



Funded by
the European Union

EU4Environment
Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries

Regional Workshop

Enhancing Biodiversity Protection in the Eastern Partnership Countries: Learning from EU Best Practices

Draft Agenda

Date: 28-30 April 2025

Venue: Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia

Format: On-site with live streaming on Day 1

Language: English (no interpretation available)

Action implemented by:



Enhancing Biodiversity Protection in the Eastern Partnership Countries: Learning from EU Best Practices

28-30 April 2025, Bratislava, Slovakia

Background

This workshop is organised under the EU4Environment Programme – Activity 4.1.2 “Supporting regional collaboration, information exchange and knowledge sharing in protecting biodiversity and natural ecosystems (the Emerald Network) in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries”.

The EU4Environment Programme supports the EaP countries in advancing the Emerald Network by developing national action plans and roadmaps, legal framework recommendations, management plan guidelines, and pilot management plans. It also enhances scientific knowledge, builds management capacity, raises awareness, promotes regional collaboration, and facilitates knowledge exchange.

Objectives

The objective of this workshop is to equip the participants from the EaP countries with a better understanding of the management and conservation of the Emerald Network and learn from best EU practices. The event will share knowledge and best practices on legal frameworks, site management, enforcement, capacity building, community participation, economic activities, and the experiences of EU countries and related initiatives such as the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Law.

Organizers

The workshop is co-organized by the World Bank and a consortium consisting of the international environmental consulting company Estonian, Latvian & Lithuanian Environment SIA (ELLE) and the Institute of Landscape Ecology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (ILE SAS), implementing Activity 4.1.2.

Participants

The meeting will gather Government representatives from the EaP countries, EU institutions, CSOs, academia, representatives of the implementing consortium and the World Bank.

Venue

Meeting room (tbc), Slovak Academy of Sciences, Štefánikova 878/3, 811 06 Bratislava, Slovakia.

Language

The meeting will be held in the English language only.

About EU4Environment

The “European Union for Environment” (EU4Environment – Green Economy) Action helps the Eastern Partnership countries preserve their natural capital and increase people's environmental well-being, by supporting environment-related action, demonstrating and unlocking opportunities for greener growth, and setting mechanisms to better manage environmental risks and impacts. The programme is funded by the European Union and implemented by five Partner organisations: OECD, UNECE, UNEP, UNIDO, and the World Bank. It is implemented over the 2019-2024 period for OECD, UNECE, UNEP, and UNIDO, and over the 2021-2026 period for the World Bank, with a total budget of EUR 20 million.

For more information, please visit our website: www.eu4environment.org.

DRAFT AGENDA
(28-30 April 2025)

CET time	DAY 1: Monday, 28 April 2025
	Venue: Meeting room (tbc), Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)
Time	Item
13:30-14:00	<i>Registration and welcome coffee</i>
14:00-14:20	<p>Opening remarks: Welcome address and introduction to the workshop <i>Moderated by Mr Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, Emerald projectELLE</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of the EU (tbc) • Mr Fisseha Tessema Abissa, Task Team Leader, EU4Environment Programme Result Area 4, Senior Natural Resources Management Specialist, World Bank • Representative of SAS (tbc)
14:20-14:50	<p>Review of national systems of protected areas in the EU Comparative review of national systems of protected areas in selected EU Member States, focusing on transitions from post-Soviet systems to Natura 2000. The examples will include the cases from Latvia, Estonia, Slovakia, and other countries. <i>Speaker: Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i></p>
14:50-15:05	<p>Road map to a functional protected area system Presentation of a checklist (road map) for establishing and ensuring the functionality of protected area systems (Emerald Network or Natura 2000). <i>Speaker: tbc, Institute of Landscape Ecology, SAS</i></p>
15:05-15:50	<p>Stakeholder roles in management of protected areas Roles of various stakeholders (government and nature protection administration, local authorities, local communities, administration of protected areas, science, NGOs, consultants, users (individuals and businesses: forestry, farmers, hunters and fishermen, tourism) – initiative, responsibility, funding, management, land ownerships. A couple of case studies with different role distribution <i>Speaker: Mr Gatis Eriņš, Latvia, "Riga Forests"</i></p>
15:50-16:20	<i>Coffee/tea</i>
16:20-16:40	<p>Conservation and management: from doing nothing to doing everything Overview of conservation measures and management activities for key habitats and species groups, ranging from minimal intervention to active management practices. <i>Speaker: Ms. Anete Pošiva-Bunkovska, ELLE</i></p>
16:40-17:10	<p>Forest management in Natura 2000 areas – a hot topic Insights into forest management practices within Natura 2000 areas, highlighting their impacts on biodiversity and economic contributions to local communities. <i>Speaker: Mr. Gatis Eriņš, Latvia, "Riga Forests"</i></p>

17:10-17:40	<p>Contribution of protected areas to economy</p> <p>Exploration of how economic activities within Natura 2000 sites can promote biodiversity conservation, with a focus on community participation and sustainable practices.</p> <p><i>Speaker: tbc</i></p>
17:40-17:50	<p>Closing remarks and overview of Day 2 and logistics</p> <p><i>Mr Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i></p>
18:00-19:00	<p><i>Networking cocktail</i></p>

CET time	<p>DAY 2: Tuesday, 29 April 2025, Field trip*</p> <p>Meeting time and place: 09:00 at the entrance of Hotel Tatra, Námestie 1. mája 5, 811 06 Staré Mesto, Slovakia.</p>
09:00-18:00	<p>Visit to Devínske aluvium Moravy</p> <p>This site, the most important section of the Morava River's floodplain, features tributary channels, oxbow lakes, sand and gravel banks, abandoned sand and gravel pits, reed beds, freshwater marshes, seasonal pools, wet meadows, pastures, and seasonally inundated forests. It is home to a high number of protected plant species and is managed by local agricultural farms and NGOs. The participants will learn about effective wetland management approaches and development of sustainable tourism without threatening habitats</p> <p>Visit to Devínska Kobyla</p> <p>Features xerothermic biotopes, forests, sand walls, and paleontological sites. The site hosts specific habitats with a high number of protected species. It is managed by NGOs and a local farmer under the guidance of public administration, with cooperation from local authorities, and demonstrates traditional management of xerothermic meadows, such as goat grazing. Examples of extensive forest management approaches and development of sustainable tourism will be provided.</p> <p>Visit to Devínska hradná skala</p> <p>A small, scenic site renowned for its zoological, botanical, and geological significance. It can be visited if time allows or skipped if time is limited. Serves as an example of protecting a NATURA 2000 site located near a tourist hotspot—Devin Castle.</p>

**Participants will be provided with additional information on the areas to be visited before their trip.*

Note on catering: *Participants will be provided lunch during this field visit. The details will be communicated in due course.*

CET time	DAY 3: Wednesday, 30 April 2025 Venue: Meeting room (tbc), SAS
09:00-09:10	Opening session: Introduction to the day's scope and objectives <i>Mr. Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i>
09:10-09:30	Recap of field trip Recap of the field visits from Day 2, focusing on key lessons learned and participant feedback <i>Mr. Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i>
09:30-10:20	Discussion session: Sustainable tourism in protected areas Session on sustainable tourism in protected areas, addressing strategies for maintaining or expanding tourism offerings while safeguarding habitats and species <i>Moderated by: Mr. Gatis Eriņš, Latvia, "Riga Forests"</i>
10:20-10:30	Coffee/tea
10:30-11:40	Interactive group activity: The rockstars of protected area management Country teams to identify and present three examples of good practices from their national experience in managing protected areas (30 minutes for preparation, followed by four 10-minute presentations) <i>Moderated by: Ms. Anete Pošiva-Bunkovska, ELLE</i>
11:40-12:00	What's new in the EU policies? Updates on EU policy initiatives, including the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Nature Restoration Law, and their implications for Emerald Network management. <i>Speaker: tbc, Emerald project / Institute of Landscape Ecology, SAS</i>
12:00-12:15	Closing session: Concluding remarks and workshop evaluation. <i>Mr. Valts Vilnītis, Team Leader, ELLE</i>