

❖ Standard 1: Engage key internal and external partners and stakeholders throughout the process.

Case Study: **Participants in the ERC process in the Carpathian Mountains**

From: WWF (2002) Ecoregion Conservation: Securing Living Landscapes through science-based planning and action. A users guide for Ecoregion Conservation through examples from the field. Washington, DC.

Purpose and region of analysis

The Carpathians initiative is a dynamic partnership of over 50 key decision-making organizations from within and outside the Carpathian area, including NGOs (non-governmental organizations), governmental representatives, scientific institutions, international funders and consultants. The Carpathian Mountains are contained within 6 countries: Romania, Ukraine, Poland, Czech and Slovak Republics and Hungary.

Criteria/Methods

The many participants involved at various stages in the planning process can be divided into several major groups.

A. Core team: The core team consisted of between 9-10 people, representing either the countries involved or the ecoregion as a whole. The team was comprised of:

- 1 ecoregional coordinator
- 2 regional coordinators (one for biodiversity and one for socio-economic issues) and
- 6 country coordinators

The core team and others who had participated in the reconnaissance (scoping) phase established 7 working groups, each dealing with specific topics:

1. The delineation of the ecoregion and GIS issues
2. The biological assessment
3. The socio-economic aspects
4. Large carnivores and large herbivores (as a sub-group of biodiversity aspects)
5. Processes to promote sustainable development and its links to biodiversity
6. The political frame
7. The communication issues

B. Reconnaissance evaluation workshop: A reconnaissance workshop, held in Brasov, Romania, November 29-30, 1999, convened 42 participants, including regional (RC) and country coordinators (CCs) plus other representatives from the governments, institutions and NGOs of the six Carpathian countries (Romania, Ukraine, Poland, Czech and Slovak

Republics and Hungary), consultants and WWF and World Bank staff. Participants in the workshop covered the following topics:

- 2 regional coordinators (for biodiversity and socio-economic issues) discussed the information gathering process and the data collated to that point
- 6 country coordinators described the benefits of and obstacles to applying ERC in their countries
- the whole group held a general discussion on issues to be addressed during the ERC process, how best to communicate the ERC message via the media, the next steps regarding ecoregion delineation/GIS; biological assessment; socio-economic assessment/political frame; large carnivore/herbivore issues; partners, and communication.

C. Data Collection: The following experts were responsible for data collection on endemic species within focal countries:

Czech republic	Mgr. Michal Hajek – Masaryk University, Brno
Slovak republic	Mgr. Viera Stanova, Mgr. Dobromil Galvanek – DAPHNE Institute for Applied Ecology, Bratislava
Hungary	Ms. Judit Sandor – CEEWEB, Debrecen
Poland	Prof. Zbigniew Mirek - Institute of Botany, PAS, Prof. Halina Piekos Mirkowa – Institute of Nature Conservation, PAS Krakow
Ukraine	Dr. Lydia Tasenkevich, Prof. Malynovski – State Museum of Natural History, Lviv
Romania	Mr. Dan Gurean, Prof. Darie Parascan and Mr. Marius Danciu – Transylvania University, Brasov

D. Expert workshop: The experts workshop, attended by over 40 scientists and others with biological and ecological expertise in the ecoregion, was held in Smolenice, Slovakia and was the result of effort by different groups of participants. Extensive pre-workshop preparation was carried out by the core ecoregional team and 6 country teams. These teams gathered and analyzed data from reconnaissance. The results of this effort and a draft vision were presented to the experts for their evaluation and improvement.

At the workshop, taxonomic group breakout teams were established. These groups represented 6 taxa: mammals, large carnivores, other mammals, birds, reptiles/amphibians, and invertebrates. Representatives from each breakout taxonomic group compiled and presented that group's input to the overall Biodiversity Coordinator and the GIS coordinator. These were processed to be used immediately for the high-level Summit on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Danube-Carpathian Region. In addition, a technical/GIS group was present to use the GIS environment as a tool for building consensus and formalizing expert opinion. The results of the GIS process served as a foundation for decision making and could be modified according to different decision making criteria.

E. Summit: Chaired by the President of Romania and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, the Heads of State of all countries of the Carpathian region and some Danube region countries were invited to promote international recognition and multi-lateral support for the region as a whole as well as to introduce the biological priorities developed at the experts workshop.

F. Steering committee: The steering committee was a multi-national group consisting of core members involved in regular project decision-making and others with more "ambassadorial" roles, including donors. This committee was established at end of the reconnaissance phase in order to give the potential members time to see the situation within the ecoregion and people involved and decide whether they wanted to continue participation in the process. The steering committee meets once a year. It is an influential group but does not affect daily work much; rather the group serves more as a resource providing information as outlined below.

Tasks for core members:

- provide an overview, guidance and future strategy for the CEI process;
- develop a clear 'vision' statement;
- make final decisions and provide advice on pilot projects
- review reports, workplans and communication material, including the vision.

Tasks for all members:

- lobbying, fundraising, and achieving high level commitment for the project
- policy guidance, links to other European-wide initiatives, preparation for the proposed country leaders summit.

References

WWF's work in the Carpathians can be viewed [here](#).