

The Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative

Development Strategy 2008-2012

The Story of CERI So Far

An ecoregion-based scale of cooperation

In 1999 the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative (CEI) was born as an informal consortium of more than 50 organisations (governmental, non-governmental, funding, scientific and academic organisations) from seven countries of the Carpathian region with the shared aim to conserve the globally-important biodiversity of the Carpathians, and at the same time, ensure sustainable livelihoods. The CERI (formerly the 'CEI') was first known as '**Ecoregion Based Conservation in the Carpathians (ERBC)**', and it evolved out of the platform of the WWF's Global 200 Program, designed to provide the blueprint to stem the loss of biodiversity occurring on an ecoregion scale.

The original 'Vision' conceived by its founders was

"the conservation of nature in the globally important Carpathian Mountains, and, at the same time, support local economy and culture for the lasting benefit of people living in the heart of Europe" .

The 'CEI' – as it was known at the time - was the first project of the truly regional scale and initially proved to be, quite probably, the most successful WWF initiated programme in Europe. The main output of the early stages of the Initiative was the drafting of the '**Status of the Carpathians**,' (2001), published in both English and local Carpathian languages. The status was derived from a two year adaptive reconnaissance and assessment process - conducted by joint international working groups and experts on: biodiversity, forests, plant communities, vascular plants, large carnivores and herbivores, birds, amphibians and reptiles, insects, rivers and fish, water and flood management, protected areas, tourism and recreation, sustainable development, socio-economics, industry, energy, mining, transport and agriculture. The document presented for the first time the threats and values of the region and helped pave the way for the two most important high-level events in the Carpathians:

- the **Bucharest Summit**, 2001, involving all heads of state and environmental ministers, journalists and international dignitaries, which the CEI organized, which adopted a "Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Carpathian-Danube region."
- This Summit then opened the way for the negotiation process for the "**Carpathian Convention**", which was signed two years later (2003) in Kiev.

The most important specific result to emerge from the Status Report was the identification of **30 Priority Areas for Biodiversity Conservation in the Carpathians**, based on results of biodiversity assessment indicating areas of "very high" and "high" biodiversity values, which will be used in the next phase of the CERI in the '**Carpathian Ecoregional System of Protected Areas**' project to strengthen and extend the management of the network of protected areas of the Carpathians.

This accomplishment would not have been possible without mapping work undertaken by the GIS workgroup and led by Daphne, which kept pace with the data-gathering from the Sustainable Development and Biodiversity workgroups every step of the process, standardized their entry, and converted them into overlays on the '**user-friendly**' CD-

ROM included in the back of the Status Report (e.g. one can easily overlay the 'future transport network' map with the '*Lynx lynx*' distribution map and obtain a rough visual estimate of encroachment of future transport developments in the Carpathians into lynx habitat).

Another important activity under the Initiative was a small grants program supporting local sustainable development projects in model areas throughout the Carpathians.

Finally, the Initiative created numerous theme reports and fact-sheets resulting from the above-described inventory process, focusing not only on biodiversity issues but also on, e.g. stakeholders of the region, sustainable development, socio-economics and evaluation of SAPARD in the Carpathian context. In 2003, the Initiative published the first "Carpathian List of Endangered Species"

Creating an organisation for the future from the Lessons learned from the past.

While the Initiative was remarkably successful in the beginning, it underwent a hiatus from 2002 to late 2003, with a drop in partnership to only 3-4 active NGOs. Detailed analysis since this time has revealed that this was due to an abstract and unfocused vision, diffused partnership and over reliance on a single organisation, notably WWF who was providing much of the resources and momentum for the activities at that time.

A 'Phoenix Meeting' was held in November 2003 by the partners that had been historically dedicated to the Initiative came together to discuss efforts needed to revive the Initiative. The primary outcome of this meeting was the decision that the Initiative should become an autonomous independent legal entity based in the Carpathians rather than an informal collective effort by the partners. Following this pivotal meeting and this change in strategy, a one-year long restructuring process ensued, involving consultations by the each of the "surviving partners" with key past partners, NGO participants and stakeholders. The aim was to ensure that this new organisation would be based on sound foundations to make sure that the effort would be sustainable.

In March 2005 **CERI – the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative** was legally established in Slovakia and the Initiative was reborn.

On 1st March 2006 the fully operational **CERI Secretariat** was established in Bratislava, Slovakia. Since that time, the CERI Secretariat consisting of two full-time project managers and part-time financial manager, technical assistant and IT expert is coordinating the network activities in seven Carpathian countries. All work is undertaken under the lead of the CERI Board and General Assembly and with the important help of CERI Chair and coordinators of CERI Working Groups. CERI for the first time in its history started its work as an independent legal entity, as a network of equal members where their potential, experiences, skills and focus are setting the direction in which CERI develops its activities. And this model turned to be very successful and effective since the beginning, what results not only in increasing the quality of CERI work, but also in number of new applicants interested in joining the network.

Comments by Jan Seffer

The strategy

1. Vision

„To achieve the long term conservation of the unique nature of the globally important Carpathian Mountains, while supporting its economy and culture for the lasting benefit of people through international partnership“

2. Mission

CERI promotes international cooperation, supports and coordinates activities relevant for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Carpathian region.

3. Long-term Objective of CERI

To provide a Carpathian-wide network to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable development within the framework of Carpathian Convention.

4. The CERI “5C” network approach

The members of CERI share the same objective and recognise that each member alone cannot achieve this objective. The members of CERI have therefore have formed CERI to help them work together to achieve this shared objective in recognition that the collaboration will achieve more than the sum of all the individual efforts by the members. The members of CERI have established a secretariat to help the members use the following approaches to achieve its goals and objectives:

Conservation Broker: *The CERI will create and implement multi-lateral and bi-lateral projects across the Carpathians and will help each other to **find and share funds and resources** for projects aimed to achieve the objective of CERI.*

Communications: *The CERI will have a **strong voice** on matters that concern its vision and goals. The members want others to know about its work and objectives and want to be able to communicate amongst themselves as a network to effectively share ideas and concerns.*

Coordination: *The strength of CERI is its members and the scale and scope of its achievement will be based on the strong participation of its members. The members have joined CERI to achieve coordinated action and will work together to be **effective and efficient**. The CERI Secretariat will help to coordinate the work and interests of the members.*

- Clearing-House:** *Efficient biodiversity conservation requires detailed data and information. Only based on them it is possible to identify and implement proper conservation measures. CERI has been created to **collect data, to share it and provide it** where relevant for conservation purposes.*
- Capacity-Building:** *To achieve its goals across the region , CERI relies on its members and will help to build their capacity, in order to enable and support NGOs and research institutes to become equal partners in expert discussions and to implement the biodiversity conservation in practice. **Only strong capacity of members** and partners can lead CERI into fulfilment of its long-term objective.*

The CERI network has set its task for the next five years:

5. 2008-2012 Goal – a Living Carpathians

*CERI will have led the design and development of a robust ecological framework for a **Living Carpathians** and supported and inspired its implementation in all seven Carpathian Countries.*

***A Living Carpathians** is a region where natural and socio-economic processes flow harmonically, where human society planning its development takes into account interests of wild nature, where interests of humans are considered not only from economic point of view, but its ecological requirements are taken into attention in equal measure.*

6. 2008-2012 Objectives

- 1. A Convention Network:** The CERI will have contributed and influenced the achievement of a strong, focused Carpathian Convention. The Secretariat and parties to the Convention recognize CERI as an effective grass-roots, civil society partner for implementation and development of the Convention.
- 2. A development Network:** The CERI network will support sustainable development in the Carpathians linking it always to the creation of a Living Carpathians.
- 3. A Scientific Network:** The CERI will create a regional information and expertise centre for biodiversity investigation and conservation in the Carpathians
- 4. A Network Support:** The CERI membership is an effective and efficient organisation with the capacity to deliver on its objectives through its „5C“ approach providing support and equal benefits to all its members.

7. 2008 - 2012 Achievements (Goals)

1. A Convention Network

- the Secretariat and parties to the Convention recognize CERI as an effective expert, grass-roots, civil society partner for implementation and development of the Convention.
- CERI will actively participate on development of Biodiversity Protocol (BP)
- CERI will contribute to implementation of BP through research, education and environmental policy activities

2. A development Network: Good results of fulfilled common projects

3. A Scientific Network:

- CERI is the recognised first-stop regional source of data and information and the centre of expertise for biodiversity investigation and conservation in the Carpathians
- CERI will establish Centre for Research and Monitoring of Carpathian Biodiversity (CRMCB) which will coordinate regional research projects and administrate Carpathian Biodiversity Information System

4. A Network Support:

- CERI will develop strong network of NGOs and research organisations active on ecoregional, national and local levels
- Strong Secretariat and Board will support CERI members by facilitating of communication, fundraising and lobbying on international level

Organisational Development Strategy
Fundraising Strategy
Communication Strategy

comments by Yaroslav Dovhanych

1. Vision

„to achieve the long term conservation of the unique nature of the globally important Carpathian Mountains, while supporting its economy and culture for the lasting benefit of people through international partnership“

2. Mission

CERI promotes international cooperation, supports, and coordinates activities relevant for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Carpathian region.

Deleted: and

Deleted: the support and

Deleted: coordination

Deleted: of

3. Long-term Objective of CERI

To provide a Carpathian-wide network to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable development within the framework of Carpathian Convention.

4. The CERI “5C” network approach

The members of CERI share the same objective and recognise that each member alone cannot achieve this objective. The members of CERI have therefore have formed CERI to help them work together to achieve this shared objective in recognition that the collaboration will achieve more than the sum of all the individual efforts by the members. The members of CERI have established a secretariat to help the members use the following approaches to achieve its goals and objectives:

Conservation Broker: *The CERI will create and implement multi-lateral and bi-lateral projects across the Carathians and will help each other to **find and share funds and resources** for projects aimed to achieve the objective of CERI.*

Communications: *The CERI will have a **strong voice** on matters that concern its vision and goals. The members want others to know about its work and objectives and want to be able to communicate amongst themselves as a network to effectively share ideas and concerns.*

Coordination: *The strength of CERI is its members and the scale and scope of its achievement will be based on the strong participation of its members. The members have joined CERI to achieve coordinated action and will work together to be **effective and efficient**. The CERI Secreteriat will help to coordinate the work and interests of the members.*

Clearing-House: *Efficient biodiversity conservation requires detailed data and information. Only based on them it is possible to identify and implement proper conservation measures. CERI has been created to **collect data, to share it and provide it** where relevant for conservation purposes.*

Deleted: is

Capacity-Building: *To achieve its goals across the region , CERI relies on its members and will help to build their capacity, in order to enable and support NGOs and research institutes to become equal partners in expert discussions and to implement the biodiversity conservation in practice. **Only strong capacity of members** and partners can lead CERI into fulfillment of its long-term objective.*

The CERI network has set its task for the next five years:

5. 2008-2012 Goal – a Living Carpathians

CERI will have led the design and development of a robust ecological framework for a **Living Carpathians** and supported and inspired its implementation in all seven Carpathian Countries.

A Living Carpathians is a region where natural and socio-economic processes flow harmonically, where human society planning its development takes into account interests of wild nature, where interests of humans are considered not only from economic point of view, but its ecological requirements are taken into attention in equal measure.

Deleted:

Formatted: Font color: Red

Formatted: English (U.S.)

Formatted: Ukrainian

6. 2008-2012 Objectives

- 1. A Convention Network:** The CERI will have contributed and influenced the achievement of a strong, focused Carpathian Convention.
- 2. A development Network:** The CERI network will support sustainable development in the Carpathians linking it always to the creation of a Living Carpathians. *Linking, kicking, connecting!*
- 3. A Scientific Network:** The CERI will create a regional information and expertise centre for biodiversity investigation and conservation in the Carpathians
- 4. A Network Support:** The CERI membership is an effective and efficient organisation with the capacity to deliver on its objectives through its „5C“ approach providing support and equal benefits to all its members.

Deleted: and

Deleted: the Secretariat and parties to the Convention recognize CERI as an effective grass-roots, civil society partner for implementation and development of the Convention.

Deleted: is the recognised first-stop

Deleted: source of data and

Deleted: the

Deleted: of

Deleted: expertise

Deleted: biodiversity

7. 2008 -2012 Achievements

1. A Convention Network: the Secretariat and parties to the Convention recognize CERI as an effective grass-roots, civil society partner for implementation and development of the Convention.

Formatted: Font color: Red

2. A development Network: Good results of fulfilled common projects.

Formatted: Font: Not Bold, Font color: Red, English (U.S.), Not Highlight

3. A Scientific Network: CERI is the recognised first-stop regional source of data and information and the centre of expertise for biodiversity investigation and conservation in the Carpathians

Formatted: Font: Not Bold, Font color: Red, Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Not Bold, Font color: Red, Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Not Bold, Not Highlight

4. A Network Support:
Organisational Development Strategy
Fundraising Strategy
Communication Strategy

Formatted: Font: Not Bold

Formatted: Font color: Red

Formatted: Font color: Red

Formatted: Font color: Red

Comments by Hildegard Meyer

The strategy

1. Vision

„to achieve the long term conservation of the unique nature of the globally important Carpathian Mountains, while supporting its economy and culture for the lasting benefit of people through international partnership“

2. Mission

CERI promotes international cooperation and supports the support and coordination of activities relevant for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Carpathian region.

3. Long-term Objective of CERI

To provide a Carpathian-wide network to support biodiversity conservation and sustainable development within the framework of Carpathian Convention.

4. The CERI “5C” network approach

The members of CERI share the same objective and recognise that each member alone cannot achieve this objective. The members of CERI have therefore have formed CERI to help them work together to achieve this shared objective in recognition that the collaboration will achieve more than the sum of all the individual efforts by the members. The members of CERI have established a secretariat to help the members use the following approaches to achieve its goals and objectives:

Conservation Broker: *The CERI will create and implement multi-lateral and bi-lateral projects across the Carathians and will help each other to **find and share funds and resources** for projects aimed to achieve the objective of CERI.*

Communications: *The CERI will have a **strong voice** on matters that concern its vision and goals. The members want others to know about its work and objectives and want to be able to communicate amongst themselves as a network to effectively share ideas and concerns.*

- Coordination:** *The strength of CERI is its members and the scale and scope of its achievement will be based on the strong participation of its members. The members have joined CERI to achieve coordinated action and will work together to be **effective and efficient**. The CERI Secretariat will help to coordinate the work and interests of the members.*
- Clearing-House:** *Efficient biodiversity conservation requires detailed data and information. Only based on them is it possible to identify and implement proper conservation measures. CERI has been created to **collect data, to share it and provide it** where relevant for conservation purposes.*
- Capacity-Building:** *To achieve its goals across the region, CERI relies on its members and will help to build their capacity, in order to enable and support NGOs and research institutes to become equal partners in expert discussions and to implement the biodiversity conservation in practice. **Only strong capacity of members** and partners can lead CERI into fulfillment of its long-term objective.*

The CERI network has set its task for the next five years:

5. 2008-2012 Goal – a Living Carpathians

*CERI will have led the design and development of a robust ecological framework for a **Living Carpathians** and supported and inspired its implementation in all seven Carpathian Countries.*

A Living Carpathians is

6. 2008-2012 Objectives

- 1. A Convention Network:** The CERI will have contributed and influenced the achievement of a strong, focused Carpathian Convention and the Secretariat and parties to the Convention recognize CERI as an effective grass-roots, civil society partner for implementation and development of the Convention.
- 2. A development Network:** The CERI network will support sustainable development in the Carpathians linking it always to the creation of a Living Carpathians. *Linking, kicking, connecting!*
- 3. A Scientific Network:** CERI is the recognised first-stop regional source of data and information and the centre of expertise for biodiversity and biodiversity conservation in the Carpathians

4. **A Network Support:** The CERI membership is an effective and efficient organisation with the capacity to deliver on its objectives through its „5C“ approach providing support and equal benefits to all its members.

7. 2008 -2012 Achievements

1. A Convention Network:

- The Secretariat together with the CERI WGs takes the lead of the coordination between the Carpathian Convention and organization.
- **Participate in the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity;** give support to the develop of the Biodiversity Protocol, carry out projects that are relevant to the Protocol that might be adopted at COP2; CERI WG on Biodiversity strongly involved
- Participate in the WG on Sustainable Tourism; contribute to the development of the Sustainable Tourism Protocol and Strategy; run at least one project under the umbrella of the Carpathian Convention, where at least 2 or more Carpathian countries are involved.

2. A development Network:

- CERI members are strongly involved in projects of sustainable development in the Carpathians. The webpage is actively used as information and experience exchange platform. CERI is known at the local level.
- Via its activities CERI attracts more and more organizations to become active members.
- CERI is networking and building strong partnerships with other players in the region.
- The Secretariat at the regional together with the National Focal Points at the national level takes the lead of the coordination.

3. A Scientific Network:

- List of Experts in various fields (biodiversity, large carnivores, botany, freshwater, wetlands, Natura 2000, protected area management, GIS, etc.) is available. These experts agree to be at anyone's disposal for questions in their specific field. Frequently Asked Questions are published on the CERI webpage.
- Scientist institutions among CERI members support and run projects to improve scientific knowledge in the region. The results derived from the projects are used to develop political statements.

4. A Network Support:

Organisational Development Strategy
Fundraising Strategy
Communication Strategy