



LIFE Project Number
LIFE 13 NAT/RO/001154

FINAL Report
Covering the project activities from 01.10.2014 to 31.12.2021

Reporting Date
28.02.2022

LIFE+ LIFE FOR BEAR
Conservation of Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*) population in Romania

Project Data

Project location	National level for some actions, Implementation area: Brasov-Prahova Valley Area	
Project start date:	01.10.2014	
Project end date:	01.10.2019	Extension date: 31.12.2021
Total Project duration (in months)	87 months	
Total budget	1.567.512 €	
EU contribution:	1.115.911 €	
(%) of eligible costs	71.19 % of total eligible budget	

Beneficiary data

Name Beneficiary	INSTITUTUL NAȚIONAL DE CERCETARE DEZVOLTARE ÎN SILVICULTURĂ MARIN DRĂCEA S.C.D.E.P. BRAȘOV (formerly Institut de Cercetări și Amenajări Silvice (ICAS) – Stațiunea Brașov)	
Contact person	Mr. Ramon JURJ	
Postal address	13, Closca Street, code 500400, Brasov, Romania	
Telephone	+40-268-419936	
Fax:	+40-268-415338	
E-mail	ramon@icaswildlife.ro	
Project Website	http://www.forbear.icaswildlife.ro https://lifeforbear.ro/en/life-project/	

ABREVIERI

Project acronym

LIFE 13 NAT/RO/001154

COORDINATING BENEFICIARY

INSTITUTUL NAȚIONAL DE CERCETARE-DEZVOLTARE ÎN
SILVICULTURĂ, SECȚIA DE CERCETARE DEZVOLTARE
EXPERIMENTARE ȘI PRODUCȚIE BRAȘOV

INCDS

ASSOCIATED BENEFICIARY

FUNDAȚIA CARPAȚI

FC

REGIA PUBLICĂ LOCALĂ A PĂDURILOR KRONSTADT R.A.

KRT

MINISTERUL MEDIULUI

MM

RNP ROMSILVA - ADMINISTRAȚIA PARCULUI NATURAL BUCEGI R.A.

PNB

OCOLUL SILVIC AL ORAȘULUI RÂȘNOV R.A.

OS

Other

BEAR TEAM

BT



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar
coordonator:



Beneficiari
asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI
APELOR ȘI PĂDURILOR



ENGLISH SUMMARY of FINAL Report (dec2021) - LIFE FOR BEAR

The implementation of the project "Conservation of the brown bear population (*Ursus arctos*) in Romania" started on 01.10.2014 and was completed on 31.12.2021. During the implementation of the project, there were repeated political/administrative changes within the institutions with a decision-making role directly involved in the management of the brown bear species, so that the completion period for some actions was extended, without influencing the final objectives of the project.

Along with the political/administrative changes, there have also been changes in the attitude of people who carry out activities concerning the bear species and/or its habitat and the attitude of people whose activities are influenced by the presence and actions of bears. At the same time, the media's attention has increased on the topics concerning the bear species, so that the management of this species in Romania has created controversies and has become an emotive subject for several groups: people who must coexist with the brown bear species, animal lovers who do not live with the bear species, managers of hunting funds, hunters, public administrations, environmental activists, researchers, conservationists and others.

The aim and objectives of the project by the end of the implementation period were achieved, although there were delays in the implementation periods of some activities.

The delays occurred in the implementation of some activities were caused by the political/administrative changes at the level of the Romanian Government, especially those in the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, as well as by the changes occurred in the management vision of the large carnivores species strictly protected.

Since 2016, when the team at the head of the Ministry of Environment took the decision not to grant derogations for hunting interventions on some specimens of the bear population, large conflicts have been opened between the managers of the hunting fauna, the rural population and some environmental organizations dealing with the protection and conservation of nature, as well as animal lovers in the urban area, so that the subject of management of the brown bear species has become very sensitive in Romania.

In 2018, the Ministry of Environment demonstrated an active participation by getting involved in the implementation and approval of *the Action Plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania*. The action plan, carried out within the framework of activity C1 integrates elements of the project actions.

The Ministry of Environment has issued an address to the project manager expressing its support for the activities carried out by the project within the limits of the legal duties. (Annex C.2.5. Address nr. 21830/EUCU of 01.10.2018).

The Ministry of Environment Water and Forests, INCDS Marin Drăcea, R.N.P. Romsilva and R.P.L.P. Kronstadt R.A. implements during the period 08.07.2021 – 31.12.2023, the project ***Implementation of the national action plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania***, having the SMIS code 136899, a project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, through the Large Infrastructure Operational Program (POIM 2014-2020), which is based on. Order no. 625/2018.



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar coordonator:



Beneficiari asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



The preparatory activities of type A, after the completion of the socio-economic analysis of the interest groups in the project area, in 2015, continued with the analysis of the conflicts and damages produced by the bear at national level, a study in which official and unofficial data of the conflicts and damages caused by the bear species were centralized and analyzed, during the whole project. Based on these results, concrete measures to reduce conflicts were proposed in the *Action Plan of the brown bear population at national level*, which was officially approved by Order of Minister no. 625/2018. The results of the study were the basis for issuing another Order of Minister regulating the interventions in the brown bear population in Romania, for the period 2022-2023.

Also within the type A activities, the study of the quality of hunting funds at national level was completed (the quality of all hunting funds at national level and a technical guide to analyze the quality of natural habitats at the level of hunting fund was completed).

- In order to determine the categories of quality of habitats for the brown bear species in Romania, the land use categories for an area of approximately 7,185,000 ha (71850 km²) were inventoried, which overlaps the area of distribution of the brown bear population in Romania.
- The following have been achieved:
 - inventory of land use categories, by quality classes, of brown bear habitats;
 - the inventory of forest habitat types in the area of distribution of the brown bear population;
 - the distribution of the areas by category of land use for each category of quality;
- It has been determined:
 - the habitat quality category according to the area occupied in the bear's habitat;
- The comparative distribution of the presence of the anthropic factor at the level of the project area was analyzed.
- For 542 hunting funds, the optimum number for the brown bear species was calculated as *being 4002 specimens*, with 398 specimens lower than the calculation in 2002.

A book was made and published: *The analysis of the quality of the brown bear habitat at national level through the prism of the socio-economic development of the last decade in Romania*. Silvica Publishing House. 62 pages. Year 2020. Published 200 copies and online version (available only in Romanian)

The concrete type C activities were the basis for the development of some tools for conservative management of the brown bear species, both at national and local level.

At *action C1*, after several meetings between the project experts, several stages of consultation with specialists from institutes / institutions / entities / universities / non-governmental organizations involved in the management, conservation and research of the brown bear species and after a stage of public debate organized by the Ministry of Environment at the Palace of Parliament (Bucharest) on 09.05.2018, attended by approximately 80 people, the result was a consolidated version of the action plan, in which the needs of the bear species and of the human population from an ecological, ethological, conservative, social and economic point of view were harmonized.

The consolidated version of the *Action plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania* was approved by ministerial order (Order no. 625/2018 on the approval of the National Action Plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania).



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar coordonator:



Beneficiari asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



The action plan contains a combination of actions necessary to achieve a peaceful coexistence between human and bear. Depending on the specifics of the conflict situations, the actions must be implemented in parallel. A single action will not be able to solve the problem.

The experience gained by the project team and based on the information accumulated during the project development, resulted in a *Management plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania*, complex, with a strategic character for the institutions with a role in the field of Biodiversity. A book was developed and published: *The Action Plan for the Conservation of the Brown Bear Population (Ursus arctos arctos) in Romania*. Silvică Publishing House. 76 pages, Year 2020. The book was edited in Romanian and English (2021). Both variants were made both in print format (400 copies) and in electronic format with different ISBN.

Within the C2 action at the level of the project implementation area, a team of specialists was formed who intervene in solving conflicts between human and bear, which works by applying a *Guide for intervention and damage assessment*, made in the project, which was made available to the authorities in the field.

The Ministry of Environment, through the address 21830/01.10.2018, approves the team of specialists for solving the conflict situations between man and bear, formed and endowed within the life for bear project "Conservation of the brown bear population (Ursus arctos) in Romania".

Based on the intervention and damage assessment guide developed by the project team, the Brasov Prefect's Institution issued an order (Order 1072 of 10.11.2017), regarding the establishment of a Joint Commission for the Evaluation of measures for the prevention of emergency situations generated by the bear and other wild animals at the level of Brasov County.

The bear conflict project team, since its formation at the beginning of the project, had 116 direct interventions in the field on 167 bears (subjects of interventions), which consisted of releasing bears from illegal traps, capturing and relocating them from localities, capturing orphan bears and relocating them to the center for the rehabilitation of orphan bears. The BEAR CONFLICT team also intervened in the cases of road and rail accidents on some bear specimens in the area of implementation of the concrete actions of the project.

Based on some working meetings held both at the MMAP headquarters and at the headquarters of the Prefectures of Brasov, the intervention in emergency situations generated by large carnivores that endanger the health and safety of people was regulated. Through the *Emergency Ordinance 81/2021 on the approval of the methods of immediate intervention for preventing and combating the attacks of brown bear specimens on people and their assets, in the built-up area of localities*, the Legislative Framework was created that allows the functioning of the intervention teams at local level.

A map of human-bear conflict risk areas at the national level was made, which was made available to the national authorities.

Human-bear conflicts reduced over 25% by the end of the project, in the pilot area of implementation of the Brasov-Prahova Valley project.

Within the framework of the C3 action, a properly trained and equipped team (BEAR TEAM) has worked and is functioning, which, based on derogations, captured, relocated and monitored (GPS/GSM)



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar
coordonator:



Beneficiari
asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI
AFELOR ȘI PADURILOR



22 brown bear specimens. This team operates based on a *Technical Guide for capture, relocation, installation of GPS/ GSM system and bear monitoring*, made within the project.

Based on the monitoring of these bears, the territory used by them after resettlement was determined and the results of the resettlement actions could be determined. Maps have been made of habitats used by relocated bears who have GPS/GSM systems. Thus, it has been determined that the relocation of habituated bears is not a long-term solution, and the relocation process is suitable only for some categories of bears (young bears that have not come into repeated contact with humans).

Within the C4 action, the project team carried out activities to improve the trophic (food) offer favorable to the natural feeding of the bear in the vicinity of the conflict zones in the Brasov-Prahova Valley pilot area, as follows: 26.1 ha of planted land; 13160 seedlings planted fruit trees / shrubs; 6000 planted fruit cuttings and 400 multiplied anthills.

In 2020-2021, when the crops offered fruits, there was a reduction in the number of bears entering the localities of Brasov, Rasnov, Săcele, Azuga and Busteni. Due to the fact that bears spend more time in these areas with improved trophic supply, they end up in areas inhabited by humans less than before.

Within the framework of action C5, based on the experience of the project team, a *set of measures with applicability in forest management* was carried out, which provides for special provisions for the management of stands favorable to the bear in areas where conflicts are recorded. This document was made available to the forest fund managers and managers of the protected natural areas in the pilot area for the implementation of the project, as well as to the authorities at national level.

Implementation of the measures carried out in this activity applicable to the forest management plan at Natura 2000 sites in the project implementation area:

- for the ROSCI0038 Ciucas site, the implementation will be made by INCDS Brasov, as a forest fund administrator that overlaps the site;
- for ROSCI0013 Bucegi will be made by the Bucegi Natural Park Administration, as administrator;
- for ROSCI 0195 Piatra Mare, ROSCI 0207 Postăvaru, the associated beneficiary Carpathian Foundation elaborates the Management Plans that will integrate these measures.

For each forest management plan that will come to the approval of the administrator of the protected natural area ROSCI0013 Bucegi, it will be necessary to implement the set of measures applicable in the forest management plan that will lead the bear-friendly stands in the critical areas.

Within the C6 action, in order to reduce conflicts by implementing protection measures, in the first stage, the project members inventoried the situation of the sheepfolds at the level of the project implementation area, taking information from the agricultural offices, from where the owners and locations of the sheepfolds were identified. Following the centralization of the sheepfolds at the level of the project implementation area, a number of 115 locations with sheepfolds resulted, distributed within the radius of 12 administrative units (mayoralties). Depending on the areas with damage caused by the bear, 20 complex systems of electric fences were installed at the sheepfolds, orchards, social buildings, tourist areas, etc. A custody document was concluded with the users of these protection systems, the training for possible errors of the installed system was made. These systems proved their effectiveness, so that where they were used correctly, the access of bears was restricted and thus the direct human-bear



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar coordonator:



Beneficiari asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



conflicts in these locations were also diminished. A *Guide of good practice* was achieved for the improvement of the protection systems of the sheepfolds, crops, orchards and beekeeping farms, which was made available to the local authorities and to the managers of the hunting funds in the pilot area for the implementation of the project.

Within the C7 action, the project database for each activity was completed, thematic maps with the parameters followed by the project implementation team were made, namely the distribution of the bear, the territory of the bears monitored with GPS/GSM, as well as other relevant objectives in the project area (sheepfolds, farms, apiaries, tourist areas and camping sites, areas frequented by habituated bears, location of bear proof systems, etc.).

As part of the C8 action, there were 2 patrol teams, who made field trips to identify areas where household waste is stored and is visited by bears, near the forest and tourist areas.

In many areas of the Brasov-Prahova Valley area (project area) bears frequent platforms or garbage bins. These areas have been monitored since the beginning of the project and the most frequently frequented locations have been determined.

The improvement of household waste management in the human-bear conflict zones in the pilot area was achieved by purchasing and installing 75 bear-proof systems incorporating 150 eurocontainers of 1100L installed in the field and 10 bear-proof systems for house use – adapted and secured bins, distributed in the field.

An operative working group was developed to limit the phenomenon of bear habituation and reduction of direct human-bear conflicts, by modifying the management of household waste within the LIFE13 NAT/RO/001154 project and raising the awareness of local communities about the risk of human-bear conflicts, materialized by the implementation of collaboration protocols with the municipalities most affected by the phenomenon of habituated bears.

The phenomenon of habituated bears decreased by 30% in terms of the number of bears and by 50% in terms of areas with permanent frequency, from the beginning to the end of the project.

Type D monitoring activities

Within the framework of action D1, in order to achieve the conservation objectives of the species *Ursus arctos*, the impact assessment indicators have been determined, which allow the regular analysis of the factual situation, compared to the initial condition, recorded at the beginning of the project.

Within the framework of the action, 5 main indicators were monitored, which were based on 28 categories of quantifiable data, based on which data could be obtained for determining the conservation status of the brown bear population, at the level of the 5 protected natural areas (ROSCI 0120 Muntele Tâmpa, ROSCI 0207 Postăvaru, ROSCI 0195 Piatra Mare, ROSCI 0013 Bucegi, ROSCI 0038 Ciucas) within the project implementation area.

Considering the aspects monitored and presented in the last report, the impact of the project activities on the conservation status of the bear population is positive and helps to maintain the conservation status of the brown bear population in the study area.



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar coordonator:



Beneficiari asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



After determining the conservation status of the brown bear population, at the level of protected area, it resulted that the global conservation status of the brown bear species within the 5 protected natural areas is favorable.

Under action D2, the established indicators were monitored in the established areas. The impact monitoring sheet followed the concrete actions carried out within the type C activities, determining the influence they have on the beneficiaries of the action and their attitude and involvement. Although the degree of acceptance seemed to decrease between 2016-2018 in communities whose existence interacted with the activity of the bear species, with the implementation of actions that demonstrate mobilization to solve conflict situations, it was observed that acceptance can take a positive curve.

Action D3. At the beginning of the project, 12 indicators were evaluated, the result of the evaluation is recorded in the Assessment Report of the initial conservation status of the brown bear in the project area, by establishing the starting indicators for type C actions. The evaluation of the indicators took into account the period between 15 September 2013 and 14 September 2014, given that the existing data, centralized up to the level of the central public authority, did not allow access to the conflict situations of the last part of 2014, as well as the need for data related to all four seasons, in order to capture the differences determined by the season on the number of conflicts.

Within the E-type actions, education and information activities were carried out, as follows:

Information events were carried out on the actions of the project for each target group and various information sessions on the bear and its associated issues (conservation actions of the species, methods of conflict reduction). On the occasion of these events, the project was presented and informative and promotional materials were disseminated: brochures for the promotion of the project, T-shirts, caps, posters, flyers, stickers and personalized pens.

The project was promoted by the project team at each event they were present at and on all occasions in the implementation of concrete actions. In addition to official presentations, informative and promotional materials, the ways of communicating with the target groups were different depending on the interests of each group on the issue of the bear species. Thus:

With target Group I (made up of specialists working in the fields of hunting, forestry, biology, ecology, etc.) it was communicated especially during the working meetings for the implementation of the action plan and at each event attended by the members of the project team. The exchange of information was also done in individual meetings or by email. The topics of the communications with this group mainly concerned applicable management measures to track the needs of the bear species and the human population from an ecological, ethological, conservative, social and economic point of view.

With target group II (made up of staff of institutions whose activity interferes with the bear species: hunting fund managers, forest districts, environmental protection agencies, local authorities, community police, sanitation companies, etc.) it was communicated during the meetings organized by the project team and at other meetings organized by various institutions regarding the conflict situations between people and bears. Also, many field actions were attended by representatives from the mentioned institutions from various localities. The topic of communication with this group was directed both to the methods of managing the existing and potential conflicts between human and bear, as well as to methods



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar coordonator:



Beneficiari asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



of conflict prevention. As links have been established with representatives of the before mentioned institutions, teamwork is still on to find solutions to the problems of human-bear coexistence.

With target group III (made up of people who frequently have conflicts with the bear, namely: farmers, beekeepers, farmers) the communication was made both during an organized meeting, but more by the field agents on the occasion of: patrols carried out in areas frequented by bears, data collection, installation of protection systems. During these meetings, it was possible to discuss the nature of conflicts, the attitude generated, prevention methods and examples of good practices for conflict mitigation.

In 2017, the project team members participated in the LIFE Caravan organized on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the LIFE+ Programme, where the project and some concrete actions carried out within it were presented and an exchange of experience between projects was carried out.

The means of online communication (website, Youtube, Facebook) have been improved.

12 project information panels were created and placed and a map with their location was made. The flyers with the project data were distributed at the meetings and actions carried out within the various activities of the project.

All the proposed informative materials were produced, as well as the 23 information panels on the existence of the bear, the conservation actions and the methods of conflict reduction. The panels have been customised for each site of the 5 Natura 2000 sites in the project implementation area. They have been located where there is a risk of human-bear conflicts and on access routes to the entrance to Natura 2000 sites in the project implementation area. The map with their location was made.

During the project, several meetings were held for different interested groups and several events were attended in order to promote bear conservation actions and methods of conflict reduction, to which informative materials were provided.

The information campaign aimed at local communities and pupils in the project area, which aims to raise awareness among the general public about the importance of the bear in the context of the Natura 2000 network, has continued. Members of the project team participated in various events in which they provided informative and promotional materials and information about Natura 2000 sites (their importance and rules of behaviour within protected areas). Actions were carried out with students in schools in the localities frequented by bears and at the I.N.C.D.S "Marin Drăcea" headquarters, Brasov resort. The actions consisted of dissemination and awareness general information about the bear and actions carried out within the project and elements of ecological education, such as: tips for preventing human-bear conflicts and behavioral advice when meeting with the bear.

Layman Report was developed, in which a synthesis of the entire project was created, with a content that is easy to follow and accessible to the general public.

Within the F-type actions, at the beginning of the project, the project management and the collaborations between the partners went well, but along the way, starting with 2016, a more difficult collaboration on the administrative line with the team from the management of the Ministry of Environment began, which made the circuit of administrative documents difficult. After successive changes in the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, starting with the spring of 2018, the collaboration began to work with the new



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar
coordonator:



Beneficiari
asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI
APELOR ȘI PADURILOR



leadership, so that the ministry's involvement in the project was felt, especially in the completion of the *Action Plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania* and, from 2021, ensuring its implementation, through the above mentioned project. The management of the project was carried out in good conditions at the headquarters of the coordinating beneficiary I.N.C.D.S "Marin Drăcea", Brasov resort. Here was the whole project management team, along with some of the implementation team. There were no changes at the coordinator level, but there were staff replacements within the associated beneficiaries: FC, OSR, PNB and KRT.

Some of the LIFE FOR BEAR team members participated in: 3 International Conferences on Bear Management and Research (IBA); 2 exchanges of experience outside the country; 1 international congress; 1 national exchange of experience (LIFE Connect Carpathians project). On the occasion of these events, the project team disseminated the results of the project and created premises for new collaborations in the management and conservation of the bear.

Long-term expected results: Conservation of the brown bear species on the basis of an active action plan, which is based on the conservation of the natural habitat, the maintenance of an ecologically and socially optimal population, following the harmonization of the interests of the species with anthropogenic interests.

The most important deliverables that support the achievement of the project purpose in the long term are:

- *Action plan for the conservation of the brown bear population (Ursus arctos arctos) in Romania*
- *Management plan for the conservation of the brown bear population in Romania*

These documents were produced using information and results from all the studies and actions carried out in this project.



Conținutul acestui material nu reprezintă în mod obligatoriu poziția oficială a Uniunii Europene sau a Guvernului României



Beneficiar
coordonator:



Beneficiari
asociați:



MINISTERUL MEDIULUI
APELOR ȘI PADURILOR

