



Endangered
Landscapes
& Seascapes
Programme

Cambridge
Conservation
Initiative

Jobs Created

Objective: Increase number of sustainable livelihood jobs

Carpathian Mountains
status: improving



Problem: In the Făgăraş Mountains of Carpathia, as in many other areas of Europe, rural economies and societies have changed over recent decades. This has resulted in increasingly limited employment opportunities for local people, and a recent increase in damaging activities including poaching and encroachment on forest areas.

Action: The Conservation Enterprise Programme was formed to develop new sustainable enterprises and [increase sustainable income](#) by providing technical support to both Foundation Conservation Carpathia-incubated businesses and businesses established by local people. In addition, the Carpathia Fund provides initial grants to new sustainable enterprises. In turn, these businesses form relationships with other local businesses and suppliers in the tourism, food and wider hospitality sectors, leading to further indirect job creation. Foundation Conservation Carpathia have also established a [local food distribution network](#) which partners with local producers to sell and distribute local products from the Făgăraş Mountains to cities including Bucharest, Braşov and Piteşti.

Indicator: An increase in the number of conservation-based enterprises, and the number of full-time and seasonal jobs directly and indirectly associated with them, indicate the project's efforts to strengthen the local nature-based economy and enable local people to benefit from the natural landscape and its conservation.



Products developed through the Conservation Enterprise Programme and sold through the



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food distribution network, Roadele Munților ('Fruits of the Mountains'). Photo: Foundation Conservation Carpathia.

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Methods

This indicator evaluated the sustainable micro, small and medium enterprises created or strengthened around the project area due to the project interventions. This included businesses focusing on nature-based tourism and the value-added food sector. Data was collected on both direct jobs (e.g. people employed by a conservation-based enterprise) and indirect jobs (e.g. in suppliers to a business which Foundation Conservation Carpathia is directly supporting). This data was collated annually.

Data was primarily collected through standardised company reports. These included both formal reports (annual statutory tax and accounts) and informal project-designed templates (co-designed with the entrepreneur and Foundation Conservation Carpathia enterprise team). Periodic check-ins with third party businesses were also used to understand their business models. Indirect job creation was estimated based on the Conservation Enterprise Team's knowledge of the incubated businesses and the supplier relationships they have established.



Eco-tourism activities. Photo: Foundation Conservation Carpathia.



Cobor biodiversity farm guesthouse. Photo: Jack Wolfskin.



Eco-tourism activities. Photo: Georgiana Cațan.

Results

The Conservation Enterprise Programme created 16 new conservation enterprises over 5 years, of which nine were incubated by Foundation Conservation Carpathia. The remainder were external enterprises run by local business owners in the Făgăraș Mountains. All of the businesses operate in the nature-based tourism or value-added food sectors. The year-on-year growth in businesses and jobs supported through the programme is summarised in Fig. 1.

Jobs reported are full-time positions. Actual employment figures vary due to the seasonality of some

work. For example, nature guiding and harvesting activities tend to be busier in the summer and autumn months, with additional daily workers employed by some businesses. If part-time and seasonal jobs are included, direct job creation was estimated at 34 in 2023 and 50 in 2024.

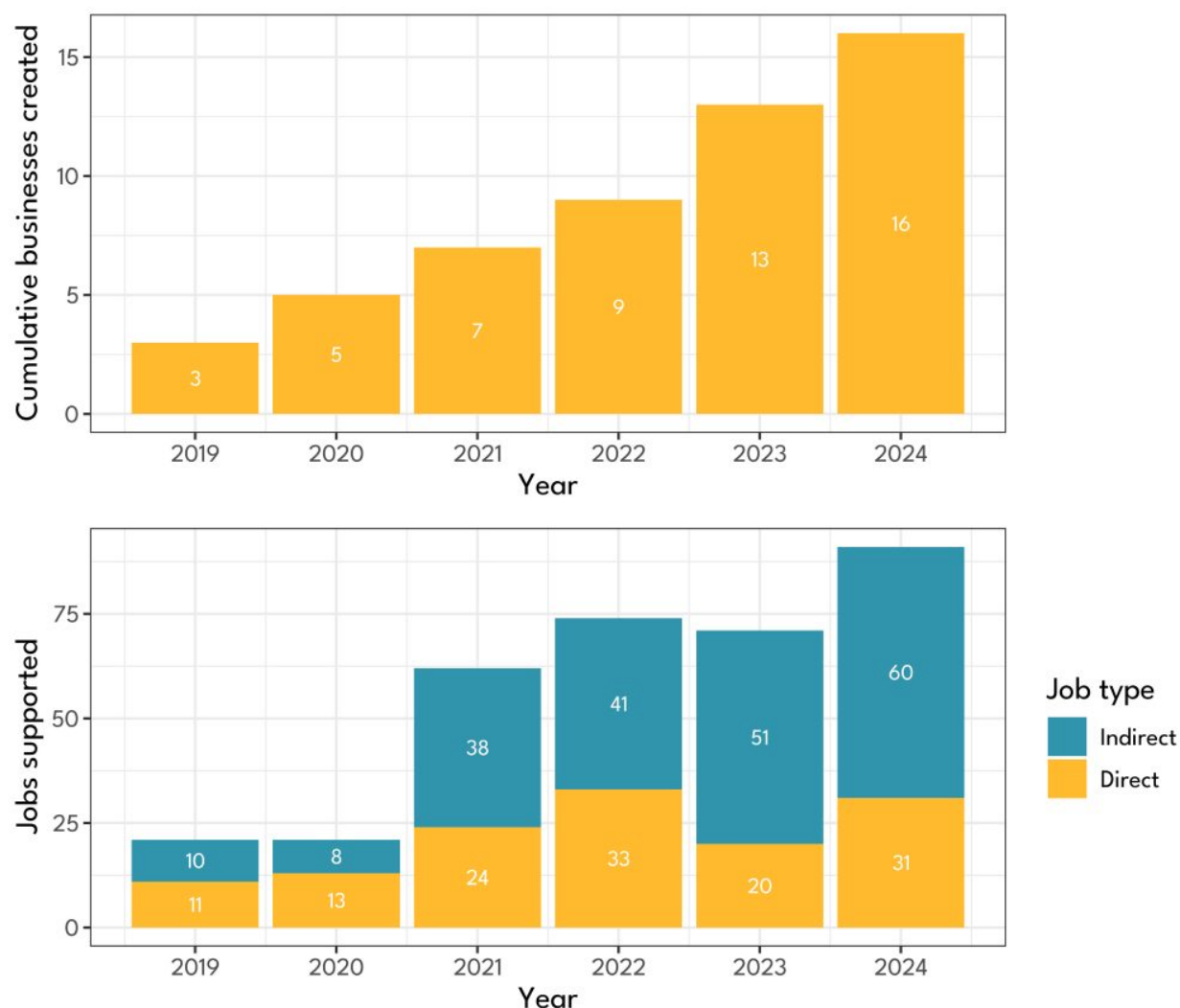


Figure 1: Number of businesses created (cumulative; above) and number of jobs directly and indirectly supported in each year by those businesses as a result of the Conservation Enterprise Programme.

Interpretation

The number of employees in Foundation Conservation Carpathia businesses has grown as the number of visitors to the landscape has increased, requiring both a dedicated manager and support staff in each business.

There has also been significant growth in the number of non-Foundation Conservation Carpathia businesses, and in 2023-2024 years the majority of new businesses created were external to Foundation Conservation Carpathia. The

majority are guesthouse kitchens and Local Gastronomic Points, which received technical support through the Conservation Enterprise Programme to become licensed businesses that prepare and sell fresh, local hot food to visitors to the region.

Despite the increasing number of businesses, job creation in non-Foundation Conservation Carpathia businesses has been lower than expected. This may be partly because financing from the recently introduced Carpathia Fund may have not yet had sufficient time to have impact. Additionally, most of these businesses are micro-enterprises and many do not have the capacity and resources to grow rapidly, since labour represents a significant cost. Several are side-ventures of working professionals or stay-at-home mothers, and therefore time is also a limiting factor.

Next steps

Learning from these initial results, the Carpathia Fund will focus on supporting the most dynamic, well-positioned businesses, who have a demonstrated track record of product development, proactive marketing and the capacity and interest to invest time into growing their businesses.

Foundation Conservation Carpathia will continue to monitor the growth of businesses in the region supported by the Carpathia Fund.



Selling locally-produced food at the annual Făgăraș Fest. Photo: Foundation Conservation Carpathia.

Partners

