

EPC Consultanță de mediu is seeking to subcontract  
**Services related to Local actions (cooperation with local stakeholders, development of a Cross Sectoral Operational Plan, local actions related to the CSOP) in the Mureș Valley (Târgu Mureș – Târgu Neamț) Pilot Area**

Within the framework of the project

**SaveGREEN**

**“Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin”**

Work Package T2

Project number: DTP3-314-2.3

- I. The **OBJECTIVE** of the assignment is to ensure the development of a cross-sectoral operational analysis (CSOP), for the pilot area (Pilot Area) Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț.

In order to carry out the cross-sectoral operational analysis, several activities and sub-activities (detailed further in this document) are proposed within the project.

**II. TASKS**

In the frame of the current Terms of Reference, the following activities and sub-activities are envisaged to be performed by the Contractor.

**Activity T2.1 Engage and cooperate with relevant stakeholders for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț pilot area**

For this activity, the following sub-activity is required:

- Participate in and contribute to 3 local meetings with local working groups and other stakeholders. The activity involves the creation of working groups with local stakeholders in the field of environment (APM, Natura 2000 site administrators), water management (ABA), forest management (Romsilva, private forestry administrative units, etc.), hunting fund management, and other stakeholders. at local level (identified according to stakeholder analysis).

### **Activity T2.2 Develop cross-sectoral operational plans for safeguarding of functionality of ecological corridors along linear transport infrastructure**

For this activity, the following sub-activities are required:

- Support the development of **Deliverable T2.2.1 Multi-sectoral GIS database** for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț pilot area. This sub-activity will be done in coordination with EPC. The Contractor will provide input, as well as valuable feedback for the development of the multi-sectoral GIS database;
- Support the development of **Deliverable T.2.2.2. Online library of multi-sectoral best practices for safeguarding eco-corridors**;
- Ensure the development of **Deliverable T2.2.3 Local monitoring plans** as integral part of the Cross-sectoral operational plans. The monitoring plan must address how to monitor the maintenance of ecological connectivity (e.g., to establish how to monitor collision victims, to establish how to monitor the use of pipelines, etc.);
- Ensure the development of **Deliverable T2.2.4 Draft local cross-sectoral operational plan** for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț pilot area. The cross-sectoral operational plan must set out how stakeholders can contribute to maintaining ecological connectivity in the analyzed pilot area.

### **Activity T2.3 Implement selected actions of local cross-sectoral operational plans**

For this activity, the following sub-activities are required:

- Ensure the development of **Deliverable T2.3.1 Report on testing the application tools and the standardized monitoring methodology** in coordination with other Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț experts. This sub-activity will be based on actions proposed in the CSOP and implemented in the field (e.g., roadkill monitoring using the ROad kill application) and will identify potential issues associated with the proposed actions, for which it will also identify solutions;
- Ensure the development of **Deliverable T2.3.2 Monitoring report and GIS database** for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț pilot area. The Monitoring Reports will be based on the same actions as T.2.3.1., and will present the results (including GIS databases) of the implemented activities.

### **III. DELIVERABLES**

1. Deliverable D.T2.1.2. Organisation of 3 local meetings in the Târgu Mureș – Târgu Neamț pilot area, due 12.2022;
2. Deliverable T2.2.1 Multi-sectoral GIS database for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț, due 10.2022;
3. Deliverable T.2.2.2. Online library of multi-sectoral best practices for safeguarding ecocorridors, due 11.2022
4. Deliverable T2.2.3 Local monitoring plan for the Târgu Mureș – Târgu Neamț pilot area, due 06.2021
5. Deliverable T2.2.4 Draft local cross-sectoral operational plan for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț pilot area, due 12.2021
6. Deliverable T2.3.1 Report on testing the application tools and the standardized monitoring methodology, due 12.2021
7. Deliverable T2.3.2 Monitoring report and GIS database for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț, due 08.2022

### **IV. TIME HORIZON OF ACTIVITY AND LOCATION**

The tasks should be carried out during the lifetime of the SaveGREEN Project, 1 September 2020 until 31 December 2022, preferably in a location in or around the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț part of the pilot area.

### **V. REQUIREMENTS FOR A GOOD COOPERATION**

For the successful implementation of the tasks agreed within the present document, the expert will:

- Work closely with the Lead Partner WWF Central and Eastern Europe based in Austria, Work Package T1 Leader Environment Agency Austria, Work Package T2 Leader Association Zarand located in Romania, Work Package T3 Leader WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme Romania, and Work Package Communication Leader CEEweb based in Hungary, as well as EPC;
- Communicate and cooperate with Pilot Area Leaders located in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania;
- Participate in the following events
  - Project Partner and SCOM Meetings (online and physical), if deemed necessary;
  - At least 3 local meetings with relevant stakeholders including face-to-face meetings for the establishment of good cooperation and the elaboration of the Cross-sectoral operational plans and related issues for the Mureș Valley, Târgu Mureș-Târgu Neamț pilot sites;

- Relevant Work Package meetings and conference calls when required.

## VI. QUALIFICATIONS

The Contractor must ensure that the proposed team of experts involved in the Contract fulfills the following requirements:

- Hold a University Degree in biology, ecology, forestry or similar domain;
- Has provable experience in biodiversity studies (preferably including fieldwork);
- Has knowledge / practical experience in wildlife monitoring and ecological corridor / connectivity monitoring;
- Has the adequate skills necessary to carry out fieldwork;
- Has advanced professional experience in data evaluation, analysis and assessment;
- Has the ability to participate effectively in inter-disciplinary and virtual project teams, efficient listening skills, ability to build and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues and external partners;
- Has good communication and networking skills;
- Has the ability to work in a team with multi-cultural environment as well as individual with minimal directions;
- Has excellent knowledge of English language.

## VII. ESTIMATION OF CONTRACT VALUE

The Contract intended to be signed with the Contractor is estimated between €20000 and €25000 without VAT. The estimated cost includes involvement of the contractor in the above-mentioned activities and sub-activities, as well as local travels by car (with travel cost, accommodation and per diem).

## VIII. APPLICATION AND DEADLINE

Interested persons should submit a Technical and Financial tender, including a calculation of man days and budget to be invested to fulfill tasks and to develop deliverables, as well as CVs of the experts involved, in English or Romanian, preferably by email to Silvia Borlea, [silvia.borlea@epcmediu.ro](mailto:silvia.borlea@epcmediu.ro) at EPC Consultanță de mediu, Romania.

Closing date for the application is **07 May 2021**.

## Annex 1

### Summary of the SaveGREEN Project

**Project's full name:** Safeguarding the functionality of transnationally important ecological corridors in the Danube basin

**Duration:** 1 July 2020 – 31 December 2022

**Budget:** € 2 756 617,57

#### Partners:

- **Austria:** WWF Central and Eastern Europe, Environment Agency Austria (EAA)
- **Bulgaria:** Black Sea NGO Network; Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation
- **Czech Republic:** Friends of the Earth Czech Republic; Transport Research Centre Czech Republic
- **Hungary:** CEEweb for Biodiversity; Szent Istvan University
- **Romania:** EPC Consultanta de mediu; Zarand Association; WWF Danube Carpathian Programme Romania
- **Slovakia:** WWF Slovakia; SPECTRA Centre of Excellence of EU

#### Associated Partners:

- **Austria:** Austrian Ministry for Transport, Innovation, and Technology; Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism
- **Bulgaria:** Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Executive Forest Agency; Southwestern State Enterprise SE – Blagoevgrad
- **Czech Republic:** Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic; Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic
- **France:** Infrastructure and Ecology Network Europe (IENE)
- **Germany:** Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment and Consumer Protection
- **Greece:** EGNATIA ODOS S.A.
- **Hungary:** NIF National Infrastructure Developing Private Company Limited; Ministry of Agriculture; Danube-Ipoly National Park Directorate

- **Romania:** Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests; Ministry of Public Works, Development and Administration; Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communications
- **Slovakia:** State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic; Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic; Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic; National Motorway Company
- **Ukraine:** M.P. Shulgin State Road Research Institute State Enterprise – DerzhdorNDI SE; Department of Ecology and Nature Resources of Zakarpatska Oblast Administration

## Background

In the Carpathians and other mountain ranges of the Danube region, plenty of ecological corridors are under threat — or, even more, have already been impeded — by poorly envisioned economic development. Among a few examples of this, the construction of linear transport infrastructure, energy supply infrastructure and settlements — especially in river valleys — and intensive agricultural, forestry and water management practices. If not adequately planned, all these man-made interventions can bring conflict for not addressing the critical need of maintaining ecological connectivity and the flow of multiple ecosystem services.

Ecological connectivity is the backbone of Green Infrastructure (GI). It provides ecosystem services and contributes to climate change resilience. Its ongoing rupture is, nevertheless, of growing gravity. This is especially the case in Eastern Europe where, due to historic and administrative capacity constraints, inter-ministerial cooperation and stakeholder involvement from different sectors is limited. Consequently, the functionality of GI decreases, impacting both humans and wildlife.

Moreover, mitigation measures, such as green bridges, are either often missing or dysfunctional due to inadequate design, location, and inappropriate land-use management. The most noticeable impacts: traffic-kills and lowered reproductive success of key species dependent on functional corridors.

The challenge ahead: to reduce the pressure from such forms of economic activities on natural areas by minimising the impact on the natural processes and securing eco-connectivity — especially, in bottleneck locations. There is, indeed, some experience in the region on how to mitigate these impacts of economic development, but little is done to comprehensively monitor the functionality of mitigation measures and their effectiveness — so to learn from examples and integrate learnings into future plans.

## Summary of the SaveGREEN project

The SaveGREEN project will demonstrate that, through integrated planning, the design of appropriate mitigation measures, and the adequate ways to maintain and improve the functionality of ecological

corridors, can be achieved. The monitoring of the impact of such measures will, moreover, allow the project to derive the proper set of recommendations for follow-up actions and policy design.

SaveGREEN will work towards this aim by fostering cross-sectoral collaboration, building capacities for the replication of pilots, and upscaling results through improved policy frameworks. It will, thus, contribute to fostering the conservation of natural heritage and work towards sustainable resource use by strengthening joint and integrated approaches with key players affecting the integrity of these resources — including GI. In addition, SaveGREEN will foster the preservation of ecological corridors and identify where and how action is needed towards restoring connectivity by addressing existing pressures and imminent threats stemming from economic development projects.

Additionally, the project will address these challenges by improving national and European Union (EU) policy and funding frameworks, building capacity of authorities and practitioners, standardising the monitoring of measures, and strengthening cross-sectoral platforms at the local, national and international levels.

The project will focus on the critical ecological corridors of the Alpine-Carpathian Corridor, the Southwestern Carpathians, Zakarpatska region, Beskydy, Lyulin, and the Balkan Mountains — all of them impacted by linear transport projects and unsustainable land use. All in all, it will create best practice examples in seven pilot areas with different landscape matrices.

The partnership covers key sectors to be involved in integrated planning of mitigation measures: nature conservation (i.e. ministries, agencies, authorities and NGOs), research and education (i.e. universities and a research institution), transport (i.e. ministries and motorway companies), consultancy business (i.e. a limited company), and Associated Strategic Partners (ASPs) from complementary sectors from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

## **Main objectives**

The project will aim to foster cross-sectoral and transnational cooperation, as well as building a comprehensive know-how, towards the development of concrete solutions aimed at improving, restoring and preserving the functionality of key ecological corridors in Carpathian, Alpine and Bulgarian mountain valleys. It will cover these areas due to the overlapping concentration of both human activities and critical points for wildlife migration, which renders high degrees of conflict.

SaveGREEN's main objective will be achieved through:

1. **Increasing the knowledge and experience of relevant authorities and stakeholders** via capacity building programmes and the dissemination of the key results coming from the Danube

Transnational Programme (DTP) projects TRANSGREEN, ConnectGREEN, and HARMON, as well as from SaveGREEN itself, on how to maintain and improve the functionality and financing of GI.

2. **Cross-sectoral joint planning of robust mitigation measures** for securing connectivity. This will be based on careful planning and design, secured funding, cross-sectoral dialogues, and sound scientific knowledge embedded in proper site-management.
3. **Establishing international and national governance frameworks** which are more supportive of maintaining ecological corridors for the preservation of Danube's biodiversity values.

This new approach of involving, in a participatory way, key stakeholders from the relevant sectors (i.e. transport, forestry, agriculture, water management, and hunting) that affect the natural heritage and ecological connectivity creates the basis for generating long-term measures and solutions to the continuous and growing pressure on biodiversity. The aforementioned will be materialized in seven local action plans. Moreover, these will be used to improve the management plans of the relevant Natura 2000 sites, as well as the relevant strategic and development plans at the county/regional and national levels. Finally, they will also be used to formulate higher level policy recommendations — at the Carpathian, Danube region, and EU levels) and improve the capacities for dealing with fragmentation, climate change and resilience.

### **Main expected results**

The project expects that, through the improvement of cross-sectoral cooperation in the fields of nature conservation, natural assets management (i.e. wildlife, forests, water), transport, and land use/spatial planning, it will enhance GI coherence in the Carpathian, Alpine and Balkan mountain valleys. It will do so by planning and implementing coherent integrated mitigation measures to minimise the negative impact of economic development.

Key stakeholders — including public authorities — will be trained on:

1. Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) targeting ecological connectivity;
2. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for projects in ecological corridors;
3. Developing integrated mitigation measures for the maintenance of corridors;
4. Developing action plans for Green Infrastructure improvement in the pilot areas — with clear and adequate technical specifications; and
5. Securing funding for the implementation of mitigation measures.



The **local cross-sectoral operational plans** developed with stakeholder groups —for at least seven locations across seven countries in the Danube region — will present innovative and integrated solutions for increasing ecological functionality in the respective areas.

The participatory approach for development will create ownership by those who have the power to implement the plans. Moreover, stakeholder groups in the pilot areas will benefit from the uptake of learnings from other pilot areas with complementary foci (e.g. agriculture, forestry, water management) and results of the ConnectGREEN and TRANSGREEN projects at the transnational level.

At the policy level, the new national programmes for the disbursement of EU funds will include financial allocations for environmental measures.

Strategic documents on sustainable transport and green infrastructure, ecological connectivity and large carnivore's populations and their sustainable management and conservation will be considered by the upcoming 6th Conference of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (COP6), while ecological connectivity will be mainstreamed into EU, EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), and cross macro-regional policy.

## Activities

- Development of a standardized monitoring methodology for structural and functional connectivity
- Development of an application toolbox for the monitoring of structural and functional connectivity
- Development of a capacity building programme
- Engagement and cooperation with relevant stakeholders of specific pilot areas
- Development of cross-sectoral operational plans to safeguard the functionality of ecological corridors in the pilot areas
- Implementation of selected actions of the local cross-sectoral operational plans
- Support the mainstreaming of ecological connectivity into EU and global policies through cooperation among macro-regional strategies (i.e. EUSDR and the Carpathian Convention)
- Development of recommendations towards the integration of mitigation measures/GI into sectoral policy and decision making
- Strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation among key players, promotion of project results in the Danube basin and beyond, and capacity building at the national level

- Organisation of public events
- Digital communications & development of promotional materials

### **Pilot areas**

1. Kobernausser Forest (Austria)
2. Alpine (Austria)-Carpathian (Slovakia) Corridor (on the Austria side)
3. Beskydy-Kysuce mountains (Czech Republic-Slovakia)
4. Trans-boundary area between North Hungary and South Slovakia
5. Zakarpatska region (Ukraine)
6. Mureș Valley (Arad – Deva)
7. Mureș Valley (Târgu Mureș – Târgu Neamț)
8. Rila – Verila – Kraishte Corridor (Bulgaria)