

BESTbelt

„More power for the European Green Belt“

BESTbelt Conference 2022

01-04 November 2022, Ulcinj, Montenegro

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BESTbelt



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Operates at different levels:

- People and projects on the **local level**: gather experiences, gain inspiration, practical implementation
- **Regional level**: reflects diversity of the European Green Belt and offers platform for exchange and common action
- **Pan-European dimension**: adds value to the local and regional levels, develop common approaches, set experiences in a broader context, platform for exchange and common learning on the European level



*in accordance with UNSCR 1244 and opinion of ICJ.

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Our vision

“The European Green Belt, our **shared natural heritage along the line of the former Iron Curtain is to be conserved and restored**, to function as an **ecological network** connecting high-value natural and cultural landscapes whilst respecting the **economic, social and cultural needs of local communities.**”

- Protecting and restoring wildlife and habitats
- Ensuring the value of the European Green Belt is reflected in decisions made by local communities, governments and businesses
- Highlighting the importance of the European Green Belt and its direct contribution to preventing biodiversity loss in Europe
- Exploring Europe's cultural and ecological history and promoting the European Green Belt as a model for local communities and nature to grow together



- **Bridging** ecological, cultural and geographical **borders to protect and develop Europe's longest green network**
- Framework for **cross-border cooperation** on regional and municipal level as well as for protected areas
- Framework for **exchange and cooperation on a pan-European level**
- **Opportunities for sustainable development** from the very North to the very South of Europe
- **Unique memorial landscape** along former Iron Curtain and example how Europe and its diverse cultures can truly grow together

- 1989: Fall of the „Iron Curtain“
- 2003: Formation of the European Green Belt Initiative
- 2014: Establishment of the European Green Belt Association (EGBA)
- 2019: Breakfast debate with Members of the European Parliament and the EGBA
- 2020: Members of the European Parliament introduced the idea of a special program for the European Green Belt
- 2021: BESTbelt started



BESTbelt

- Main objective: Provide support for biodiversity action along the European Green Belt
 - Unlock and strengthen initiatives and potentials on local level in the fields of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of ecosystem services
 - Increase capacity of local actors to access and manage EU-funds
 - Strengthen local capacities
 - Increase visibility of EGB and its contribution to biodiversity conservation
- Duration of 5 years
- Total budget 3,673,684 Euro (95% EU funding)
- All four regions of the EGB are included
- Lead: EuroNatur as chair of EGBA and Regional Coordinators
- EGBA Board acts as Steering Committee

- BESTbelt Small Grants Scheme
- Communication Activities
- Training Activities
- Promotion of green jobs



- Projects with actions resulting in effective measures on the ground
- 12-24 months duration
- Three BESTbelt Calls for proposals
- Up to 55 funded projects with a maximum of 40,000 Euro
- 2,200,000 Euro

- Communication activities to
 - Highlight the biodiversity along the EGB
 - Promote BESTbelt
 - Inform about results of funded projects
- Three BESTbelt Conferences to increase the visibility of BESTbelt and to disseminate success stories

- Two training workshops to train organizations and young volunteers so that they are capable of managing and leading European Green Belt Youth Work Camps (input for Small Grants Programme)
- Webinars, capacity and workshops for BESTbelt applicants and grantees
- Four regional conferences to foster exchange and knowledge transfer amongst current and former grantees



- Analysis of potential of green jobs for EGB
- Sharing of best practices for job creation in different regions
- Explore opportunities for green job creation on the ground through six local/transboundary fora in Bulgaria plus another country addressed to administration, business and other stakeholders
- Input for Small Grants Programme

- Implementation of measures in all four regions
- Strengthen initiatives and potentials on local level
- Increase capacity of local actors to access and manage EU-funds
- Increase visibility of EGB and its contribution to biodiversity conservation



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