



Shaping a Sustainable Future for South-Eastern Europe

A Strategic Plan for IUCN in SEE





This publication has been made possible in part through the support of the MAVA Foundation

Shaping a Sustainable Future for South-Eastern Europe

A Strategic Plan for IUCN in SEE

Table of Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations.....	5
Summary.....	6
1. Introduction	7
2. Regional context	8
2.1 Background	8
2.2 Sectors	9
2.2.1 Nature conservation.....	9
2.2.2 Agriculture.....	11
2.2.3 Forestry.....	11
2.2.4 Water management.....	12
2.2.5 Energy	13
2.3 Initiatives	13
2.3.1 Dinaric Arc Initiative.....	13
2.3.2 European Green Belt.....	14
3. IUCN Members and Commissions in SEE.....	15
3.1 IUCN Members	15
3.2 IUCN Commissions.....	16
4. The Niche of IUCN.....	17
5. Mid-term Strategic Directions	18
5.1 Protected areas.....	18
5.2 Species conservation	19
5.3 Sustainable ecosystem management	19
5.4 Policy influencing.....	19
5.5 Capacity development.....	19
5.6 Strengthening the Union.....	20
6. Programme priorities 2013–2016.....	21
7. Operational plan	26
8. Communications	27
9. Monitoring and evaluation	30
Annex 1: IUCN Members in South-Eastern Europe	31
Annex 2: IUCN Members in countries neighbouring South-Eastern Europe.....	33

Acronyms and abbreviations

BfN	Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEC	Commission on Education and Communication
CEESP	Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy
CEM	Commission on Ecosystem Management
CEPA	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
CIC	International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DAI	Dinaric Arc Initiative
ECENA	Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network
ECNC	European Centre for Nature Conservation
ECRAN	Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Network for Accession
DAI	Dinaric Arc Initiative
EU	European Union
EU IPA	European Union's Instrument for Pre-Accession
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FASRB	Framework Agreement for the Sava River Basin
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
FYR	Former Yugoslav Republic
GA	Government agency
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPAP	Global Protected Area Programme
IBA	Important Bird Area
ICPDR	International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River
IPA	Important Plant Area
ISRBC	International Sava River Basin Commission
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUCN CMC	IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation
IUCN HQ	IUCN Headquarters
IUCN SEE	IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
MAB	Man and Biosphere
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	Member State
n/a	not applicable
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PA	Protected area
PBA	Prime Butterfly Area
RAPPAM	Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management
REC	Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
RENA	Regional Environment Network for Accession
SEE	South-Eastern Europe
SNV	Netherlands Development Cooperation
SSC	Species Survival Commission
TBPA	Transboundary Protected Area
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization
WCEL	World Commission on Environmental Law
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WDPA	World Database on Protected Areas
WH	World Heritage
WHP	World Heritage Programme
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Summary

The IUCN Strategic Plan for South-Eastern Europe (SEE) is aimed at defining mid-term Strategic Directions for IUCN by 2020 and programme priorities for the period 2013–2016. The plan stems from a broad consultation process including the IUCN Secretariat, IUCN Members and Commissions, and partners in SEE and beyond. The process of setting programme priorities stems from and is closely linked with the IUCN Programme 2013–2016. The consultation process assumed a series of events and steps along the way, including an online assessment of needs and priorities, the IUCN Members' meeting held in March 2013 in Tirana, Albania, as well as continuous email and personal consultation.

The overall objective of IUCN in South-Eastern Europe is to work towards the long-term protection of biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. Stemming from this, six mid-term Strategic Directions have been defined, the first three of which are thematic and the remaining three are cross-cutting issues. The six mid-term Strategic Directions to 2020 are as follows:

- Protected areas;
- Species conservation;
- Sustainable ecosystem management;
- Policy influencing;
- Capacity development;
- Strengthening the Union.

In order to achieve these goals, IUCN will work across all of its components, which include the IUCN Secretariat, IUCN Members and Commissions, including a broad network of partners and stakeholders, spanning governments, research centres, NGOs, local authorities and communities. The IUCN Secretariat will have a central role in coordinating the process; however, it cannot deliver the strategy alone, nor could its Members or Commissions without their mutual cooperation. Moreover, IUCN has to strive towards broadening its membership and expert base and work towards expanding external networks and partnerships. Partnerships should be built at all levels – local, national, regional, and international.

The IUCN Strategy for SEE is subject to monitoring and evaluation. The strategy would require a thorough revision by 2020, after the expiry of the next two quadrennial programme cycles of IUCN, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

1. Introduction

IUCN is today the largest professional global conservation network dealing with environment and sustainable development, with more than 1,200 member organizations including 200+ government and 900+ non-government organizations and almost 11,000 voluntary scientists and experts, grouped in six Commissions in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN is the world's leading authority on conserving nature and natural resources for people's livelihoods, setting standards, fostering policies and bringing together a diverse membership of States, government agencies and civil society organisations to seek out nature-based solutions to global challenges and environmental governance, aimed at sustainable development and biodiversity conservation on the ground.

The IUCN Balkan Initiative Programme was initiated in 2002 at the European IUCN/WCPA meeting in Pörtlach, Austria. Subsequently, a meeting held at IUCN headquarters in Gland, Switzerland in February 2003 identified the clear need for a special sub-regional programme concentrated on the Balkans. As a result of these mentioned efforts, the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe was established in spring 2004 in Belgrade, at that time Serbia and Montenegro. The rationale for its establishment was based on the identification of the niche in which a sub-regional programme for South-Eastern Europe, then referred to as the Balkans, could put IUCN conservation efforts forward more effectively. The first strategic plan for the SEE region entitled "Conservation without Frontiers" was prepared the same year and served as a guiding document for IUCN in SEE from 2004 to 2013. This plan addressed the recommendations ensuing from discussions held at the IUCN Members Meeting in Novi Sad, Serbia on 7-8 March 2004. One of the central aims of the IUCN Strategic Plan was to promote the region as a European treasure chest of cultural and natural heritage.

Since 2004, a number of changes, environmental, political and structural, have occurred both across the region and in IUCN. All these changes have prompted the need to review the IUCN 2004 SEE strategy and launch a new process to set mid-term targets and priorities for IUCN in South-Eastern Europe. Hence, in December 2012, the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe, with the support from the MAVA Foundation, initiated the process of reviewing and updating IUCN's regional strategy. The process, facilitated by IUCN SEE, assumes broad consultation between the IUCN constituency and partners in SEE and beyond, including the IUCN SEE Members' meeting held in Tirana, Albania on 6–7 March 2013. The aim of this process was to set mid-term Strategic Directions for IUCN in SEE to 2020, and to define priority activities for 2013–2016. The process of setting Strategic Directions and programme priorities for SEE reflect the following strategic documents: IUCN Programme 2013–2016, Draft European Programme 2013–2016 and Implementation Plan of the IUCN Programme in Europe. The main focus in this process was placed on terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. Marine ecosystems are dealt with by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN CMC) and, rather than expanding its capacity and portfolio into that direction, IUCN SEE will rely on the expertise of IUCN CMC with regards to marine conservation. The mid-term Strategic Directions and Programme priorities are subject to regular periodic review. Given the timeframe of the next two quadrennial planning cycles of IUCN and two additional and important strategic processes — the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 — it is recommended that a thorough review of the IUCN Strategy for SEE be undertaken prior to 2020.

2. Regional context

2.1 Background

The South-Eastern European region, as defined by the 2004 IUCN Strategic plan for South-Eastern Europe, encompasses Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. It is part of the IUCN Statutory Region East Europe, North and Central Asia. The region is known for its biodiversity values, rich tradition and history. Geographically, the region is very diverse. It encompasses the whole of the Dinarides, the Balkan, Rhodope and Pindus mountain ranges, as well as parts of the Carpathians and the Pannonian Plain. Its southern parts belong to the Mediterranean Basin, while the northern areas belong to the Danube River Basin. Due to diverse influences in the region throughout history, these countries encompass a range of ethnic groups, languages and religions, thus creating an immense cultural diversity but also diverse land use patterns. The centuries-long use of natural resources, coupled with urban sprawl, recent economic growth and infrastructure development has posed great pressures on biodiversity and placed it under increasing threat. Yet, due to the predominantly mountainous character of the region and harsh living conditions that stem from it, it is still possible to find vast tracts of unspoiled nature and pristine habitats.



Politically, the region has undergone major changes in the past twenty years caused by the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the subsequent armed conflicts and strong EU integration processes. Today, the region is characterized by the relatively small size of countries with numerous state borders. Among several integrative processes in the region, EU accession ranks very high. Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007, Croatia in July 2013, while FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia have received the status of candidate countries. It is expected that Serbia will begin EU negotiations in 2014.

The region has experienced depopulation in the last 20 years mainly due to unfavourable economic conditions. Yet, over the past fifteen years, the region has returned onto the path of economic recovery. GDP per capita (current US\$) (2011) is highest in Croatia, followed by Romania, Bulgaria and Montenegro and exceeding around three times that in FYR Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo*. The figures are presented in the table below.

Table 1: GDP per capita in US\$ (Source: World Bank, 2013)¹

Country	GDP (US\$)
Albania	4,029.73
Bosnia and Herzegovina	4,820.67
Bulgaria	7,282.52
Croatia	14,193.33
FYR Macedonia	5,057.97
Kosovo*	3,579.23
Montenegro	7,110.63
Romania	8,874.32
Serbia	6,312.33

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the IJC opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

¹ World Bank data portal <http://data.worldbank.org/>, data accessed 29 May 2013

Population growth varies, showing positive trends in Albania and Kosovo*, FYR Macedonia and Montenegro. Rural population is decreasing in all countries at a higher rate than the overall country populations, showing a depopulation process of rural areas taking place across the region.

Table 2: Population growth and rural population growth – annual % in 2011
(Source: World Bank, 2013)²

Country	Population growth	Rural population growth
Albania	0.36	-1.89
Bosnia and Herzegovina	-0.21	-1.25
Bulgaria	-2.50	-4.55
Croatia	-0.34	-1.02
FYR Macedonia	0.16	-0.15
Kosovo*	1.51	no data
Montenegro	0.12	-0.40
Romania	-0.25	-0.31
Serbia	-0.45	-1.24

2.2 Sectors

2.2.1 Nature conservation

SEE is characterized by high biodiversity and large, relatively well preserved ecosystems. The high mountains have an outstanding diversity of plant species, and are one of the last retreats of large European carnivores, such as bear, wolf and lynx that have vanished in many parts of Europe. The most notable of all the large carnivores is the rare and endangered Balkan Lynx (*Lynx lynx martinoi*). Wetlands and water bodies are key for the conservation of migratory birds on an international scale. To the east, millions of birds flock to the Danube Delta. The region serves as a refuge for many species listed by the IUCN as vulnerable or endangered. In order to conserve wildlife in the region and prevent the loss of many endangered species, transboundary cooperation between the countries in the region is required. Bird migration over the region links the important sites of transboundary wetlands for the conservation of birds along the Adriatic Flyway. The Balkan Lynx Recovery Programme focuses on the establishment of a system of transboundary sites with potential occurrence of the Balkan Lynx in order to secure long-term management of habitats to safeguard its survival. Similar initiatives are essential in order to enhance regional wildlife management, such as the Green Alliance for the Balkan Lynx initiated by the CIC Coordination Forum for Central and Eastern Europe. In most cases, species conservation is backed by research and policy. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is recognized as an important tool in species conservation, with Croatia making the most significant progress in developing national Red Lists to date.

Protected areas (PA) are still the main tool for nature conservation in the region. National protected area systems as well as their alignment with the IUCN PA management categories system differ from country to country. PA coverage is on rise, though the majority of countries are behind the global Aichi Target 11, which calls for at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas to be conserved by 2020. PA coverage may vary significantly from country to country. In Albania, the PA network has increased significantly during the last years and reached 16% in 2012, yet not all of the designated PAs are effectively managed. BiH has the lowest percentage of PA coverage in the region (see Table 3).

² World Bank data portal <http://data.worldbank.org/>, 2011, data accessed 29 May 2013

Table 3: Main designation types in SEE countries

Country	PA coverage (%) ³	Natura 2000 (%)	Ramsar sites ⁴ ha (number of sites)	World Heritage ⁵ ha (number)	Biosphere Reserve ⁶ ha (number)	IBA ⁷ ha (number)
Albania	16.00	n/a	83,062 (3)	0	0	90,309 (15)
BiH	2.63	n/a	56,779 (3)	0	0	56,779 (4)
Bulgaria	5.2	34.34	35,381 (11)	38,718 (2)	37,778 (16)	2,601,787 (114)
Croatia	8.19	29.64	94,358 (5)	29,482 (1)	595,861 (2)	850,518 (21)
FYR Macedonia	9.00	n/a	21,616 (2)	83,350 (1)	0	681,388 (22)
Kosovo*	11.00	n/a	0	0	0	0
Montenegro	9.05	n/a	20,000 (1)	32,100 (1)	182,889 (1)	94,700 (5)
Romania	7.00	23.38	923,597 (12)	312,440 (1)	708450 (3)	4,157,459 (130)
Serbia	5.86	n/a	63,919 (10)	0	53,804 (1)	766,960 (35)

Overall, effectiveness remains one of the key obstacles in the management of protected areas. There are different types of governance of PAs including government, shared and private governance⁸. The work on protected areas in SEE, and more specifically in the Dinaric Arc, has largely been supported by WWF, which conducted the RAPPAM and protected area gap analyses in the Dinaric Arc and recently launched the Dinaric Parks process.

As EU Member States, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania have identified Natura 2000 networks but not all protected sites are officially designated yet. Currently Bulgaria has a total number of 336 Natura 2000 sites and the Natura 2000 network in Romania includes 531 sites. The Croatian proposal for the Natura 2000 network includes 794 sites⁹. The other countries from SEE have also started developing their Emerald and Natura 2000 networks.

The Regional Environment Network for Accession (RENA)¹⁰ is the EU's IPA project launched in 2010 with the aim of enhancing regional environmental cooperation in the Western Balkans and Turkey in the field of environment in the prospect of accession to the European Union. A new programme, called the Environment and Climate Regional Accession Network (ECRAN)¹¹ is due in 2013 as a follow up to RENA. Its aim will be to continue providing support in key policy areas such as water, waste, air, horizontal legislation, nature protection and industrial emissions.

A range of legal and institutional arrangements for nature conservation can be found across the region. All countries recognize a standard law or act on nature conservation, with a number of by-laws regulating the expert area. All countries in the region have at least one ministry responsible for nature conservation. Sometimes this role is divided among the sectoral ministries dealing with, for example, forests, water and agriculture, which are accountable for natural resource management but can in part also be accountable for nature protection, usually as managers of protected areas. The ministries usually have regional and sometimes local level divisions. In some countries, such as Croatia, Montenegro¹² and Serbia, there are nature conservation institutes and

3 Fourth National Report to the UN CBD for the period August 2007 – December 2010, Biodiversity Directorate, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water, Republic of Albania, December 2010.

4 Fourth National Report for the period 2005-2008 to the CBD, Ministry of Environment and Water, Republic of Bulgaria.

Glasnović, P. et al. (2011): Protected Area Gap Analysis. Final Report. WWF Dinaric Arc Ecoregion Project. University of Primorska, Science and Research Centre of Koper, Institute for Biodiversity Studies.

<http://www.dzpz.hr/eng/protected-areas/protected-areas-in-croatia/protected-areas-in-croatia---national-categories-1137.html>.

Action Plan for Implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Republic of Macedonia, 2012.

Maxhuni, Q. et al. (2013): Biodiversity and protected areas in Kosovo, The 3rd International Conference of Ecosystems (ICE 2013), Tirana, Albania National Biodiversity Strategy with the Action Plan for the period 2010–2015, Ministry for Spatial Planning and Environment, Podgorica, Montenegro, July 2010.

<http://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=ro>

Biodiversity Strategy of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2011–2018. Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2011.

4 http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-about-sites/main/ramsar/1-36-55_4000_0__

5 Includes only those sites inscribed under one of the natural criteria, i.e. (vii) to (x). <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>

6 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/europe-north-america/>

7 <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/country>

8 Stanciu, E. & Ionita, A. (2013): Governance of Protected Areas in Eastern Europe – overview on different governance types, case studies, and lessons learned. Study commissioned to ProPark, Romania, by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN). BfN-Skripten.

9 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs/docs/nat2000news/nat34_en.pdf

10 <http://www.renanetwork.org>

11 <http://tacso.org/doc/07%20PF%20ECRAN%20.pdf>

12 The Institute for Nature Protection in Montenegro has been incorporated as a part of the Environmental Protection Agency

agencies subordinated to the ministries responsible for nature conservation. Nature conservation agencies also exist in the Republika Srpska entity of BiH and in Kosovo*. Similar structures are lacking in other countries. In most countries, scientific institutes and universities also deal with nature conservation issues. The management of protected areas is diversely structured. Most national and nature parks have their own administrations, while other types of protected areas usually have delegated management. In many cases, the capacity to manage the protected area is very limited and coupled by a lack of financial means for activities related to the implementation of the management plans. Normally, protected area management plans are required by the law, yet in some countries, clear guidelines on PA management plans are missing.

The number of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in South-Eastern Europe focusing on nature conservation is relatively small. There are however exemptions to this, with several well-established and profiled CSOs with a specific focus on nature conservation. There are several examples of CSOs managing protected areas, yet the CSO contribution to nature conservation processes should be better formulated and more visible. CSOs play an important role in the designation and maintenance of national nature conservation systems and that role has to be exercised more. It is certain that unstable and interrupted funding pose a major obstacle in the process of profiling CSOs, yet there are also other reasons, such as the recognition of civil society organizations in establishing and maintaining nature conservation systems, frequent flow of young experts working in CSOs, lack of strategic planning, etc. Still, there is much room for the improvement of capacities of CSOs dealing with nature conservation and IUCN certainly has to play a role in this.

2.2.2 Agriculture

Lowland agriculture is primarily intensive while in the mountains, where intensification is more difficult, traditional low-intensity sustainable farming practices are still in place. However, the latter are being abandoned as they are no longer economically viable. Without management, the mosaic landscape and in particular semi-natural grasslands with their typical flora and fauna are slowly disappearing. Existing farms are small and the parcels are scattered. Farmers are typically elderly people with a low level of education, without financial capital and without heirs wishing to continue in agriculture. However, there is some evidence of young and middle-aged people returning to agriculture due to the economic crises and unemployment.

SEE is a globally important region in terms of both crop landrace varieties and crop wild relative varieties. Recent analysis on a global scale has highlighted the region as being a particular hotspot of the latter; however, they are significantly threatened within the region.

The EU Member States in the region – Bulgaria, Romania and, recently, Croatia have EU support for the implementation of agri-environment measures from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. However, they are still facing many administrative and bureaucratic obstacles, such as an up-to-date register of farmers for smooth implementation of the measures. Poor alignment between the EU legislation and national acts is another issue that occasionally leads to negative consequences for biodiversity. Also, the above mentioned countries would benefit more if they started to implement a more diverse set of measures eligible for support. One of the main problems, common to the EU Member States in SEE, remains the non-eligibility of small farmers to apply for agri-environmental schemes due to the criteria for minimum land area. Through national support schemes, the countries from the former Yugoslavia have provided support for some of these types of measures. These usually include: species-rich grasslands; meadow orchards; genetic resources such as local breeds and traditional varieties; hedges and dry stonewalls; organic farming; sustainable use of mountain pastures, etc. The main problem with national support schemes is that the budget fluctuates annually and is therefore not continuous. New measures or new places for their implementation are usually introduced via pilot projects in high nature value farming areas.

2.2.3 Forestry

The forest area as a percentage of the total land area in SEE is close to the average for Europe – around 30%. Forests provide habitat for a number of plant and animal species. Since large parts of the region are hilly and mountainous, forests have also an important protective function – they help prevent erosion and alleviate the effects of avalanches. Forests in the region have been exploited for centuries. In some parts, such as the

Adriatic coast, deforestation combined with harsh climatic conditions has left behind many barren slopes. As in the rest of Europe, natural lowland forests are in serious decline and have been replaced by pine and poplar plantations. Forests are managed intensively, which includes the vast majority of protected areas that still secure revenues through timber production. Other challenges for forest managers in the region are illegal logging and summer fires.

The last State of Europe's Forest Report 2011 states that the forest area as well as the growing stock in SEE is increasing, with more than 60% of forests aged 21-80 years and 6% of forests undisturbed by man. However, there is a low share of forests protected for biodiversity conservation and not enough information to objectively estimate if the forests are sustainably managed.

The voluntary scheme for FSC certification of sustainably managed forests has been applied in BiH, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Serbia. The demand for FSC certified timber is mainly market-driven. The EU has little competence on forest management in its MSs as EU policy and legislation directly related to forests, such as the EU Forest Strategy and Action Plan, is not legally-binding except for the Regulation laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market.

2.2.4 Water management

The SEE region, with the exception of Bulgaria, is abundant in water resources including large rivers and river deltas, tectonic and glacial lakes, underground lakes, wetlands, thermal waters, water springs, etc. The largest water bodies are the rivers: Bojana/Buna, Cetina, Danube, Drava, Drina, Drin, Mura, Neretva, Sava, Una, Vardar and Vrbas; the lakes: Skadar/Shkodër, Ohrid, Prespa, Dojran; and the wetlands: Danube Delta, Gornje Podunavlje and Kopački Rit, Hutovo Blato, Livanjsko Polje, Neretva Delta, etc. Many of these water bodies are shared between two or more countries. In addition, the Dinarides are considered to be the largest freshwater aquifer in the Mediterranean.

Water pollution remains a serious problem. In many cases, wastewater in both urban and rural areas is discharged into water bodies without treatment. This, combined with uncontrolled dumping of solid waste, and the predominantly karst nature of the geology in parts of the region, contribute to surface and ground water pollution. Erosion is also a problem resulting from the mountainous terrain and uncontrolled deforestation. Floods are a significant risk in all the counties – many areas suffer from frequent flooding during the heavy rain season. Freshwater resources still lack integrated management systems, which is also impeded by a lack of cooperation across borders.

Several initiatives and transboundary structures like Prespa Park Management Committee, Lake Ohrid Watershed Committee and Lake Skadar/Shkodër Commission were established to facilitate and improve river and watershed management.

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) is an international organisation consisting of 14 cooperating states and the European Union. It was established in 1998 to deal with the Danube and the entire Danube River Basin, including its tributaries and groundwater resources. Its work is based on the Danube River Protection Convention with goals to safeguard the Danube's water resources for future generations; secure naturally balanced waters free from excess nutrients; eliminate the risk from toxic chemicals; secure healthy and sustainable river systems and damage-free floods.

The International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) was established with the purpose of implementing the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin (FASRB), for realizing the following goals: establishment of an international navigation regime on the Sava River and its navigable tributaries; establishment of sustainable water management, undertaking of measures to prevent or limit hazards, such as floods, ice, droughts and accidents involving substances hazardous to water, and to reduce or eliminate related adverse consequences.

The Drin Dialogue, i.e. the establishment of a Shared Vision among the Drin Basin Riparians, was the outcome of a structured multi-stakeholder process at both the national and transboundary levels. The Strategic Shared Vision for the management of the Drin Basin identifies key issues, along with short-, medium- and long-term

actions needed to develop an integrated management of the basin in close cooperation among the Riparians. An Action Plan guides the work to be undertaken by the parties to the MoU with the facilitation of the Drin Core Group and its Secretariat.

There are a number of multilateral and bilateral initiatives and agreements on water management. They all play a vital role in discussions on water management issues and finding acceptable solutions for concerned parties.

Water resources in South-Eastern Europe, and especially in the Dinaric Arc, are of great quantity and high quality and represent one of the most important features of the region. Simultaneously, associated species and habitats are under severe threat due to ever increasing pressure on water resources for energy production. This may have negative consequences not only on biodiversity but also on local communities that are dependent on these resources. It is likely that these pressures will continue. Meanwhile, more cross-border and transnational initiatives on the management of water resources are expected to commence.

2.2.5 Energy

The region has a strategic geographical position, situated between the energy-rich areas of Russia, Caspian Asia and the Middle East, and the industrialized Western and Central Europe, which provides certain opportunities to improve its position on the energy market. The region's own energy potential is closely linked with water resources. Thermal and hydro power plants are the main domestic producers of energy. Hydropower is the main source in Albania (60%) and Croatia, and represents a significant percentage in BiH with a tendency for growing investments. More than 573 new dams larger than 1 MW are planned in the SEE countries, having a direct impact on rivers with "very high conservation value" in 70% of cases and on rivers with "high conservation value" in 23% of cases, according to a study conducted by EuroNatur.¹³ Hydropower dams modify entire river landscapes, leading to a loss of endangered habitats and species. They interrupt river corridors, hamper sediment transport and produce channel degradation further downstream, etc. Still, most of these countries are dependent on electricity imported from abroad.

All the countries are included in the EU energy sphere, meaning improved overall energy conservation and efficiency, strengthened national institutional capacities and adapted legislation and regulation to EU norms and practices. It also includes ever growing proportions of energy from renewable resources, i.e. investments in hydro, biodiesel, wind and solar power stations. The increase of renewable energy sources is highly desirable in terms of reduction of CO₂ emissions. However, in many cases, the utilization of renewable energy sources ends up having a negative or potentially negative effect on the environment, especially on natural habitats and species. So far, investments in wind power are very controversial due to placement of the installations in sensitive areas, e.g. on bird migration routes. Bats are also very sensitive to wind turbines, especially during low wind speed. Overall, wind parks may have serious adverse impacts on biodiversity and their placement should follow careful assessments. Moreover the incorporation of wind power to the energy grid seems not to be consistent and strategically well planned. Biomass, the main part coming as forest firewood, as the least expensive renewable energy option so far, will continue to account for a significant share of the energy mix, which suggests either more intensive forest exploitation or import from remote countries. All this poses a great threat to the biodiversity of the region.

2.3 Initiatives

2.3.1 Dinaric Arc Initiative

In 2004, WWF, IUCN and UNESCO launched an informal partnership for the conservation and sustainable development of the Dinaric Arc, an eco-region characterised by the Dinarides, covering parts of several South-Eastern European countries. The Dinaric Arc Initiative (DAI) soon attracted other international organizations active in the region: UNDP, UNEP, FAO, Council of Europe, EuroNatur, SNV, ECNC, REC and CIC. Each partner contributes with its own programme portfolio, bringing diverse experience into DAI.

13 http://www.euronatur.org/fileadmin/docs/projekte/Balkan_Rivers_Blaues_Herz_Europa/BalkanRiverAssessment29032012web.pdf

DAI has proven to be an important regional process which has helped raise awareness, increase visibility and recognition, build partnerships and mobilize resources for the conservation of the Dinaric Arc. With its great leverage potential, DAI has paved the way for several subsequent processes such as the Big Win for Dinaric Arc, the Resolution for the Sustainable Development of the Dinaric Arc, Dinaric Parks, the Dinaric Arc transboundary conservation platform, as well as numerous site- and community-based projects and activities. One of the main achievements of DAI, led by WWF, was the signing of the 'Big Win for Dinaric Arc' Joint Statement of the representatives of the Governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia in 2008. The Governments agreed to foster transboundary cooperation in implementing the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas, with the aim to establish a well-managed and ecologically representative protected area network. By signing the statement, the countries recognized the importance of regional collaboration for transboundary management of protected areas, encouraging the exchange of experiences and exploring options for the enhancement of transboundary conservation across the Dinaric Arc. DAI has recently entered a new phase by setting up a Support Unit and working on a new Vision and Strategy for the initiative. IUCN continues to be an active partner in DAI by providing continuous support in the process of achieving its objectives.

2.3.2 European Green Belt

The European Green Belt is a 12,500 km strip stretching from the Barents Sea at the Russian-Norwegian border, along the Baltic coast, through Central Europe and the Balkans to the Black Sea, i.e. along the former Iron Curtain, which separated the European continent into East and West for nearly 40 years. The European Green Belt Initiative was established in 2003. Today, the Green Belt connects 24 countries, is a backbone of a transnational ecological network and represents a significant contribution to the European 'Green Infrastructure'. It is a symbol for transboundary cooperation and shared European natural and cultural heritage. Some of the last remnants of wilderness in Europe are encompassed by the Green Belt. Currently, 40 national parks are situated directly along the European Green Belt. More than 3,200 protected nature areas can be found within a 50 kilometre buffer on either side of the Green Belt. It also crosses eight European bio-geographical regions.

There are two sections of the Green Belt relevant for this strategy: the Central European Green Belt running along the Drava River along the border of Croatia and Hungary and the South-East European Green Belt (also referred to as the Balkan Green Belt) throughout the rest of the region. The Drava River is still characterized by high dynamism which includes numerous meanders, oxbows and river islets. It is a part of the Danube-Drava-Mura Transboundary Biosphere Reserve in Croatia and Hungary. The South-East European Green Belt is the southernmost stretch of the European Green Belt. It is characterized by high diversity of ecosystems with vast tracts of unspoilt nature. Apart from diverse nature, a multitude of stakeholders from different levels are actively involved in the initiative. The Regional Coordinator for the South-East European Green Belt section is EuroNatur. IUCN actively supports the initiative in a number of ways, spanning governance, fundraising, networking and promotion.

3. IUCN Constituency in SEE

IUCN has three main constituent parts: IUCN Members, Commissions, and the IUCN Secretariat. IUCN Members and Commissions are considered the backbone of the Union. They form IUCN's broad decision-making and knowledge base and are a key to the successful implementation of the strategy and programme.

3.1 IUCN Members

IUCN is a democratic membership-based organisation and its Members form the highest decision-making body of the Union, through the World Conservation Congress held every four years. Membership in the Statutory Regions of West Europe, and East Europe, North and Central Asia totals 403 Members (327 in West Europe and 76 in East Europe, North and Central Asia) as of the most recent IUCN Council meeting.

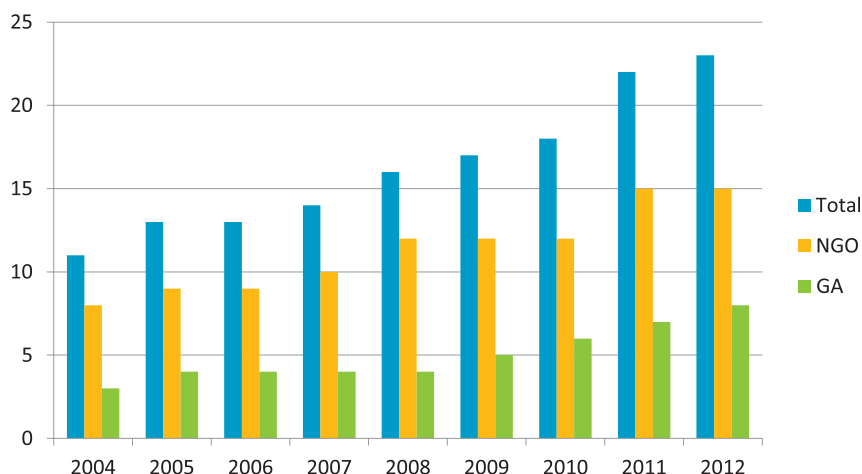
The IUCN Strategy for South-Eastern Europe encompasses the following countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia. In early 2013, IUCN had a total of twenty-three (23) Member organizations in South-Eastern Europe, 15 of which in the NGO category and 8 as Government Agency without Member State. IUCN membership in SEE covers all countries except for FYR Macedonia. At the moment there are no National Committees in SEE. Apart from the region-based members, a number of IUCN Members with international outreach have been active in region, such as BfN, ECNC-European Centre for European Conservation, EuroNatur, Global Footprint Network, International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), Plantlife, Tour du Valat, WWF, etc.

Naturally, IUCN SEE has established close ties and cooperation with Kosovo and the following neighbouring countries: Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Slovenia and Ukraine. Further cooperation with Turkey has yet to be explored.

IUCN has a strong membership base in SEE with a rather equal distribution across categories and countries, yet enlarging the membership and strengthening the network are integral parts and goals of the IUCN SEE strategy.

Looking back to 2004 and comparing accordingly, gradual though significant expansion has in fact been achieved. At that time, Membership included several Government Agency Members (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and Serbia), and seven NGO Members, some of which were already Members long before the establishment of the SEE Office. In 2009, there were four (4) Government Agencies and twelve (12) NGO Members and by 2012, both categories had increased, with eight (8) GA and fourteen (14) NGO Members. The following graph depicts the increase.

Figure 1: Membership evolution in SEE since 2004 (source: IUCN)



IUCN Members are a key component towards achieving IUCN's Vision and Mission, actively contributing to the implementation of the IUCN Programme and priorities, both in the region and globally. Members participate in the work of IUCN according to their priorities and depending on the available resources and capacities. A full list of IUCN Members in South-Eastern Europe is provided in Annex I to this document.

At the 2012 IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), several priorities for IUCN were suggested, dealing with Enhanced Leadership, A Stronger Union, and Resource Mobilization. At its 81st meeting in January 2013, IUCN Council discussed the priorities and a draft note to plan actions around them.

As a result, the proposal to develop a Framework of Action to Strengthen the Union with specific actions will to a great extent guide IUCN's future Membership Strategy by strengthening its continually expanding Membership, as well as governance and structure. One identified key challenge, directly related to Membership is to ensure continued engagement of all Membership categories, an action that will involve extensive dialogue, while acknowledging their different status and needs and bringing all IUCN components in order to effectively deliver the 2013–2016 IUCN Programme and beyond.

3.2 IUCN Commissions

IUCN has six thematic volunteer Commissions covering a range of issues relevant to nature conservation, with more than 11,000 experts globally. The Commissions are as follows:

- Commission on Education and Communications (CEC);
- Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM);
- Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP);
- Species Survival Commission (SSC);
- World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL);
- World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA).

The six Commissions constitute the expert base of IUCN and help generate knowledge products, shape policies and implement the IUCN Programme. They are indispensable in establishing and maintaining the knowledge-policy-action axis. All six Commissions are represented in SEE.

Table 4: The number of Commission members per country (source: IUCN, 2013)

Country	Commission					
	CEC	CEM	CEESP	SSC	WCEL	WCPA
Albania	1			4		4
BiH	2			2		1
Bulgaria	1		2	19	1	2
Croatia	1	4	2	15	1	4
FYR Macedonia		1		2		-
Montenegro				1	1	1
Romania	3	1	2	16		5
Serbia	6	3	1	7	1	5
TOTAL	16	9	7	66	4	22

The IUCN SEE Office plays an important role in mobilizing experts and recruiting new Commission members in the region. It will continue working closely with Commissions and its members to facilitate the vast knowledge generated within. Moreover, IUCN SEE should exert every effort to mobilize the expert network and work on recruiting new Commission members from the region. One key challenge related to the IUCN Commissions is to improve the recognition and involvement of the members of IUCN Commissions in Programme implementation, clarifying their added value to the Union.

4. The Niche of IUCN

IUCN is the world's authority on conserving nature and natural resources for people's livelihoods, setting standards, fostering policies and bringing together a diverse membership of States, government agencies and civil society. IUCN stands for nature-based solutions to global challenges and environmental governance, aimed at sustainable development and biodiversity conservation on the ground.

IUCN produces and disseminates science-based, applied knowledge on biodiversity and its conservation, drawn from its Members and Commissions as well as the IUCN Secretariat.

The knowledge-policy-action link, achieved jointly through the Union, is what makes IUCN the world's authority on biodiversity conservation, nature-based solutions and related policy development and environmental governance. Four features summarize how IUCN works as a Union:

1. IUCN generates and disseminates credible and trusted knowledge on conservation and sustainable development;
2. IUCN convenes and builds partnerships for action across governments and civil society;
3. IUCN bridges local, regional and global policy and action;
4. IUCN develops standards, influences practices and builds capacity for conservation and sustainable development.

Together, these features make IUCN distinct from others in the conservation, environment and sustainable development arena and enable the Union to deliver a joint Programme. Many organizations share the focus on knowledge-based policy making, standard-setting and action on the ground, but none with a membership and a science-foundation as robust and diversified as that of IUCN.

In the 2004 strategic plan "Conservation without Frontiers", the role of IUCN in SEE was defined as trifold:

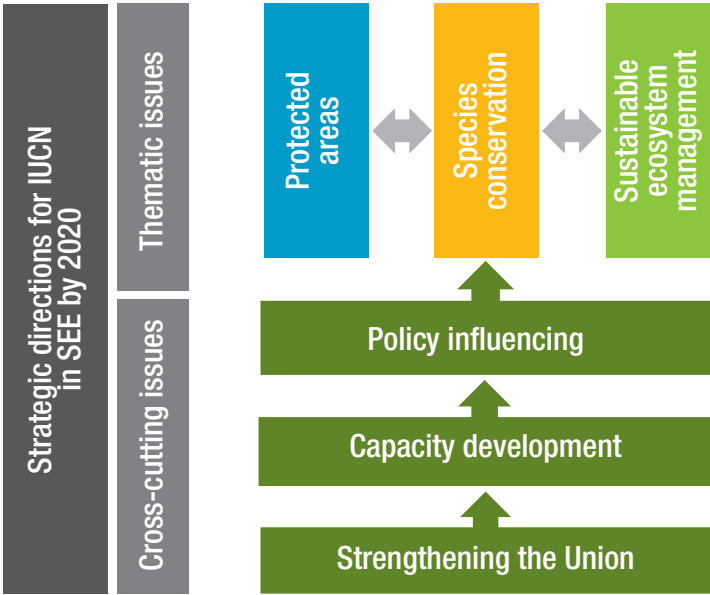
1. Strengthening and supporting the work of the Union through networking, coordination, facilitation, training and technical assistance;
2. Supporting policy-making on conservation and sustainable development aimed to empower Union Members and Commissions participation in regional and national policy-making;
3. Drawing on field activities and regional experience to demonstrate the feasibility and appropriateness of the IUCN approach to biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of natural resources and equitable sharing of benefits coming from conservation and sustainable use.

IUCN is well positioned to play an important role in providing a platform that brings various stakeholders together, from governmental levels to NGOs, business and the scientific community. To that end, IUCN will continue mobilizing networks and exercising convening power in order to fulfil its role, from field activities to conservation planning to policy-shaping.

5. Mid-term Strategic Directions in SEE

IUCN’s vision is “a just world that values and conserves nature”. Our Mission is “to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable”. IUCN is a knowledge-based organization with expert advice and capacity development at the core of its mission. IUCN is committed to maintaining the highest possible professional standards in delivering capacity development programmes at all levels and according to its programme areas. In SEE, IUCN stands for the long-term protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources. Priorities for IUCN in SEE stem from the global and regional needs and trends in nature conservation, IUCN’s goals as defined by the IUCN Programme 2013–2016 and a broad online and direct consultation process with IUCN Members, Commissions and partners undertaken after the 2013 IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in Jeju, Republic of Korea in September 2012. One important step in the consultation process in SEE was the online survey and the IUCN SEE Members’ meeting held in Tirana, Albania from 6–8 March 2013. The Members’ meeting brought together more than 40 participants, including IUCN Members, IUCN Commissions, partners and the IUCN Secretariat serving as a key platform for identifying IUCN’s priorities in SEE.

Figure 2: IUCN SEE Strategic Directions by 2020



During the consultation process, three thematic and three cross-cutting issues have been identified as mid-term Strategic Directions of IUCN in SEE by 2020, as outlined below.

5.1 Protected areas

IUCN is a global provider of credible knowledge and standards on protected areas. It spans a range of key knowledge products from the Protected Planet, IUCN Protected Area Management Category system, standards for management planning and effectiveness evaluation and transboundary conservation to emerging issues such as a Green List of Protected Areas. Protected Planet is one of the six IUCN flagship knowledge products. It is powered by the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), a joint initiative between the IUCN and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC). The WDPA is the most comprehensive and authoritative global dataset on protected areas, intended to inform decision-makers and policy-makers. In

South-Eastern Europe, protected areas were at the core of IUCN's work from the outset, with PA network and coverage and effective management as two main programme objectives as defined by IUCN's strategy in 2004. Transboundary conservation ranks among the key programme themes when it comes to the Strategic Direction on protected areas. Protected areas will remain at the core of IUCN's work in South-Eastern Europe in the future and particular emphasis will be given to protected area coverage, management, and effectiveness.

5.2 Species conservation

IUCN's focus on species conservation has been thoroughly exercised throughout the decades. It is one of the pillars of the IUCN Programme 2013–2016 and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is recognized as one of the key knowledge products of IUCN, alongside Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA), another important IUCN knowledge product that IUCN intends to launch in the running quadrennial period. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is widely recognized as the most comprehensive, objective global approach for evaluating the conservation status of species. KBA is meant to be a global conservation standard (utilizing criteria derived from the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems) to identify the most important sites for biodiversity on land and in the sea. Species conservation was defined as one of the objectives of IUCN's work in SEE in its strategy from 2004, with particular emphasis on increasing the number of the populations of indicator species and the protection of migratory corridors. IUCN will continue supporting and advocating a science-based approach to species conservation, increased field activities and financing with a view to safeguarding threatened species.

5.3 Sustainable ecosystem management

Ecosystem management is becoming increasingly important and central to nature conservation efforts. It is driven by ever growing pressure on species and habitats, particularly relevant for fragmented habitats observed throughout Europe and increasingly present in South-Eastern Europe. IUCN's focus on ecosystems in SEE was formulated in the 2004 strategy under two priority themes: Sustainable use of natural resources and Water resources conservation and management. The IUCN Programme 2013–2016, which addresses ecosystem management in all three Programme Areas, in particular focuses on drivers of ecosystem change in Programme Area 3: Deploying Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges in Climate, Food and Development. The Red List of Ecosystems is another global knowledge product that IUCN is planning to launch by 2016. It will assess the risk of collapse of ecosystems by using standardised criteria similar to those used by the Red List of Threatened Species, and it will be applicable at the local, national, regional and global levels. An important task for IUCN will be to better understand the drivers of ecosystem change, such as climate change, infrastructure development or energy production, in order to be able to address them and curb the process of further ecosystem degradation.

Apart from the three thematic Strategic Directions outlined above, three cross-cutting issues were also defined. The cross-cutting issues overarch the thematic issues and aim to address each of them, as outlined below.

5.4 Policy influencing

Globally, IUCN is the leading provider of biodiversity knowledge, tools and standards used to influence policy, undertake conservation planning and guide action on the ground. IUCN has a strong convening power and potential to bring together key actors at all levels ensuring that knowledge-policy-action links are in place and are effective. Within this strategic priority, particular emphasis will be on biodiversity-related conventions, first and foremost to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and policy development at the national level. IUCN can play an important role in bridging and aligning global and regional policies with national ones.

5.5 Capacity development

Capacity building for conservation and sustainable development has been recognized as one of the four features of IUCN in the current quadrennial programme. In South-Eastern Europe, IUCN remains at the forefront of capacity development and is recognized as one of the leading organizations in delivering state-of-the-art capacity building programmes on nature conservation. In the next mid-term period, particular attention will be

given to capacity building on IUCN knowledge products and global and regional policies addressing an array of target groups, spanning both governmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

5.6 Strengthening the Union

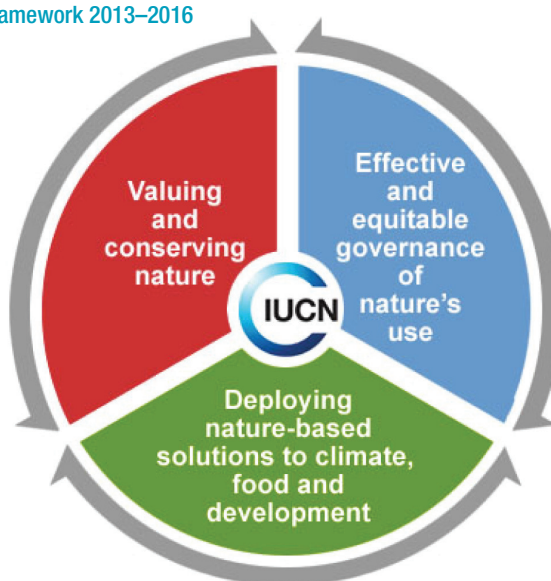
Engaging and leveraging the Union represents one of the four main business lines of IUCN with a view to delivering on its programme objectives and, in essence, is part of its mission. IUCN's work is defined by its convening, networking and empowering potential, strengthening Members' involvement in IUCN, policy development, and capacity-building of and services to Members, the Union's governing bodies, Commissions, and National and Regional Committees.

The six Strategic Directions span the next mid-term period which extends until 2020. In order to be able to implement these six mid-term Strategic Directions, all three components of IUCN — IUCN Members, Commissions and the IUCN Secretariat — should work closely and in a coordinated manner over the next mid-term period.

6. Programme priorities 2013–2016

The IUCN's work is based on a Programme that is approved by Members at the IUCN World Conservation Congress every four years. It is a joint Programme that serves all IUCN components in achieving its objectives. The current Programme 2013–2016 was approved and adopted by IUCN Members at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju, Republic of Korea in 2012. The IUCN Programme 2013–2016 has three Programme Areas: *Valuing and Conserving Nature*, *Effective and Equitable Governance of Nature's Use* and *Deploying Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges in Climate, Food and Development*. The Programme reflects the *One Programme Charter*, adopted by the IUCN Council in May 2011, calling upon the Secretariat, Members, Commissions, and National and Regional Committees to work together to develop and implement the IUCN Programme collaboratively.

Figure 3: IUCN's Programme framework 2013–2016



The three Programme Areas of the IUCN Programme 2013–2016 are as follows:

Valuing and Conserving Nature enhances IUCN's heartland work on biodiversity conservation, emphasizing both tangible and intangible values of nature. The Programme Area aims to ensure that credible and trusted knowledge for valuing and conserving biodiversity leads to better policy and action on the ground.

Effective and Equitable Governance of Nature's Use consolidates IUCN's work on people–nature relations, rights and responsibilities, and the political economy of nature. The Programme Area aims to ensure that improved governance arrangements over natural resource management strengthen rights and deliver equitable conservation with tangible livelihoods benefits.

Deploying Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges in Climate, Food and Development expands IUCN's work on nature's contribution to tackling problems of sustainable development, particularly in climate change, food security and social and economic development. The Programme Area aims to ensure that healthy and restored ecosystems make cost-effective contributions to meeting global challenges of climate change, food security and social and economic development.

IUCN's work in South-Eastern Europe in the next four years reflects the IUCN Programme 2013–2016 and contributes to the Draft European Programme and the Implementation Plan of the IUCN Programme 2013–2016 in Europe.

Table 5: IUCN SEE priorities according to IUCN Programme Areas 2013–2016

Programme Area 1: Valuing and Conserving Nature		
Global and regional result: Credible and trusted knowledge for valuing and conserving biodiversity leads to better policy and action on the ground		
Priority theme	Objective	Indicator
Protected area management and financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the coverage and management effectiveness of protected areas • Ensure compliance of national standards on protected areas with IUCN PA best practice guidelines and knowledge products • Provide technical assistance to authorities on designing sustainable systems of financing for protected areas • Ensure functional links with the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Area, the Aichi Targets and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 • Support the implementation of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and Upstream Process 	<p>Protected Area coverage increased by 2% in five countries following the IUCN PA categories system and taking into account internationally recognized inventories such as IPA, IBA, BPA, KBA, etc.</p> <p>Key Biodiversity areas are used to extend protected areas coverage in two countries</p> <p>Protected areas managed in accordance with the IUCN PA categories system increased by 20%</p> <p>National standards on PA management planning developed in two countries</p> <p>At least one country joins the Green List of Protected Areas process</p> <p>Mid-term priorities on protected area management set in five countries</p> <p>A preliminary list of Natura 2000 sites elaborated in at least one country</p> <p>At least one workshop on World Heritage for the SEE region</p> <p>Nomination file for one Upstream pilot project prepared</p>
Transboundary conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve transboundary cooperation in the region • Identify existing and potential TBPAs in the region • Support joint planning, management and monitoring of TBPAs • Ensure that regional TB experience contributes to global TB conservation efforts 	<p>A regional map of transboundary protected areas, including areas with potential for transboundary conservation</p> <p>Initiated cooperation in three transboundary protected areas or sites</p> <p>Case studies from SEE contribute to one global publication on TB conservation</p>

Species conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide expert support to the development of national Red Lists • Support the application of international standards in species conservation • Provide functional links between Members and partners for species conservation and relevant IUCN SSC Specialist Groups • Achieve favourable conservation status of threatened species • Promote the conservation of native genetic resources and information dissemination on alien and invasive species • Support fundraising for species conservation • Improve game management by applying sustainable hunting principles and law enforcement • Identify priority threatened species in SEE across a wide range of taxa and with emphasis on endemic species 	<p>Five national Red Lists according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species criteria</p> <p>New IUCN Key Biodiversity Areas standard applied in two countries</p> <p>At least one country joins the Red List of Ecosystems process</p> <p>One new regional expert network on species conservation</p> <p>30 experts trained on Red List principles</p> <p>Full participation of SSC experts from SEE in the development of regional Red Lists</p> <p>IUCN SEE-led project portfolio focusing on threatened species doubled</p> <p>Information on native genetic resources and alien invasive species publicly available</p> <p>Regular updates on funding opportunities provided to Members and Commissions</p> <p>Guideline(s) on sustainable hunting management in SEE</p> <p>A list of priority threatened species in the region</p>
Ecological networks and green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce mitigation measures on habitat fragmentation • Apply the concept of ecological networks and green infrastructure 	<p>One representative and functional ecological network in SEE</p> <p>Five green infrastructure projects</p>
Programme Area 2: Effective and Equitable Governance of Nature's Use		
Global and regional result: Improved governance arrangements over natural resources deliver rights-based and equitable conservation with tangible livelihoods benefits		
Priority theme	Objective	Indicator
Shared and equitable governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure public participation in the planning and management of biodiversity and natural resources • Promote shared governance models which include the private sector, local communities and resource managers • Introduce alternative sources of income for local communities, e.g. through the sustainable use of natural resources and increased valorisation of nature 	<p>Fifteen PA management plans elaborated in a participatory manner</p> <p>20 private businesses, local communities or resource managers participate in a training programme on the governance of natural resources</p> <p>Extent of revenues to local communities generated from alternative/innovative sources of income</p>

Programme Area 3: Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges in Climate, Food and Development		
Global and regional result: Healthy and restored ecosystems make cost-effective contributions to meeting global challenges of climate change, food security and economic and social development		
Priority theme	Objective	Indicator
Ecosystem management and restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the drivers of ecosystem change and degradation Improve knowledge on ecosystem restoration with a particular emphasis on climate change Support restoration and rehabilitation of threatened ecosystems The private sector recognizes the importance of biodiversity conservation and improves its performance with respect to natural resources Ensure better integration of biodiversity conservation principles into sectoral planning processes 	<p>At least one ecosystem-specific restoration initiative</p> <p>Three successful ecosystem restoration projects</p> <p>Five companies with improved management standards as regards natural resources, taking IUCN knowledge products into consideration</p> <p>Five sectoral management planning processes with integrated biodiversity concerns</p>
Ecosystem services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate the value of ecosystem services and showcase the benefits of biodiversity conservation Integrate TEEB aspects into the management and use of natural resource 	<p>Two assessments of the benefits of sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services</p> <p>At least one country with integrated ecosystem services and biodiversity values in its national account</p>

Apart from programme priorities stemming from the three Programme Areas as defined by the IUCN Programme 2013–2016, a number of priorities have been defined for the three cross-cutting issues for SEE.

Table 6: 2013–2016 priorities for cross-cutting themes

Strengthening the Union	
Result: A larger, more effective and coherent Union effectively contributes to the implementation of global and regional nature conservation priorities	
Objective	Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivate and engage the Member network by identifying and communicating clear and targeted benefits of IUCN membership Support the establishment of National and/or Regional Committees as deemed appropriate Maintain regular meetings between the IUCN Secretariat and Member organizations Facilitate access to first-hand information on nature conservation news, events and networks Leverage communication and cooperation with IUCN Members, commissions and staff members outside SEE 	<p>Member mapping with particular emphasis on underrepresented countries</p> <p>5 new IUCN Members and 20 new Commission members</p> <p>One National/Regional Committee</p> <p>One event in WCC and one event in WPC featuring SEE</p> <p>A minimum of six meetings with Member organizations organized annually</p>

Policy influencing	
Result: Global and regional policies in nature conservation are properly understood, transposed and implemented	
Objective	Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of biodiversity-related conventions and their proper incorporation into national and regional policy documents • Support the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2012–2020 and the EU 2020 Strategy for Biodiversity • Provide the necessary support to the development of regional and national policies in line with EU and global nature conservation policies and strategies 	<p>Regional and national priorities in nature conservation identified and agreed</p> <p>Regional nature conservation targets set and institutional networks established</p>
Capacity development	
Result: Stakeholders are enabled to actively participate in all relevant nature conservation processes	
Objective	Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver capacity building programmes on key IUCN nature conservation standards (e.g. IUCN PA Management Categories system, PA management planning and effectiveness assessment, World Heritage, etc.) • Provide functional links and promote IUCN global knowledge products • Provide knowledge on system-level participatory planning, such as designing nature conservation or protected area systems at the national level • Support capacity building on other relevant biodiversity-related issues 	<p>A series of tailored workshop trainings on IUCN knowledge products organized</p> <p>One new IUCN global knowledge product introduced</p> <p>Five countries develop mid-term conservation plans building on their own capacity</p>

7. Operational plan

The *One Programme Charter* is a conceptual framework that underpins the implementation of this strategy. Proper understanding and implementation of this approach is instrumental in delivering the objectives set in this document. IUCN should work across all of its components, which include the IUCN Secretariat, IUCN Members and Commissions, in order to effectively implement this strategy. The IUCN Secretariat alone cannot deliver the strategy or the programme, nor could its Members or Commissions without cooperation amongst themselves and across the Union. Moreover, IUCN has to strive towards broadening its membership and expert base and work by expanding external networks and partnerships. Partnerships should be built at all levels – local, national, regional, and international. The IUCN Secretariat in SEE is represented by the Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe based in Belgrade. The role of the IUCN SEE office in the implementation of the Strategic Plan is essential, and in particular when it comes to cross-cutting issues where IUCN SEE will play a major role. IUCN SEE will continue providing the necessary facilitation and coordination role in linking IUCN Members and Commission experts in the region and beyond, IUCN Global Programmes and other Regional and Programme Offices. IUCN Members and Commissions, on their part, will actively contribute to the implementation of the joint Strategic Plan for SEE, according to their capacity and resources. Strong links will be maintained with thematic IUCN global programmes such as the Global Programme on Protected Areas (GPAP), the World Heritage Programme (WHP), Species Programme, Ecosystem Management Programme (EMP), and others while particular support will be sought from the Union Development Group when it comes to Union development-related activities. Particular attention will be given to cooperation with the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN CMC) in Málaga, and the EU Representation Office in Brussels. Cooperation with the IUCN CMC is particularly important for its expertise on marine conservation, an area of great importance for South-Eastern Europe, whereas close relationship with the EU Representation Office will be maintained given the EU Member State status of several countries, and the on-going EU accession processes in the region. In its work, IUCN SEE will actively liaise with the Regional Councillor for East Europe, North and Central Asia. Another important aspect of the work of IUCN in SEE is cooperation with national authorities, EU and international organizations. IUCN SEE will continue cooperating with national and international institutions and organizations, both bilaterally and through specific programmes and initiatives.

IUCN SEE is primarily a project-based office and therefore it is crucial to maintain donor relationships and actively fundraise for its activities. In order to be effective on this aspect of its work, IUCN SEE will liaise with IUCN HQ and work in partnership with Members, Commissions and partners. This pertains to various levels of operations from the formulation of strategic priorities to development of specific projects and activities.

8. Communications

Since the establishment of the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe (IUCN SEE), its communication activities have been mostly linked to project activities, due to the overall funding scheme of the office. The achievements and results of the SEE office are also promoted through the global and regional channels of IUCN and the messages are coordinated with IUCN global/regional communication messages. The publications and other communications products and activities in which IUCN is engaged in the region are announced on the IUCN websites, both SEE and European, and others as appropriate. Below is the main target audience of IUCN in SEE:

- Nature protection/environment ministries and relevant government agencies;
- Research and scientific institutions;
- Authorities responsible for the management of biodiversity – local, national, and regional;
- Natural resource managers;
- Environmental NGOs;
- IUCN Constituency (Secretariat, Members and Commissions);
- Donor agencies.

In past years, IUCN has been communicating in South-Eastern Europe through a range of communication tools, as analysed below. Each can further support the implementation of the IUCN strategy for SEE as proposed below, but are subject to change according to the available resources. Whenever possible, IUCN aims to translate communication products into the national languages, which remains one of the priorities of IUCN's communication work in SEE.

Online presence (website and social media)

IUCN SEE publishes regular news and updates on its section of the IUCN website <http://www.iucn.org/southeasterneurope>, with an average frequency of 1-2 stories per month. Web stories highlight the IUCN SEE project milestones and achievements, share globally/regionally important information while aiming to promote its members' activities. Several project related websites have been created, e.g. <http://www.savariver.com> and <http://www.dinaricarc.net>. Stories also appear on regional and global websites and newsletters, as well as on the Global Members Portal Platform, reaching a worldwide audience. When relevant, the achievements of IUCN SEE work have been promoted through IUCN global social media channels and blog.

IUCN SEE e-bulletin

The e-Bulletin functions as an exchange platform for receiving, filtering and disseminating information related to nature conservation in the region and beyond. Recipients are invited to contribute to each issue of the bulletin. Articles are mostly written in the reporting style, as their main objective is information sharing. IUCN has an editorial control over the product's content. The e-Bulletin features the IUCN SEE Constituency updates, and includes global and/or European content considered of interest for the SEE community. It has been published quarterly since 2004, and disseminated by IUCN SEE to approximately 570 contacts in the region and beyond. The number of recipients will continue to grow in the future. In 2012, the e-Bulletin was enriched with a new section entitled "In the focus". This addition enables IUCN to get the desired message across, while being closely linked with one of the project components (strengthening CSOs, project cycle and fundraising). It was introduced as part of the project, and it will be published beyond the project whenever possible. IUCN SEE will continue improving the quality of the bulletin by introducing new content and working to broaden the recipients' network. The published issues of the IUCN SEE e-Bulletin are accessible at: http://iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/resources/newsletters/see_bulletin/.

Printed material

Printed material results from implemented projects and office activities and includes project leaflets (info sheets), usually distributed at regional events and made available to the partners for distribution, and publications (guidelines, case studies, etc.) that are available online and, if possible, sent in hardcopy to partners.

The IUCN Programme Office for SEE will prepare an IUCN SEE info sheet, introducing the IUCN constituency and its priorities in the region, and also work on a series of info sheets introducing the key knowledge products of IUCN.

Press releases

Press releases are disseminated for project milestones and IUCN announcements and achievements. The media contact network is growing, and media relations building will be the following step.

The key messages of IUCN's communications work in South-Eastern Europe could be summarized as follows:

- Nature conservation is essential to life;
- IUCN is a leading authority on biodiversity conservation in the region;
- IUCN is an active and reliable partner that promotes knowledge-sharing throughout the region;
- IUCN promotes examples of best practice and new approaches to nature conservation;
- Sharing information across the region helps harmonize approaches and improve practices;
- IUCN represents a growing network – a Union of knowledge and field experience.

During the IUCN SEE Members' Meeting in Tirana in March 2013, and highlighting the online survey conducted and completed in February 2013, the IUCN Constituency shared its views on the possible joint actions that could be grouped into two pillars:

1. Actions to increase information exchange internally within the IUCN SEE constituency and strengthen the network (website boost, specialized blog entries dedicated to issues of joint concern, shared stories on IUCN membership benefits; IUCN SEE e-Bulletin enrichment; communication capacity building workshops, etc.),
2. Steps that could raise public awareness on the importance of sustainable use of natural resources and good environmental practices in SEE, and beyond (proposed topics to be addressed: importance of PA categorisation, importance of national red list development, priorities in species conservation through indicator and flagship species; sharing information on funding for conservation and other environmental issues, sharing good examples and case studies from the region of the benefits of valuing ecosystem services and the sustainable use of natural resources, etc.).

Whenever possible, in its communication work IUCN SEE will rely on key CEC products such as the CEPA toolkit or the Strategic Communication Guideline.

Table 7: The main goals of the communication work of IUCN in SEE

Result: Increased information flow and exchange on biodiversity conservation in SEE	
Objective	Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify the IUCN SEE webpage • Issue IUCN SEE e-Bulletin on a quarterly basis • Increase social media presence • Initiate thematic discussions and harmonized actions on issues of common interest and regional importance 	<p>The number of visitors of the IUCN SEE webpage increased by 10%</p> <p>Website updated weekly</p> <p>The number of recipients of IUCN SEE e-Bulletin increased by 10%</p> <p>Develop a new social media account for IUCN SEE</p> <p>At least two thematic Foci prepared yearly</p> <p>A minimum of one joint communication activity of regional importance every two years</p>
Result: IUCN and its work in SEE profiled	
Objective	Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elaborate an overview on IUCN and its mission in SEE • Provide regular updates on IUCN's activities in the region • Disseminate information on IUCN through SEE media networks and channels • Leverage communication between IUCN Members, Commissions and the IUCN Secretariat 	<p>IUCN SEE info sheet available online and printed in English and at least three local languages</p> <p>IUCN SEE updates prepared annually</p> <p>At least four press releases issued annually by IUCN</p> <p>30 news articles on the work of IUCN in SEE published in the media</p> <p>One of the social media sites serves as a platform for info exchange and contact building</p>

9. Monitoring and evaluation

Effective strategies require continuous monitoring and evaluation. This strategy is not an exemption in this respect and IUCN will pay particular attention to the monitoring of the implementation of the strategy. This will primarily be the role of the IUCN Secretariat and the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe. Monitoring and evaluation require specific knowledge and resources and IUCN SEE will aim to make a short-time evaluation of the strategy on a biennial basis. The monitoring and evaluation of the IUCN SEE strategy should be a joint effort with all three IUCN components contributing and participating in it. The IUCN SEE strategy is not time limited but would require a thorough revision by 2020, upon the expiry of the 2017–2020 quadrennial programmatic period of IUCN, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. Ideally, the strategy should be thoroughly revised before 2020, while the programme objectives should be evaluated every two years.

Annex 1: IUCN Members in South-Eastern Europe¹⁴

Albania

- Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) / Instituti për Ruajtjen e Natyrës në Shqipëri (INCA)
- Preservation and Protection of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) / Ruajtja dhe Mbrojtja e Mjedisit Natyror në Shqipëri (PPNEA)

Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Natural Heritage Protection Society - ARBOR MAGNA, Banja Luka / Društvo za zaštitu prirodnog naslijeđa - ARBOR MAGNA, Banja Luka

Bulgaria

- Ministry of Environment and Water / Министерство на Околната Среда и Водите
- Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF) / Българска Фондация Биоразнообразие

Croatia

- Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection, Nature Protection Directorate/ Ministarstvo zaštite okoliša i prirode, Uprava za zaštitu prirode
- State Institute for Nature Protection / Državni zavod za zaštitu prirode
- Association BIOM / Udruga BIOM
- Croatian Biological Society / Hrvatsko biološko društvo
- Croatian Herpetological Society / Hrvatsko herpetološko društvo (HHD-Hyla)
- Croatian Society of Natural Sciences / Hrvatsko prirodoslovno društvo

Montenegro*

- Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism / Ministarstvo održivog razvoja i turizma
- Centre for the Protection and Research of Birds of Montenegro / Centar za zaštitu i proučavanje ptica Crne Gore (CZIP)
- Greens of Montenegro / Zeleni Crne Gore

*Application of the Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro / Javno preduzeće za nacionalne parkove Crne Gore will be discussed at the 82nd Meeting of the IUCN Council

Romania

- Ministry of Environment and Forests /Ministerul Mediului și Pădurilor
- Speleological Association / Asociatia Speologica Exploratorii (ASE)
- UNESCO Pro Natura (Association for Action in Protected Areas) / UNESCO Pro Natura (Asociatia pentru Actiune in Aril Proteiate)
- Earthvoice Romania / Societatea Romana de Ecologie

Serbia

- Ministry of Energy, Development and Environmental Protection / Ministarstvo energetike, razvoja i zaštite životne sredine
- Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia / Zavod za zaštitu prirode Srbije

¹⁴ As of the 81st Meeting of the IUCN Council, January 2013

-
- Institute for Nature Conservation of Vojvodina Province / Pokrajinski zavod za zaštitu prirode
 - Ecolibri Bionet: Centre for Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development / Ecolibri Bionet: Centar za očuvanje biodiverziteta i održivi razvoj
 - Green Network of Vojvodina / Zelena mreža Vojvodine

Annex 2: IUCN Members in countries neighbouring South-Eastern Europe¹⁵

Greece*

- World Wide Fund for Nature – Greece – WWF Ελλάς
- Elliniki Etairia, Society for the Protection of the Environment and Cultural Heritage / Ελληνική Εταιρία Περιβάλλοντος και Πολιτισμού
- Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature (HSPN) / Ελληνικά Εταιρία Προστασίας της Φύσης
- Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal (Mom) / Εταιρία Μελέτης και Προστασίας Μεσογειακής Φώκιας
- Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change / Υπουργείο Περιβάλλοντος, Ενέργειας και Κλιματικής Αλλαγής

*Application of the Society for the Protection of Prespa / Εταιρία Προστασίας Πρεσπων will be discussed at the 82nd Meeting of the IUCN Council

Hungary

- Ministry of Rural Development / Vidékfejlesztési Minisztérium
- International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC)
- Nimfea Environmental and Nature Conservation Association / Nimfea Természetvédelmi Egyesület
- Goncol Foundation / Goncol Alapítvány
- Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society / Magyar Madártani és Természetvédelmi Egyesület
- National Society of Conservationists – Hungary / Magyar Természetvédők Szövetsége
- World Wide Fund for Nature – Hungary / WWF Világ Természeti Alap Magyarország Alapítvány

Moldova

- BIOTICA Ecological Society / Societatea Ecologica BIOTICA

Slovenia

- Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment of the Republic of Slovenia / Ministrstvo za kmetijstvo in okolje

Turkey

- Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs of the Republic of Turkey / Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Orman ve Su İşleri Bakanlığı Söğütözü
- Turkish Association for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources / Türkiye Tabiatini Koruma Derneği
- Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (Tema Foundation) / Türkiye Erozyonla Mücadele, Ağaçlandırma ve Doğal Varlıkları Koruma Vakfı (Tema Vakfı)
- WWF Turkey / WWF Türkiye (Doğal Hayatı Koruma Vakfı)
- Doğa Derneği (Nature Society) / Doğa Derneği

Ukraine

- National Ecological Centre of Ukraine - NECU / Національний екологічний центр України
- Environment-People-Law / ЕПЛ (Колишній БФ "Екоправо-Львів")

¹⁵ As of the 81st Meeting of the IUCN Council, January 2013



**INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

PROGRAMME OFFICE FOR
SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE
Dr Ivana Ribara 91
11070 Belgrade, Serbia
see@iucn.org
Tel +381 11 2272 411
Fax +381 11 2272 531
www.iucn.org

