



The Carpathian Opportunity

More Business, More Jobs, More Nature

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"The best way to ensure the future is to create it"

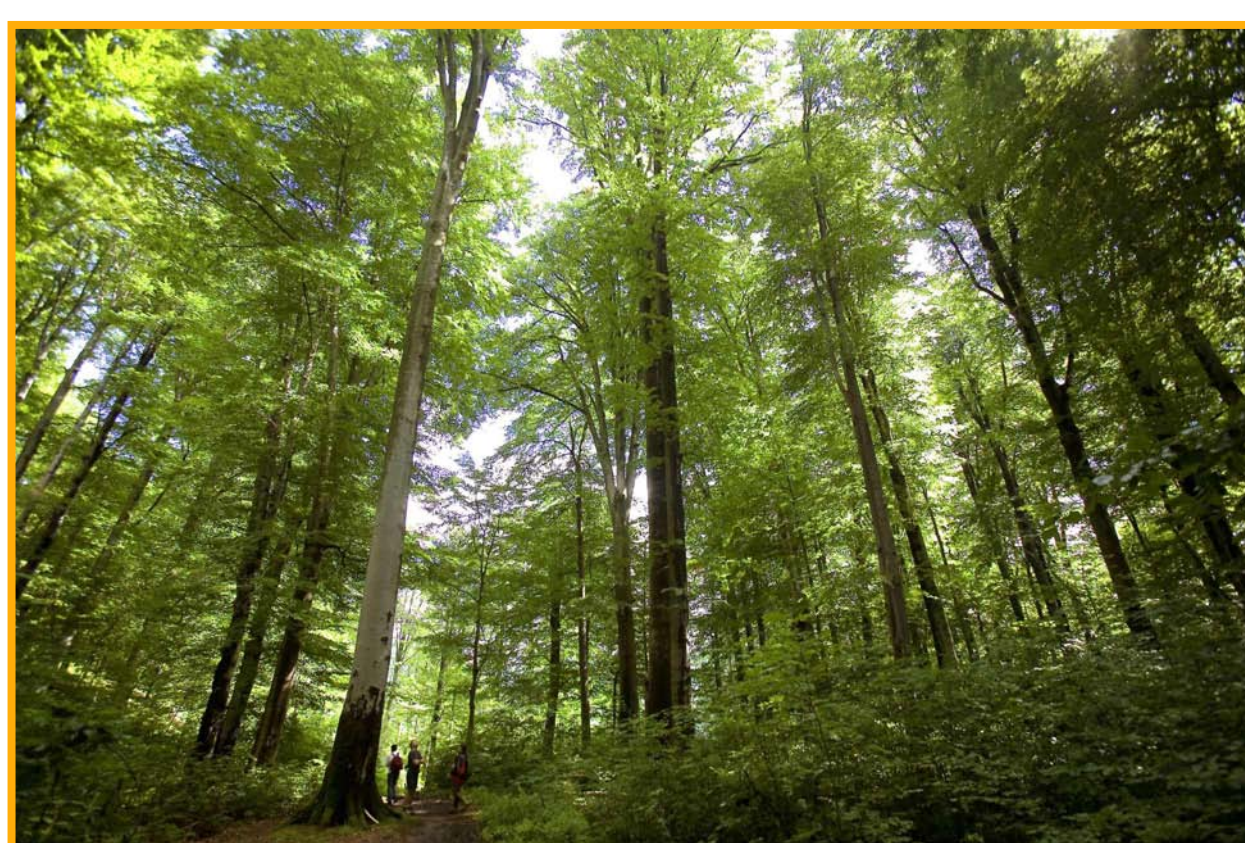
The Carpathian Opportunity is an innovative and ambitious action spearheaded by business, environmental and public interests that seek to catalyze the right kind of development in one of Europe's last great natural regions.

The **vision** of the Carpathian Opportunity is to create a thriving, prosperous "conservation economy" in the Carpathians.

The **goal** is to achieve More Business, More Jobs and More Nature.

The **target** is to achieve 10 million "conservation economy" jobs.

The **Carpathian Opportunity will accelerate investment and business activities** that have a net positive impact for the environment and place social equity high on the agenda.



The Carpathian Region

A centre of cultural and natural capital.



Some places in the world are blessed with a richness and diversity of natural and cultural wealth. The Carpathian Mountain range in Eastern Europe is one of them, giving this region a significant natural advantage over other areas. Change is coming to the Carpathians. But what will this change look like now, tomorrow, and for generations to come? Decisions are being made at every level: from state and regional policy, to business interests and family lifestyles. These decisions will determine the future prosperity and future sustainability of the region.

In many parts of the world, communities are beginning to recognize the value of social integrity, culture and nature as the foundations for happiness and prosperity. Protecting and nurturing these values are therefore vital, but where to start? Many solutions are already exist; others must still be found.

The Carpathian Opportunity presents a rallying call, a challenge to be met. The challenge for the Carpathians is to find the solutions and take action now. The Carpathian Opportunity aims to help motivate and mobilize those who are ready to meet this new challenge.

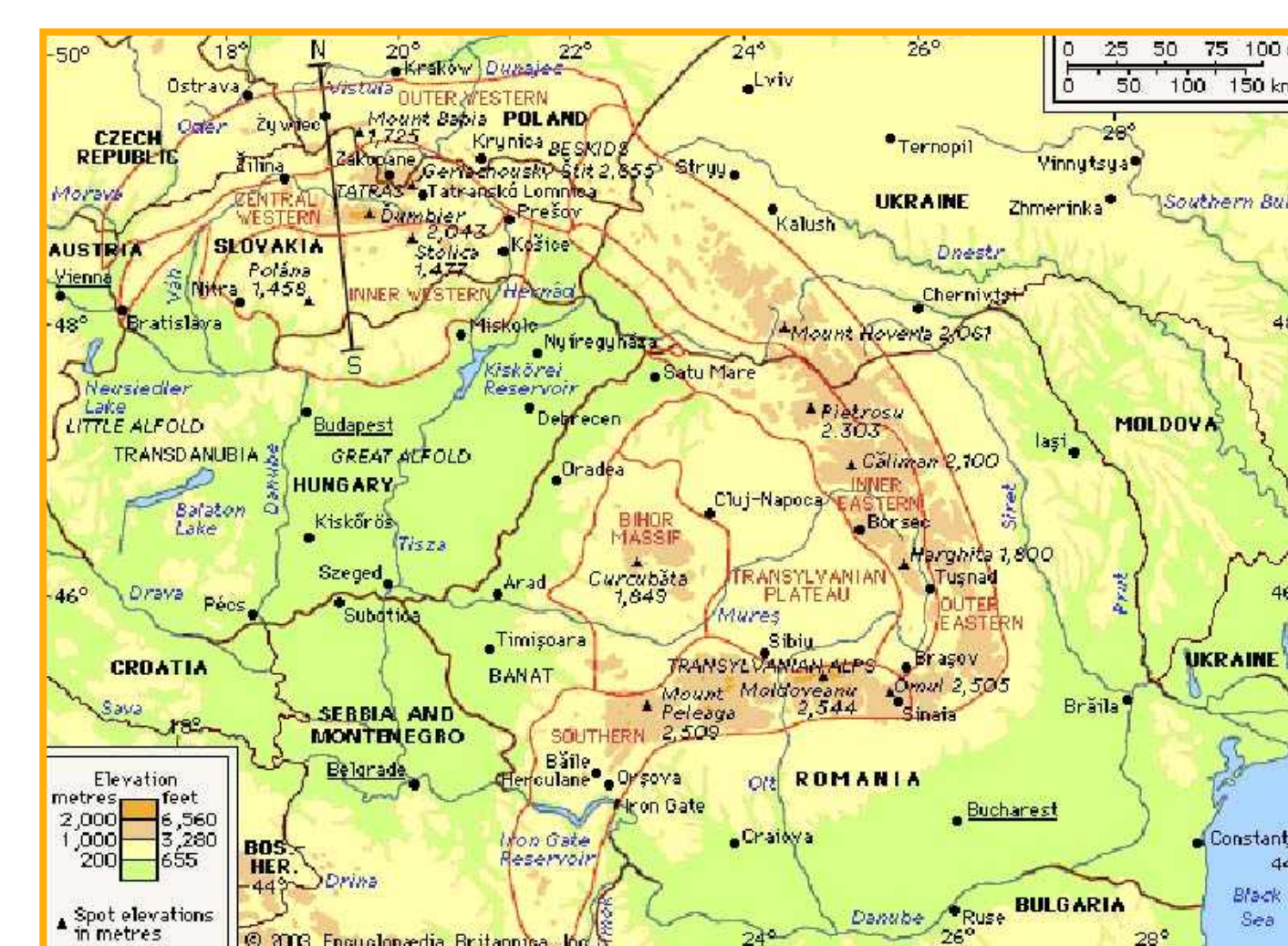
A Conservation Economy

For Europe's "natural capital", we have a triple bottom line in mind: economic development coupled with social opportunities and environmental promotion. These are the three Es of a Conservation Economy: Economy, Environment and Equity. A new economy is possible bringing many new opportunities. It requires innovation, an entrepreneurial movement and support from leaders. Solutions need to be found, new ways must be discovered and the challenge must be met. It requires a spirit of purpose and focus to find a creative way forward for the future of the Carpathians.



Geographical focus and political impetus

The Carpathian Mountains are the eastern wing of the great Central Mountain System of Europe, curving 1500 km (approximately 900 miles) along the borders of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and northern Hungary. The Carpathians are Europe's greatest wilderness area – a bastion for large carnivores, with over half of the continent's populations of bears, wolves and lynx, and home to the greatest remaining areas of old growth forests outside of Russia. The area is also rich in cultural heritage, developed over centuries of symbiosis between people and nature.



On May 22nd, 2003 in Kiev, Ukraine, the Ministers of the Environment from the seven Carpathian Countries signed the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians the world's first regional Convention for sustainable development.

The Carpathian Convention provides the framework for cooperation and multi-sectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development, and a forum for dialogue between all stakeholders involved.

The Objective

The main objective of the Carpathian Opportunity is **to identify, promote and support development opportunities that focus on stimulating a vibrant economy and generate new job opportunities**, particularly in the rural environment, replacing and displacing business activities that are harmful to the natural and social infrastructure of the region.



The Carpathian Opportunity seeks to prevent:

- ▶▶ Environmental degradation, loss of natural capital and resulting ecological catastrophes such as water scarcity, landslides & floods, loss of biodiversity and deforestation
- ▶▶ Rural decline and out-migration (loss of local employment, "rural exodus")
- ▶▶ Loss of strong and distinctive local traditions and cultures

The Carpathian Opportunity engages in the following missions:

Inspiring Change

A long-term campaign

First and foremost the Carpathian Opportunity is about **outreach and awareness**. It is an action for change. The action will focus on using high profile examples and ambassadors to spread the message about the opportunity and to inspire innovative approaches and entrepreneurial activity.

Pioneers for Change

Sector and community led transformation

Success will depend on people, government, business and communities taking action and making a change. We will work to create and support **partnerships** with those with a vision and a commitment to catalyse, demonstrate and inspire through action. Pioneers for Change will share their commitment by signing up to a Charter for the Future of the Carpathians. The action will be focused on initiating transformation through critical sectors and through communities.



Actions already started include:

- ▶▶ A new web-hub based **travel company** is being set up to support, educate and catalyse sustainable tourism in the Carpathians.
- ▶▶ An **Energy Alliance** of companies is being established to create an action for sustainable energy and to help create the first integrated energy offer.
- ▶▶ Commitments from **forestry companies** to promote sustainable forestry practices and halt illegal logging.
- ▶▶ A major campaign working with food and agricultural companies to transform the **food sector** towards one that supports "slow food".

To provide a sound foundation to the initiative, the **Carpathian Opportunity Facility** is being created. The purpose of the Facility is to provide support to entrepreneurs and local Pioneers for Change. The main components of the Facility will be:

Facilitating Change

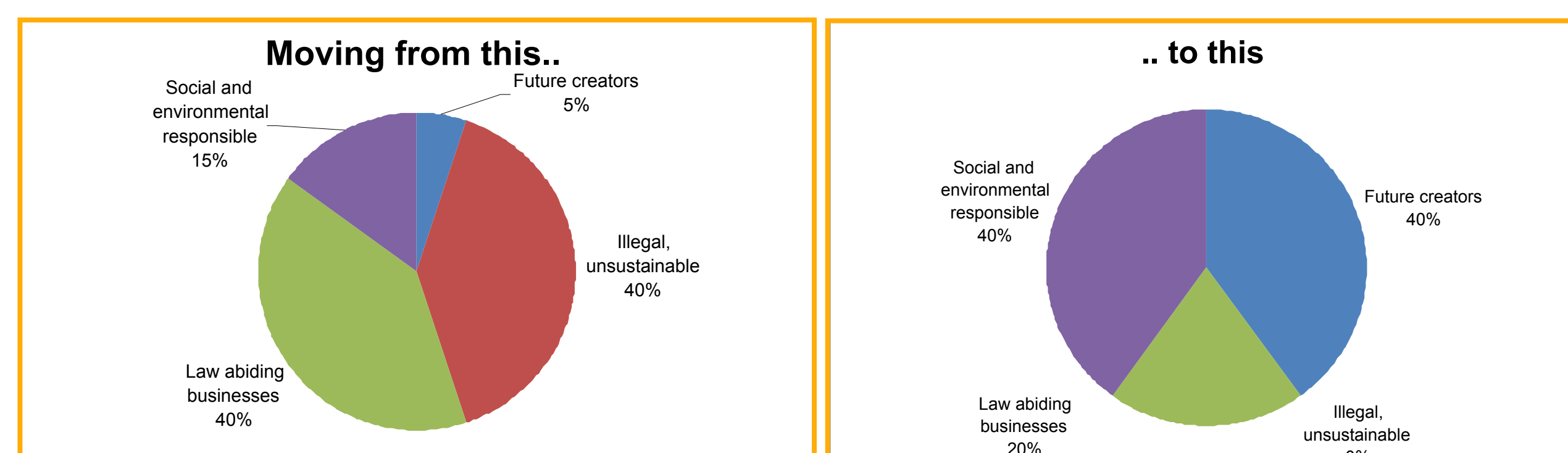
The Carpathian Opportunity Facility



- ▶▶ A **Gateway Fund**: a financial mechanism that promotes triple bottom line investments and loans in the region, managed by partner financial institutions and by the Carpathian Opportunity.
- ▶▶ **Training**: Initiating training programmes for future entrepreneurs.
- ▶▶ **Additional financing opportunities**: Building and managing the engagement of private investment companies, supporting communities in seeking EU co-funding.

Desired Outcome

The action will transform an economy dominated by illegal or unsustainable activities to one framed by the triple-bottom line. The Carpathian Opportunity seeks to increase the share of the economy towards a conservation framed economy. The ultimate target is to establish as many businesses and actions that are "future creators". They are businesses that have net added value by providing jobs, maintaining prosperity and protecting or restoring the cultural and natural diversity of the Carpathians.



Operational Structure

A small team is being created, managed by WWF, to lead, communicate and coordinate the Carpathian Opportunity. However, the Carpathian Opportunity will principally operate through a network of partners and signatories to the Carpathian Opportunity Charter. The main operating principle is to find the best and most motivated partner or partners to take the lead on the various different actions under the Carpathian Opportunity. The WWF Carpathian Opportunity team is tasked therefore with launching actions and finding the partners to lead those actions.

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