

# BIODIVERSITY TASK FORCE

OF SOUTH EAST EUROPE



TECHNICAL AND ADVISORY BODY  
OF THE REGIONAL WORKING  
GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT





# THE BIODIVERSITY TASK FORCE OF SOUTH EAST EUROPE

## ABOUT

The **Biodiversity Task Force (BD TF)** is an intergovernmental technical and advisory body of the Regional Working Group on Environment that coordinates regional activities, facilitates the implementation of the **South East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy** and creates a framework for more efficient implementation of biodiversity policies in the framework of accession to the European Union.

## BACKGROUND

The **Regional Working Group on Environment (RWG Env)** operates under the auspices of the **Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Secretariat**, with the main responsibility for programming, overseeing and monitoring the activities within the **Dimension Environment**. Recognising the need for establishing a platform for planning, coordination and monitoring the regional activities on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity the BD TF was established under the RWG Env. Recognising the richness and the significant importance of the biodiversity for the region, the Bonn Environmental Ministerial Declaration 2017 calls upon the BD TF to provide a mechanism for regular monitoring and half-yearly reporting on the implementation and main developments through the RWG Env.

## WHY DO WE NEED THE BD TF?

The purpose of the Biodiversity Task Force is to support evidence based decision making by offering technical expertise to the RWG Env with the aim to **mainstream biodiversity concerns into actions and measures related to the overall and specific targets of the SEE 2020 Strategy and in particular into the Dimension Environment**. In this way the BD TF will stimulate regional cooperation and enable the SEE economies' progress towards international biodiversity commitments encompassed under the umbrella of the **Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030)**, and including the **Aichi Biodiversity Targets** adopted under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, as well as implementation of EU biodiversity related directives.



## MODE OF OPERATION

The BD TF is composed of focal points and deputy focal points with specialized expertise in biodiversity and related intervention fields, nominated by the economies of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Representatives of the Government of Croatia with expertise in biodiversity have the observer status.

According to BD TF Terms of References (ToR), endorsed by RWG Env and Rules of Procedure, adopted at the **constitutional meeting on 14 November 2017 in Belgrade, Serbia**, the BD TF meets in person up to two times a year, while additional meetings and online consultations may be organized as appropriate.

Observers participate in the work of BD TF while all inputs from the civil society, education, scientific and government bodies who may join at meetings or submit their proposals regarding ongoing themes and issues are welcome. Proposals and comments should be submitted in writing to the BD TF Secretariat, hosted by IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN ECARO).

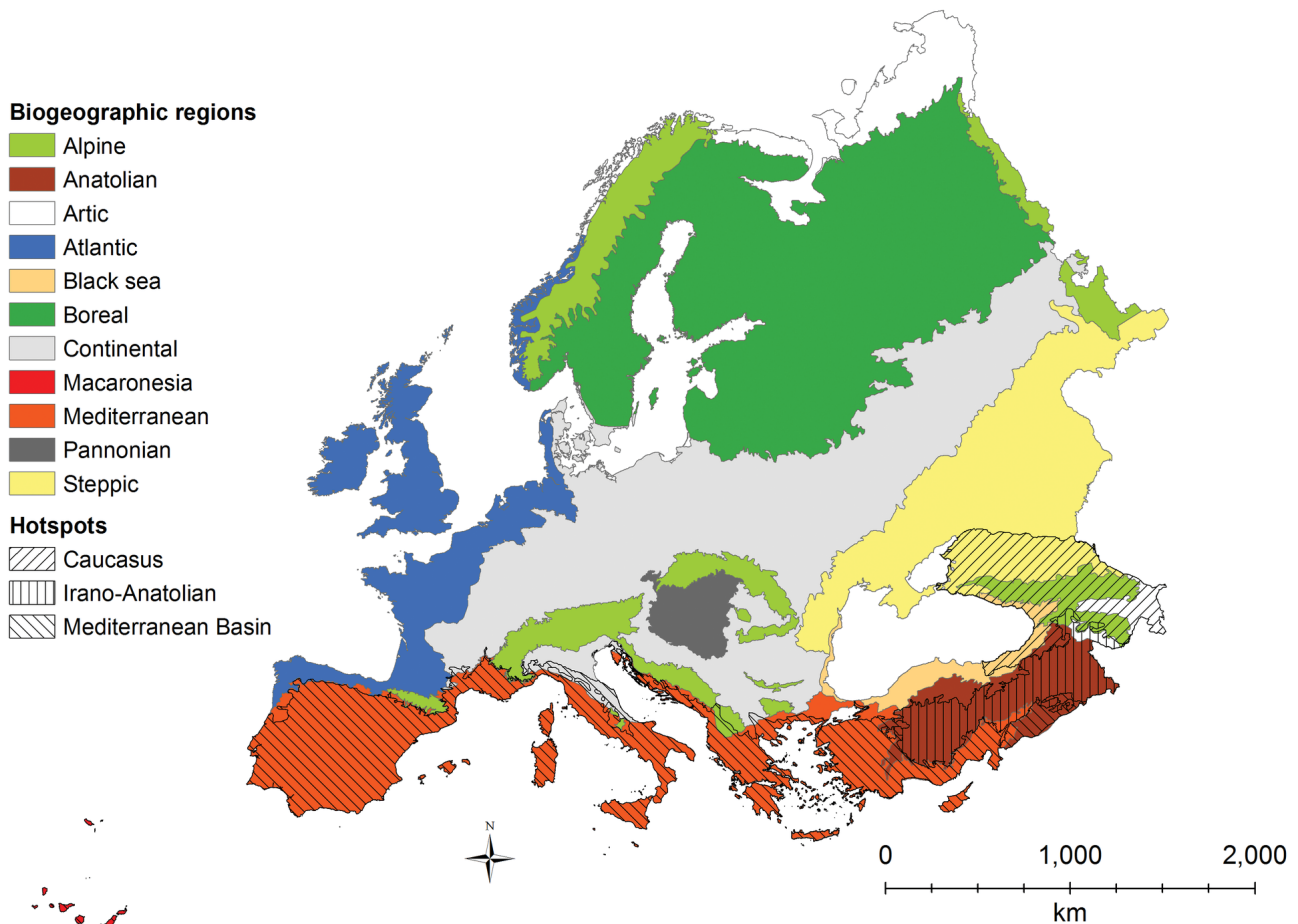
## BD TF WORK PLAN

After the first meeting, the Biodiversity Task Force underlined the importance of fostering regional cooperation and giving a unified voice on issues concerning biodiversity protection. Accordingly BD TF members and observers, coordinated by the Secretariat, agreed on a set of common regional priorities, as follows:

- THEME 1:** Streamline and monitor progress in implementing biodiversity-related conventions and agreements;
- THEME 2:** Enhance the transposition and implementation of EU *acquis*;
- THEME 3:** Integrate biodiversity protection and conservation into sectoral policies;
- THEME 4:** Cross-cutting issues: capacity development, communications and outreach, resource availability.

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

# BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOTS



Source: European Environmental Agency (<http://dataservice.eea.europa.eu/dataservice/>; accessed on January 2010), and biodiversity hotspots as defined by Myers et al. (2000).

The Western Balkan peninsula is home to rich and important biodiversity, including many threatened, rare and endemic species, making it an important part of the Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot, one of the 35 global biodiversity hotspots. A number of internationally designated sites have been established to protect this heritage in the region, including 26 Ramsar sites, five UNESCO

Biosphere Reserves, as well as seven UNESCO World Heritage natural sites. The economies in the region are also part of the European Green Belt Initiative and are working on establishing the Natura 2000 Network as part of the accession process to the European Union, that will help ongoing conservation efforts by improving management practice of protected areas.

# BIODIVERSITY IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO HUMAN WELL-BEING

Biological diversity provides the baseline for a healthy planet. People's lives, livelihoods, survival and culture are dependent on 'provisioning and regulatory services' provided by nature - for food and water, as a source of energy and medicine, as well as for climate regulation and disaster risk mitigation, alongside defining cultural and aesthetic values. While people in urban and developed areas draw less obvious, yet very significant, benefits from nature's services, those living in rural and developing regions are closely connected and dependent on the state of the natural environment.

Biodiversity protection is embedded in all 17 Sustainable Development Goals, with specific reference to SDG 14 and 15, thus aligning them with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.



**GOAL 14:** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.



**GOAL 15:** Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

## Aichi Targets



Understand values



Sustainable fisheries



Protected areas



Implement Nagoya Prot.



Mainstream biodiversity



Manage within limits



Prevent extinctions



Revise NBSAPs



Address incentives



Reduce pollution



Conserve gene pool



Respect and conserve TK



Sustainable production



Reduce invasive spp.



Restore ecosystems



Improve knowledge



Halve rate of loss



Minimise reef loss



Enhance resilience



Mobilize resources



# NATURE'S SERVICES

## Species - our food and medicine

- Some **200 million people worldwide** depend on wild species for at least part of their food, while others depend mainly on domesticated species for their dietary needs.
  - Fishing on Skadar Lake brings annually approximately **€1.8 million to the local economy**.
  - The Bosut Forests retention area bordering Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina can store 100-200 million cubic meters of water, cutting the water management costs for almost **3,5 million € per flooding season**.
  - Gross primary returns from water use of the Neretva and Trebišnjica river basins in just four sectors: hydropower, public water supply, tourism and selected agricultural production in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Croatia is around **450 million € yearly**.
- **More than 60 wild species** have been used to improve the world's 13 major crops by providing genes for pest resistance, improved yield, and enhanced nutrition.
- Roughly **7,000 plant species** have been used for human consumption, since agriculture began about 12,000 years ago.
  - It is estimated that 970 tons of berries are collected in National Parks Prokletije and Biogradska gora. This generates about **€1,100,000 every year**.
- **100 most-prescribed drugs** originate from wild species, while many medicinal plants and animals are used directly for their production.
- **More than 70,000 different plant species** are used in traditional and modern medicine globally.

Source: IUCN Facts and figures on biodiversity, ESAV case studies of the Institute for Nature Conservation of the Province of Vojvodina, Serbia and the Udruga Dinarica and WWF BAT reports.



Source: Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are defined by IUCN as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”.

# BIODIVERSITY FACTS

Nature provides services, also referred to as ecosystem services, that are essential to sustain all life on the planet. Besides provisioning services or goods like food, wood and other raw materials, plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms provide essential regulating services such as pollination of crops, prevention of soil erosion and water purification, and a vast array of cultural services, like recreation and a sense of place.

- Production of at least **one third of the world's food**, including 87 of the 113 leading food crops, depends on pollination carried out by insects, bats and birds. This ecosystem service is worth over US\$ 200 billion per year.
- Wild species are important in pest regulation. Bats, toads, birds, snakes, and so on consume vast numbers of the major animal pests found on crops or in forests.
- A family of **woodpeckers can eat 8,000-12,000 harmful insect pupae per day**, helping to maintain the health of forests. Alike, insectivorous birds can make the difference between a plentiful crop or a costly failure of fruit plantations.

## Trends and data for Europe and Central Asia (source IPBES report)

- From 1960 to 2016 there is **>50% of decline** in the share of nature's regulating and some non-material contributions to people.
- **42% of terrestrial animal and plant species** with known trends have declined in population size in the last decade.
- **15% decrease in water availability** (since 1990) per capita
- **26.6% estimated proportion of marine fish species** (for which trend data exist) that have declining populations, due to unsustainable fishing, habitat degradation, invasive alien species, eutrophication and climate change.
- **71% fish populations in decline** in past decade.
- **60% amphibian populations in decline** in past decade. Amphibians are vital indicators of environmental health ecosystems, while often used in the search for new medicines.



**The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species offers up to date information about the status of biodiversity globally, with detailed regional and national facts.**



The **Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)** serves regional cooperation and European and Euro-Atlantic integration of South East Europe in order to spark development in the region to the benefit of its people. RCC is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the SEE 2020 Strategy.

[https://www.rcc.int/working\\_groups/42/regional-biodiversity-task-force](https://www.rcc.int/working_groups/42/regional-biodiversity-task-force)



The **Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN ECARO)** acts as the Secretariat of the BD TF and provides administrative support, and contributes to better linking and faster implementation of measures related to biodiversity conservation and healthy ecosystems envisaged in the SEE 2020 Strategy.

[www.iucn.org/ecaro](http://www.iucn.org/ecaro)



Support for establishing the BD TF, and for different regional cooperation and biodiversity conservation projects, has been provided by the **Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Biodiversity (GIZ/ORF BD)**, funded by the **German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)** and implemented by the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH**.

[www.balkangreenenergynews.com/category/giz-orf-bd/](http://www.balkangreenenergynews.com/category/giz-orf-bd/)  
[www.facebook.com/BiodiversityORF/](https://www.facebook.com/BiodiversityORF/)