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CONTRIBUTION

# SWISS – POLISH COOPERATION PROGRAMME



**Biodiversity and nature protection  
and cross-border environmental initiatives**

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# SWISS – POLISH COOPERATION PROGRAMME



# BACKGROUND

**Swiss – Polish Cooperation Programme is a part of the Swiss Contribution - a non-returnable financial aid programme set by Switzerland in 2007 as an expression of solidarity of Switzerland with 13 countries, which joined the European Union after 2004. The Switzerland commitment lays ground for solid economic and political relations between Switzerland and the EU member states.**

Swiss Contribution covered the following countries:

- CHF 1 billion granted to 10 countries, which joined the European Union on 1 May 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary;
- CHF 257 million granted to 2 countries which joined the European Union on 1 January 2007 – Romania and Bulgaria;
- CHF 45 million contributed to Croatia, which joined the European Union on 1 July 2013.

Out of CHF 1,302 million of the Swiss support, **37,56% (CHF 489,02 million) is the financial aid for Poland to be disbursed in the period 2007-2017.**

## PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES IN POLAND

The objective of the Swiss financial aid in Poland is to reduce economic and social disparities between the Republic of Poland and more advanced countries of the enlarged European Union. On the national level, its goal is to reduce disparities between the dynamic urban centres and the structurally weaker peripheral regions.

The programme supports the following priorities, focus areas and specific objectives:

**Priority 1** – Security, stability and support for reforms - allocation 79.699.602 CHF

Focus area 1.1 Regional development initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions

Focus area 1.2 Measures to secure borders

**Priority 2** – Environment and infrastructure - allocation 198.726.913 CHF

Focus area 2.1	Rehabilitation and modernisation of basic infrastructure and improvement of the environment
Objective 1	<i>To enhance municipal infrastructure services in order to increase living standards and promote economic development</i>
Objective 2	<i>To increase energy efficiency and to reduce emissions, in particular greenhouse gases and hazardous substances</i>
Objective 3	<i>To improve the management, the safety, the efficiency and the reliability of communal/regional public transportation systems</i>
Focus area 2.2	Biodiversity and nature protection and cross-border environmental initiatives

**Priority 3** – Private sector - allocation 67.866.117 CHF

Focus area 3.1	Improving the business environment and the access to financing for SMEs
Focus area 3.2	Development of the private sector and promotion of exports of SMEs

**Priority 4** – Human and social development - allocation 81.179.938 CHF

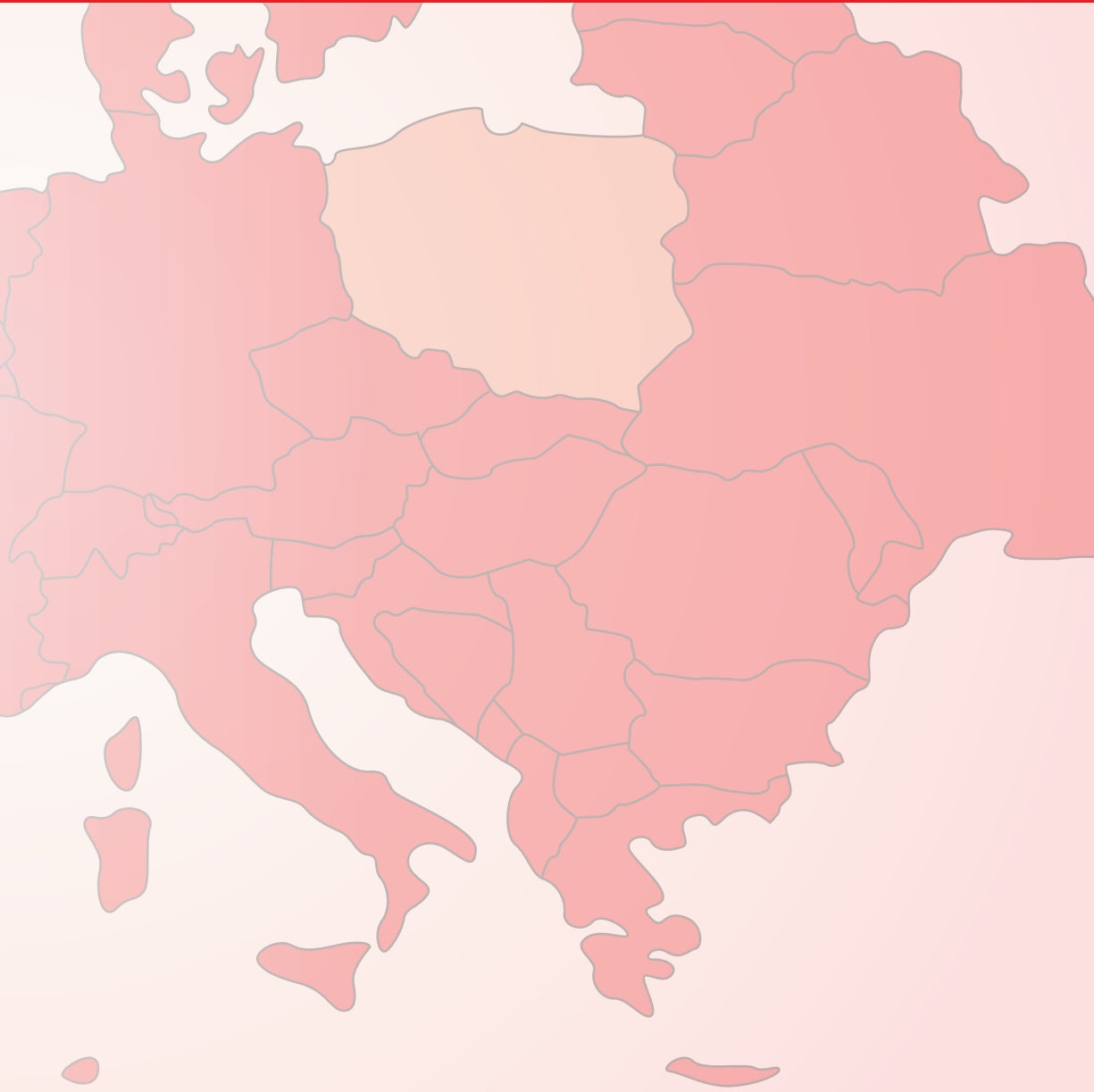
Focus area 4.1	Health
Objective 1	<i>To promote healthy lifestyles and to prevent communicable diseases on national level and in geographical focus areas</i>
Objective 2	<i>To strengthen primary health care and social services in the peripheral and disadvantageous region of the geographic focus areas in favouring a multi-sectorial programmatic approach</i>
Focus area 4.2	Research and development (including the Polish-Swiss Research Programme and the Scholarship Fund)

**Priority 5** – Special allocations – allocation 61.547.430 CHF

Focus area 5.1	Block grant for NGOs and Polish-Swiss Regional Partner Projects
Focus area 5.2	Projects proposed by the Swiss party
Focus area 5.3	Project Preparation Facility
Focus area 5.4	Swiss Programme Management
Focus area 5.5	Polish Technical Assistance



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE  
PROTECTION AND CROSS-BORDER  
ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES



# SWITZERLAND SUPPORTS NATURE PROTECTION

Sustainable development cannot take place without respect for nature. Three elements: economy, society and environment, must work coherently. Hence, one of the areas of intervention agreed between the Polish and the Swiss governments was focus area: Biodiversity and nature protection and cross-border environmental initiatives.

Switzerland as a country located in more than 70% in the mountainous area, with extensive farming sustained, and developed eco-tourism, has broad experience in the development of naturally valuable areas in a sustainable way.

At the same time, Switzerland is a country where most important source of the electricity power is renewable energy produced in more than 50% in hydroelectric power stations and in 40% in nuclear power plants, which leaves the Swiss environment at a well-preserved level. Moreover, approximately 30% of the country's area is covered by the nature conservation.

By implementation of seven projects within the focus area Biodiversity and nature protection and cross-border environmental initiatives, Polish authorities have decided to use the experience gained by Switzerland in the field of investment activities with respect to nature conservation, green jobs creation and the development of agritourism and ecotourism.

A wide spectrum of activities, ranging from large-scale inventory and monitoring of habitats and animal species, through extensive training and initiatives aimed at increasing of the public's ecological awareness, to the development of coherent conservation strategies and the implementation of specific restoration measures for endangered ecosystems, have allowed to achieve ambitious ecological effects assumed at the beginning of project implementation. The strategic documents developed, have set the direction for further sustainable development, whereas the experience gained is an excellent basis for further projects aimed at reducing socioeconomic disparities, particularly in the agricultural and mountainous areas, carried out with respect for the environment and its ecosystems.

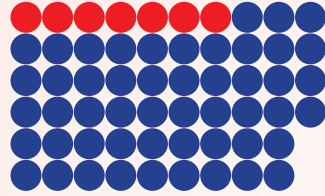
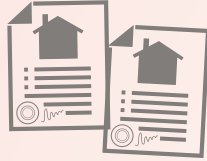




# SWISS – POLISH COOPERATION PROGRAMME



7 projects implemented within the area

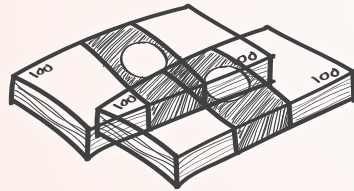


7 out of 58 projects implemented in Poland

projects implementation period

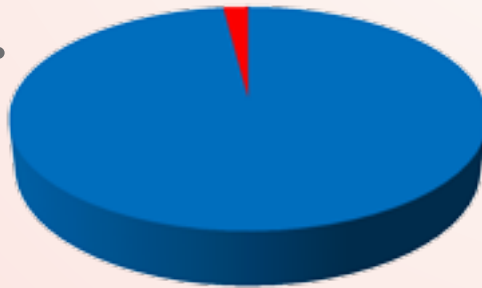


SPCP contribution



**9 818 134 CHF**

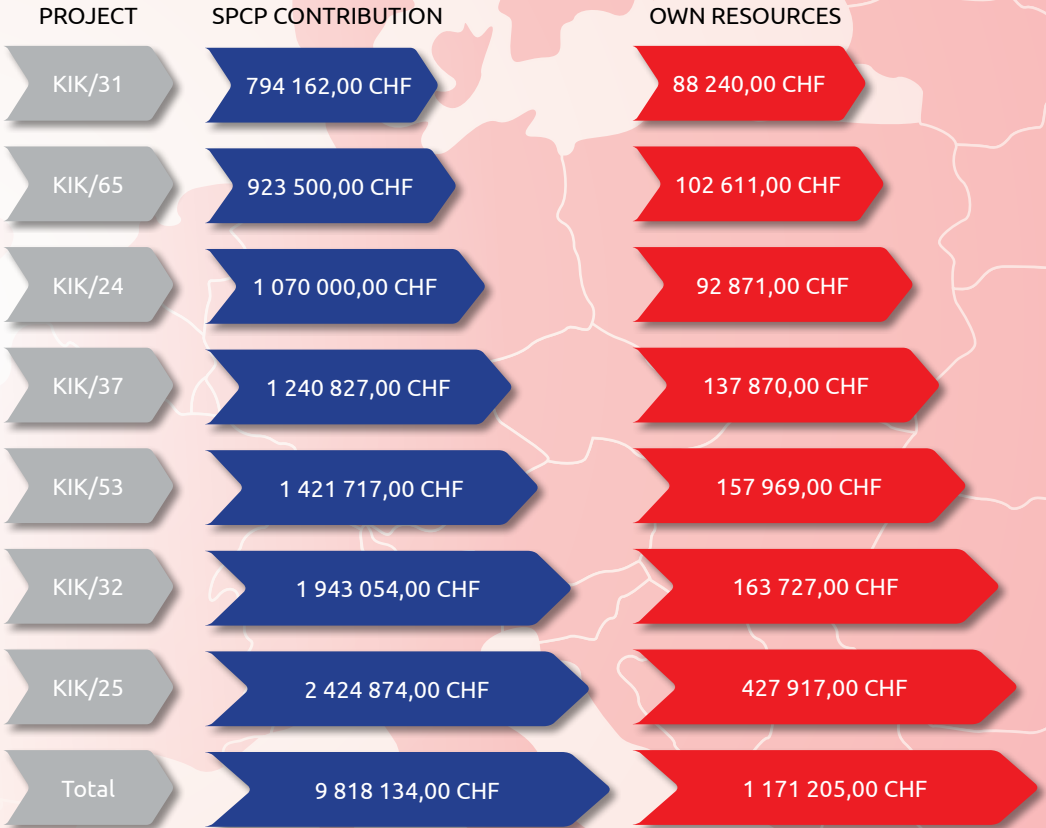
allocated to Poland



**● 2,01%**

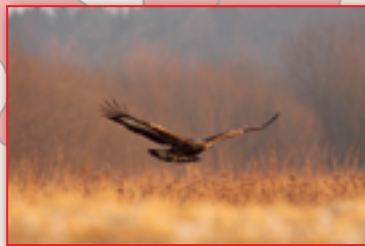
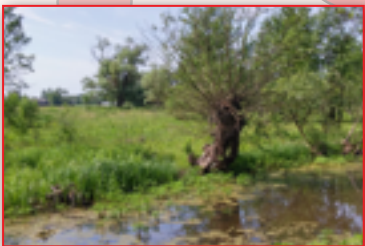
# BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE PROTECTION AND CROSS-BORDER ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

projects by budget size





# PROJECTS





# Birds of the Carpathians

High mountains, clean streams, extensive forests and wildlife (eagles, bears, wolves) – is what most of us associate the Carpathians with. The history of this region as well as its specific environmental conditions, the inaccessibility of breeding sites and the refuge of wildlife have made the local nature preserve in many places its unique diversity, richness and character specific only for this region. These mountains are one of the most valuable natural areas of Poland, still remaining one of the least recognized regions in terms of nature.

The variety of birds of the Polish Carpathians is remarkable - for some it is the most important nesting region in Poland and even in Europe. The golden eagle (merely 30 pairs), the lesser spotted eagle, the black grouse, the capercaillie, the Ural owl, the ring ouzel, the white-backed woodpecker and three-toed woodpecker, the wallcreeper and the water piper - are just some of them. Approximately 11% of nesting species in the region are endangered in the country. The survival of species in our country depends on which of them will be protected in the Carpathians.

The incomplete identification of natural resources (lack of comprehensive inventories covering a wider area), incomplete information on the situation and threats to natural resources (lack of comprehensive monitoring programs), and lack of sufficient knowledge of these resources among the society led to incomplete and ineffective environmental protection of the Carpathians.

The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds took a challenge to investigate the distribution and abundance of key species of birds in

the Polish part of the Carpathians (about 45 species, mainly from Annex I of the Birds Directive and the Polish Red Book of Animals) and to collect information on the status of their habitats and threats.

For this purpose, the Association has been carrying out activities related to the first ever, comprehensive inventory of birds and their habitats across the whole region in the area of 530 000 ha resulting in new monitoring data for 80 bird species.

The results of the inventory are summarized in the book „Birds of the Polish Carpathians - status, threats, protection”, in strategies and auxiliary documents to support the planning process of bird protection in the region, the main customers of which include the Regional Directorate for Environmental Protection, National Parks, Landscape Parks, Forest Districts, Regional Directorates of State Forests, Agricultural Advisory Centers, non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions.

Data collected during the inventory were also used on a regular basis by various institutions

” Within the framework of the Birds of the Carpathians project, OTOP undertook extensive monitoring activities, documenting birds and their habitats in the Polish part of the Carpathians. A book summarizing these activities is a practical tool for academics, local authorities, public administrations, owners and users of space and forest managers. ”

Fritz Hirt,  
consultant, SVS/Bird Life Schweiz

(particularly Regional Directorates for Environmental Protection), among others when evaluating an investment or in the process of preparing protective plans.

The main target groups of the project including farmers, foresters and local governments, have had a broad knowledge on local natural resources and forms of farming that will be favourable for their protection and will promote local economic development. At the same time representatives of these target groups were provided with tools - strategies presenting concrete solutions (12 strategies for sustainable development for municipalities, 10 strategies for bird protection for forest districts), which will support the real implementation of pro-environmental solutions. The society was informed about the natural values of the Carpathians, the need and possibilities for their protection, through a series of educational and promotional activities, e.g. over 1000 people have been trained, including teachers, there have been published a Carpathian tour guidebook, brochures, folders, leaflets regarding 5 selected regions in the Carpathians, posters presenting birds of selected habitats. Creating a network of more than 100 volunteers will provide longterm monitoring of the region, also after the completion of the project.

Good practices developed within the project, included in the developed strategies and presented during the training sessions will be used by other local government units in the activities carried out by them for nature protection such as active protection of habitats and species.

**3037**

field inspections carried out

**530 000 ha**

of the area covered by new, reliable monitoring data

**27**

developed strategies for bird protection



Project: **KIK/24**

Executing Agency: **The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds**

SPCP contribution: **1 070 000 CHF**

Implementation period: **2011.05 - 2017.03**





# AgroProNature

The Lubelskie province is one of the regions of a significant role in the agricultural sector. At the same time, it is an area of particularly high biodiversity at national level, particularly in agricultural areas. More than half of the region's inhabitants live in rural areas - 53.4%, and agricultural land accounts for 57.8% of the total area of the province.

One of the most important tools for the protection of biodiversity in these areas is the agri-environmental programme - a tool enabling the binding of economic activity with the protection of natural values. It is an important source of the EU funding for farmers operating in less-favored areas, which are most often valuable natural areas, and as a consequence may be an impulse for the creation of small and medium-sized non-agricultural enterprises in rural areas.

At the same time, the EU's environmental policy assumes to maintain in a good condition and to increase biodiversity in natural areas as well as to increase their range.

Therefore, the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute in

Pulawy together with partners: The Institute of Technology and Nature in Falenty, The Polish Society for the Protection of Birds and the University of Natural Sciences and Humanities in Siedlce decided to implement a project the main purpose of which was to preserve and increase biological diversity on arable lands, mainly in the NATURE 2000 area in the Lubelskie voivodeship, also by assessing the impact of various agricultural practices - including agri-environmental programme - on biodiversity and then establishing a biodiversity monitoring network on agricultural land.

Within the project, on the selected sites, a natural inventory was carried out, followed by monitoring of the species diversity of the plants, breeding birds, spiders and prostaquin, analysing simultaneously,



” Thanks to the study „Recommendations for changes in the agri-environment programme” and other results, the project should contribute to the orientation and shaping of the new agri-environment programme for the years 2021-2027. ”

Jarosław Stalenga,  
project coordinator, Institute of Soil Science  
and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute

the way of farming and taking into account the structure of field use, crop rotation, fertilization, size and distribution of fields, share of non-productive areas etc. Based on the results obtained in the research section, the current knowledge and legal conditions, there have been developed appropriate educational and training tools which helped to carry out informative campaign – training, educational films, textbooks – addressed to different groups of stakeholders in 4 voivodeships: the Podkarpackie, Swietokrzyskie, Malopolskie and Lubelskie.

Apart from obtaining valuable natural data for practical management of nature in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, the project has developed a Code of Good Agricultural Practices for Biodiversity and information brochures on butterfly species and indicator plants for naturally valuable meadows and fields, rare bird species, and the significance of spiders in agroecos. They are currently used as educational materials during training for natural science candidates at the Centre for Agricultural Advisory Services in Brwinow and postgraduate studies: Environmental Management „Ekoznacwa” at the University of Wrocław.

Also, the recommendations provided by the project team were used by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to develop the so-called Agri-environmental and climate packages of the Rural Development Program 2014-2020.

3

networks of natural monitoring of the agri-environmental programme on agricultural land

800

trained farmers

1000

trained employees of administration, non-governmental organizations, agri-environmental advisors, natural experts and teachers



Project: **KIK/25**

Executing Agency: **Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation - State Research Institute**

SPCP contribution: **2 424 874 CHF**

Implementation period: **2011.05 - 2017.06**



# The people-friendly Carpathians

The southern part of the Podkarpackie province due to its valuable landscape qualities as well as to rich cultural heritage is a tourist attractive area. The most popular attractions include natural areas of the Bieszczady Mountains, the Lower Beskids, Solina Lake and the San Valley. Along with the observed inflow of tourists, the pressure of economic development has been increasing on rare and valuable areas.

At the same time, low awareness and level of public knowledge on biodiversity and business practices in biodiversity, local tensions at the nature protection-business contact point, in the context of the NATURE 2000 Directive, and insufficient investment to limit the tourist pressure on the valuable natural resources of the Bieszczady National Park were observed.

The need to manage these problems inspired the authors of the project „*The people-friendly Carpathians*”, the aim of which was to raise awareness and education of the society in areas of natural value, as well as to enable and support the development of the so called „green jobs”, the pro-environmental enterprises, which in their core activities dependent on nature and through which contribute to the protection of biodiversity. Due to limited economic potential resulting from the insufficient number of investments

aimed at limitation the tourist pressure on the valuable natural resources of industrial production and the large number of land use restrictions resulting from conservation considerations within the Bieszczady National Park and NATURE 2000 areas, the development of green jobs has been - for some time - an important strategic objective at the regional level.

Within the project, the Centre for Green Investments Services (COZI) of the Carpathian Foundation was established along with the [www.cozi.org.pl](http://www.cozi.org.pl) portal. As a result of activities carried out by COZI, it was possible to provide 260 counseling hours and a number of business training courses on biodiversity for institutions and individuals intending to start business in this field. COZI's activities support the local community in terms of biodiversity-friendly business.

” There was no such investment in the Bieszczady National Park. Alpine-style toilets, a peat bog footbridge, shelters, all make the park even a more attractive place to relax. ”

dr Ryszard Prędko,  
the Bieszczady National Park

At the same time, as a result of actions taken by the Bieszczady National Park on its territory, investments were created to limit the pressure of tourists on the most valuable natural areas of the park. Within the project it was possible to modernize car parks, purchase automatic tourist traffic monitoring equipment on roads and trails, build wooden shelters and footbridge, as well as build dry toilets (Alpine type). The creation of the Information and Education Centre in Wolosate which raises the awareness of the arriving tourists on the protection of biodiversity in the Carpathians is also an unquestionable success of the project.

In addition, Mountain Volunteer Search and Rescue has conducted preventive and informative activities on safe forms of tourism in protected areas for various age groups and purchased equipment needed to work in mountain rescue. These activities have improved the safety of mountain tourism and raised the awareness of target groups on safe forms of behaviour in the mountains.

The project resulted in a number of actions launched to promote sustainable economic development in the rare and valuable natural area of the Carpathians.

1

centre for Environmental Education established in the Bieszczady National Park in Wolosate

2

partnership agreements signed between public entities and non-governmental organizations in order to establish contact networks and business cooperation on biodiversity

5

built or renovated facilities to reduce the pressure of tourists on valuable natural areas including dry ecological toilets, a wooden resting shelter and a peat bog footbridge



Project: **KIK/31**

Executing Agency:

**Carpathian Foundation - Poland**

SPCP contribution: **794 162 CHF**

Implementation period: **2012.01 - 2015.04**



# Implementation of the Carpathian Convention

The Carpathian region in all its rich biodiversity and landscapes, as well as cultural heritage, is under inevitable and threatening pressure from economic development. Mountain meadows in the Carpathians are home to many species of plants and animals. Progressive forest succession poses a risk to open halls in the Carpathians. The grazing pastures and flowering meadows have been overgrown with groups of blueberries and forests for many years. Biodiversity in the mountain pastures fades. Smaller villages are depopulated in the Carpathians as well as in other regions of the country, with the migration to the city traditional professions, such as the shepherd, disappear. The abandonment of traditional shepherding results in the disappearance of pastoral tradition and the culture associated with grazing sheep. These needs are addressed by the Carpathian Convention, the second largest agreement in the world dealing with the protection of a single mountain area, which was ratified by Poland in 2006.

The effective implementation of the objectives of the Carpathian Convention must be preceded by a number of activities aimed at strengthening the level of partnership and cooperation between non-governmental organisations, local authorities and communities. This goal inspired the authors of the project „*Carpathians unite - mechanism of consultation and cooperation for implementation of the Carpathian Convention*“, who decided to respond to these needs by creating a platform for cooperation, strengthening the capacity of the Carpathian stakeholders (local authorities, institutions and organizations) to implement the Carpathian Convention, to protect the biodiversity and the landscape of the Carpathians by maintaining and developing traditional sheep grazing pastures and semi-natural meadows, supporting the revival of shepherding traditions, popularizing the development of traditional, environmentally friendly farming and developing sustainable

tourism in the Carpathians with particular regard to the areas of natural value.

The project included nature inventories and monitoring of 15 Carpathian pastures that confirmed the positive impact of sheep grazing on biodiversity conservation in the Carpathian pastures. Then, after obtaining the opinion of habitat experts, pastoral capability bases were prepared, sheep were purchased, small shepherding facilities were built or rebuilt. In order to strengthen the role of the traditional economy, a number of pastoral trainings / meetings have been carried out to reconcile the role of grazing and biodiversity preservation. Redyk (transhumance) and Carpathian Festival - special events related to grazing and promotion of traditional pastoral products, were organized.

Tourist traffic in 38 municipalities of this region has been investigated in order to create a tourism strategy combining the needs of tourism with the needs of nature conservation. On the basis of this research,



” It was a project for us, the residents of the Carpathians. We met on pastoral training, exchanged our knowledge of sheep farming, we were able to get acquainted with the experiences of other shepherds and breeders. The programme also gave us the opportunity to broadly promote our activities, especially pastoralism as a way of life and culture, which here in the Carpathians is functioning from the hundreds of years and we hope - will continue to shape our lives and actions. ”

Józef Michatek, Carpathian shepherd

in cooperation with local communities and scientists working in the region, a „Strategy for the sustainable development of the Magical Land of the Lemkos and Pogórze tourism for the period 2015-2020” has been developed.

The strategy is considered to be a model sustainable tourism development strategy, that takes into account the interests of the municipalities, their economic development as well as the environmental values that need protection or reasonable sharing.

The response to strengthening the Carpathian stakeholders' ability to implement the Carpathian Convention was undoubtedly the creation of, among others, the „Carpathian Informatorium (Information Centre)”, which combines 3 groups of recipients: scientists, local communities and lovers of the region, on one, common platform. In order to reach this goal, a Platform for Consultation and Cooperation was also established. Within the framework of the Platform the national and international Carpathian Convention work group meetings were organized, as well as the national action plan for the biodiversity and landscape protocol and the code of good practice for the Carpathian space planning were created. At the same time, the training courses „The Carpathian Leader” and „Environmental Mediations”, the competitions „The Carpathian Municipality” and „The Carpathian Identity” and lectures of the Carpathian Open University were conducted. Undoubtedly, the success and response to the needs diagnosed in the project planning phase is the creation of a Coalition for the Implementation of the Carpathian Convention, which now comprises more than 70 entities.

Nowadays, „The Carpathian Unite” is not only a project and its achievements today, but above all a community of people who appreciate the unique value of the Carpathians. Around a simple idea, many people were involved. A true community, whose goal is to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Carpathians.

38

municipalities implementing the „Strategy for the sustainable development of the Magical Land of Lemkos and Pogórze for 2015-2020”

730

sheep purchased and the investments in shepherding facilities (shepherd's huts, barnyard and logs)

1995

participants of 80 training sessions for the people interested in the subject of shepherding and traditional sheep grazing



Project: **KIK/32**

Executing Agency:

**National Foundation for Environmental Protection - Environmental Information Centre UNEP/GRID Warsaw**

SPCP contribution: **1 943 054 CHF**

Implementation period: **2012.01 - 2017.04**



# Renaturalization of mountain rivers

Road investments carried out in mountain areas over the last 15 years have left a mark on the state of nature and biodiversity. This situation is well illustrated by the case of the Raba River along its valley from Myślenice to Pcim, which as a result of the reconstruction of the national road No. 7 was regulated by strengthening both its banks and the liquidation of the floodplain. The narrowing of the valley and regulation of the riverbed changed the route and fall of the river and increased the unit power of the stream in the riverbed.

The construction of the Raba banks and floodplains has caused damage to the environment, which has been identified as a deterioration of the fish habitat, causing almost complete disappearance of characteristic species (grayling and European bullhead), reducing the riverbeds to impermeable surfaces and the simplification of their geomorphological features, the limited extent of riparian forests and the disappearance of characteristic underwater and coastal vegetation, as well as the inaccessibility of the Raba's tributaries spawning areas for the protected fish (lampreys, bullheads, barbels) for which the NATURE 2000 area was established.

The dams built in the past for the Krzczonowka and Trzebunka streams have caused a break in the natural continuity of the stream and the inability to migrate fish upstream of the dams. In addition, stopping of debris above the dam caused an increase in deep-seated erosion. In the course of seasonal observations and on the

basis of initial monitoring of the Raba and its tributaries, it was noted that all the above mentioned phenomena have also influence on the violent character of the floods in the region, which often causes damage to the existing river infrastructure due to the too rapid flow of water through the riverbed.

Bearing this in mind, the authors of the project „*The Upper Raba River Spawning Grounds*” decided to undertake a number of actions to restore the Raba River and its valleys in the area limited by the development of its banks and floodplains, ultimately leading to the restoration of its natural migration and widening of the riverbed to natural floodplains.

Reclamation of the area consisted, among others, in the modernisation of the anti-debris dams – the cascade on the Krzczonowka stream and the dam in Stroza - in such a way that the patency of the river structures for the river processes and fish migration is provided.

“ During the training, we presented the natural and technical society with compromise guidelines, which prove that instead of building dams and steps, they should be demolished, instead of cutting down trees, they should be planted, instead of extracting gravel from rivers, it should be brought there. As a consequence, the result will be the better, the more we care about monitoring and maintaining rivers as something natural - and not as channels built back in the day or now. ”

Józef Jeleński, project coordinator,  
„Ab Ovo” Association

Simultaneously, the river valley was revitalized based on the proper biological development of the floodplain areas by the removal of alien plant species and the afforestation of river banks with native species suitable for the habitat as well as the plantation of coastal and riverbed vegetation. More than 18 000 trees and shrubs were planted within the project and more than 9 000 cubic meters of rubble and gravel were introduced into the river bed and its tributaries, which together with the modernisation of the dam led to a situation in which 2/3 Raba’s catchment area from Lubień to Stróža is available for fish to spawn in the right environment.

Implementation of the project activities has contributed to the improvement of environmental conditions of the Raba River and its tributaries. The well-designed and managed river section of considerable length will simultaneously serve the continuity of geomorphological and natural processes on its adjacent, built-up sections for many consecutive years. The creation of new floodplains and the expansion of the river bed will also reduce the effects of violent floods in the future.

At the same time, the project organized a number of trainings in the field of river maintenance, biological development of river valleys, applied geomorphology, spatial development and natural valley retention as flood prevention. Trainings were provided for the bodies responsible for water

maintenance and nature conservation, as well as representatives of local government units.

Based on the experience gained with the renaturalization of the Raba River and its tributaries, valuable guidance has been developed. „Possible technical and biological interventions in the maintenance of mountain rivers” are currently used in the implementation of similar undertakings in Poland.

2

cascades and 1 dam on the Raba River and its tributaries removed

18 000

trees and shrubs planted in the area of the Raba River and its tributaries

2/3

of the Raba River catchment area from the Lubień to Stróža section available for fish to spawn in appropriate habitats



Project: **KIK/37**

Executing Agency:  
**„Ab Ovo” Association**

SPCP contribution: **1 240 827 CHF**

Implementation period: **2012.01 - 2017.06**



# Green corridors in the Carpathians

Deforestation and the creation of anthropogenic barriers that are difficult to overtake by animals are one of the main threats to the Carpathian fauna, which is home to large and compact forest complexes. The emergence of new roads, car parks etc. leads to the emergence of increasingly transformed, smaller and more isolated fragments of forests that impede the proper functioning of the animal population.

In turn, genetic isolation causes a decrease in the genetic variability in a population, which in turn leads to its extinction as a result of inbreeding and the lack of a minimum population size being able to survive. The lack of gene exchange and habitat fragmentation processes can be mitigated by preserving or restoration connection between the patches inhabited by these species by creating the green corridors.

This issue was selected as the key one in the project called „*The protection of the refugium of the Carpathian forest fauna – migration corridors*“.

Implementation of the main objective of identifying ecological corridors between habitat patches (forest complexes), critical to maintaining the continuity of large mammal populations in the refugium of the Carpathian forest fauna, was based on the identification of potential ecological corridors and their verification based on data collected in the period of field works carried out during project implementation. During field works, in the winter season,

the method of counting of the crossings of animals through public roads on the basis of tracking was used as well as long-distance tracking according to wolves, lynxes and bears. These observations were confirmed in the summer, by using night observations and photo-traps applied to record the movement of animals crossing through public roads. In addition, the identification of migration route of European bison in the Bieszczady National Park was based on telemetry. For that purpose, animals were fitted with telemetry collars to track their movement. Such an approach allowed for the real determination of the functionality of individual connections between habitat patches, providing optimal living conditions for the specific species covered by the project.

Additionally, during the designation of existing corridors takes into account the possibility of their protection in long time perspective also by identifying particular location that should be subject to special protection and be considered in the process of forming local spatial development plans or studies of the conditions and



” The project has allowed us to gain extremely valuable experience in integrating different stakeholder groups influencing the nature. ”

dr Agnieszka Pieniżek,  
Vice President of the Board, the Association for  
Development and Promotion of the Podkarpacie  
„Pro Carpathia”

directions of the spatial development of the municipality. During field works, 189 bears crossings through public roads of paved surface, 78 European bison crossings, 1020 wolves crossings, 94 lynx crossings, 7649 red deer crossings, 883 wild boars and 8 elk crossings have been registered.

As a result of field works, local migration corridors have been determined that is connections between neighboring habitat patches enabling the functioning of the population and important for preserving the the habitats integrity. Moreover, the critical points have also been identified - connections particularly important for maintaining the continuity of large mammal populations in the region – as well as potential direction of animal migration. A numerical map is a final output of conducted works. The map is showing outlined green corridors, recommended for including in planning documents the Podkarpackie province and in order to manage the nature conservation in the region.

In the course of the entire project a wide information-educational campaign and environmental mediation were being conducted in order to resolve a conflict. As part of mediation representatives of chosen regions and communes covered by the project were involved as well as institutions responsible for processes of planning and road investments.

Additionally a Lesser Spotted Eagle (*Clanga pomarina*) was provided with action of the project in order to ensure a space sufficient for living. For that purpose 6 adult Lesser Spotted Eagles and 5 juveniles were marked with telemetry transmitters and feeding-sites and routes of flights of birds were tracked. As a result, the locations of optimal habitats – feeding sites for Lesser Spotted Eagle of the Carpathian population and the migration routes - have been determined, which will allow for effective protection of this rare species.

**767,67 km**

of identified and confirmed  
migration corridors

**1470 km**

of roads, were animal passes were  
recorded

**1**

developed digital map of ecological  
corridors as a new planning document



Project: **KIK/53**

Executing Agency: **The Association for  
Development and Promotion of the  
Podkarpacie „Pro Carpathia”**

SPCP contribution: **1 421 717 CHF**

Implementation period: **2012.01 - 2017.03**



# Protection of the Vistula oxbows in Malopolska

The river regulation made in the interwar years and in the 60's of the previous century caused that the Upper Vistula losing its natural character - the river bed was regulated, the meanders were crossed by embankments. The development of industry, agriculture and the associated chemical pollution of the river, the discharge of untreated municipal waste water, the dredging and extraction of sediments, have completed the destruction of the river.

As a result of the Vistula regulation and the construction of flood embankments, the process of natural regeneration of the oxbow lake, which is a valuable habitat for numerous protected species of plants and animals as well as a breeding ground for birds or amphibians, has been stopped.

Currently, due to the improvement of the environment condition, there is a chance for at least partial restoration of the Vistula's natural functions and this was the idea of the authors of the project *„Revitalisation, biodiversity protection and usage of the Vistula River oxbows, preventing degradation of Upper Vistula River Valley as an ecological corridor“*.

The aim of the project was to preserve and increase the biodiversity of the Vistula

riverbed, to popularize natural values of the oxbow lake and the idea of its protection as well as the increase of interest in the Vistula Valley as a recreation area.

Within the framework of a project natural valorisation in the area of more than 700 hectares has been carried out. The species composition of flora and fauna in more than 210 oxbow lakes has been examined. Birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, dragonflies, snails, fish and flora composition on each of the old river beds have been subject of research.

Based on the aforementioned research, some activities related to active protection have been also successfully done including: flora reintroduction (yellow floating heart, Water Chestnut, European white

” Revitalization of the oxbow in the municipality of Zator (oxbow owned by a private owner) allowed to restore a habitat of the European fire – bellied toad . ”

Karol Ciężak, The Society for the Earth

water lily), planting selected oxbow lakes with trees, such as headed willows or replenishing plantings to create convenient bird habitats, amphibian movement and migration monitoring was carried out, waste disposal, dredging etc. Revitalization of the „Nowa Huta Meadows” contributed to the return to the old river of Montagu’s harrier - the bird of prey covered by the species protection listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, whereas revitalization of the oxbow lake in the municipality of Zator allowed to restore a habitat of the European fire – bellied toad.

In total, 16 oxbow lakes were revitalized, where 30 information and leisure spots, 20 podiums were located, and 90 km of educational trails lead to these new places of rest and recreation.

The reclaimed terrains are equipped with information boards and bicycle racks so that they can be visited by locals and tourists, as well as be used as convenient places for ecological education adjusted to various age groups.

In addition, under the project a program of migration channels revitalization for selected Vistula tributaries, a revitalization program for the Vistula oxbow „Zakole B” and a revitalization program for the Upper Vistula River have been developed. The last of mentioned programs includes an ecological model of the flood protection of the city of Cracow, as well as makes river passable for fish migration in the Upper Vistula Cascade.

Over the past several decades, people have gradually turned away from the increasingly polluted Vistula River. Thanks to the project implemented by the Society for the Earth, there is a real chance that the trend will be reversed and the Vistula will be returned to the society with its natural values preserved.

157,82 ha

of the area covered by the legal protection as a project result

16

oxbows renovated

3

revitalization programmes of the Vistula River in the Malopolska Region



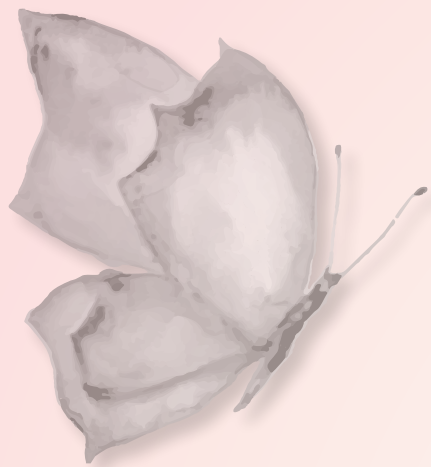
Project: **KIK/65**

Executing Agency:

**The Society for the Earth**

SPCP contribution: **923 500 CHF**

Implementation period: **2012.05 - 2017.03**



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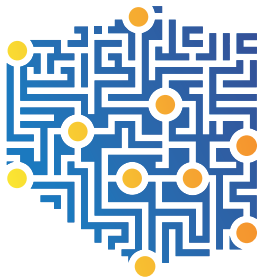
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Currently, CPDP is a state budgetary unit subordinated to the Minister of Digitization, which, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Poland, implements tasks related to the management of the European Union structural funds (Operational Programme Digital Poland 2014 - 2020), non - returnable foreign aid (Swiss - Polish Cooperation Programme for years 2007 - 2017), as well as the funds of other programmes, which implementation was entrusted to it.

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