattia Regional State Administration is an independent structural unit of the Zakarpattia Regional State Administration. As a strategic associated partner the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources will facilitate and support on behalf of the state authorities the implementation of the project activities within the Ukrainian part of the project territory under its jurisdiction. The Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Zakarpattia Regional State Administration is responsible for the implementation of the state policy in the areas of environmental protection, rational use, reproduction and protection of natural resources (land, subsoil, surface and groundwater, atmospheric air, forests, flora and fauna, etc.), waste management (except for radioactive waste management), environmental safety, development of nature reserves, formation, preservation and sustainable use of the ecological network, preservation of wetlands of international importance and virgin forest ecosystems, what is relevant to the project subject and goals.

Ministerul Mediului, Apelor și Pădurilor AO6	
Partner number	PP4
Name of the organisation in original language	Ministerul Mediului, Apelor și Pădurilor
Name of the organisation in english	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
Country	România (RO)
NUTS 2	București-Ilfov (RO32)
NUTS 3	București (RO321)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Libertății Bvd. 12 050706 Bucharest
Legal representative	Mr. Barna Tánczos
Contact person	Ms. Liliana Vîrtopeanu
Email	liliana.virtopeanu@mmediu.ro
Telephone no.	+40214089546
Partner role	<p>The Ministry of Environment (MoE), Waters and Forests is the main public authority in Romania responsible for the conservation of biodiversity. The Ministry is consequently in charge of the management and conservation of large carnivore species, which represent a national asset. At the same time, since the conservation of these species is challenging due to the increasing number of conflicts with humans, efficient solutions need to be implemented to handle the conflicts and keep humans safe at the same time. Ecological connectivity is an important topic for the MoE as well, and the proposed project is very much welcome, especially in the light of climate change effects, which are going to modify not only the distribution of the large carnivores, but also of their habitats and ecological corridors. The MoE can facilitate national level consultations, as well as include other relevant stakeholders in order to find the most appropriate solutions to tackle the issue of connectivity between forest habitats, as identified and addressed by the project. In addition, as party to the Carpathian Convention, Romania through the MoE can mainstream the agreed measures and results at the level of the Convention, into the national practices, concerning large carnivores,</p>

Ministerul Mediului, Apelor și Pădurilor AO6	
	<p>ecological connectivity, forests and climate change. In this way, the MoE will be implemented to ensure long-term sustainability, through e.g. supervision /coordination activities, directly or through the subordinated authorities from the territory, as needed. The MoE can thus support and facilitate the implementation of the key activities of the project, making sure at the same time that the results are viable at both the national and Carpathian levels. The MoE has a long cooperation with the Carpathian Convention, as well as with the other Ministries responsible for the Environment from the other Carpathian Countries.</p>

Ministerstvo životného prostredia Slovenskej republiky A07	
Partner number	PP10
Name of the organisation in original language	Ministerstvo životného prostredia Slovenskej republiky
Name of the organisation in english	Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic
Country	Slovensko (SK)
NUTS 2	Bratislavský kraj (SK01)
NUTS 3	Bratislavský kraj (SK010)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Námestie Ľudovíta Štúra 1 81235 Bratislava
Legal representative	Mgr. , MSc Milan Chrenko
Contact person	State senior advisor Zlatica Šimoňáková
Email	zlatica.simonakova@enviro.gov.sk
Telephone no.	+421 259562357
Partner role	The Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic (MoE SR) is the central authority of the state administration responsible for the creation and implementation of environmental policy and for the protection of nature. MoE SR promotes and coordinates efforts towards sustainable development and endeavours to increase the concern of society to maintain natural balance and biodiversity in the country as the essential heritage for the future generations. Department of Nature, Biodiversity and Landscape Protection ensures overall management of the state administration performance in the area of biodiversity conservation and landscape protection including related international conventions, global, EU and national agreements as well as EU legislation. One of the tasks of the MoE SR is to prepare and implement environmental legislation and policy. In this project MoE will act in a role of strategic associate partner, to promote replication of project results and transfer of knowledge into other parts of Slovakia and implementation of project results into related strategies in the future.

Uprava za šume, Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede A08	
Partner number	LP1
Name of the organisation in original language	Uprava za šume, Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede
Name of the organisation in english	Forest Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management
Country	Serbia (RS)
NUTS 2	City of Belgrade (RS11)
NUTS 3	City of Belgrade (RS110)
Street, House number, Postal code, City	Omladinskih brigada 1 11 070 Belgrade
Legal representative	Acting director Saša Stamatović
Contact person	Head Planning in forestry Vladimir Nikolić
Email	vladimir.nikolic@minpolj.gov.rs
Telephone no.	+381 64 8310 932
Partner role	<p>The Forest Directorate is a governmental body within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management in Serbia. It is responsible for the management and conservation of forests in the country. The Forest Directorate plays a crucial role in the implementation of forestry policies, sustainable forest management, and the protection of forest ecosystems. The Forest Directorate is responsible for developing and implementing forest management plans at national and regional levels. These plans guide the sustainable use of forest resources, including timber production, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem services. The Forest Directorate is responsible for forest protection measures, including the prevention and suppression of forest fires, pest and disease control, and the conservation of endangered species and habitats. They work in collaboration with other relevant institutions and organizations to mitigate risks and protect forest ecosystems. The Directorate promotes and implements sustainable forest management practices in line with national and international frameworks. The Forest Directorate will be involved actively in preparation of measures and</p>

Uprava za šume, Ministarstvo poljoprivrede, šumarstva i vodoprivrede A08	
	<p>guidelines especially relate to management of habitats beneficial to large carnivores. Additionally, the Directorate will support development of training material for forest and protected area managers and other relevant stakeholders. The Directorate will support mapping of safe corridors with available data and information with special focus on Stara planina nature park.</p>

C - Project description

C.1 Project overall objective

Below, you can see the Programme priority specific objective your project will contribute to (chosen in section A.1.).

2.4: Protecting and preserving the biodiversity in ecological corridors and eco-regions of transnational relevance in the Danube Region

Project main objective

Now think about your main objective – what do you aim to achieve by the end of your project? Remember your project needs to contribute to the programme's objective.

Your objective should:

- be realistic and achievable by the end of the project, or shortly after;
- specify who needs project results and in which territory;
- be measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for.

ForestConnect aims to secure climate-resilient forest corridors for large carnivores to move across borders in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region through dynamic conservation planning tools for transnational species monitoring in response to climate change, engaging stakeholders in piloting climate adaptation measures reducing the human-wildlife conflicts and building capacity of nature management professionals to apply forest management practices facilitating large carnivores range shifts

C.2 Project relevance and context

C.2.1 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): What are the common territorial needs and challenge(s) that will be tackled by the project? / (in case of PAC CALL): What are the needs and challenge(s) of the PA - both regarding policies in the field concerned as well as governance of the PA that will be tackled by the project? / (in case of DSP CALL): To what extent are the challenges with regard to supporting the governance of the EUSDR identified and described?

Please describe common needs and challenges of the addressed territory in relation to the project topic.

ForestConnect is designed to address common challenges and needs on the topic of protecting and preserving forest ecological corridors of large carnivores in the target area of the project - the Carpathian, Balkan and Dinaric Mountains - an integral part of the European Mountain Forests within the Western Eurasia Bioregion. Specifically, the pilot areas chosen are: the largest Natura 2000 site Zapadna Stara planina I Predbalkan (BG0001040) on the territory of the Bulgarian North-Western State Forestry Enterprise; the NP Stara planina in Serbia; the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (Marmorosh and Svydovets massifs); Apuseni NP (Western part of the Romanian Carpathian - a bridge between Maramures Mountains and the SW Carpathians/Djerdap NP in Serbia); the Paradise NP in Slovakia as part of the Western Carpathians and the three National parks in Montenegro: Durmitor, Biogradska gora, Prokletije. Thus, the cumulative area affected by the project encompasses a total of approx. 600,000 ha. The pilot interventions aiming at testing approaches to enhance LCs food availability, address seasonality issues, and improve the mosaic character of the forest landscapes to adapt to climate change challenges, will be tested on a total territory of approx. 85 ha. The diversity of pilot areas allows for a comprehensive understanding of how varied landscapes respond to conservation efforts and climate change, contributing to improved transnational knowledge. It allows for the development of conservation models that are not only transnationally relevant but also scalable. Lessons learned can be applied to diverse landscapes facing comparable challenges.

A number of reasons were taken in consideration for the selection of pilot areas: 1) They represent the most well-preserved forest ecosystems in the Carpathian, Balkan, and Dinaric regions and serve as crucial habitats for large carnivore species, with high protection status on both national and EU level: the Grey wolf, the Eurasian lynx and the Brown bear. These ecosystems allow for insights into transnational patterns of biodiversity and the interplay between species in different regions; 2) All of the selected territories are important hotspot areas within the ecological corridors for large carnivores, facilitating cross-border movement and ensuring connectivity between transboundary LCs populations; 3) Four of the areas have designations as UNESCO World Heritage Sites or UNESCO biosphere reserves, representative for old-growth forest of European Black Pine (NP Durmitor), for natural spruce relict forests in the Western Balkan Mountains (Chuprene biosphere reserve) and for ancient and primeval beech forests (Strambu Baiut, Carpathian Biosphere reserve), which demonstrate their transnational importance and potential for upscaling climate mitigation solutions for forest habitats in other countries; 4) all selected areas are currently experiencing the impacts of climate change (e.g. altering forest composition and diminishing the primary food basis for large carnivores) and further impacts can be anticipated. This affects the range and movement of large carnivores, leading them to displace from mountainous areas towards more populated regions with a risk to increase human-wildlife conflicts; 5) all areas are facing socio-economic challenges: some of the areas (e.g. in BG, SR, UA) are very isolated with shrinking populations that still heavily rely on forest resources, including timber and firewood collection, gathering of edible mushrooms, medicinal plants, and berries. Additionally, these areas are experiencing a decline in the number of grazing animals, which are vital for the management of mosaic habitats; conversely, other areas (such as Apuseni National Park in RO and Durmitor NP in MN) are among the most densely populated

protected areas, experiencing increasing pressure from tourism development. However, both groups, in recent years, have reported an increase of human-wildlife conflicts and frequently find themselves confronted with the challenges of coexisting with these animals.

Due to the prevalence of large carnivores cross-border distribution and the complex effects of climate change and other conservation challenges, some of the common needs expressed refer to: 1) coordinated multinational conservation planning accompanied by a holistic governance framework for forest eco-corridors beyond national jurisdiction; 2) testing and implementing climate-resilient enhancing forest management practices along forest wildlife corridors across borders and transnationally; 3) joint methodology that can help the relevant institutions to adequately manage structured data gathering and analysis; 4) joint strategic planning and capacity-building and engagement of actors on all levels.

C.2.2 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): How does the project tackle the identified common challenges and/or opportunities and what is new and innovative about the approach the project takes? / (in case of PAC call): How does the project tackle identified needs and challenges of the PA? / (in case of DSP call not applicable - add "N/A")

Please describe new solutions that will be developed during the project and/or existing solutions that will be adopted and implemented during the project lifetime. Describe also in what way the approach goes beyond existing practice in the sector/DRP area/participating countries.

(1) The envisaged activities will address the specific needs and common problems identified by the PPs in the important ecological target regions.

- As a first crucial step towards better management of functional and structural connectivity for large carnivores (LCs), the project will address the specific need for more relevant and comprehensive data (biodiversity, ecological and anthropogenic) on LCs' habitats and corridors, also in the light of climate change (through desk and field research). The project envisages GIS database and "online viewer tool" for all project countries which will be integrated into the existing CCIBIS database (the Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System) thus updating and enlarging the system with new eco-regions and serving to better identify the critical corridor areas of LCs in the three Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric eco-regions.. Furthermore, Digital Twin modeling for critical sectors in some of the project pilot areas will be developed as a test tool for an innovative solution in species conservation and nature protection in the region and the target areas. Including climate change data is also a new approach that goes beyond the usual practice and will give valuable information about future developments. As an innovative tool based on modern technologies, the digital twin allows for replication and further development in other areas from the target regions.

- The pilot actions on sites will be another tool for addressing the identified common challenges in the target territories – habitat fragmentation, unsustainable forest management practices, disturbed mosaic structure, and climate change. These actions (such as planting of climate-resilient trees/ herbaceous plants, pruning of wild fruit trees, restoration of overgrown wooded meadows and pastures by removing overgrown vegetation, and restoring abundant game crop fields) will test solutions to improve the mosaic habitats for LCs and facilitate their movement in response to climate change along existing transnational forest corridors in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region. The approach goes beyond the usual forest management practices of protected area and forest management institutions as it will also involve the local community in some of the actions aiming to raise their awareness and understanding over the conservation of large carnivores and their role in the ecosystem.

- Jointly developed guidelines and a joint strategic guideline will be developed by the project partners stepping on the data and experience gained in the project (and also the lessons learnt and the results from previous DRP projects such as ConnectGREEN and SaveGreen). This will help to overcome the lack of ownership and use of standardized methodologies and approaches across transnational ecoregions (e.g. the pan Carpathian-Balkan-Dinaric region). The strategic guidelines will benefit from the valuable involvement of the Carpathian Convention in order to solidify its impact and upscale the project conclusions. Thus the project will create the opportunity for a multinational planning and transnational engagement of actors on all levels in the Danube region.
- The success of the piloted solutions and strategic documents will be supported by relevant capacity-building and experience-sharing activities across the project countries on national and transnational level by actively involving all relevant stakeholders (not only the PPs).

(2) The partnership in this project is key to its success and lasting impact. Through the involvement of various types of actors on all levels as PPs, ASPs, and stakeholders (local, regional, national, sectoral, international) and with various complementing competences (ministries, park and forestry administrations, NGOs, universities, hunting association) the project addresses the need for a strong partnership and mobilization of resources to achieve a coherent climate-smart integrated approach to preserve the LCs' forest habitats on a transnational level.

(3) Last but not least, the project is capitalizing on other projects thus building on and adopting a more comprehensive and integrated approach. The project is capitalizing on ConnectGREEN's "Methodology for Identification of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Countries by Using Large Carnivores as Umbrella Species" and on the adopted by the Carpathian Convention parties "International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians", but it takes on the climate change challenge. It builds on the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS), improving it with data on climate change and making it more coherent with the Biodiversity Information System for Europe. However, it also transfers this knowledge and expertise from the Carpathian to the Balkan and Dinaric regions – this is a new approach to the topic of the project.

C.2.3 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Why is transnational cooperation needed to address the identified needs and challenges? / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL not applicable)

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Please explain why the project objectives cannot be efficiently reached acting only on a national/regional/local level and describe what benefits the project partners /target groups/ project area/DRP area gain in taking a transnational approach. / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL please enter the text "N/A" in the field!)

The transnational approach in achieving the project objectives is crucial for its success. There are several reasons for that:

(1) The large carnivores' habitats and movements have a transnational character. The range of their forest habitable areas is quite large since their natural behavior requires a substantial space regardless of the borders, superficially imposed by humans. At the same time, the nature of large carnivores as species allows for the application of unified transnational solutions, as opposed to smaller animals with shorter migration routes that should be tackled locally, transnational measures are perfectly suited for conservation measures of large carnivores. The sharing of knowledge and expertise between areas and project partners will have a special added value, while the joint pilot actions and activities for a common framework for maintaining the eco-corridors across borders is an advantage in the implementation which cannot be achieved only by local and separated actions by

individual bodies. The partnership based on the different roles and expertise that the partners from the different countries will bring to the project is a key factor for its success. Thus, the transnational approach is actually crucial for achieving the main objective of the project.

(2) Additionally, the new challenge identified by the project partners - namely the impact of climate-induced change on the European Mountain Forests habitats and on the key umbrella species like the large carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region - requires a transnational cooperation as the climate change is a global problem. Climate change has transnational impacts and often climate events affecting one country require adaptation in another country. That is why the ForestsConnect is focusing on providing cross-border and regional solutions that could be adapted not only nationally but regionally – i.e. the Balkan-Carpathian region, the Alps and the Dinarides. It will pilot solutions - like the establishment of climate-resilient forest refugia for large carnivores along forest corridors, that will allow for a more horizontal and European-wide management model promoting large carnivores' range expansion.

(3) Finally, the transnational character of the challenges and needs in the target areas related to forest habitats of LC are a prerequisite for establishing joint management and cooperation regarding ecological connectivity. The transnational impact of the project will support the creation and strengthening of the cooperation in relation to the ecological regions and among protected areas since the project involves one Dinaric, two Balkan and three Carpathian countries, along with an academic institution from Austria thus forming strong linkages in the whole Danubian region.

ForestConnect capitalizes on the results achieved by other transnational projects on connectivity and large carnivores (ConnectGREEN, SaveGREEN, CLIMAFORCEELIFE, DINALPCONNECT) and has an outstanding transnational added value in a few crucial aspects:

- ForestConnect is working towards a more dynamic conservation planning aimed at reducing the impact of climate change in forested landscapes and piloting solutions that can facilitate species range shifts, as well as minimizing the climate change induced human-wildlife conflicts, stepping on the measures proposed by SaveGREEN. The project will focus on climate-smart solutions for maintaining and enhancing ecological connectivity within and between forest habitats at pan-Carpathian/Balkans/Dinaric level. ForestConnect will further support the remote-sensing monitoring systems in forest planning, monitoring and evaluation like the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS).
- The other added value of the project is that it transfers the experience from other projects from the Carpathian region to the Balkans and the Dinarides and across the regions. So apart from strengthening the results already achieved in the Carpathian region, the project will introduce the outputs of other projects and the experience of partners in the other project target area.
- The project will also strengthen the capacity of protected areas managers along these ecological corridors to address the challenges and profit from knowledge exchange on how best to sustain a functional ecological network.

It is evident that the transnational element is crucial for this project. During project preparation, the buy-in of all project partners and ASPs was collected. The envisaged activities will be implemented jointly across the borders and in all pilot target areas. Capacity-building and knowledge sharing will also strengthen the transnational value of the project. As a conclusion, the project arises from identified common needs and challenges that will be addressed by the partners with transnational efforts and solutions that will go far beyond a simple collection of local actions.

C.2.4 Who will benefit from your project outputs?

In the first column of each row, please select one of the pre-defined target groups from the drop-down list. In the second column explain in more detail exactly who will benefit from your project. For example, if you choose the category education, you need to explain which specific schools or groups of schools and in which territory.

Target Group	Specification
Local public authority	<p>On the one hand, local public authorities from the target pilot areas in the project countries (municipalities in Bulgaria - Belogradchik, Berkovitsa, Chuprene; municipalities in Serbia - Knjazevac, Pirot, Dimitrovgrad, Zajecar; Rakhiv Town Council in Ukraine which is an associated strategic partner in the project; municipalities in Romania from the Maramures and Apuseni region - Baiut, Sighetu Marmatiei; municipalities in Montenegro on which territories the national parks Durmitor, Biogradska gora, and Prokletije are located - Žabljak, Kolašin, Plav and Gusinje; also local authorities from the region of Slovak Paradise National Park in Slovakia - Brezno, Spišská Nová Ves, Gelnica, Rožňava, Poprad, Levoča.) will be involved in capacity-building events as well as in the consultation process, providing relevant feedback on project strategic documents that may have applicability at local level. Continued input and support from local municipalities where the pilot activities will be implemented will be sought in Activities A.2.1-A 2.4, while at the same time local volunteers will be engaged in the pilot actions. Thus, the local authorities and local communities will benefit from increased capacity and knowledge sharing across the borders and across institutions. On the other hand, since the project aims at improving the forest habitats of large carnivores and as a consequence address the local problems of human-wildlife conflicts (caused by displacement of individual large carnivore specimen that move from mountainous areas towards more populated areas) the project will be beneficial for the local communities as a whole improving their relation to nature and biodiversity.</p> <p>Number of local public authorities to be involved in the project through participation, input and consultations during the project activities implementation: at least 20</p>

Target Group	Specification
Regional public authority	<p>Regional public authorities on whose territories are situated the project target areas will also greatly benefit from the project by directly participating as PPs and ASPs, and also as regional stakeholders which will be invited to participate in the project activities in order to give valuable input and feedback in the field of their expertise. These are: North-Western State Forest Enterprise in Bulgaria operating in the Western Balkan region and the Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water – Montana in Bulgaria; Public Enterprise "Srbijašume" managing the Nature Park Stara Planina in Serbia (could not join as project partner due to administrative issues but will be involved as a crucial stakeholder to give input and feedback for the project activities); the Maramures Forestry Directorate (through a MoU with WWF RO) and the Environmental Protection Agency Cluj in Romania; the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve managing this important forest protected area in Ukraine and the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Transcarpathian Regional State Administration of Ukraine; National park Slovak Paradise in Slovakia; Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro (JPNP). Additionally, in Bulgaria a few other regional forestry administrations will be involved for capacity-building and experience-sharing: South-Western State Forest Enterprise, North-Central Forest State Enterprise, South-Central Forest State Enterprise. All of these organisations who are directly responsible for managing the target territories will benefit from the developed new tools, the gathered data, the pilot actions on the field, the developed guiding documents and strategy that will improve their work on conservation of forests as a permanent or migration habitat for LCs, also in the light of climate change impacts and human-wildlife conflicts.</p> <p>Number of regional public authorities to be involved in the project through participation, input and consultations: at least 12</p>

Target Group	Specification
National public authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Executive Forestry Agency in BG – the institution within the Ministry of Agriculture in BG who is managing the wooded ecosystems in line with the Forestry Act. - Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests in RO (in the role of ASP) – the competent authority for the management of Natura 2000 areas. The ministry is key to managing the LC populations, thus it will benefit from the new tools and technologies applied in the project, the collected data on populations, habitats and climate-change impacts. - Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia - professional institution that carries out activities on protection of nature in Serbia. - Serbian Hunting Chamber (in the role of ASP) - the contribution of hunters can be decisive in unraveling all possible solutions related to LC habitat in the target countries. Based on the project results, the Chamber would conduct professional training of persons who prepare planning documents - Ministry of Environment of SK – as the central authority responsible for the environmental policy and nature protection will join as an ASP to give its input and benefit from the project results, the capacity-building and expertise-sharing, and can promote replication in other national parks. - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in RS – as the national authority responsible in the project topic will support the activities in its role as ASP and will use and upscale the project tools, methodologies and action plan. - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and Ministry of Ecology, Spatial planning and Urbanism in Montenegro – as responsible for the relevant policies to the project topic, their involvement is essential. They will participate in many of the activities by providing expertise and will be engaged in the upscaling and durability of project results. <p>Number of national public authorities who will be directly involved (both partners and non-partners): at least 8</p>

Target Group	Specification
Sectoral agency	<p>Sectoral agencies on the national level are the: Environment Protection Agency (EPA) in Montenegro, and Administration of Forests and Hunting Grounds in Montenegro.</p> <p>Sectoral bodies on regional level are: North-Western State Forest Enterprise, South-Western State Forest Enterprise, North-Central Forest State Enterprise, and South-Central Forest State Enterprise in Bulgaria; Public Enterprise "Srbijašume" managing the Nature Park Stara Planina in Serbia (as stakeholder); Maramures Forestry Directorate in Romania (through an MoU with WWF RO); the Environmental Protection Agency Cluj in Romania; the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve in Ukraine; the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Transcarpathian Regional State Administration of Ukraine; the Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro (JPNP); National park Slovak Paradise.</p> <p>Through their involvement the project will ensure both their expertise and participation in the project activities, but also that the benefits of the project will reach the relevant sectors and target groups who will apply the project results (especially the climate adaptation measures and those related to the protection of biodiversity and game will be further integrated and scaled up). The Forestry Directorate Maramures RO ensures the application of the national strategy in the field of forestry aimed at the defense, conservation and sustainable development of the forest fund, the appropriate management of the hunting funds under its administration, as well as the valorization of other non-wood forest products in accordance with the legislation in force.</p> <p>Number of sectoral agencies that will be involved in the project (some of whom are also national and regional authorities): at least 13</p>

Target Group	Specification
Interest groups including NGOs	<p>NGOs directly working in the project: WWF BG; WWF RO; WWF Adria-RS; Emblema Association in RS, WWF SK, NGO RakhivEcoTour in UA target area; Birdlife MN; Association of parks in BG.</p> <p>NGOs which are not part of the project but will be involved on local level in Serbia: STADO Breeding Organization, Dimitrovgrad; Biobalkan- Association of Organic Farmers, Dimitrovgrad; Forum for Sustainable Development - Env.NGO, DImitrovgrad; Society for Protection of Stara Planina, Piroto.</p> <p>Other WWF offices who will be part of the project implementation as part of the WWF network and will help with direct contribution of experience and relations to EUSDR actors: WWF CEE, WWF Austria</p> <p>The expertise of these partners will be crucial for organizing the pilot actions, engaging regional and local stakeholders, developing monitoring tools and technologies, providing input for guidelines, and capacity building. NGOs have an important role in the dissemination of results and best practices, and within the project they will use their networks to disseminate the project results.</p> <p>All NGOs will benefit from the project outputs for continuing their conservation work on forest ecosystems and protection of large carnivores. The collected data and the technologies and tools developed in the project will continue to be used by them and through their members and volunteers they could further provide data to maintain these tools. The joint solutions and the strategy will benefit and strengthen their work on the ground and with the relevant managing institutions. The project will be most beneficial in its part of capacity-building and expertise-sharing whose lasting results will be a great contribution.</p> <p>Also, private companies, e.g. performing EIAs and SEAs, will use the project outcomes to include its recommendations on connectivity in their assessments.</p> <p>Number of interest groups, including individual NGOs, which will partake in the project: at least 14</p>

Target Group	Specification
Higher education and research organisations	<p>Higher education institutions will be involved as project partners: University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Cluj-Napoca (Romania) and the Carinthia University (in Vienna).</p> <p>The university in Cluj-Napoca will have a major role in providing expertise on topics related to habitat GIS mapping, digital twin modelling and online viewer, as well as habitat management. In addition, both universities will actively be involved in developing guidelines on mosaic forest habitats (forests, wooden pastures and pastures between forests) beneficial to large carnivores in the context of climate change, facilitating guidance at project level as well as training sessions. The Carinthia University will lead the execution of Activity 3.1 and the preparation of the Strategic Action Plan by also making the liaison and involving the Carpathian Convention so that the projects results are upscaled to the highest policy level and ensure their sustainability. Both higher education institutions will benefit from the project cooperation network, the capacity-building and the practical expertise of the project partners.</p> <p>In Bulgaria, the lead partner will also involve the National Museum of Natural History (to use their expertise and scientific approach in the guidelines development), the University of Forestry (which has a training base in the target region for studying of multifunctional management of beech forests and can provide expert advice and use the results of the project to integrate them in practical courses in the university), Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research (involve them in capacity building and knowledge sharing, they are experts in applied sciences).</p> <p>Number of higher education and research institutions to be involved: at least 5.</p>

Target Group	Specification
International organisation, EEIG	<p>International organizations (e.g. Carpathian Convention via the MoU with the European Environment Agency, IUCN WCPA via Convention but also via Carinthia University as one of their experts Prof Jungmeier is UNESCO Chair "Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas") are highly relevant for ensuring integration of valuable expert recommendations within strategic biodiversity related documents as well as to ensure cooperation and policy coherence in order to guarantee protection and sustainable development. The UNEP Vienna Office, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, will be involved in the project activities through its experts and working groups. The benefits for the Carpathian Convention will result from the joint solutions and strategy developed in the project that can be further integrated in its working groups and strategic documents. Also, the EUSDR (through its relevant bodies such as National Coordinators (NCs) of the EUSDR from all participating countries; Priority Area Coordinators of PA6 (PACs) and the relevant Steering Groups) will be directly involved in the project to ensure the project is in line with the strategy for the Danube Region and that its results will be validated and up taken. The project will also use other international organisations and initiatives in order to build capacity, share expertise and disseminate project results: such as EUROPARC (the umbrella organisation of Europe's Protected Areas); Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivores Initiative (platform for collaboration between the countries in the said region to improve large carnivores management); WildLife Connect Initiative (a joint initiative between WWF, Centre for Large Landscape Conservation and the Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group under IUCN that aims to maintain or increase ecological connectivity of landscapes).</p> <p>Number of international organisations, bodies and initiatives that will be involved: at least 6</p>
General public	<p>General public from the target countries (Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, Montenegro, Slovakia, Austria) will be the target audience for the awareness campaign related to the importance of maintaining the mosaic habitats and related services and safeguarding key wildlife species in the context of increasing resilience of ecosystems to climate change. They will benefit from the disseminated information about the project outputs because they will better understand the importance of preserving large carnivores and forest ecosystems via transnational cooperation. The general public in at least 7 Danubian countries will be reached out. The project outputs and the achievement of the project objectives will be a gain for the society as a whole.</p>

Target Group	Specification
Other	<p>Specific segments of local communities in the pilot areas will be targeted as well – e.g. the livestock breeders, farmers, beekeepers, users of NTFPs, local tourist service providers) as they are primarily linked to human-carnivore conflict, suffer most damage caused by LCs and can play an important role in mitigating this conflict. Representatives of the target local communities will be involved in some of the pilot actions – A.2.1-A 2.2 - in order to raise their awareness of the impact of climate change on mosaic forest habitats and biodiversity (which sustains their livelihoods) as well as on the importance of LCs in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. They will benefit from the project as a whole as it will lead to decreasing the human-large carnivores conflicts.</p> <p>Number of specific other segments of target groups to be involved in the project: at least 5</p>

C.2.5 How does the project contribute to wider strategies and policies?

Please indicate to which strategies and policies your project will contribute. Then describe in what way you will contribute.

Strategy	Contribution

Strategy	Contribution
<p>EU Strategy for the Danube Region</p>	<p>ForestConnect is in line with target 2 of Priority Area 6 (PA6) of the EUSDR and is contributing to strengthening the efforts to halt the deterioration in the status of species and habitats occurring in the Danube Region and covered by EU nature legislation (such as the large carnivores). It will do so by piloting solutions in 23 intervention sites within the 9 selected pilot sites for improving the heterogeneity of key forest habitats and securing additional natural food for LCs (Activity 2.1) and for improving the mosaic character of the forest habitats, increasing natural food diversification and seasonality, and eventually reducing the human-wildlife conflicts (Activity 2.2). Very important in this regard is the joint development of guidelines and methodologies (Activities 2.3 and 2.4) for the tested solutions.</p> <p>ForestConnet also directly contributes to Target 4 of the EUSDR aiming at maintaining and restoring the Green Infrastructure elements through integrated spatial development and conservation planning. ForestConnect will provide as output pilot testing and development of solutions for joint monitoring: a joint GIS database, digital twins model and online viewer of human-wildlife conflict hotspots developed based on common methodologies (Activities 1.1 and 1.2). These tools along with the reports, reviews and consultations during the process of their development essentially represent an integrative approach to spatial development and conservation planning of the Green Infrastructure in the Danube region.</p> <p>Crucial contribution to the EUSDR PA 6 and in harmony with Actions 2, 3, and 5 for this priority of the EUSDR Action Plan (EC SWD (2020) 59 final) will be also the capacity-building and cooperation networking activities (mostly in Activity 3.1, 3.2 and Activity 1.3) that will include three distinct but connected eco-regions (Carpathians, Balkans and Dinaric) and actors who will jointly work on the methodologies, guidelines and uptake of results.</p>

Strategy	Contribution
European Green Deal	<p>The project will support the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change in the pursuit to make adaptation smarter, faster and more systemic through showcasing a Strategic Action Plan with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices for Protected areas.</p> <p>The project will also support the pledging process of EU Member States on meeting the objectives of the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, in particular 1) EU target of getting 30% of EU territory under a protected areas status, including 10% strict protection regime, while increasing landscape connectivity. This includes earmarking high conservation value forests for protection, getting all old growth forests protected and designated as well as improving ecological corridors. 2) Boost species and habitats in favourable conservation status, which relates in particular to lynx but in Bulgaria also to bears. 3) Planning for a Trans European Nature Network (TEN-N), is critical for ensuring that protected areas maintain their role in conserving biodiversity and a resilient nature, including allowing species, ecosystems and their services to adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Depending on the final form of the EU Nature Restoration Law, the project intends to support the national implementation process by sharing the blueprints and expanding the knowledge gained from the conducted restoration pilot actions.</p> <p>We will also support compliance with the EU Forest Strategy by piloting and promoting sustainable forest management approaches and piloting actions and guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services and on management of transnational mosaic habitats.</p> <p>The project will support the implementation of the Habitats Directive by making science-based and cross-border monitoring of protected large carnivore species a norm and advocating for ways of lowering human-wildlife conflict. Namely we will pilot joint monitoring tools and technologies for identifying human-wildlife conflict hotspots.</p>
Territorial Agenda 2030	<p>The project is in line with the Green Europe overarching objective of the Territorial Agenda 2030 and is contributing to the first priority of this objective - Healthy environment by promoting green and blue infrastructure networks that link ecosystems and protected areas in spatial planning, land management and other policies. This is important because besides ensuring official designation of ecological corridors by environmental authorities, spatial planners need to be involved in order to analyse the situation from a territorial planning perspective. This should ensure the development of robust maps with ecological corridors that need to be applied by local authorities.</p>

Strategy	Contribution
Other	Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: The second conservation target of the Global Biodiversity Framework refers to prioritising ecological restoration (restoration towards natural state) and including connectivity (wildlife corridors) in the restoration plans. Each Member State will need to revise the NBSAPs in tune with the new GBF targets and the project intends to support the process by sharing blueprints from the restoration pilot actions conducted.
Other	Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention): The project supports the objectives of the Carpathian Convention, especially its Protocol on Biodiversity (Art. 12.2: "Each Party shall take measures in its national territory with the objective to ensure the long-term conservation... of large carnivores which might be in need of management plans.") and its Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management (Art. 14.2: "Each Party, taking into consideration the effects of climate change, shall pursue adaptation policies and measures aiming at increasing the stability and the resilience of the Carpathian forests.")
Other	EU acquis communautaire, chapter 27: As the project will be implemented in Serbia and Ukraine, which are both candidates for EU accession, it will make a contribution to achieving Chapter 27 (environment) of the acquis communautaire

C.2.6 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Which synergies with past or current EU and other projects or initiatives will the project make use of? / (in case of PAC / DSP CALL not applicable)

<p>(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Project or Initiative / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")</p>	<p>(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Synergy / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")</p>
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(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Project or Initiative / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")	(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Synergy / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")
<p>Danube Transnational Programme: ConnectGREEN - Restoring and managing ecological corridors in mountains as the green infrastructure in the Danube basin (June 2018 - October 2021)</p>	<p>ConnectGREEN provided a map of ecological corridors in the Carpathians with a focus on large carnivores as umbrella species. Project partners analysed mechanisms to include ecological corridors into spatial planning, touching upon other sectors like agriculture, forestry, tourism etc. when compiling management measures for critical zones in four pilot areas across the Carpathians. ForestConnect will capitalize on ConnectGREEN's "Methodology for Identification of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Countries by Using Large Carnivores as Umbrella Species" and on the adopted by the Carpathian Convention parties "International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians".</p> <p>The map will be used in the ForestConnect project as the basis for elaborating ecological corridors in the forests in the pilot areas, catalogues of measures will be analysed. ForestConnect will transfer the experience of ConnectGREEN and expand to new territories in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Montenegro and new eco regions: Balkans and Dinaric. ForestConnect will have an additional added value in focusing on the impacts of climate change on connectivity. The networks that have been built during the implementation of Connect GREEN will be used to further expand cross-sectoral and transnational collaborations.</p>

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Project or Initiative / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")	(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Synergy / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")
Danube Transnational Programme: SaveGREEN - Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin (July 2020 - December 2022)	Most of the SaveGreen outputs are related to ecological connectivity at landscape level. Because the landscape level connectivity occurs on a larger scale, SaveGreen considered the impact of all sectors (e.g. transport infrastructure, urban development, water management, agriculture, forestry) on connectivity, while ForestConnect further builds only on the findings and recommendations related to the forest sector and in particular on the critical core forest areas. The SaveGREEN local cross-sectoral operational plans for seven pilot areas in the Danube-Carpathian region including Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine, and the handbook of best practices for planning and implementing mitigation measures regarding landscape connectivity for various sectors will be a guidance for the implementation of ForestConnect. For example, ForestConnect pilot measures (e.g. small grassland areas as "stepping stones" and LC climate refugia) are designed to improve forest habitat favorability/diversity and its protection against harsh climatic conditions (e.g. trough measure suggested by the SaveGreen: (i) improving the mosaic of forest habitats serving as shelter habitats and food during the vegetative season for the bear as an umbrella species; (ii) increase the natural food diversification and iii) reduce human-wildlife conflicts). On the other side, ForestConnect will further support the remote-sensing monitoring systems in forest planning, monitoring and evaluation like the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS). CCIBIS is a living platform that harbours data and publications from different projects and initiatives. ForestConnect's added value will be to expand the existing CCIBIS by incorporating additional functionalities and broadening its geographical coverage to also cover Dinaric and Balkan regions. The networks that have been built during the implementation of SaveGREEN will be used to further expand transnational collaboration.
Horizon Europe: NaturaConnect "Designing a resilient and coherent Trans-European Network for Nature and People" (July 2022 - June 2026)	NaturaConnect (https://naturaconnect.eu/) together with key stakeholders (universities, institutes, environmental agencies, NGOs across Europe) is co-developing knowledge, tools and capacity building programmes to support EU Member States in implementing an ecologically representative, resilient and well-connected Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N). Data and knowledge generated by ForestConnect will support the future scenarios for nature narratives in Europe that will consider land use change, climate change and socio-economy. The knowledge developed by NaturaConnect will inform ForestConnect actions. The project envisages in its capitalization strategy to interact with NaturaConnect and do joint meetings to transfer knowledge and experience.

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Project or Initiative / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")	(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Synergy / (in case of PAC/DSP CALL add "N/A")
LIFE Climate Change Adaptation Program: CLIMAFORCEELIFE (September 2020 - December 2027)	Fostering transition from conventional to climate-smart management of forests in Central and Eastern Europe is the main aim of the CLIMAFORCEELIFE project (https://clima4ceelife.eu/). The project intends to demonstrate forestry interventions, which shall increase resilience of forests against climate change. These include thinnings and tendings in younger stands to create space for most vital trees which could then develop better and be more resilient to drought, heatwaves etc. In addition, experimental thinning in mature stands combined with local soil preparation aims to boost natural regeneration and diversify the age and space structure of the forest. Planting of admixed wood species seedlings into undergrowth will increase species diversity and thus increase the overall resilience of the forest stands. As CLIMAFORCEELIFE interventions are located in W Slovakia and SW Bulgaria, ForestConnect provides the possibility to transfer experience from CLIMAFORCEELIFE to other geographies, replicate and/or adapt methods in new conditions. On the other hand CLIMAFORCEELIFE can benefit from the experience of the ForestConnect and from its focus on forest connectivity related to large carnivores. ForestConnect envisages collaboration with LIFE CLIMAFORCEE through its capitalization strategy.
Interreg Adrion: DINALPCONNECT: Transboundary ecological connectivity of Alps and Dinaric Mountains (March 2020 - February 2023)	DINALPCONNECT project (https://dinalpconnect.adrioninterreg.eu/) is focused on strengthening transnational and sectoral cooperation to improve ecological connectivity throughout Dinaric Mountains, connecting them with the Alps enabling long term protection of biodiversity and included partners from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Italy, Montenegro and Greece. The project developed a Strategy for improved ecological connectivity throughout the Dinaric Mountains and connecting them with the Alps, as well as an Atlas of ecological connectivity and the main barriers in the Dinarides and between Alps and Dinaric Mountains. The project outcomes will be used in ForestConnect, which will be the bridge between experience gathered in the Carpathians, the Balkans and Dinaric mountains.
EU LIFE Programme: EuroLargeCarnivores - Improving human coexistence with large carnivores in Europe through communication and transboundary cooperation, LIFE16 GIE/DE/000661 (March 2018 - March 2022)	Synergies with EUROLARGE CARNIVORES will be established addressing further the importance of large carnivores and ecological connectivity. ForestConnect project will build on best practices developed to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and how to maximise the benefits that large carnivores bring, such as the ecological role they play and their socio-economic impact. Through WWF RO the project will also benefit on the multi-stakeholder network of local and national authorities covering all authorities responsible for population-based conservation of large carnivores in the LIFE target countries (covering other ecoregions like Alpine, Iberain, Fenoscandinavian).

C.2.7 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): How does the project build on available knowledge? / (in case of DSP CALL) How does the project build on the results of the previous DSP project? / (in case of PAC CALL not applicable)

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Please describe the experiences/lessons learned that the project draws on, and other available knowledge the project capitalises on; / (in case of DSP CALL) how the project takes into consideration the capitalisation of outputs and results of the previous DSP project(s) (i. e. what outputs and results will be used and how they will be integrated in the day-to-day work); / (in case of PAC CALL not applicable - add "N/A")

ForestConnect builds on available knowledge by incorporating existing research, data and expertise on large carnivores' connectivity, forest ecosystems and climate change. ForestConnect capitalises on the outputs of three DTP projects: TRANSGREEN, ConnectGreen and SaveGreen, and especially on the key methodologies developed, such as the "Methodology for Standardised Monitoring of Ecological Connectivity" (developed under the SaveGreen project) and the "Methodology for Identification of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Countries by Using Large Carnivores as Umbrella Species" (developed under the ConnectGreen). Another key document that is taken into consideration while planning the current activities is the "International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians", which was developed under the ConnectGreen project and was adopted by the parties of the Carpathian Convention, as well as the "Guidelines for the Identification, Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Ecoregion". In terms of learning from developed innovative solutions to identify ecological corridors and connectivity gaps, the ForestConnect was referring to one of the main ConnectGreen outputs: the CCIBIS Geoportal providing various items of biological (e. g. endangered species, habitats) and environmental (protected areas, Natura 2000 sites, old-growth forests) information about the Carpathian Ecoregion. ForestConnect takes into account the lessons learned from those projects especially the ones related to stakeholder engagement and community-based conservation, e.g. on the importance of personal meetings, dedication of sufficient time and efforts to engage not only with policy makers but with community leaders and opinion makers, provide tools and opportunities for stakeholders' feedback, the need for established cross-sectoral collaboration at all levels, etc.

A valuable source of information for formulating the challenges and needs to be addressed by the ForestConnect was the Carpathian Convention Action Plan 2030 accompanying the Long-term Vision 2030 towards Combating Climate Change in the Carpathians and activities related to possible areas for transnational climate action in the Carpathians with concrete options for climate change mitigation and adaptation; a useful knowledge source were the proceedings from the discussions of the Working Group on Climate Change such as concerning exchange about other ongoing transnational initiatives (e.g. Alpine Climate Board).

ForestConnect builds on the knowledge of the Horizon Europe project NaturaConnect, which is collecting information on good practice examples, protected area coverage, connectivity and resilience under climate and land-use change; develop scenarios for expanding protected areas, establish ecological corridors and other areas of connectivity to address these gaps. NaturaConnect will further provide knowledge and decision support for policy, financing and implementation of TEN-N at national and supra-national level.

Last but not least, by building on these existing knowledge sources, ForestConnect benefits from the lessons learned, best practices and scientific insights to develop more informed and effective strategies for enhancing large carnivores forest connectivity in the context of climate change.

C.3 Project partnership

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Describe the structure of your partnership and explain why these partners are needed to implement the project and to achieve project objectives. What is the contribution of each partner to the project? / (in case of PAC / DSP CALL not applicable - add "N/A")

The project partnership consists of organizations and institutions which are highly relevant for the project activities and objectives as they have both thematic expertise in the field of the project and competences to act in the identified territories.

(1) There are actors on the demand side - managing authorities directly responsible for the target areas of the project (North-Western Forest State Enterprise in BG; Association Emblema in RS who will do pilot actions via local farmers from Stara Planina; WWF RO via a MoU with the Maramures Forestry Directorate in RO; the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve managing this important forest protected area in UA; the Slovak Paradise National Park in SK; the Public Enterprise for National Parks of MN). Among the ASPs there are also managing authorities of the target areas and important policy makers that will support the project and actively contribute to sustainability of its results (Institute for Nature Conservation of RS, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests in RO, Rakhiv Town Council in UA, Ministry of Environment in SK, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in RS, the Environmental Protection Agency Cluj in RO, the Department of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Transcarpathian Regional State Administration of UA). These project partners will play a crucial role in implementing the activities on the ground, e.g. the pilot actions and field research, will practically contribute to the development of the joint solutions and the strategy of the project and will enable the up-take of the project outputs.

(2) On the supply side, the project relies on the expertise and past experience of several NGOs that have worked in these territories and/or on topic-related actions (WWF BG, WWF RO, WWF Adria-RS, WWF SK, NGO RakhivEcoTour, Birdlife MN, Association of nature parks in BG), as well as academic knowledge and expertise (provided by the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Cluj-Napoca in RO and the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences in AT). The input and expertise of these partners will be crucial for organizing the pilot actions, engaging the regional and local stakeholders, developing the monitoring tools and technologies, providing input for developing guidelines and strategies, capacity building

(3) There are also results users such as the Executive Forestry Agency in BG, the Serbian Hunting Chamber, the regional environmental administrations in RO and UA, all ministries involved as ASPs, the Rakhiv Town Council and all the regional and local stakeholders. They will actively participate in the knowledge-sharing, the capacity-building, in the development of solutions, and in the implementation of the project results.

All the project PPs and ASPs are recognised organizations with years of experience in project management, forestry, habitat management and protection, identification of eco-corridors, or strategic planning, including many relevant policy and decision makers. The majority of them have past experience working on connectivity for large carnivores since this project capitalizes on other projects.

Last but not least, the project partners will actively engage with the Carpathian Convention (CC)

whose role in the region is strategic (four of the project countries are parties to the convention). The Secretariat of the CC cannot be a project partner but is willing to contribute to the project implementation and sustainability of project results. It will be included through expert involvement and the respective partner countries) and will ensure also that the project results are disseminated in all the relevant Carpathian countries through the CC working groups.

Thus, the partnership is very balanced in terms of engagement of various types of relevant partners (and their networks) in each country where pilot actions are envisaged (managing authorities, policy makers, NGOs, hunting association, academia), all of which have separate crucial roles covering all aspects of the project implementation. The number of partners is geographically balanced between the countries of implementation. The overall number of partners is sufficient and necessary for the effective and successful implementation of the project. The project achieves proportional involvement of EU countries (BG, RO, SK, AT) and non-EU countries (RS, UA, MN) that will work hand in hand to address the joint territorial challenges in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region. The involvement of Ukraine and activities on its territory will contribute to the post-war recovery of the country. The composition of the partnership is such that all the partners will benefit greatly from working jointly across the borders and learning from each other's expertise, while at the same time being crucial for achieving the project objectives.

C.4 Project work plan

Number	Specific objective title
1	New tools and technologies integrated in transnational monitoring of large carnivores' forests
2	Heterogeneity, connectivity and climate resilience of large carnivores' forests is improved
3	Promote capacity and cooperation for integrated LC climate-forest connectivity across eco-regions

Specific objective 1

Specific objective title

New tools and technologies integrated in transnational monitoring of large carnivores' forests

Objectives

Your objectives should be:

- realistic and achievable by the end of the project;
- specific (who needs project outputs delivered in this specific objective, and in which territory);
- measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for.

Define one project specific objective that will be achieved when all related activities are implemented and outputs delivered.

Joint and harmonised development of transnational tools and technologies for monitoring of key large carnivore forest habitats and identification of populations movement patterns in response to climate change. By the end of month 30 the consortium will collaboratively 1) expand the existing Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System (CCIBIS) by incorporating additional functionalities and broadening its geographical coverage to also cover Dinaric and Balkan regions and 2) develop and implement two standardized sets of transnational tools and technologies to be used in 8 pilot sites as example for forest practitioners and protected areas managers to oversee climate-resilient forest habitats and devise impactful conservation strategies to safeguard transnational forest corridors for large carnivores. The work under the objective will be led by WWF RO.

Think about the communication objective that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective. Communication objectives aim at changes in a target audience's behaviour, knowledge or belief.

The communication objective is to raise awareness and share experience across the region for the developed innovative tools for monitoring and management of large carnivores' forest habitats among two target groups:

- 1) Forestry and protected areas managing institutions, policy makers – communication will have the aim to expand the knowledge of the target groups which is key for implementing management strategies and measures to improve resilience of transnational forest habitats and guarantee safe corridors for LCs. Only through a transdisciplinary shared knowledge, research is integrated in practice.
- 2) The general public – raising awareness of the general public about the project and the measures that are taken to ensure protection of LCs is key to gathering support and positive public opinion about the project's actions. This will support the other target groups in their efforts to develop a comprehensive approach and gather national and transnational data for monitoring.

Activities

Activity 1.1	
Title	Fill knowledge-gaps to inform a joint Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric technological application for forest ecosystems resilience and large carnivores monitoring and management
Start period	Period 1, 1 - 6
End period	Period 3, 13 - 18
Description	<p>315,993 EUR</p> <p>This is a pilot activity led by USAMV, where all PPs will provide data to inform the development and testing of technological tools for modelling structural and functional LCs forest connectivity. All PPs, helped by USAMV and CUAS, will develop a standardised data protocol to ensure that comparable data is collected across all project countries, representing different ecoregions. The data will consist of new and existing datasets, for example: 1) data on LCs (e.g. presence, numbers, trends), threats (e.g. roadkill incidents, human disturbances), human-wildlife conflicts (e.g. livestock depredation, demographics) from field inventories in the 9 project sites collected by all PPs teams and experts. This will involve verification and refining existing data used for macro modelling of eco-corridors (e.g. SaveGreen, ConnectGreen projects); 2) data from field inventories concerning forested areas (incl. wood grasslands) for each critical connectivity sector in at least 6 pilot territories will be elaborated; 3) Real-time data from new and already installed photo traps and from radio-collared LCs (e.g. lynx in Slovakia and bears in Bulgaria and Serbia) in the pilot sites to track movement and behavior of these animals; 4) Climate data (historic and new) will be collected to inform the development of climate-smart forest connectivity models, as well as lessons learned from the ongoing "Assessment of climate change risks and impacts on Carpathian forest ecosystems and their services" led by the Carpathian Convention. To implement the activity relevant equipment will be purchased such as binoculars, radio collars, photo traps, laptops to manage the GIS data sets, etc.</p>

Activity 1.1	<p>The new data collected will be verified by the USAMV and then populated on an ad hoc basis by the PPs into the Data Catalogue and the Geoportal of the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System – CCIBIS, thus further expanding the scope of this collaborative platform for information exchange with the Dinaric and Balkan ecoregions and facilitating the comprehensive analysis and data visualisation.</p> <p>Given the complexity of collecting standardized data across all project countries, we will also conduct a small-scale test first in Romania with USAMV assisting WWF RO to validate the data protocol within Apuseni NP. This essential initial testing aims to confirm the accuracy and effectiveness of the data protocol before its broader application and integration into technological tools in A.2.1. Conducting data testing at a site scale will proactively address and mitigate any potential delays with A.2.1.</p> <p>PPs will arrange two meetings, one with national experts and the other organized by WWF RO with international experts, with the aim of ensuring that the approach and the beta version of the new technological tools is practical and user-friendly.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 1.1			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.1.1.1	Map of critical connectivity sectors in at least 6 pilot sites	Detailed maps depict the status of threats to connectivity in the key habitats for LCs in every pilot site; uploaded into the CCIBIS Data GIS Layer Catalog	Period 2 , 7 - 12
D.1.1.2	Report on forest ecosystem for each critical connectivity sector in at least 6 pilot sites	Report on forest ecosystem for each critical connectivity sector in at least 6 pilot sites providing a comprehensive overview of the status of key habitats for LCs in proximity of critical connectivity sectors; together with the climate related data it will be essential for the digital twin models.	Period 2 , 7 - 12

Deliverables 1.1			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.1.1.3	Consolidated meetings' report on experts' consultations	Consolidated report on consultations with international and national experts summarising their recommendations on improved and new technological tools	Period 3 , 13 - 18

Activity 1.2	
Title	Mapping of safe corridors for large carnivores in the project transboundary forest areas under different climate change scenarios
Start period	Period 1, 1 - 6
End period	Period 4, 19 - 24
Description	<p>327,894 EUR</p> <p>The activity will be led by WWF RO. With the assistance from CUAS and UASMV they will review the existing methodologies – e.g. the SaveGreen Standardised Monitoring of Ecological Connectivity, the ConnectGreen Methodology for Identification of Ecological Corridors in the Carpathian Countries by Using Large Carnivores as Umbrella Species, the DINALPCONNECT Project Strategy for Ecological Connectivity in Dinaric Mountains and the Alps. Drawing from the data availability analysis (A.1.1) and the review of existing methodologies CUAS and UASMV will formulate a methodology that refines existing approaches to identify safe corridors under varying climate scenarios. A transnational experts' round table (online) with other ecoregions (e.g Alpine) will validate the methodology.</p> <p>New tools and approaches for mapping and visualizing safe corridors, and helping conservation practitioners make decisions for connectivity planning and restoration will be tested via:</p> <p>1) the Least-Cost Corridor approach method to identify the most cost-effective and efficient LCs forest corridors in a climate dynamic context will be tested by the PPs in at least 2 of the pilot territories (RO, UA). Through spatial analysis techniques and</p>

Activity 1.2	<p>modelling of different landscape elements the least costly route that LCs can take to move between fragmented habitats will be evaluated;</p> <p>2) USAMV with the support of CUAS will coordinate the development of a methodology to run a Digital Twin Model (DTM) - a virtual replica of a natural territory (e.g. a national park) allowing to simulate and analyse the impacts of various factors such as climate change, management practices, etc. All partners will contribute to developing the methodology. The testing and calibrating of the DTM will be done by the PPs in 3 countries (RO, BG and MN); pilot areas will be selected based on the analysis in A.1.1, subject to the availability of sufficient verified information to support the digital twin modelling. DTM calibration and validation will ensure that it reflects the dynamics along LCs forest corridors under different climate scenarios. DTM will illustrate how LCs favorable habitats and ecological corridors could change over time. For example, based on the ConnectGreen data and the new data gathered we will develop a Digital Twin prediction model for the Carpathian LC corridors for 2030 and 2050. Although not all PPs will develop their own Digital Twin models, they will collect data to establish their DTM in the future;</p> <p>3) Development of an online viewer on “human-wildlife conflict hotspots” due to climate-induced changes. All PPs will contribute to it via their updated GIS databases. The viewer will extract information from the PPs GIS databases and will visualise the potential hotspot zones of human-wildlife conflicts. It will be tested first in Romania and after adjusting its functionalities, then it will be applied in all project pilot countries.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 1.2			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.1.2.1	Review of existing methodologies on	Comprehensive review of existing methodologies related to structural and functional connectivity; gaps or	Period 1 , 1 - 6

Deliverables 1.2			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
	LCs connectivity	limitations that need to be addressed.	
D.1.2.2	Methodology on climate-smart LC forest corridors	Methodology on climate-smart LC forest corridors adjusting existing approaches and integrating climate data, ecological modeling, and conservation objectives	Period 2 , 7 - 12
D.1.2.3	Digital Twin Methodology (DTM)	DTM methodology identifying key components, variables and interactions within the real-world system; unified format and type of data (e.g. satellites, field surveys, existing databases), etc.	Period 2 , 7 - 12
D.1.2.4	Regional report on the Least-Cost Corridor approach method results	Regional report on the Least-Cost Corridor approach method summarizing the results from at least 4 sites	Period 3 , 13 - 18
D.1.2.5	ToR online viewer for human-wildlife hotspot zones	ToR online viewer for human-wildlife hotspot zones	Period 2 , 7 - 12

Activity 1.3	
Title	Capacity building and experience-sharing across the region and beyond to promote to stakeholders the developed tools
Start period	Period 1, 1 - 6
End period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Description	266,318 EUR Considering the complex nature of the information to be gathered and analyzed, as well as the varying levels of knowledge and experience among stakeholders, we will develop a comprehensive Capacity Building and Experience-sharing Plan as the initial step. This will help to substantiate the structure and the content to be covered in each workshop, course, guidelines, and will allow stakeholders to enhance their learning and engagement throughout the program. As part of the elaboration of the Capacity Building Plan we will

<p>Activity 1.3</p>	<p>conduct a comprehensive needs assessment (through surveys) and stakeholder analysis (forest practitioners, protected area staff, academia, governmental institutions). This would involve understanding their specific needs and challenges, and determining the most effective methods and activities to address those needs.</p> <p>The ForestConnect Capacity Building Programme will be delivered at national and regional level through a blend of activities: 1) National workshops and training sessions in project countries (without AT) with responsible authorities how to use the developed methodologies, guidelines and technological applications (e.g the GIS database, online viewer, digital twin) for management and policy purposes – will be prepared and facilitated by PPs that have the lead on respective project outputs; 2) Distance training course for improving the capacity of forest managers and protected area staff to adapt the management of eco-corridors to the projected climate change effects; A Training of Trainers course will be done to ensure the delivery of the course and further replicability; 3) Regional conference (in partnership with the IUCN WCPA Europe and Carpathian Convention) to present the transnational methodologies and guidelines developed and project's technological apps (upscaling of the CCIBIS to other European regions, Digital Twin);</p> <p>WWF RO will lead the overall activity. All other PPs will support the process by providing inputs and comments from the perspective of their respective field of experience. Durability of outputs will be ensured through cooperation with ASPs. Training materials will be disseminated through the project's networks, social media and CCIBIS document catalogue.</p> <p>Communication experts will support the national and regional events that will take place under this objective through preparation of give-away and promotional materials, visuals, press releases, multimedia coverage (e.g. short videos, story, photos), newsletter, involvement of the press.</p>
<p>Partner(s) involved</p>	<p>WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema</p>

Deliverables 1.3			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.1.3.1	Capacity Building and Experience-sharing Plan	The Plan is crucial for guiding the capacity building activities, as well as the involvement of different PPs, networks (e.g. IUCN WCPA, Europarc) and other external collaborators. More universities (e.g. Babes-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca) will be targeted to transfer knowledge to students.	Period 1 , 1 - 6
D.1.3.2	One report on cooperation and capacity-building activities	Report on cooperation and capacity-building summarising discussions, presentations, and outcomes of the regional conference and national workshops. Further recommendations will be collected through all these events and included into guidelines and other recommendations the project will produce.	Period 5 , 25 - 30
D.1.3.3	Generic framework for a distance training course and report from Training of Trainers	Generic framework for a distance training course that includes course introduction, structure, learning materials, assessment criteria and methods for evaluating participants' understanding and progress, etc. It will include a report from a Training of Trainers for the course.	Period 2 , 7 - 12

Outputs

Output 1.1	
Output Title	Pilot testing of joint monitoring tools and technologies: GIS database, digital twins model and online viewer of human-wildlife conflict hotspots based on common methodology in the pilot areas
Programme Output Indicator	2.4.1: Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects
Measurement Unit	pilot actions
Target Value	3,00
Delivery period	Period 4, 19 - 24
Output Description	Partners in the pilot countries will test the common data protocol efficiency (A.1.1) and the methodologies under activities 1.1. and 1.2 (the suitability of the joint monitoring tools and technologies): the shared Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric GIS database in at least 2 pilot territories (RO, UA); the digital twin model in 3 pilot sites (RO, BG, MN)

Output 1.1	
	that creates projections for the future of the pilot areas; and the online viewer of “human-wildlife conflict hotspots” in 1 pilot site (RO).
Output 1.2	
Output Title	Jointly developed solutions for transnational monitoring: shared Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric GIS database, Digital twin model and Online viewer of “human-wildlife conflict hotspots”
Programme Output Indicator	2.4.2: Jointly developed solutions
Measurement Unit	solutions
Target Value	3,00
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Output Description	<p>The shared Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric GIS database informs management authorities of large carnivore movement patterns along forest corridors under different climate scenarios.</p> <p>The online viewer “human-wildlife conflict hotspots” visualizes potential conflict areas along transnational forest corridors.</p> <p>The Digital twin model creates a digital replica of an existing area - the projected situation in the future considering climate change and species and habitat distribution and informs planning.</p>

Investments

Specific objective 2

Specific objective title

Heterogeneity, connectivity and climate resilience of large carnivores' forests is improved

Objectives

Your objectives should be:

- realistic and achievable by the end of the project;
- specific (who needs project outputs delivered in this specific objective, and in which territory);
- measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for.

Define one project specific objective that will be achieved when all related activities are implemented and outputs delivered.

Common solutions in line with the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy and based on joint pilot actions to improve heterogeneity, increase resilience and connectivity of forest habitats in the transnational ecological regions used by large carnivores. By month 30, we will develop and implement joint pilot actions in 8 critical connectivity sectors along forest corridors in the Balkans, Carpathian and Dinaric ecoregions to assess and measure the effectiveness of common solutions aligned with the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy. We will engage with relevant stakeholders (forest managers, protected area staff, policy makers, farmers, beekeepers, hunters, scientific community) and monitor progress to improve heterogeneity, increase resilience, and enhance connectivity of forest habitats used by large carnivores, with a focus on evaluating outcomes and ensuring timely adaptation of methodologies and guidelines based on the collected data and lessons learned. The work will be led by WWF BG.

Think about the communication objective that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective. Communication objectives aim at changes in a target audience's behaviour, knowledge or belief.

The communication objective is to raise awareness about forest management practices, tools and methodologies related to solving human-wildlife conflicts and preserving large carnivores habitats among these target groups:

- 1) Forest practitioners and protected area managers through participatory processes in climate-mitigation interventions and forest habitat improvement aimed at minimising conflicts with large carnivores and improving their eco-corridors
- 2) Local communities, especially the ones dependent on non-timber forest products, by involving them in consultations and local pilot actions to gain support
- 3) Policy-makers in order to raise awareness on the approach taken by the project and promote the developed methodologies and piloted solutions to be further upscaled and strengthened.
- 4) The general public will also be informed about the pilot actions to improve connectivity and climate resilience of large carnivores' forest habitats to ensure public support

Activities

Activity 2.1	
Title	Engagement of local community members in piloting measures to achieve positive biodiversity outcomes and reduce conflicts with large carnivores
Start period	Period 2, 7 - 12
End period	Period 4, 19 - 24
Description	<p>285,168 EUR</p> <p>The activity is aiming at enhancing heterogeneity of critical forest habitats while ensuring availability of additional and seasonal natural food for LCs. It will be led by WWF BG starting with a joint study to identify native climate-resilient plant species. The next steps include: 1) preparation of the intervention sites for planting of trees (e.g. pulling, mowing - traditional mowing will be performed in SK, or removing vegetation that compete with the young trees); improve soil fertility; 2) planting of seedlings /saplings to compare survival rates in different habitat types and draw conclusions; some of the seedlings will be produced by the PPs own nurseries or will be purchased from local providers; 3) watering the trees after planting and monitor soil moisture to increase the survival rate of young trees; 4) where wild fruit trees exist - thinning out dense vegetation to allow better airflow, sunlight penetration.</p> <p>The pilot activity will be organized in 23 intervention sites covering a total area of approx. 25 ha and situated in the 9 pilot territories, namely: in BG – Chuprene biosphere reserve, Midzur hunting estate, Berkovitza; RO – villages Giurcuța de Sus village, Mârgău, Budureasa, and Strambu Baiut state forest; in SR – Dimitrovgard, village Kamenica; in MN – Horolac, Bjelaja, Hridsko jezero, Ribljak, Bunetina, Crna pada, Leverski omar, Suvodo-Siska; in UA - Rakhiv town and villages Kostylivka, Dilove and Yasinya; in SK - Spišská Nová Ves, Rožňava, Poprad. The emphasis is not on the quantity of the area covered, but on the pioneering effort to plant wild fruit forest trees and shrubs in 23 separate intervention sites, each located within diverse forest ecosystems (such as spruce, beech, spruce-fir, and beech-spruce-fir), and subject to varying climate</p>

Activity 2.1	<p>conditions, including temperate warm and Mediterranean climates. This makes the scale of the results and the conclusions from this pilot action a considerable one for the whole Danubian region.</p> <p>It's important to acknowledge that the full impacts of these actions may not become immediately apparent within the project' timeframe. For instance, fruit-bearing trees require around 4-5 years to bear fruit, while shrubs may take up to 3 years. However, the trees and shrubs will contribute to the availability of food for wildlife through their leaves and buds. At the end of the pilots, the information which will be gathered from them will provide important insights such as initial survival rates, saplings availability, seeds, soil status, the process itself etc. which combined with some non-systematised available data and the lessons learnt from similar past actions, will produce valid conclusions regarding the achievement of positive biodiversity outcomes. In the end, guidelines will be developed stepping on the experience in the project and the relevant data, which will provide a joint solution tested on a significant scale (in 23 various sites in different eco-regions).</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 2.1			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.2.1.1	Study "Enhancing Habitat Heterogeneity and Climate Resilience in transnational forest ecosystems"	First comprehensive transnational feasibility study to identify native wild forest fruit species and other climate-resilient plants, as well as describing other conservation measures for improved mosaic habitats	Period 4 , 19 - 24
D.2.1.2	Site selection and pilot action progress report	Site selection and pilot action progress report describing step by step approach of site selection and sequence of works done; lessons learned to be capitalized	Period 4 , 19 - 24

Activity 2.2	
Title	Pilot key measures to demonstrate positive effects of climate-resilient forests microrefugia creation along transnational large carnivores' corridors
Start period	Period 2, 7 - 12
End period	Period 4, 19 - 24
Description	<p>432,934 EUR</p> <p>The activity foresees testing of two conservation measures: 1) restoration of overgrown wooded meadows and pastures and 2) restoration of abundant game crop fields. Both activities represent practical solutions that will contribute to enhancing the structural diversity of forest habitats, as well as the trophic levels of the forest ecosystem. Ultimately, these measures aim to mitigate the ongoing issue of human-large carnivore conflicts, which has been a growing concern in recent years.</p> <p>The two conservation measures will be tested on approximately 60 ha of overgrown wooded pastures and meadows in diverse forest ecosystems in 23 intervention sites situated in the 9 project territories. The practical steps include cutting down of shrubs /trees, trimming trees/shrubs, clearing excessive grass affecting the functionality of the potential LCs refugia, removal and transportation of grass clippings to avoid enriching the soil with nutrients.</p> <p>The pilot intervention sites will align with those in A. 2.1 to maximize the impact of the habitat management measures. However, the specific locations (e.g. the critical sectors in the intervention sites will be further specified during the first 6 months of the project) may vary or potentially be combined to achieve the project's objectives.</p> <p>The emphasis is not on the quantity of the area with restored overgrown pastures/meadows, but on pioneering the approach of climate microrefugia in 23 distinct intervention sites, each located within diverse forest ecosystems (such as spruce, beech, spruce-fir, and beech-spruce-fir), and subject to varying climate conditions. This makes the scale of the results and the conclusions from this pilot action</p>

Activity 2.2	<p>a considerable one for the whole Danubian region.</p> <p>The start date of restoration will be specific to each intervention site taking into account the specific management guidelines and prescriptions.</p> <p>Following the restoration of overgrown pastures, PPs experts will promptly procure and set up photo traps. These photo traps will gather valuable data on wildlife responses to the habitat restoration initiatives. Furthermore, they can capture rare and noteworthy footage, which can be used for public awareness campaigns. In addition, other equipment such as binoculars, including thermal and laser binoculars with rangefinders, will enable us to effectively monitor the wildlife that frequents the restored mosaic habitats and contribute to A.2.4, A.1.2, and A.3.2. During the project, valid conclusions from this pilot action will be drawn as the results from the field work and the photo traps will allow for thorough analysis of the success of these demonstrating activities. Thus, the tested measures will be presented as a solution with conclusions that will provide guidance for conservation planning aimed at improving landscape permeability for LCs in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 2.2			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.2.2.1	Site Assessment and Pilot Measures Report for establishment and management of climate microrefugia	Site Assessment and Pilot Measures Report for establishment and management of climate microrefugia: experiences from different pilot sites in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region	Period 3 , 13 - 18

Activity 2.3	
Title	Develop guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in relevant ecological connectivity areas and assess the role of ecological corridors in

Activity 2.3	
	the local economies
Start period	Period 2, 7 - 12
End period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Description	<p>138,300 EUR</p> <p>Well-preserved forest ecosystems in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region provide important services and resources for local communities' livelihoods. To study the services provided by forest-grassland mosaic ecosystems along ecological corridors and assess economic and non-economic benefits to local communities, USAMV - lead of the activity, will set up a regional multi-stakeholder working group consisting of key stakeholders (PPs, ASPs and others e.g. forest and conservation practitioners, academia, non-timber forest products users associations, tourist service providers) from at least 4 project countries (BG, RO, UA, RS).</p> <p>The regional working group will first develop a methodology for guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in critical connectivity areas. To inform the guidelines, four ecosystem services will be analysed in at least 4 selected pilot sites and across multiple scenarios: supporting service (e.g. ecosystem processes), regulating (e.g. hazard regulation such as floods protection), provisioning (e.g., food, timber, non-timber), cultural (e.g., recreation, tourism). The different scenarios will examine the current situation (e.g. fragmented forest-grassland mosaics), and the potential of the pilot measures in A.2.1 and A.2.2 or of the agroforestry to enhance connectivity and permeability for large carnivores. The analysis will consider the impacts of these scenarios on the forest ecosystem and the ecosystem services. The regional working group will have regular online meetings to discuss the methodology and results from the ecosystem services analysis. An important element will be the economic and non-economic valuations for all services and scenarios: assessing the direct use values (e.g. timber), indirect use values (e.g. pollination), option values (e.g. resources with potential future use), bequest value (e.g. valuing resources for future generations). The aim is to understand the trade-offs that are</p>

Activity 2.3	<p>acceptable to forest and conservation specialists, and local communities. Based on the analysis, national stakeholders in each pilot site will meet to discuss and choose the best pilot measures for each critical connectivity sector. This process will support both mitigation decision-making (addressing challenges) and adaptation decision-making (adjusting to changing circumstances). All steps above will result in guidelines on preserving ecosystems and related services in critical connectivity areas – a tool for reducing disturbances especially in LCs sensitive areas. The guidelines will be presented at the regional conference in RO (A.1.3 in period 5) and disseminated through the project's partners networks, social media and CCIBIS document catalogue.</p> <p>When guidelines are developed communication support in creating document design and further distribution will be given by the project comms experts.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 2.3			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.2.3.1	Methodology for guidelines of ecosystems and related services in critical connectivity areas	Methodology for guidelines of ecosystems services in critical connectivity areas defined by the regional multi-stakeholder working group	Period 2 , 7 - 12
D.2.3.2	One regional report combining national assessments of four ecosystem services	One regional report combining national assessments for at least 4 pilot sites on four services provided by forest-grassland mosaic ecosystems and their economic and non-economic benefits in critical connectivity areas	Period 3 , 13 - 18
D.2.3.3	One final report on best pilot measures	One final report on best pilot measures for each critical	Period 5 , 25 - 30

Deliverables 2.3			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
	for each critical connectivity sector	connectivity sector	

Activity 2.4	
Title	Develop guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats (forests, wood pastures and pastures between forests) beneficial to large carnivores in the context of climate change
Start period	Period 4, 19 - 24
End period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Description	<p>194,308 EUR</p> <p>The viability of LCs depends on functional connectivity of their populations through dispersal across wide landscapes and countries. The activity's goal is to provide guidance for conservation planning aimed at improving landscape permeability for LCs in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region, with a particular focus on management of forest-grassland mosaics consisting of numerous types of forest and grassland patches of various sizes, wooden pastures, edge communities, etc. - acting as stepping stones that connect fragmented forest patches. The forest planners and protected area managers are recognising the need to shift their efforts more towards restoring forest ecosystem integrity and resilience to address climate change impacts, but they don't have the knowledge what type of measures support the needs of large carnivores and their adaptation to the changing climate. That is why guidelines are needed to provide a framework for effective management practices that support sustainable forest use practices, such as agroforestry and integrated landscape management and to offer opportunities for the coexistence of agriculture, livestock grazing, and local communities' sustainable livelihoods.</p> <p>The lead – USAMV will organise series of joint meetings (online) between PPs and experts from the</p>

Activity 2.4	<p>Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management of the Carpathian Convention, Dinaric experts (through DINALPCONNECT project), UNEP Ecosystems Division, IUCN WCPA to 1) transfer existing good practices on projects' key habitats (forests, wooden pastures, pastures between forests) and 2) identify optimal management strategies to enhance connectivity within and between the subpopulations mitigating the climate barriers to movement. As a result, through an inclusive approach (with all stakeholders including forest managers, landowners, conservation organizations, local communities, and relevant authorities) a Guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats will be developed and disseminated through partners' networks to relevant stakeholders in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region. The Guidelines will 1) assess the quality and suitability and climate resilience potential of mosaic habitats for large carnivores in the project pilot sites; 2) provide recommendations on conservation actions to enhance the resilience of mosaic habitats also addressing specific challenges related to climate change impacts in the different eco regions; 3) suggest monitoring and evaluation tools of management interventions, flexibility in adjusting strategies based on new knowledge and emerging challenges, and learning from best practices. As a result the new knowledge and enhanced understanding of mosaic habitat management for large carnivores in the context of climate change will be included in the A.1.3 – distance training courses.</p> <p>Communication experts will give support in the dissemination of the guidelines and in organization of events and meetings where needed.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 2.4			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.2.4.1	Report of the collaborative	Report of the collaborative online meetings between project partners and experts. The report will be compiled and made available to relevant stakeholders, who will be	Period 4 , 19 - 24

Deliverables 2.4			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
	online meetings between project partners and experts	invited to further contribute with recommendations to the Guidelines.	
D.2.4.2	Agreed ToR for the Guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats	Agreed ToR for the Guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats. ToRs are needed to best shape the development of the guidelines, as well as the expectations in terms of content, level of details, length, involvement if experts, etc.	Period 4 , 19 - 24

Outputs

Output 2.1	
Output Title	Pilot actions for positive biodiversity outcomes, reducing conflicts with large carnivores and creating climate-resilient forest refugia
Programme Output Indicator	2.4.1: Pilot actions developed jointly and implemented in projects
Measurement Unit	pilot actions
Target Value	2,00
Delivery period	Period 4, 19 - 24
Output Description	The partners in 8 areas in BG, MN, SK, RS, RO and UA will jointly develop and pilot a set of common actions to facilitate LCs movement along transnational forest corridors in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region. The pilot actions involve restoration of wood pastures and meadows, planting of native trees (e.g. wild forest fruit trees, herbaceous plants), thus demonstrating the positive transnational effects of mosaic habitats as climate microrefugia and important foraging areas.
Output 2.2	
Output Title	Guidelines on management of transnational mosaic habitats along forest corridors and on preserving ecosystems and related services in eco-connectivity areas for the benefit of LCs and local people

Output 2.2	
Programme Output Indicator	2.4.2: Jointly developed solutions
Measurement Unit	solutions
Target Value	2,00
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Output Description	The guidelines are result of the pilot actions, data analysis, information and knowledge sharing between experts, practitioners and local communities. The two guidelines will provide solutions for a long-term protection of wildlife ecological corridors through economic benefits to local communities and decreased social conflicts over LCs; on the other side they will guide conservation practitioners how to jointly manage transnational mosaic habitats and improve landscape permeability for LCs.

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Specific objective 3

Specific objective title

Promote capacity and cooperation for integrated LC climate-forest connectivity across eco-regions

Objectives

Your objectives should be:

- realistic and achievable by the end of the project;
- specific (who needs project outputs delivered in this specific objective, and in which territory);
- measurable – indicate the change you are aiming for.

Define one project specific objective that will be achieved when all related activities are implemented and outputs delivered.

The objective aims to build capacity and enable cooperation and networking between different eco-regions and actors (protected areas managers, foresters, policy makers, users, NGOs, international organizations and structures) who will uptake and replicate results towards integrated large carnivore forest connectivity in response to climate change. The work under the objective will be lead by CUAS.

Think about the communication objective that will contribute to the achievement of the specific objective. Communication objectives aim at changes in a target audience's behaviour, knowledge or belief.

The objective is to communicate and disseminate the project conclusions and the developed Strategic guidelines among the target groups:

- 1) Local stakeholders from the project target areas whose attitudes and superstitions towards large carnivores will be changed by the project results and the sharing of experience
- 2) Forestry and protected areas managers in order to fill in the knowledge and capacity gap to incorporate complex climate-smart solutions in national management interventions
- 3) Policy-makers who will be able to incorporate the project results on regional and/or national level and upscale them
- 4) The general public through a larger awareness-raising campaign aimed at changing negative attitudes towards large carnivores and the lack of understanding towards forest practices aiming at maintaining forest mosaic habitats.

Activities

Activity 3.1	
Title	Development of Strategic Guidelines to respond to climate change challenges faced by the Protected areas at the pan-Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans level
Start period	Period 3, 13 - 18

Activity 3.1	
End period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Description	<p>312,061 EUR</p> <p>The activity will be led by the CUAS with the involvement of all partners and contribution from the Carpathian Convention. An expert group composed of all project partners representatives and moderated by the UNESCO Chair "Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas" at CUAS will meet to develop strategic guidelines for protected area managers on climate change mitigation measures on LCs and forest corridors. By having this guidance - a valuable tool to navigate complex challenges - the protected area managers can proactively address climate change threats, implement adaptive management strategies to enhance the resilience of LCs habitats, and contribute to the overall forest ecosystem functioning. In a series of online meetings, the findings of the project expert group will be presented to the Carpathian Convention Working Groups on Biodiversity, Forest, Climate Change, to the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, IUCN WCPA (Europe, Mountain Specialist Group), Europarc, as well as at the Carpathian Convention Implementation Committees meetings, at the Annual EUSDR Forum, and at other appropriate fora. At national level, two meetings per country will be organised with national protected areas managers to validate the recommendations of the expert group. At regional level, an expert meeting will be held involving protected areas managers from the Carpathian Convention countries, Balkan and Dinaric countries, thus allowing transfer of knowledge from the Carpathian countries to other regions, with the support and facilitation of the UNEP Vienna Office Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.</p> <p>The strategic guidelines will have an added value especially for the protected area managers in the Carpathian countries, as they will facilitate the implementation of the International Action Plan on Conservation of Large Carnivores and Ensuring Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians. The guidelines are expected to contribute to the Carpathian Biodiversity framework (CBF) to be endorsed at the upcoming COP in October 2023 that is implementing the CBD global biodiversity</p>

Activity 3.1	
	<p>framework.</p> <p>Communication support will be given in designing of the strategic guidelines and their further distribution to relevant stakeholders and to the wider public in order to accent climate mitigation and present the project solutions.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 3.1			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.3.1.1	ToR strategic guidelines on LCs climate change mitigation measures in PAs	ToR strategic guidelines on LCs climate change mitigation measures in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric protected areas approved at national and regional experts	Period 3 , 13 - 18
D.3.1.2	Report from the Expert Meeting with PAs managers from Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric countries	Report from the Expert Meeting with Protected Areas managers from Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric countries. The report will summarise the main findings as well as recommendations provided by protected area practitioners regarding the Strategic Guidelines.	Period 5 , 25 - 30

Activity 3.2	
Title	Capacity building, exchanges and capitalisation activities to enable durability, cross-fertilisation and uptake of project results
Start period	Period 3, 13 - 18
End period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Description	<p>221,728 EUR</p> <p>The activity is led by WWF BG with the contribution of all partners. The A.3.2 Capacity Building co-created with the project partners will be developed to allow multi-sectoral and regional knowledge transfer. It involves fostering long-term sustainability by building the capacity of</p>

Activity 3.2	<p>stakeholders to integrate and apply project outcomes into their practices, policies, and decision-making processes, unlike A.1.3, which is focusing on enhancing knowledge, skills, and understanding of stakeholders, enabling them to effectively use the tools, guidelines and methodologies developed. The A.3.2 Capacity Building foresees: 1) 3 peer exchange visits in BG, RO and MN - representing the three ecoregions - Carpathians, Balkans and Dinaric, to foster learning between project partners with accent on pilot actions in A.2.2 and A.2.3; 2) one regional workshop in BG on population-based approaches for monitoring and management of large carnivores in the context of climate change in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region; 3) one webinar moderated by UNEP Vienna (hosting the Carpathian Convention) to exchange experience on climate change adaptation and flagship species with other mountain regions in Europe. Both the webinar and the regional workshop will involve nature-conservation professionals from the Carpathians, Balkans and the Dinaric region through their networks of protected areas such as Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, Network of Protected Areas Dinarides, IUCN WCPA Europe, Europarks, Priority Area Six Coordinators (PAC) of the EUSDR; working closely with them will create a win-win situation since the projects can benefit from the professional networks but also capitalizing on other DRP projects, as well as other ongoing projects such as NaturaConnect project and CLIMAFORCEELIFE.</p> <p>The activity will rely on combining transnational and country-specific capacity building tools to foster mutual support and collaboration among countries from different eco-regions facing similar challenges. By sharing information, resources, and expertise, countries can work together to develop innovative solutions, share technologies, and collectively address shared issues.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 3.2			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.3.2.1	Post-project sustainability plan	Post-project sustainability plan outlining effective use of results and their incorporation in ongoing initiatives/practices. It will serve as a basis for transferability to target regions of Europe and beyond, through the strong international/global network of professionals the PPs are involved in.	Period 5, 25 - 30

Activity 3.3	
Title	Communication: Awareness-raising campaign and promotional activities showcasing the project results and outcomes
Start period	Period 1, 1 - 6
End period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Description	<p>439,531 EUR</p> <p>The activity will be led by WWF Adria Serbia with the support of all PPs. The first step will be to develop a joint project communication plan to frame the delivery of the communication campaign. It includes: 1) Audience research to understand the characteristics, preferences, and behaviors of our target audience, e.g. demographics, interests, values, communication preferences; 2) Based on the audience research we will select communication channels that represent an effective mix of traditional media (TV, radio, print) and digital platforms (social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn; WWF and partners websites, email newsletters) to maximize reach and engagement. In addition, we will communicate the project results and outputs at workshops and events engaging local communities, at webinars and virtual events, site visits, etc.; 3) Develop two-way communication to encourage interaction with and feedback from our target audience. We will provide instruments for them to ask questions, provide input, and share their experiences (especially relevant for local communities who need more time to get engaged and are often overlooked when decisions are taken on a higher level); 4) Engage with community leaders and local NGOs who have</p>

Activity 3.3	<p>influence over our target audience. We will seek partnerships that amplifies our messages and could extend our reach; 5) Based on our experience and the DRP requirements we will develop a clear and recognizable identity that resonates with our target audiences.</p> <p>The implementation of the communication plan will consist of various activities tailored to the needs of different project target groups such as: 1) developing a social media campaign that highlights the ecological and climate importance of large carnivores and promotes responsible coexistence between humans and wildlife; 2) collaborating with local NGOs and local community organizations to organize events on responsible coexistence and conservation best practices; 3) supporting the production of policy briefs for policymakers / government agencies / local communities to promote evidence-based decision-making; 4) host webinars and virtual events to engage stakeholders in large carnivore conservation.</p> <p>To deliver the activity relevant equipment will be purchased such as notebooks, laptops and beamers. Printed materials with tailored content and design will be produced to effectively engage stakeholders and communicate relevant information.</p>
Partner(s) involved	WWF BG , EFA, NWSE, WWF RO, USAMV CN, WWF Adria-RS, NGO RET, CBR, CUAS , WWF SK, Slovenský raj, CZIP, APM Cluj, JPNP, Emblema

Deliverables 3.3			
Running number	Deliverable title	Description	Delivery period
D.3.3.1	Project communication campaign plan	Project communication campaign plan including target audiences, key messages, campaign layout, main communication channels, etc.	Period 1 , 1 - 6
D.3.3.2	Regional report on the communication campaign	Regional report on the communication campaign summarising national communications outcomes	Period 5 , 25 - 30

Outputs

Output 3.1	
Output Title	Strategic Action Plan with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices for Protected areas
Programme Output Indicator	2.4.4: Strategies and action plans jointly developed
Measurement Unit	strategy/action plan
Target Value	1,00
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Output Description	Strategic Action Plan (SAP) with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices (as well as pasture related practices) for Protected Areas supports the Carpathian Convention assessment of climate change on forests, recommending landscape heterogeneity as a main adaptation strategy. Based on national consultations, SAP will also provide guidance for the Balkans and Dinarics managers of mountain protected areas to improve climate resilience of national protected areas.
Output 3.2	
Output Title	At least 23 organizations - from the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region - cooperating for cross-fertilization and uptake of results
Programme Output Indicator	2.4.3: Organisations cooperating across borders
Measurement Unit	organisations
Target Value	23,00
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Output Description	Through a series of exchange visits, online regional workshops, webinars, and capitalization with other DRP projects, at least 23 organizations (PPs and ASPs) from 7 countries will strengthen their cooperation and form a transnational partnership for uptake and dissemination of the results. Learning will be enhanced between practitioners in the pilot areas and participating countries of the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region and other areas through their networks of protected areas.

Investments

C.5 Project Results

What do you expect to change because of the activities you plan to implement and the outputs you plan to deliver? Please take a look at the programme result indicators and select those that you will contribute to.

Result 1	
Programme result indicator	2.4.2: Organisations with increased institutional capacity due to their participation in cooperation activities across the borders
Measurement unit	No. of organisations
Baseline	0,00
Target value	36,00
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Result description	<p>All 23 PPs and ASPs from 7 countries in the Carpathian-Balkan-Dinaric region will greatly benefit from the cooperation across the borders. They will be involved in the joint pilot actions, the development of the joint solutions and in the preparation of guidelines and strategy. Also, they will participate in transnational capacity-building and experience sharing during meetings, workshops and conferences thus forming a partnership of cooperation. All of this will result in an increased institutional capacity for them to meet the future challenges related to the preservation and conservation of large carnivores in the target areas in the context of climate change, and to uptake and sustain the project results.</p> <p>Apart from the partnership, some other institutions will be involved directly in the project pilot activities: at least 10 local authorities from all countries with pilot actions, 1 nature park authority (Srbijasume) in Serbia, 2 research institutions from Bulgaria.</p>
Result 2	
Programme result indicator	2.4.1: Joint strategies and action plans taken up by organisations
Measurement unit	joint strategy/action plan
Baseline	0,00
Target value	1,00

Result 2	
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Result description	<p>ForestConnect will foster the cross-border and cross-regional forest habitat connectivity specifically to facilitate large carnivores movement in response to climate change. The protection of Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric populations of European large carnivore species, requires a multinational conservation planning and a holistic strategy jointly developed and implemented by the protected areas authorities. A new Strategic Action Plan (SAP) is needed to give a harmonized answer to the climate change challenges faced by the Protected areas /Natura 2000 managers in the Carpathian / Dinaric / Balkans regions. SAP will represent the new dynamic conservation planning framework aiming at adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing management practices that facilitate LCs range shifts and minimize the climate change induced human-wildlife conflicts. It will be taken up by the Carpathian Convention and through the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and Network of Protected Areas Dinarides.</p>
Result 3	
Programme result indicator	2.4.3: Solutions taken up or up-scaled by organisations
Measurement unit	solutions
Baseline	0,00
Target value	5,00
Delivery period	Period 5, 25 - 30
Result description	<p>The technological tools – the shared Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric GIS database, the online viewer and the digital Twin Model upscale existing solutions and will be accessible through the Data Catalogue and the Geoportal of the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System – CCIBIS, based on open source that will allow policy, NGO and academia to continue using it. The guidelines will be utilized by the member countries of the Carpathian Convention and through the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and Network of Protected Areas Dinarides. The tools will</p>

Result 3	
	<p>help forest and protected areas managers to visualise complexity of ongoing processes and implement climate-resilient measures. This, combined with solutions tested in the pilot areas – restoration of wood pastures and meadows, planting of native trees and vegetation - will ensure managers have a powerful tool for verifying and optimising conservation interventions to respond to the new climate-induced challenges.</p>

C.6 Project Time Plan

	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	After End
WP1 New tools and technologies integrated in...						
A1.1 Fill knowledge-gaps to inform a joi...			D1.1.1 D1.1.2	D1.1.3		
A1.2 Mapping of safe corridors for large...	D1.2.1	D1.2.2 D1.2.3 D1.2.5	D1.2.4			
A1.3 Capacity building and experience-sh...	D1.3.1	D1.3.3			D1.3.2	
2.4.1				O1.1		
2.4.2					O1.2	
WP2 Heterogeneity, connectivity and climate ...						
A2.1 Engagement of local community membe...				D2.1.1 D2.1.2		
A2.2 Pilot key measures to demonstrate p...			D2.2.1			
A2.3 Develop guidelines on preserving ec...			D2.3.1	D2.3.2	D2.3.3	
A2.4 Develop guidelines on management of...				D2.4.1 D2.4.2		
2.4.1				O2.1		
2.4.2					O2.2	
WP3 Promote capacity and cooperation for int...						
A3.1 Development of Strategic Guidelines...			D3.1.1			D3.1.2
A3.2 Capacity building, exchanges and ca...						D3.2.1
A3.3 Communication: Awareness-raising c...	D3.3.1				D3.3.2	

2.4.3					O3.2	
2.4.4					O3.1	
Result indicator						
2.4.1					R2	
2.4.2					R1	
2.4.3					R3	

C.7 Project management

In addition to the thematic work you will do in your project, you will need time and resources for coordination and internal communication. Please describe below how you plan to organise yourself to ensure the project work runs smoothly.

C.7.1 How will you coordinate your project?

Who will be responsible for coordination? Will you have any other management structures (e.g., thematic groups, SO/activity managers)? How will the internal communication work?

WWF Bulgaria has extensive experience in managing transnational multi-partner projects, including under DTP and will employ its best practice for the efficient project management.

The main elements of ForestConnect project management structure are: Core Project Management Team, Steering Committee, Quality Assurance Management, Objectives Leads and Activity Leads and the Implementation Team. The LP is the liaison to the DRP MA/JS and signatory of the Subsidy Contract. The Partnership Agreement stipulates the relations between PPs.

The Project Core Team consists of Project Manager and Financial Manager, appointed by the LP, and Communications Manager, appointed by WWF Serbia. The Project Manager is the contact person with the MA/JS; is responsible for the overall coordination of the project implementation; monitors the project progress and supports the Objectives and Activity Leads; compiles the PPR and Chairs the Steering Committee. The Financial Manager is the interface with MA/JS on financial matters, submits consolidated financial reports, together with the Applications for Reimbursement; transfers the Interreg funds to each PP; monitors budget spending and advises PPs on the eligibility of expenses. The Communication Manager develops the communication strategy and plan; prepares information materials; collects input from partners for communication purposes and updates the project website.

The Steering Committee (SCOM) is the main decision-making body of the project and its functions and procedures are specified in the Partnership Agreement. SCOM members will be officially appointed by each PP and announced at the kick-off meeting. SCOM meets every 6 months, validates the project performance and progress towards achievement of the objectives; and takes decisions with regard to project modifications and corrective actions.

The Quality Assurance Management structure will consist of a Quality Assurance Manager (QAM), based at the LP, and a team of Quality Assurance Experts from the LP, Carinthia University, Cluj University and others. The Quality Assurance team will be responsible for proofreading, analysing and reviewing the project outputs from a qualitative point of view and producing Quality Reports for each output.

ForestConnect has 3 objectives and for more efficient management, Objective leads have been designated: WWF RO leads Obj. 1, WWF BG leads Obj. 2 and Carinthia University leads Obj. 3. Their role is the overall coordination and leadership of the work under each objective and tracking progress on tasks on a monthly basis. Also, together with the LP and QAM, their role is to oversee the timely and high quality delivery of the outputs within each objective.

In addition, under each objective there are activity leads to guide the implementation and facilitate the coordination between the partners. Under Obj. 1 the Cluj University is leading activity 1.1 and WWF RO is leading activities 1.2 and 1.3. Under Obj. 2, WWF BG is leading activity 2.1, WWF SK is

leading activity 2.2 and the University in Cluj is leading activities 2.3 and 2.4. Under Obj. 3 Carinthia University is leading Activity 3.1, WWF BG is leading activity 3.2 and WWF RS is leading activity 3.3.

The Implementation Team consists of all staff, appointed for implementation of the project. A Project Manager is established at partner level, responsible for PP level overall project coordination. A Financial Manager is also established at each PP. In addition, expert positions are established to be involved in the implementation of the activities.

Internal communication

The internal communication among the partners is essential, having in mind that one of its main aims is the transnational cooperation and given the large consortium. Communication will be timely, transparent, open and honest. The tools will be:

- Email and telephone: for basic communication between partners, setting up meetings.
- Zoom: LP has a Zoom account, and it will be used for joint meetings and discussions. Monthly meetings of the Objectives and Activities leads, chaired by the LP, will be held.
- Google folder: the LP will set up a google folder with subfolders for the objectives and activities. It will be used for joint work on documents, and for access to all project official documents, templates, deliverables, outputs, reports.
- Meetings: ForestConnect will hold bi-annual project management meetings including SCOM meetings, back-to-back with key meetings under the activities or online.

Reporting and deadlines

ForestConnect will have 5 six-months reporting periods. The project will follow the indicative timeframe of the program – 15 days for preparation and submission of partner reports by PPs to the controller from the end of each reporting period; 60 days for verification of the expenditure by the controller and issuing the control certificate; and 15 days for preparation and submission of the PPR and AfR by the LP to the MA/JS.

C.7.2 Which measures will you take to ensure quality in your project?

Describe specific approaches and processes and responsible partners. If you plan to have any type of project evaluation, please describe its purpose and scope here.

ForestConnect will set up from the beginning an effective Quality Assurance Management Structure, which will ensure the quality of all project outputs. It will consist of a Quality Assurance Manager, based at the LP, as well as a team of Quality Assurance Experts from the LP, the Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine from Cluj-Napoca, and/or other partners.. The Quality Assurance Management structure will be independent from the Project Management Structure. At the LP level the project will be managed under the WWF BG Wildlife Program unit and the Quality Assurance Manager and Expert will be under the Project Development and Monitoring unit of WWF Bulgaria. The Quality Assurance team will be responsible for proofreading, analysing and reviewing the project outputs from a qualitative point of view. The Quality Assurance Manager with the help of the Quality Assurance team is responsible for:

- a. reviewing all 11 project outputs (1 strategic action plan, 5 solutions and 5 pilot actions), providing feedback to the partnership, and developing Output Quality Reports for each output;
- b. ensuring that the findings are included in the final outputs to be submitted to the MA/JS;
- c. validating of the outputs before submission to the MA/JS;
- d. informing the MA/JS about any obstacles/problems encountered during the process.

The Project Outputs are the major tool with which ForestConnect achievements are measured and reported to the DRP. The PPs who develop Project Outputs are responsible for the timely and high-

quality delivery of the Outputs and Output Factsheets to the Quality Assurance Team and for their improvement as needed based on the Quality Assurance recommendations. The following procedure and deadlines shall be respected:

- a) The responsible PP when the Output is finalized, presents the output to the Quality Assurance Team and prepares the Output Factsheet. The Output Factsheet shall be prepared and submitted to the QAM, together with the Output, maximum 20 days after the end of the period when the Output is due. In case of an Output being finalised before the timeline plan, the responsible partner could submit it to the QAM for review and verification without prior notice. Output responsible partners shall inform the QAM and the LP Manager in due course in case of identified risks and problems to timely delivery of output factsheets and seek solutions jointly.
- b) The QAM will distribute the Output and Output Factsheet to the Quality Assurance Experts, based on the expertise needed. The Quality Assurance Team is entitled to a 20-day-period to review the Output and Output Factsheet and request additional information and/or revisions, if necessary and develop the Output Quality Report, including recommendations.
- c) The recommendations/findings of the QAM should be taken into account by the partners and the updated output and output factsheet shall be provided within 15 days from receipt of QAM's communication.
- d) The Quality Assurance Team will finalize the Output Quality Report for the respective output and submit it together with the Progress Report. The QAM bears the responsibility for the information provided in the output quality report. The actions implemented based on these findings shall be included in the quality report of the specific output.

Project evaluation

The LP has a system of internal operational monitoring and evaluation of all projects of the organization. At project level, the LP will do an operational evaluation of the project to analyse the effectiveness of the project management in terms of: procedures, workflow and project governance. The evaluation will be done after one year of project implementation, will be assisted by collecting info through questionnaires from project partners and results will be presented to the Steering Committee.

An end of the project evaluation of the project achievements in terms of objectives, outputs and results will be done with the assistance of the Quality Assurance Management team, and the results will be presented to the Steering Committee and included in the final report.

C.7.3 What will be the general approach you will follow to communicate about your project?

Who will coordinate project communication and how will he/she ensure the involvement of all partners? How will the communication function contribute to transfer your project results? Please ensure that the mandatory communication requirements are met. Please note that all communication activities should be included in the different specific objectives, as an integral part of your project. There is no need to repeat this information here.

Continuous communication about large carnivores and their coexistence with humans is critical for nurturing understanding and reducing human-wildlife conflicts, for promoting responsible individual behaviour and land management practices. The project communication is thus an important integral part of the project. The project communication will be tailored to the specific objectives - to meet the conservation needs and the relevant stakeholders' expectations. The communication activities will

target mainly the following groups: 1) the general public to create general awareness on the topic 2) specific segment of local stakeholders – non-timber forest product (NTFP) users, hunters, small kettle farmers, beekeepers, local tourist service providers 3) forestry and protected area managers often responsible for managing human-wildlife conflicts, and 4) policy and decision makers who will also use and replicate the project results. The communication language and approach for them will be different taking in mind their specificities.

WWF Adria will lead the delivery of the project communication and will develop in partnership with other PPs the overall communication strategy. The strategy will take into consideration the project countries' national context, the project target groups and the project activities' timeline. In general, the project communication approach will combine transnational and country-specific communication and tools regarding human-wildlife coexistence. Transnational communication allows for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and best practices among different regions and stakeholder groups. It enables them to learn from successes and failures in countries facing similar challenges, and adapt proven strategies to their own circumstances. At the same time the country-specific tools cater to the unique context, cultural factors, and specific issues within each country. The localised approach increases the effectiveness of communication efforts, as it resonates better with local communities and stakeholders. The communication work and channels will be an interactive way to involve local communities. Last but not least, the projects' communication approach - bridging local and global perspectives, will allow to share local knowledge, concerns, and experiences also at the transnational level, influencing broader conservation policies. Equally, global initiatives and best practices are disseminated to local communities, providing them with a broader understanding of the global context and access to international resources and support.

The communication experts from all partners will hold monthly meetings (both online and physical when possible) to plan and report on activities. If necessary for bigger campaigns, the communication team will meet more frequently to ensure quality and consistency of the communication. These meetings will be obligatory for all communication staff of all partners in order to keep the transnational and country specific communication coordinated, as well as to discuss specific issues that need to be tackled. In order to promote responsible coexistence between humans and large carnivores, communication officers from the different PPs will closely cooperate with project management teams and experts and will bring a fresh approach to the topic (also by choosing the right timing of the communication flow). They will interpret the messages of the conservation and scientific community, as well as of the professional managers of territories in a way that is understood by the layman audience. To achieve collaboration between offices it's essential to establish and maintain organized folders for each office to store wildlife - related materials they've produced. The regional communications manager should periodically review these materials and assess whether they could be adjusted for other countries or translated into English.

WWF Adria-Serbia will provide the general guidance and will coordinate the communication activities (including providing visual, materials and communication content) but the PPs will have the freedom to choose how to adapt the developed communication tools and activities to their national context and implement them in a way that suits their stakeholders and audiences best. All the project partners have allocated budget for comms activities during project preparation and all partners will be obliged to participate. The mandatory communication requirements will be observed and overseen by WWF Adria-Serbia with support from the partners (use of project logo and branding, regular update of project website and social media, project poster put by each PP, website information, acknowledging DRP support in public, media & publications). More details on the communication goals of the project, the content, the messages and the concrete communication activities are included for each Specific Objective and also in Activity 3.3.

C.7.4 How do you foresee the financial management of the project and ensure that the spending forecast is kept?

Define responsibilities, deadlines in financial flows, reporting flows, project related transfers, reclaims, etc.

The sound financial management is crucial for the successful implementation of the project. It will be based on the DRP Manual on eligibility of expenditure and the Implementation Manual and its annexes. The LP WWF Bulgaria has experience in leading a DTP project in the past (LENA), as well as participating as a PP in another project (MEASURES) and will build on the experience and systems established for ensuring the sound financial management of ForestConnect.

A Financial Manager will be appointed at the LP as part of the core team and overseeing the overall financial management of the project, and financial managers will also be appointed at each PP.

LP Financial Manager responsibilities:

- Financial management: advice the partners regarding eligibility of expenses and contact the donor in case of need for clarifications.
- Be the interface with the DRP for financial matters;
- Submit the consolidated financial report with each project PPR, based on the certificates for expenses, issued by the controllers for each PP.
- Submit the Application for reimbursement (AfR) based on the amount of verified expenditure of PPs. The LP will verify that the expenditures declared by the PP have been incurred for implementing the project and has been verified by a controller.
- Transfer the contribution from Interreg funds to each PP according to the approved AfR within the deadline given in the partnership agreement. No deduction, retention or any other specific charges shall be made by the LP.
- Monitor the budget spending – the LP will monitor the budget spending, the extent to which budget forecasts are kept and take corrective action where. The LP will monitor the budget reallocations made by partners and make sure that MA/JS PO's confirmation is requested in case the cost category budget reallocations of a PP reach 15% of their respective total budget. The LP shall upload Annex B2_Minor Reallocation Tool, reflecting the budget shifts made during a certain reporting period, together PPR.

PP Financial Manager Responsibilities:

- Each PP will appoint a Financial Manager, who is responsible for permanent monitoring of all financial aspects, including internal management of funds, expenditures, spending rates, budget shifts, financial reporting, public procurements, collection of documents for the controllers.
- Financing reporting: Each PP has to submit for each reporting period, its expenditure incurred and paid and related supporting documents, for verification to the responsible controller in its Partner State through the Jems system. Each PP is responsible separately for having its expenditure verified by the responsible controller.
- It is the responsibility of each PP to timely inform the LP whenever they intend to reallocate budget among cost categories and get their confirmation for control purposes.

Financial reporting

All PPs and the LP will prepare and submit their PRs through the Jems system to their responsible Controller at national level. The Controller, after verification of the PP's reported expenditure issues the Control certificate to the PP in Jems. The LP compiles the PPR and signs the AfR in Jems and uploads the necessary annexes and supporting documents. After receiving the Interreg funds from the MA/JS, the LP transfers the contributions to the PPs according to the approved AfR.

In case control certificates and PRs are not available from each PP for a given reporting period, the LP shall submit the AfR on the basis of the control certificates available until the reporting deadline. The expenditure of the project partners not verified for the given reporting period within the reporting deadline shall be requested in the subsequent AfR.

Reporting Periods and Deadlines

ForestConnect will have 5 six-months reporting periods. The project will follow the indicative timeframe of the program – 15 days for preparation and submission the partner report by the project partner to the controller from the end of each reporting period; 60 days for verification of the expenditure by the controller and issuing the control certificate; and 15 days for preparation and submission of the PPR and AfR for the whole project by the lead partner to the MA/JS. The LP will submit the PPR and AfR within 3 months after the end of the reporting period.

The LP will transfer the funds to the partners within 10 working days from receiving the funds from the DRP and receiving the Calling of funds from the respective PP.

C.7.5 Cooperation criteria

Please select all cooperation criteria that apply to your project and describe how you will fulfil them. Please consider that at least 3 cooperation criteria shall be selected and Joint development and Joint implementation are mandatory.

Cooperation criteria	Description
Joint development	<p>Yes</p> <p>All the partners have been involved in an integrated way in analyzing the joint problems, developing joint ideas and developing the project proposal. A core team of partners from the targeted countries in the Balkan-Carpathian region, whose sphere of expertise is highly relevant for the topic, developed the initial theory of change, with problem analysis, prioritization and selection of pilot sites to work in. An online workshop was held in September 2022 to shape the initial idea. Afterwards these organisations reached out to the most relevant potential partners in their respective countries to get their buy-in and invite them as project partners. Thus the partnership was shaped to include a mixture of implementing authorities such as forestry agencies and departments and protected area management authorities, academia and NGOs, which best suits the project idea and supports the successful implementation of the project. Based on the recommendations for 2nd step the lead partner with assistance from the PPs invite new partners to the partnership to both enlarge the geographic scope and involve more policy makers. A number of meetings were held at national and transnational level to shape the partnership. Then the more detailed activities and planning were developed jointly with the participation and contribution of all partners through active communication and sharing of ideas, priorities and feedback. The lead partner WWF Bulgaria organized a number of joint and bilateral meetings with different partners to help further clarify and improve the concept. An overarching principle in the project development was the overall transnational interest and common problems, as well as the opportunities for transnational exchanges and transfer of experience and good practices.</p>

Cooperation criteria	Description
Joint implementation	<p>Yes</p> <p>The project is designed in a way that has the buy-in and commitment of all project partners and is both of transnational relevance and relevant to each of them. Transnational cooperation is at the core of the project and the successful implementation of the activities requires that the partners jointly implement them in a coordinated and cooperative manner. The partners will cooperate in the joint development of pilot actions (tested at different pilot sites), in the joint development of solutions, and strategies, as well as in joint events for mutual learning. The structure of the partnership and the management of the project by the lead partner will enable joint planning and implementation of all the activities through dedicated meetings and mutual exchange on specific topics. The work will be done jointly, with established leads by specific objective and by activity, who will lead and coordinate the implementation. The partners will have joint meetings to enhance cooperation and learning interactions, which will be held back-to-back with important project events to save on travel and carbon emissions. Clear content-based links are established among partners, who represent forestry administrations (implementing activities on the ground), academia (working on forest connectivity) and NGOs (working on forestry and connectivity for large carnivores), which will be coordinated by the lead partner during the joint implementation of the project. Quality Assurance Management will also be established, with a quality assurance team from key partners, which is independent from the project implementation.</p>
Joint staffing	<p>Yes</p> <p>The principle of joint staffing is observed as it reflects the joint implementation and joint financing principles to which the project adheres. No functions are duplicated within the partnership and the responsibilities of each partner are strictly determined in accordance with its expertise and role in the project implementation. The overall project management is ensured by the LP WWF Bulgaria who is responsible for the general coordination of the project and will appoint an overall Project Manager, Financial Manager, and Quality Assurance Manager. The Communication Manager will be appointed by the partner WWF Serbia.. At partner level each partner appoints a project coordinator to coordinate the partner's activities, a financial manager, as well as project staff strictly related to the individual tasks of the project partner. A number of partners work jointly to complete the tasks and activities under each objective.</p>

Cooperation criteria	Description
Joint financing	<p>Yes</p> <p>The project has a joint budget, developed by all project partners. The budget is based on clear task distribution of the different partners within each country and within the partnership as a whole, as well as on realistic cost calculation based on the activities to be carried out by each partner in order to achieve efficient implementation of the project actions. The budget also envisages interactions on a transnational level to facilitate the joint implementation, as well as capitalization activities with other projects. Joint activities - workshops, study visits - are envisaged, where the costs between the host and participating partners are also separated. The LP WWF Bulgaria is responsible for the administration and reporting towards the program, as well as for distribution of funds to the partners, for which sufficient staff resources are allocated. At project level each partner will appoint a Financial Manager, who is responsible for permanent monitoring of all financial aspects, including internal management of funds, expenditures, spending rates, budget shifts, financial reporting, public procurements, collection of documents for the controllers.</p>

C.7.6 Horizontal principles

Please indicate which type of contribution to horizontal principles applies to the project, and justify your choice.

Horizontal principles	Type of contribution	Description of contribution
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Horizontal principles	Type of contribution	Description of contribution
Sustainable development	positive effects	<p>The project is primarily positioned to promote the sustainable development principles in the Balkan-Carpathian transnational region in line with the EU objectives and regulations, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the "do no significant harm" principle. It aims at improving the forestry habitats and connectivity, thus preserving the populations of large carnivores and minimizing human-wildlife conflicts, without restricting economic activity, thus creating positive effects at all three pillars of sustainable development: environmental, social and economic. The project will focus on a very important and still very underdeveloped area of climate-resilience of forest habitats of large carnivores, which will contribute to forest climate adaptation and creating new paradigms for climate-smart connectivity of habitats, thus having a direct positive impact. The project will employ nature-based solutions for forest connectivity. Green management and green procurement will be an integral part of the project. Green Public Procurement will be organized where possible using the official handbook on GPP published by the European Commission (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pdf/Buying-Green-Handbook-3rd-Edition.pdf) and the internal policies of the project partners. The project aims at reducing the carbon footprint of its administration and project work, and online communication is at the heart of project management. Online tools for internal communication and management will be used to keep travelling to project management meetings to a necessary minimum. Consortium meetings will be held back-to-back with important project events to save on additional travel. Printed materials will be produced only if strictly necessary to reach a certain target group and where possible FSC recycled paper will be used, or if not available, postconsumer recycled paper.</p>

Horizontal principles	Type of contribution	Description of contribution
EU Charter of fundamental rights, gender equality, non-discrimination	positive effects	<p>The project will adhere at all times to the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights and the UNESCO Universal Declaration of Human Rights and special attention will be paid to their principles during the project implementation and management . First of all, the project will comply with the EU and national requirements on non-discrimination related to employment. In particular, project partners will prevent discrimination based on personal characteristics such as gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, unrelated to inherent job requirements. The same principles will apply during tender procedures within the project where no tenderer or applicant will be discriminated against and all the procedures will be carried out in transparency. Furthermore, the project will strive to ensure equal representation and freedom of expression in workshops and public fora, guaranteeing good gender balance in project teams and committees. The project will take into consideration the gender equality aspect in the analyses, studies and strategies developed under the project. In the implementation of the activities, the project will be guided by principles of respect for human dignity, social inclusion and a commitment that the benefits of the project will be fairly distributed. Special attention will be given to minimizing the conflict between humans and large carnivores for the benefit of local communities without any discrimination or special attention favouring one social, gender, race, or ethnicity group.</p>
Strategic Environmental Assessment (if applicable)	positive effects	<p>The project is focused on improving the connectivity and climate resilience of forest habitats, thus improving the conditions for large carnivores and minimizing human-wildlife conflict. Thus, it will have a positive environmental impact on the pilot areas. The project does not envisage either the development of strategies or action plans with potential significant impact on the environment, nor the implementation of investments with potential significant adverse environmental impact, that would fall under the scope of the SEA Directive or that of the UN Protocol on strategic environmental assessment of the Espoo Convention.</p>

C.8 Durability and transferability

As a programme, we aim to support projects that have a long-lasting effect in the DRP territory and those who will benefit from them. Please describe below what you will do to ensure this.

C.8.1 Not applicable

Please enter the text "N/A" in the field!

N/A

C.8.2 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Durability / (in case of PAC / DSP CALL): Durability and transferability

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): All outputs should be used by relevant groups (project partners or others) after the project's lifetime, in order to have a lasting effect on the territory and the population. For example, new practices in urban transport need to be used by local authorities to have cleaner air in the city, and the whole population will benefit from this. Please describe how your outputs will be used after the project ends and by whom, as well as how the institutional and financial support will be ensured. / (In case of PAC/DSP CALL): please describe below what you will do to ensure the durability and transferability of the project.

After the project's end the GIS databases and the new tools developed - the online viewer and the Digital Twin model - will be accessible to facilitate ongoing updates and analysis of information through the Data Catalogue and the Geoportal of the Carpathian Countries Integrated Biodiversity Information System – CCIBIS.

The outputs from the pilot actions for positive biodiversity outcomes, reducing conflicts with large carnivores and creating climate-resilient forest refugia will be used by all of PPs. Based on the methodologies and field results (e.g. cleaning of overgrown vegetation, planting of climate resilient and wild forest fruit trees) the PPs will gain valuable insights for future habitat improvement strategies in the face of CC; they will continue improving the heterogeneity of forest habitats important for LCs, as it will improve the forest climate resilience which leads to reduced budgets for maintaining forest vitality and better response to CC and extreme weather events, natural disturbances, etc. The presence of decision-making PPs will guarantee the best practices from pilots are directly built into the national-level strategic plans for agriculture and rural development, and support implementation of EU policies such as Forest Strategy and Biodiversity strategy by 2030. The first comprehensive study on the native wild forest fruit species and best practices of producing native climate resilient seedlings will be promoted nationally (e.g. through national platforms and networks of stakeholders) and regionally through the Forest and Biodiversity Working Groups of the Carpathian Convention, and the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and Network of Protected Areas Dinarides. The dissemination of the project's results will be facilitated through various umbrella institutions and networks, some of which include Balkan countries as members. The Executive Forestry Agency in Bulgaria plays a central role as a member of: 1) Dinaric-Balkan-Pindos Large Carnivore Platform including countries such as Albania, BiH, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia, among others; 2) Forest Europe, which is developing common strategies for its signatories including countries Albania, BiH, Turkey, Montenegro, and Serbia, to protect and sustainably manage their forests; 3) European State Forest Association representing state forest companies, enterprises, and agencies that prioritize sustainable forest management and wood production including Serbia, BiH, and Croatia, among others.

The guidelines (e.g. on management of transnational mosaic habitats along forest corridors and on preserving ecosystems and related services in eco-connectivity areas, the Strategic Guidelines with adaptation actions and resilience-enhancing forest management practices for Protected areas) and the knowledge shared between experts, practitioners, and local communities will be utilized by the member countries of the Carpathian Convention, in line with the decision COP6/13 Sustainable forest management Article 7 of the Convention to encourage the development and assessment of the impacts of climate change on the Carpathian forests and their ecosystems services by relevant Convention Working Groups and partners and with support of the Convention Secretariat.

Also, WWF CEE, in its observer role in EUSDR, will bring into specific meetings and working groups the results and actions of the Forest Connect project. On a national level, the National Coordinators will be included in all activities where relevant as to ensure also that the local actions are in line with EUSDR. The EUSDR Priority Area Coordinators for PA 6 (Bavarian State Ministry of Environment and Consumer Protection and Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Croatia) and the relevant Steering Group members will also be involved throughout the project in order to ensure the project is in line with the macro-framework of the EUSDR. WWF CEE and WWF Adria-Serbia offices as regional structures of WWF in Central and Eastern Europe are in communication with PA 6 Coordinators in connection with WWF's conservation work and involvement in EUSDR implementation in general. WWF CEE is informed and invited whenever there is a Steering group meeting tackling connectivity in the Danube region thus having direct access and an overview of the overall work of EUSDR on this topic. The project will benefit from this greatly and will build upon this partnership through further contributing to PA 6 of the EUSDR with the project results and engagement of the EUSDR structures. Involving these relevant EUSDR actors, the project will hold dedicated sessions during the project workshops and conferences where the proper measures to embed the ForestConnect results into the regional framework of the strategy for the Danube region will be discussed and adopted. Thus, EUSDR relevance and uptake of results will be a key focus in the project.

C.8.3 (in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): Transferability / (in case of PAC / DSP CALL not applicable - add "N/A")

(in case of 1ST CALL FOR PROPOSALS): All outputs that you will deliver ideally could be adapted or further developed to be used by other target groups or in other territories, even outside the DRP area. What will you do to make sure that relevant groups are aware of your outputs and are able to use them?

ForestConnect transferability strategy has been embedded in the project design by engaging representatives of various stakeholders as PPs and ASPs. This collaborative approach ensures that not only the PPs but the partners' networks will play a vital role in facilitating the transferability of project outcomes. Thus, the project gains access to a wider range of knowledge, resources, and networks, enhancing the dissemination and further use of project outcomes. Through the PPs and ASPs networks we will ensure that the results are effectively shared, disseminated, and further adjusted and applied by relevant groups, extending the reach and impact of the project beyond its immediate scope.

For example, the PPs will transfer outputs to future professionals in the field of infrastructure and spatial planning via the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP) and the Network of Spatial Research and Planning Institutes in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe (SPA-CE.NET) where CUAS is actively involved. CUAS is an active member of the global UNESCO UNITWIN - a network of 850 institutions of higher education or research in 117 countries. The UNESCO Chair is rooted at the CUAS where it is established at the Centre for Further Education (WBZ), an interdisciplinary institution for lifelong learning. Through the UNESCO Unitwin Network the project

outputs will be shared with various UNESCO Biosphere Parks (e.g. Carinthian Nockberge (Austria), Hohe Tauern Nationalpark (Austria), where the topic of improving functional and structural LCs forest connectivity in face of climate change is a relevant topic.

In addition to the mentioned organizations, there are other crucial networks for sharing and using the project outcomes. The European State Forest Association, representing 37 members across Europe, including some Balkan countries, serves as a significant advocate for European state forest management organizations at both EU and pan-European levels. Similarly, Forest Europe, encompassing 45 European countries and the European Union, plays a pivotal role in the region's sustainable forest management strategies. The Executive Forestry Agency (EFA), a member of both of these organizations, will play a pivotal role in disseminating the project's guidelines to their members. These guidelines will encompass best practices for protecting and sustainably managing forests, with a focus on reaching out to member countries in the Balkan region.

Other important networks to share and integrate the project outcomes are the European University Association (representing more than 850 universities), the Network of Central and South Eastern European Higher Education Institutions relating to the Life Science disciplines (agriculture, food, biotechnology, natural resources, rural development and the environment), where USAMV Cluj-Napoca is also a proactive member. The fact that all the technological tools developed will be open source is significant as it enables their integration into existing planning tools and enhances their usability and compatibility with tools with established planning frameworks. Ultimately, this promotes efficiency, effectiveness, and innovation in the planning and decision-making processes, leading to improved conservation outcomes. Both CUAS and USAMV offer a range of new training courses addressing the growing needs for integration of digital technologies in conservation work – e.g. disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence, geoinformatics, remote sensing, and data science, and through their networks will further change the management of protected areas.

As the project results will be available through CCIBIS and DRP website in the long-term, consultants and field staff from different countries and eco-regions could use the methodologies and guidelines developed and take it up for future projects, research or landscape planning.

The project will allow for development of proposals to support the conservation and restoration of habitats that promote and increase the landscape connectivity, especially in identified and designated corridors, through EU funding programmes such as the Regional Development Programme (agri-environment programme), LIFE, Transport Development Programme. The Carpathian Convention via Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and the EUSDR will promote the outputs in their sphere of action and through their website, as well as the broad IUCN network, and especially its IUCN WCPA (Europe, Mountain Specialist Group); Europarc Federation and of the Protected areas of the Alpine and Carpathian Region where some of the PPs are members.

Last but not least, the dissemination and transfer of project results will primarily be facilitated through the extensive network of WWF, leveraging the expertise and outreach of the project partners who are affiliated with WWF.