

Project Title

EcoStay Carpathians -

Mapping mountain shelters for sustainable tourism and cultural heritage preservation in the Ukrainian Carpathians

Project Data

Duration	Funding	Project location/ Region
1 February 2026 – 31 January 2027	DBU Ukraine Funding Initiative	Ukrainian Carpathians, Ukraine

Project Partners

Who are the project partners?

- Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) Ukraine
- National nature parks and reserves of the Ukrainian Carpathians (12 protected areas in total)

What does each partner specifically contribute to the project?

- Supports the project through its conservation expertise, local network and cooperation with protected areas.
- Provide and verify information about shelters and accommodation facilities, contribute local knowledge, historical information and photographs.

About the Project

What is the problem – and what do you want to change about it? What are you doing specifically to achieve this goal?	The Ukrainian Carpathians are experiencing increasing pressure from domestic tourism during the war, while the region's historic network of mountain shelters is gradually disappearing. At the same time, information about existing shelters and other sustainable accommodations in protected areas is scattered and incomplete. EcoStay Carpathians aims to create an open-access bilingual platform that brings this information together in one place. The project combines archival research, field verification, mapping, and consultations with protected-area staff to document mountain shelters and other sustainable accommodation options. The resulting interactive map and website will help visitors make more sustainable travel choices, support protected-area managers and preserve the cultural heritage connected with the Carpathian shelter tradition.
What is special or new about your approach?	The project introduces a new approach to sustainable tourism in the Ukrainian Carpathians by bringing verified information about mountain shelters and other accommodation options together in one publicly accessible bilingual platform. No comparable resource currently exists for the Ukrainian Carpathians. By combining field verification, GIS-based mapping and cooperation with protected areas, the platform will make sustainable accommodation options easier to discover and encourage visitors to choose lower-impact ways of exploring the region. In this way, EcoStay Carpathians can become a major driver for sustainable tourism, while also providing protected-area managers with a practical tool for better tourism planning and management.
The figure: What does the project actually do?	EcoStay Carpathians is creating a new digital infrastructure for sustainable tourism in the Ukrainian Carpathians. The project brings together previously scattered information on mountain shelters and other overnight accommodations in protected areas on one publicly accessible bilingual platform.

	So far, more than 40 overnight locations in protected areas have been documented and verified, including shelters, guest rooms and glamping facilities. The information will form the basis of an interactive map and searchable website. The project also develops stories connecting the present-day use of mountain shelters with their historical context, helping visitors better understand these places and their role in the mountains. By making reliable information on low-impact accommodation easy to find, EcoStay Carpathians aims to become a powerful driver of sustainable tourism, supporting informed travel choices, better management of visitor flows and reduced pressure on fragile mountain ecosystems. The platform is planned for launch in early 2027.
What remains? What concrete results are achieved, and who can use them in the future?	By the end of the funding period, EcoStay Carpathians will leave behind a freely accessible, bilingual online platform with an interactive GIS-based map covering more than 40 verified mountain shelters and other sustainable overnight locations across the Ukrainian Carpathians. The underlying database, including location data, condition assessments and historical information, will remain available to the twelve partner protected areas for ongoing maintenance, monitoring and future updates, forming a lasting basis for sustainable tourism planning. The five documented shelter stories preserve local cultural heritage in a format that protected-area staff and tourism initiatives can keep using for visitor education long after the project ends. Beyond the platform itself, the project strengthens cooperation between FZS Ukraine and the region's protected areas, creating a network and a working method that can be extended to document further sites in the future.

Project images

Image 1 of 5



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