

ConnectGREEN

Restoring and Managing Ecological Corridors in Mountains as the Green Infrastructure in the Danube basin

Mainstreaming Ecological Connectivity into Policy – National Roadmaps and Recommendations for the improvements of the EIA/SEA Directive

Protected Areas – Cornerstones of Ecological connectivity in Carpathians and Beyond
ConnectGREEN final conference, Visegrad, 28. – 30. 9. 2021
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Work package 6

Task 4.1: Enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation at regional Carpathian level and beyond

Why: The ConnectGREEN project identified gaps in regards to biodiversity-spatial planning legal framework, partly caused by the lack of proper understanding of the ecological connectivity concept by spatial planners and partly by missing pieces of legislation that should allow an easy integration of corridors into spatial planning systems.

What: The elaboration of an integrative roadmap for ecological-spatial planning policy and legal approach is needed to improve this situation, together with strengthening the cross-sectoral cooperation between conservation and spatial planning.



How: The roadmap will build on the information collected (and materials elaborated) so far in the project, such as the State of the Art Report, the GAP analysis report on the identification of the needs for improving the planning processes and tools, and other relevant information and materials from WP 3 and 5. It will highlight the key areas for building capacity and inter-sectoral dialogue to enhance connectivity through coordinated policy mechanisms.

Workshops were organized in this respect, which will also be used for the joint development of the roadmap, so that it can be easily used by both initiated and non-initiated spatial planners in the topic of ecological connectivity.

For whom: The roadmap will be widely distributed among decision makers from both sectors, but especially spatial planners who need to improve their overview related to ecological corridors.

The roadmap will also be used as communication and advocacy tool to promote integrated policy and legislative approaches and to create the basis for improving the sectoral legislation.



Main problem areas in EIA processes in Slovakia

Problem area 1: conflicts between sectors



- the investments regarding projects are being decided about in individual sectors
- the project proposals themselves are not integrated among sectors
- potential conflicts between projects of individual sectors are not being analysed and considered in a systematic way on a systematic level



Problem area 2: actors involvement

- the EIA documentation is often elaborated in parallel with project proposal drafting, which means that the technical inputs into EIA process are often not final and the nature protection organ does not have all necessary information for decision process
- the permitting organ often has little technical possibility to check the actual fulfilment of the conditions set out in the permit decision
- during the whole process there is redundancy of consultation rounds with public actors, resulting in confusion and decrease of involvement



Problem area 3: process malpractices



- the EIA process is often circumvented by splitting the project into multiple sub-limit activities
- insufficient project documentation resulting in decisions issued not based on the actual status of the environment and only formal assessment of impacts
- landscape elements not situated in areas with increased level of nature protection often considered as “expandable”



Problem area 4: lack of funding



- no/low funding for post-realisation monitoring resulting in missed opportunities for negative impact mitigation and compensation measures
- lack of funding for realisation of the actual proposed mitigation and compensation measures



Target groups of identified main problem areas

[how to reach them / when to reach them]

spatial planners: individual reach, chambers, authorities / during the planning phase, but especially when proposing regulations

road/rail designers: individual reach, chambers / during the planning phase

specialists (biologists and nature protection experts): individual reach, associations / during drafting of the EIA documentation – before start of the project for site assessment, during implementation as environmental construction site supervision, after the implementation for actual impact determination and proposal of mitigation/compensation measures

infrastructure development: project management / during the initial phase

policy makers: authorities / according to the terms set in legislation

NGOs / especially at the beginning of the process

local stakeholders / during the whole process



Vision on EIA process changes and expected results for Slovakia


- need for better integration of planning activities and synergy between sectors, for better protection of ecological connectivity
- interconnection of active (investments into protection and development of ecological networks) and passive (limits, regulations) tools
- closer integration of planning processes between EIA and strategic fiscal planning
- secure investments in the field of adaptation to climate change impacts and improving resilience of the ecosystems



Vision on EIA process changes and expected results for Slovakia

- need to reduce duplication of some steps in the participative processes
- update of the EIA directive to reflect upon individual situation in member states
- provide the permitting organ with means allowing it to check and enforce the fulfilment of the permit decision conditions
- create a unified database storage accessible for all actors containing information on all projects implemented to provide for cumulative impact assessments





Thank you for your attention!

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