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JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN OF PROTECTED AREAS IN THE CROSS- BORDER REGION

Project CB005.2.12.075: "Revitalization of abandoned landfills" is co-financed by the European Union through the Interreg-IPA Program for cross-border cooperation Bulgaria - Turkey.



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1. Context of the development of the Plan



The plan for joint management of protected areas in the common cross-border region (the "Plan") was developed in the implementation of **Project No. CB005.2.12.075 "Revitalization of abandoned landfills"**, co-financed by the European Union through the Interreg-IPA Bulgaria-Turkey Cross-Border Cooperation Program.

2. SCOPE AND DESCRIPTION OF SHARED NATURAL RESOURCES

2.1. Strandzha Mountain

Strandzha is a mountain in southeastern Bulgaria (Burgas and Yambol regions) and European Turkey. It is close to the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. Strandzha is located in the eastern part of the historical-geographical region of Thrace. It extends to the north to the Burgas lowland, to the northeast and east to the Black Sea, to the southwest to the East Thracian plain. It connects with the Bakadzhitsite (near the village of Stefan Karadjovo) and the Derventa hills (in the vicinity of the village of Strandzha). To the northwest, Its length from northwest to southeast is about 125 km and its width reaches 65 km. The mountain's total area is about 10,000 km², of which about 35% on Bulgarian territory and 65% on Turkish territory

The forests are of South Euxinian type, formed by eastern sessile oak, eastern beech, and hornbeam with undergrowth of laurel bushes (Strandzha periwinkle and others) sub-euxinian forests of hornbeam, cerris, and eastern sessile oak. **The flora** of the mountain consists of **1665 species**, with dozens of relict and endemic plants. The plants that grow in Strandzha are **pine, spruce, fir, and others**. **The fauna** contains **99 endemic species of** invertebrates, while its vertebrate fauna is the richest in the Bulgarian protected area - **263 species**. Strandzha's fauna is characterized by a high percentage of Mediterranean, sub-Mediterranean, and Asia Minor species. They are widespread in the low and medium-high parts of the mountain. The high parts are characterized mainly by Euro-Siberian species. **Mammals** - There are 82 species of mammals in the mountains. Of these, large game predominates: **roe deer, red deer wolf, wild boar, jackal, fox, badger, squirrel, and others**. **The otter population in Veleka is the best preserved in Europe**. Six species are included in the Red Book of Bulgaria, and one species - the **monk seal** - in the World Red Book. It is very likely that the mammals in Strandzha will exceed 82 species because the caves are only partially studied. Large mammals that can be found there are: **jackal, wolf, wild boar, deer, wild cat, rabbit, of the small - gray hamster (Cricetus migratorius, degree type)**. **Numerous Bird species** nest in the park, but many more can be seen. During migration, huge **groups of storks, pelicans and eagles** fly over the park and along the coast.

Strandzha Nature Park is located on the territory of the mountain. There are 5 nature reserves, 14 protected areas, and 8 natural landmarks on the park's territory.

2.2. Derventa hills



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Derventa hills are located in the Southeastern Bulgaria (about 40%), Yambol district and European Turkey (about 60%). They stretch from west to east for about 50 km, and their total width on Bulgarian and Turkish territory is also about 45 - 50 km. They are located between the Srem gorge of the Tundzha River to the west and the valleys of the Popovska (left tributary of the Tundzha) and Chengerlidere (right tributary of the Ergene in Turkey) to the east, which separate them from the Strandzha mountain and, in the vicinity of the village of Strandzha they connect with it. To the north and south, their inter-valley hills extend to the Elhovo field and the Edirne lowland in Turkey, respectively. The region is a habitat for about **120 species of birds, 25 of which are included in the Red Book of Bulgaria.**



2.3. The longo forests in Strandzha



The longo forests have a unique character, which derives from the composition and structure of the forest vegetation and the specific conditions under which it grows. The forest, which is located in the Turkish part - near the **Turkish town of Ineada**, looks like a hidden paradise with its centuries-old and impressive trees, changing lakes, which are constantly fighting for territory with the sea, as well as hundreds of species of waterfowl which have chosen this place as a resting point for their kilometers-long annual migration trips

3. Specifics of protected natural areas in the cross-border region

3.1. Protected natural territories and zones on the territory of Yambol district

3.1.1. Protected areas

- ♣ **BG0002026 Derventa hills** / Category: Protected areas under the Birds Directive /
- ♣ **BG0002066 West Strandzha** / Category: Protected areas under the Birds Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000218 Derventa hills 1** / Category: Protected area under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000219 Derventa hills** category: habitats /
- ♣ **BG0002094 Adata - Tundzha** / Category: Protected areas under the Birds Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000402 Bakadzhitsite** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000513 Soldier Bakadzhik** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000420 Grebenets** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000217 gorge of the river Tundzha** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0002028 Complex Straldza** / Category: PZ under the bird Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000196 River Mochuritsa** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000427 River Ovcharitsa** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000192 Tundzha River 1** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000195 Tundzha River 2** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000212 Sakar** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /



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- ♣ **BG0002021 Sakar** / Category: PZ under the bird Directive /
- ♣ **BG000401 St. Elijah’s Heights** / Category: PZ under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000198 Sredetska river** / Category: Protected area under the Habitats Directive /
- ♣ **BG0000205 Straldzha** / Category: Protected area under the directive for habitats /
- ♣ **BG0002027 Malko Sharkovo Dam** / Category: Protected area under the Birds Directive /
- ♣ **BG0002023 Ovcharitsa Dam** / Category: Protected area under the Birds Directive /

3.1.2. PROTECTED TERRITORIES, according to the Register of Protected Territories and Protected Areas in Bulgaria

- ♣ **BALABAN** (Unique identification code in the register: 17) / Category: Maintained reserve
- ♣ **BLATOTO** (Unique identification code in the register: 11) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **VESELINOVSKA FOREST** (Unique identification code in the register: 178) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **GORNA TOPCHIA** (Unique identification code in the register: 12) / Category: Reserve
- ♣ **DEBELATA KORJA – village of TENEVO** (Unique identification code in the register: 55) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **DOLNA TOPCHIYA** (Unique identification code in the register: 18) Category: Maintained Reserve
- ♣ **DRANCHI DUPKA** (Code in the register: 232) / Category: Attractions
- ♣ **TUNDJA GORGE** (Code in the register: 452) / Category: Protected Site
- ♣ **IVAN GOL** (Code in the register: 10) / Category: Protected Site
- ♣ **LONGOZITE** (Code in the register: 502) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **VAGENITSOVA METLICHINA HABITAT** (Unique identification code in the register: 547) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **MRAZOVETS HABITAT in locality ORMANA** (Unique identification code in the register: 487)
- ♣ **LOCALITY: Prihodno - Lesovo** (Unique identification code in the register: 548) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **PTITSITE** (Unique identification code in the register: 497) / Category: Protected area
- ♣ **TETROLIKA** (Unique identification code in the register: 499) / Category: Natural Landmark
- ♣ **TARNAVSKI BAKADJIK** (Unique identification code in the register: 556) Category: Protected area

3.2. Natural resources and protected areas in the Turkish part of the cross-border region

A number of protected areas have been declared, such as national parks, nature parks, Ramsar sites, etc., and in the last few years, their number has increased. In Turkey, the protected areas are as follows: **41 national parks** (898,044 ha), **31 natural areas** (46,575 ha), **34 nature parks** (79 299 ha), **103 natural monuments** (5,541 ha), **14 territories** (1,211,254 ha), **81 game protection areas** (1,201,285 ha) and **13 Ramsar sites** (203,762 ha). Since 2000, the share of protected areas with different status in the country's total area has increased from 4% to about 6%.

In **Kirklareli Province** There are two protected areas: **the Kastura Körfezi reserve**, where the black pine population is of interest, and the reserve **lake Saka**.



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Via Pontica passes along the Black Sea coast (Northern Anatolia), which also crosses Kirkclareli province.

The National Park lake Gala is located in the province of Edirne. It is a wetland (Class I of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry) and covers an area of 2,369 ha. The park is home to 111 species of birds, many of which are extremely rare and endangered. In the lake Gala, at the mouth of the Maritsa River, there are 6 plant formations. There are 5 nature wood reserves in the region, as well as 5 other wetlands with the same status (Class I according to the Ministry of Natural Resources).

In addition to the lake Gala, the area around lakes Golbala and Egribuyuk (about 1,500) has been declared a wetland - a natural site of Class I (Decision № 4218 of 25.09.1997 of the Council for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Resources of Edirne by the Ministry of Culture).

3.2.1. Strandzha Mountain

The protection requirements of Strandzha, which is one of the five most significant zones in Eastern Europe, are of a key importance. 345 new plant species have been registered here. There are 1,377 species of plants. 14 species have been added to the Thracian fauna and 16 species have been recorded.

3.2.2. INEADA

Ineada or Igneada (Turkish: İğneada) is a small town, the center of a municipality in the district of Malak Samokov, Lozengrad Province (Kirkclareli), Turkey. Ineada includes a complex of dense, wet forests ("longoz"), swamps, and marshes, formed after a sand embankment on the Black Sea coast, with a length of 10 km. and a depth of 300 meters. This provides a natural barrier for the rivers flowing into the Black Sea from Strandzha to the west (especially the rivers Cavushdere and Bulanekdere), which leads to the appearance of typical for the dunes vegetation on the sand embankment and a mosaic of wet forests and habitats behind the embankment.

3.2.3. Ineada Long Forest National Park

The area is located near the resort town of Ineada on the Turkish Black Sea coast. The unique Strandzha longoz forests near Lake Saka in the Ineada area are a magnificently preserved biosphere reserve, which in 2007 was officially declared a National Park. Here can be found sand dunes, wetlands, lakes, longoz forests, and if we add the dry forests, these are five different ecosystems full of life.

Streams of water coming from the mountains before flowing into the sea form lakes or swamps on the Black Sea coast. Because of the vast sand dunes in front of the lakes, the water in them cannot flow into the sea as they overflow due to the spring's rains and flow into the ground inland. **These flooded areas, called longoz, are an ecosystem different from any other lake or forest ecosystem.** The water level is significant and is maintained during each of the four seasons. The acidic soils, rich in organic matter, contribute to enhancing the biological richness of the longoz forest, which develops similarly to the tropical one. There are three separate areas in this area - **Lake Ericley, Lake Mert, and Lake Saka**



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3.2.4. *The lakes of Ineada*

The lakes within the Ineada region are known for their many species of fish and an oxygen-rich atmosphere. Although there are 7 lakes in the vicinity of Ineada, the most important are Mert, Hama, Erikli, and Saka. About 30 species of fish are known to live in the lanes of Ineada and in the lakes and streams in the wetland, and according to the Berne Convention, 8 of them are described as "species in need of protection". These are bleak, black-striped pipefish, monkey goby, aspicius, bleaker, ray-finned fish, amur bitterling, and common nase. Among the lakes, Mert has the widest variety of fish. Lakes Hamam and Pedina can also be defined as habitats for birds, wild ducks, and swans migrating from Bulgaria, Russia, and the Danube River.

The *longoz* forests are completely flooded in winter and spring, with a mixed floral set of different types of trees from 8 to 15 meters high. As alluvial soils are characterized by the more intensive activity of microorganisms, forests and other plants in the region begin their growing season earlier than plants in other areas. Protecting the habitat of these forests is crucial.



The Ineada longoz forests are one of the so-called "**Hot spots**" in Turkey that requires immediate protective action as they are directly affected by environmental issues..

4. CONCLUSIONS MADE BASED ON CONDUCTED STUDIES

4.1. *Needs assessment and awareness survey on environmental protection in the region (Bulgaria)*

The main conclusions drawn from this study can be defined as follows:

- ♣ Respondents' self-assessment of their general awareness of the environmental policy at national and local level is rather low - less than half are identified as informed to some extent, and only 3% think that they are well informed, also about ¼ state that they are not informed about the topic at all.
- ♣ Respondents find it challenging to assess how the environmental control authorities and local authorities perform their functions and their contribution to the environment's state.
- ♣ The respondents firmly believe that cleanliness lies not only with the institutions but mainly with citizens (86%). Awareness of this fact can be considered a good prerequisite for launching a campaign and enhancing awareness in this direction, raising awareness and achieving a positive change in residents' behavior.
- ♣ Awareness of various aspects of waste generation, collection, transport, storage, and treatment is generally low. Maximum 1/5 of the respondents are informed about where to submit/ legally dispose of a particular type of waste. This information is practically lacking for the electronic and electrical equipment which grow in number in every household.
- ♣ There are almost no practices for separate waste collection within the respondents' territory of residence - 92% of them do not collect separately.



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4.2. Study for the prevention of illegal dumping and its impact on the development of business and commercial life (Turkey)

The key findings identified in the study and which serve as a basis for the preparation of this Plan are the following: There is a lack of sufficient information about the need and the process of separate waste disposal, which is crucial for their subsequent recycling. Still, there is also a positive attitude towards the need for training and an increase in awareness. Here, the answers to the question "Sorting garbage before disposal," to which 90% of the respondents marked "NO," make a strong impression.

It is essential to inform the community to recycle animal waste or use it for other purposes. In the villages, where the rural population has a significant share, the utilization of agricultural and household waste will create a significant economic profit. There is potential for active cooperation with the local communities on illegal dumping.

The analysis of the results of these activities, in the context of this Joint Plan, shows the clear need to raise awareness of the population in both border regions regarding the issues of environmental protection and natural resources and, in particular separate waste disposal, which in turn, is an essential prerequisite for sustainable protection of the environment and in particular of the protected areas in the region.

5. JOINT MANAGEMENT PLAN

5.1. Concept - short-term and long-term vision for enhanced protection of natural resources



The main objectives of the Plan are related to achieving harmonious, balanced, and sustainable development of protected areas in the cross-border region, a prerequisite for preserving biodiversity, improving the quality of the environment, and resp. the quality of life of the local communities.

The cross-border planning process seeks a balance between the various aspects of development (environmental, territorial, economic, and social) and between the diverse communities, institutions, and social groups. The joint management plan aims to become one of the main tools for protection and conservation of available natural resources and

enhancement of the environmental

This strategy is based on the concept of visual tracing to achieve a future vision using a scheme of strategic objectives that relate to the priorities of the strategic documents at local, national, regional and European levels in the field of environmental conservation and the protected areas. The strategic objectives should be based on the development of the main factors for the sustainability of the joint forms of environmental protection and in particular of the protected areas in the two regions..

VISION - "For a better future in the cross-border region": sustainable development of protected areas, through conservation and protection of valuable natural capital and biodiversity, in close connection with economic growth and social well-being and strengthening the intrinsic relationship of the communities with their natural surrounding



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The vision formulated in this way reflects the concept for developing the cross-border region, considering the available natural potential and taking into account the interests of the local residents. This can be achieved by formulating adequate goals and undertaking necessary activities and measures to preserve and improve the environment focus on the protected areas in the region.

5.2. SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
YAMBOL DISTRICT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ natural environment preserved in relatively good condition ♣ Presence of protected areas and zones, rich biodiversity, unique and valuable ecosystems, and heritage ♣ Legal framework and regulations, harmonized with EU legislation ♣ Availability of strategic and program documents at the national level in the field of the environment ♣ Lack of significant industries polluting the environment ♣ A positive attitude of local authorities towards foreign investments ♣ Existence of a Regional Waste Management System - Yambol region, which disposes of waste from five municipalities - Yambol, Sliven, Nova Zagora, Tundzha, and Straldzha, built under the project "Construction of a regional waste management system in the region of Yambol - First Phase," implemented under OP "Environment 2007-2013" and forthcoming for the second phase of the project with the construction of composting and separating installations to reduce the total volume of wastes in the landfills, their reuse, and recycling, as well as extraction of valuable raw materials from mixed household waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Local environmental pollution, incl. groundwater pollution with phosphates and nitrates ♣ Deteriorated ecological status of water resources in the district ♣ Lack or insufficient infrastructure for wastewater collection and treatment ♣ The severity of natural disasters caused by a combination of several hazards, such as droughts, extreme temperatures, forest fires, and floods ♣ Natural vulnerability of species and habitats (Successions, inter-species competition, isolation, etc.) ♣ Ineffective cooperation in the management of natural resources and insufficient coordination for environmental protection; Protected areas are not sufficiently included in the structure of the region ♣ Unsatisfactory level of information provision for waste management processes ♣ Poaching ♣ Harmful practices in farming, agriculture, forestry, and hunting, including the use of chemicals and other hazardous substances ♣ Lack of targeted measures and incentives to contribute to waste prevention. Existence of illegal landfills ♣ Lack of community awareness about the importance of environmental protection for the quality of life; lack of information about the



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	<p>protected areas and zones in the region and how to conserve them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Low energy efficiency and high dependence on fossil fuels. The trend of increasing the amount of solid fuels for domestic heating continues ♣ The existing practice of burning stubble ♣ Lack of sufficient financial resources in the field of environmental protection and in particular in protected areas ♣ Investors are hardly aware or underestimate the requirements of legislation in the field of environmental protection of biodiversity ♣ Adverse demographic trends: reduction of the population of the district, aging of the population, especially in the rural areas, and depopulation of the villages;
KURKLARELI DISTRICT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Favorable natural conditions ♣ Exceptional plant and animal diversity and significant water resources in forest areas ♣ Rich and healthy forest ecosystems, availability of fertile lands ♣ Strandzha Nature Reserve is located in the area ♣ Qualified staff in the forest administration ♣ Some forest areas are included in the nature conservation network - reserves, protected areas, Kasatura, Saka ♣ Availability of universities and research institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Lack of education on nature conservation ♣ Lack of awareness of opportunities for conservation in the development process ♣ Lack of participation in regional planning ♣ Improper use and destruction of arable land ♣ Lack of re-planting activities in the endangered territories ♣ Local environmental pollution, incl. groundwater pollution with phosphates and nitrates ♣ The severity of natural disasters caused by a combination of several hazards, such as droughts, extreme temperatures, forest fires, and floods ♣ Lack of sewerage systems in most of the smaller municipalities ♣ Erosion, landscape disturbances, habitat damage ♣ Poaching ♣ Low energy efficiency and high dependence on fossil fuels
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS



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AREA Yambol	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ effective use of EU funds in the environmental sector ♣ versatile and sustainable use of the natural resources potential, landscape, and biodiversity ♣ Improving the skills and knowledge of those working in the sector ♣ Encouraging environmental friendly behavior and habits among the population, especially among adolescents ♣ The positive public attitudes in support of the environmental protection efforts ♣ Existence of good preconditions for cross-border cooperation for environmental protection ♣ Rich biodiversity and availability of protected areas and zones, unique and valuable ecosystems as a prerequisite for the development of cognitive, eco, ornithological, photo, and hobby tourism ♣ Raising public awareness through the introduction of new and interactive forms of environmental education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Increase in the number of natural disasters (including. floods, droughts, fires, etc.) due to climate change ♣ Reduction of precipitation in summer (lack of water) and rising temperatures ♣ The gradual change of weather conditions ♣ Existing risks of floods and flooding of the terrains near the Tundzha River. ♣ Growing pressure on the environment due to urbanization, intensification of agriculture, transport, etc. ♣ Inefficient water resources management and flood protection ♣ Expansion of illegal logging and poaching ♣ Poor professional adaptability and professional qualification of employees in the sector, inconsistent with the specifics of the industry and the requirements of the labor market ♣ Inefficient use and management of favorable natural conditions and resources to improve the development potential ♣ High costs of implementing environmental legislation to meet the high EU requirements ♣ Harmful human impact on flora and fauna in protected areas
KURKLARELI DISTRICT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ The rich diversity of ecosystems and biodiversity ♣ Opportunities to use international EU programs and projects ♣ Exchange of good practices with the EU Member States ♣ Multifunctional and sustainable use of the potential of natural resources, landscape, and biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Quarries and mines in Strandzha ♣ Excessive logging in certain forest areas as a result of inadequate and insufficient forestry infrastructure ♣ Growing number and frequency of natural disasters (including floods, droughts, fires, etc.) due to climate change ♣ Reduction of summer precipitation (water scarcity) and rising temperatures ♣ The gradual change of climatic conditions



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Risk of illegal logging and poaching ♣ Lack of participation in regional planning ♣ Lack of interdepartmental cooperation and resources ♣ Investment threats: mining, Ineada nuclear power plant project
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5.3. Priorities for management and conservation of protected areas in the cross-border region

- ♣ **Priority 1** - Preservation of good ecological status of the protected areas described in this plan as crucial for the protection of biological diversity
- ♣ **Priority 2** - Sustainable use of resources in protected areas - a prerequisite for improving the quality of life of local communities, their livelihood, and tool towards limiting and adapting to global climate change
- ♣ **Priority 3** - Reducing adverse factors of human interventions that affect protected areas as ecosystems
- Priority 4** - Raising public environmental awareness to support the conservation, maintenance, and restoration of protected areas

5.4. Defining goals. Strategic and operational objectives

5.4.1. Purpose and tasks of the plan

General objective - To provide a basis for the planning and implementation of activities for joint management of protected areas in the cross-border region

Specific tasks

- ♣ To update the information on the current state of protected areas of priority importance in the cross-border region, including their conservation significance and main characteristics
- ♣ To assess the threats to the protected areas, such as sensitive ecosystems and unique species and habitats
- ♣ To identify good practices in the field of environmental management and protection of natural resources
- ♣ To identify the necessary measures for the conservation of the protected areas, and the funding sources for their implementation

5.4. 2. Strategic and operational objectives

- ❖ **Strategic objective 1:** Conservation and conservation of natural habitats and biological diversity in protected areas in the cross-border region
- ❖ **Strategic goal 2:** Achieving an optimal balance between the ecological function of forests in the cross-border region and their ability to provide long-term material benefits and services and increase



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their role in ensuring economic growth in the area and sustainable territorial socio-economic development

- ❖ **Strategic goal 3:** Effective management of protected areas included in Natura 2000 and other protected areas in the cross-border region
- ❖ **Strategic goal 4:** Building and raising the community's environmental culture and awareness in the cross-border area as a prerequisite for sustainable development of protected territories and the preservation and conservation of the natural resources
- ❖ **Strategic goal 5:** Development of green infrastructure to preserve and restore ecological balance, conserve biodiversity and protect the environment in combination with increasing the economic and social benefits of the natural functions of ecosystems
- ❖ **Strategic objective 6:** Improving the quality of the environment in the cross-border region by creating a cross-border network for joint actions to reduce or prevent the negative consequences of human activity

For the implementation of strategic goals and priorities, **12 operational objectives** are formulated:

- ♣ **Operational goal 1:** Improving the planning and implementation of activities related to the protection of biological and landscape diversity in the transboundary region
- ♣ **Operational objective 2.** Protection and increase of the sustainability of the *longoz* ecosystems. Optimizing the management and administration of *longoz* forests in order to protect and restore them
- ♣ **Operational objective 3.** Conservation of biodiversity to increase the resilience of *longoz* ecosystems. Preservation of game, birds, and fish inhabiting the *longoz* ecosystem and its habitats
- ♣ **Operational objective 4.** Improving the effectiveness of forest fire prevention and combating illegal activities in forests
- ♣ **Operational objective 5.** Increasing the area of woods, timber, and carbon stocks in forest areas in the cross-border region
- ♣ **Operational objective 6.** Maintenance and development of the system for conservation of forest genetic resources in Strandzha Mountain
- ♣ **Operational objective 7.** Effective management of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas
- ♣ **Operational objective 8.** Ensuring sustainable planning of activities in protected areas
- ♣ **Operational objective 9.** Effective use of funds from European and international funds and programs
- ♣ **Operational objective 10.** Promotion of protected areas in the cross-border region. Raising environmental culture and awareness of the residents in the cross-border area on the conservation and development of biodiversity and nature
- ♣ **Operational objective 11.** Promoting the developing GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE as a tool for sustainable development of protected areas in the cross-border region
- ♣ **Operational objective 12.** Nature conservation and sustainable management of protected areas in the cross-border region through measures aimed at reducing and/or preventing anthropogenic impact on the environment



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6. Action Plan

The plan covers the period **2021-2027** and includes the main measures and activities scheduled for execution. The adoption and implementation of the plan aims to achieve an optimal balance between the various legislative, institutional, economic, and technical measures and the practical implementation of an integrated approach to environmental protection and its components in the cross-border region

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Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 1: Improving the system for planning and implementation of activities related to the conservation of biological and landscape diversity in the cross-border region Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 1			
Activity 1. Integration of the goals for protection of the biological and landscape diversity in the planning of the activities and management of the protected territories in the cross-border region	State budgets, European and international programs	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: Ministry of Environment and Water / MOEW /; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, Tundzha State Forestry Yambol, Elhovo State Forestry;</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 2. Development and application of methodologies for systematic collection, assessment, monitoring, and exchange of data on biological diversity in Strandzha Mountain's forests.</p> <p>The monitoring is necessary to observe changes and trends in the state due to specific anthropogenic impacts and to monitor background changes in the environment.</p>	State budgets, European programs and projects	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>
<p>Activity 3. Ensuring adequate administrative capacity and financial resources for management and conservation of protected areas</p> <p>The main sources of funds for these purposes are public - from the national budget, as well as co-financing under various EU financial instruments</p>	State budgets, European programs and projects	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, EAG</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Republic of</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
			Turkey; RDG Kirkclareli NGOs from both countries Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 4. Overcoming existing gaps in scientific information on protected areas through targeted surveys and monitoring For protected area management purposes, gaps in the information need to be filled, and data on key biotic and abiotic characteristics of ecosystems need to be updated.	State budgets, European programs and projects	2023.	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOS
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 2. Preservation and increase of the sustainability of the long ecosystems. Optimizing the management and administration of longoz forests in order to protect and restore them Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 1			

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
Activity 1. Afforestation. Introduction of tree species	State budgets, European and international programs.	2024	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides</p>
Activity 2. Improving the qualification of the loggers working in the field, the timber export workers, and the logging companies' managers.	State budgets and European and international programs.	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 3.</p> <p>Salvage logging systems should be aimed at working around all tree species with less than 10% share in the composition and in good physiological condition; maintaining a three-story structure in the plantations to achieve optimal reserves and sustainable protective functions; creating conditions for optimal growth of quality trees; creating conditions for natural regeneration necessary to reach the desired future forest; restriction of felling on large areas, etc.</p> <p>Breeding fellings – the main principle in breeding fellings is the purposeful forestry intervention to achieve the set goals: regulation of the composition for conservation of biodiversity; selection of quality specimens of tree species; creating favorable conditions for growth in height and diameter of the selected stems and their individual cultivation.</p>	State budgets and European and international programs.	2027	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides</p>
<p>Activity 4. Seed collection from longoz tree species with the best genetic predisposition</p> <p>All valuable plantations, groups, or even single summer oak trees and field elm need to be mapped for this purpose. The priority should be directed</p>	State budgets and European and international programs.	2027	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
to the species with limited and sole participation in the current composition - hornbeam, field maple, forest fruit species, etc.			Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides
<p>Activity 5. Introduction and implementation of measures to combat invasive species</p> <p>*** Invasive (from Latin: <i>invasio</i> - invasion, attack, raid, violence, occupation) for a particular place are those species that are not naturally distributed there but are introduced in one way or another and tend to spread to the point of damaging the local ecosystem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of an inventory of invasive species that change or endanger the ecological characteristics of protected areas in the transboundary region (longoz ecosystems) 	State budgets and European and international programs.	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOS</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 3. Conservation of biodiversity in order to increase the resilience of longoz ecosystems. Conservation of game, birds, and fish inhabiting the longoz ecosystem and their habitats <u>Compliance with the Strategic Goal: Strategic Goal 1</u>			
Activity 1. Improving the capacity and coordination between all stakeholders in the field of hunting for protection, improvement and increase of the populations of game and fish in the cross-border region	State budgets; European and international programs; LIFE programs	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 2. Conservation of biodiversity</p> <p>♣ Development of Action Plans for conservation of endangered populations</p> <p>Here we can pay attention to the populations of otters, which is included in the World Red List due to its greatly reduced numbers. (From an economic point of view, the otter is harmful to fish farming. Still, from an ecological point of view, it is a species that has its niche in nature and helps maintain environmental balance. The number of otters decreases due to water pollution); the globally endangered corncrake; the black and white storks, which is of European importance; the olive tree warbler - world-class significance; particular attention should be paid at the bats, which are represented with 25 species, 13 of which are in the World Red List (Bechstein's bat, long-fingered bat, and Geoffroy's bat, Mediterranean horseshoe bat and lesser horseshoe bat, western barbastelle, etc.).</p>	State budgets; European and international programs; LIFEprograms	2024	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>
<p>Activity 2. Improvement and increase of game and fish populations for conservation of biological diversity and sustainable development of forest ecosystems</p> <p>The aim is to improve and increase game and fish populations based on institutional, organizational, scientific, and other conditions to ensure the</p>	State budgets; European and	2027	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>necessary symbiosis between humans, forests, and wildlife, incl. by updating the laws and regulations in hunting; improving capacity and coordination between all stakeholders in the field of hunting; increase and diversification of game and fish resources, including through genetic selection and introduction.</p> <p>Here we can pay attention to deer and roe deer populations in the Turkish part of Strandzha, where due to poaching, they have become endangered species.</p>	<p>international programs; LIFE programs</p>		<p>Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides</p>
<p>Activity 3. Control of poaching and the resource use in protected areas</p> <p>The legal framework governing the fight against poaching in both Bulgaria and Turkey is relatively straightforward and detailed. The shortcomings in the fight against poaching are often due more to the insufficient capacity of the responsible institutions, public tolerance, and in some cases - conflicts of interest.</p> <p>Enhanced controls may include more frequent and regular inspections of control bodies at the sites described in this plan and joint inspections with NGOs / civil society organizations.</p>	<p>State budgets; European and international programs; LIFE programs</p>	2021 - 2027	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 4. Spatial and functional connection of protected areas as habitats</p> <p>The function of protected areas to maintain rich biodiversity and their other ecosystem benefits depends on their spatial and functional connection with neighboring areas, incl. forests and lands of primary environmental value. The maintenance and restoration of these connections is stated in the Biodiversity Act and the concept of "Green Infrastructure," which has recently received significant support at the European level.</p> <p>In practice, this includes, for example, the restoration of landscape connectors with ecosystem functions, as well as the restoration of territories in the area, which are important feeding points for birds nesting in the PA.</p>	<p>State budgets; European and international programs; LIFEprograms</p>	<p>2027</p>	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides</p>
<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 4. Improving the effectiveness of forest fire prevention and combating illegal activities in forests</p> <p>Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 2</p>			
<p>Activity 1. Carrying out analysis and evaluation of the results from the implementation of the fire protection measures</p>	<p>State budgets; European and</p>	<p>2022</p>	<p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry,</p>

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Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
	international programs;		forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 2. Establishment of a unified system for monitoring, early detection, and notification of forest fires	State budget, Bulgaria; State sectoral budget, the Republic of Turkey; European programs	2025	Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides
Activity 3. Enhancing the capacity and improving the interaction between the institutions for prevention and detection of illegal actions in the forest territories	State budget Bulgaria; State sectoral budget, Republic of Turkey; European programs	2023	Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
			owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 4. Increasing the local executive power's monitoring and control over the fire season's agricultural territories' activities.	Own funds of SF, municipalities and other owners of FF; RDP, other European and international programs.	2025	Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs on both sides
Activity 5. Development of a program for the prevention, training forest owners and local populations in fire-endangered regions; conducting information campaigns. Development and implementation of training	Own	2025	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry,

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
programs for specialized groups and volunteers to prevent and extinguish forest fires.	funds of SF municipalities and other owners of FF; RDP, other European and international programs.		forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 6. Creation, improvement, and maintenance of fire infrastructure, water sources, forest roads, etc., to fight fires.	Republican budgets European programs	2027 -	Bulgarian institutions: EAG; RDG-Sliven, Tundzha State Forestry Yambol, Elhovo State Forestry Turkish institutions: RSG Kırklareli and other state institutions
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 5. Increasing the area of woods, timber and carbon stocks in forest areas in the cross-border region <u>Compliance with the Strategic Goal:</u> Strategic Goal 2			

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Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
Activity 1. Implementation and upgrading of the measures envisaged in the Third NAPD48 2013-2020 for the sector "Land use, change in land use and forestry" for increasing the forest area by: Assimilation of "non-forested area for afforestation" in forest territories; Afforestation of areas of abandoned agricultural land, bare, eroded and threatened by erosion areas outside forest areas.	Republican budget Bulgaria Republican budget by sectors Republic of Turkey European programs projects	2027	Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 2. Implementation and upgrading of the measures provided in the Third NPDIK 2013-2020 for the sector "Land use, change in land use and forestry" for: - Restoration and maintenance of forest protected zones and implementation of new erosion afforestation	Republican budget Bulgaria Republican budget by sectors Republic of Turkey	2027	Bulgarian institutions: MOEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the condition and needs for restoration and construction of new forest protection belts - Creation/restoration of forest protection belts 	European programs		<p>district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGO</p>
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 6. Maintenance and development of the system for conservation of forest genetic resources in Strandzha Mountain			
Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 2			
Activity 1. Development of the "ex-situ" system for the preservation of genetic diversity and construction of a system of actions to protect the local gene pool.	State budgets and European programs LIFE	2027.	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 2. Expansion and maintenance of the forest seed production base	State budgets and European programs LIFE	2027.	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
Activity 3. Production of the necessary seeds to form the seed collections of the most valuable tree species for the conservation of forest genetic resources.	State budgets and European programs LIFE	2025.	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 4. Performing genetic assessment of forest seed bases and preservation of the genetic fund.	State budgets and European programs LIFE	2025.	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 7. Effective management of Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas			
<u>Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 3</u>			
Activity 1. Development of the network of regional protected areas under the PTA, based on analyses of the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation activities	State budgets, European and international programs	2026.	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, owners in the woods; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 2. Development of measures to improve the connectivity of protected areas.	State budgets, European and	2023	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry,

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
	international programs;		forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 3. Improving the staff qualification in the institutions from the protected territories and zones for conservation of biological diversity.	State Municipal budgets, European and international programs.	2023	Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs
Activity 4. Research, inventory, and monitoring, as well as conflict management and illegal wildlife trade prevention, which will significantly contribute to decreasing the deterioration of the conservation status of all species and habitats covered by EU environmental legislation.	State Municipal Budgets, European and international programs.	2025	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry,</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
			forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOS
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 8. Ensuring sustainable planning of activities in protected areas			
<u>Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 3</u>			
Activity 1. Development and updating of management plans for protected areas and zones of NATURA 2000. Development and adoption of management plans for protected areas of Natura 2000, according to the Biodiversity Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Management plan of BG0002026 Derventa hills ♣ Management plan of BG0000218 Derventa hills 1 ♣ Management plan BG0000219 Derventski hills 2 ♣ Management plan BG0002066 West Strandzha 	State and municipal budgets European programs, incl. Horizon 2020 and LIFEprogram	2027	Ministry of Environment and Water / MoEW / Executive Environment Agency (EEA) State bodies and their divisions in the field of their competence, municipalities and their associations, scientific and academic institutes and non-governmental environmental organizations.

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Currently, most of the protected areas and territories do not have developed management plans, and others need updating. Management plans are extremely important because:</p> <p>the Management Plans for protected areas, according to the BDA, envisage measures aimed at preventing the deterioration of the conditions in the natural habitats of the species, as well as the endangerment and disturbance of the species for the protection of which the respective protected areas have been declared</p> <p>the Management Plans for protection of territories, according to the PTA, contain norms, regimes, conditions, or recommendations for implementation of the activities in the forests, lands, and water areas; infrastructure development and construction; the organization of management and others, ensuring the achievement of the set goals, as well as short-term and long-term action programs related to research and monitoring of environmental components, maintenance of endangered species, communities and habitats, environmental education and others.</p>			
<p>Activity 2. Support for the construction of the ecological network NATURA 2000 in Turkey, incl. research and identification of potential areas in the Strandzha Mountains, according to the Habitats Directive and the Birds</p>	State budgets	2027	<p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirkclareli, District</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Protection Directive, to be included in Natura 2000; providing expertise for preparation of the necessary documentation for declaring natural territories in the Turkish part of Strandzha; training for the joint data collection on both sides of the border; workshops on the topic with representatives of environmental NGOs, institutions, and citizens; sharing of experience and presentation of good practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of areas in Ineada (areas around Ineada National Park) in the Natura 2000 ecological network: areas with longoz forests, lakes in Ineada 	<p>"LIFE Nature" of the program "LIFE"</p> <p>International programs</p>		<p>Governments, municipalities, forest owners; State - owned enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs</p> <p>Expert working group from the Bulgarian side</p>
<p>Activity 3. Improvement and development of the mechanisms for public consultations, incl. creation of new forms for effective participation of the non-governmental organizations in the process of planning and implementation of the documents for regional and local sustainable management of protected territories</p>	<p>State and municipal budgets</p> <p>European and international programs.</p>	2023	<p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOS</p>
<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 9. Effective use of funds from European and international funds and programs</p> <p><u>Compliance with the Strategic Goal: Strategic Goal 3</u></p>			

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
Activity 1. Building and improving the administrative capacity of the district and municipal administrations and the other potential beneficiaries, incl. the directorates of national parks and the regional environment and water inspectorates; associations, non-governmental organizations, and others for preparation and implementation of projects financed by European and international funds and programs	European and international programs	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 10. Promotion of protected areas in the cross-border region. Raising environmental culture and awareness of the residents in the cross - border area on biodiversity conservation and environmental protection			
<u>Compliance with the Strategic Goals:</u> Strategic Goal 4			

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 1. Implementation of information campaigns as a means to promote the need to preserve protected areas, improve and maintain public awareness of their potential, significance, and value, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Presence in the electronic media ♣ Presence in the print media (magazines and newspapers), aimed at the broader audience ♣ Joint seminars / meetings - conferences aimed at establishing the link between civil and environmental protection in the cross-border region and the development of supporting materials. ♣ Joint campaigns to inform and organize various volunteer activities (e.g. clearing of sensitive ecosystems, afforestation, etc.) ♣ Multi-page printed brochures containing information on the environment and biodiversity and the services they offer and the importance of conservation and protection by civic volunteers. <p>Posters with important habitats of plant and animal species marked on them, emphasizing the importance of their protection and conservation by civil volunteers</p>	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 2. Improving the ecological culture of the local population and visitors, as well as the younger generation in order to promote conservation behavior, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Organizing on the territory of protected areas in the cross-border region - and not only - educational and research programs, such as monitoring of priority species and habitats, organization of school and student study trips and expeditions, inclusion of volunteers in the monitoring programs. ♣ Creation and maintenance of a database; Study of little-known organism groups ♣ Development and maintenance of additional signposts and information boards ♣ Educational programs with students' pupils' and local population' participation, related to the conservation of biological diversity. <p>Creation and maintenance of the protected areas' websites with an educational section, providing information about environmental and biodiversity protection programs.</p>	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state enterprises, non - state forest owners, NGOs</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 3. Encouraging young people's participation as volunteers in the protection and conservation of natural resources and biodiversity in the cross-border region, including measures and actions to motivate and inform volunteers about the conservation tools and ways to improve biodiversity and the natural environment.</p> <p>The volunteer's help is vital because it leads to better preserving and protecting forests and biodiversity. Overall, the contribution of volunteers for nature and biodiversity in the border region, directly or indirectly, will focus on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ residents' mobilization and awareness ♣ indication of problems ♣ patrols and checks during the high-risk days ♣ providing information ♣ fire protection ♣ guided firefighters and firetrucks in the area of the fire ♣ support of the fire brigades 	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2023	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
Restoration of burned areas (afforestation, etc.)			
OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 11. Promoting the development of GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE as a tool for sustainable development of protected areas in the cross-border region <u>Compliance with the Strategic Goals: Strategic Goal 5</u>			
Activity 1. Promoting the benefits of environmentally friendly infrastructure for ecosystems and biodiversity conservation, contributing to the development of green economic activities, the creation of green jobs, and the generation of sustainable incomes for local people engaged in, for example, organic food and beverage production, green tourism and other activities based on green infrastructure, protection and sustainable management of water resources, contribution to protection and reduction of risks and negative consequences of natural disasters on the territory of protected areas, etc. benefits from the development of green infrastructure. For this purpose, campaigns should be planned and conducted to promote good practices in connection with the implementation of green infrastructure investments in protected areas.	European and international programs, State and municipal budgets	2023.	Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kirklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 2. Planning, development, and implementation of measures, objectified in joint plans and programs for the promotion of the construction and development of green infrastructure, as well as the implementation of cross-border projects for the development of the green infrastructure network at the European level;</p> <p>♣ Joint plan for promoting the construction and development of green infrastructure in the cross-border region as a tool for sustainable development of protected areas</p>	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2027	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>
<p>OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE 12. Nature conservation and sustainable management of protected areas in the cross-border region, through measures, to reduce and/or prevent anthropogenic impact on the environment</p> <p><u>Compliance with the Strategic Goals:</u> Strategic Goal 6</p>			

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 1. Reducing the use of pesticides and chemicals in the region's environment</p> <p>Developing appropriate programs and concepts to reduce old pesticides and chemicals in general or in specific areas and initiate the management of hotspots or restrictions on their application by creating buffers or compensating zones.</p> <p>Achieving sustainable use of pesticides, ie. to create a framework for public action, countries in cross-border regions must make effective use of the possibilities of the Pesticides Framework Directive (PFD) and explore various issues related to the current state and use of land and soils in the cross-border region, incl. state and quality of land and soils, risks associated with land and soils, and the conservation and restoration of above-ground and underground ecosystems and biological diversity through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Identification of suitable sites; ♣ Identification of sites with old pesticides and other chemical pollutants and preparing plans for environmental restoration and risk management in case of environmental disasters; 	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2023.	<p>Working group for the cross-border region;</p> <p>MoEW, NAFA, MAF and other public bodies;</p> <p>NGOs;</p> <p>Scientific organizations;</p> <p>Interested international organizations;</p> <p>Managers and other stakeholders</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Preparation of risk management and intervention plans for neutralization of OPC and restoration of degraded ecosystems; ♣ Ensuring cross-border cooperation in the case of pollution or potential pollution problems ♣ Promoting stakeholder participation, training and the flow of information at a local and regional level, and more targeted use of EU funds and/or pooling existing resources. 			
<p>Activity 2. Measures to combat illegal dumping. Ensuring appropriate treatment of solid waste</p> <p>Establishment and implementation of integrated waste management systems at national, regional and local levels. It is necessary to establish centers to manage the household and non-hazardous waste and rehabilitation and closure of non-compliant landfills, heavily polluted sites, and unregulated landfills. Activities should also include actions to raise awareness of waste reduction and recycling needs.</p> <p>Example of effective measures:</p>	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2023.	<p>Working group for the cross-border region;</p> <p>MoEW, NAFA, MAF and other public bodies;</p> <p>NGOs;</p> <p>Scientific organizations;</p> <p>Interested international organizations;</p> <p>Managers and other stakeholders</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ green telephone for signaling to be promoted on the territory of the cross-border region ♣ internet platform for marking of polluted places ♣ warning signs and video surveillance of the areas, usually used for unregulated dumps; ♣ socially beneficial work on cleaning contaminated sites from proven violators; ♣ broad and ongoing promotion on the proper disposal of different types of waste. 			
<p>Activity 3. Raising awareness on air, soil, and water protection by assessing and promoting the potential of natural resources as an engine of sustainable regional development by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ extending the objectives of cross-border projects to the international level; ♣ distinguishing between further priority actions that are (specifically) related to the region and the need to implement them at a regional level; 	European and international programs, State and municipal budgets	2023.	<p>Working group for the cross-border region;</p> <p>MoEW, NAFA, MAF and other public bodies; NGOs; Scientific organizations; Interested international organizations; Leaders and other stakeholders</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ bringing together different regional leaders, stakeholders, and their networks from different directions; ♣ promoting stakeholder participation, training, and the flow of information at a local and regional level; ♣ pooling of available resources. <p>In addition, the cooperation is related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Raising the general public's awareness by recognizing and promoting the potential of natural resources as engines of sustainable regional development and education of children and adolescents. ♣ Enhancing general awareness and facilitating the exchange of best practices on issues of integrated management of protected areas among decision-makers at all levels and the population of the region ♣ Raising awareness and stakeholders' involvement and assisting the implementation of the EU Strategy for Biodiversity 2020. ♣ Increasing the perception of protected nature as a valuable asset. 			<p>This action can be achieved in cooperation with the European Land and Soil Alliance (ELSA), while deeper partnerships in the region need to be initiated at municipal and educational level</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>♣ Promotion of green and sustainable ecotourism as part of these activities.</p>			
<p>Activity 4. Upgrading the capacity of local authorities on environmental issues</p> <p>Local authorities are primarily responsible for implementing environmental solutions (such as waste management or issues related to protected areas). Still, they often lack the knowledge and skills to develop projects in the field of environment. The activity includes a set of practical measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ Implementation of guidelines to improve the understanding of the key sector of EU environmental legislation ♣ Establishment of guidelines on EU environmental legislation ♣ Establishment of an expert group to support the regions and cities in solving various problems and a network for exchange of good practices. 	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p>Bulgarian institutions: MoEW; RIEW - Stara Zagora; MAF, IAG; RDG-Sliven, SFE "Tundzha" Yambol, SFE Elhovo</p> <p>Turkish institutions: Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey; RDG Kırklareli, as well as district administrations, municipalities, forest owners; State-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs from both countries</p> <p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>

Activities	Sources of funding	Deadline	Responsible institutions
<p>Activity 5. Identifying a system of measures for climate change adaptation at transboundary level</p> <p>The expected impacts of climate change are drought, changes in rainfall amount and distribution, and to a lesser extent, the temperature change itself. However, there is currently no study on this problematics.</p> <p>It is necessary to research the trends and potential impact of these factors on ecosystems in the transboundary region.</p>	<p>European and international programs,</p> <p>State and municipal budgets</p>	2023.	<p>Expert working group of: representatives of state institutions, experts, state forestry, forest owners; state-owned enterprises, non-state forest owners, NGOs</p>

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