

Biodiversity Task Force for South-East Europe: Towards achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets



With the aim of fostering cooperation in the region and giving it a unified voice on issues concerning biodiversity protection, the Biodiversity Task Force (BDTF) of South-East Europe (SEE) was created in November 2017 as a technical and scientific advisory body under the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWG Env) of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

The BDTF covers 7 economies, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) of Macedonia and harbors an extraordinary biodiversity with a comparatively high rate of endemism. Under the umbrella of the Agenda 2030 the BDTF regional priorities are (i) streamline and monitor progress in implementing biodiversity-related conventions and agreements, (ii) enhance the transposition and implementation of EU acquis, (iii) integrate biodiversity protection and conservation into sectoral policies, and (iv) cross-cutting issues. IUCN Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) acts as the Secretariat of the BD TF, supported by the Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Biodiversity project (ORF BD) of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Acronyms

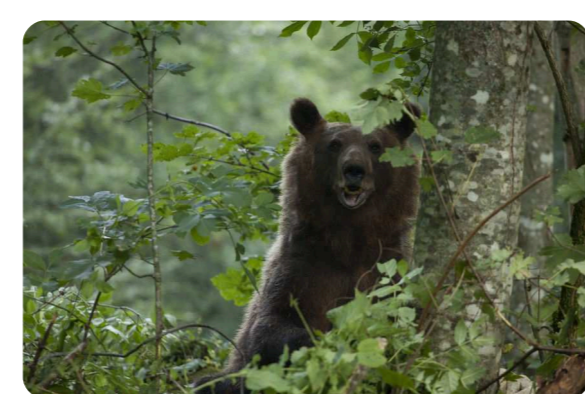
B&H	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BDTF	Biodiversity Task Force
BIMR	Biodiversity Information Management and Reporting
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSBL	Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at Lakes Prespa, Ohrid and Shkoder/Skadar
DinAlp	Dinaric Mountains and the Alps
ECARO	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
EN	European Centre for Nature Conservation
ESAV	Ecosystem Services Assessment and Valuation
EU	European Union
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FYR Macedonia	The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
Kosovo*	* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence
LCIE	Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
ORF BD	Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe - Biodiversity project
PA	Protected Area
PA4NP	Protected Areas for Nature and People
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Areas Management
RCC	Regional Cooperation Council
REC	Regional Environmental Centre for Eastern and Central Europe
RWG Env	Regional Working Group on Environment (under the auspices of RCC)
SEE	South-East Europe
SEE BAP	Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Local Sustainable Development in the Western Balkans
SoNC	State of Nature Conservation
SSC	Species Survival Commission

C



Protecting large carnivores (wolf, bear and lynx) in SEE

Largely afforested, mountain habitats of the Balkan Peninsula host vibrant populations of brown bear, wolf and Eurasian lynx. However, threats to large carnivores are evident and growing. This has prompted the need for improving the knowledge base and planning for large carnivore conservation. Under the broad umbrella of IUCN SSC's Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe (LCIE), several collaborative efforts emerged in the region over the past years. Drawing on extensive field research and monitoring carried out in transboundary areas in Albania, Kosovo*, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro, the Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme generated fresh data on the extent and status of the population of Balkan lynx, resulting in species' listing as Critically Endangered (CR) according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. With less than 50 mature individuals in the wild, this iconic species keeps being under threat from habitat loss and degradation. Other significant initiatives include cooperation on brown bear under the LIFE DinAlp Bear Project, the Dinaric Brown Bear Project and PA4NP ranging from research and monitoring, to the development of nature tourism and community-based education programmes on brown bear conservation and management.



Brown Bear in Tara National Park, Serbia

- 11 While the coverage of terrestrial protected areas varies from economy to economy, the region's average is slightly below 10%.
- 11 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia (FYR), and Serbia have officially submitted their PoWPA Action Plans.
- 11 Management effectiveness assessments provide important information on PA performance, including regional, national and site-based METT analyses in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia and along the Balkan Green Belt and RAPPAM in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion.
- 11 First experiences with shared protected area governance are being made in Albania and FYR Macedonia.

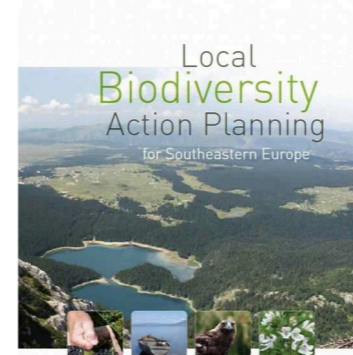
12 Transboundary efforts for protecting large carnivores (wolf, bear and lynx) in SEE.

A



Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation at community level

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are internationally recognized instruments addressing biodiversity at large, threatened species, habitats as well as ecosystem services, designed to conserve and restore biological systems through the involvement of local communities and stakeholders. Several initiatives in the Western Balkans have been initiated recently to mainstream biodiversity conservation at local level. The European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) and the Regional Environmental Centre for Eastern and Central Europe (REC) implemented the project "Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Local Sustainable Development in the Western Balkans – SEE BAP" in 18 municipalities in South Eastern Europe. Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the aim of this project was to contribute to the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity through integrating them into the municipalities' planning and decision-making processes. An additional goal was to promote the development of local businesses for the benefit of local sustainable development in rural municipalities. The municipalities have developed LBAPs and the level of awareness on and recognition of the importance of safeguarding biological diversity and sustainable use of ecosystem services has grown accordingly. EU's LEADER is another important approach undertaken in the Western Balkans with the aim of empowering rural communities in designing and implementing rural development and nature conservation policies and actions and promoting transboundary conservation.



- 1 Various media specialized on environment regularly publish news on biodiversity (e.g. Balkan Green Energy News, A Voice for Nature, NatureforPeople, etc.).
- 1 Awareness and understanding of biodiversity and conservation has increased through the celebration of important environmental days: World Environment Day, International Day of Biological Diversity, World Water Day, World Wetlands Day, Natura 2000 Day, Clean-up Day and others.
- 1 Awareness raising campaign on specific biodiversity related issues such as illegal use of pesticides and wildlife trade, sustainable use of hydropower, etc.

1 Mainstreaming biodiversity conservation at community level

D



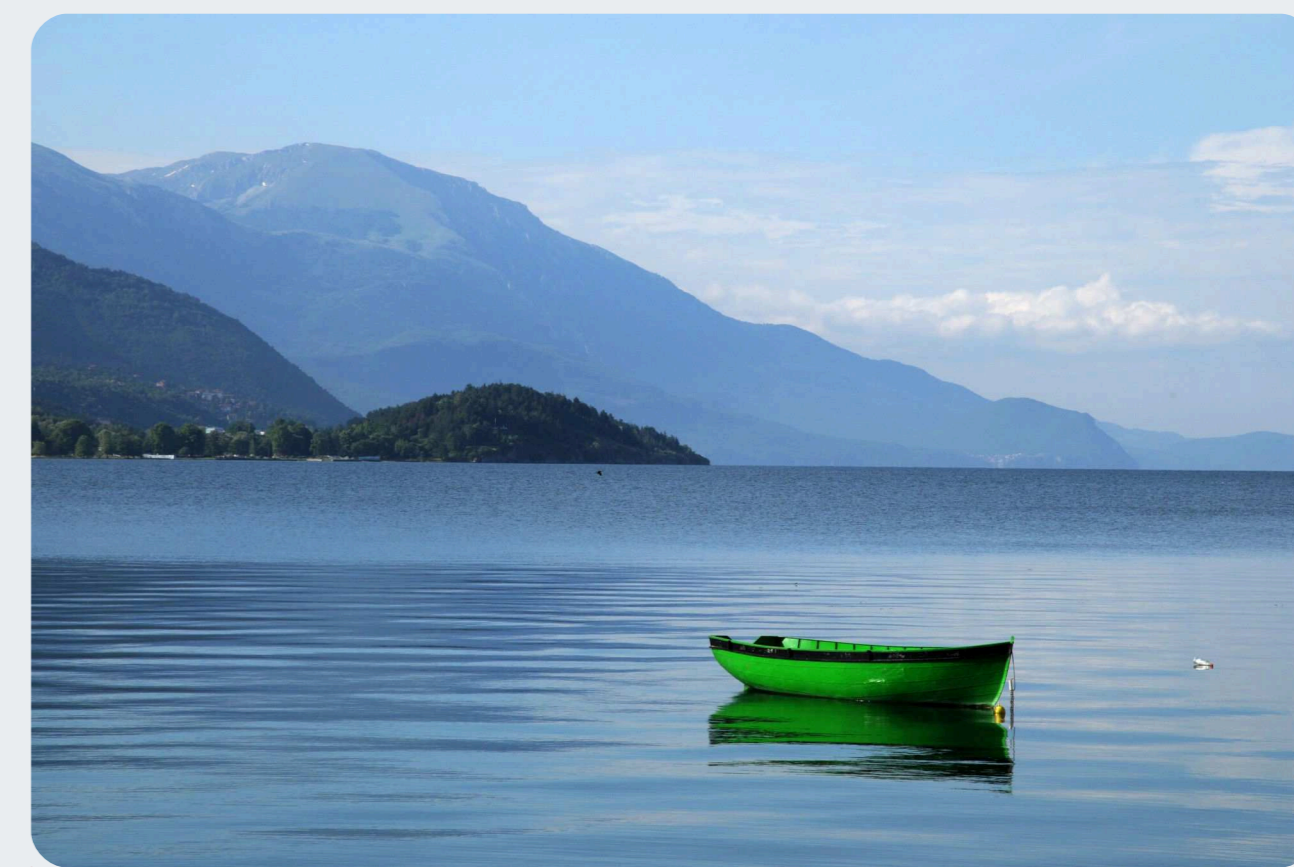
Ecosystem Services Assessment and Valuation (ESAV) – a regional approach

The region's rich biodiversity and ecosystem services offer considerable opportunities to strengthen socio-economic growth and development. Two exceptional case studies were done in the framework of the GIZ ORF BD project: a) Advocating Ecosystem Services Assessment and Valuation (ESAV) in Bosut Forests area – integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services in natural resource uses and management and b) The Economic Significance of the Neretva and Trebišnjica River Basins. According to the conclusions of the Bosut Forests study, it is shown that if environmental flooding of the forest complex of the Bosut Forests and an increase of traditional animal husbandry are implemented along with the joint management and establishment of a protected area, the value of four ecosystem services selected as the most important for the area, which lays between Serbia, B&H, and Croatia – wood production, flood prevention, meat production and biodiversity, is expected to rise. The study on Neretva-Trebišnjica illustrates that it is in the interest of all sectors to ensure that these shared water resources are managed in an integrated, transboundary way and should be used to influence decision-making in the SEE region, multiply ecosystem services assessment and valuation practice, and share lessons learned as well as a tool to raise awareness among planners, policy-makers and managers about contributions that biodiversity and ecosystem services make to the economic growth.



- 14 Regional case studies on values of ecosystems for local communities through ESAV in Bosut Forests area (Serbia, Croatia and B&H), and on the economic significance of Integrated Natural Resource Management.
- 14 Strengthening development and conservation planning in FYR Macedonia through piloting PES mechanism in the frame of "Program for Nature Conservation Phase 2".
- 14 A Gender Based Review of the Key National Biodiversity Related Strategies and Reports in South-East Europe has been elaborated, assessing how women and gender equality considerations are addressed by SEE economies.
- 14 A SEE 2018 Regional Symposium on "Valuing and Investing in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services for Sustainable Development: Lessons Learned and Future Directions" yielded ten regional recommendations for decision makers.

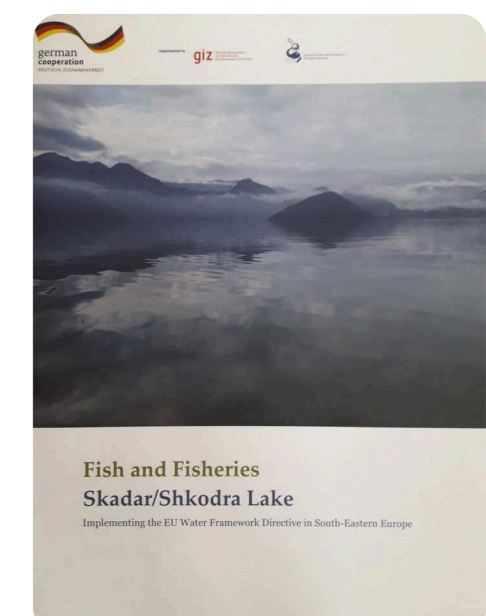
B



Standardized cross border monitoring of fish stocks in Lake Prespa, Lake Ohrid and Shkoder/Skadar Lake

The ecological and economic value of the three lakes partly derives from a rich fish fauna, which includes endemic, rare and threatened species. Fishing activities take place on all three lakes and fishery is an important source of income for local people from the surrounding communities.

GIZ Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity at Lakes Prespa, Ohrid and Skadar (CSBL) project supported partner economies Albania, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro in conducting multi-annual fish sampling pursuant to EU fishing standard (EN 14757). Standardized sampling was carried out in a collaborative manner, resulting in the most comprehensive transboundary database since the 1980s. 80,000 data sets were put together on the basis of 130,000 fish samples, which provide an overview of the present-day composition and abundance of fish assemblages. Data was systematized and transferred into an Access database. Interpretation and analysis results were published in a "Fish and Fisheries" report for each lake. Specific recommendations for EU-compliant conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks were presented to decision-makers in the three economies. Lake-specific, transboundary monitoring programs for fish stocks are agreed, and need to be implemented in the future.



- 6 Standardized criteria for the sustainable management of fish stocks and the preservation of endemic species in Lake Prespa, Lake Ohrid and Lake Skadar are currently being developed with support of the GIZ CSBL project.
- 6 Fish stocks at three lakes are monitored according to standardised methods.
- 9 Regulatory frameworks with regards to invasive alien species are being tackled in accordance to the respective EU regulations and through enhanced regional cooperation.
- 9 4,666.204 ha FSC certified in SEE in August 2018 (B&H 1.654.459 ha; Croatia 2.048.517 ha; Serbia 963.228 ha)

E



Biodiversity information management and reporting (BIMR)

Aiming at the conservation and sustainable use of the rich SEE biodiversity assets, a regional consensus on principles and key elements of a biodiversity information management and reporting (BIMR) mechanism in line with CBD and EU requirements is needed. Addressing this need, a Regional Assessment of the BIMR Baseline for SEE was developed, focusing on an assessment of the current stakeholder, as well as on the policy and institutional frameworks and information system set-ups in the field of biodiversity. Based on this assessment, BIMR Regional Guidelines were developed to assist all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in effective data management, thereby systematically improving both the quality and usability of data as well as ensuring compliance with EU and CBD standards and requirements. The Guidelines highlight aspects to be considered when planning, designing and developing biodiversity information systems, and also in the process of biodiversity data management and reporting (biodiversity data standards, standardized forms for biodiversity data collection, geo-referencing, data usage and authorship rights, etc.).



- 17 Revised NBSAPs adopted by B&H, Montenegro, Albania, FYR Macedonia and Kosovo*. A Draft Strategy for Nature Conservation of Serbia 2018-2025 is being prepared for adoption.
- 18 Ensure community involvement in biodiversity related decision making through varying mechanisms in Montenegro, Serbia, FYR Macedonia and B&H.
- 19 BIMR Regional Guidelines and a Recommendation Paper on Enhancing the BIMR in SEE region have been developed and accepted by regional economies.
- 19 Harmonization of national biodiversity databases ongoing in Montenegro, FYR Macedonia and B&H with a list of selected endemic terrestrial plant and animal taxa including plants, beetles, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, describing nearly 2.200 endemic taxa for SEE, already being available.
- 19 A first overview of the State of Nature Conservation (SoNC) systems in SEE published by IUCN in 2018.



United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

IMPRINT

Biodiversity Task Force (BDTF) under the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWG Env) of the South-East Europe (SEE) Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)

BDTF Secretariat: International Union for Conservation of Nature Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (IUCN ECARO)

E-Mail: ecaro@iucn.org

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For further reading, please use the QR-code provided hereunder.



November 2018

AICHI BIODIVERSITY TARGETS STRATEGIC GOALS

A Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society

- 1 Target 1: By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.
- 2 Target 2: By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.
- 3 Target 3: By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.
- 4 Target 4: By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.

B Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use

- 5 Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.
- 6 Target 6: By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.
- 7 Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.
- 8 Target 8: By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.
- 9 Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.
- 10 Target 10: By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

C To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity

- 11 Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
- 12 Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.
- 13 Target 13: By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

D Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services

- 14 Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.
- 15 Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.
- 16 Target 16: By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

E Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

- 17 Target 17: By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.
- 18 Target 18: By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.
- 19 Target 19: By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.
- 20 Target 20: By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.