



CEEweb for Biodiversity
Széher út 40. 1021 Budapest, Hungary
Phone: +36 1 398 0135
Fax: +36 1 398 0136
ceeweb@ceeweb.org
www.ceeweb.org

PRESS RELEASE

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CEEweb for Biodiversity

Why is it the very high time to enhance cooperation between the non-profit and the for-profit sector in the Visegrad countries?

Biodiversity loss is accelerating worldwide also in the Visegrad countries, causing decline of ecosystem services and natural resources, which are the preconditions for human well-being, and economy, including businesses to operate. Thus, it is the interest of both civil society and the business sector to conserve biodiversity and preserve our unique resources. Therefore, a project is launched for businesses and environmental NGOs in Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic to enhance their cooperation for the sake of the natural heritage in the Visegrad region. The [Visegrad fund](#) is supporting the project implementation from July 2013 to July 2014.

Ecosystems do not know political borders. Visegrad countries share unique cross-border natural heritage, ensuring different services like clean air and water, the maintenance of which is in line with the interests of each Visegrad country. Well-designed sustainable operation of businesses contributes to the conservation of this uniqueness, while environmentally friendly business operation improves competitiveness for Visegrad companies. In order to achieve this mutual benefit, the project aims to involve different stakeholders to work for the sake of biodiversity and thus finally for the benefit of all. Besides, channelling the project outputs into Visegrad policy discussions would result in common Visegrad standpoint about proper business and NGO cooperation.

Establishing partnerships, however, is a complex and sensitive process due to different viewpoints. While in Western Europe, the exchange between nature conservation NGOs and the private sector has a long history, civil society in the Visegrad countries has no significant experience in this field. This project aims to initiate discussion to create ownership and real interest in working together for biodiversity conservation in the region.

Biodiversity, its services, and natural resources form basis for humanity's well-being, and for businesses to operate. Visegrad countries have unique natural beauties and resources, but threats posed by unsustainable business operations can lead to their irreversible destruction, damaging finally also society and economy. In order to avoid this, the project just launched initiates expert level discussions between conservation NGOs and businesses to work together for the sake of biodiversity and natural resources.

[BROZ](#) from Slovakia, [CEEweb for Biodiversity](#) from Hungary, [DAPHNE](#) and [Veronica](#) from the Czech Republic and [PTTK](#) from Poland and are taking part in implementing properly the project activities. These five NGOs will collect good case studies from the Visegrad countries in order to show what kind of partnerships already exist in the region and how their practices can be implemented widely.

More information:

Veronika Kiss, kiss@ceeweb.org, +36-1-398-01-35

Project website: <http://www.ceeweb.org/about-us/cooperation-with-business/>