



**Terminal Evaluation of the Project
Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the
Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions**

By

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March 2015

Acknowledgements

The author wants to thank Ms. Pauline Marima and Mr. Michael Spilsbury, UNEP Evaluation Office Nairobi for the effective supervision of the evaluation work, their valuable contributions during the evaluation process and the review of the evaluation reports.

The evaluator is thankful to Mr. Harald Egerer, Head of UNEP Vienna, and his extraordinary team for document collection / sharing and valuable inputs and advice during the entire evaluation process, specifically as regards the Theory of Change analysis, which had to be theoretically re-constructed.

Last but not least, thanks to all stakeholders who took part in the evaluation (government authorities, protected areas managers, managers of UNEP Divisions, representatives of universities, NGOs, development agencies, etc.). Thanks for the willingness to provide time, knowledge and energy for comments, interviews and meetings that were necessary for the elaboration of the terminal report.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AL	Albania
ALPARC	Alpine Network of Protected Areas
ANPED	Northern Alliance for Sustainability
ASC	(UNEP) Administrative Service Center
AT	Austria
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BSP	Bali Strategic Plan
CADSES	Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Space
CASALEN	Carpathian Sustainable Learning Network
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CC	Carpathian Convention
CCIC	Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee
CEE	Central-Eastern Europe
CEI	Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative
CERI	Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (follow-up)
CH	Switzerland
CNPA	Carpathian Network of Protected Areas
COP	Conference of Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CWI	Carpathian Wetlands Initiative
CZ	Czech Republic
DABEO	Dinaric Arc and Balkan Environmental Outlook
DEPI	Division of Environmental Policy Implementation
DEWA	Division of Early Warning and Assessment
DEZA	Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (Swiss Development Cooperation)
EC	European Commission
ECNC	European Centre for Nature Conservation
EEA	European Environmental Agency
EF	Environmental Fund
ENSI	Environment and Schools Initiative
ENVSEC	Environment and Security Initiative
EO	Evaluation Office (in UNEP Headquarter Nairobi)
ERDF	European Rural Development Fund
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
EURAC	European Academy (in Bolzano)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FRO	First Reporting Officer (UNEP)
FYRoM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
HL	High-level (intermediate states)
HQ	Headquarter
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
IMIS	Integrated Management Information System
IMP	International Mountain Partnership
IR	Inception Report
ISCC	Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IYM	International Year of the Mountains
LL	Low-level (intermediate states)
MDG-F	Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
ML	Medium-level (intermediate states)
MNE	Montenegro
MP	Mountain Partnership
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTS	Medium-term Strategy
N/A	Not applicable
NAP	National Action Plan
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans
NFPs	National Focal Points
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OMV	Oil and Gas Company with Headquarter in Austria
OSCE	Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA	Protected Area
PD	Project Document
PEBLDS	Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy
PIMS	Programme Information Management System
PL	Poland
PoW	Programme of Work
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PR	Public Relations
PRC	Project Review Committee
RBM	Result-Based Management
RDO	Regional Desk Officer
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
RO	Romania
ROE	Regional Office for Europe (UNEP)
ROtI	Review of Outcomes to Impacts
RSO	Regional Support Office
S4C	Science for the Carpathians Initiative
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SARD	Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development
SCC	Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	South-Eastern Europe
SER	Serbia
SK	Slovak Republic
SMART indicators	Stands for: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound indicators
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization (Balkan Office)
SRO	Second Reporting Officer (UNEP)
SWOT analysis	Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats Analysis
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Network
TIM	Transboundary Institutional Mechanism
ToC	Theory of Change

ToR	Terms of Reference
UA	Ukraine
UN	United Nations
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNON	United Nations Office Nairobi
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOV	United Nations Office Vienna (Vienna International Centre)
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Regulation
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WG	Working Group
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development
WTO	(UN) World Tourism Organization
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
XB	Extra-budgetary

Executive Summary

A. Introduction

1. At the request of the Ukraine government, UNEP promoted and serviced the negotiations aimed at developing the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention), which was adopted and signed by seven countries in May 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine. The Parties called for a UNEP serviced interim Secretariat and requested UNEP's Regional Office for Europe (UNEP-ROE) to provide the arrangements. The Carpathian Convention entered into force in January 2006.

2. The UNEP project 'Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the Support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions' supporting the Carpathian Convention process started in October 2003. With the establishment of UNEP Vienna – Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (ISCC) in 2004 the project scope was broadened. UNEP Vienna – ISCC was given the additional mandate to act as the environmental focal point within the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, to promote cooperation in Central and South Eastern Europe and to serve as UNEP's focal point for Austria-based international organizations. The Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention held in the Czech Republic in September 2014, designated UNEP Vienna officially as the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna – SCC)¹.

3. The terminal evaluation of the project covers more than ten years of operation of a project, which in the course of its implementation underwent many revisions, and will be finalized in December 2014. The evaluation is looking at the performance of the project in delivering services, at short-comings in project implementation, and is identifying lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. The findings of the evaluation are based on a desk-top review of relevant documents and – to the extent possible under the limited resources available – on interviews with selected key stakeholders.

B. Evaluation findings and conclusions

4. The first conclusion is that this project cannot be compared with 'normal' projects having a clear goal to be achieved at the project's end. The implementation of the Convention – including its outreach to other mountain regions in the world – is an ongoing process.

5. There is clear evidence that signing of the Convention as a sub-regional instrument for the Carpathians – based on the needs of governments and other important stakeholders – was an excellent idea, providing a mechanism for regional cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination. UNEP played a major role in the support and leadership of this process.

6. As regards **institutional issues and implementation arrangements**, the evaluation concludes that clear and solid operational structures to implement legal, policy and strategic decisions are essential. The Carpathian Convention itself is a solid structure with guiding, coordinating and implementing bodies in place. The establishment of UNEP Vienna in 2004, servicing the Convention process and implementing its additional mandates, was a clear commitment to strengthen UNEP's regional presence and an important and sustainable institutional arrangement, which will continue after the end of this project.

7. The **reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC) analysis** reveals that the project is following a logical pathway leading towards the intended future impact. So far the project successfully produced the programmed activities and outputs as outlined in the adopted Programme of Work (PoW) of the Convention and UNEP's PoW. The Convention process provides the overall framework, and there is evidence that UNEP Vienna – ISCC provided leadership and was effective in servicing the Convention process and steering cooperation amongst Parties. In the Balkans, UNEP Vienna – ISCC was successful in promoting and steering cooperation within and between countries, proven by its prominent role in the ENVSEC Initiative, and the increasing project portfolio.

8. With respect to **coordination and networking**, the evaluation discloses the importance of the inter-governmental platform, specifically for providing a platform for dialogue and discussion, identification of needs, information sharing, development of joint strategies and joint projects. In this respect the fruitful cooperation

¹ The term UNEP Vienna – SCC is used throughout the document

between the Alpine and Carpathian countries, through the Alpine – Carpathian partnership, is worth to be mentioned. Furthermore, the important role UNEP Vienna – ISCC had and should continue to have as a Focal Point for International Mountain Partnership (IMP) and the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiatives in the Balkans is highlighted. To this end the project contributed to the higher global outcomes of realizing the importance of ecological, cultural and socio-economic values of mountain regions, as spelled out in many documents².

9. The project provides the bases for **regional approaches** and for **capacity building processes** on different levels, e.g. the project contributes to enhancing the governance of shared natural resources and transboundary environmental issues. There is clear indication that the project has already achieved its primary objectives related to the facilitation of regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development in the Carpathians, and to provide best practice examples for sub-regional cooperation and partnership in other mountain regions. It will continue to do so even after the project’s lifespan, as it has been supporting an ongoing process, which needs to achieve its objectives on a continuous basis (meaning that with every day of effective cooperation objectives are achieved until the day cooperation would fail).

10. UNEP Vienna – ISCC was aware of the importance of applying **integrated** approaches for the protection of biodiversity and sustainable mountain development, and the project tries – wherever possible – to adapt to changing conditions and to promote integration of sectoral approaches, both on the policy and on the project level, in order to ensure sustainability of the results.

11. Nevertheless, there are some **shortcomings and critical voices** as regards project implementation. These voices regret that the Convention is seen as a ‘soft’ legislation, different than EU directives and regulations, where real possibilities of financial fines and sanctions exist and with no compliance mechanism. There is a gap between the environmental commitments made on paper and practical implementation, and a pressing need for putting priorities at the decision making levels. In some meetings, too much time is spent with endless discussions with no real output or impact, for instance, on the question of the scope of the Convention and the permanent location of its Secretariat. However, this is a point valid for all Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and many instances of international law in general. Of course many stakeholders would like to see greater effectiveness of international environmental law! Though, the Carpathian Convention reflects the maximum of international consensus, which could be achieved on this subject. Therefore, the historic achievement of the development of a full-fledged sub-regional MEA should be considered as a great and outstanding success for UNEP, and the progress on transforming the ‘Interim Secretariat’ into ‘the Secretariat’ is highly acknowledgeable.

12. The overall rating of the project is **satisfactory** and the assessment is summarized in the following table.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator’s Rating	Evaluation Office Rating
A. Strategic relevance	The evaluation reveals that the project is of strategic relevance for global and regional policies and is fully in line with UNEP strategies and programmes.	HS	HS
B. Achievement of outputs	Outputs and activities mentioned in the planning documents, both as regards the PoW under the Convention and UNEP’s PoW, were fully achieved (some with delays explained in the respective sections).	HS	HS
C. Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results	The project contributed effectively to all objectives and produced the results and Outputs are generally of high quality.	S	HS ³

² United Nations General Assembly Declaration of the International Year of Mountains (2002); the importance of Mountain areas, as enshrined in Chapter 13 (Sustainable Mountain Development) of the Declaration on Environment and Development (“Agenda 21”, Rio de Janeiro, 1992); the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and recently in the Rio +20 Outcome Document.

³ The transboundary cooperation between countries that has been facilitated by this project in the context of the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention, has been quite a commendable achievement in consideration of the fact that there was no prior tradition of inter-governmental cooperation in the Carpathian just about a decade ago. The report findings indicate that within the Mountain Partnership, the Carpathian Conventions is seen as best practice example on outreach, and information/experience-sharing, and acknowledged by other mountain regions

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Rating	Evaluation Office Rating
1. Achievement of direct outcomes	Direct outcomes, according to the reconstructed ToC, are to a large extent being achieved, as well as some of the 'low-level intermediate states' have partly also already been achieved.	HS	HS
2. Likelihood of impact	There are already visible impacts in terms of increased cooperation and capacity building, increased visibility of the region, enlarged project portfolio, etc., but there is still a long way to go (in follow-up projects) to reach the intended long-term and ongoing impact.	S	S
3. Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	The project was successful in achieving the goal and objectives. UNEP Vienna – ISCC successfully acted in its capacity as the Secretariat, but also played a key role in strengthening cooperation and partnerships in the Carpathians, the Balkans and other mountain regions.	HS	HS
D. Sustainability and replication	Implemented activities have a high replication value moving towards removal of barriers and opening doors and opportunities for integrating lessons learned through practical projects into policy and decision-making.	L	L
1. Financial	The financial sustainability is seen as critical. Risks, posed by the absence of structural UNEP support, the impact of the economic crisis, the low priority of environment, etc., have to be addressed and mitigated.	L	ML ⁴
2. Socio-political	The project contributes to socio-political sustainability through partnerships with and support by EU macro-regional strategies and funding programmes. As many projects are demand-led, activities are contributing to government and local level ownership.	L	L
3. Institutional framework	The institutional framework and governance sustainability of the Convention process is vested in the commitment of the Parties and will sustain beyond the life of the project. The sustainability of UNEP Vienna – ISCC as a multifunctional sub-regional office and Centre of Excellence in the UNEP family deserves to be fully recognized and supported.	HL	HL
4. Environmental	As regards environmental sustainability , conflict between nature protection and economic development can be mitigated by appropriate measures and the project addresses these issues on several levels	HL	HL
5. Catalytic role and replication	Applied approaches are supporting institutional changes, catalyzing projects and stakeholder behaviour and the replication potential is extremely high and the dissemination of experiences contributes to sustainable mountain development elsewhere in the world.	HL	HL
E. Efficiency	UNEP Vienna – ISCC was efficient in managing project activities and successfully contributed to all planned objectives by using synergies.	HS	HS
F. Factors affecting project performance			
1. Preparation and readiness	Appreciating the flexible and adaptive approaches of the project, the design and planning was done according to UN standards in 2003, not applying the today's	HS	S ⁵

⁴ In light of the findings presented in section 4.4., the EO has considered the rating under this sub-criterion to be "Moderately likely" due to the critical risks identified (economic, social, financial, and political).

⁵ EO considers a "Satisfactory" rating on the understanding that a "Highly Satisfactory" rating implies no significant shortcomings were noted in project performance under this criterion. The original project design lacked a robust logical framework upon which to base the project's causal pathways and progress towards its desired impact. The revised project design documents do however present outcomes, outputs and milestones, and there are (qualitative) indicators and means of verification included. Challenges mentioned in regards to insufficient human resource at the project also point to a noteworthy shortcoming in project design.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Rating	Evaluation Office Rating
	methodology/terminology (designing the new project will take the current standards into account). In terms of readiness, the project was reacting on given opportunities at that time (proven by the success of achievement of results).		
2. Project implementation and management	The effectiveness of project management is generally well perceived and acknowledged. There is a motivated and qualified team in place. Nevertheless, there is clear indication, that staff is overloaded with work, which may have implications for the quality of work in future. Practical work could be further scaled up with stronger UNEP support and a strengthened mandate for the Vienna Office.	S	S
3. Stakeholders participation and public awareness	The evaluation clearly demonstrates that UNEP Vienna – ISCC was very good and effective in stakeholder involvement by providing a platform for combining national, sub-regional and global aspects and all activities are organized in a participatory way. But there is the need for improved participation mechanisms and awareness raising, as well as for strengthening stakeholder involvement on different levels.	S	S
4. Country ownership and driven-ness	The project was demand-led at the beginning and ownership and driven-ness were high among most national partner institutions, which slightly decreased during implementation in some of the countries, in others its constantly increasing, through continuous integration and increase of participation of other line ministries.	S	S
5. Financial planning and management	Financial operations are well managed, services provided by supporting Divisions are satisfactory, but administrative capacity in UNEP Vienna – ISCC needed to be strengthened.	S	S
6. UNEP supervision and backstopping	The delegation of authority to UNEP Vienna – ISCC needs to be optimized and clarified following requests by the COP. The overall supervision and backstopping should be within the full powers and authority of Director UNEP ROE and Head of UNEP Administrative Service Center (ASC).	S	S
7. Monitoring and Evaluation		S	MS ⁶
a. M&E Design	At the beginning, the design of M & E was not according to professional standards used today, but was fully in line with UNEP requirements at the time of project design.	MS	MS
b. Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Costs for monitoring are included in staff time and are not separately specified. No resources for external evaluations were set aside, however, a small amount was made available for the current evaluation.	S	MS
c. M&E Plan Implementation	Originally, a monitoring plan was not included in the project document, but monitoring has improved over time. There is continuous and effective monitoring on several levels and progress and financial reports are accurate and in time.	S	MS
Overall project rating		S	S

C. Lessons learned

13. The most important lessons learned are listed below and are captured and discussed in detail in the report.

⁶ EO considers a “Moderately satisfactory” rating for the criteria under Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). From the onset, the project lacked a robust M&E system to guide strategic planning, scrutinize progress, and reinforce accountability. A higher rating would set the performance bar quite low on what is considered as Best Practice in M&E planning and implementation.

Lesson 1: Robust, operational and financially secured institutional frameworks are important to guarantee sustainable governance structures.

Lesson 2: Leadership and strong coordination at the regional level strengthens cooperation towards sustainable mountain development, and on national levels it enhances ownership and sharing experiences among stakeholders.

Lesson 3: Capacity building through joint projects, responding to and implementing policy decisions ('learning by doing') leads to improved communication and contributes to awareness raising.

Lesson 4: Biodiversity protection at the regional level is only possible through, integrated, and participative approaches.

Lesson 5: Investing in catalytic interventions with the potential of transferability of results contributes to making mountain development in other regions of the world more environmentally sound.

Lesson 6: Project design (for jointly developed regional projects), development and implementation should be subjected to administrative rules and procedures, which are flexible enough to allow for efficient delivery of services in a continuously changing, process-oriented environment.

Lesson 7: Ensuring the required stable organizational framework and strengthened and clarified institutional mandate of the Vienna Office is a prerequisite for efficient and effective management of the project, including appropriate human capacity according to realistic workloads.

Lesson 8: The Carpathian Convention is perceived by stakeholders as a neutral and consensual framework of cooperation, jointly 'owned' by all participating countries, organizations and institutions.

D. Recommendations

14. It has already been decided that there will be a follow-up phase of the project with the same intentionality starting in 2015. The following recommendations should be considered in the development of the project document for the next phase of this process. Reference is made to the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (SCC) following its changed status from interim secretariat. Actionable proposals and responsibilities are proposed in section 5.3.

15. As regards **institutional arrangements**, it is important to have robust governance structures in place, and to continue to build up and effectively manage these structures. Independently of the Secretariat responsibilities, there is a clear need for UNEP to build on the de facto role and functions and track record of achievements of UNEP Vienna – IISCC, and secure its multi-functional mandate as well as the necessary cash and in kind support, to ensure long-term presence in the region and its role as UNEP's global resource centre for sustainable mountain development.

16. There is a need for commitments from governments and political will to steer development towards sustainability. Parties to the Convention are encouraged to focus on strategic issues, to further develop and implement new Protocols, such as on agriculture, energy, mining, etc. The role of the National Focal Points should be strengthened to effectively promote the Convention. However, this is an issue of internal organization of the national administrations involved, external to the project itself.

17. For the Balkan countries it is advisable to keep responding to the current, actual country needs, because it is benefiting the countries, UNEP, and in the long-term, the environment. A follow-up project should look for new partnerships and further support governments in the development and revision of strategic policy papers, as well as in the design and implementation of projects.

18. As regards **coordination, cooperation and networking**, good (semi)legal instruments are in place and should be further used and strengthened, specifically looking for synergies and new partnerships and the negotiation of additional Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperation.

19. Although a lot has been done in the project, **capacity building** is an ongoing process. Capacity building efforts should be an important component in a follow-up project. Activities in this regard should be strengthened at

different levels, and the support and collaboration with relevant UNEP Divisions/UN initiatives (e.g. links to the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy – PEBLDS or the United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF) should be invoked and secured, as there is still a long way to go to achieve the intended impacts as regards sustainable development and environmental protection.

20. There is a clear need for more **integrated approaches** to land management and the linkages between nature protection and other environmental management sectors. A follow-up project should support such approaches on policy and project levels, ensuring a greater focus on land use and spatial planning and incorporating biodiversity aspects into other sectoral policies.

21. The project has proven to be successful with respect to **stakeholder participation**. Nevertheless, there is the need for continued strengthening of stakeholder involvement, specifically as regards the Civil Society Organizations. There are proposals to stronger involve the community level (county councils, mayors, business, etc.). Furthermore, there is the need to have a strategic approach towards the involvement of the European Commission, e.g. foster the relationship through participation in working groups and meetings, and to receive UNEP support for soliciting and obtaining EU involvement and support. It is very important to focus on cooperation with sub-national authorities and to create a flexible platform for their cooperation across borders.

22. In order to ensure a good mix of formal processes on policy level and **projects**, there should be a balance of top-down and bottom-up approaches linking institutional work with practical work on the ground. The current path in catalyzing projects should be followed, but project design and the elaboration process of projects should be improved by better involvement of partners from the very beginning, and looking at their experience and real capacity for implementation. Both for the Carpathian Convention process and for projects in the Balkans, additional UNEP support, e.g. from the Environment Fund, would be needed to enhance the project portfolio and UNEP's reputation in the region.

23. **Sharing and learning from experience** in the Carpathians, and further building up of the global mountain agenda, has a high potential for promoting the Carpathian experience and enhancing UNEP's role, but relevant activities would need strengthened and clarified UNEP-internal mandate and support. On request of governments, UNEP Vienna – as a resource centre for sustainable mountain development – should be ready and enabled to support the negotiations for similar environmental agreements in other mountain regions, adapted to the political, ecological and economic situation.

24. There is the obvious need to invest more resources as regards **communication and awareness raising**. Specifically, the UNEP website providing information on activities other than the Convention has to be newly designed and expanded. Synergies with and support from partners should be thought upon as regards the promotion of the Convention and other mountain related activities. A strategic approach toward collaboration with municipalities and communities as regards awareness raising is needed.

25. In terms of **funding**, UNEP Vienna – SCC is heavily depending on project funding, which might not be sustainable in the long-term and there is the need for a more robust resource mobilization strategy. As regards EU money and the question of co-financing, it is sometimes very difficult to arrange for partner organizations and should therefore be taken seriously and solutions found. There is also the need for increased, predictable, and stable financial support from UNEP, and for making internal UNEP administrative procedures more compatible with donor procedures. With respect to UNEP Vienna's role for liaison work and strengthening the mountain partnership, there is the need for additional resources to effectively implement activities and to sustain the outcomes. There is also the need to strengthen the explicit mandate of the Vienna office for liaison with Vienna Based Organizations.

26. With respect to the **performance of the Secretariat**, although there is a qualified and motivated team in place and the project management is well perceived, there is a clear indication that the exceptional wide range of activities in the future will not be able to be effectively and efficiently managed with the current resources, meaning that human and financial resources should be adequate to the numerous tasks. However, the management to date has been very effective, despite the lack of financial and human resources.

1 Introduction

27. This report presents the Terminal Evaluation of the project ‘Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the Support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions’. This project was initiated in October 2003 and has undergone several revisions to date. The project duration is 123 months, and the completion date was December 2014, with a budget amounting to USD 6,310,246.00 \$. Table 1 below shows some of the project details.

Table 1: Project Identification Table

UNEP PIMS ID:	01294	IMIS number:	3477 (CB5023-04-82)
Sub-programme	(2010-2011 & 2012-2013) SP4 Environmental Governance	Expected Accomplishment	(2010-2011 & 2012-2013) EA c
Managing Division	UNEP Regional Support Office (RSO) ⁷	Linkage with PoW Outputs	2010/11-432 2010/11-434 2012/13-431 2012/13-432 2012/13-434
Geographical Scope:	Regional	Region:	Europe
Participating countries:	Austria, Italy, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia, Switzerland, possible extension to other Alpine, South East European and other mountain regions of Europe.		
Expected Start Date:	October 2003	UNEP approval date:	16 October 2009
Actual start date:	October 2003	Planned duration:	123 months
Intended completion date:	December 2013	Actual completion date:	December 2013
Planned project budget at approval	\$6,310,246.00	Secured budget*:	\$6,310,246.00
Mid-term review/evaluation (actual date):	Not conducted	No. of revisions:	19
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	N/A	Date of last Revision:	February 2014

2 Evaluation Background

2.1 Objectives and purpose

28. The terminal evaluation of the project ‘Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions’ was carried out in line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁸ and the UNEP Evaluation Manual⁹ between May 2014 and March 2015 with an input of 20 working days. The goal of the evaluation was assessing the project performance in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and determining outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability.

29. The purpose of the evaluation was two-fold:

- (i) to provide strategic and selective evidence of results meeting accountability requirements, and
- (ii) to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, governments, international and national executing agencies.

30. Therefore, the evaluation looked at the performance of the project in delivering services, short-comings in project design and implementation, and identified lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation. The evaluation focused on a certain set of key questions, based on the project’s intended outcomes and impacts (Annex B).

⁷ Formerly Division for Regional Cooperation (DRC)

⁸ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPEvaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

2.2 Methodological approach

31. The findings of the evaluation are based on a desk review of relevant documents, an online questionnaire (for guiding questions see Annex B), which was sent to a selected group of people, and – to the extent possible under the limited resources available for conducting this evaluation – interviews with selected key stakeholders (for the list of respondents see Annex C).

32. An introductory meeting was held with staff of the UNEP Vienna – ISCC with the objective to discuss the scope of the evaluation, agree on the working arrangement, timing and deliverables following the procedures of the UNEP Evaluation Office (EO) in Nairobi.

33. The final inception report was delivered on 11 August, 2014. Thereafter, a complete draft evaluation report was submitted to the Evaluation Office in August 2014 and circulated for internal review. Comments made by participants of COP4 in September 2014 (cf. para 34) as well as comments from the Evaluation Office were incorporated, and a revised draft of the terminal evaluation report was submitted in November, 2014, for reviewed by key stakeholders in order to obtain their views on the findings, and to capture these in the final evaluation report. The final version was delivered on March 4, 2015.

34. The project expired on 31 December, 2014. Although this is a terminal evaluation usually done at the end of the project, the evaluation process started already before the project end. The evaluator elaborated the document *'Preliminary findings and conclusions of the evaluation'* in September 2014 and findings were presented to over 200 stakeholders at the Fourth Conference of the Parties of the Carpathian Convention (COP4) that took place in September 2014, where important decisions on the further course of action as regards this project were taken by the Parties. The document can be found on the Convention's web site¹⁰ (www.carpathianconvention.org).

2.3 Limitations to the Evaluation

35. It has to be understood that the project evaluation covers more than ten years of operation of a project, which in the course of its implementation underwent many changes and adaptations, such as the adaptation of the Convention process to the decisions of the COP, and changes as regards the mandate of UNEP Vienna – ISCC, etc. (cf. section 3.6).

36. The original project document proposed that the project would be jointly evaluated by the project coordinator and the desk assessment team; neither a mid-term evaluation nor an independent terminal evaluation had been foreseen. Consequently, only very limited funds could be made available for conducting this terminal evaluation.

37. Because of the financial constraints, time constraints, and in light of the huge number of activities in a continuously changing institutional, administrative and financial context, not all projects carried out or supported by UNEP Vienna – Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention that are likely to contribute to expected outcomes and intended impacts have been studied in detail. The consultant tried to overcome this deficiency by asking appropriate questions during the interviews.

38. For similar reasons, regarding financial issues, it was not possible to study all financial reports in detail (already with 19 revisions) and to provide a detailed breakdown of financial figures according to specific budget lines, nor was it possible to look at other regional mechanisms and their resources mobilization.

39. Furthermore, it is only possible to present a desk-based reconstructed Theory of Change (ToC)¹¹ and impact-pathway without any direct involvement and input from stakeholders. Due to the resource limitations, there was no opportunity for the evaluator to present the draft ToC prepared in the inception phase to stakeholders and to discuss their understanding of the project logic.

¹⁰http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/03%20Meetings%20and%20Events/COP/2014_COP4_Mikulov/Follo%20Up/Evaluation_UNEP%20project_%20preliminar%20findings_final.pdf

¹¹ A theory-based evaluation tool that maps out the logical sequence of means-ends linkages underlying a project and thereby makes explicit both, the expected results of the project and the actions or strategies that will lead to the achievements of results.

40. Although the project has access to a huge network of people, the on-line questionnaire was sent out only to beneficiaries, project partners and a small group of selected stakeholders, as the consultant would not have been able to analyze hundreds of replies due to time limitations. Furthermore, no country/field visits were scheduled, only selected people were interviewed either personally (based in Vienna) or through skype calls. This notwithstanding, the evaluator made a concerted effort to consult widely in order to enhance the data gathering experience.

3 The Project Background

3.1 Context

41. Before and during the International Year of the Mountains (IYM) in 2002, UNEP's mountain-related work was coordinated jointly by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe (ROE) and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC). This was based on the UNEP-wide paper entitled 'The UNEP contribution to the IYM 2002' (March, 2001) followed by a strategy paper entitled 'UNEP before and during the IYM' (May, 2004). During that period, ROE serviced, at request, negotiations on (i) a Central Asian Mountain Charter (request by Kyrgyzstan), (ii) a Charter/Convention for the Protection of the Caucasus Mountains (request by Armenia), and (iii) a Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (request by Ukraine).

42. Partly due to a lack of resources the Central Asian Mountain Charter never materialized. Cooperation on the mountain ranges of the Caucasus was under discussion following a Meeting of Ministers and High level Officials of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation and Turkey that was hosted by Liechtenstein in Vaduz in November 2007. These discussions were serviced by UNEP Vienna, but despite a number of meetings only little progress was recorded due to the political situations and tensions in the Caucasus region.

43. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) was adopted and signed by the seven Parties (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine) in May 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine, and entered into force in January 2006. The region hosts up to 20 million people and contains Europe's greatest reserve of pristine forests. It is a refuge for brown bears, wolves, bison, lynx, eagles and some 200 unique plant species found nowhere else in the world. It also plays a vital role in ensuring Europe's fresh water supplies.

44. The Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Carpathian Convention meets every two (now three) years and provides guidance to its inter-sessional Implementation Committee and a suite of Working Groups. To date it has met four times, in 2006, 2008, 2011 and 2014 (cf. section 4.2). Milestones reached at these meetings include, among others: the adoption of Protocols on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity, Sustainable Forest Management, Sustainable Tourism, and Transport; the establishment of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas; and the development and implementation of major programs and projects on *inter alia* spatial planning and bio-region protection.

45. In adopting the Convention, the Carpathian countries called for a UNEP serviced Interim Secretariat. The Mountain Partnership¹², officially launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (September, 2002), underlined the catalytic role UNEP could play in making mountain development environmentally sound. UNEP Vienna was thereafter officially opened on 15 July 2004 (see Annex H) with the mandate to: act as the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention; perform the role of an environmental focal point within the Mountain Partnership Secretariat; promote cooperation in Central and South Eastern Europe; and serve as UNEP's focal point for Austria-based international organizations. Since 2004, the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention has been strategically administered by UNEP Vienna – an out-posted Office of UNEP's Regional Office for Europe located in Geneva.

46. In 2003, UNEP ROE organized the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit. A multi-stakeholder Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership was established in Rome with the direct participation of UNEP through the Vienna Office,

¹² The Mountain Partnership is a United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. Currently, 53 governments, 13 intergovernmental organizations and 162 Major Groups (e.g. civil society, NGOs and the private sector) are members.

which acted as the Environmental Reference Centre of the Mountain Partnership. UNEP Vienna acted until 2011 as the UNEP corporate Mountain Focal Point and since then as the alternate Mountain Focal Point.

47. In December 2004, UNEP through its office in Vienna was requested by the Minister of Environment of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to 'facilitate intergovernmental consultations aiming at enhanced regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions in South Eastern Europe'. Consequently, two meetings were organized by UNEP Vienna – ISCC, after which the initiative de facto was submerged in the ministerial process on the 'Sustainable Development of the Dinaric Arc and its Neighbouring Regions'. Although there has been no tangible follow up at governmental level to date, the cooperation has led to the establishment of a support unit for the Dinaric Arc Initiative¹³ in UNEP Vienna.

48. UNEP Vienna – IISCC, based on the project objective of facilitating environmental cooperation in South East Europe (SEE), successfully established SEE as a new sub-regional initiative under the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)¹⁴ for the South East European region. UNEP Vienna also became the provider of the Regional Desk Officer (RDO) for ENVSEC in SEE and successfully raised resources for a sub-regional programme on transboundary mountain biodiversity, as well as hotspots from the montana/mining industry. In 2009, the ENVSEC Management Board passed the main RDO function to the Regional Environmental Center REC in Szentendre, Hungary, which posed considerable challenges for UNEP to keep its leading position in the Balkans. The challenges were overcome through the development of a bundle of country-level projects by UNEP Vienna.

49. Because of its emerging presence, role and expertise in the region UNEP Vienna – SSC serviced and is servicing an increasing number of projects provided by / through UNEP, the SEE and the Balkans, and as a consequence established an office in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina, as a small project outfit of the Regional Office for Europe.

50. The project is executed in the Danube-Carpathian region, in Balkan countries in South-Eastern Europe and furthermore, is bringing inputs to other mountain regions, such as the Caucasus, Central Asia, Andes, etc. Target groups include, among others: governmental institutions, state agencies, international institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and the scientific community.

3.2 Project objectives and components

51. According to background documents, the original title of the project was: '*Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention*' (without an outreach to other regions). The original Project Document (PD) with a project time frame from 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2006, focused on the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and described the following objectives:

- i. To be a permanent framework of cooperation
- ii. Enhance implementation of existing instruments
- iii. Stimulate partnership and attract donors
- iv. Prevent rather than cure
- v. Foster integration and coordination between sectors

52. The project has been extended several times because of the nature of its core activities that are essential to UNEP support in an important ongoing international process.

53. The original PD furthermore described the needs, results, outputs and activities. In the evaluator's opinion the needs can be interpreted as intended impacts and there is confusion as regards the terminology, e.g. the results and partly also the outputs; and activities are also described as objectives.

¹³ The Dinaric Arc Initiative is a broad framework of collaboration between WWF, IUCN, UNESCO-BRESCE, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, EuroNatur, SNV, REC, and ECNC, which aims to add value to the ongoing programmes and activities of all its partners.

¹⁴ ENVSEC is a partnership of six international organizations with specialized, but complementary mandates and expertise, which provides an integrated response to environment and security challenges, by contributing to the reduction of environment and security risks through strengthened cooperation among and within countries in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus, and South-Eastern Europe.

54. With the establishment of UNEP Vienna – ISCC in 2004, the scope of the project was broadened. UNEP Vienna – ISCC was given the additional mandate to:

- perform the role of environmental focal point within the Mountain Partnership Secretariat;
- promote cooperation in Central and South Eastern Europe; and
- serve as UNEP’s focal point for Austria-based international organizations.

55. Furthermore, UNEP Vienna – ISCC is also working to transfer its experiences in response to sub-regional or transboundary challenges to other mountainous regions. The project documents describe **four main outputs**:

Output i. UNEP programme support to the Interim Secretariat of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians strengthened.

Output ii. Strengthened Environmental Focal Point mechanism for the Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership.

Output iii. Focal point mechanism for cooperation with Central and South-Eastern European (SEE) countries, and sub-regional Focal Point for South Eastern Europe enhanced.

Output iv. Liaison between UNEP and organizations based in the region supporting in-region UNEP action strengthened.

56. The measure in which these outputs served as a framework for the actual activities under the project has to be evaluated against the changes in the institutional and country context, referred to in section 3.6.

57. As stated by former and current UNEP staff, the project was originally designed to be adaptive to the needs of the Parties and has been seen as a long-term process. Therefore, no milestones and indicators were described in the original project document so as to allow for flexibility. Only since 2011 have the supplement project documents included a Logical Framework, presenting milestones and indicators that could be used to monitor the stated project outputs.

58. Implementation milestones can be divided according to the four main outputs as described above:

- i. Progress reports and decisions including Ministerial Declaration of COP1, COP2 and COP3 reveal a huge number of achieved milestones: amongst them the adoption of Protocols, which are the most important means of completing and facilitating the implementation of the general principles constituted in the Convention itself; the establishment of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA), constituting a thematic network of cooperation of mountain protected areas; the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (CWI), facilitating the cooperation between the CC and the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention); and the development and implementation of major programmes and projects on *inter alia* spatial planning and biodiversity protection.
- ii. Project reports describe the achievement of milestones and several interview partners (e.g. ADA, Austrian MoE, UNEP staff) refer to milestones as regards the Mountain Partnership: UNEP representation in Mountain Partnership events (World Mountain Forum), Mountain Side Event in Rio 2012, Open Working Group in New York – climate change and disaster risk reduction, thematic mountain policy briefs, activities in the Caucasus, etc.
- iii. As regards cooperation in Central and South-Eastern Europe, the ENVSEC Initiative was the most important instrument. Implementation of the project was led by UNEP Vienna – ISCC and statements of the donor agency ADA – the Austrian Development Agency – prove the good cooperation and the timely delivery of the milestones. Other milestones include the publication of the report on Climate Change Adaptations in SEE, transboundary consultation meetings in Sharr (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – FYROM), in Prokletie /Bjehket e Nemuna (Albania – AL, Montenegro – MNE, and Kosovo under UNSCR 1244/99), and the development and submission of country level follow-up projects (Global Environmental Facility – GEF projects).

- iv. Milestones related to the liaison function of the office, including UNEP contribution to the World Environmental Day, yearly International Mountain Day celebrations, cooperative activities between International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and UNEP, etc., have been fully achieved.

3.3 Implementation arrangements

59. As regards implementation arrangements for the CC, the rules of procedures and financial rules for the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Carpathian Convention were agreed during COP 1 in December 2006. The COP meetings – providing guidance to its inter-sessional Implementation Committee and the Working Groups – took place in Kyiv (December 2006), Bucharest (June 2008), Bratislava (May 2011) and Mikulov (September 2014).

60. The Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee (CCIC) consists of representatives of the CC and meets at least once every year. It oversees the preparation of the political decisions of the COP. This includes the consideration, development and recommendation for adoption of additional Protocols, strategies, or other measures and recommendations relevant for the achievement of the objectives of the Convention. Furthermore, the CCIC monitors compliance of the contracting Parties with the provisions of the Convention and its Protocols, and prepares the meetings of the COP. The Parties also monitor the performance of the (interim) Secretariat on a continuous basis.

61. Thematic Working Groups (WG) were established in accordance with the Convention and related Protocols and are composed of the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the CC and/or persons nominated by them. The meetings of the WGs are open to observers, representatives of different partner organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The WGs provide technical assistance, information and advice on specific issues related to the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians. To date eight Working Groups have been established and are operational: 1) WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity, 2) WG on Spatial Development, 3) WG on Agriculture and Rural Development, 4) WG on Sustainable Forest Management, 5) WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure, 6) WG on Sustainable Tourism, 7) WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge, and 8) WG on Adaptation to Climate Change.

62. At the request of Contracting Parties, UNEP Vienna has been serving as the Interim Secretariat for the CC since 2004 as an out-posted office of UNEP's ROE, located in Geneva, and hosted by Austria in the Vienna International Centre. The core team consisted of three UNEP employees (Head of UNEP Vienna – ISCC, Programme Officer and Financial Assistant). These employees were supported by one staff member seconded by the European Academy (EURAC). At the time of the evaluation, eight professional and support staff were working on a consultancy basis (UNOPS, UNEP) and financed through projects. Moreover, one shared officer from UNEP-GRID Arendal¹⁵ based in Vienna was supporting the international mountain work.

63. Since the opening of the UNEP Vienna – ISCC, the office has been ensuring UNEP's liaison with the Secretariats of the Alpine Convention, the International Partnership for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions (hosted by FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) and the Danube Protection Convention; it also assists UNEP in its contacts and collaboration with the Regional Environmental Centre (REC). According to a memorandum dated 24 September 2013, UNEP Vienna – ISCC fulfils liaison functions for Vienna-based international organizations. In addition, UNEP Vienna – ISCC is acting as a Focal Point for the ENVSEC Initiative in the Balkans and plays a major role in promoting cooperation between and implementing the UNEP Programme of Work (PoW) in the countries of SEE and the Danube-Carpathian region.

64. By decisions of COP4, UNEP Vienna has been formally designated as the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. In case the Parties would agree on another location for the Secretariat the situation will be reviewed at COP5.

3.4 Project finances

¹⁵ A Centre collaborating with UNEP; established in 1989 by the Norwegian Government as a Norwegian Foundation, with the mission to communicate environmental information to policy-makers and facilitate environmental decision-making for change.

65. Financial figures from UNEP Vienna – ISCC show a total project budget of US\$ 6,310,246¹⁶. The ToR document mentions in-kind contributions from UNEP, which are used to cover the cost of core operations of UNEP Vienna – SCC. According to UNEP ROE administration staff, this ‘in-kind contribution’ refers to an estimate of de facto services provided by UNEP for the project and it is therefore difficult to assess it in absolute numbers. Going through the financial Original Project Document 2003, only US\$15,000 is mentioned under ‘in-kind contributions (which reflects the three months’ salary of the project coordinator in the beginning of the project). The majority of activities are funded through external donors, and projects are being implemented with or through a number of partner organizations, and the Vienna office is performing either a leading, coordinating or cooperating role. Table 2 shows the planned project budget (originally for the period 2003 – 2006), the planned project budget as per the regular revisions and the total funds available. The final exact figures will only be available once the project closure is finalized.

Table 2: Project costs

Planned Project Budget (Original Project Document for 2003 – 2006)	\$ 534,090 (plus 15,000 in-kind)
External Project Funding	\$ 5,761.156
Planned Project Budget (as per approval process):	\$ 6,310,246.00
Co-Financing Total:	\$ 0.00
Total Funds Programmed (annual expenditures + current allotment):	\$ 6,310,246.00

Source: UNEP Vienna – ISCC

66. The project is financed through counterpart contributions. UNEP provides in-kind support through staff (administration officer), as well as a project coordinator from UNEP/UNOPS for the first three months of operation.

67. After the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, the Carpathian countries agreed to support the interim services of UNEP Vienna – ISCC with yearly voluntary financial contributions, which would be up to EUR 198,500 or US\$ 269,335 (rate 0.737) in total per year.

68. The project underwent 19 revisions, mostly to include new earmarked contributions received as the project progressed, as well as to amend timelines, activities and outputs. The project also experienced various revisions to cost estimates in order to take into account the difficulties encountered by UNEP to fully meet the funding requirements estimated at design, and the savings made during the implementation of the project.

69. All funds earmarked as project funds include also State contributions and were handled as such prior to the establishment of the Trust Fund (cf. para 73).

70. The ratio of Environment Fund versus Extra-budgetary Funds (XB) shows an exceptionally high degree of performance in resource mobilization of the project concerning XB.

Table 3: Project costs and co-financing table

Component	Amount in US \$	Percentage
Earmarked contributions from governments, partner organizations, EU Programmes and private sector	6,310,246	99,75
Total direct costs of the project	n/a	
2% of direct cost (programme support)	n/a	
In-kind contributions UNEP	15,000	0,25
Environmental Fund	0	0
Total	6,310,246 + 15,000	100

Source: UNEP Vienna – SCC

3.5 Project partners

¹⁶ Source: UNEP Vienna – SCC

71. Project partners have included the governments of Carpathian and Balkan countries and all UNEP Divisions. External partners included the following:

- The Alpine Convention
- The European Academy (EURAC) in Bolzano, offering scientific inputs, press and PR, logistics and meetings, is part of the Secretariat arrangement in Vienna by having placed an out posted EURAC staff member in Vienna to support the Secretariat;
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International Danube-Carpathian Programme, working on issues of conservation, communication, public participation and awareness raising;
- International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR);
- European Commission (EC) as a partner and an important donor;
- ENVSEC partners;
- GRID Arendal;
- GRID Warsaw;
- European Environment Agency (EEA);
- FAO Budapest;
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

3.6 Changes in the design during implementation

72. The project underwent many changes and adaptation during the last ten years. Linked to the changing landscape of the institutional context the project over time covered different countries and groups of countries, both within the SEE region and in a global context. Some examples of these changes include the following:

- The development and adoption of Protocols to the Convention on Biodiversity, Forestry, Tourism and Transport opened avenues of contact, cooperation and support – in cash and/or in kind – from/to a great variety of organizations and entities active in these areas, including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), FAO Budapest, UNWTO, Alpine Convention, ICPDR, WWF, EURAC and the European Commission. Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), cooperative projects and activities with these organizations and entities emerged and were implemented;
- Following the International Year of Mountains and based on constitutional decisions regarding the establishment of the International Mountain Partnership, UNEP Vienna – ISCC was designated and acted as the global focal point for environment in the IYM Secretariat, a role which in preparation of RIO +20 was claimed by UNEP Nairobi, but as far as the activities are concerned, left in the hands of UNEP Vienna – ISCC as the de facto Centre of Excellence on these matters;
- Following the establishment of the Environment and Security Initiative, UNEP Vienna – ISCC was the designated secretariat focal point for SEE, a role which later was shifted to the REC, leaving however, part of the implementation work in the hands of UNEP Vienna – SCC;
- Based on requests of individuals from Central Asian, the Caucasus region, and SEE countries, generated in the context of the IYM, UNEP Vienna – ISCC, with the support of Italy and some other donors, serviced negotiations and implemented related work towards the development of legal instruments for mountain protection and development in these regions;
- Because of its emerging presence, role and expertise in the region, UNEP Vienna is servicing an increasing number of projects provided by / through UNEP, the SEE and the Balkans, and as a consequence has established an office in Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina, as a project outfit of the Regional Office for Europe;
- The project is executed in the Danube-Carpathian region, in Balkan countries in South-Eastern Europe and brings inputs also to other mountain regions, e.g. Caucasus, Central Asia, Andes, etc.

73. At COP3 members agreed to establish a Trust Fund¹⁷ (Annex I) to cover the costs of administering and meeting the objectives of the Carpathian Convention and related Protocols, including the functioning of its

¹⁷ Memorandum, as of 12 January 2012, on the authority to establish a General Trust Fund for the Core Budget of the Carpathian Convention.

Secretariat, and requested the Executive Director of UNEP to assume the responsibility of administering the Trust Fund.

74. With the establishment of the Trust Fund for the Carpathian Convention, the core secretariat services provided by UNEP Vienna – ISCC were separated from the project and the contributions from the seven Carpathian Governments are now handled through the Trust Fund under the management authority of the Carpathian Convention Secretariat.

75. This means that this project (and the follow up project) exclusively focuses on UNEP support to the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention, to the work of UNEP Vienna in South-East Europe and other mountain regions including the International Mountain Partnership, and on enabling UNEP Vienna to exercise its liaison function. A project concept, according to this new restricted scope, has already been approved as part of the UNEP Programme Framework and will be developed fully to be operational by the end of 2014. The secretariat services for the Carpathian Convention provided by its Secretariat hosted by UNEP Vienna are therefore handled as part and parcel of the services, which the COP requested UNEP to provide to this MEA.

76. A further specification of the request by the Carpathian Convention to UNEP for possible continuation of secretariat services was made at COP4 in September 2014.

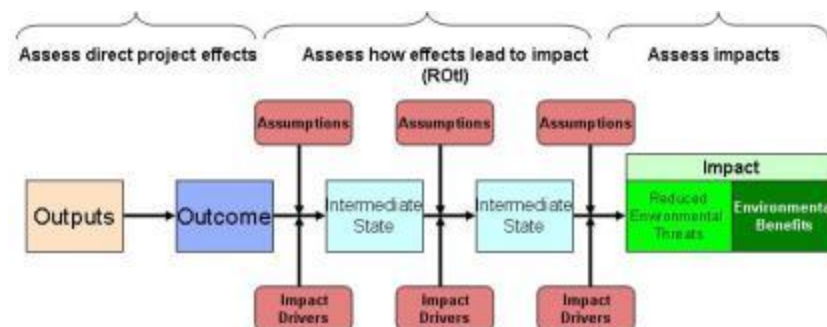
3.7 Reconstructed Theory of Change of the project

77. The GEF Evaluation Office developed an approach to assess the likelihood of impact. Annex 6 of the ToR on *‘Introduction to Theory of Change / Impact Pathways, the ROTI Method and the ROTI Results Score Sheet’* describes the Theory of Change (ToC) approach. The ToC depicts the causal pathways from project outputs, over outcomes towards impact. It also depicts any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact and defines the external factors that influence change along these pathways – referred to as either drivers (factors , in which the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (factors beyond project’s realm of influence). The application of this methodology has three distinct stages:

- a. Identifying the project’s intended impacts
- b. Review of the project’s logical framework
- c. Analysis and modeling of the project’s outcomes-impact pathways: reconstruction of the project’s Theory of Change

78. Using the ToC methodology, it is possible to assess to what extent the project has to date contributed towards achieving the intended impact. The following diagram (Figure 1), taken from the ToR, outlines a generic ‘impact pathway’ schematic, showing causal pathways from outputs, through intermediate states, assumptions and impact drivers, and over to the intended Impact. (Annex J also depicts a reconstructed ToC developed by the Evaluation Office).

Figure 1: A schematic ‘impact pathway’¹⁸



¹⁸ Diagram adapted from GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), 2009.

79. The Logical Framework of the project is the primary source of information for understanding the project logic. As the Logical Framework provided in the project documents is very basic, there was a need to reconstruct the project logic retrospectively. The current analysis was done based on available information, project documentation, and discussions with selected key UNEP Vienna – ISCC staff during personal interviews. Therefore, the methodology was only briefly discussed during an initial meeting with the selected staff of the UNEP Vienna – ISCC, and the evaluator elaborated a desk-based identification of the project’s impact pathways during the inception phase of the evaluation.

80. Neither the original project document (PD) nor any of the revision documents define the intended impact of the project. The original PD mentions the need to “*ensure effective regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians*” (covering only the implementation of the Carpathian Convention), which – if successfully implemented – can be interpreted as intended impact.

81. As the scope of the project extended during implementation, using information in relevant documents, the evaluator formulated the intended impact as follows: ‘***Sustainable development and environmental protection of mountain regions through strengthened regional and inter-regional cooperation in Central and South-Eastern Europe with an outreach to other mountain regions in the world***’, which was discussed and agreed upon with the Head of UNEP Vienna – SCC.

4 Evaluation Findings

4.1 Strategic relevance

4.1.1 Relevance to UNEP strategies and programmes

82. If one considers the broad range of issues and areas addressed by the CC and its Protocols, as well as the scope and content of work under the other components of the project (capacity building and technical assistance to countries of the Balkans and SEE; liaison with Vienna-based organizations; and environmental inputs and contributions to mountain related policies and programmes in other regions of the world), the project touches upon and has relevance for a great number of elements of UNEP’s MTS 2010-2013 and its biennial PoW.

83. As regards consistency with UNEP’s and other partners’ mandates and policies, the desk study as well as statements made by UNEP staff reveal the clear evidence that the project is in line with UNEP’s PoW. As regards ecosystem management and environmental governance, the project fully contributed to the objectives outlined in the Medium-term Strategy 2010 – 2013, and the project also contributes to the objectives and expected accomplishments described in the current MTS 2014 - 2017¹⁹.

84. The proposed follow-up project will also remain relevant under the MTS 2014 – 2017, as integrated approaches to sustainable development are more urgent than ever. Global emerging issues are covered by the project, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, integrating biodiversity across the ecological and economic agendas, and reconnecting science and policy.

85. Starting in 2003, the project was seen as part of UNEP’s Environmental Governance thematic priority, contributing also to UNEP’s biannual programmes of work and the Montevideo Programme on Environmental Law. According to background documents, the project corresponds to UNEP’s core mandate to provide early warning and assessment, to foster regional cooperation, and to assist governments in the development of international environmental law. The high strategic relevance of the project has been confirmed by the fact that it led to the successful conclusion of a sub-regional, Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) – the Carpathian Convention, which was signed at the Fifth Ministerial Conference ‘Environment for Europe’ held in Kiev, Ukraine in May 2003.

4.1.2 Relevance to global policies and strategies

86. The project and its activities interact with major global policies and strategies in fields, such as biodiversity, climate change, natural resources management, environment and security, and mountain development, as

¹⁹ To catalyze a transition towards low carbon, resource efficient and equitable development based on the sustainable use of ecosystem services, coherent environmental governance and the reduction of environmental risks for the well-being of current and future generations and the attainment of sustainable development goals.

specified in the articles of the CC. Several interviewees referred specifically to the Convention on Biological Diversity and its PoW on Mountain Biodiversity and related events in Nagoya, Japan (2010) and Rio+20 in 2012. It can be stated that the project has contributed to the higher global outcomes of realizing the importance and ecological, cultural and socio-economic value of mountain regions, as spelt out in the United Nations General Assembly Declaration of the International Year of Mountains (2002); the importance of Mountain areas, as enshrined in Chapter 13 (Sustainable Mountain Development) of the Declaration on Environment and Development (“Agenda 21”, Rio de Janeiro, 1992); the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and in the Rio +20 Outcome Document. Furthermore, UNEP Vienna – ISCC signed Memoranda of Understanding with CBD (together with the Alpine Convention) and the Ramsar Convention.

87. Also in the Balkans, several examples can be listed, amongst them: support to selected Balkan countries for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); Development of the Fifth National Report to the CBD in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH); and support for development of National Action Programs aligned to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 10-Year Strategy and Reporting Process under UNCCD in BiH, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRoM) and Montenegro (MNE).

4.1.3 Regional policy relevance

88. Two main components of the project – Carpathian Convention and Protocols, and ENVSEC – focus entirely on sub-regions in pan Europe and were constituted as part of the Inter-governmental Environment for Europe process, which – through conferences and other activities – sets the stage for regional and sub-regional policies and programmes in the Pan European region.

89. Statements made by persons who have been involved in the preparation and negotiation process of the CC reveal that the project objectives were realistic and were agreed and approved by the Parties to the Convention. According to the current and former UNEP staff the project was very timely, responding to the real needs at that time.

90. The high interest and need for a regional cooperation agreement (as expressed by government as well as NGO representatives), the momentum of the Bucharest Summit²⁰, and the dynamics during the negotiation process confirm the project’s relevance at the national and regional level in the area of protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian mountains. Another factor was Ukraine’s interest to finalize negotiations and to have the convention ready for signature at the Kiev Environmental Ministers Conference.

91. The project builds on existing initiatives (e.g. the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative – CEI), policies, programmes and project documents prove linkages to European Strategies, e.g. the Danube²¹ and the future Alpine Strategies. Numerous projects under the umbrella of UNEP Vienna – ISCC demonstrate complementarity with other ongoing and planned UNEP projects (among others, the ENVSEC Initiative, Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund/MDGF²² in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and One UN²³), and contribute also to GEF focal areas strategies and priorities.

92. As regards steering cooperation amongst countries, interviewees had different perceptions and it became clear that the subject cannot be generalized and has to be analyzed on different levels (governmental, thematic and project level). A Romanian official perceives that it is too early to see results, but the process, started through UNEP support, has good perspectives. The importance of establishing a governance structure is highlighted by several interviewees. The same perception was expressed by a Czech representative, mentioning increasing cooperation and information exchange between the Czech Republic and Poland.

93. Also UNEP Vienna – ISCC staff see clear indications of increased cooperation and interaction, mainly on expert level, e.g. regular talks between Poland, Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, joint initiation of projects

²⁰ A Summit devoted entirely to environmental conservation and development in the Carpathian and Danube region. Hosted by the Romanian Government in co-operation with the WWF International Danube-Carpathian Programme; the Summit was held in Bucharest in 2001 and co-chaired by the President of Romania and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, WWF President Emeritus.

²¹ EU Strategy for the Danube Region: ‘The Carpathian Region – a macro region forming an integral part of the Danube region’.

²² MDG-F – The MDG Achievement Fund was committed to eradicating poverty and inequality and changing people’s lives around the world and is helping to implement programmes related to the Millennium Development Goals.

²³ The One United Nations Programme is a strategic programme framework for the period 2015-2019, which draws on the full range of expertise and resources of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) to deliver development results.

(currently a project related to ‘improving the ecological connectivity in mountain regions in the Danube Basin’ is under development). According to interviewees this is due to the very open approach, such as COP meetings, which are open to everyone, and cooperation improved even beyond the implementation of the CC. For example, before government representatives attend global meetings, consultations are organized amongst them as part of the preparation.

94. Project partners are supporting arguments for increased cooperation on thematic issues, e.g. activities of the CNPA or the development of the Carpathian Red List of Species, the Work Package on connectivity within the BioREGIO Carpathian Project. The fact that countries are requesting UNEP Vienna – ISCC support, supports the argument of the need for steering cooperation in the region.

95. Steering cooperation in the Balkans is slightly different than in the Carpathians, as there is no mountain agreement in place, and the area is larger and more scattered. According to an Austrian donor organization, however, UNEP contributed a lot to improving and steering cooperation, for example, through the ENVSEC Initiative. UNEP Vienna – ISCC staff also state increased cooperation through joint efforts, partnership approaches and transboundary activities, e.g. feasibility studies for transboundary protected areas²⁴ and a report summarizing results and providing recommendations²⁵.

96. Worth to mention is the successful cooperation between entities in BiH due to UNEP facilitation – the first ever State of Environment Report was elaborated, published in 2012 and adopted by both Parties – which is a major political success reported by a government official from BiH.

97. The rating on ‘strategic relevance’ is **highly satisfactory**.

4.2 Achievement of outputs

98. The project documents list four project outputs:

- i. UNEP programme support to the Interim Secretariat of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians
- ii. Facilitation and support to inter-regional and global mountain partnerships
- iii. Provision of technical assistance and advisory services to countries in Central and South-East Europe for sub-regional and transboundary cooperation
- iv. Liaison to relevant organizations in the region

99. According to progress reports and information provided by UNEP staff, the project successfully produced the programmed activities and outputs, as outlined in UNEP’s internal planning documents, both as regards the adopted PoW of the CC, and UNEP’s PoW. In total UNEP Vienna – ISCC organized and/or attended 143 events, such as conferences, regional workshops, working group meetings, steering group meetings, stakeholder meetings, consultation meetings, etc. (Annex D). Furthermore, the Secretariat played an important role, either as the lead or as project partner, in 19 projects covering activities in the Carpathians and Alps, and as regards the Balkans, various projects under the ENVSEC Initiative and 7 GEF project (Annex E). The number of publications produced is also considerable, over 50 different publications are available, ranging from reports, handbooks, feasibility studies, leaflets, etc. (Annex F).

100. Supporting statements as regards quality, usefulness and timeliness of the project outputs were made by several interviewees. An Austrian government official emphasized UNEP Vienna – SCC’s good expertise and know-how related to environment and sustainable development in mountain regions, which is of utmost importance for regional development cooperation. Several interviewees referred to the high quality of experience exchange between Alps and Carpathians as a consequence of a series of joint meetings, workshops and projects.

101. COP1, held in Kiev, Ukraine, in December 2006 adopted 19 decisions, a Ministerial Declaration, rules of procedures, financial rules and a report on credentials by the Executive Secretary. COP2 was organized in

²⁴ Feasibility study on establishing a transboundary protected area: Durmitor – Tara Canyon – Sutjeska; Feasibility study on establishing a transboundary protected area: Prokletije / Bjeshket e Nemuna Mountains; Feasibility study on establishing a transboundary protected area: Sharr /Sar Planina – Korab – Desat/Deshat.

²⁵ ‘Potential for the establishment of the sub-regional network of mountain protected areas in the Balkans and the Dinaric Arc’.

Bucharest, Romania in June 2008, and 16 decisions were adopted and the Ministerial Declaration was published. In May 2011, COP3 took place in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, where 16 decisions and the Ministerial Declaration emerged. In September 2014, COP 4 was held in Mikulov, Czech Republic, adopting 19 decisions. All the decisions were and are implemented, with progress reports provided to the CCIC and the COPs and all documents are available on the Convention's website: <http://www.carpathianconvention.org/>.

102. The Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) and the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (CWI) were established and key documents developed and approved, amongst them a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) for the Implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol, the CNPA Medium Term Strategy, Action Plan for a Regional Framework Approach for Promotion of Renewable Energies in the Carpathian Region, Sustainable Tourism Strategy, Climate Change Strategic Agenda, etc. (also available on the Convention's website).

103. Some examples for other achievements of the project in producing its planned outputs include:

- UNEP Memorandum as of 24 September 2013, stating that UNEP Vienna – ISCC had been included in the revised UNEP organizational chart – besides other roles – as a Liaison Office for Vienna-based international organizations;
- Finalization and operationalization of an inter-regional mountain project managed by UNEP Vienna – ISCC on behalf of Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI);
- Successful organization of the Workshop on the Dinaric Arc Initiative, as well as the ongoing provision of UNEP SEE focal point in the ENVSEC Secretariat;
- Development of a Draft Practical Arrangement between UNEP and IAEA;
- Yearly celebration events on 'World Environment Day' (June 5), 'International Mountain Day' (December 11), and 'International Day for Biological Diversity' (May 22) in the Vienna International Centre;
- Cooperation with UNIDO and UNODC was supported by UNEP Vienna – ISCC on many occasions, as well as with OSCE – mainly in connection to ENVSEC Initiative.

104. Original ideas for a possible regional instrument were mainly related to biodiversity issues, as reported in NGO documents. But already during the first steps in the negotiation process, it became clear that the Convention is implemented in countries with economies in transition, with fast developments as regards transport, agriculture, mining, etc., which partly have negative impacts on the environment. Based on the example of the Alpine Convention, the CC took the concept as a framework for a regional environmental agreement, setting general objectives and principles for environmental protection and sustainable development, which will be tailored into obligatory goals or measures in the so-called Protocols for specific sectors. In the evaluator's opinion, threats to biodiversity have partly already been addressed in the Articles of the Convention, as the Protocols respond directly to the main issues in the region, such as forestry, transport, tourism, etc. NGO representatives are seeing the threats addressed mainly in policy papers, but state that implementation is weak or absent.

105. Several interviewees consider that threats and root causes have only been partly addressed. Main progress has been made in terms of commitments to biodiversity protection, but the key to securing this protection lies in addressing pressures in other areas, which are often sensitive issues, such as development of infrastructure for transportation and energy, mining issues, etc. There were statements made by UNEP staff that root causes are only addressed to the extent possible in the capacity of the project. They are mostly outside of environmental aspects, often related to social issues, which can only be tackled in cooperation with others due to the limited UNEP mandate, at least for the Carpathians. Therefore, only 'soft measures' are applied, not dealing with investment projects.

106. To successfully achieve the planned outputs, the project had to be adaptive. During previous years, impacts of climate change appeared on the environmental agenda and, according to UNEP staff, the project reacted to the changing conditions and adapted its approach. Appropriate measures – to the extent possible – were introduced, e.g. COP3 adopted the Working Group on climate change, and supporting projects are being implemented, such as Carpatclim, Carpivia, CarpatCC (see the list of project in Annex E). In this respect there is close cooperation with relevant initiatives in the Alps. During COP4 the 'Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change' and the 'Climate Change Strategic Agenda' was adopted.

107. There is a general agreement that biodiversity protection and functioning ecological networks are important elements for achieving sustainable development and the topic of ecological connectivity becomes more and more important. The 'green infrastructure' is under imminent threat from fragmentation due to 'grey infrastructure' development, in particular roads, railway lines, and intensive land management. UNEP's – ISCC adaptive response is to work closely with NGOs and other partners on the policy level²⁶ and to develop pilot projects, in order to mitigate conflicts between natural capital protection and economic development, trying to facilitate sustainable development²⁷.

108. Strategic interventions in the Balkans are different than in the Carpathians due to the absence of a regional environmental agreement. A government representative affirmed that UNEP Vienna – ISCC is the leading organization in addressing the threats, developing projects in this respect and involving stakeholders e.g. in land degradation, adaptation to climate change, or mining issues. An Austrian official confirmed that through the ENVSEC Initiative, UNEP is dealing with the root causes of environmental degradation in Balkan countries.

109. The rating on 'achievement of outputs' is **highly satisfactory**.

4.3 Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results

4.3.1 Direct outcomes from the reconstructed ToC

110. The core interest of this evaluation is the extent of the achievements of the project outcomes and the analysis of the sustainability of the project results. The objectives of the project are realistic, but the timeframe is not applicable, as the project is an ongoing, long-term process. A follow-up project is under development.

111. The intervention logic and the causal pathways from the project outputs through outcomes towards impacts are shown in Figure 2, providing an overview of the project's 'Theory of Change Analysis and Results to Impact Analysis', following the methodology explained in section 3.7. Each column has a different colour (Outputs are green, Outcomes are orange, Intermediate States are brown and the intended impacts are yellow).

112. As regards '**Outputs**', originally, there was only 'Output A' (UNEP programme support to the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention), mentioned in the project document as of 2003. As explained in section 3.2, the scope of the project and the mandate of UNEP Vienna – ISCC were broadened in 2004, and three 'Outputs' were added ('Output B': Facilitation and support to inter-regional and global partnerships; 'Output C': Provision of technical assistance and advisory services to countries in Central and South-East Europe and transboundary cooperation; and 'Output D': Liaison to relevant organizations in the region).

113. The reconstructed ToC lists seven '**Outcomes**'. According to UNEP staff and statements made by certain interviewees, the proposed activities are appropriate, are successfully implemented, and are likely to produce the intended outcomes, but not all of them within the project's time frame as, again, this is an ongoing and continuously changing, long-term process. It is important to understand that progress towards project Outcomes has been achieved to a large extent. However, it is technically correct that further progress towards the Outcomes will also be achieved after the project lifespan e.g. countries will continue to cooperate and they will also adopt further Protocols in addition to those already adopted during the project's lifetime. In the evaluator's opinion, this underpins the exceptionally high degree of sustainability of this project.

114. The same is valid for driving changes along the intended causal pathways. These external factors – **assumptions and drivers** – are also included in Figure 2 and are highlighted in blue. As regards assumptions (factors influencing impact achievement, but for which the project has no control of), some have been derived already from the original project design, and some have been added during the evaluation exercise. One of the original assumptions, '*Experience exchange within the Danube-Carpathian and other mountain regions in Europe*', turned into an impact driver (i.e. factors over which the project has a certain level of control) through broadening the scope of the project.

²⁶ Proposal for the creation of a 'Platform on Ecological Connectivity in the Carpathians'.

²⁷ Currently a project proposal is under development: 'I-ECONNECTICS' to be submitted under the follow up programme to the SEE European Territorial Cooperation Programme for the Danube Region.

115. The reconstruction of the project logic uncovered a wide range of drivers. This is a major advantage as drivers – contrary to assumptions – can be influenced to a certain extent by the project. The project is already investing a lot in this direction by, to name a few examples, continuous lobbying at government and donor level, using integrated approaches in all projects, strengthening and adding new partnerships either through MoU or projects. If the outlined assumptions prove valid and the impact drivers are effected in a strategically planned way, this will lead the countries towards attaining higher intermediate states along the impact pathway.

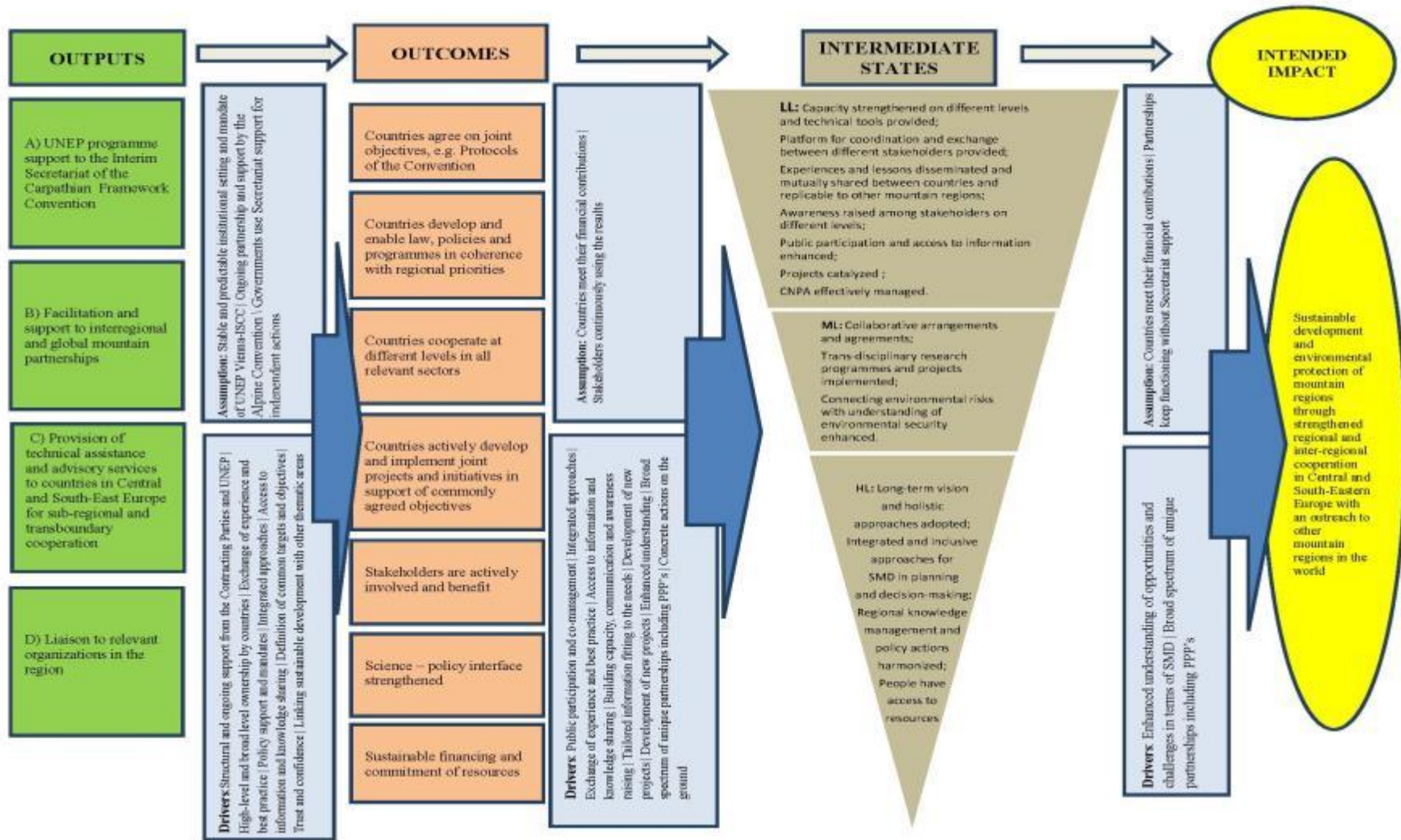
116. Due to the complexity of the project, the reconstructed ToC reveals a long list of **intermediate states** between project outcomes and intended impacts. To make ratings more effective, the evaluator split intermediate states into three levels: low-level (LL), medium-level (ML), and high-level (HL) intermediate states.

117. The project already successfully contributed to several low-level intermediate states, but there will be need for ongoing UNEP support in the future in order to continue meeting the intermediary objectives in the future after this project's lifespan so as to fully ensure and safeguard this project's sustainability. In addition, not all of the intermediate states can be achieved by only the project's interventions (which is also true for the outcomes). A more detailed analysis would be necessary in the follow-up project.

118. The intended impact 'Sustainable development and environmental protection of mountain regions through strengthened regional and inter-regional cooperation in Central and South-Eastern Europe with an outreach to other mountain regions in the world' contributes to the objectives and expected accomplishments as regards ecosystem management and environmental governance, outlined in UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2010 – 2013 and MTS 2014 – 2017 and more generally, to global environmental benefits, specifically in the context of the GEF projects in the Balkans (cf. section 4.1).

119. The first level outcomes (see Figure 2) – as an immediate result of the project outputs – are described in detail in the following sub-sections of this report.

Figure 2: The project 'Theory of Change' diagram



4.3.1.1 Countries agree on joint objectives, e.g. Protocols of the Convention

120. Concerning the CC, all Parties have ratified the Convention and implementation is well underway. To the present date four Protocols have been adopted:

- Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;
- Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;
- Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;
- Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians.

121. Numerous policy documents implementing the Protocols have already been approved (Annex F), and useful implementing structures have been established, e.g. the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) and the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative (CWI); both are fully operational on the regional level. Nevertheless, with respect to the CNPA, the management structure is still under discussion and not yet clarified. However, as mentioned before, consensus building in international cooperation needs a lot of diligence and effort, in particular, when questions of institutional arrangements and their geographic location are involved. Giving the lead to national partners, instead of pushing them from top-down, seems to be a proper approach to capacity building.

4.3.1.2 Countries develop and enable laws, policies and programmes in coherence with regional priorities

122. Interviewees declare that both the Convention and the Protocols, which were /are to be adopted, are in principle in line with the national legislation of the Contracting Parties. Some articles are the consequence of a common denominator of national legislation, others have inspired countries to change and adapt their legislation. Implementation Plans have been developed or are in the process of being developed for all the Protocols. Also these plans partly derive from existing national programmes and plans. They also partly instigate the development and increase in attention and/or funding for new activities under the national programmes and plans.

123. According to the NFPs of the CC the main driving forces for implementation of the Convention are the responsible Ministries of seven countries and subordinated agencies, as well as environmental NGOs and Protected Areas Directorates. As described in a UNEP publication²⁸, a specific strategy or action plan for the Carpathian region does not exist in the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania. However, issues relevant to the Carpathian region have been integrated into some sectorial plans and policies etc. Serbia has passed a National Law on Ratification of the Biodiversity Protocol. Due to the territorial extent of the Carpathians in the Slovak Republic, the country adopted a Strategic Plan on Biodiversity that is applicable to the entire national territory. Ukraine has issued two ministerial documents and a decision of Oblast Councils on local action plans. In Hungary, the execution of wolf and lynx Strategic Action Plans and local management plans is in progress.

124. COP3 approved the Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change by its Decision COP3/15. Since then, this WG has been very active in aiming to support the Parties to the CC by providing advice on adaptation to climate change in the Carpathian region and providing guidance and recommendations for the development of policy proposals in line with the objectives of the Carpathian Convention and the European Commission's White Paper on Adapting to Climate Change. The CARPIVIA project is supporting the WG (see Annex E).

125. Summarizing statements made during personal interviews, from both government officials and NGO representatives, they indicate that there is still a long way to go for the Carpathian countries to achieve coherence with regional priorities. Although the CC is the framework for thinking and deciding on a regional level, and despite the need for a consensus for approval of Protocols and Strategic Action Plans, the countries have to take on more responsibility in this respect. However, in the evaluator's opinion, this is a typical feature of a process of capacity

²⁸ 'National achievements and challenges related to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention', European Academy of Bolzano and UNEP Vienna – SCC, October 2011.

building and development in the Carpathian countries. The full implementation of a MEA may take decades or may never be achieved; however, this does not put in question the need or the success of a specific MEA. Against this background, and as has been emphasized in the peer review by Convention Parties, many stakeholders have also stated that they consider the Carpathian Convention to be a concrete, effective and targeted platform for the coordinated implementation of global MEAs such as the CBD and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

4.3.1.3 Countries cooperate at different levels in all relevant sectors

126. Compared to the situation a decade ago and knowing that there is no tradition of cooperation, there is clear indication and an agreement among interviewees that cooperation between countries increased, either through relevant WGs for developing policy papers or through specific projects; a good example is the joint development of the Carpathian Red List of Species within the BioREGIO Carpathian Project. There is an interesting fact that the CC brought together different countries, which share almost nothing outside of the Carpathians, e.g. Poland and Serbia, but the Convention work brought them together, according to a representative of a Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In particular, very successful support to transboundary cooperation between countries has been facilitated by this project in the context of the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention (e.g. Djerdap National Park Serbia / Iron Gates Nature Park Romania, and Alpine Carpathian Corridor between Austria and Slovakia).

127. Also a government official from BiH reported the improved cooperation of his country with Serbia and Montenegro in selected sectors, which was absolutely impossible in the past, and countries starting to overcome historical obstacles. His statement 'UNEP Vienna – ISCC connects us' was also supported by an Austrian donor agency, and a reference was made to a successful GEF Focal Point meeting in Vienna together with representatives from FYRoM, BiH and MNE.

128. The ENVSEC Initiative by its very nature interlinks care for the environment with the promotion of peace and stability within and between countries. In addition, its multi-agency set up was praised as an outstanding example of implementation of the so called Paris Guidelines for inter-agency cooperation (quotation from correspondence with former UNEP staff).

129. Article 15 of the CC provides the legal basis for the establishment of strategic partnerships, which is of utmost importance when talking about cooperation. Up to date, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has signed seven MoUs and one Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) (Annex G). Nevertheless, there is room for new partnerships – not only in the frame of the Carpathian – and to link the project to other UN regional initiatives.

4.3.1.4 Countries actively develop and implement joint projects and initiatives in support of commonly agreed objectives

130. The CC process, the ENVSEC Initiative and the Mountain Partnership have been strong and successful catalysts for joint programming. Usually UNEP mandates are rather targeting policy level, but the approach used in this project was a different one, having a strong component of practical implementation.

131. A wide range of publications, progress reports and information obtained during interviews prove the success related to this outcome. Countries recognize the fact that there are more and more possibilities for partnerships and the interest from the region for the development of joint projects is increasing. The CC provides the framework, projects are not isolated, they are based on existing initiatives, take country needs into account, and reflect political reality. Activities are designed to implement policy documents, and results are supposed to feed back into the policy level.

132. Although there are several excellent examples that project ideas are coming from the grass-root level (e.g. Big Foot²⁹, Move4Nature³⁰, InRuTou³¹), the evaluation finds that bottom-up approaches still have to be strengthened and examples from the implementation of the Alpine Convention should be taken into account, as stated by a representative from an Alpine country. Also references to efficiently and effectively implemented

²⁹ Big Foot – Crossing Generations – Crossing Mountains (see Annex E).

³⁰ Move 4 Nature ESD – Teacher training programme on Education on Sustainable Development (see Annex E).

³¹ InRuTou - Innovation in Rural Tourism (see Annex E).

activities of the ICPDR were made, but noting that the structure of the instrument and the leadership/culture is different.

133. However, it is clear that the Carpathian Convention is the only inter-governmental framework existing covering the whole Carpathian region. Bottom up approaches are being integrated through, e.g. the close cooperation with the Carpathian Euroregion, national Parliamentarians, the Science for Carpathians movement, and sub-national authorities. One flagship activity was the 'Carpathian Transhumance' resulting in the engagement of shepherds and cheese makers in all the Carpathian countries in a common major cultural heritage event. Moreover, the very open and transparent stakeholder participation policy, due to the modern Rules of Procedure of the Carpathian Convention, has been described as exemplary by the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED)³².

4.3.1.5 Stakeholders are actively involved and benefit

134. The CC process is especially unique in entertaining a wide variety of stakeholders, both in the formal meetings and in the area of Convention and Protocol implementation. According to progress reports and publications, the implementation of the project offers many examples of active stakeholder involvement since its very beginning, taking into account their priorities and needs. The project was built on preparatory work carried out in collaboration with many different organizations and using established networks and synergies, e.g. the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative³³.

135. One of UNEP Vienna – ISCC guiding principles is strong stakeholder involvement on different levels. All activities are organized in a participatory way and in a good atmosphere, and meetings are open for all stakeholders, but funding for participation is the limiting factor, according to NGO representatives. UNEP staff is listening to stakeholder needs and providing 'space' for discussion and interaction, e.g. the project successfully supports NGOs through local projects, policy papers are provided to guide NGOs through implementation of local initiatives and give them credibility to be seen by governments, which is seen as a benefit for stakeholders and is appreciated by several interviewees.

136. According to information from one interviewee, not directly involved in the implementation of the project, the approach is too much top-down and only few local stakeholders are involved. Contrary, the UNEP – Vienna Team states, that it should be clear, that the Convention can only ensure participation in its own proceedings; the vastest role of ensuring participation during implementation remains with national and regional administrations.

137. As stated by UNEP staff, there is increasing interest, but for some countries the approach is quite new and benefits are not yet visible, specifically for Balkan countries. With support of UNEP Vienna – ISCC, stakeholder discussions are organized as regards compliance with laws and conventions.

4.3.1.6 Science – policy interface strengthened

138. A good example is the S4C – Science for the Carpathians Initiative³⁴. In consideration of global trends and guided by European policies, the initiative listed priority topics for current activities in the 'Research Agenda for the Carpathians: 2010 – 2015' and several project are under implementation (see list of project Annex E). Activities include the organization of 'Forum Carpaticum', and a wide field of topics is covered, like effects of climate change, monitoring of air and water pollution, natural hazards threatening mountain communities, land use and land cover change and its impact on biodiversity, forests as most important natural resources in the Carpathians, research on ecosystem services, etc. Research results are supposed to feed into regional policies.

139. With respect to the Balkan countries, the project supports reliable data collections on different topics, and helps to connect different scientific institutes. National databases are established, data are fed into competent authorities to provide decision-makers with a trustworthy basis for arguments, awareness is raised, and therefore, the project is helping the countries to comply with conventions, according to the information obtained through interviews.

³² Citizens for Europe are civil society actors supporting each other to create a participatory and democratic Europe.

³³ The Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative started in 1999 – a unique international partnership facilitated by WWF-International, involving more than 50 organizations from seven countries.

³⁴ The Science for the Carpathians Initiative is a regional science network targeting at supporting and streamlining mountain research in the Carpathians.

4.3.1.7 Sustainable financing and commitment of resources

140. According to the financial reports and information obtained from UNEP staff, the project is implemented with finances from different sources. Governments are paying yearly contributions, as agreed by the Parties to the CC (several interviewees think that the contributions should be increased as they are at a very low level since the beginning). Activities of the CC are of direct relevance to most of the work being undertaken by UNEP under the topic 'Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development' (cf. section 4.1).

141. At COP3 members agreed to establish a Trust Fund (cf. para 73) to cover the costs of administering and meeting the objectives of the CC and related Protocols, including the functioning of its Secretariat. COP3 – through decision COP3/14 – requested the Executive Director of UNEP to assume responsibility of administering the Trust Fund, and to delegate the necessary administration authorities to the Secretariat placed in Vienna.

142. The majority of funding is coming from external donors for specific projects. For the Carpathians, funding is received mainly through the EU from different angles, such as accession programmes, development portfolio, territorial cooperation, etc., as well as from bilateral government contributions, e.g. Austria, Switzerland, Germany, etc. Since its very beginning, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been good at fundraising, as stated by UNEP staff in ROE.

143. Information obtained from interviewees differs substantially as regards financial resources. On one hand UNEP is seen as a good, trustful international partner with good reputation for developing new projects in an open and participatory way. Furthermore, the CC is seen as a mechanism to access funding involving many countries and using integrated approaches. On the other hand, for example in the Czech Republic, the CC didn't help to access financial resources, as donors see the implementation of a convention as a national obligation, which has to be financed from national budgets. Therefore, the CC is not a tool for attracting finances according to a CZ government representative. A statement from one Romanian official goes on the same line; compared to other UNEP projects, the CC is not attractive for big donors and the lack of resources can be overcome by involving local communities, county councils, entrepreneurs (ICPDR is a good example) and by increasing the country contributions. However, the Carpathian Convention proved to be successful to attract the EU as a big donor, interestingly through the angle of regional development programmes rather than environmental programmes. Moreover, the work in South-East Europe has found its way into the mainstream of GEF operations, and a number of sequel projects financed by GEF are currently implemented by UNEP Vienna – ISCC at the country level, in closest cooperation with UN country teams.

144. Obviously, the main lack of financial resources does not concern the project itself, but national implementation measures, which of course are difficult to finance in times of financial crisis. From the point of view of project performance in raising funds for international and transnational cooperation, the project itself and the connected spin – off large EU programmes (Carpathian Project, BioREGIO Carpathians, Access2Mountains, etc.), the project was outstandingly successful and mobilized several tens of millions of Euros for implementation measures (see annex E) from mainly international and EU funds.

145. As regards project funding, the limiting factor is the co-financing for EU projects, which is sometimes very difficult to arrange for partner organizations, e.g. BioREGIO Carpathian Project. Other constraints are related to internal administrative procedures, as expressed by several interviewees, which are often not compatible with EU requirements. According to statements made by NGOs, financing of core activities of the process is not sustainable, e.g. stakeholders are invited to all activities but there are no funds available for their participation. On the other hand, UNEP staff argue that it is not the task of a Convention to finance stakeholders, and other sources have to be found.

146. Concerning finances for UNEP Vienna – ISCC activities in the Balkans and other mountain regions, an Austrian government official and the main donor organization for the ENVSEC Initiative state very positively 'low money but big inputs'. Nevertheless, Austria would like to see basic annual funding for strengthening UNEP's liaison work. A Balkan country representative mentioned that UNEP Vienna – ISCC is enhancing its role in the Balkans and is currently the leading implementation agency as regards GEF funding for environmental projects. In the evaluator's opinion there is a huge potential for UNEP to increase its portfolio in this region.

147. Summarizing the achievements of direct outputs, the project serves as a good example of regional cooperation and effectively managed – to the extent possible in the given time frame – the implementation of the

Carpathian Convention, and ensures that experiences gained and lessons learned can be replicated in other mountain regions.

The rating on 'achievement of direct outcomes' is **highly satisfactory**.

4.3.2 Likelihood of impact using Review of Outcomes to Impact (RoTI) approach based on reconstructed ToC

148. The reconstructed ToC summarizes the intended impact as 'sustainable development and environmental protection of mountain regions through strengthened regional and inter-regional cooperation in Central and South-Eastern Europe with an outreach to other mountain regions in the world' (Figure 2). Full impacts often accrue only after considerable time-lags, probably only in several decades after finalization of the project activities. Therefore, the project's likelihood for impact achievement is reviewed along the pathways from outcomes to intended impact.

149. When assessing the likelihood of impact using the RoTI approach, it can be stated that the project has made progress towards achieving the intended impacts. This is proven through the fact that some intermediate states – not only on the lower-level, but even to some extent at the medium and high levels, have partly already been reached, although there is still a long way to go. An overview of the project's impact pathways based on the RoTI assessment, including scoring and justification, can be found in Table 4 at the end of this section.

150. Information gathered through interviews and personal correspondence revealed that the CC has created the network and institutional base, which allows project development, financing and implementation – not only in the Carpathian countries, but also in South-Eastern Europe, whereas the emerging project portfolio provides the catalytic financial support for keeping the convention process going. According to UNEP Vienna – ISCC staff, the CC process is an engine and evolving centre of expertise for similar initiatives in other regions, the Mountain Partnership and UNEP's work in the Balkans.

151. The following sub-sections describe the **Low-level Intermediate States** along the causal pathway of the project (Figure 2), whereas the Medium-level and High-level Intermediate States are not discussed, as they can only be reached in the future. Nevertheless, they should not be ignored, as they provide valuable information that completes the result chain from outputs to impacts and are needed to enable the project to achieve its impacts.

4.3.2.1 Capacity strengthened on different levels and technical tools provided

152. UNEP staff reported that capacity building processes started from the very beginning of the project and were still ongoing. In all Working Groups of the Convention, systematic capacity building of stakeholders and civil society is a main focus. Interviewees report progress in making links between WGs, such as climate change, forest and protected areas (PAs) experts. Another example was mentioned, as there is no WG on water, this sector is covered under sustainable agriculture and sustainable energy (developing a project together with ICPDR on sustainable hydropower). Capacity building activities are implemented also through several projects (see list of projects with UNEP Vienna – SCC's role in Annex E). Already in the REC Project that began in 2004³⁵, national workshops were organized to train civil servants. Capacity building activities are included in almost all UNEP Vienna – ISCC projects, most effectively within the CNPA, amongst others, related to database and information systems as important technical tools.

153. Nevertheless, capacity building efforts have to be strengthened on different levels and a follow-up project should have a focus on capacity building on different levels. A government representative from Romania suggests a stronger involvement and building up capacity of County Councils and mayors, as it seems that this stakeholder group is only moderately aware of the CC, and there is willingness to contribute, either to support and promote the CC, but possibly also via in-kind contributions, at least in some areas of Romania.

154. For the Balkan countries, interviewees observe capacity building efforts on the policy level, e.g. UNEP Vienna – ISCC staff was involved in and facilitated the elaboration of several policy documents, amongst others, the State of Environment Report (2012) in BiH and the preparation of National Reports to the CBD; furthermore, in the development of National Action Programmes and Reporting Process under the UNCCD in Macedonia and Montenegro or working on municipalities level in Macedonia regarding desertification issues.

³⁵ Support to the Implementation of the Carpathian Convention financed through the Italian Trust Fund'.

4.3.2.2 Platform for coordination and exchange between different stakeholders provided

155. A representative from an Alpine country involved in activities of the Alpine Convention and in several experience exchange workshops stressed the importance of the process for CC implementation, specifically for providing a platform for discussion, identification of needs, and the development of joint projects.

156. A government official from the Czech Republic highlighted the importance of information exchange with other countries and mentioned that implementation activities have 'changed the picture' and participants are seeing now the bigger context of different thematic aspects. In addition, such meetings are seen as a source of inspiration and impulse to outputs, which would not have been possible without CC in place, and the inter-ministerial steering committee meetings in the Czech Republic were positively highlighted. A representative of an international NGO reported that very often stakeholders have not been aware of CC in the past, but through these inter-governmental platform meetings they receive information. NGOs more and more use Convention as the framework for their projects. In addition, the usefulness of the WGs was mentioned, specifically the fact that participants are coming from different sectors and integrated approaches are applied.

157. According to information obtained from an Austrian donor agency, UNEP Vienna – ISCC in its role as a Focal Point for the ENVSEC Initiative has good contacts, is well positioned in the Balkan region and contributes effectively to networking, both in working groups related to specific projects and also within the Mountain Partnership. As a positive example UNEP's involvement in the Bhutan project was mentioned, which is related to knowledge management for sustainable development in mountain regions, carried out together with the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (DEZA).

4.3.2.3 Experiences and lessons disseminated, mutually shared between countries and replicable to other mountain regions

158. In this respect the project offers numerous positive examples described in publications, progress reports and interview statements. Above all, experience sharing with the Alpine Convention has to be mentioned, which started already before the signature of the CC. The Alpine-Carpathian cooperation among protected areas has a long tradition; the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (Alparc) helped to establish the network in the Carpathians (CNPA) by providing lessons learned, advice and information exchange, and several topics were identified as priorities for the cooperation, such as PAs management and large carnivore management, with a focus on transboundary issues, tourism aspects, and implementation of European Union nature legislation. A publication elaborated by Alparc and financed by several Alpine countries summarizes the results³⁶. There is a strong cooperation with the Alpine Convention confirmed by a MoU between the two conventions, as well as a MoU signed by the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention and the CBD. Moreover, a 'Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change' was adopted during COP4, to be presented at UNFCCC COP20 in Lima.

159. Another successful example is reported from the Czech Republic, where an inter-ministerial committee for the implementation of the CC has been established; since 2006, the CZ Ministry of the Environment has also been organising annual round tables for stakeholders to share information and enhance cooperation. The CC has offered an opportunity to think and deal with different thematic issues in a broader context. Such activities are inspired from best practice in information sharing and best practices in the design of new projects, reflecting local, national and Carpathian experience and building on outcomes of other CC related initiatives.

160. There is common agreement among interviewees that lessons learned from implemented projects (e.g. the elaboration of the Carpathian Red List of Species and the ecological connectivity issues in the BioREGIO Carpathian Project) and best practice examples are effectively shared among the countries. Sharing experiences in WGs of the Convention is seen as an asset by many people, and the process can be transferred to other regions, but has to be adapted to the political, ecological and economic situation in the countries. All implemented projects have included thoughts related to the replicability of experiences. Worth to mention is the publication 'Synthesis report on transferability of the project results in the Balkans (Dinaric Arc)' within the BioREGIO Carpathian Project³⁷.

³⁶ 'Towards a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas'.

³⁷ All documents produced during the BioREGIO Carpathian Project can be downloaded on: <http://www.bioregio-carpathians.eu>.

161. According to a Romanian Protected Areas manager, experience sharing is of utmost importance and with respect to replicability there are already requests to the CNPA from Danube Parks for joint meetings and from Balkan countries for help to establish a network in this sub-region.

162. Several interviewees referred to the increased activities of UNEP Vienna – ISCC as regards mountain cooperation on a global level. The original idea to use experiences gained and to develop a similar environmental agreement in the Caucasus region failed, due to political constraints. Amongst them, the Russian – Georgian war, a conflict between the countries along with the separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which took place in August 2008. Adapting to the political situation, UNEP Vienna – ISCC approached the issues from a different angle, and started the process and activities on the level of scientific cooperation between the countries.

163. Within the Mountain Partnership, the Carpathian and the Alpine Conventions are seen as best practice examples, having an outreach and are acknowledged by other mountain regions, e.g. Pyreneans, Andes, ICIMOD in the Himalaya region, African Mountain Forum, etc. As evidenced by several statements, this is due to UNEP Vienna – ISCC excellent information sharing and effective presentations of results at relevant events.

164. The Austrian Government highlighted the involvement and important role in experience-sharing in the Pavilion for the Global Mountain Partnership, which was opened during the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012.

4.3.2.4 Awareness raised among stakeholders on different levels

165. In all countries where project activities are taking place, the internet, and specifically websites, are playing an increasing role with respect to awareness raising. The Carpathian Convention website³⁸ together with the websites of all partners and projects are valuable sources of information. During interviews some valuable recommendations for improving the Convention website were made. There was also the suggestion to restructure and update the website www.unep.at.

166. In the context of awareness raising, the important role of UNEP Vienna – ISCC in producing and publishing reports, documents, folders, etc. (see a list of relevant publications in Annex F), is stressed. Several interviewees evidence the high quality in presenting the results through publications, power point presentations, among other products.

167. Several interviewees confirm increased visibility of the Carpathian region and the recognition of ‘being part of something bigger’, as there is greater awareness on the local level. People on the ground are becoming aware of the common space and understand that they are part of a bigger region. Locals are more and more fascinated, and they appreciate projects adapted to local conditions, according to UNEP staff working on tourism and education issues.

168. The project contributes to awareness raising on the European, regional and global levels (information received during interviews and from correspondence). There is increased visibility and awareness of the existence of the Carpathian and Balkan sub-regions and the shared resources, and UNEP Vienna – ISCC contributed to bringing mountain issues on the global agenda. The following examples were mentioned:

- the Rio+20 Conference – calling upon strengthening existing mechanisms and developing new ones – mentioned the Carpathians;
- the Resolution of the UN General Assembly (December 2013), which made a reference to the Convention with respect to its constructive new approaches to the integrated, sustainable development of the Alps and the Carpathians; and its importance as a forum for dialogue among stakeholders;
- As regards the European level, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has in the past and is still assisting countries in drafting the relevant paragraphs of EU policy papers.

4.3.2.5 Public participation and access to information enhanced

169. As regards public participation and access to information, interviewees immediately refer to events in the Vienna International Centre, regularly organized by UNEP Vienna – ISCC. The following examples of public events were highlighted:

³⁸ <http://www.carpathianconvention.org>.

- Organization of regular events on the 'International Mountain Day' on 11 December; for example, in 2013, during the SWOMM³⁹ dissemination event, presenting the results of the ACCESS2MOUNTAIN Project; and the Future of Mountain Conference⁴⁰ in 2012;
- Regular celebrations on the World Environment Day on 5 June, e.g. the Symposium: The Future of Biodiversity in 2010 ;
- A symposium 'Value of Diversity – Diversity of Value'⁴¹ on 28 May 2010
- Other events with respect to the 'International Year of Biodiversity 2010'.

4.3.2.6 *Projects catalyzed*

170. There is concurrent evidence that the project is successful in catalyzing projects. Many projects are connected and linked with the CC, and results from these projects feed into Working Groups of the CC, where Protocols and Strategic Action Plans are elaborated, and which complements the policy cycle.

171. UNEP Vienna – ISCC is planting the seed and some of the NFPs together with partner organizations are initiating projects. The number of projects is steadily increasing (the list of projects and UNEP's role can be found in Annex E). EU recognition in terms of financing for regional projects was mentioned in interviews – with the limitation that funding for activities in Ukraine and Serbia has to be covered through other sources.

172. Although, there is concurrent evidence that the project is successful in catalyzing regional projects, recommendations were made during interviews to ensure a better involvement of partners in the design of projects, specifically looking at their capacity and experience during the proposal development phase (e.g. in the BioREGIO Carpathians Project two partner organizations failed to comply with planned results and had to be replaced, which led to delays in implementation). However, the institutional landscape for environment in Central and Eastern Europe is still very fragile. The project brought several institutions for the first time into large EU programmes (take into account, that these are 'new' EU Member States). In the evaluators view, this should be considered as a great success of the project. If delays at the EU programme level led to cash flow problems of some partners, this may be regrettable, but is probably an unforeseeable risk.

173. There seems to be a high potential to increase the project portfolio in South-Eastern Europe, providing an even wider range of benefits, resulting in a much greater UNEP success, in case there would be additional UNEP support, besides in-kind contributions, (according to the financial statements the project is only funded by voluntary government contributions, bilateral and project funds).

174. Summarizing this section, the project started to contribute to improved cooperation and partnerships towards the achievement of the Convention and other mountain related work as a result of these immediate 'Outcomes'. There is the likelihood that these will lead to further positive changes as regards improved environment and human living conditions, but only under the condition that there will be well designed follow-up projects.

175. The rating on 'likelihood of impact' is **satisfactory**. Table 4 overleaf presents a summary of the assessment of the project's likelihood for impact achievement.

³⁹ Scientific Workshop on Mountain Mobility and Transport.

⁴⁰ The organization of the event has been facilitated by the EURAC Vienna Office together with UNEP Vienna - SCC and UNIS Vienna in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water of Austria, the Austrian Development Cooperation, BOKU University, Environment Agency Austria (UBA), the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, and further supported by the projects "CARPATCLIM" and "CARPIVIA".

⁴¹ Symposium organized by the Austrian NGO "die umweltberatung" (Eco Counselling Austria), in co-operation with the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Vienna Office and the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) Vienna.

Table 4: Overall likelihood of impact achievement

Results rating of project entitled: <i>'Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions'</i>							
OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	RATING	INTERMEDIATE STATES	RATING	INTENDED IMPACT	Rating (+)	Overall
A) UNEP programme support to the Interim Secretariat of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians	<p>1. Countries agree on joint objectives, e.g. Protocols of the Convention</p> <p>2. Countries develop and enable law, policies and programmes in coherence with regional priorities</p> <p>3. Countries cooperate at different levels in all relevant sectors</p> <p>4. Countries actively develop and implement joint projects and initiatives in support of commonly agreed objectives</p>	<p>B</p> <p>Rating justification:</p> <p>The project's intended outcomes were delivered to the extent possible in the available time frame – taking into consideration that the project is a long-term process – and a follow-up project, starting in 2015, is already in preparation.</p> <p>The seven outcomes – a result of the reconstructed Theory of Change – are designed to feed into the ongoing process and are described in detail in subsection 4.3.1.</p>	<p>Low-level intermediate states</p> <p>Capacity strengthened on different levels and technical tools provided</p> <p>Platform for coordination and exchange between different stakeholders provided</p> <p>Experiences and lessons disseminated and mutually shared between countries and replicable to other mountain regions</p> <p>Awareness raised among stakeholders on different levels</p> <p>Public participation and access to information enhanced</p> <p>Projects catalyzed</p> <p>CNPA effectively managed</p>	<p>A</p> <p>Rating justification:</p> <p>The evaluation concludes that the activities and measures designed and implemented to move towards intermediate states have started and have partly already produced results, which clearly indicate that they can progress towards the intended impact.</p>	Sustainable development and environmental protection of mountain regions through strengthened regional and inter-regional cooperation in Central and South-Eastern Europe with an outreach to other mountain regions in the world		BB Likely
B) Facilitation and support to inter-regional and global mountain partnerships	<p>5. Stakeholders are actively involved and benefit</p> <p>6. Science – policy interface strengthened</p>	<p>Medium-level intermediate states</p> <p>Collaborative arrangements and agreements</p> <p>Trans-disciplinary research programmes and projects implemented</p> <p>Connecting environmental risks with understanding of environmental security enhanced</p>	<p>B</p> <p>Rating justification for medium-level and high-level intermediate states:</p> <p>The evaluation finds, that activities and measures are designed to move towards higher-level intermediate states (some of the medium and high-level states have been partly already achieved), but at the current stage it is not foreseeable, if and when all of them can be reached, as it depends on many external factors (assumptions) e.g. political stability and commitments, economic developments, financial resources, etc.</p>				
C) Provision of technical assistance and advisory services to countries in Central and South-East Europe for sub-regional and transboundary cooperation	<p>7. Sustainable financing and commitment of resources</p>	<p>High-level intermediate states</p> <p>Long-term vision and holistic approaches adopted</p> <p>Integrated and inclusive approaches for SMD in planning and decision-making</p> <p>Regional knowledge management and policy actions harmonized</p> <p>People have access to resources</p>					
D) Liaison to relevant organizations in the region							

4.3.3 Achievement of project goal and planned objectives

176. The objectives described in the original PD (framework for cooperation, enhance implementation of existing instruments, stimulate partnerships, attract donors, prevent rather than cure, foster integration and coordination between sectors) are fully in line with the CC and – due to broadening the scope of the project in 2004 – also with UNEP’s PoW (cf. section 4.1). The yearly project document supplements contributed to the fine tuning of the design of the project, and incorporating the decisions taken during the meetings of the COP and other relevant steering bodies.

177. As far as progress reports and personal interviews reveal, the project is on a good way to achieve its primary objectives related to the facilitation of regional cooperation (on several levels) for the protection and sustainable development in the Carpathians, and to provide best practice examples for sub-regional cooperation and partnership in other mountain regions. All people contacted are aware that project implementation is a long-term process and statements can be summarized as: ‘it is a good start, but there is still a long way to go’.

178. Several interviewees stressed the fact that achievements so far are due to the effective management by UNEP Vienna – ISCC. A wide range of examples were mentioned, e.g. through implementation of regional projects with activities on the ground and feeding the outcomes into the relevant Working Groups of the Convention, the project is linking the policy with the project level (and vice versa) and in addition, strengthening cooperation between countries and sub-regions. In the Balkans, the policy dialogue and the preparation and implementation of GEF Projects contributes to the achievement of objectives and results.

179. A decade ago, the Carpathian Mountains were a ‘blank area on the map’. According to information obtained from interviews, one major result of UNEP Vienna – SCC’s services is that the Carpathian Mountains appeared on the European and global agendas. For example, references to the Carpathians are made in international fora, e.g. CDB meetings, UN General Assembly, Rio+20 events and the Carpathians are included in EU policy papers.

180. Unlike other treaties, implementing a framework convention is a big advantage, according to one Romanian official, as the scope is very broad and covers many sectors, and work moves now into fields beyond biodiversity, like agriculture, tourism and climate change, contributing to sustainable mountain development. This is also stimulating networking, partnerships and coordination. Within the framework of the global Mountain Partnership, the project was very effective in sharing experience made in the Carpathians with mountain regions all over the world, such as the Andes, the Caucasus, and the Karakoram-Himalaya Hindukush regions.

181. In the evaluator’s opinion and according to statements made by UNEP staff and government representatives from Austria and Romania, this project cannot be compared with ‘normal’ projects having a clear goal to be achieved at the project’s end.

182. The implementation of the CC – including its outreach to other mountain regions in the world – is an ongoing, long-term process. The same is true for the functions to catalyze sub-regional cooperation in the Balkans, global mountain cooperation, and liaison.

183. The project has achieved so far many results (cf. section 4.2). To name a few, the negotiation and adoption of four Protocols has been achieved (biodiversity, forestry, tourism, transport), whereas some other protocols are under development, e.g. cultural heritage. Negotiations for additional agreements, such as energy, agriculture, regional development and spatial planning, will be initiated beyond the current project’s time frame. Furthermore, the evaluation reveals successful communication and information events, including the production of materials (Annex F), as well as many capacity building activities.

184. As regards the planned objectives, the evaluation finds that UNEP Vienna – ISCC is successfully acting in its capacity as an interim secretariat, and since September 2014, as a full-fledged secretariat, promoting swift ratification, entry into force and effective implementation of the Carpathian Convention.

185. UNEP Vienna – ISCC played a key role in strengthening cooperation and partnerships, exchange of experience and mobilization of funds, not only in the Carpathian region, but also in Central and South Eastern Europe. Through its open and transparent approach (as evidenced by the fact that workshops, events, and COP meetings are open to everybody), UNEP Vienna – ISCC encouraged and ensured stakeholder participation in its activities and identified best practice examples of sub-regional and transboundary cooperation. As the

environmental focal point within the Mountain Partnership, UNEP Vienna – ISCC transferred its experiences to other mountain regions.

186. According to staff, the goals of PoW have been achieved, with some challenges. For example, the Carpathian Convention PoW foresaw consultations on cultural heritage, but their outcome – as in any other international negotiation – can never be precisely forecast; so instead of a Protocol on Cultural Heritage, a Ministerial Declaration on cultural heritage was adopted at COP4 in September 2014. One constraint stressed by some project partners is the fact that, sometimes there are delays in implementing activities due to the lack of human and financial capacity within the ISCC, but it was also made clear by the Secretariat that it is not in charge of implementing the Carpathian Convention, but this is mainly a task of the participating Parties (which is not always fully perceived by stakeholders, which always hope that national implementation should be improved).

187. Summarizing this section, the project achieved the results outlined in the original PD (including revisions). The Project Document Supplement as of April 2014 displays milestones including indicators and means of verifications for each of the ‘Outputs’ and the targets (number of meetings, communication events, trainings, or policy drafting), which have been reached, some with slight delays. (See section 4.2).

188. The rating on ‘achievement of project goal and planned objectives’ is **highly satisfactory**.

189. The overall rating on ‘effectiveness: attainment of project objectives and results’ is **satisfactory** (as an overall judgment of the evaluator).

4.4 Sustainability and replication

190. As regards sustainability of outcomes and benefits, the CC itself is a sustaining strategy, and projects designed within this framework replicate experiences in other mountain regions in Europe, such as the Balkan’s Dinaric Arc and in other regions, such as the Caucasus, etc.

191. As regards **financial sustainability**, the results of interviews present a mixed picture. There might be risks, as the project addresses countries with economies in transition, and the financial and economic crisis may have impacts, such as the decline of voluntary contributions by governments, which may in turn affect implementation, specifically on the national level. The fact that environmental issues have low priority on the political agenda increases the risk further. Possible negative impacts have to be addressed (e.g. UNDP/GEF Project⁴²) and need to be mitigated, which is one of the core principles of the CC.

192. On the other hand, there are many opportunities for project funding, either from the EU or other donors (c.f. sub-section 4.3.1.7). With respect to EU funding, UNEP Vienna – ISCC had to be very creative as not all countries in the region are eligible for funding, e.g. in the case of the Carpathians, Ukraine and Serbia are not EU Member States and therefore not eligible for funding under EU budget lines. The evaluator emphasizes that UNEP Vienna – ISCC managed to overcome a number of these formal challenges by applying results-oriented and flexible approaches. In the Balkans, there is a high potential for increased funding from GEF. Nevertheless, relying only on project funding is not sustainable, core functions and activities need regular budget allocations. Therefore, more core resources from UNEP GEF would be helpful to ensure the projects sustainability in the future.

193. Another fact to be considered in this respect is the division between the finances for the PoW of the Convention and UNEP’s PoW. As regards the CC, the established Trust Fund is covering the costs (cf. para 73), but for UNEP’s portfolio, it seems that Europe is not attractive for financial contributions within the UNEP family (according to internal communication). UNEP Vienna – ISCC is recognized for the quality of engagement, but the majority of funding from the UNEP Environment Fund is embedded in other continents. It would be advisable to allocate a UNEP core budget to support corporate functions for activities related to the UNEP PoW in the context of sustainable mountain developments and liaison functions.

194. The rating on ‘financial sustainability’ is **likely**.

⁴² UNDP/GEF project in cooperation with Romsilva, the National Forest Administration and WWF, with the objective to secure the financial sustainability of Romania’s Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) as a model for replication to the entire Carpathian Network of Protected Areas.

195. The project is addressing socio-political factors likely to influence the project results and tries to ensure **socio-political sustainability** through partnerships (as important drivers) with and support by EU macro-regional strategies and funding programmes (Decision COP3/10, EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the accompanying Action Plan, EU Strategy for the Alpine Region, MoU with the Alpine Convention, Workshops 'Towards an EU Strategy for the Carpathian Region' in May 2013 and June 2014). Many projects are demand-led and therefore, activities are contributing to government and local level ownership (also an important driver), which strengthen the implementation of several EU-funded projects, e.g. SARD-M Project⁴³, ACCESS2MOUNTAIN⁴⁴, BioREGIO Carpathians, etc. Even after project end there is considerable interest expressed by several stakeholders to have a follow-up, and leveraged funding is being searched. This fact addresses issues of sustainability and interviewees mentioned several examples, where additional funding is urgently needed (e.g. education and awareness raising projects, projects aiming at ensuring ecological connectivity in fragmented landscapes by applying integrated approaches, etc.) were mentioned by interviewees.

196. The rating on 'socio-political sustainability' is **likely**.

197. The sustenance of results and the progress towards intended impacts is heavily dependent on robust **institutional frameworks and governance structures**. Sustainability is laid down in the Convention itself as a sustaining strategic approach, which will sustain beyond the life of the project. The project itself created the governance structure, the rules of procedures, and financial rules of the CC (cf. section 3.3). The governments of the signatory parties, especially the respective Focal Points and related staff support the project and create positive impressions for long-term sustainability, despite the many political changes in CEE countries. Institutional structures are important for implementing legal, policy and strategic decisions, e.g. the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas and the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative. Both structures are fully operational on the regional level and developed key documents, such as the Strategic Action Plan for the implementation of the Biodiversity Protocol. Civil Society Organizations (CSO) representatives and other stakeholder groups seem to have a high level of ownership in these structures.

198. On the other hand, UNEP's secretariat services have been on an interim basis for the duration of the project. It is only at the most recent COP4 (September 2014) that UNEP Vienna was confirmed as the Secretariat of the Convention in the understanding that the situation will be reviewed, if by COP5 in three years' time, the Parties reach an agreement on another location of the Secretariat. This should be considered as a great success of the project, as the confirmation of the Secretariat in Vienna and the removal of the wording "interim" has brought a new full-fledged MEA Secretariat in Vienna to the family of UNEP-administered MEAs.

199. The evaluation could make clear that the establishment of UNEP Vienna – ISCC was an important and sustainable institutional arrangement, one of broader importance for UNEP. The organization should recognize the important contributions UNEP Vienna is delivering to the international mountain agenda and should institutionalize – as soon as possible – its role as a corporate resource centre to support UNEP activities of all sub-programmes and divisions regarding sustainable mountain development.

200. The rating on 'institutional framework and governance sustainability' is **highly likely**.

201. As regards **environmental sustainability**, infrastructure development (in particular roads and railway lines under the TEN-T Programme⁴⁵), hydropower development, and intensive land management might have negative environmental impacts (if not carefully planned), leading to habitat fragmentation and biodiversity loss. The conflict between nature protection and economic development can be mitigated by establishing ecological corridors for the maintenance of ecosystem resilience and stability, secured through integrated participatory planning and management approaches. The project addressed these issues on several levels, e.g. working group on spatial planning and the development of future project, e.g. within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, etc.

202. The overall rating on 'environmental sustainability' is **highly likely**.

203. In terms of **replication and catalytic effects**, a wide range of best-practice examples are available (cf. subsection 4.3.2.6). These can be used to encourage States to adopt a long-term vision and holistic approaches

⁴³ SARD-M Report for the Carpathian Countries Member States – An Assessment of Policies, Institutions and Processes.

⁴⁴ The project ACCESS2MOUNTAIN aims to achieve durable, environmentally friendly tourism, as well as to ensure accessibility and connection to, between and in sensitive regions of the Alps and the Carpathians.

⁴⁵ European Union's new transport infrastructure policy that connects the continent between East and West, North and South.

towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems, and incorporating mountain-specific policies into national sustainable development strategies, particularly in developing countries. There is agreement that lessons learned from implemented projects and best practice examples are effectively shared among countries, within the Carpathians, but also in other regions. Worth to mention is UNEP's focal point role in the ENVSEC Initiative, with the overall goal to contribute to the reduction of environment and security risks and increased cooperation both between and within countries of the SEE region.

204. Also the Convention work and related projects are offering examples and lessons learned. In this respect interviewees referred to the important role of the CNPA, provided major contributions and lessons learned through their activities. Results from on-going and/or completed projects are processed and information and experience is made accessible to the key stakeholders at regional, national and international level, as stated by UNEP staff. An excellent example is presented in the BioREGIO Carpathian Project, which under the work package 7 (Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians) produced the publication *'Synthesis Report on Transferability of the BioREGIO Carpathian Project Results in the Balkans (Dinaric Arc)'* (cf. para 161). Also other projects, e.g. the Big Foot Project (see Annex E), which involved close cooperation with local governments, agencies and NGOs in Italy, Greece and Bulgaria, is sharing experiences of intergenerational learning as a tool for local sustainable development and nature protection with the Carpathians other mountain regions.

205. Other activities in the Balkans, such as the project *'Enhancing Transboundary Biodiversity Management in South Eastern Europe'* with a summarizing publication⁴⁶, provide a good overview on the benefits of protected areas networks, the potential for establishing the mountain protected area network in South-East Europe, and current initiatives.

206. The rating on 'catalytic role and replication' is **highly likely**.

207. The overall rating on 'sustainability and replication' is **likely**.

4.5 Efficiency

208. Originally, the project's duration was three years (2003 – 2006), but in fact the project ended in December 2014. Within this – more than ten years' timeframe, 19 revisions took place, which was in fact an extension of continuous UNEP support to a successful high-level inter-governmental process. This was a necessary measure, both from the points of view of programming and of financial management, as the project was specifically designed to support on-going processes. From the programmatic point of view, the project had to be regularly revised in order to include the new programme(s) of work adopted by each Conference of the Parties, as well as to include new work streams approved by the ENVSEC Management Board. Moreover, the progress of work the Carpathian Convention Working Groups had to be taken into account, in order to plan ahead, adapt the related implementation schedule, and eventually apply time saving measures, as appropriate.

209. From the financial management point of view, revisions were required in order to include the new funds provided on a yearly basis as voluntary contributions by the project's governmental supporters and external donors. This *modus operandi* was a necessity, particularly before the establishment of the Trust Fund system, including the commitment of assessed contributions to the Convention. Since UNEP financial rules do not allow to anticipate the budgeting of pledges before they are actually deposited in UNEP accounts, these yearly voluntary contributions and additional donor support had to be budgeted upon receipt of the funds.

210. The system proved to be appropriate because it did allow UNEP Vienna to coordinate the monitoring measures of substantive progress and financial management in close interaction with the constituent partners and donors, to optimize the time schedule and to apply cost control, as appropriate.

211. The project was built upon existing initiatives and partnerships; worth mentioning is the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative with a huge network of partners and a baseline for data sources, as well as other programmes and projects (e.g. World Wide Fund for Nature/WWF, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River/ICPDR, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/UNECE, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations/FAO, United Nations Development Programme/UNDP, EU-programmes, Convention on

⁴⁶ 'Towards the network of mountain PAs in the Balkans and the Dinaric Arc', UNEP Vienna – SCC, 2009.

Biological Diversity/CBD, Ramsar Convention, Carpathian Wetland Initiative, and Green Belt). Synergies were efficiently used according to the judgment of the evaluator.

212. The project was meant to be flexible and adaptive, and UNEP Vienna – ISCC’s response to changing situations was efficient. Time efficiency was slightly hampered due to political reasons (within the normative work risk management measures had to be applied in cases where political agreement was not found or delayed), but also due to complicated internal administrative procedures.

213. In terms of financial efficiency, despite not receiving funding from the Environment Fund (EF) of UNEP (only in-kind contributions were provided) – the project survived on counterpart contributions, bilateral and international donors in providing a broad range of services and benefits to UNEP’s PoW. According to a statement of an Austrian donor organization ‘*low input but high impact*’.

214. The rating on ‘efficiency’ is **highly satisfactory**.

4.6 Factors affecting project performance

4.6.1 Preparation and readiness

215. NGO representatives, as well as several partners, stressed the fact that it was the ‘right moment’ to start the project. Many interviewees were referring to the momentum of the Bucharest Summit in April 2001 and the following highly professionally guided negotiation process – supported by Governments of the Alpine countries – which led to the signing of the Carpathian Framework Convention during the Kiev Environmental Ministers Conference in May 2003.

216. As regards stakeholders’ identification during project preparation in 2003, the project was built upon existing initiatives (cf. para 211) and was designed according to the needs of the countries, as it builds up on the inter-governmental negotiation process and guides, facilitates, and implements decisions, made by Parties to the CC, and the requested mandate to act as an interim secretariat.

217. Project objectives were specified in a very general way as the project provides a framework for a long-term process. Reviewing in detail the original project document, the evaluator finds that project development and planning was not strategically done. As the currently accepted terminology of project management planning was not taken into account, several inconsistencies can be observed. For example, the original PD does not define any impacts and does not specify any outcomes (defined as behavioral or systematic effects and changes towards impacts), but lists results of proposed activities. There was no Logical Framework included in the original PD. In the project document supplements the term ‘outcome’ is differently used, and from 2011 on, a series of results of the project are condensed as four project ‘Outputs’, which are also laid down in a Logical Framework, the latest project document supplement is dated 24.04.2014.

218. Having said the above, one cannot expect to apply the today’s methodology and terminology to a project designed more than ten years ago. The flexible project design back in 2003 was fully in line with UNEP requirements at the time was well thought through and was one of the keys to success of the high performance of this project both in substance as well as in resource mobilization.

219. Implementation and partnership arrangements were properly determined and negotiated, and the rules of procedures and financial rules were officially approved during COP 1 in Kiev in December 2006 (cf. section 3.3 and para 97).

220. UNEP administrative staff stressed the fact that UNEP – ROE provided enormous support when the project started in 2003 and overtook the managerial duties. In the evaluator’s opinion it seems that the opening of the Vienna office in 2004 – as an out-posted small office with international status – was the most efficient and cost-effective management structure, and the location and its proximity to the sub-regions is an advantage.

221. The rating on ‘preparation and readiness’ is **highly satisfactory**.

4.6.2 Project implementation and adaptive management

222. The Ministerial Declarations and Decisions of COP1, COP2, COP3 and COP4 of the CC acknowledge the services of UNEP Vienna – ISCC and state the effectiveness as regards implementing the PoW of the CC, the administrative and financial management, and the support in implementing related projects.

223. The effectiveness of project management is generally well perceived. Partners, both in the Carpathian countries as well as in the Balkans, described the cooperation with UNEP Vienna – ISCC as uncomplicated and effective. Transparent, integrated, client-orientated but sensitive approaches were applied and delivery was result-based, which was appreciated by several countries. Specifically, the responsiveness and excellent cooperation with UNEP Vienna – ISCC as regards the preparation of documents for COP and CCIC meetings was mentioned, although a reference was made by several interviewees to the low human resource capacity in the office, and the need for additional staff was stressed.

224. According to internal statements, UNEP Vienna – ISCC successfully applied a results-based management approach in its operations (as a result of proper training and system-wide introduction of RBM approaches in the UN). The achieved results are the basis for further support by the donors and the ownership of recipient countries in the present and future.

225. Donor organizations, several government and CSO representatives appreciated the networking skills of UNEP Vienna – ISCC, not only related to the implementation of the CC and the networking within the working groups, but also in the frame of the Mountain Partnership. Specifically, donor organizations appraise UNEP's role and competence as mediator in environmental issues, the good reputation and its advocating role on the policy level.

226. Since its beginning the office has been growing due to increasing activities and a wide range of projects. Although there were many changes in the project design during implementation, the management structure proved to be adaptive in the evaluators' opinion. The project reacted to changing conditions, amongst others, through hiring staff on a consultancy basis, funded through projects, and bringing in additional expertise to provide support to the three UNEP employees. Other examples for adaptation are: 1) UNEP's approach towards a regional instrument for the Caucasus Mountains, by changing the inter-governmental negotiation approach to activities on the level of scientific cooperation between the countries, due to political constraints; and 2) UNEP listening to the needs and priorities of the countries in terms of climate change adaptation on the regional level and supporting the revision of relevant national policies and strategies (as stressed by an Austrian government official).

227. The team is well managed by the head of the office and well accepted by partners. Interviewees describe the following characteristics of the ISCC staff: motivated, dedicated, enthusiastic, committed team, extremely robust, devoted and feeling ownership, open to new challenges, eager to cooperate, and thinking that it can make a change. Despite the increasing overload of work, the performance of the team is described by almost all interviewees as effective, with the limitation as regards human capacity. There was one statement that for the same reason, sometimes meetings are not professionally planned and prepared, the moderation is perceived as weak, and valuable time is lost. Only one stakeholder sees UNEP Vienna as too formal and not reaching the local level. In the evaluator's opinion, these views are a clear minority and cannot be considered as representative.

228. There is clear indication that staff is overloaded with work, which partly has implications on the quality of work. The evaluation finds that practical work of UNEP Vienna – ISCC could in some cases be more efficient and effective, which would only be possible with additional human and financial resources and a more stable and predictable support by UNEP plus the institutional upgrading of the office by recognizing its success and strengthening its formal mandates.

229. In terms of internal administration, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has to work under UNEP administrative rules and procedures and the administrative support by the Administrative Service Center (ASC) Geneva is excellent, according to the Head of UNEP Vienna. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned, that international donors, above all the EU, require different administrative procedures, partly not compatible with the UN ones, which regularly becomes a burden for staff members. In the view of the increasing project portfolio, a solution has to be found to make the administration more efficient. In the case of UNEP Vienna's function as the secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, this solution will be made in consultation between the COP and UNEP (handled as part of the Trust Fund and therefore outside of the planned follow-up project). However, for the remaining parts (UNEP support to the substantive activities in the Danube-Carpathian region, and global replication of mountain experience

exchange), a solution in line with UNEP policies and programmatic prerogatives will continue to be implemented in consultation with the beneficiary countries. Some formal delegation of authority to the UNEP Vienna – ISCC (currently none) would be beneficial. Despite the sometimes cumbersome rules and procedures, a very effective management at the project level has been achieved.

230. The rating on ‘project implementation and management’ is **satisfactory**.

4.6.3 Stakeholder participation and public awareness

231. According to project documentation and personal interviews, the project offers many examples for successful stakeholder involvement since its very beginning (cf. sub-sections 4.3.1.5, 4.3.2.3-5). The project was build up on preparatory work carried out in collaboration with many different organizations and using established networks and synergies. Participatory approaches applied by UNEP Vienna – ISCC were highlighted by many interviewees, and references were made to the fact that all meetings are open to everybody, and – whenever possible – priorities and needs of the stakeholders were taken into account.

232. A representative of the Alpine Convention stressed the importance of institutional structures, like the CNPA, which is of high importance for stakeholder involvement. Through the activities of this network, such as thematic workshops (often together with Alparc) on different ecosystems/habitats, tourism, experiences sharing as regard methods and tools, etc., stakeholders from different countries, but also from different sectors, are coming together, and this network is functioning quite well.

233. With respect to the importance of institutional structures, several interviewees also referred to the WG of the Convention, e.g. the chair of the Climate Change WG emphasized the inter-disciplinary approach, and in addition, inviting also experts from other mountain regions, such as the Caucasus, Pyrenees, etc., to discuss appropriate adaptation measures in different regions of the world.

234. As regards participation mechanisms, according to UNEP staff, participation is not yet institutionalized, with the exception of the Convention’s WGs. There is room for the involvement of additional stakeholder groups, for example, communities, county councils, etc., as suggested by a Romanian official, which would be important for information exchange on nature-related topics (wetlands, forests, etc.) on this level. The subject should be explored in more detail in the follow-up project.

235. On the local level, stakeholders involved through projects are appreciating the transparent approach and emphasize the fact that UNEP is ‘giving them a space’ for discussion, and the involvement is giving grass-root NGOs credibility, and as policy papers of the Convention are guiding their initiatives, they are recognized by governments.

236. Key drivers for participation mentioned by interviewees were: locally committed persons, the process has to be transparent and facilitated, constant funding sources, involvement of local actors, such as PAs managers, providing meaningful opportunities and meeting places, ideally integrated in local events. But as already mentioned, for some countries participatory approaches are quite new and only first steps are taken towards such approaches.

237. As regards public awareness, the subject cannot be generalized, it differs from country to country and is depending on many different factors, according to statements made by interviewees, e.g. the commitment of the respective national authority, the motivation and capacity of the NFP, the size of mountain regions within a country, interested journalists and the relation of partners/stakeholders with the media, the existence of awareness raising campaigns organized by stakeholders, etc. Furthermore, web sites – not only the Convention web site, but also the willingness of stakeholders to put information on their respective site – are playing an important role when it comes to awareness. Implementing the public participation strategy should be tackled in the follow-up project.

238. The rating on ‘stakeholder participation and public awareness’ is **satisfactory**.

4.6.4 Country ownership and driven-ness

239. Generally, there is the perception that UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been a good listener and paid close attention to countries' priorities and needs, as stated by many interviewees, which is an important prerequisite for ownership.

240. But there was mixed views among respondents as regards buy-in / ownership; according to UNEP staff and consultants; this issue cannot be generalized, it is different in each of the countries and related to the political and the economic situation in each of them. Furthermore, it also depends on the percentage of the Carpathian area within one country, for example, the Czech representative mentions the low attention on the ministerial level due to the extremely small size of the Carpathians in their country; further, the Czech name for the Czech part of the mountains is so different that it is not associated with the Carpathian Mountains by the local people. The buy-in is also heavily dependent on the nominated National Focal Points. One group of interviewees referred to extremely motivated persons, who are promoting the CC, connecting different stakeholders on the national level, etc. On the contrary, the other group felt the opposite. The truth lies somewhere in the middle, it cannot be generalized, it depends on the country, the political decisions as regards human resource capacity, the natural fluctuation in competent authorities, and it always comes down to persons.

241. According to the judgment of the evaluator, the level of commitment within Carpathian countries to implement the Convention and other related international treaties, has to be strengthened. There is a gap between policy papers, such as the adopted Protocols and practical implementation on the ground. This opinion is also supported by some NGO representatives, who see a basic problem in the fact that the CC is a so-called 'soft' legislation, different than EU directives and regulations, where real possibility of financial fines and sanctions exist.

242. According to several statements, there are more and more bottom-up requests, e.g. the number of NGOs in the Carpathian region is enormously increasing and project proposals developed by grass-root organizations are referring to and are using the CC as a framework for their activities. The buy-in also depends on the subject, e.g. for education and awareness raising projects, the Ukrainian, Polish and Romanian representatives are well informed, highly motivated and have started professional networking.

243. The situation is different in the Balkans compared to the Carpathians, as stated by a representative of UNEP – ROE. EU member states more often apply a bottom-up approach, as there is a strong engagement of the civil society, whereas in other countries the challenge is to set up robust governance structures, which can further steer the process.

244. Before the involvement of UNEP in the Balkan region, projects often were 'disconnected' from the countries' needs and designed and implemented only according to the donor's agenda. This statement was made by a government representative from a Balkan country and supported by UNEP staff. Whereas UNEP Vienna – ISCC applied different approaches, the ideas have to come from the countries; UNEP Vienna – ISCC made it relevant to GEF requirements and linked it with UNEP's PoW, but the final endorsement has had to come from the Focal Points and the relevant ministries. With such an approach there is a joint commitment to agreed goals and a clear distribution of tasks and roles. The judgment is also supported by the fact that the owner of all publications is not UNEP, but the respective countries.

245. The rating on 'ownership and country-driven-ness' is **satisfactory**.

4.6.5 Financial planning and management

246. To ensure sustainability of financial operations, the project revision is on time, according to UNEP – ROE administrative staff.

247. The head of UNEP Vienna – ISCC is in principle satisfied with the administration services provided by Operational Service Center (OSC) in Geneva, United Nations Office Vienna (UNOV) and United Nations Office Nairobi (UNON). However, a delegation of appropriate authorities and strengthening the administrative capacity in the Vienna Office would be beneficial for the follow-up project.

248. The project was almost entirely financed by extra budgetary sources. There was, however, a need to increase UNEP's co-financing through the Environmental Fund to sustain the office, its project activities and successful follow-up activities.

249. As stated by the responsible staff in UNEP – ROE, the project was quite successful as regards the financial and administrative side and no irregularities were reported. The recruitment of staff was guided by the UN rules. UNEP Vienna – ISCC had only three staff members (head, programme officer, and financial assistant); others were interns or consultants (who are experts on particular jobs and cannot represent UNEP in any meetings. However, consultants and associated EURAC staff can represent the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, because they are recognized by the Parties as being part of the Secretariat).

250. According to financial figures of project documents, UNEP Vienna – ISCC was successful in fundraising. The project had leveraged substantial resource since the inception in 2003; the amount increased from around half a million to over six millions USD, which are governmental contributions outside of the CC Parties' financial commitments (Governments of Austria, Switzerland, Germany, etc.) and from EU budget lines e.g. INTERREG III B CADSES Neighborhood Programme, European Territorial Cooperation, etc. The project served as a framework for joint projects and had a huge potential for attracting donors and leverage funding. Nevertheless, there was a limited absorption capacity due to the limited human resources, which has to be taken into account in the follow-up project.

251. As regards procedures, UNEP signs contribution agreements with donor agencies and once the money is received, the project revisions are done accordingly. In case of cost savings, the project document supplements re-phase the unspent funds. Not included in these figures are the leveraged resources coming from GEF money for projects in the Balkans. All received resources contribute towards achieving the objectives of the project.

252. The rating on 'financial planning and management' is **satisfactory**.

4.6.6 Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping

253. As UNEP Vienna – ISCC is an integral part of UNEP in administrative terms, the reports to supervisors in Geneva. Until 2009, the First Reporting Officer (FRO) was the Director of ROE and the Second Reporting Officer (SRO) was the Director of the Division for Regional Cooperation. From 2010 onwards the FRO is the Deputy Director of ROE and the SRO is the Director of ROE.

254. The Regional Director is the highest representative of UNEP in Europe and provides administrative oversight and political guidance. The Head of UNEP Vienna – ISCC serves as Head of the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, and, in the evaluator's opinion, a direct reporting line to Regional Director as the first reporting officer and second reporting officer in the UNEP Headquarter in Nairobi would be beneficial.

255. So far, the full implementation of the management decision to upgrade UNEP Vienna – ISCC into a liaison office has not yet been fully implemented. This issue has been pending for a considerable time and the status of the Vienna office would merit to be further institutionalized and strengthened.

256. Over the duration of the project, some changes affected the scope of the project, for instance, the focal point role to the Mountain Partnership was transferred to DEPI. The result was the loss of continuous donor support for this function by one Alpine State; however, due to the approval and successful fundraising for a new major global mountain project in the UNEP PoW, lead by UNEP Vienna, activities could be further strengthened.

257. The transfer of the Regional Desk for South East Europe of the ENVSEC initiative from UNEP (located in the Vienna Office) to the REC considerably affected UNEP's capacity and credibility in the sub-region. UNEP Vienna – ISCC had been involved since the early stages of the ENVSEC initiative, was instrumental in designing the system of Regional Desks, and had fundraised successfully for the South East European region in the overall ENVSEC context. This risk could be appropriately managed by developing a solid activity portfolio for South-East Europe at the country level, while maintaining the sub-regional dimension of UNEP's presence through taking over the coordinating role of the Dinaric Arc Initiative by UNEP Vienna – SCC.

258. The quality and adequacy of supervision has been varying over the duration of project implementation, at times fully satisfactory in terms of guidance and administrative support, while at other times the Vienna office was not consulted on time and provided with the full range of institutional security and was subject to sometimes unpredictable changes in status and mandate. However, the current situation in the final years of the project is satisfactory.

259. The rating on 'supervision, guidance and technical backstopping' is **satisfactory**.

4.6.7 Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E)

260. As regards the **design of M & E**, the original PD did not have a sound M & E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives, but it defined clear reporting lines with respect to technical and financial reports. Furthermore, the original PD didn't include a Logical Framework (cf. para 217), only the Project Document Supplements, since 2011, included one.

261. Since 2011, indicators are described for each 'Output', which are specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that there are only quantitative indicators related to the process (e.g. number of meetings, communication events, technical trainings, etc.), therefore, nothing can be said about the quality of the interaction. In this respect, there is also no baseline information about the capacity of member states and collaborating partners, to determine their administrative and technical support needs.

262. With respect to the assessment of risk management, in none of the project documents were assumptions and risks identified. The evaluation identified critical risks (economic, social, financial, environmental) as the project is implemented in countries in transition and the project tries to mitigate these risks through several strategies (e.g. lobbying, development of joint projects using integrated approaches, fundraising, etc.). But related assumptions are not clearly specified. There is the need for a clear risk assessment and an accompanying mitigation strategy.

263. The rating on 'M & E design' is **moderately satisfactory**.

264. Regarding **budgeting and funding**, the costs for monitoring are not separately shown in the budget, but are included in staff time. With respect to evaluation, neither an independent mid-term nor an independent terminal evaluation were foreseen and budgeted. The original PD states that the project will be jointly evaluated by the project coordinator and the desk assessment team, and the terminal report and the self-evaluation fact sheet will be sent to the Evaluation and Oversight Unit for record keeping and future feedback. Nevertheless, according to internal staff, this was standard at the time of project design. The project fully conformed to M & E standards applicable at the time of project design. Therefore, the UNEP Vienna Team does not believe that it would be fair to measure the project against today's considerably improved standards. For ENVSEC Initiative an evaluation was carried out in 2010 with extra-budgetary sources.

265. The rating on 'budgeting and funding for M & E activities' is **satisfactory**.

266. Concerning **M & E implementation**, UNEP staff states that there is continuous and effective monitoring on several levels: a) within the framework of the CC, defined through the government mechanism of the CC and regular review by Parties; b) the monitoring of ENVSEC is facilitated by regional consultations and feed-back of beneficiary countries and stakeholders; c) the monitoring of the numerous projects financed through external sources is done on the project level; and d) the UNEP result-based management methodology is applied.

267. Furthermore, progress and financial reports are complete and accurate, and the information provided by the M & E system is always used to improve performance and to adapt, in case of needs.

268. The rating on 'M & E plan implementation' is **satisfactory**.

269. The overall rating on 'monitoring & evaluation' is **satisfactory**.

4.7 Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes

270. Activities carried out by UNEP Vienna – ISCC in the frame of the CC, as well as in Balkan countries and other mountain regions, are of direct relevance to most of the work undertaken by UNEP under 'Environment Protection and Sustainable Development'. The complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes has been described under the section 'Strategic relevance' (cf. section 4.1).

271. As regards the alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)⁴⁷, the project contributes to it, as it clearly is responsive to the BSP objectives regarding, for example, complying with international agreements and obligations at the national level, capacity-strengthening for developing coherent international environmental policies, etc.

⁴⁷ The Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building (BSP) is an inter-governmentally agreed framework for strengthening the capacity of governments in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to coherently address their needs, priorities and obligations in the field of the environment.

272. The rating on ‘complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes’ is **highly satisfactory**.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

273. The very first conclusion is that this project cannot be compared with ‘normal’ projects having a clear goal to be achieved at the project’s end. The implementation of the Convention – including its outreach to other mountain regions in the world – is an ongoing, long-term process.

274. There is clear evidence that signing of the Convention as a sub-regional instrument for the Carpathians – based on the needs of governments and other stakeholders – was an excellent idea to strengthen regional cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination. The Carpathian Convention is on track towards the goal of environmental protection and sustainable development, enabling Parties to take measures, to remedy, mitigate or deal with global and regional environmental concerns. UNEP Vienna –ISCC played a major role in the support and leadership of this process, together with supporting initiatives from the Alpine countries, and in addition, managed to transfer experiences and lessons learned to other mountain regions, specifically to the Balkans. Summarizing, the project has contributed to the higher global outcomes of realizing the importance of ecological, cultural and socio-economic values of mountain regions, as spelled out in many documents.

275. The project was originally designed by participating countries as an innovative instrument to foster cooperation, to support harmonization of policies and practices, to strengthen integration and to place the Carpathians within a holistic development perspective. Through widening of the scope in 2004, the project adapted to changing requirements by strengthening communication, coordination, awareness raising and spreading the knowledge and lessons learned in the Carpathians as regards biodiversity protection and sustainable mountain development to other regions in Europe and in the world.

276. Robust **institutional structures** are of utmost importance for implementing legal, policy and strategic decisions and for the sustenance of results and the progress towards intended impact. The Convention created its own structure embedded in several COP decisions, and is itself a sustaining structure, currently serviced by the UNEP led Secretariat. The establishment of UNEP Vienna – ISCC can be considered as an added value, and showed a clear commitment to strengthen UNEP’s regional presence, reflecting flexibility, responsiveness and accountability to Member States and effective regional programme delivery. The Convention process provides the overall framework, and there is clear evidence that **UNEP Vienna – ISCC provided leadership and strong coordination**, is effective in servicing the Convention process, and steering regional cooperation amongst the Parties. In the Balkans, UNEP Vienna – ISCC was successful in promoting and steering cooperation between countries, proven by its prominent role in the ENVSEC Initiative, including transboundary activities and the increasing project portfolio.

277. The **reconstructed Theory of Change analysis** reveals that the project is following a logical pathway towards the intended impact, leading from strategic interventions (carried out under each of the four ‘Outputs’) to ‘Outcomes’ and ‘Intermediate States’. The project successfully produced the programmed activities and outputs as outlined in UNEP’s internal planning documents and is on a good way to achieving its primary objectives related to the facilitation of regional cooperation (on several levels) for the protection and sustainable development in the Carpathians, and to provide best practice examples for sub-regional cooperation and partnership in other mountain regions.

278. As regards **coordination and networking**, the evaluation discloses the importance of the inter-governmental platform, specifically for providing a platform for discussion, identification of needs, information sharing, developing joint strategies for sustainable development and the development of joint projects. Meetings contribute to improving coordination amongst countries, but also ‘to opening the eyes to see the bigger picture’, making participants aware of the connection and inter-dependence of different aspects.

279. The project provides the bases for **regional approaches**, and there is clear indication that cooperation between countries increased, leading to a better understanding how to manage shared resources and to protect biodiversity and therefore, contributing to sustainable mountain development. The Secretariat serves to bring together governments, partners, stakeholders, and to focus attention on commonly agreed issues. The Alpine –

Carpathian Partnership and transboundary projects are enhancing the governance of shared natural resources and therefore, are contributing to sustainable mountain development. The evaluation finds not only improved cooperation amongst Carpathian countries, but also good facilitation and cooperation between Carpathian and other mountain regions, such as the Alps, Dinaric Arc in the Balkans and others (Caucasus, Himalayas, Andes). It can be stated that the project achieved its primary objectives related to the facilitation of regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development in the Carpathians, and to provide best practice examples for sub-regional cooperation and partnership in other mountain regions. It will continue to do so even after the project's lifespan, as it has been supporting an ongoing process, which needs to achieve its objectives on a continuous basis.

280. The evaluation concludes that **capacity building processes** on different levels (e.g. jointly developed and implemented projects, working groups, discussion rounds, etc.) are extremely important to sustain results, leading to improved communication and awareness raising. The project is investing in systematic capacity building of stakeholders and civil society. Capacity building activities are included in almost all projects and initiatives, most effectively within the CNPA. For the Balkan countries, capacity building efforts are taking place mainly on policy level.

281. The application of **integrated approaches** is a prerequisite to ensuring sustainability. UNEP Vienna – ISCC was aware of it and – to the extent possible – tried to promote integration of sectoral approaches. Examples are regional projects related to impacts of climate change or the development of pilot projects to mitigate conflicts between natural capital protection and economic development, ensuring connectivity and trying to facilitate sustainable development. The evaluation finds, though, that there is still a long way to go to achieve the integration of biodiversity issues into sectoral policies and the coherence with regional priorities.

282. It is concluded that UNEP Vienna – ISCC is very good and effective in **stakeholder involvement** by providing a platform for dialogue between all stakeholders and for combining national, sub-regional, and global aspects. The Convention process is especially unique in entertaining a wide variety of stakeholders – both in the formal meetings and in the area of Convention and Protocol implementation – from local communities and various NGOs up to the regional and national Governments, Institutions of the European Union and the United Nations. The project offers many examples of active stakeholder involvement since its very beginning, taking into account their priorities and needs. All activities are organized in a participatory way, meetings are held in a good atmosphere and are open for all stakeholders, but funding for participation is the limiting factor, according to NGO representatives. The Convention is open for all interested observers and stakeholders and no discrimination is made. Practical necessity, however, is that those groups approach the Secretariat and participate in meetings. In the Balkans, there is increasing interest as regards involvement of stakeholders, but for some countries the approach is quite new and benefits are not yet visible. As a starting point, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been organizing stakeholder discussions as regards compliance with laws and conventions.

283. **Joint projects** on the ground are of utmost importance for the real implementation of decisions made on the policy level. There is concurrent evidence that the project is successful in catalyzing projects. Many projects are connected and linked with the Convention and therefore, responding to the country needs, and results of projects feed into Working Groups of the Convention, where Protocols and Strategic Action Plans are elaborated, which feeds back and complements the policy cycle. UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been planting the seed for projects, and some of the National Focal Points together with partner organizations are initiating projects. The number of projects is steadily increasing. Though the project was able to catalyze many projects, which have reached flagship status in EU programmes and are considered as exceptionally successful and relevant.

284. The evaluation depicts some weaknesses regarding the capacity and experience of partner organizations in the planning phase, leading to problems during implementation, which is typical for Eastern Europe as a region in a weak socio-economic situation. There seems to be a high potential to increase the project portfolio in South-Eastern Europe, providing an even wider range of benefits, resulting in a much greater UNEP success, in case there would be additional UNEP support.

285. With respect to **sharing experience and replication**, the project offers numerous positive examples described in publications, progress reports and interview statements. Above all, successful experience sharing with the Alpine Convention has to be mentioned, which started already before the signature of the Convention. The Convention has offered an opportunity to think and deal with different thematic issues in a broader context.

286. There is also common agreement that lessons learned from implemented projects and best practice examples are effectively shared among the countries – sharing experiences in WGs of the Convention is seen as an asset by many people – and the process can be transferred to other regions. All implemented projects so far included activities, supporting the replication of experiences and transfer of the knowledge to other regions. The findings and lessons learned from this project should be shared with other regions/sub-regions.

287. Increased activities of UNEP Vienna – ISCC as regards the **global mountain cooperation** can be observed. For example, the original idea to develop a similar environmental agreement in the Caucasus region failed due to political constraints, amongst them the Russian – Georgian war. Adapting to the political situation, UNEP Vienna – ISCC approached the issues from a different angle, and started the process and activities on the level of scientific cooperation between the countries. Within the Global Mountain Partnership, the Carpathian and the Alpine Conventions are seen as best practice examples, having an outreach and acknowledged by other mountain regions, e.g. Pyreneans, Andes, ICIMOD in the Himalaya region, African Mountain Forum, etc. This is due to UNEP Vienna – ISCC excellent information sharing and effective presentations of results at relevant events, such as the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012.

288. As regards **awareness raising and communication**, the evaluation confirms increased visibility of the Carpathian region and the recognition of ‘being part of something bigger’ as there is greater awareness on the local level. The Carpathian Convention website together with the websites of all partners and projects are valuable sources of information. In the context of awareness raising, the important role of UNEP Vienna – ISCC in producing and publishing reports, documents, folders, etc. has to be mentioned. The high quality of the publications as well as of other means, such as power point presentations, is noticeable.

289. The project also contributes to awareness-raising on European and global levels. As regards the European level, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has assisted countries in drafting the relevant paragraphs of relevant EU policy papers, and there is increased visibility and awareness of the existence of the Carpathian and Balkan regions and their shared resources. With regard to the global level, UNEP Vienna – ISCC contributed to bringing mountain issues on the global agenda, e.g. the Rio+20 Declaration, the Resolution of the UN General Assembly, making a reference to the Convention with respect to its constructive new approaches to the integrated, and the sustainable development of the Alps and the Carpathians.

290. As regards **public participation and access to information**, the evaluation highlights events in the Vienna International Centre organized regularly by UNEP Vienna – ISCC, e.g. annual celebrations of the International Mountain Day on 11 December, with yearly changing topics, celebrations with respect to the World Environment Day on 5 June, and events related to the International Year of Biodiversity 2010.

291. Speaking about **funding**, the project is implemented with finances from different sources. Governments are paying yearly contributions, as agreed by the Parties to the Convention. In 2011, Parties agreed to establish a Trust Fund to cover the costs, but the majority of funding is coming from external donors for specific projects. There is EU recognition in terms of financing for regional projects in the Carpathians, interestingly, through the angle of regional development programmes rather than environmental programmes. As regards EU funding the limiting factors are the co-financing for EU projects and the fact that UNEP and EU administrative procedures are not really compatible, which puts additional burden on the shoulders of the project staff. Additional source are coming from bilateral government contributions, e.g. Governments of Austria, Switzerland, Germany, etc. Moreover, the work in South-East Europe has found its way into the mainstream of GEF operations, and a number of sequel projects financed by GEF are currently implemented by UNEP Vienna – ISCC at the country level, in close cooperation with UN country teams. There is a huge potential for UNEP to increase its portfolio in this region, as UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been recognised as the leading implementation agency for environmental projects.

292. The **performance of the Secretariat** is generally well perceived. Partners, both in the Carpathian countries as well as in the Balkans, describe the cooperation with UNEP Vienna – ISCC as uncomplicated and effective. Transparent, integrated, client-orientated but sensitive approaches are applied and delivery is result-based, which is appreciated by several countries. UNEP’s role and competence as mediator in environmental issues and its advocating role on policy level is apparent.

293. Since its beginning the office has been growing due to increasing activities and a wide range of projects. There is a motivated, robust and committed team in place, which is well managed, and accepted by partners.

Nevertheless, there is clear indication, that staff is overloaded with work, so enhanced UNEP investment and support to the Convention will be beneficial to further expanding the Secretariats activities and project portfolio. The evaluation finds that practical work of UNEP Vienna – ISCC could have been further up-scaled, if additional human and financial resources, a strengthened mandate, more delegated authority, and stronger structural support by UNEP were made available.

294. The evaluation concludes that the project is of **strategic relevance**, both with respect to global and regional policy levels and to UNEP strategies and programmes.

295. Some **shortcomings** have already been mentioned, but the evaluation wants to draw the attention to additional shortcomings: firstly, there is still no agreement between the Carpathian countries on the delineation of the Carpathian Mountains; secondly, the question of the location of the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention is not yet solved (according to the Convention, the location should be within the scope of the Carpathian mountains); and thirdly, a discrepancy exists between commitments made by governments (e.g. the adoption of policy documents) and practical implementation. Such challenges are typical for international cooperation in general. At the project level, UNEP has helped to develop a full-fledged sub-regional MEA negotiated in less than a year, which entered into force in less than two years thereafter. Consequently, several Protocols have also been developed and adopted by Parties. Seen also the marginal needed input from the UNEP EF needed for this purpose, this can be considered as a highly successful aspect of the project.

296. Ratings for the individual criteria are given in Table 5. The overall rating for this project based on the evaluation findings is **satisfactory**.

Table 5: Project performance ratings according to the evaluation criteria:

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Ratings	Evaluation Office Ratings
Strategic relevance	The evaluation reveals that the project is of strategic relevance. With respect to global policies , the project and its activities interact with major global policies and strategies in fields such as biodiversity, climate change, natural resources management, environment and security, and mountain development as specified in the articles of the CC and support to Balkan countries, specifically to the CBD and its PoW on Mountain Biodiversity and related events and the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy. As regards the regional policy level , the two main components of the project – the Carpathian Convention/Protocols and the ENVSEC Initiative – focus entirely on sub-regions in pan Europe and were constituted as part of the inter-governmental 'Environment for Europe' process. And there is also a clear relevance to UNEP strategies and programmes.	HS	HS
Achievement of outputs	Almost all outputs and activities mentioned in the planning documents, both as regards the PoW under the Convention and UNEP's PoW, were fully achieved, only some with delays due to political reasons and/or the lack of human capacity. Planned activities were appropriate and have been successfully implemented, many in cooperation and collaboration with partner organizations.	HS	HS
Effectiveness: Attainment of project objectives and results	The project has to be seen as a long-term process. Within the project timeframe, the project contributed effectively to all objectives and produced the results as described in the planning documents. Outputs are generally of high quality.	S	HS⁴⁸

⁴⁸ The transboundary cooperation between countries that has been facilitated by this project in the context of the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention, has been quite a commendable achievement in consideration of the fact that there was no prior tradition of inter-governmental cooperation in the Carpathian just about a decade ago. The report findings indicate that within the Mountain Partnership, the Carpathian Conventions is seen as best practice example on outreach, and information/experience-sharing, and acknowledged by other mountain regions

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Ratings	Evaluation Office Ratings
Achievement of direct outcomes	The reconstructed ToC discloses seven outcomes. The evaluation shows that direct outcomes have to a large extent already been achieved and in addition, some low-level intermediate states have partly already also been achieved. Nevertheless, the process has to go on, many tasks and several challenges are still ahead. The project is able to adapt to changing situations (political ones, e.g. as regards a planned MEA for the Caucasus, or environmental changes, e.g. climate change) and incorporated appropriate measures into the work programmes.	HS	HS
Likelihood of impact	There are already visible impacts in terms of increased cooperation and capacity building, increased visibility of the region, enlarged project portfolio, etc. but there is still a long way to go ahead (in a new project) to reach the intended long-term impact.	S	S
Achievement of project goal and planned objectives	The project was successful in achieving the goal and objectives. UNEP Vienna – ISCC successfully acted in its capacity as an Interim Secretariat, and also played a key role in strengthening cooperation and partnerships in the Carpathians as well as in other mountain regions.	HS	HS
Sustainability and replication	Implemented activities have a high replication value moving towards removal of barriers and open doors and opportunities for integrating lessons learned through practical projects into policy and decision-making.	L	L
Financial	The financial sustainability is seen as questionable. There might be risks as the project addresses countries and economies in transition and the financial and economic crisis may have impacts, such as the decline of voluntary contributions by governments, which may affect implementation specifically on the national level. The fact that environmental issues have low priority on the political agenda increases the risk further.	L	ML ⁴⁹
Socio-political	The project contributes to socio-political sustainability through partnerships with and support by EU macro-regional strategies and funding programmes. Many projects are demand-led and therefore, activities are contributing to government and local level ownership, which strengthens the implementation of several EU-funded projects. There is considerable interest expressed by several stakeholders to have a follow-up and leveraging funding is being searched.	L	L
Institutional framework	The institutional framework and governance sustainability is laid down in the Convention, which will sustain beyond the life of the project. The governments of the signatory parties, especially the respective Focal Points and related staff, support the project and create positive impressions for long-term sustainability despite the fact of many political changes in SEE countries. Furthermore, representatives CSO and other stakeholder groups seem to have a high level of ownership. The sustainability of UNEP Vienna –ISCC as a multifunctional sub-regional office and Centre of Excellence in the UNEP family is de facto secured through the solid work and performance of the office and deserves to be fully recognized and supported in the frame and	HL	HL

⁴⁹ In light of the findings presented in section 4.4., the EO has considered the rating under this sub-criterion to be “Moderately likely” due to the critical risks identified (economic, social, financial, and political).

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Ratings	Evaluation Office Ratings
	setting of the organization as a whole.		
Environmental	As regards environmental sustainability , infrastructure development (in particular roads and railway lines under the TEN-T Programme), hydropower development and intensive land management might have negative environmental impacts, specifically leading to habitat fragmentation. The conflict between nature protection and economic development can be mitigated by establishing ecological corridors for the maintenance of ecosystem resilience and stability and secured through integrated participatory planning and management approaches. The project addresses these issues on several levels, e.g. working group on spatial planning, the negotiation of relevant protocols (transport, energy), the development of future project, e.g. within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, etc.	HL	HL
Catalytic role and replication	The project has catalytic effects as the applied approaches are supporting institutional changes, catalyzing projects and stakeholder behaviour. The replication potential is extremely high, based on strategic dissemination efforts, the ability to adapt to the needs and situation of countries and therefore, to contribute to sustainable mountain development.	HL	HL
Efficiency	UNEP Vienna – ISCC was efficient in managing project activities, both in terms of cost-effectiveness and timeliness, successfully contributed to all planned objectives and increased project efficiency by using synergies with other ongoing programmes and initiatives.	HS	HS
Factors affecting project performance			
Preparation and readiness	The evaluation appreciates the flexible and adaptive approaches of the project, taking into account that the design and planning was done according to UN standards in 2003. In terms of readiness, the project started exactly at the 'right moment' taken all advantages and reacting on given opportunities, e.g. the momentum of the Bucharest Summit, the interest and request of the Ukrainian Government, the dynamics during the negotiation process, etc.	HS	S ⁵⁰
Project implementation and management	The effectiveness of project management is generally well perceived. Partners, both in the Carpathian countries as well as in the Balkans, describe the cooperation with UNEP Vienna – ISCC as uncomplicated and effective. Transparent, integrated, client-orientated but sensitive approaches are applied and delivery is result-based, which is appreciated by several countries. UNEP's role and competence as mediator in environmental issues and it's advocating role on policy level is apparent. Since its beginning the office has been growing due to increasing activities and a wide range of projects. There is a motivated,	S	S

⁵⁰ EO considers a "Satisfactory" rating on the understanding that a "Highly Satisfactory" rating implies no significant shortcomings were noted in project performance under this criterion. The original project design lacked a robust logical framework upon which to base the project's causal pathways and progress towards its desired impact. The revised project design documents do however present outcomes, outputs and milestones, and there are (qualitative) indicators and means of verification included. Challenges mentioned in regards to insufficient human resource at the project also point to a noteworthy shortcoming in project design.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Ratings	Evaluation Office Ratings
	robust and committed team in place, which is well managed and accepted by partners. Nevertheless, there is clear indication, that staff is overloaded with work, and would benefit from additional resources in the future. The evaluation finds that practical work of UNEP Vienna – ISCC could be further up-scaled, if additional human and financial resources, a strengthened mandate, more delegated authority and stronger structural support by UNEP were available.		
Stakeholders participation and public awareness	<p>Outcomes of the evaluation clearly demonstrate that UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been very good and effective in stakeholder involvement by providing a platform for combining national, sub-regional and global aspects. The Convention process is especially unique in entertaining a wide variety of stakeholders, both in the formal meetings and in the area of Convention and Protocol implementation. The project offers many examples of active stakeholder involvement since its very beginning, taking into account their priorities and needs.</p> <p>All activities are organized in a participatory way; meetings are held in good atmosphere and are open for all stakeholders, but funding for participation is the limiting factor according to NGO representatives.</p> <p>Few interviewees, not directly involved in the implementation of the project, think the approach is too much top-down and only few local stakeholders are involved. This statement discloses that there is the need for improved participation mechanisms and awareness raising, as well as for strengthening stakeholder involvement on different levels.</p> <p>In the Balkans, there is increasing interest as regards involvement of stakeholders, but for some countries the approach is quite new and benefits are not yet visible. As a starting point, UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been organizing stakeholder discussions as regards compliance with laws and conventions.</p>	S	S
Country ownership and driven-ness	The project was demand-led at the beginning and ownership and driven-ness were high among most national partner institutions. During implementation, interest and commitments were increasing in all Carpathian countries, not only on governmental, but also on academia/NGOs levels. In the Balkan countries, increased interest and country-driven-ness can be constantly observed.	S	S
Financial planning and management	Financial operations are well managed, services provided by supporting Divisions are satisfactory, but administrative capacity in UNEP Vienna – ISCC needed to be strengthened.	S	S
UNEP supervision and backstopping	UNEP Vienna – ISCC has been part of the UNEP in administration terms and UNEP plays an adequate role in supervision and backstopping.	S	S
Monitoring and Evaluation		S	MS⁵¹

⁵¹ EO considers a “Moderately satisfactory” rating for the criteria under Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). From the onset, the project lacked a robust M&E system to guide strategic planning, scrutinize progress, and reinforce accountability. A higher rating would set the performance bar quite low on what is considered as Best Practice in M&E planning and implementation.

Criterion	Summary Assessment	Evaluator's Ratings	Evaluation Office Ratings
M&E Design	At the beginning, the design of M & E was not according to professional standards, but consistent with UNEP standards at that time. Since 2011, more emphasis has been given to the design of M & E.	MS	MS
Budgeting and funding for M&E activities	Costs for monitoring are included in staff time and are not separately specified. The project did not include funds for external evaluations, neither for mid-term nor terminal evaluations, however a small amount was made available for the current evaluation.	S	MS
M&E Plan Implementation	Originally, no monitoring plan was included in the project document, but monitoring has improved over time. There is continuous and effective monitoring on several levels and progress and financial reports are accurate and in time.	S	MS
Overall project rating		S	S

NB: These criteria have been rated on a six-point scale as follows: Highly Satisfactory (HS); Satisfactory (S); Moderately Satisfactory (MS); Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU); Unsatisfactory (U); Highly Unsatisfactory (HU).

'Sustainability' and 'Likelihood of Impact Achievement' criteria have been rated from Highly Likely (HL) down to Highly Unlikely (HU).

5.2 Lessons learned

297. The lessons learned are anchored in the findings and conclusions of the evaluation. To avoid duplication, the most important lessons learned are only listed below, as all of them have already been captured and discussed in detail in respective sections and sub-sections of the report.

Lesson 1: The importance of robust and operational institutional frameworks to guarantee sustainable governance structures (cf. para 197).

Lesson 2: Leadership and strong coordination at regional level is strengthening cooperation towards sustainable mountain development, and on national levels, it enhances ownership and sharing experiences among stakeholders (cf. section 4.3.2.2 and para 181).

Lesson 3: Capacity building through joint projects responding to and implementing policy decisions ('learning by doing') is leading to improved coordination, communication and contributing to awareness raising (cf. sections 4.3.1.4 and 4.3.2.2).

Lesson 4: Biodiversity protection is only possible through regional, integrated, and participative approaches (cf. paras 279 and 281).

Lesson 5: Investing in catalytic interventions with the potential of transferability of results contributes to make mountain development in other regions of the world more environmentally sound (cf. paras 161, 162 and 203).

Lesson 6: Emphasis on the project design (for jointly developed regional projects) but keeping a certain degree for adaptation and flexibility (cf. para 173).

Lesson 7: Ensuring the required stable organizational framework and strengthened and clarified institutional mandate of the Vienna Office as a prerequisite for efficient and effective management of a project, including appropriate human capacity according to realistic workloads (cf. paras 228 and 250).

Lesson 8: The Carpathian Convention is perceived by stakeholders as a neutral and consensual framework of cooperation jointly 'owned' by all participating countries, organizations and institutions cf. para 135, sections 4.3.2.2, 4.3.2.4 and 4.3.3).

5.3 Recommendations

298. Although the project ended by 31 December, 2014 and this is the terminal evaluation, it has already been decided that there will be a follow-up phase of the project with the same intentionality starting in January 2015. A project identification draft according to the 'Environmental Governance Template 2'⁵², has already been elaborated. The following recommendations should be considered in the development of the full project document for the next phase of this process. Please note that the following recommendations make reference to UNEP Vienna -Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (SCC), following its change of status from "interim secretariat".

299. As regards **institutional arrangements**, it is important to have robust governance structures in place. Therefore, continue to building up and effectively manage these institutional structures, for example the CNPA and the CWI. Independently of the Secretariat responsibilities, there is the clear need for UNEP to build on the de facto role and functions and track record of achievements of UNEP Vienna – ISCC, and secure its multi-functional mandate, as well as the necessary cash and in kind support, to ensure long-term presence in the region and as UNEP's global resource centre for sustainable mountain development.

- **Who will do it?** UNEP, as part of its role and responsibilities as the Interim Secretariat, and outside the Convention process, relevant UNEP entities (UNEP HQ, UNEP-ROE and UNEP Vienna – SCC) as part of their business.

300. There is the need for commitments from governments and the political will to steer development towards sustainability. Parties to the Convention are encouraged to focus on strategic issues, to further develop and implement new Protocols, such as on agriculture, energy, mining, etc. The role of National Focal Points should also be strengthened to effectively promoting the Convention.

- **Who will do it?** This is actually outside UNEP's direct influence, nevertheless, UNEP Vienna – SCC can play a major role in lobbying governments. In addition, the evaluation identified several impact drivers, which can help steer the process in the right direction. As regards the NFPs, the follow-up project may introduce a mechanism, e.g. capacity building, training, and motivation workshops, organized on a yearly basis.

301. For the Balkan countries it is advisable to keep the current approach of responding to country needs because it is benefiting the countries in the management of their environment. While developing and implementing country-level projects, for UNEP as a regionally based agency it is very important to maintain the regional dimension in the Balkans and South East Europe through this project, e.g. through replication of Carpathian experiences in the Dinaric Arc and.

- **Who will do it?** UNEP Vienna – SCC with additional support and a clear institutional mandate.

302. As regards **coordination, cooperation and networking**, good (semi)legal instruments are in place and should be further used and strengthened, specifically looking for synergies, transboundary initiatives and new partnerships. As Memoranda of Understanding and even more importantly, Memoranda of Cooperation, have proven to be successful in the past, it is advisable to negotiate additional agreements.

- **Who will do it?** UNEP Vienna – SCC should put emphasis on also involving partners from other sectors, e.g. transport, mining, agriculture, etc., and negotiate relevant MoUs. Furthermore, a stronger cooperation and collaboration with ICPDR should be envisaged, as both organizations are working in the same sub-region.

303. Although a lot has been done in the project, **capacity building** is an ongoing process. Capacity building efforts should be an important component in a follow-up project. Activities in this regard should be strengthened at different levels, and the support and collaboration with relevant UNEP Divisions should be invoked and secured, as there is still a long way to go to achieve the intended impacts as regards sustainable development and environmental protection. It would therefore be advisable, to link the project to other regional processes / mechanisms, such as the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS), the Health Environment Forum, etc. and to provide input the UN Country Teams in the frame of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF, e.g. in Romania and Serbia.

⁵² UNEP working document template

- **Who will do it?** UNEP Vienna – SCC in the follow-up project and additional UNEP inputs.

304. There is a clear need for more **integrated approaches** to land management and the linkages between nature protection and other environmental management sectors. A follow-up project should support such approaches on policy and project level, ensuring a greater focus on land use and spatial planning and incorporating biodiversity aspects into other sectoral policies. Due to the need of integrated approaches, a follow-up project should look for additional partnerships and further support governments in the development and revision of strategic policy papers, as well as in the design and implementation of projects.

- **Who will do it?** To be included in the project documents for the follow-up project developed by UNEP Vienna – SCC, with a special focus on building up and maintaining strategic partnerships with relevant sectors.

305. The project has proven to be successful with respect to **stakeholder participation**. Nevertheless, there is the need for continued strengthening of stakeholder involvement, specifically as regards the Civil Society Organization. There are also proposals to stronger involve the community level (county councils, mayors, business, etc.). Furthermore, there is the need to have a strategic approach towards the involvement of the European Commission, e.g. foster the relationship through participation in working groups and meetings, and to receive UNEP support for soliciting and obtaining EU involvement and support. It is very important to focus on cooperation with sub-national authorities and to create a flexible platform for their cooperation across borders.

- **Who will do it?** UNEP Vienna – SCC with additional UNEP support.

306. Ensure a good mix of formal processes on policy level (the development of additional Protocols and strategy papers) and **projects**; there should be a balance of top-down and bottom-up approaches linking institutional work with practical on the ground. UNEP Vienna – SCC should follow the current path in catalyzing projects, but improve project design and the elaboration process of projects by better involvement of partners from the very beginning and looking at their experience and real capacity for implementation. Both for the Carpathian Convention process and for projects in the Balkans, additional UNEP support, e.g. from the Environment Fund would be needed to enhance the project portfolio and UNEP's reputation in the region.

- **Who will do it?** For the Carpathians, UNEP Vienna – SCC in the frame of the Convention work and its role as a Secretariat, putting emphasis on inter-sectoral projects and investing more time in the design and planning of projects (capacity and absorption capacity of partners, risk mitigation strategy, etc.). As regards activities in the Balkan countries and other mountain regions, UNEP should recognize the important contributions and regular support would be advisable, the decision for regular funding from the Environment Fund lies in the hands of the UNEP Management in the HQ.

307. **Sharing and learning from experience** from the Carpathians and further building up of the global mountain agenda has a high potential for promoting the Carpathian experience and enhancing UNEP's visibility, but relevant activities would need a strengthened and clarified UNEP-internal mandate and support. On request of governments, UNEP Vienna – as a resource centre for sustainable mountain development – should be ready and enabled to support the negotiations for similar environmental agreements in other mountain regions, adapted to the political, ecological and economic situation. The lessons learned from this project should be shared across regions for replicability. It would therefore be advisable to share the final evaluation document with all Regional Offices and particularly the sub-regional offices, which are just being established.

- **Who should do it?** There needs to be a decision by the management of UNEP HQ and UNEP-ROE as regards the future mandate of UNEP Vienna – SCC (besides its Convention work), and the official recognition and promotion as a 'Centre of Excellence' for sustainable mountain development, equipped with necessary human and financial resources. UNEP Evaluation Unit to distribute the final report to all relevant institutions.

308. There is the obvious need to invest more resources as regards **communication and awareness raising**. Specifically, the UNEP Vienna website, currently providing unstructured and outdated information on activities other than the Convention, has to be newly designed and expanded. Synergies with and support from partners should be thought upon as regards the promotion of the Convention and other mountain related activities. A

strategic approach toward collaboration with municipalities and communities as regards awareness raising is needed.

- **Who should do it?** UNEP Vienna – SCC to include the elaboration and implementation of a communication strategy in the follow-up project, as well as – together with partner organizations – strategically planned awareness campaigns in selected countries.

309. **In terms of funding**, a more robust resources mobilization strategy is needed in the next phase. UNEP Vienna – SCC is heavily depending on project funding, which might not be sustainable on the long-term. There is the need to strengthen the involvement of participating countries and encourage governments – whenever possible – to increase their yearly contributions or provide additional in-kind support. As regards EU money the question of co-financing, which is sometimes very difficult to arrange for partner organizations, should be taken seriously and solutions found. There is also the need for increased, predictable and stable financial support from UNEP and for making internal UNEP administrative procedures more compatible with donor procedures.

- **Who should do it?** UNEP management to lobby on government level for increased contributions and commitments, and provide support for co-financing joint projects. UNEP internally, to discuss possibilities for simplified/streamlined administrative procedures and regular allocations from the Environment Fund and to clarify the mandate of the UNEP Vienna Office.

310. With respect to the **performance of the Secretariat and its mandate**, although there is a qualified and motivated team in place and the project management is well perceived, there is the clear indication that the exceptional wide range of activities cannot be effectively and efficiently managed with the current resources, meaning that human and financial resources should be adequate to the numerous tasks. With respect to UNEP Vienna's role for liaison work and strengthening the mountain partnership, there is the need for additional resources to effectively implement activities and to sustain the outcomes. There is also the need to strengthening the explicit mandate of UNEP Vienna – SCC for liaison with international Vienna-based organizations.

- **Who should do it?** UNEP Management to clarify the mandate and status of UNEP Vienna – SCC and provide sufficient support responding to their actual roles and responsibilities. It is also recommended to include the budget for a thorough evaluation in the next project.

6 Annexes

- Annex A** Terms of Reference of the terminal evaluation (without annexes)
- Annex B** Guiding questions for the evaluation (from the Inception Report)
- Annex C** List of respondents
- Annex D** List of activities and meetings
- Annex E** List of projects
- Annex F** Bibliography – list of documents and publications
- Annex G** List of Memoranda of Understanding
- Annex H** Note ‘Official Opening of UNEP Vienna’
- Annex I** Memorandum and ToR of the Carpathian Convention Trust Fund
- Annex J** Reconstructed ToC as illustrated by the Evaluation Office
- Annex K** Matrix for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (from Inception Report)

ANNEX B Terms of Reference for the Terminal Evaluation

Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP Project: “Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions” (Project CP/5023-04-82)

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

1. Project General Information⁵³

Table 1. Project summary

UNEP PIMS ID:	01294	IMIS number:	3477 (CB5023-04-82)
Sub-programme	(2010-2011 & 2012-2013) SP4 Environmental Governance	Expected Accomplishment/	(2010-2011 & 2012-2013) EA c
Managing Division	UNEP Regional Support Office (RSO) ⁵⁴	Linkage with PoW Outputs	2010/11-432 2010/11-434 2012/13-431 2012/13-432 2012/13-434
Geographical Scope:	Regional	Region:	Europe
Participating countries:	Austria, Italy, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovak Republic, Ukraine, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia, Switzerland, possible extension to other Alpine, South East European and other mountain regions of Europe.		
Expected Start Date:	October 2003	UNEP approval date:	16 October 2009
Actual start date:	October 2003	Planned duration:	123 months
Intended completion date:	December 2013	Actual completion date:	December 2013
Planned project budget at approval	\$6,310,246.00	Secured budget*:	\$6,310,246.00
UNEP contribution	\$ 0	Co-financing:	\$ 0
Mid-term review/eval. (planned date):	N/A	Terminal Evaluation (actual date):	
Mid-term review/eval. (actual date):	Not conducted	No. of revisions:	19
Date of last Steering Committee meeting:	...	Date of last Revision:	February 2014

*Total Funds Programmed (annual expenditures + current allotment).

2. Project Background

311. Before and during the International Year of the Mountains (IYM) in 2002, UNEP’s mountain-related work was coordinated jointly by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe (ROE) and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC). This was based on the UNEP wide-paper entitled “The UNEP contribution to the IYM 2002” (March, 2001) followed by a strategy paper entitled “UNEP before and during the IYM” (May, 2004). During that period, ROE serviced, at request, negotiations on (i) a Central Asian Mountain Charter (request by Kyrgistan), (ii) a Charter/Convention for the Protection of the Caucasus Mountains (request by Armenia), and (iii) a Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (request by Ukraine).

312. Partly due to a lack of resources the Central Asian Mountain Charter never materialized. Cooperation on the mountain ranges of the Caucasus was under discussion following a Meeting of Ministers and High level Officials of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation and Turkey that was hosted by Liechtenstein in Vaduz in November 2007. These discussions were serviced by UNEP Vienna but despite a number of meetings only little progress was recorded due to the political situations and tensions in the Caucasus region.

313. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) was adopted and signed by the seven Parties (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine) in May 2003 in Kyiv, Ukraine, and entered into force in January 2006. The region hosts up to 20 million people and contains Europe’s greatest reserve of pristine forests. It is a refuge for brown bears, wolves, bison, lynx, eagles and some 200 unique plant species found nowhere else in the world. It also plays a vital role in ensuring Europe’s fresh water supplies.

⁵³ Source: PIMS and Project Documents (original and revisions 1-3), and Project Document Supplement Nov-2012

⁵⁴ Formerly Division for Regional Cooperation (DRC)

314. The Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Carpathian Convention meets every two (or three) years and provides guidance to its inter-sessional Implementation Committee and a suite of Working Groups. To date it has met in Kyiv (December 2006), Bucharest (June 2008) and Bratislava (May 2011) respectively. Milestones reached at these meetings include: the adoption of Protocols on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity, Sustainable Forest Management, and Sustainable Tourism; the establishment of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas; and the development and implementation of major programs and projects on *inter alia* spatial planning and bio-region protection.

315. In adopting the Convention, the Carpathian countries called for a UNEP serviced interim Secretariat in Vienna. The Mountain Partnership⁵⁵, officially launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (September, 2002), underlined the catalytic role UNEP could play in making mountain development environmentally sound. UNEP Vienna was thereafter officially opened on 15 July 2004 with the mandate to: act as the interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention; perform the role of environmental focal point within the Mountain Partnership Secretariat; promote cooperation in Central and South Eastern Europe; and serve as UNEP's focal point for Austria based international organizations. Since 2004, the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention (ISCC) - as an outposted Office of UNEP's Regional Office for Europe located in Geneva - has been administered by UNEP on an interim basis

316. In 2003, UNEP ROE organized the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit. A multi-stakeholder Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership was established in Rome with the direct participation of UNEP through the Vienna Office, which acted as the Environmental Reference Centre of the Mountain Partnership. UNEP Vienna acted until 2011 as the UNEP corporate Mountain Focal Point and since then as the alternate Mountain Focal Point.

317. In December 2004, UNEP through its office in Vienna was requested by the Minister of Environment of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to "facilitate intergovernmental consultations aiming at enhanced regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of mountain regions in South Eastern Europe". Consequently, two meetings were organized by UNEP Vienna after which the initiative de facto was submerged in the ministerial process on the Sustainable Development of the Dinaric Arc and its Neighbouring Regions. Although there has been no tangible follow up at governmental level to date, the cooperation has led to the establishment of a support unit for the Dinaric Arc Initiative⁵⁶ in UNEP Vienna.

318. UNEP Vienna ISCC - based on the project objective of facilitating environmental cooperation in South East Europe (SEE) - successfully established SEE as a new sub-regional initiative under the The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)⁵⁷ for the South East European region. UNEP Vienna also became the provider of the Regional Desk Officer (RDO) for ENVSEC in SEE and successfully raised resources for a sub-regional programme on transboundary mountain biodiversity, as well as hotspots from the montane/mining industry. In 2009, the ENVSEC Management Board passed the main RDO function to the Regional Environmental Center REC in Szentendre.

3. Project Rationale⁵⁸

319. The Carpathian Convention can be considered as a best practice example for sub regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of a major transboundary mountain ecosystem. Subject to availability of resources, and in consultation and cooperation with the signatories and external partners, activities related to the sustainable development of the Danube-Carpathian region and associated countries may be initiated and undertaken. One such activity would be to analyse this experience and identify replicable elements, which could be made widely available and used as a guidance tool for other sub regional processes in the region or elsewhere. The Fifth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Kyiv, 2003) expressed its concern "that environmental degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources may have significant social and economic consequences, such as increased poverty, cause health hazards, and aggravate insecurity and social tensions, possibly leading to political instability". Furthermore, conflicts over shared natural resources and ecosystems could lead to tensions between States and have an adverse impact on other sub-regions, directly or indirectly. Instead, shared natural resources should be a catalyst for regional and sub-regional cooperation.

320. The Project meets the need to ensure effective regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, by managing a best practice example of sub-regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable

⁵⁵ The Mountain Partnership is a United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. Currently, 53 governments, 13 intergovernmental organizations and 162 Major Groups (e.g. civil society, NGOs and the private sector) are members.

⁵⁶ The Dinaric Arc Initiative is a broad framework of collaboration between WWF, IUCN, UNESCO-BRESCE, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, EuroNatur, SNV, REC, and ECNC, and which aims to add value to the ongoing programmes and activities of all its partners,

⁵⁷ ENVSEC is a partnership of six international organizations with specialized, but complementary mandates and expertise, that provides an integrated response to environment and security challenges, by contributing to the reduction of environment and security risks through strengthened cooperation among and within countries in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus, and South-Eastern Europe.

⁵⁸ Source: Original project document for "Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention"

development of the transboundary ecosystem of the Carpathians. It is intended to draw and apply experiences in response to similar sub-regional or transboundary challenges in Central and Eastern Europe.

321. Decision 21 of the 22nd Governing Council calls for the “regional implementation of the programme of work of UNEP” and “recognises the importance of effective and timely delivery of global policies and programmes, with a view to strengthening and implementing regional and sub-regional initiatives”. This project directly related to UNEP’s activities in the 2004-2005 programme of work by promoting policy integration, and in particular, fostering regional cooperation by supporting the implementation of global and regional environmental priorities through strengthened regional and sub-regional cooperation. Furthermore, this project contributes to the implementation of the Governing Council Decision “GC 22/17 – Governance and Law” including the implementation of the Montevideo Programme II, as well as the thematic areas “Strengthening environmental governance and law” and “Engaging civil society and the public” of UNEP work programme through capacity building activities. The project is relevant for implementing and strengthening the environmental component of the Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity (WEHAB) agenda discussed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly issues on “Biodiversity”, “Water and Sanitation”, and “Agriculture”.

4. Project objectives and components

322. The common vision of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention is to pursue comprehensive policy and cooperation in order to guarantee protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians. The primary objective of this project is to ensure that ***“regional and sub-regional institutional arrangements are facilitated to address common interests in shared natural resources and transboundary environmental issues in accordance with priorities and strategies identified by the relevant regional or sub-regional inter-governmental bodies and forums, or by the countries concerned”***.

323. The project was designed to generate the following results under the assumption that the Carpathian countries would provide continued high-level support to the cooperation process, and to the ongoing partnership with and support by the Alpine Convention countries, and the experience exchange within the Danube-Carpathian and other mountain regions of Europe:

- a. To provide cost-effective interim secretariat services to the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;
- b. To promote the swift ratification, entry into force and effective implementation of the Carpathian Convention;
- c. To perform the role of environmental focal point within the Mountain Partnership Secretariat;
- d. To promote cooperation in Central and South Eastern Europe;
- e. To serve as UNEP’s focal point for Austria based international organizations. To further strengthen the ongoing Alpine-Carpathian Partnership, and to continue to promote mutual exchange of experience and mobilisation of funds to implement activities, such as the creation of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA), in cooperation with the Alpine Network of Protected Areas;
- f. To continue to build and further strengthen partnerships with the European Union, States and partner organisations (Danube Protection Convention Secretariat, REC, WWF) on this and related topics in the Danube Carpathian region;
- g. To ensure full stakeholder participation in the work of the Convention and its implementation;
- h. To identify and analyse best-practice examples of sub-regional or transboundary cooperation in the region, to synthesise replicable elements and apply experiences in response to similar or relate sub-regional or transboundary challenges, and to propose inputs to draft guidelines for sub-regional and transboundary cooperation.

324. The table below provides a summary of the project’s planned outputs and activities:

Table 2. Project Components

I. Outcomes	Outcome Indicator
National development processes and United Nations common country programming processes increasingly mainstream environmental sustainability in the implementation of their work programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of intergovernmental agreements and policies adopted and / or ratified
II. Outputs	Output Indicator
A) UNEP programme support to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of meetings convened as

the Interim Secretariat of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians strengthened	part of the secretariat services provided to Member states.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of secretariat services provided to Member states
B) Strengthened Environmental Focal Point mechanism for the Secretariat of the Mountain Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of communication events [side events, etc.] organized or co-organized on mountain partnerships
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnership activities carried out with other mountain regions
C) Focal point mechanism for cooperation with Central and South-Eastern European (SEE) countries, and sub-regional Focal Point for South Eastern Europe enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of trainings or technical assistance provision or policy drafting services in support of sustainable mountain development in SEE carried out
D) Liaison between UNEP and organizations based in the region supporting in-region UNEP action strengthened	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of activities or events involving or co-organized with other international organizations based in Vienna or in the region
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of official meetings with organizations based in the region and missions carried out in the region
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of UNEP communication events supported in Vienna
III. Activities	
Preparation of relevant documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant documents (as listed in section 4.1 of the Project Document), to include the following: draft rules of procedure for the Conference of Parties (COP); draft work programme/ budget for the implementation of the Convention; proposed scale of contributions to the Convention; a consolidated proposal for Secretariat arrangements; and a comprehensive report and proposal on the scope of application of the Framework Convention for consideration by the COP at its first session. • Input to proposed draft guidelines on sub-regional and transboundary cooperation based on identification and analysis of best practices and experiences with relevant sub-regional instruments or transboundary initiatives in the region.

Provision of services and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service to the Intergovernmental Committee meetings and other advisory or subsidiary bodies, as determined by the signatories • Support and assistance to national ratification procedures through
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	public information activities
Public participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation and implementation of a public participation strategy • The representation, networking and liaison with partner countries and organisation, follow-up to existing and initiation of new partnership, fundraising and Public Relations (PR)
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other UNEP-implemented, -coordinated and/or -supported processes and programmes or projects in the Danube-Carpathian region as appropriate, and subject to the availability of funds

Sources: PIMS, Project Document Supplement Nov-2011.

5. Executing Arrangements

325. By ministerial resolution adopted by the Carpathian countries, UNEP's Regional Office for Europe (UNEP-ROE) was requested to provide the arrangements for an Interim Secretariat to the Carpathian Convention (ISCC), in cooperation with a network of supporting external partner organisations and institutions. Located in Vienna, the Head of the Vienna Office was appointed and the ISCC was established in 2004. ISCC supports the implementation of the Carpathian convention, promotes ratification and facilitates cooperation between the signatory states as well as other relevant international bodies and conventions, encourages and supports research, communication and information exchange between partners, coordinates the preparation and implementation of the work programme under the Convention, prepares relevant documentation and supports further institutional development. Other functions of the Secretariat are:

- a. to make arrangements for sessions of the Conference of Parties and to provide them with services as required;
- b. to compile and transmit reports submitted to it;
- c. to coordinate its activities with the secretariats of other relevant international bodies and conventions;
- d. to prepare reports on the exercising of its functions under this Convention and its Protocols, including financial reports, and present them to the Conference;
- e. to facilitate research, communication and information exchange on matters relating to this Convention; and
- f. to perform other secretariat functions as may be determined by the Conference.

326. Support of the European Commission was also solicited by the project and the connected so-called "Carpathian Project"⁵⁹. Furthermore, close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Danube River Protection Convention and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), also situated in Vienna/Austria, were initiated. Other external partners of the project included:

- a. The Alpine Network of Protected Areas, which provides technical assistance for the establishment of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas;
- b. The WWF International-Danube Carpathian Programme, working on issues of conservation, public participation and liaison with the Carpathian Eco-region Initiative;
- c. The European Academy (EURAC) in Bolzano, offering scientific inputs, press and PR, logistics and meetings;
- d. The Stakeholder Forum (for stakeholder participation and networking).

327. The project established the Vienna ISCC as a UNEP Centre for mountain issues. Furthermore, the project provided the required UNEP programme support to the Carpathian Convention in addition to being the ROE Focal Point for PoW delivery in South East Europe, providing support to international mountain work and support to UNEP liaison in Vienna.

328. Subsidiary bodies, including thematic working groups established in accordance with the Convention, provided the Conference of Parties with technical assistance, information and advice on specific issues related to the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians.

⁵⁹ The Carpathian Project was a project co-financed by the EU-Community Initiative Programme for transnational cooperation in the programming period 2000-2006. The objective of the Carpathian Project was to enhance the sustainable development of the Carpathian region based on its rich natural and cultural heritage. (www.carpathianproject.eu)

6. Project Cost and Financing

329. Table 3 presents a summary of financing for the project. The total budget was US\$6,310,246 with in-kind contributions of US\$ 200,000 from UNEP. The budget covered the cost of core operations of the interim secretariat. Various activities would be implemented with or through a number of external partners, the ISCC performing a coordinating/cooperating role.

330. The Carpathian countries agreed to support the interim services by UNEP with yearly voluntary financial contributions, which would be up to Euro 198,500 or USD 269,335 (rate 0.737) per year (see Table 4 below). The project would therefore be financed through counterpart contributions. UNEP would provide in-kind support through staff (administration officer), as well as a project coordinator from UNEP/UNOPS for the first three months of operation.

331. The project underwent 19 revisions mostly to include new earmarked contributions received as the project progressed, as well as to amend timelines, activities and outputs. The project also experienced various revisions to cost estimates in order to take into account the difficulties encountered by UNEP to fully meet the funding requirements estimated at design, and the savings made during the implementation of the project.

Table 3. Estimate Project Cost

Planned Project Budget (as per approval process):	\$6,310,246.00
Co-Financing Total:	\$0.00
Total Funds Programmed (annual expenditures + current allotment):	\$6,310,246.00

Source: ISCC

Table 4: Voluntary contributions by Carpathian countries to the project (2010- 2013)

Cost to:	US\$ 2003 - 2011	US\$ 2012-13	US\$ 2014	US\$ Total
<u>Secured</u>				
Various contributions from participating countries	3,803,772	1,508,042	998,433	6,310,246
Subtotal	3,803,772	1,508,042	998,433	6,310,246
<u>Unsecured</u>				
	-	-	-	
Total	3,803,772	1,508,042	998,433	6,310,246

Source: ISCC

7. Implementation Issues⁶⁰

332. The predominant implementation issues experienced by the project have included those to do with political and socio-economic stability in some of the countries involved, as well as issues related to natural disasters. The political situation in some of the recipient sub-regions (Caucasus and SEE) may still impede effective cooperation, particularly in post-conflict situations.

333. Regional cooperative action in mountain regions is subject to political differences among the countries involved and requires careful approaches. During the project, exchange of experiences with Caucasus countries was delayed due to the political situation (for example, the recent elections in Georgia in autumn 2012). In order to support the process of regional cooperation in the Caucasus mountain regions (based on the experiences of the Carpathian Convention) a meeting was hosted in 2013 with the view of launching the initiative "Caucasus cooperation platform" to foster cooperation by creating a science-policy interface through a scientific network in the Caucasus Mountain Region, and to support the overall political process.

⁶⁰ Implementation issues and management actions drawn from PIMS

334. Regional cooperation in other mountain regions as well, was subject to political differences among the countries involved. In many countries there is a need for and also interest in cooperative action, but such cooperation takes time to establish, and it is imperative to adopt a bottom-up approach in order to build confidence between the countries and also other stakeholders involved.

335. According to the convention's *National Achievements and Challenges Report, 2011*⁶¹, implementation issues among the participating countries more specifically included: decreasing national contributions from Hungary which would otherwise have allowed a better implementation of the Carpathian Convention; lack of a specific mountain law and slow money flow in Poland; a lack of human resources and the absence of institutions especially established for the management of the Carpathian protected areas system in Romania; a general lack of knowledge on sustainable management by the inhabitants of the Carpathian region; the absence of an agreement on the geographical scope of the Carpathian Convention which complicated the implementation of the convention's objectives in Ukraine; as well as the fact that EU nature protection programs do not apply to the Carpathian Convention that are not also EU members.

II. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION

1. Objective and Scope of the Evaluation

336. In line with the UNEP Evaluation Policy⁶² and the UNEP Evaluation Manual⁶³, the Terminal Evaluation of the Project "Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention" is undertaken at completion of the project to assess project performance (in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency), and determine outcomes and impacts (actual and potential) stemming from the project, including their sustainability. The evaluation has two primary purposes: (i) to provide evidence of results to meet accountability requirements, and (ii) to promote learning, feedback, and knowledge sharing through results and lessons learned among UNEP, governments, international and national executing agencies. Therefore, the evaluation will identify lessons of operational relevance for future project formulation and implementation, especially for project formulation and implementation.

337. The evaluation will focus on the following sets of **key questions**, based on the project's intended outcome and results, which may be expanded by the Consultant as deemed appropriate:

- a. To what extent has the project been successful in steering cooperation among the Parties in establishing intergovernmental agreements and/or policies related to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including other instruments of cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of mountains in the European region? How successful was the project in supporting environmental cooperation in South East Europe?
- b. How effective was the project in creating a UNEP global mountain agenda and influencing global processes such as *Multilateral Environmental Agreements* (MEAs) and Rio+20 by providing a corporate global UNEP mountain Focal Point in Vienna?
- c. How effective was the project in servicing the implementation of the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention?
- d. Has the project been effective in and attracting donor organisations interest and funding to support UNEP's actions in the Danube-Carpathian region?
- e. To what extent has the project been strategically relevant in strengthening the UNEP support to the Carpathian Convention (i.e. focus on strategic services as opposed to administrative services)?
- f. How successful has the project been in enhancing partnerships with other mountain organisations (e.g. Mountain Partnership Secretariat, Alpine-Carpathian Partnership, Danube Protection Convention Secretariat, etc.), including strengthening the focal point mechanisms for the South Eastern Europe (SEE) countries?
- g. How effective was the project in sharing experiences on sub-regional mountain cooperation in the Danube-Carpathian region, the Alps, the Caucasus, Central Asia and other mountain regions of the world? Has the project been effective in generating and disseminating lessons on best-practice sub-regional transboundary cooperation, including replicable elements that can be applied in similar or related sub-regional or transboundary environmental challenges?
- h. What were the most effective strategies used by the project and what were the key drivers and assumptions required to influence stakeholder participation and political decision-making? What are the existing evidence of the project's influence on public awareness and political decision-making in sustainable development and protection of the Carpathians?

⁶¹ http://www.carpathianconvention.org/tl_files/carpathiancon/Downloads/04%20Publications%20-%20Press%20-%20Gallery/Documents%20and%20Publications/201110_ImplementationReportonCC.pdf

⁶² <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationPolicy/tabid/3050/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

⁶³ <http://www.unep.org/eou/StandardsPolicyandPractices/UNEPevaluationManual/tabid/2314/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

- i. How effectively and efficiently was the overall project planned, coordinated and monitored? What was the performance of the lead UNEP division and partners involved in the project?
- j. How successful was the project's engagement in the UN "Delivering as One" and country level interventions, the Environment and Security Initiative⁶⁴, the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) projects, and GEF interventions in the Danube-Carpathian region?

2. Overall Approach and Methods

338. This evaluation will be conducted by an independent consultant under the overall responsibility and management of the UNEP Evaluation Office (Nairobi), in consultation with UNEP ROE, and the UNEP Vienna - Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention.

339. It will be mostly a desk-based evaluation using an approach whereby key stakeholders are kept informed and consulted throughout the evaluation process. The consultant will liaise with the UNEP Evaluation Office (EO), the UNEP ISCC office and the project's technical staff in UNEP RSO on any logistic and/or methodological issues to properly conduct the evaluation as independently as possible. Both quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods will be used to determine project achievements against the expected outputs, outcomes and impacts.

340. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) A **desk review** of:

- Relevant background documentation, inter alia UNEP Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013 and Programmes of Work, other relevant MEA policies, publications on the activities of the Carpathian Convention, including background information available online;
- Project design documents and their revisions;
- annual work plans and budgets or equivalent, the logical framework and project financing, as well as [draft] project document for the planned project implementation beginning 2014;
- Project reports such as progress and financial reports from participating countries, from UNEP, and partners, ISCC Secretariat, meeting minutes as well as annual reviews and relevant correspondence;
- Documentation related to project outputs, and relevant materials published on the project web-site.

(b) **Interviews**⁶⁵ with, but not limited to:

- UNEP project management (Vienna), Head of ISCC in Vienna and ISCC staff;
- Fund Management Officer (Geneva);
- UNEP ROE and relevant UNEP RSO staff;
- Individual experts involved in the project;
- Party representatives/ National Focal Points; and
- Representatives of multilateral agencies, networks and other strategic partnerships to the Convention, including: Secretariat of the Central European Initiative (CEI-ES), Carpathian Eco-region Initiative (CERI), Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar Convention), Alpine Convention, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Alpine Convention, European Academy (EURAC), International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), and Science for the Carpathians Initiative (S4C).

3. Key Evaluation principles

341. Evaluation findings and judgements should be based on **sound evidence and analysis**, clearly documented in the evaluation report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification was not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out.

342. The evaluation will assess the project with respect to **a minimum set of evaluation criteria** grouped in six categories: (1) Strategic Relevance; (2) Attainment of objectives and planned result, which comprises the assessment of outputs achieved,

⁶⁴ ENVSEC (<http://www.envsec.org/index.php?lang=en>)

⁶⁵ Face-to-face or through any other appropriate means of communication

effectiveness and likelihood of impact; (3) Sustainability and replication; (4) Efficiency; (5) Factors and processes affecting project performance, including preparation and readiness, implementation and management, stakeholder participation and public awareness, country ownership and driven-ness, financial planning and management, UNEP supervision and backstopping, and project monitoring and evaluation; and (6) Complementarity with the UNEP strategies and programmes. The evaluation consultants can propose other evaluation criteria as deemed appropriate.

343. **Ratings.** All evaluation criteria will be rated on a six-point scale. However, complementarity of the project with the UNEP strategies and programmes, including other relevant partners' strategies and programmes is not rated. Annex 3 provides guidance on how the different criteria should be rated and how ratings should be aggregated for the different evaluation categories.

344. In attempting to attribute any outcomes and impacts to the project, the evaluators should consider the difference between "*what has happened with*" and "*what would have happened without*" the project. This implies that there should be consideration of the baseline conditions and trends in relation to the intended project outcomes and impacts. This also means that there should be plausible evidence to attribute such outcomes and impacts to the actions of the project. Sometimes, adequate information on baseline conditions and trends is lacking. In such cases this should be clearly highlighted by the evaluators, along with any simplifying assumptions that were taken to enable the evaluator to make informed judgements about project performance.

345. Although this is a terminal evaluation, a follow-up project is certain and particular attention should be given to learning from the experience. Lessons learned and recommendations drawn from the evaluation can be assimilated into the follow-on phase through adaptive management or through formal Project Document revisions.

346. The "*Why?*" question should be at front of the consultants' minds all through the evaluation exercise. This means that the consultants need to go beyond the assessment of "*what*" the project performance was, and make a serious effort to provide a deeper understanding of "*why*" the performance was as it was, i.e. of processes affecting attainment of project results (criteria under category F – see below). This should provide the basis for the lessons that can be drawn from the project. In fact, the usefulness of the evaluation will be determined to a large extent by the capacity of the consultant to explain "*why things happened*" as they happened and are likely to evolve in this or that direction - which goes well beyond the mere review of "*where things stand*" at the time of evaluation.

4. Evaluation criteria

A. Strategic relevance

347. The evaluation will assess, in retrospect, whether the project's objectives and implementation strategies were consistent with the UNEP and other partners' mandates and policies at the time of design and implementation; it will also assess whether the project was aligned with UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2010-2013 and Programmes of Work 2010-2011 and 2012-2013.

348. UNEP MTS 2010-2013 specifies desired results (termed Expected Accomplishments) in six thematic focal areas or Sub-programmes. The evaluation should comment on whether the project makes a tangible contribution to the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS 2010-13. The magnitude and extent of any contributions and the causal linkages should also be fully described.

349. The evaluation will assess whether the project objectives were realistic, given the time and budget allocated to the project, the baseline situation and the institutional context in which the project was to operate.

350. The evaluation will also assess the effectiveness of the project in servicing the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention adopted by the first, second and third Meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention.

B. Achievement of Outputs

351. The evaluation will assess the project's success in producing the programmed activities and outputs as presented in Table 2 above, both in quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness and timeliness.

352. Briefly explain the reasons behind the success (or failure) of the project in achieving its different outputs and meeting expected quality standards, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F (which covers the processes affecting attainment of project results).

C. Effectiveness: Attainment of Objectives and Planned Results

353. The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project's objectives were effectively achieved or are expected to be achieved.

354. The evaluation will, to the extent possible, reconstruct the Theory of Change (ToC) of the project based on a review of project documentation and stakeholder interviews.⁶⁶ The ToC of a project depicts the causal pathways from project outputs (goods and services delivered by the project) over outcomes (changes resulting from the use made by key stakeholders of project outputs) towards impact (changes in environmental benefits and living conditions). The ToC will also depict any intermediate changes required between project outcomes and impact, called “intermediate states”. The ToC further defines the external factors that influence change along the pathways, whether one result can lead to the next. These external factors are either drivers (when the project has a certain level of control) or assumptions (when the project has no control).

355. The assessment of effectiveness will be structured in three sub-sections:

- (a) Evaluation of the **achievement of outcomes as defined in the reconstructed ToC**. These are the first-level outcomes expected to be achieved as an immediate result of project outputs. For this project, the main question will be to what extent the project has served as a best practice example of sub-regional cooperation and partnership in the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians, by effectively managing the ISCC and ensuring that the experiences gained can be replicated in similar and related sub-regional or transboundary challenges in Central and Eastern Europe.
- (b) Assessment of the **likelihood of impact** using a Review of Outcomes to Impacts (ROtI) approach as summarized in Annex 8 of the TORs. The evaluation will appreciate to what extent the project has to date contributed, and is likely in the future to further contribute, to improved cooperation and partnership by the relevant stakeholders towards the achievement of the objectives of the Carpathian Convention as a result of the projects outcomes, and the likelihood of those changes in turn leading to positive changes in the benefits derived from improved environment and human living conditions.
- (c) Evaluation of the **achievement of the formal project overall objective, overall purpose, goals and component outcomes** using the project’s own results statements as presented in the Project Document (including revisions). This sub-section will refer back where applicable to the preceding sub-sections (a) and (b) to avoid repetition in the report. To measure achievement, the evaluation will use as much as appropriate the indicators for achievement proposed in the Logical Framework (Logframe) of the project, adding other relevant indicators as appropriate. Briefly explain what factors affected the project’s success in achieving its objectives, cross-referencing as needed to more detailed explanations provided under Section F.

D. Sustainability and replication

356. **Sustainability** is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived results and impacts after the external project funding and assistance ends. The evaluation will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to undermine or contribute to the persistence of benefits. Some of these factors might be direct results of the project while others will include contextual circumstances or developments that are not under control of the project but that may condition sustainability of benefits. The evaluation should ascertain to what extent follow-up work has been initiated and how project results will be sustained and enhanced over time. The reconstructed ToC will assist in the evaluation of sustainability, as the drivers and assumptions required to achieve higher-level results are often similar to the factors affecting sustainability of these changes.

357. Four aspects of sustainability will be addressed:

- (a) *Socio-political sustainability*. Are there any social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Is the level of ownership by the main stakeholders sufficient to allow for the project results to be sustained? Are there sufficient government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?
- (b) *Financial resources*. To what extent are the continuation of project results and the eventual impact of the project dependent on financial resources? What is the likelihood that adequate financial resources⁶⁷ will be or will become available to implement the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project? Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact? How financially sustainable are the regional activity centres?

⁶⁶ It is appreciated that at the time of the project design the Theory of Change methodology as described in these TOR was not used. This notwithstanding, the project did have an intentionality or project logic that can be interpreted to be its TOC. The consultant will reconstruct this to see the causal linkages between the expected project outcomes and Impact, and to establish how “far along” the impact pathway the project will have progressed at the time of the terminal evaluation.

⁶⁷ Those resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, other development projects etc.

- (c) *Institutional framework.* To what extent is the sustenance of the results and onward progress towards impact dependent on issues relating to institutional frameworks and governance? How robust are the institutional achievements such as governance structures and processes, policies, sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustaining project results and to lead those to impact on human behaviour and environmental resources?
- (d) *Environmental sustainability.* Are there any environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits? Are there any foreseeable negative environmental impacts that may occur as the project results are being up-scaled?

358. **Catalytic role and replication.** The *catalytic role* of UNEP interventions is embodied in their approach of supporting the creation of an enabling environment and of investing in pilot activities which are innovative and showing how new approaches can work. UNEP also aims to support activities that upscale new approaches to a national, regional or global level, with a view to achieve sustainable global environmental benefits. The evaluation will assess the catalytic role played by this project, namely to what extent the project has:

- (a) *catalyzed behavioural changes* in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of: i) secretariat services provided to Member states, ii) the regional policy instruments developed, iii) the focal point mechanisms established, and iv) the built technical capacity attained through training/technical assistance, at a national and sub-regional level;
- (b) provided *incentives* (social, economic, market based, competencies etc.) to contribute to catalyzing changes in stakeholder behaviour;
- (c) contributed to *institutional changes*, for instance institutional uptake of project-demonstrated multi-regional partnership approaches;
- (d) contributed to *policy changes* (on paper and in implementation of policy);
- (e) contributed to sustained follow-on financing (*catalytic financing*) from Governments, private sector, donors etc.;
- (f) created opportunities for particular individuals or institutions ("*champions*") to catalyze change (without which the project would not have achieved all of its results).

359. *Replication*, in the context of UNEP projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in different geographic areas) or scaled up (experiences are repeated and lessons applied in the same geographic area but on a much larger scale and funded by other sources). The evaluation will assess the approach adopted by the project to promote replication effects and appreciate to what extent actual replication has already occurred or is likely to occur in the near future. What are the factors that may influence replication and scaling up of project experiences and lessons?

E. Efficiency

360. The evaluation will assess the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of project execution. It will describe any cost- or time-saving measures put in place in attempting to bring the project as far as possible in achieving its results within its programmed budget and (extended) time. It will also analyse how delays have affected project execution, costs and effectiveness. Wherever possible, costs and time over results ratios of the project will be compared with that of other similar interventions.

361. The evaluation will give special attention to efforts by the project teams to make use of/build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency.

F. Factors and processes affecting project performance

362. **Preparation and readiness.** This criterion focusses on the quality of project design and preparation. Were project stakeholders⁶⁸ adequately identified? Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were the capacities of the executing agency properly considered when the project was designed? Was the project document clear and realistic to enable effective and efficient implementation? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to project implementation? Were counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities) and enabling legislation assured? Were adequate project management arrangements in place? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in the project design? What factors influenced the quality-at-entry of the project design, choice of partners, allocation of financial resources etc.?

⁶⁸ Stakeholders are the individuals, groups, institutions, or other bodies that have an interest or stake in the outcome of the project. The term also applies to those potentially adversely affected by the project.

363. **Project implementation and management.** This includes an analysis of implementation approaches used by the project, its management framework, the project's adaptation to changing conditions (adaptive management), the performance of the implementation arrangements and partnerships, relevance of changes in project design, and overall performance of project management. The evaluation will:

- (a) Ascertain to what extent the project implementation mechanisms outlined in the project document have been followed and were effective in delivering project milestones, outputs and outcomes. Were pertinent adaptations made to the approaches originally proposed?
- (b) Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of project management and how well the management was able to adapt to changes during the life of the project.
- (c) Assess the role and performance of the teams and working groups established and the project execution arrangements at all levels.
- (d) Assess the extent to which project management responded to direction and guidance provided by the Steering Committee or its equivalent and UNEP supervision recommendations.
- (e) Assess the extent to which the UNEP accountability framework was effectively applied and allowed for effective management of the project in Vienna.
- (f) Identify administrative, operational, technical, institutional and/or political problems and constraints that influenced the effective implementation of the project, and how the project partners tried to overcome these problems. How did the relationship between the project management team and the collaborating partners and focal points develop?

364. **Stakeholder participation and public awareness.** The term stakeholder should be considered in the broadest sense, encompassing project partners, government institutions, private interest groups, local communities etc. The TOC analysis should assist the evaluators in identifying the key stakeholders and their respective roles, capabilities and motivations in each step of the causal pathway from activities to achievement of outputs and outcomes to impact. The assessment will look at three related and often overlapping processes: (1) information dissemination to and between stakeholders, (2) consultation with and between stakeholders, and (3) active engagement of stakeholders in project decision making and activities. The evaluation will specifically assess:

- (a) the approach(es) used to identify and engage stakeholders (within and outside UNEP) in project design and implementation. What were the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches with respect to the project's objectives and the stakeholders' motivations and capacities? What was the achieved degree and effectiveness of collaboration and interactions between the various project partners and stakeholders during design and implementation of the project?
- (b) the degree and effectiveness of any public awareness activities that were undertaken during the course of implementation of the project; or that are built into the assessment methods so that public awareness can be raised at the time the assessments will be conducted;
- (c) how the results of the project (secretariat support, documents, meetings, cooperative frameworks, mountain region partnerships, intergovernmental agreements and policies, regional policy instruments, etc.) promote participation of stakeholders, including users, in decision making.

365. **Country ownership and driven-ness.** This is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements. The evaluation will assess:

- (a) the level of country ownership. Specifically, the evaluator should assess whether the project was effective in providing and communicating information on sustainable mountain development that catalysed action to improve decisions relating to their conservation and sustainable management in the Carpathian countries;
- (b) the level of commitment within the Carpathian countries to the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians and other related international treaties, protocols, MoUs or COP decisions; and
- (c) how well the UNEP support processes to the ISCC stimulated country ownership of the convention and related partnership activities.

366. **Financial planning and management.** Evaluation of financial planning requires assessment of the quality and effectiveness of financial planning and control of financial resources throughout the project's lifetime. The assessment will look at actual project costs by activities compared to budget (variances), financial management (including disbursement issues), and co-financing. The evaluation will, to the extent possible:

- (a) Verify the application of proper standards (clarity, transparency, audit etc.) and timeliness of financial planning, management and reporting to ensure that sufficient and timely financial resources were available to the project and its partners;
- (b) Appreciate other administrative processes such as recruitment of staff, procurement of goods and services (including consultants), preparation and negotiation of cooperation agreements etc. to the extent that these might have influenced project performance;
- (c) Present to what extent co-financing has materialized as expected at project approval (see Table 1). Report country co-financing to the project overall, and to support project activities at the national level in particular. The evaluation will seek to provide a breakdown of final actual costs and co-financing for the different project components (see tables in Annex 4).
- (d) Describe the resources the project has leveraged since inception and indicate how these resources are contributing to the project's ultimate objective. Leveraged resources are additional resources—beyond those committed to the project itself at the time of approval—that are mobilized later as a direct result of the project. Leveraged resources can be financial or in-kind and they may be from other donors, NGO's, foundations, governments, communities or the private sector.
- (e) Analyse the effects on project performance of any irregularities in procurement, use of financial resources and human resource management, and the measures taken by UNEP to prevent such irregularities in the future. Appreciate whether the measures taken were adequate.

367. **Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping.** The purpose of supervision is to verify the quality and timeliness of project execution in terms of finances, administration and achievement of outputs, in order to identify and recommend ways to deal with problems which arise during project execution. Such problems may be related to project management but may also involve technical/institutional substantive issues in which UNEP has a major contribution to make. The evaluators should assess the effectiveness of supervision, administrative, financial and technical support provided by UNEP including:

- (a) The adequacy of project supervision plans, inputs and processes;
- (b) The realism and candour of project reporting and the emphasis given to outcome monitoring (results-based project management); and
- (c) How well the guidance and backstopping mechanisms worked.

368. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The evaluation will include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and evaluation plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The evaluation will appreciate how information generated by the M&E system during project implementation was used to adapt and improve project execution, achievement of outcomes and ensuring sustainability. M&E is assessed on three levels:

- (a) *M&E Design.* The evaluators should use the following questions to help assess the M&E design aspects:
 - Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives?
 - How well was the project logical framework (original and possible updates) designed as a planning and monitoring instrument?
 - SMART⁶⁹-ness of indicators: Are there specific indicators in the logframe for each of the project objectives? Are the indicators measurable, attainable (realistic) and relevant to the objectives? Are the indicators time-bound?
 - Adequacy of baseline information: To what extent has baseline information on performance indicators been collected and presented in a clear manner? Was the methodology for the baseline data collection explicit and reliable? For instance, was there adequate baseline information on pre-existing accessible information on environmental status and trends in the region? Was there sufficient information about the capacity of Member states and collaborating partners etc. to determine their administrative and technical support needs?
 - Arrangements for monitoring: Have the responsibilities for M&E activities been clearly defined? Were the data sources and data collection instruments appropriate? Was the time frame for various M&E activities specified? Was the frequency of various monitoring activities specified and adequate? To what extent were project users involved in monitoring?

⁶⁹ SMART stands for: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

- Arrangements for evaluation: Have specific targets been specified for project outputs? Has the desired level of achievement been specified for all indicators of objectives and outcomes? Were there adequate provisions in the legal instruments binding project partners to fully collaborate in evaluations?
- Budgeting and funding for M&E activities: Determine whether support for M&E was budgeted adequately and was funded in a timely fashion during implementation.

(b) *M&E Plan Implementation.* The evaluation will verify that:

- the M&E system was operational and facilitated timely tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period;
- Half-yearly Progress & Financial Reports were complete and accurate;
- the information provided by the M&E system was used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs;
- the M&E system had in place proper training, instruments and resources for parties responsible for M&E.

G. Complementarity with UNEP policies and strategies

369. **Alignment with the Bali Strategic Plan (BSP)**⁷⁰. The linkage between the project's outcomes and achievements to the objectives of the UNEP BSP should be briefly discussed (as applicable).

370. **Gender.** Ascertain to what extent project design, implementation and monitoring have taken into consideration: (i) possible gender inequalities in access to and the control over natural resources; (ii) specific vulnerabilities of women and children to environmental degradation or disasters; and (iii) the role of women in mitigating or adapting to environmental changes and engaging in environmental protection and rehabilitation. Appreciate whether the intervention is likely to have any lasting differential impacts on gender equality and the relationship between women and the environment. To what extent do unresolved gender inequalities affect sustainability of project benefits?

371. **South-South Cooperation.** This is regarded as the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries. How did the project promote and benefit from the exchange of resources, technology, and knowledge between developing countries and countries with economies in transition? Briefly describe any aspects of the project that could be considered as examples of South-South Cooperation.

5. The Consultants' Team

372. For this evaluation, the Consultant should have extensive experience in the evaluation of projects and programmes, and experience in project management related to environmental governance and biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. They should also have experience in working in/with Central and Eastern European countries, in the general area of land resource management, and more specifically in conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biological and landscape diversity. Candidates should have a sound knowledge of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) or other biodiversity-related MEAs at national, regional and international level.

373. The candidate should have at least ten years of work experience and practical knowledge in the environmental field, preferably in biodiversity. A university degree in science, environment, or relevant discipline is required, in addition to professional skills in project management. Good interpersonal and communication skills are required to be able to convey information in a concise and understandable way. Candidates should also have an analytical mind, be organized and structured and have excellent oral and written communications skills. The Consultant will coordinate data collection and analysis, and the preparation of the main report for the evaluation. S/He will ensure that all evaluation criteria and questions are adequately covered. Fluency in oral and written English is required.

374. By undersigning the service contract with UNEP/UNON, the Consultant certifies that s/he has not been associated with the design and implementation of the project "Best practice of sub-regional cooperation: Partnership for the support of the Carpathian Convention and other Mountain Regions" in any way which may jeopardize their independence and impartiality towards project achievements and performance. In addition, they will not have any future interests (within six months after completion of the contract) with the project's executing or implementing units.

6. Evaluation Deliverables and Review Procedures

375. The Consultant will, after an initial telephone briefing with the UNEP Evaluation Office and the UNEP Project Manager, conduct initial desk review work and prepare and submit an **inception report** to the UNEP Evaluation Office, containing a

⁷⁰ <http://www.unep.org/GC/GC23/documents/GC23-6-add-1.pdf>

thorough review of the project context, project design quality, a draft reconstructed Theory of Change of the project, the evaluation framework and a tentative evaluation schedule (see Annex 2(a) of TORs for Inception Report outline).

376. The review of design quality will cover the following aspects (see Annex 9 for the detailed project design assessment matrix):

- Strategic relevance of the project
- Preparation and readiness;
- Financial planning;
- M&E design;
- Complementarity with UNEP strategies and programmes and the Programme of Work of the Carpathian Convention; and
- Sustainability considerations and measures planned to promote replication and up-scaling.

377. The inception report will also present a draft, desk-based reconstructed Theory of Change of the project. It is vital to reconstruct the ToC *before* most of the data collection (review of reports, interviews, surveys etc.) is done, because the ToC will define which direct outcomes, drivers and assumptions of the project need to be assessed and measured – based on which indicators – to allow adequate data collection for the evaluation of project effectiveness, likelihood of impact and sustainability.

378. The evaluation framework will present in further detail the evaluation questions under each criterion with their respective indicators and data sources. The evaluation framework should summarize the information available from project documentation against each of the main evaluation parameters. Any gaps in information should be identified and methods for additional data collection, verification and analysis should be specified.

379. The inception report will also present a tentative schedule for the overall evaluation process including, the conduct of an online survey, a tentative list of people/institutions to be interviewed, and a draft programme for a visit to the ISCC.

380. The inception report will be submitted for review and approval by the Evaluation Office before the implementation phase of the assignment.

381. **The main evaluation report** should be brief (no longer than 40 pages – excluding the executive summary and annexes), precise, and written in plain English. The report will follow the annotated Table of Contents outlined in Annex 1. It must explain the purpose of the evaluation, exactly what was evaluated and the methods used (with their limitations). The report will present evidence-based and balanced findings, consequent conclusions, lessons and recommendations, which will be cross-referenced to each other. The report should be presented in a way that makes the information accessible and comprehensible. Any dissident views in response to evaluation findings will be appended in footnote or annex as appropriate. To avoid repetitions in the report, the author will use numbered paragraphs and make cross-references where possible.

382. **Review of the draft evaluation report.** The Consultant will submit what shall be referred to as a **zero draft report** to the UNEP EO and revise this draft following the comments and suggestions made by the EO. Once a draft of adequate quality has been accepted, the EO will share this as a **first draft report** with the Head of UNEP Vienna ISCC, who will alert the EO in case the report contains any factual errors. The ISCC Head will then forward the first draft report to the other project stakeholders, in particular the Parties, ROE, UNEP/RSO, Implementation Committee, Working groups, and strategic partners, for their review and comments. Stakeholders may provide feedback on any errors of fact and may highlight the significance of such errors in any conclusions. Comments would be expected within two weeks after the draft report has been shared. Any comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the UNEP EO for collation. The EO will provide the comments to the Consultant for consideration in preparing the **final draft report**.

383. The Consultant will submit the final draft report no later than 2 weeks after reception of stakeholder comments. The Consultant will prepare a **response to comments**, listing those comments not or only partially accepted that could therefore not or only partially be accommodated into the final report. The Consultant will explain why those comments have not or only partially been accepted, providing evidence/justification as required. This response to comments will be shared by the EO with the interested stakeholders to ensure full transparency.

384. **Submission of the final Terminal Evaluation report.** The final report shall be submitted by email to the Head of the Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will finalize the report and share it with the interested Divisions and Sub-programme Coordinators in UNEP. The final evaluation report will be published on the UNEP Evaluation Office web-site⁷¹.

⁷¹ www.unep.org/eou

385. As per usual practice, the UNEP EO will prepare a **quality assessment** of the zero draft and final draft report, which is a tool for providing structured feedback to evaluation consultants. The quality of the report will be assessed and rated against the criteria specified in Annex 4.

386. The UNEP Evaluation Office will assess the ratings in the final evaluation report based on a careful review of the evidence collated by the Consultant and the internal consistency of the report. Where there are differences of opinion between the evaluator and UNEP Evaluation Office on project ratings, both viewpoints will be clearly presented in the final report. The UNEP Evaluation Office ratings will be considered the final ratings for the project.

7. Logistical Arrangements

387. This Terminal Evaluation will be undertaken by an independent evaluation consultant contracted by the UNEP Evaluation Office. The consultant will work under the overall responsibility of the UNEP Evaluation Office and will consult with the EO on any procedural and methodological matters related to the evaluation. It is, however, the consultants' individual responsibility to arrange for their travel, visa, obtain documentary evidence, plan meetings with stakeholders, organize online surveys, and any other logistical matters related to the assignment. The UNEP Vienna ISCC will, where possible, provide logistical support (introductions, meetings, etc.) allowing the consultant to conduct the evaluation as efficiently and independently as possible.

8. Schedule of the evaluation

388. Table 6 below presents the tentative schedule for the evaluation.

Table 6. Tentative schedule

Milestone	Estimated date of completion
Consultants identified and contractual process initiated	7 April 2014
Consultant contracts signed	28 April 2014
Inception Report	10 May 2014
Evaluation Mission - 3 days (UNEP Vienna ISCC)	21-23 May 2014
Zero Draft Report submitted to EO by consultant	6 June 2014
First Draft Report submitted to EO by consultant	16 June 2014
First Draft Report shared with ISCC Head for onward circulation and review	20 June 2014
Submission of review comments to consultant	9 July 2014
Final Report submitted to EO by consultant	16 July 2014
End of assignment	30 July 2014

9. Contractual arrangements

389. The Consultant will be hired under an individual Special Service Agreement (SSA). There are two options for payment: "lumpsum" or "fees only".

390. **Lumpsum:** The fee is payable under the individual Special Service Agreement (SSA) of the evaluator and is **inclusive** of all expenses such as travel, *per diem* (DSA) and incidental expenses which are estimated in advance. The Consultant will receive an initial payment covering such estimated expenses upon signature of the contract.

391. **Fee only:** The contract stipulates consultant fees only. The fee is payable under the individual SSA of the evaluator and is **not inclusive** of travel, accommodation and incidental expenses. Air tickets will be purchased by UNEP and 75% of the DSA for each authorised travel mission will be paid up front. Local in-country travel and communication costs will be reimbursed on the production of acceptable receipts. Terminal expenses and residual DSA entitlements (25%) will be paid after mission completion.

392. The payment schedule for both consultants will be linked to the acceptance by the Evaluation Office of the key evaluation deliverables:

- Final inception report: 20 percent of agreed total fee
- First draft main evaluation report: 40 percent of agreed total fee
- Final main evaluation report: 40 percent of agreed total fee

393. In case the Consultant is not able to provide the deliverables in accordance with these TORs, and in line with the expected quality standards by the UNEP Evaluation Office, payment may be withheld at the discretion of the Head of the Evaluation Office until the Consultant has improved the deliverables to meet UNEP's quality standards.

394. If the Consultant fails to submit a satisfactory final product to UNEP in a timely manner, i.e. before the end date of their contract, the Evaluation Office reserves the right to employ additional human resources to finalize the report, and to reduce the Consultant's fees by an amount equal to the additional costs borne by the Evaluation Office to bring the report up to standard.

ANNEX B Guiding questions for the evaluation

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Methods
A. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Strategic Relevance			
To what extent has the project been successful in steering cooperation among the Parties in establishing intergovernmental agreements and/or policies related to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention, including other instruments of cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of mountains in the European region ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkages to country priorities • Linkages to MEAs and European strategies • Joint programmes and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Country policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
How successful was the project in supporting environmental cooperation in South-East Europe ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives / projects build-up on experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Reports • Evaluation Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
Did the project objectives and implementation strategies fit with the priorities and policies of the government and project stakeholders ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of coherence between project objective and stated priorities of government and project stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policies, strategies and programmes • Staff surveys • Stakeholder perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews with selected government representatives, staff and project stakeholders
How does the project relate to other initiatives ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree the project builds on existing initiatives, policies and programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policies, strategies and programmes • Staff surveys • Stakeholder perception 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
To what extent has the project been strategically relevant in strengthening the UNEP support to the Carpathian Convention (i.e. focus on strategic services as opposed to administrative services)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate UNEP core support (including Environment Fund allocations) to the Carpathian Convention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff interviews
B. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Achievement of outputs – project design			
Is the project adequately addressing the threats and underlying root causes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of proposed and implemented measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Government representatives • Staff surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
Were the project objectives realistic, given the time and budget allocated to the project, the baseline situation and the political and institutional context in which the project was to operate ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and institutional context support the achievement of objectives • Allocated resources are sufficient to meet objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Government representatives • Staff surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
Was the project designed with involvement of target beneficiaries and other stakeholders ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of involvement in the development of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government representatives and staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews with Focal Points
C. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Effectiveness			
Was the project successful in producing the proposed activities and outputs as described in the original logframe, both in quantity and quality as well as their usefulness and timeliness ? Specifically, how effective was the project in servicing the implementation of the Programme of Work adopted by COP1, COP2 and COP3 of the Carpathian Convention ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of planned outputs versus delivered outputs • Setting new directions to existing policies • The degree to which outputs are perceived by beneficiaries and key stakeholders as being of high quality • Outputs used by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • COP decisions and declarations • Sector policy papers • Government representatives and staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews with Focal Points
What were key factors for project success or failure ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of documentation of and preparation for risks, assumptions and impact drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews with Focal Points
How effectively and efficiently was the overall project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to avoid delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Methods
planned, coordinated and monitored ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to leverage existing results • Degree to use synergies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government representatives and staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
What was the performance of the lead UNEP division and partners involved in the project ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The degree to which outputs are perceived by beneficiaries and key stakeholders as being satisfactory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government representatives, staff and key stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
What is the likelihood that the project has an impact ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project's ToC is thorough • The assumptions and drivers are valid • Process from input to output and outcomes is on track and is monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government representatives, staff and key stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • ROTI approach • On-line survey • Interviews
How effective was the project in creating a UNEP global mountain agenda and influencing global processes such as Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and Rio+20 by providing a corporate global UNEP mountain Focal Point in Vienna ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of global mountain initiatives which UNEP Vienna – ISCC initiated/is leading • Number of initiatives / projects/ processes in which UNEP Vienna – ISCC is involved • The degree of which mountain regions are considered in global processes and documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
How effective was the project in sharing experiences on sub-regional mountain cooperation in the Danube-Carpathian region, the Alps, the Caucasus, Central Asia and other mountain regions of the world?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of occasions where experiences were shared by UNEP Vienna – ISCC staff • Number of joint projects initiatives between UNEP Vienna – ISCC and representatives of the other regions • Degree to which CC experience is considered in the other regions • The degree of which lessons learned and good practices of the Carpathians are considered in other regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
How successful was the project's engagement in the UN "Delivering as One" and country level interventions, the Environment and Security Initiative, the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund (MDG-F) projects, and GEF interventions in the Danube-Carpathian region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of joint events/initiatives/projects in each case • Reference to the CC in the documents and reports of the other programmes • Number of country-level projects developed by or with the support of the project / UNEP Vienna – ISCC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
Has the project been effective in and attracting donor organisations interest and funding to support UNEP's actions in the Danube-Carpathian region?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of resources leveraged for projects contributing to outcomes financed from other sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
How successful has the project been in enhancing partnerships with other mountain organisations (e.g. Mountain Partnership Secretariat, Alpine-Carpathian Partnership, Danube Protection Convention Secretariat, etc.), including strengthening the focal point mechanisms for the South Eastern Europe (SEE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of MoU • Joint projects • Regular coordination meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation agreements • Project reports • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Methods
countries ?			
What were the most effective strategies used by the project and what were the key drivers and assumptions required to influence stakeholder participation and political decision-making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of participants at CC-organized events • Number of partners in CC-lead projects • Typology of participants • Degree of involvement of / number of stakeholders involved in processes and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
D. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Sustainability and Replication			
Socio-political sustainability			
What are the existing evidence of the project's influence on public awareness and political decision-making in sustainable development and protection of the Carpathians?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of consideration of "mountains" in strategic, political and legislative tools adopted by countries in the Danube-Carpathian region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
Do relevant stakeholders have an adequate level of buy-in and ownership ensuring the maintenance of benefits ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of engagement of relevant stakeholders in activities and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
Financial sustainability			
To what extend are outcomes likely to be depended on continued financial support ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial requirements for maintenance of outcomes defined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • On-line survey • Interviews
What is the likelihood that required funding will be available ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of financed available from different sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
Institutional framework			
To what extend is progress towards impacts on institutional framework and governance ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term governance mechanism • The degree of capacity, accountability and know-how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-line survey • Interviews
Environmental sustainability			
Are there any environmental risks that can hamper the achievements of outcomes and intended impacts ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental risks identified • Environmental benefits from interventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
Replication and catalytic role			
Has the project been effective in generating and disseminating lessons on best-practice sub-regional transboundary cooperation, including replicable elements that can be applied in similar or related sub-regional or transboundary environmental challenges ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of replication of outcomes and lessons learned • Communication and consultation mechanisms used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
E. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Efficiency			
Was the project cost-effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and adequacy of financial management procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews with staff
Was project implementation on time? If not, how did delays affect costs and effectiveness?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project milestones achieved in time • Adaptive management measures in case of delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews with staff
F. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Factors and Processes Affecting Project Performance			
Project implementation and management			
What are key internal factors which might affecting the achievement of results ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate design • Addressing the crucial issues and doing the right things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Staff and stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • On-line survey • Interviews

Evaluation Questions	Indicators	Sources	Data Collection Methods
Are coordination arrangement clearly defined ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities defined • Management and supervision arrangement adequate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Staff and stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • On-line survey • Interviews
Stakeholder participation and public awareness			
To what extend has the project stakeholder involvement, coordination and cooperation considered ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key stakeholders identified and involved in design and implementation • Level of commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Staff and stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • On-line survey • Interviews
Are there effective participation mechanisms in place ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public consultations allowing for feedback • Local participation facilitated by project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Staff and stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • On-line survey • Interviews
Financial planning and management			
Are financial management structures and procedures clearly set ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and timely of financial reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Financial reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Staff interviews
Supervision, guidance and technical backstopping			
How effective is supervision, administrative, financial and technical support by UNEP ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision plans • Appropriate guidance and backstopping mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Staff interviews
Monitoring and evaluation			
Does the project have a sound M & E plan ? Are there specific indicators defined in the logframe ? Are responsibilities regarding M & E clearly distributed ? Is there a budget allocated for M & E activities ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART-ness of indicators • Extend to which reporting is regular and of high quality • Budget allocations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and financial reports • Beneficiaries and staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews with Focal Points, lead Partners and staff
Is the M & E system operational and are results used to improve performance and to adapt to changing needs ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results reported in time • Planned versus spent budget for M & E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and financial reports • Beneficiaries and staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews with Focal Points, lead Partners and staff
G. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Complementarity with UNEP Policies and Strategies			
Is the project aligned with UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy 2010 – 2013 and the current Programme of Work ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful approval by Project Review Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP policy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
Does the project make tangible contributions to the Expected Accomplishments specified in the UNEP MTS 2010 – 2013 ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance rating in UNEP PIMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP policy documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk review • Interviews
Has gender been considered in the project design and implementation ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender issues are reflected in the design and implementation and are considered in staff and management structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and stakeholder perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews

ANNEX C List of respondents

No.	Name	Institution	Position	Country
1	Ms. Zuzana Tollrianova	Ministry of Environment, Department of Species Protection and Implementation of International Commitments	CC Focal Point	Czech Republic
2	Ms. Liliana Vîrtopeanu	Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	CC Focal Point	Romania
3	Mr. Felix Zaharia	Ministry of Foreign Affaires	International Law and Treaties Department	Romania
4	Mr. Mircea Vergehet	Carpathian Network of Protected Areas	Head of the CNPA and Director of the Piatra Craiului National Park	Romania
5	Mr. Lubos Halada	Slovak Academy of Science		Slovakia
6	Mr. Sandor Szalai	Szent István University	Head of the Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change	Hungary
7	Mr. Sena Oprasic			Bosnia & Herzegovina
8	Ms. Sandra Wibmer	Austrian Development Agency		Austria
9	Ms. Elfi More	Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, International Environmental Affairs	Head	Austria
10	Ms. Elisabeth Soetz	Austrian Development Agency		Austria
11	Ms. Eleonore Musco	EURAC staff seconded to UNEP Vienna – SCC		Austria
12	Mr. Guido Plassmann	Alpine Network of Protected Areas	Director	France
13	Mr. Andreas Beckmann	WWF – International, Danube Carpathian Programme	Director	Austria
14	Ms. Hildegard Meyer	WWF – International, Danube Carpathian Programme		Austria
15	Mr. Giacomo Luciani	Former EURAC staff seconded to UNEP Vienna – SCC		Italy
16	Mr. Jan Dusik	UNEP Regional Office for Europe	Acting Director	Geneva
17	Mr. Michael Evteev	UNEP Regional Office for Europe	Officer in Charge	Geneva
18	Mr. Frits Schlingemann		Director in times of project design (UNEP ROE)	
19	Mr. Harald Egerer	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Head	Austria
20	Mr. Pier Carlo Sandei	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Programme Officer	Austria
21	Ms. Maria Emilie Mayr-Lichem	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Administrative Assistant	Austria
22	Mr. Mathias Jurek	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Consultant	Austria
23	Ms. Sonja Gebert	UNEP Vienna – SCC		
24	Ms. Tamara Mitrofanenko	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Consultant	Austria
25	Ms. Mathilde Köck	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Consultant	Austria
26	Ms. Klaudia Kuras	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Consultant	Austria

ANNEX D List of activities and meetings carried out by UNEP Vienna – SCC

Activities	Delivery date
Implemented activities (a list of activities already in preparation can be found at the end of the table)	
	2014
Mountain Partnership SDGs and mountains side event at margins of OWG New York, United States	08.01.2014
Fifth Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Prague, Czech Republic	18.02.2014 – 20.02.2014
CNPA Steering Group Meeting Prague, Czech Republic	20.02.2014
BioREGIO Project Partner and Steering Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	25.02.2014 – 26.02.2014
Alpine Convention to EXPO 2015 meeting Milan, Italy	02.03.2014 – 03.03.2014
GRID Arendal mountain planning meeting Arendal, Norway	03.03.2014 – 07.03.2014
Horizon 2020 – project proposal preparation meeting Rome, Italy	10.03.2014 – 11.03.2014
Dinaric Arc Initiative Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	11.03.2014
Carpathian Convention WG on Adaptation to Climate Change Vienna, Austria	12.03.2014 – 13.03.2014
Second capacity building workshop of LocSEE project Zagreb, Croatia	19.03.2014 – 20.03.2014
Carpathian Convention WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge Bratislava, Slovak Republic	25.03.2014 -27.03.2014
Meetings at the IMELS – amongst them meeting with the Undersecretary of the Italian Ministry of Economy and Finances Rome, Italy	26.03.2014 – 28.03.2014
ENVSEC SEE Regional meeting Podgorica, Montenegro	31.03.2014 – 01.04.2014
ACCESS2MOUNTAIN Final Conference Gesäuse National Park, Austria	01.04.2014 -03.04.2014
UNECE-SC-ESD Carpathian ESD Network side event Geneva, Switzerland	03.04.2014 – 04.04.2014
Presentation at First European Conference on the links between biological and cultural diversity in Europe Florence, Italy	08.04.2014 – 11.04.2014
ACCESS2MOUNTAIN Capitalization Workshop Vienna, Austria	09.04.2014
International Conference: ‘The Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention – Sharing Experiences. The Apennines, a European Mountain Ridge Sarnano, Italy	23.04.2014 – 24.04.2014
Carpathian Convention WG on Sustainable Tourism Bratislava, Slovak Republic	12.05.2014 - 14.05.2014
Third Regional Meeting on Development of Updated National Biological Diversity Strategy and Action Plans Belgrade, Serbia	15.05.2014 - 16.05.2014
Preparatory Meeting for First United National Environmental Assembly Meeting in Nairobi 23- 27 June, with representatives of Ministries of Environment in South East Europe. Vienna, Austria	19.05.2014 - 20.05.2014
World Mountain Forum contribution and launch of the publication “Tourism in Mountain Regions” Cusco, Peru	23.05.2014 - 24.05.2014
1st Carpathian States Tourism Forum – meeting of Tourism Ministers of the Carpathian States Rzeszow, Poland	27.05.2014 - 28.05.2014
BioREGIO Final Conference Brasov, Romania	12.06.2014 - 13.06.2014
Workshop - Stressing the role of mountains in European macro regional strategies Portorož, Slovenia	16.06.2014 - 17.06.2014
Workshop - Shaping the Carpathian Region in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Vienna, Austria	27.06.2014
Meeting of Scientific Network for Caucasus Mountain Region	03.07.2014 - 04.07.2014

Kvareli, Georgia	
Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation Forum, Rzeszow, Poland	13.09.2014 - 14.09.2014
Forum Carpaticum 2014: Local Responses to Global Challenges, Lviv, Ukraine	16.09.2014 - 19.09.2014
Sustainable Tourism in the Carpathians: A joint effort of the Seven Parties of the Carpathian Convention, Mikulov, Czech Republic	23.09.2014
COP4 – Fourth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention, Mikulov, Czech Republic	23. 09.2014 - 26.09.2014
	2013
Conference of the "Europe of the Carpathians" cycle Krasieczyn near Przemyśl, Poland	23.02.2013 (Saturday)
Carpathian Convention WG on Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure Meeting Vienna, Austria	26.02.2013 - 27.02.2013
BIOREGIO Carpathians Project Partners and Steering Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	04.03.2013 - 06.03.2013
Biodiversity WG and CNPA SC Meeting Vienna, Austria	06.03.2013 - 08.03.2013
Seventh Biodiversity WG and CNPA Steering Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	07.03.2013 - 08.03.2013
BioREGIO Carpathians 3rd Work Package 4 Meeting Vienna, Austria	19.03.2013 - 21.03.2013
Dinaric Arc Initiative, First Meeting of 2013 Vienna, Austria	18.04.2013
BioREGIO Carpathians Mid-term Conference Tatranská Javorina, High Tatras Region, Slovak Republic	23.04.2013
2nd CNPA Conference Tatranská Javorina, High Tatras Region, Slovak Republic	23.04.2013 – 26.04.2013
Second Meeting of the WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge Krynica, Poland	14.05.2013 - 16.05.2013
"Celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Carpathian Convention" Vienna, Austria	22.05.2013
Workshop "Towards a EU Strategy for the Carpathian Region", Committee of the Regions (CoR) Brussels, Belgium	28.05.2013
Meeting - Towards a Scientific Network in the Caucasus Mountain Region going to be hosted Tbilisi, Georgia.	30.05.2013 – 31.05. 2013
Carpathian Convention WG on Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure Meeting Vienna, Austria	04.06.2013 - 05.06.2013
Intergenerational Learning and Innovation for Sustainable Development, Final conference of the project "Big Foot: Crossing Generations, Crossing Mountains" Vienna, Austria	05.06.2013 – 06.06.2013
Seminar on Implementation of the EU Timber Regulation and Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management (Forest WG) - Workshop on Carpathian virgin forests in preparation of the Forest WG meeting of September 2013 in Poland Baia Mare, Romania	18.06.2013 - 21.06.2013
Conference of the "Europe of the Carpathians" cycle Krynica, Poland	04.09.2013
Fourth meeting of the WG on Sustainable Forest Management Rzeszow, Poland	04.09.2013 - 06.09.2013
Alpine-Carpathian Cooperation Forum Rzeszow, Poland	06.09.2013 - 08.09.2013
Third Meeting of the WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge Orelec, Poland	09.09.2013 - 11.09.2013
Fourth Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership Erzurum, Turkey	17.09.2013 – 20.09.2013
Carpathian Convention WG on Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure Meeting Vienna, Austria	01.10.2013 - 02.10.2013
Workshop "Transportation Infrastructure and Wildlife Corridors – learning from experience" Luhacovice, Czech Republic	16.10.2013 - 18.10.2013
Fourth Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Tourism Brasov, Romania	21.10.2013 - 22.10.2013
Workshop on "Cross border co-operation with respect to sustainable tourism" Lviv, Ukraine	30.10.2013
Second trilateral ministerial meeting in the proposed transboundary protected area "Sharr/Šar Planina - Korab - Dešat/Deshat" Popova Shapka, The Republic of Macedonia	06.11.2013 - 07.11.2013
International Workshop on Sustainable Financing of Carpathian Protected Areas	13.11.2013 - 15.11.2013




Sinaia, Romania	
The macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian Region - Conference Brussels, Belgium	03.12.2013
Scientific Workshop on Mountain Mobility and Transport (SWOMM). The Experience Exchange Between the Alps and the Carpathians Vienna, Austria	11.12.2013
"The Post 2015 Agenda – Why Mountains Matter For The SDGs" in celebration of the International Mountain Day 2013 Vienna, Austria	11.12.2013
Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure Vienna, Austria	12.12.2013
	2012
BIOREGIO Project Partner and Steering Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	25.01.2012 – 26.01.2012
International Conference on the Alpine Carpathian Corridor Bratislava, Slovakia	30.01.2012
First Meeting of the WG on Adaptation to Climate Change Brussels, Belgium	06.02.2012 - 07.02.2012
The first trilateral stakeholder meeting in the proposed transboundary protected area "Prokletije / Bjeshkët e Nemuna Mountains" Plav (Montenegro)	15.03.2012 – 16.03.2012
Dinaric Arc Initiative – Meeting Vienna, Austria	30.03.2012
Sixth Meeting of the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity Banska Bystrica, Slovakia Organized within the European Union co-funded BioREGIO Carpathians project and hosted by the State Nature Conservancy of Slovak Republic.	26.03.2012 - 27.03.2012
CNPA - Ninth Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Banska Bystrica, Slovak Republic Organized within the European Union co-funded BioREGIO Carpathians project and hosted by the State Nature Conservancy of Slovak Republic.	27.03.2012
Third meeting of the WG on Sustainable Forest Management Donji Milanovac, Serbia Organized within the European Union co-funded BioREGIO Carpathians project and hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of Serbia.	23.04.2012 - 24.04.2012
Monitor II project - Final Conference Innsbruck, Austria	14.05.2012
Second Forum Carpaticum 'from data to knowledge, from knowledge to action' Starà Lesná, Slovakia	30.05.2012 - 02.06.2012
"Second Trilateral Stakeholder Meeting in the proposed transboundary protected area "Prokletije/Bjeshket e Nemuna Mountains" Shkoder, Albania	12.09.2012
Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure Košice, Slovakia Start of negotiations for the draft text Protocol on Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure to the Carpathian Convention	18.10.2012 - 19.10.2012
Workshop "Sharing of experiences on adaptation to climate change in mountain areas" & Second Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Adaptation to Climate Change Eger, Hungary	23.10.2012 - 24.10.2012
Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Steering Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	05.11.2012
Regional Workshop on trans-boundary environmental risks arising from mining: Presentation of the past 3 years of experience and future planning Mojkovac, Montenegro	12.11.2012-13.11.2012
First Regional Coordination Meeting on Development of Updated National Biological Diversity Strategy and Action Plan Vienna, Austria	06.12.2012-07.12.2012
Fourth Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	05.12.2012 - 07.12.2012
International Mountain Day 2012 Vienna, Austria	11.12.2012
	2011
Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Meeting	17.01.2011 - 18.01.2011

Vienna, Austria	
Workshop - Moving towards a Carpathian Strategy Brussels, Belgium	25.01.2011
Consultative Workshop - Moving towards a Carpathian Strategy - Implementing the EU Strategy for the Danube Region in the Carpathian Area	
CWI-Wetlands for the Future Banskà Bystrica, Slovakia	19.05.2011 - 21.05.2011
Workshop on Adaptation to the Impacts of Climate Change for Reducing Security Risks in SEE Venice, Italy	19.05.2010 – 20.05.2011
COP3 - Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention Bratislava, Slovak Republic	25.05.2011 - 27.05.2011
Environment Day Talks 2011 Vienna, Austria	05.06.2011
CLISP Project - Final Conference Climate Change Adaptation by Spatial Planning in the Alpine Space; European Territorial Cooperation Alpine Space Project Vienna, Austria	08.09.2011
Second Stakeholder Workshop on Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) State of Environment Reporting (SoER) Process Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	14.09.2011-15.09.2011
Final Conference of the CLIMALPTOUR Project "Climate change and its impact on tourism in the Alpine Space" Venice, Italy	6.10.2011 - 07.10.2011
Meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention Bratislava, Slovak Republic	28.11.2011 - 29.11.2011
	2010
Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Steering Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	14.01.2010
First Meeting on the Dinaric Arc And Balkans Environmental Outlook (DABEO) Reporting Process. Ljubljana, Slovenia.	04.02.2010 – 05.02.2010
The Mountain Research Initiative, Workshop on Global Change Research In Mountain Regions Vienna, Austria	07.05.2010
CNPA - Seventh Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Brasov, Romania	17.05.2010 - 21.05.2010
Fourth Meeting of the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity Brasov, Romania	18.05.2010-19.05.2010
World Environment Day Talks Vienna, Austria	29.05.2010
Meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Forest Management, San Vito di Cadore, Italy	14.06.2010 – 16.06.2010
Third Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Tourism Rytro, Poland	09.09.2010 - 10.09.2010
First Forum Carpathicum 'integration of nature and society towards sustainability' Krakow, Poland	15.09.2010 – 18.09.2010
Alpine Carpathian Exchange on Ecological Networks Mikulov, Czech Republic	20.09.2010 - 23.09.2010
First meeting - Alpine Carpathian Exchange on Ecological Networks - Implementing the Memorandum of Understanding Organizing Institution - Task Force on Protected Areas of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention	
Danube Parks Ranger Training Eckhartsau, Austria	22.09.2010
Fifth Meeting of the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity and Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Belgrade, Serbia	4.10.2010 - 05.10.2010
Regional Workshop on Environmental Risk Reduction at Abandoned Mining Sites in South Eastern Europe Tirana, Albania	6.10.2010 - 08.10.2010
Implementation of the CBD programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity: Regional Approaches and Conventions – Side Event Nagoya, Japan	27.10.2010
Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Meeting Bratislava, Slovak Republic	29.11.2010 - 30.11.2010
Order	2009

Carpathian Sustainable Learning Network (CASALEN) Meeting on the development of the Carpathian Mountains ESD Training Tool Kit	29.01.2009 -30.01.2009
National consultations of the ENVSEC Initiative Tirana, Albania	05.02.2009
Meeting of the Bureau of the Carpathian Convention Vienna, Austria Organized in the framework of the "Carpathian Biodiversity Days"	02.03.2009
Third meeting of the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity Vienna, Austria Organized in the framework of the "Carpathian Biodiversity Days"	03.03.2009
CNPA - Sixth meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Vienna, Austria Organized in the framework of the "Carpathian Biodiversity Days"	04.03.2009 - 05.03.2009
CNPA - Joint meeting of the CNPA Steering Committee and the CC Biodiversity WG Vienna, Austria Organized in the framework of the "Carpathian Biodiversity Days"	04. 03. 2009
Meeting of Government – Nominated Experts for the protection and sustainable development of the mountain regions of the Caucasus Bolzano, Italy.	28.04.2009-29.04.2009
SARD-M Seminar- How to best remunerate Mountain Rural People for their Provision of positive Externalities? Vienna, Austria Lessons from different case studies throughout Europe and of relevance for mountain regions of SEE and the Carpathians	19.05.2009 - 20.05.2009
Transboundary Cooperation of Mountain Protected Areas in South Eastern Europe: Towards the Dinaric Arc and Balkan Network of Mountain Protected Areas Podgorica, Montenegro	16.06.2009 – 17.06.2009
CWI-Conservation of Wetlands in the Carpathians Tatranska Strba, Slovak Republic	16.11.2009 - 19.11.2009
Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Forest Management Bratislava, Slovak Republic	19.11.2009 - 20.11.2009
National Consultations of the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative in Croatia Zagreb, Croatia	24.11.2009
Second Meeting of Government – Nominated Experts for the protection and sustainable development of the mountain regions of the Caucasus. Bolzano, Italy.	25.11.2009 - 26.11.2009
Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Meeting Vienna, Austria	10.12.2009 - 11.12.2009
	2008
Carpathian Convention Implementation Committee Meeting Sibiu, Romania	02.04.2008
CNPA - Third Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Sibiu, Romania	03.04.2008 -04.04.2008
Second Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Tourism Krakow and Sucha Beskidza	22.04.2008 - 25.04.2008
WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure Lviv, Ukraine Regional Workshop on Renewable Energy in the Carpathians	06.05.2008 - 07.05.2008
Strategic Workshop on Spatial Planning Vienna, Austria	26.05.2008 - 27.05.2008
Planning Workshop on Teachers Training Bucharest, Romania	17.06.2008 - 19.06.2008
COP2 – Second Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention Bucharest, Romania	17.06.2008 - 19.06.2008
CNPA - Fourth Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Bucharest, Romania	19.06.2008
CNPA - Fifth Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Poiana Brasov, Romania	22.09.2008
CNPA - First Conference of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Poiana Brasov, Romania	23.09.2008 - 24.09.2008
	2007
CNPA - First Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Vienna, Austria	26.01.2007
First Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure Bolzano, Italy	22.03.2007 - 23.03.2007
First Meeting of the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity Vienna, Austria	25.03.2007 - 27.03.2007

First Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Tourism Lopenik, Czech Republic	02.04.2007 - 05.04.2007
Second Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry (SARD-F) San Vito di Cadore, Italy	09.07.2007 - 10.07.2007
First meeting of the WG on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry (SARD-F) Vienna, Austria	09.07.2007 - 10.07.2007
First Meeting of the WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge Venice, Italy	27.08.2007 - 28.08.2007
Second Meeting of the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity Budapest, Hungary	19.11.2007 - 21.11.2007
WG on SARD-F San Vito di Cadore, Italy	22.11.2007 - 23.11.2007
CNPA - Second Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Budapest, Hungary	23.11.2007
Second Meeting of the WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure Trieste, Italy	11.12.2007 - 12.12.2007
	2006
Second preparatory meeting to the first Conference of the Parties Vienna, Austria	11.09.2006 - 12.09.2006
COP1 – First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention Kyiv, Ukraine	11.12.2006 - 13.12.2006
	2005
First preparatory meeting to the first Conference of the Parties Bolzano, Italy	16.12.2005
	2004
2 nd Ad hoc Expert Meeting of the Carpathian Convention Bolzano, Italy	11.10.2004 - 12.10.2004
	2003
5 th Pan-European Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' Kiev, Ukraine	20.05.2003 - 22.05.2003
Carpathian Workshop on large Carnivore Conservation Brasov, Romania	12.06.2003 – 14.06.2003
Upcoming activities – in preparation	
Joint meeting of the Carpathian Convention WG on Biodiversity and Spatial Planning Sromowce, Poland	22.10.2014 - 24.10.2014
International Conference - Analysis And Management of Changing Risks For Natural Hazards, Padua, Italy	18.11.2014 - 19.11.2014
WG on Green Infrastructure meeting Brussels, Belgium	November 2014




ANNEX E List of projects

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
<p>Alpine – Carpathian Corridor Project</p> 	<p>The Alpine-Carpathian Corridor project aims to safeguard the ecological connectivity between the Alps and the Carpathians. It strengthens the conservation management for the protected areas along the Alpine Carpathian Corridor and the neighboring habitats. Migration and genetic exchange among wildlife populations in the Centrepe region shall be secured.</p> <p>www.alpenkarpatenkorridor.at</p> <p>Duration: 2008 – 2014 (including AKK Centrepe Add-on in 2014)</p>	<p>Project Partner Task leader of the relevant WP related to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). UNEP took leadership in facilitating negotiation of this MoU.</p>
<p>Carpathian Project</p> 	<p>Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians in a Transnational Framework</p> <p>The CARPATHIAN PROJECT was a project co-financed by the EU-Community Initiative Programme for transnational cooperation: INTERREG CADSES in the Programming Period 2000-2006. The objective of the Carpathian Project was to enhance the sustainable development of the Carpathian region based on its rich natural and cultural heritage. In the Carpathian Project, 18 project partners from 10 countries joined their efforts to work on common and harmonized data and maps from the Carpathian Space and to develop analyses, recommendations and a common conceptual document covering the contents of the Carpathian Convention (biodiversity and natural heritage; cultural heritage; sustainable rural development, agriculture and forestry; sustainable transport, infrastructure, industry and energy; sustainable tourism and spatial planning) as well as to implement pilot activities for selected topics (e.g. on sustainable tourism). The outputs of the project gave a detailed status quo of the Carpathian region which includes eight Central and East European countries with differing basic conditions. Among the most valuable outputs of the Carpathian Project you can find the Handbook for Local Authorities and Development Actors in four languages, the Carpathian Environment Outlook, the Carpathian Spatial Development Vision (VASICA), the Carpathian Atlas, etc. The Carpathian Project resulted in the formulation of the Carpathian Space Vision. Its main objective is to continue and intensify the provision of support to the Carpathian Space, as an area of economic, social and environmental progress and sustainability in the heart of Europe, in the following programming periods. In order to bring the Carpathian Space Vision into life in the upcoming EU programming period 2014-2020, a full-fledged “Carpathian Space” programme, following the successful example of the Alpine Space programme, should be established, possibly in combination with (an) existing programme(s), or as a stand-alone new programme for the new period.</p> <p>www.carpathianproject.eu/portal/</p> <p>Duration: 2005 - 2008</p>	<p>Lead Partner</p> <p>UNEP Vienna - SCC developed and led the project with the support of the seven Parties to the Carpathian Convention.</p>
<p>SARD Project</p> 	<p>SARD-M - Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountains</p>	<p>UNEP Vienna – SCC assisted the process of elaboration of the SARD-M Report for the Carpathian Region.</p>

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
<p>S4C – Science for the Carpathians</p> 	<p>The Science for the Carpathians initiative is a regional science network targeting at supporting and streamlining mountain research in the Carpathian Mountains. The S4C activities include organization of the Forum Carpaticum, creation a conducive environment for research and also integration of science and practice in the region.</p> <p>With roots going back to the initiation of the Carpathian Convention in 2001, the S4C network was formally established during the launching workshop in May 2008 at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland.</p> <p>In due consideration of global trends and guided by policies implemented at the European level, the preliminary priority topics for current activities in the Carpathian Mountains have been listed in the Research Agenda for the Carpathians: 2010-2015.</p> <p>www.forumcarpaticum.org/FC-main/Main_S4C.html</p>	<p>Member of the S4C Steering Committee</p> <p>Supports the implementation of the “Research Agenda for the Carpathians”; maintaining a regular dialogue between the S4C and the Carpathian Convention.</p>
<p>ACCESS2MOUNTAIN</p> 	<p>Access2Mountains - Sustainable Mobility and Tourism in Sensitive Areas of the Alps and the Carpathians</p> <p>The project ACCESS2MOUNTAIN aims to achieve durable, environmentally friendly tourism, as well as to ensure accessibility and connection to, between and in sensitive regions of the Alps and the Carpathians. It should benefit all (potential) users. With the long-term perspective of increasing sustainable tourist mobility, railway and multimodal connections will be improved and attractive offers created via pre-investment measures, pilot activities, and investments.</p> <p>www.access2mountain.eu</p> <p>Duration: 2011 - 2014</p>	<p>Subcontractor by EURAC</p> <p>UNEP was mainly involved in the WP9 dealing with policy issues. With the technical and financial support by A2M a draft text Protocol on Sustainable Transport was negotiated to be adopted and endorsed at COP4.</p>
<p>BioREGIO Carpathians</p> 	<p>Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians.</p> <p>BioREGIO Carpathians showed how the integrated management of the Carpathians’ natural assets can boost both, sustainable development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathian region.</p> <p>Duration: 2010 – 2013</p> <p>www.bioregio-carpathians.eu</p>	<p>Project partner</p> <p>UNEP was the leader of WP2 on communication as well as WP7 on stakeholders involvement and intergovernmental platform meetings. It’s specific functions ensured an adequate dissemination of the project results as well as the project follow up at institutional level. UNEP Vienna- SCC is responsible to produce a study on Financial mechanism of protected areas in the Carpathians, as well as a study on Transferability of the project results in the Balkan region, as environment focal point for south east europe within the ENVSEC initiative. Furthermore, UNEP SCC is responsible to organise the Midterm and Final Conference of the project as well as to produce the final publication.</p>

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
	<p>Toward Carbon neutral Alps-Make best practice minimum standard!</p> <p>The project is addressing the need for well-directed and cross-cutting action to effectively manage climate change and reduction of climate-damaging emissions in the Alpine region, which was expressed in the Action Plan on Climate Change in the Alps approved within the frame of the Alpine Convention during the 10th Alpine Conference. Furthermore, ALPSTAR encourages the capitalization, diffusion and implementation of proven good practice measures in reduction of climate change on regional and local level.</p> <p>alpstar-project.eu Duration: 2011 – 2013</p>	<p>Project Partner</p> <p>UNEP Vienna provided input for the agreement on common methodology and common criteria and standards on what is considered as a good practice in strategies, action plans and measures toward carbon neutrality. In addition, UNEP Vienna transferred project results and outcomes to stakeholders in different Alpine and other towns and stakeholders from Carpathian Convention and Dinaric Arc Initiative through its well established channels and guaranteed an adequate Media coverage of the project through the organization and support of the Mid-Term and Final Conference. Finally, UNEP Vienna was committed to supporting the establishment of the Policy Board which gathered together experts in the field of climate change adaptation to elaborate recommendations on climate change strategies.</p>
<p>C3-Alps</p> 	<p>Capitalizing Climate Change Knowledge for Adaptation in the Alpine Space</p> <p>C3-Alps is a transnational capitalisation project. Building on the results of previous projects and initiatives on adaptation to climate change in the Alps, C3-Alps seeks to synthesize, transfer, and implement in policy and practice the best available adaptation knowledge.</p> <p>Duration: 2010 - 2014 Capitalizing Climate Change Knowledge for Adaptation in the Alpine Space</p> <p>Duration: 2010 - 2014</p>	<p>Project partner</p> <p>UNEP Role: in the frame of the C3ALPS Project, UNEP Vienna is communicating the project results and sharing outcomes with ministries, international governmental organizations, international non-governmental organizations, EU institutions, UN agencies, etc.) and expert communities on the international level, including with such leading international climate change expert institutions. Furthermore, UNEP is engaged in involving and financing experts from the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) providing a scientific perspective on the project results.</p>
<p>Move 4 Nature</p> 	<p>Move 4 Nature ESD – Teacher training programme on Education on Sustainable Development</p> <p>UNEP, in partnership with the Carpathian Sustainable Learning Network (CASALEN), the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport of Romania and local partners has trained more than 100 teachers in six rural areas of Romania, and produced the Carpathian Mountains ESD Training Tool Kit in Romanian and English languages. The Tool Kit aims to introduce the principles of ecosystem-based thinking, cooperation and sustainable development to the rural mountain communities, and to</p>	<p>The initiative was lead and managed by UNEP Vienna – SCC, UNEP continues to promote the project results in the Carpathian region.</p>

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
	<p>encourage critical thinking about the urgent development-related issues.</p> <p>Duration: 2008 - 2011</p>	
<p>Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD</p> 	<p>UNEP is a partner of the Regional Centre of Expertise in ESD Vienna – Bratislava, support this network especially in its connection and dissemination in the Carpathian Region</p>	<p>Network Partner</p>
<p>Big Foot – Crossing Generations – Crossing Mountains</p> 	<p>The Big Foot project served to bridge the gap - and establish intergenerational learning and dialogue in the mountain areas, enabling and valuating the skills and knowledge of the older generation of locals, combining traditional knowledge with modern communication tools and expertise in order to enable innovative, creative and productive joint solutions for local sustainable development. The project pilots took place in Gubbio, Italy, Trikala, Greece and Berkovitsa, Bulgaria, and are now being introduced to the Carpathian region by UNEP</p> <p>Duration: 2010 - 2013</p>	<p>UNEP Vienna - SCC was in charge of valorizing and exploiting the Big Foot achievements. It provides support to the partnership in identifying the most suitable interventions in the experimentation areas – such as involvement of protected areas. UNEP introduced the project and its results to the Carpathian countries.</p>
	<p>Carpathian Heritage Inventory was created within Pilot Actions Project, one of the implementation activities under the Carpathian Convention.</p> <p>The project was coordinated by ANPED (the Northern Alliance for Sustainability) and implemented by its members and partners in the Czech Republic (Institute for Environmental Policy and Bile Karpaty Education and Information Centre) and Ukraine (Green Dossier).</p> <p>The webpage contains basic information on the background of the Carpathian Heritage Inventory development, its basic ideas, principles and criteria that should be considered when proposing items, and contacts on the organizations involved.</p>	<p>UNEP Vienna – SCC supported financially the project. Currently, is responsible for the maintenance of the webpage.</p>
<p>ClimAlpTour – Climate Change and its Impact on Tourism in the Alpine Space</p> 	<p>The ClimAlpTour project aims at providing a novel, science-based approach to tackle the impacts of climate change on Alpine tourism.</p> <p>Duration: 2007 - 2011</p>	<p>Project partner</p>
<p>CLISP – Climate Change Adaptations by Spatial Planning in the Alpine Space</p> 	<p>CLISP is a European project funded by the Alpine Space Programme under the European Territorial Cooperation 2007-2013. CLISP is focused on the challenges to spatial planning in the face of climate change and contributed to climate change adaptation by providing climate-proof spatial planning solutions. CLISP is committed to positioning spatial planning as a key player for future sustainable development under the adversities of climate change.</p> <p>Duration: 2007 - 2011</p>	<p>Project partner</p>

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
	<p>CARPIVIA - Carpathian Integrated Assessment of Vulnerability to Climate Change and Ecosystem-based Adaptation Measures Duration: 2011 - 2013</p>	<p>UNEP Vienna – SCC supported the process of elaboration of the Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Convention, which is one of the main results of the CARPIVIA project.</p>
<p>CarpatSusTourStrat</p>	<p>Development of the „Sustainable Tourism Strategy for the Carpathians“ (CarpatSusTourStrat) Duration: March 2013 - November 2014 (possible extension until 2016)</p>	<p>UNEP Vienna – SCC in its function as the coordinating body for the Convention communicates the project interim progress and results to the Focal Points of the Convention and the wider members of ordinary meetings on a continuous basis.</p>
	<p>Innovation in Rural Tourism The project aims at developing and testing a set of tools and innovative models for facilitating the development of sustainable tourism in rural areas, specifically in mountainous regions, by fostering a community consultation process, and for training selected opinion leaders to act as multipliers in enhancing community tourism planning via training existing and new local tourism operators, with various degrees of experience, professional and educational background. The project is tested in three mountainous regions: Carpathians, Alps and Appenines, and in 5 countries: Austria, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Ukraine. http://inrutou.eu/ Duration: December 2012 - November 2015</p>	<p>UNEP Vienna developed the project in cooperation with the Italian partner, and brought the three Carpathian partners on board. Project partner responsible for exploitation of the project results, especially in the Carpathian countries.</p>
UNEP Vienna – SCC projects in the Balkan countries		
<p>Environment & security Initiative</p> 	<p>“ Transforming risks into cooperation ” Peacefully resolving the overriding political, economic and social concerns of our time requires a multifaceted approach, including mechanisms to address the links between the natural environment and human security. UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, NATO, UNECE and REC have joined forces in the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative to offer countries their combined pool of expertise and resources towards that aim.</p>	<p>Various projects under UNEP lead</p>
<p>ENVSEC Improving regional cooperation for risk management from pollution hotspots in South Eastern Europe/Reducing environment and security risks from mining in South Eastern Europe</p>	<p>Aiming to reduce trans-boundary environmental and human safety risks posed by sub-standard mining operations in the South Eastern European region, by providing a targeted in-depth assessment of trans-boundary environment and health risks resulting from mining designed for decision-makers and mining experts at the regional level; identifying potential 'hot spots'; recommending priority measures of mitigation and for risk management. The project developed policy and technical options suitable for the region and took forward demonstration and pilot activities, in particular focusing on innovative, local and cost-efficient risk reduction and management measures. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo (territory under UN resolution 1244), Montenegro, Serbia Duration: 2006 – 2008</p>	<p>UNEP lead implementing agency.</p>

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
<p>ENVSEC</p> <p>Management of shared natural resources</p>	<p>The project's objective is to encourage, enhance and support transboundary and regional cooperation of governments and local stakeholders on management of shared natural resources of the South Eastern European countries. The project will particularly focus on selected transboundary mountain protected areas with an ecosystem services based approach, and transboundary rivers.</p> <p>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo (territory under UN resolution 1244), Montenegro, Serbia</p> <p>Duration: 2009 – 2012</p>	<p>UNEP lead implementing agency.</p>
<p>ENVSEC</p> <p>Management and reduction of transboundary risks from hazardous activities</p>	<p>The project's objectives are: (i) prevention and mitigation of transboundary environmental risks arising from hazardous pollution hotspots in particular from abandoned mines, tailing dams and chemical sites; and (ii) capacity building to support countries in ratifying and implementing the UNECE Industrial Accidents Convention, Espoo Convention and its Strategic Environmental Assessment Protocol, and Water Convention.</p> <p>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo (territory under UN resolution 1244), Montenegro, Serbia</p> <p>Duration: 2009 - 2012</p>	<p>UNEP together with REC, UNECE, UNDP implementing the project.</p>
<p>Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina for development of National Action Programs aligned to the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy and Reporting Process under UNCCD</p>	<p>This project is individually implemented in the following three countries: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. The aim of these projects is to create the National Action Program to combat land degradation in the three respective countries, aligned to the UNCCD 10 Year Strategy as a key instrument for the implementation of the Convention, which sets out the practical steps and measures to combat desertification in specific ecosystems, and to support the process of reporting to the authorities of the Convention.</p>	<p>As GEF Implementing Agency</p>
<p>Support to the FYRoM for development of National Action Programs aligned to the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy and Reporting Process under UNCCD</p>	<p>The aim of the project is to create the National Action Program to combat land degradation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (NAP BiH), aligned to the UNCCD 10 Year Strategy as a key instrument for the implementation of the Convention, which sets out the practical steps and measures to combat desertification in specific ecosystems, and to support the process of reporting to the authorities of the Convention.</p>	<p>UNEP is the implementing agency</p>
<p>Support to Republic of Montenegro for development of National Action Programs aligned to the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy and Reporting Process under UNCCD</p>	<p>The aim of the project is to create the National Action Program to combat land degradation in the FYRoM, aligned to the UNCCD 10 Year Strategy as a key instrument for the implementation of the Convention, which sets out the practical steps and measures to combat desertification in specific ecosystems, and to support the process of reporting to the authorities of the Convention.</p>	<p>As GEF Implementing Agency</p>
<p>Support to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Development of Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)</p>	<p>This project is individually implemented in the following three countries: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The aim of this project is to integrate CBD obligations into national planning processes through enabling activities, to revise the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and to develop the Fifth National Report to the CBD.</p>	<p>As GEF Implementing Agency</p>
<p>Support to the FYRoM for the Revision</p>	<p>The aim of the project is to support to Bosnia and Herzegovina</p>	<p>As GEF Implementing Agency</p>

Project name	Short description	Role of UNEP Vienna – SCC
of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Development of Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	and the FYRoM for the Revision of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Development of Fifth National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)	
Cross-Cutting Capacity Development Strategy – GEF 5 in Bosnia and Herzegovina	<p>The objective of the Cross-cutting Capacity Development (CCCD) projects is to address those important capacity needs that will enhance a country's ability to meet its obligations under international conventions by creating synergies, while at the same time catalyzing the mainstreaming of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) into national policy, management or financial and legislative frameworks. To this end, Cross-cutting Capacity Development projects focus on the environmental governance system and mainstreaming global environmental issues into national development programs.</p> <p>Cross-cutting Capacity Development projects will provide resources for reducing, if not eliminating, the institutional bottlenecks (e.g., barriers to data gathering) to the synergistic implementation of the Rio conventions. The expected outcomes of these projects are therefore to strengthen multi-sectoral processes that promote policy harmonization, realize cost-efficiency, and enhance operational effectiveness in Convention obligations.</p>	As GEF Implementing Agency
Enhanced Cross-Sectoral Land Management through Land Use Pressure Reduction and Planning - Land Degradation project in Serbia	Reduce pressures on land as a natural resource from competing land uses in the wider landscape through reversal of land degradation and remediation in Serbia and development of instruments and mechanisms for integrated land use management and capacity development.	As GEF Implementing Agency
Achieving Biodiversity Conservation through Creation and Effective Management of Protected Areas and Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Planning - the FYRoM	The objective is to support the expansion of national protected areas system and enabling capacity conditions for effective management and mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation into production landscape. The project consists of expansion of protected area by 4% of total area of the country, improved management effectiveness and capacity as a tool for biodiversity conservation and protection of threatened species and habitats, mainstreaming biodiversity into national planning and different selected pilot projects.	As GEF Implementing Agency
<p>ENVSEC</p> <p>Improving regional cooperation for risk management from pollution hotspots in South Eastern Europe/Reducing environment and security risks from mining in South Eastern Europe</p>	<p>Aiming to reduce trans-boundary environmental and human safety risks posed by sub-standard mining operations in the South Eastern European region, by providing a targeted in-depth assessment of trans-boundary environment and health risks resulting from mining designed for decision-makers and mining experts at the regional level; identifying potential 'hot spots'; recommending priority measures of mitigation and for risk management. The project developed policy and technical options suitable for the region and took forward demonstration and pilot activities, in particular focusing on innovative, local and cost-efficient risk reduction and management measures.</p> <p>Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo (territory under UN resolution 1244), Montenegro, Serbia</p> <p>Duration: 2006 – 2008</p>	UNEP lead implementing agency.

Annex F Bibliography – list of documents and publications

Document title	Author	Type	Date
UNEP			
Medium-term strategy 2014 – 2017	UNEP	Policy paper	
Medium-term strategy 2010 – 2013 ‘Environment for Development’	UNEP	Policy paper	2007
UNEP Programme of Work	UNEP	Internal document	
Project Document Carpathian Convention	UNEP	Internal document	2003
‘UNEP Opens a New Office in Vienna’	UNEP	Press release	15.07.2004
Project Document Carpathian Convention	UNEP	Internal document	2006
Project Document Carpathian Convention	UNEP	Internal document	2008
Project Revision Document with PRC Comments	UNEP	Internal document	2008
Project Document Supplement	UNEP	Internal document	23.11.2011
Project Document Supplement	UNEP	Internal document	16.11.2012
Project Document Supplement	UNEP	Internal document	24.04.2014
Carpathian Convention			
Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians	The Parties	Convention text	May 2003
Report of COP 1	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Report	December 2006
COP 1 Decisions	The Parties	Official document	December 2006
Carpathian Declaration of COP 1	The Parties	Official document	December 2006
Rules of Procedure for the meetings of COP	The Parties	Official document	December 2006
Report of COP 2	UNEP VIENNA – SCC	Report	June 2008
COP 2 Decisions	The Parties	Official document	June 2008
Ministerial Declaration of the COP 2	The Parties	Official document	June 2008
Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity to the Carpathian Convention	The Parties	Official document	June 2008
Agreement on Working Groups (WG)	The Parties	Official document	June 2008
Memorandum of Cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	June 2008
ToR for the Implementation Committee (CCIC) and Report of the 1 st Meeting of the CCIC	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
ToR for the WG on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Biodiversity	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
ToR for the WG on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge ToR for the WG on Spatial Planning ToR for the WG on Sustainable Agriculture, Rural Development and Forestry	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
ToR for the WG on Sustainable Industry, Energy, Transport and Infrastructure	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
ToR for the WG on Sustainable Tourism	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
ToR for the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA)	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
ToR for the Carpathian Wetlands Initiative	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
Report Carpathian Environmental Education Network	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	April 2008
Report of COP 3	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Report	May 2011
COP 3 Decisions	The Parties	Official document	May 2011
Ministerial Declaration of COP 3	The Parties	Official document	May 2011
Protocol on Sustainable Forest Management to the Carpathian Convention	The Parties	Official document	May 2011
Protocol on Sustainable Tourism to the Carpathian Convention	The Parties	Official document	May 2011
ToR for the WG on Adaptation to Climate Change	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	May 2011
Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Protocol on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological and Landscape Diversity	The Parties	Official document	May 2011
Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) – Medium Term Strategy	The Parties	Official document	May 2011
Strategic Action Plan for the Carpathian Area	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	May 2011
Memorandum of Understanding for the Alpine – Carpathian Corridor Project	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	January 2012
Report of COP 4	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Report	October 2014

COP 4 Decisions	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
Ministerial Declaration on Cultural Heritage of the Carpathians	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
Joint Alpine – Carpathian Statement on Adaptation to Climate Change	The Parties/Alpine Convention	Official document	September 2014
Protocol on Sustainable Transport to the Carpathian Convention	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
Strategic Action Plan for the Implementation of the Forest Protocol	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
Criteria and Indicators for selection of virgin forests in the Carpathians	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
Strategic Agenda on Adaptation to Climate Change in the Carpathian Region	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
Strategy for the Sustainable Tourism Development of the Carpathians	The Parties	Official document	September 2014
National Report on the implementation of Biodiversity Protocol to the Carpathian Convention	The Parties	Official document	September
Carpathian Network of Protected Areas Medium Term Work Plan	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	September 2014
Memorandum of Understanding between the Carpathian Convention and the Science for the Carpathians	UNEP VIENNA - SCC	Official document	May 2012
Partnership Agreement between the Carpathian Convention and the European Environment Agency	UNEP VIENNA – SCC / EEA	Official document	July 2014
Memorandum of Understanding for the Establishment of a Carpathian Integrated Biodiversity Information System	UNEP VIENNA _ SCC	Official document	September 2014
Joint Declaration of ICPDR Tisza Group and the Carpathian Convention	UNEP VIENNA – SCC / ICPDR	Official document	September 2014
List of Publications, UNEP Vienna – SCC			
Carpathian Convention Codex	UNEP VIENNA – SCC/ Italian Ministry for the Environment	Publication	September 2014
Future Imperfect – Climate change and adaptation in the Carpathians	GRID Arendal with contributions from project leads	Synthesis publication (CarpathCC, CARPIVIA, CARPATCLIM)	September 2014
Integrated management of biological and landscape diversity for sustainable regional development and ecological connectivity in the Carpathians	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Final Publication of BioREGIO Carpathian Project	June 2014
ACCESS2MOUNTAIN – Sustainable Mobility and Tourism in Sensitive Areas of the Alps and the Carpathians, Outputs and Results	University of Camerino, Access2mountain partners, Italy	Final Publication	April 2014
Towards the protection of biodiversity and ecological connectivity in multi-layered systems	EURAC	Publication	2013
National Achievements and Challenges Related to the Implementation of the Carpathian Convention	EURAC/UNEP VIENNA – SCC	Publication	October 2011
The Carpathians in the European Environment – State and Outlook 2010	EEA	Publication	2011
Highlight THE CARPATHIANS	Carpathian Convention	Map	2011
S4C Research Agenda for the Carpathians 2010 - 2015	Kozak J., Björnson Gurung A., Ostapowicz K.	Publication	2011
Carpathian Fairy Tales			2011
Creation of Ecological Corridors in Ukraine	State Agency of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine, Altenburg and Wymenga Ecological Consultants, InterEcoCentre	Publication	2010
Renewable Energy in the Carpathian Region	UNIDO, UNEP Vienna – SCC	Publication	2010
Alpine – Carpathian Corridor Project	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Leaflet	2010
Europe's ecological backbone: recognizing the true value of our mountains	EEA	Report	2010
Carpathian Mountains ESD Training Tool Kit	UNEP Vienna – SCC, ENSI, CASALEN	Publication, English version	December 2009
Atlas of the Carpathian Macroregion Carpathian Project	Palacky University and European Academy	Publication	2009
VASICA – Visions and Strategies in the Carpathian Area; Protection and Sustainable Spatial Development of the Carpathians in a Transnational Framework	Carpathian Project (INTERREG III B, CADSES)	Publication	2009
A Collection of the Carpathian Convention – Before the Second Conference of Parties held in Bucharest on 17 – 19 June 2008	EURAC	Publication	2008

A Collection of the Carpathian Convention – After the Second Conference of Parties to be held in Bucharest on 17 – 19 June 2008	EURAC	Publication	2008
SARD-M Report for the Carpathian Convention Member States	Carpathian Project, EURAC	Publication	2008
The Carpathian Convention. Practical Use. Plain language Guidebook. Book 2	Kiev	Publication	2007
Carpathian Environmental Outlook	UNEP / DEWA Europe	Publication	2007
Handbook on the Carpathian Convention	REC, EURAC	Publication	2007
A Heightened Perspective - Regional Assessment of the Policy, Legislative and Institutional Frameworks Implementing the Carpathian Convention	REC, EURAC	Publication	2007
Implementing an International Mountain Convention – An Approach for the Delimitation of the Carpathian Convention Area	EURAC, UNEP Vienna - SCC	Publication	2006
Rapid Environmental Assessment of the Tisza River Basin	UNEP/ROE and UNEP/DEWA/GRID Europe, in collaboration with UNEP Vienna – SCC	Publication	2004
Central and South-Eastern Europe			
State of the Environment Report for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2012	UNEP	Report	2013
Climate change adaptation in South-eastern Europe, Background Report	ENVSEC, UNEP Vienna – SCC	Publication	2012
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Towards the network of mountain PAs in the Balkans and the Dinaric Arc	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Feasibility study	2009
Dinaric Arc and Balkan Environmental Outlook (DABEO)		Assessment	
Mining for Closure: policies, practices and guidelines for sustainable mining and closure of mines	ENVSEC	Publication	2005
Mountain Partnerships and other Mountain regions			
UNEP Mountain Flyer	UNEP et. al	Flyer/brochure	2014
Tourism in Mountain Regions – Hopes, Fears and Realities	University of Geneva and CDE Bern (contribution by UNEP)	Publication	2014
Thematic Mountains and SDG briefs related to energy, biodiversity & forestry, climate change & and water (multiple languages)	GRID Arendal with contributions by partners (ICIMOD, CONDESAN, etc.) / Mountain Partnership	Policy brief	2013/2014
Mountains: Our Life, Our Future – Progress and perspectives on sustainable mountain development	CDE Bern, SDC with contribution by UNEP	Publication	2013
Why invest in sustainable mountain development?	FAO with contribution by UNEP	Publication	2011
Mountain Biodiversity and global change	GMBA with contribution by UNEP	Publication	2010
Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus – A Case for Intergovernmental Cooperation	REC and UNEP	Background paper for consultations	2009

ANNEX G List of Memoranda of Understanding

Partnership Agreements			
MoU with the Executive Secretariat of the Central European Initiative (CEI-ES)	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Official document	December 2006
MoU with the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Official document	??
MoU with the Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR Convention)	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Official document	December 2006
MoU with the Alpine Convention	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Official document	??
MoU with the Convention on Biological Diversity (together with the Alpine Convention)	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Official document	May 2008
MoU with the Science for the Carpathians Initiative			May 2012
MoC with the European Academy (EURAC)	UNEP Vienna – SCC	Official document	
Initiative of mutual observer status between SCC and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)			December 2010

ANNEX H Official opening of UNEP Vienna

The secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions to UNEP and the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Vienna, and has the honour to inform them of the opening of the Office of the Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, hosted by UNEP, in Vienna, Austria. The contact address of the Office is the following:

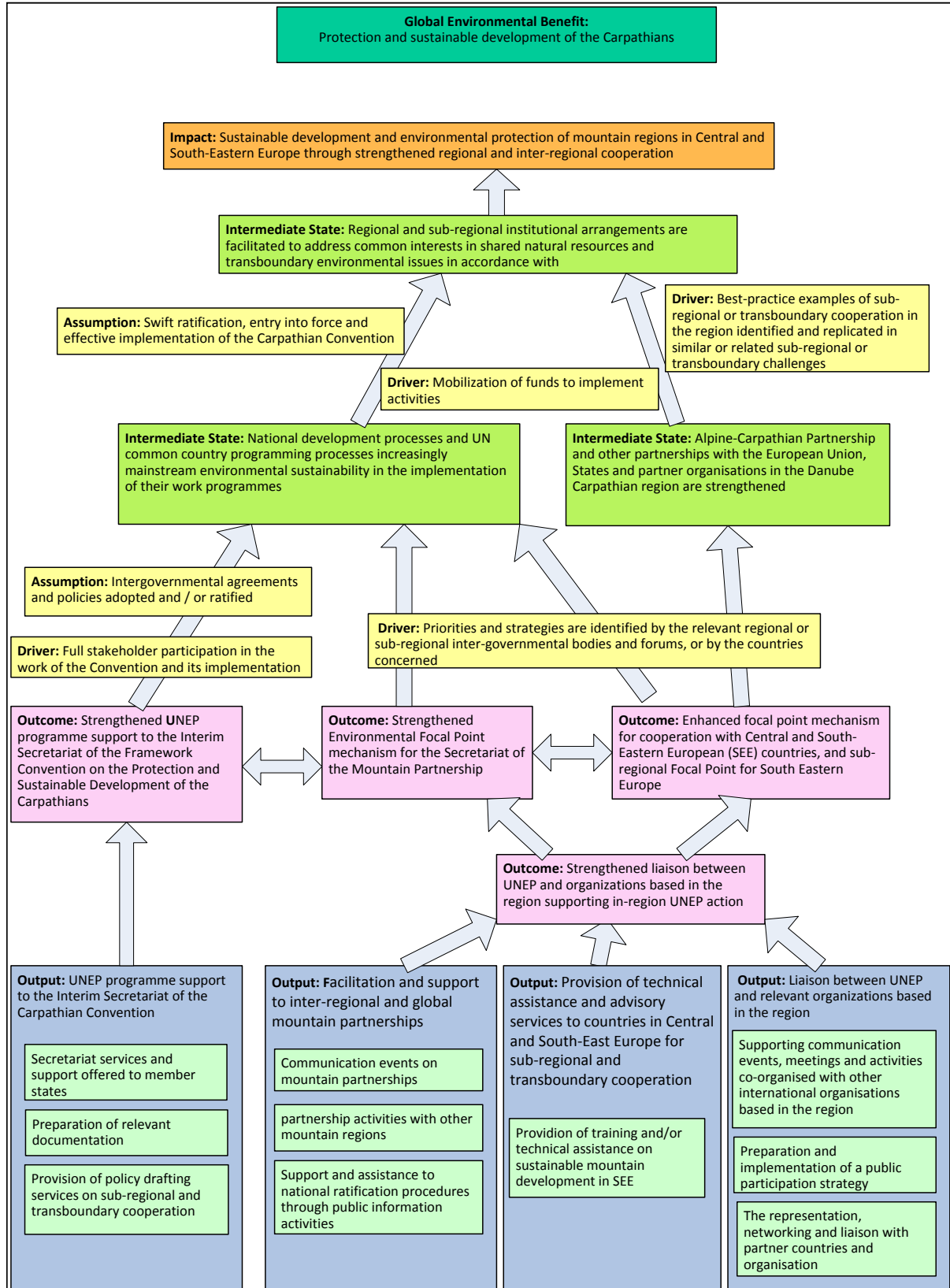
Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
United Nations Environment Programme
Vienna International Center
UNEP, Vienna/ISCC – Room JOE 25
P.O. Box 500
A-1400 Vienna
AUSTRIA
Telephone: (+43 1) 26060-4545
Telefax: (+43 1) 26060-6730
Email: harald.egerer@unvienna.org

In addition to the Carpathian Convention and the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, the above-mentioned Office will ensure UNEP's liaison with the Secretariats of the Alpine Convention, the International Partnership for Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions (hosted by FAO) and the Danube Protection Convention. The Office will also assist UNEP in its contacts and collaboration with the Regional Environment Centre in Szentendre, Hungary (REC) and with organisations and institutions based in Vienna. The Office will furthermore promote cooperation between countries of South Eastern Europe and the Danube/Carpathian region.

The secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions to UNEP and the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Vienna the assurances of its highest consideration.

31 May 2004

ANNEX J: Reconstructed TOC (Evaluation Office)



ANNEX K Matrix for the Assessment of the Quality of Project Design (from Inception Report)

Relevance	Evaluation Comments	Prodoc Reference	
Are the intended results likely to contribute to UNEPs Expected Accomplishments and programmatic objectives?	Yes, after revisions and broadening the scope of the project during implementation, the intended results are in line with UNEP's current PoW (2012 – 2013) and contribute to fulfill the objectives outlined in the Medium-term Strategy 2010-13, in particular as regards ecosystem management and environmental governance.	Para 15	
Does the project form a coherent part of a UNEP-approved programme framework?	There was no logframe included in the original PD. The five original objectives were only related to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention and can be seen as a part of a UNEP's Environmental Governance Thematic Priority at that time and contribute to policy implementation of the UNEP biannual programme 2004-2005 (UNEP/GC.22/6). Furthermore, the project design contributed to several components of the 3 rd Montevideo Programme related to effectiveness of environmental, conservation and management and relationships with other fields and is catalyzing regional cooperation. Currently, a follow up project has been included into the approved SP-Governance of the 2014-2017 Programme Framework.	Para 16	
Is there complementarity with other UNEP projects, planned and ongoing, including those implemented under the GEF?	Yes, several projects can be mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENVSEC (Environment and Security Initiative) • MDGF in BiH (project designed to address and overcome the significant barriers faced in effectively environmental services and management at local level) • One UN, Albania, Montenegro • current GEF projects in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and Macedonia • the future TIM (Transboundary Institutional Mechanisms) project 	Refers to several para	
Are the project's objectives and implementation strategies consistent with:	i) Sub-regional environmental issues and needs?	There is clear consistency with sub-regional environmental issues and needs, the project contributes to global and regional legally binding MEA's (e.g. the Biodiversity Protocol of the CC is clearly coherent with the CBD, in addition a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed in 2008). Furthermore, there is proven consistency with EU strategies, e.g. involvement in the development of the Strategy for the Danube Region.	Para 16, 17
	ii) the UNEP mandate and policies at the time of design and implementation?	The 3 rd Montevideo Programme included components related to effectiveness of environmental law, conservation and management and relationship with other fields. The project as originally designed is contributing to these components and is catalyzed regional cooperation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing, facilitating and entry into force of the CC • opening of the UNEP Vienna – ISCC • supporting environmental cooperation in SEE • acting as Focal Point for Mountain Partnership • liaising with relevant organizations 	Para 16
	iii) the relevant GEF focal areas, strategic priorities and operational programme(s)? (if appropriate)	With respect to GEF-5 focal areas strategies and priorities, numerous project activities related to biodiversity, sustainable forest management and cross-cutting capacity development strategy are successfully implemented.	Para 17
	iv) Stakeholder priorities and needs?	The project was built up on existing initiatives – a huge network of institutions and organizations taking the needs into account. Numerous examples for successful stakeholder involvement can be listed:	Para 12, 18, 27, 34

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative(CEI) which put the region 'on the map' and its follow-up programme (CERI) • Danube-Carpathian Summit – a milestone on the way to a regional agreement and a baseline for future stakeholder involvement • Dinaric Arc Initiative • Science for the Carpathians (S4C) • Etc. 	
Overall rating for Relevance		HS	
Intended Results and Causality			
Are the objectives realistic?	Yes, outcomes are realistic but the project is an ongoing process		Para 19, 22. 24
Are the causal pathways from project outputs [goods and services] through outcomes [changes in stakeholder behaviour] towards impacts clearly and convincingly described? Is there a clearly presented Theory of Change or intervention logic for the project?	The intervention logic is basically summarized in the PD Supplement – there is no Theory of Change presented		Section 4
Is the timeframe realistic? What is the likelihood that the anticipated project outcomes can be achieved within the stated duration of the project?	Not applicable, as the project is a continuous activity and the need for an ongoing process		Para 22
Are the activities designed within the project likely to produce their intended results?	Probably yes, but not until the end of the project, as it is an ongoing process		Para 22, 25
Are activities appropriate to produce outputs?	Same as above		
Are activities appropriate to drive change along the intended causal pathway(s)?	Same as above		Section 4
Are impact drivers, assumptions and the roles and capacities of key actors and stakeholders clearly described for each key causal pathway?	Casual pathways are not described, as there is no ToC; few assumptions are mentioned in the original PD and the roles of key actors are described.		Section 4
Overall rating for Intended Results and causality		MS	
Efficiency			
Are any cost- or time-saving measures proposed to bring the project to a successful conclusion within its programmed budget and timeframe?	Not really applicable as the project supports ongoing processes and lessons learned will be applied in the next generation of the project.		Para 22
Does the project intend to make use of / build upon pre-existing institutions, agreements and partnerships, data sources, synergies and complementarities with other initiatives, programmes and projects etc. to increase project efficiency?	Yes, numerous projects and initiatives		Para 34
Overall rating for Efficiency		S	
Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic effects			
Does the project design present a strategy / approach to sustaining outcomes / benefits?	Yes, as the Carpathian Convention is itself a sustaining strategy and project replicates these experiences in other parts of this sub-region; there are many project examples in the Balkans and other mountain regions.		Para 33
Does the design identify the social or political factors that may influence positively or negatively the sustenance of project results and progress towards impacts? Does the design foresee sufficient activities to promote government and stakeholder awareness, interests, commitment and incentives to execute, enforce and pursue the programmes, plans, agreements, monitoring systems etc. prepared and agreed upon under the project?	Yes, in particular the partnership with and support by EU macro-regional strategies and funding programmes contributing to governmental ownership and strengthening implementation (several EU Carpathian projects, e.g. BioREGIO Carpathians, ACCESS 2MOUNTAIN, etc.		Para 28
If funding is required to sustain project outcomes and benefits, does the design propose adequate measures / mechanisms to secure this funding?	Yes, through assessed and voluntary contributions by governments as well as supporting projects.		
Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project results and onward progress towards impact?	Yes, financial crisis may have major impacts and may affect implementation specifically on national level.		Para 30, 37
Does the project design adequately describe the institutional frameworks, governance structures and processes, policies,	The project itself created the governance structure of the CC,		Section 2

sub-regional agreements, legal and accountability frameworks etc. required to sustain project results?	rules of procedures and financial rules of the CC; UNEP Vienna – ISCC services are still on an interim basis however and the secretariat’s mandate needs to be clarified.	Para 27	
Does the project design identify environmental factors, positive or negative, that can influence the future flow of project benefits? Are there any project outputs or higher level results that are likely to affect the environment, which, in turn, might affect sustainability of project benefits?	Project addresses countries and economies in transition, possible negative impacts of the developments need to be mitigated, which is one of the core principles of the CC.	Para 29	
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to catalyze behavioural changes in terms of use and application by the relevant stakeholders of (e.g.):	i) technologies and approaches show-cased by the demonstration projects;	Yes, several examples can be mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCESS2MOUNTAIN • BioREGIO Carpathians • Alps – Carpathian Corridor 	In several para
	ii) strategic programmes and plans developed	Yes, through several protocols of the CC, like Biodiversity Protocol, Forest Protocol, Tourism Protocol	Section 2
	iii) assessment, monitoring and management systems established at a national and sub-regional level	Yes, worthwhile to mention are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science for the Carpathians • CC information system • Assessments in the Danube river basin • Cooperation with EEA 	
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to institutional changes? [An important aspect of the catalytic role of the project is its contribution to institutional uptake or mainstreaming of project-piloted approaches in any regional or national demonstration projects]	CC signed and adopted by seven countries, EU Strategy for the Danube Region influenced, etc.	Section 1 Section 2 Para 28	
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to policy changes (on paper and in implementation of policy)?	On paper yes, but policy implementation is depended on political and economic situation in the countries, effective capacity building for stakeholders to engage in EU programmes		
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to contribute to sustain follow-on financing (catalytic financing) from Governments, the GEF or other donors?	Follow-up platform for the development of projects and close interaction with United Nations Country Teams (e.g. GEF project development) and EU and partnerships with national and regional governments in EU projects	Para 29	
Does the project design foresee adequate measures to create opportunities for particular individuals or institutions (“champions”) to catalyze change (without which the project would not achieve all of its results)?	Yes, on one hand there are the Focal Points, on the other hand, several National park Directors within the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas, representatives from the scientific and NGO community, e.g. WWF	Several para	
Are the planned activities likely to generate the level of ownership by the main national and regional stakeholders necessary to allow for the project results to be sustained?	Implementation work is in progress, currently there are three protocols signed (biodiversity, forest, tourism); but there is cross – sectoral coordination necessary to get other sectors involved, e.g. transport, energy,	Section 2 Para 23	
Overall rating for Sustainability / Replication and Catalytic effects	L ??? (the evaluator is unsure of the rating and wishes to learn more from interviewee which will then be reflected in the main evaluation report)		
Risk identification and Social Safeguards			
Are critical risks appropriately addressed?	There are critical risks (economic, social, financial, environmental) as the project is implemented in countries in transitions. There is the clear need to identify and mitigate those risks and political support is needed from all sectors. The project addresses these needs and aims to improve governance on national, regional and transboundary level.	Para 37	
Are assumptions properly specified as factors affecting achievement of project results that are beyond the control of the project?	In the original PD (2003) some few assumptions are mentioned.	Section 4	
Are potentially negative environmental, economic and social impacts of projects identified?	Yes, a background paper ‘The Carpathians – existing instruments and programmes and a Carpathian sector analysis’ (December 2002) identified potential impacts and results were used in the negotiation process towards the CC; Furthermore, in each of the project concepts/proposals for funding.		

Overall rating for Risk identification and Social Safeguards		S	
Governance and Supervision Arrangements			
Is the project governance model comprehensive, clear and appropriate?	Yes, UNEP Vienna – ISCC office established.		Section 1 and 2
Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?	There is the need to clarify roles and responsibilities; furthermore, there is the pending decision concerning the permanent secretariat.		Para 23, 27
Are supervision / oversight arrangements clear and appropriate?	Delegation of authority to ISCC needs to be clarified/strengthened/formalized.		Para 23
Overall rating for Governance and Supervision Arrangements		U	
Management, Execution and Partnership Arrangements			
Have the capacities of partners been adequately assessed?	Main partners are governments of countries with economies in transition.		
Are the execution arrangements clear?	There is the need to distinguish activities as part of the UNEP PoW and the PoW of the CC. Since an important bulk of activities of the Carpathian Convention PoW, which are not within the UNEP PoW, will be managed through the Carpathian Convention Trust Fund in the future, there is a need to develop a follow up project encompassing the activities, which are part of the UNEP Programme of work and implemented by UNEP Vienna – ISCC.		Para 38
Are the roles and responsibilities of internal and external partners properly specified?	The project has mainly external partners and it seems that their roles and responsibilities are defined.		
Overall rating for Management, Execution and Partnership Arrangements		MS	
Financial Planning / budgeting			
Are there any obvious deficiencies in the budgets / financial planning?	There are no deficiencies in budget / financial planning, nevertheless it should be mentioned that one part of the financial planning is done by CC, the other part by UNEP PoW.		
Is the resource utilization cost effective? Is the project viable in respect of resource mobilization potential?	Yes, see above projects and additional support by bilateral donors (Austria, Italy, ...).		Para 36
Are the financial and administrative arrangements including flows of funds clearly described?	Yes for the CC, a number of supporting 'projects' are handled as activities of the present project.		
Overall rating for Financial Planning / budgeting		S	
Monitoring			
Does the logical framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> capture the key elements of the Theory of Change for the project? have 'SMART' indicators for outcomes and objectives? have appropriate 'means of verification'? identify assumptions in an adequate manner? 	Originally, there was no logframe included in the PD, the revised project design presents outcomes, outputs (but confusion with terminology) and milestones; there are indicators and means of verification included; assumptions are not addressed in an adequate manner.		Section 4
Are the milestones and performance indicators appropriate and sufficient to foster management towards outcomes and higher level objectives?	There are quantitative indicators, but no qualitative ones		
Is there baseline information in relation to key performance indicators?	Yes – in the retrofitted framework		
Has the method for the baseline data collection been explained?	No		
Has the desired level of achievement (targets) been specified for indicators of outcomes and are targets based on a reasoned estimate of baseline?	Since retrofitting the project design yes		
Has the time frame for monitoring activities been specified?	Continuous monitoring within the CC institutional framework; application of PIMS for UNEP PoW		Para 39
Are the organisational arrangements for project level progress monitoring clearly specified?	Yes, on several levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in the framework of CC 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP result-based management methodology • ENVSEC evaluation 	
Has a budget been allocated for monitoring project progress in implementation against outputs and outcomes?	Only for the ENVSEC evaluation	
Overall, is the approach to monitoring progress and performance within the project adequate?	Yes, as now included in the PIMS	
Overall rating for Monitoring	MS	
Evaluation		
Is there an adequate plan for evaluation?	The original project design included only a self evaluation.	Para 39, 53
Has the time frame for evaluation activities been specified?	No	
Is there an explicit budget provision for mid-term review and terminal evaluation?	There is no budget provision for the mid-term review, for the final evaluation funding is extremely limited as it was not scheduled right from the beginning.	Para 39
Is the budget sufficient?	No, due to this financial constraints the terminal evaluation is carried out under several limitations.	
Overall rating for Evaluation	U	