

“CLIMATE HEROES: YOUTH VOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING”

1 CONCEPT NOTE

1.1. Description of the action

Objectives of the action	<p>Overall objective: By 2023 a broad spectrum of high school and university aged youth from 7 Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are aware of climate change (CC) issues and the implications of wasteful consumption for both their communities and those in the developing world, have achieved more sophisticated, powerful voices when representing these crucial CC issues within both their communities and those elsewhere and are able to provide sustainable solutions that they and their peers can apply.</p> <p>SO 1. Youth understand their impact on CC, their responsibilities and power to affect positive change, and the interlinked connections to the developing world;</p> <p>SO 2. Young climate leaders are empowered and given a voice in representing climate and global issues through developing skills and knowledge in participatory and innovative ways;</p> <p>SO 3. Young climate heroes are actively engaged in reducing wasteful consumption and promoting their solutions to their peers, decision makers and communities, thereby creating a movement for positive change.</p>
Target group	<p>15 - 24 year old youth in 7 CEE countries (BG, CZ, HU, PL, RO, SK, SI) aiming to reach 1.8 million of approximately 10 million youth.</p>
Final beneficiaries	<p>Citizens in the 7 CEE countries (92.6 million), citizens of Malaysia (32.4 million) and other developing countries.</p>
Estimated results	<p>Outcome 1: Youth and citizens in 7 CEE countries have greater awareness and understanding of their and the EU's roles and responsibilities for limiting negative CC impacts in an interconnected world and the needed lifestyle changes to achieve that.</p> <p>Op 1.1. Representative survey on youth understanding of CC, its global interlinkages and readiness for action at project beginning and end.</p> <p>Op. 1.2. Youth outreach communication campaign with a single concept run at national levels (driven by CSOs then the youth themselves) on CC and roles and responsibilities in an interconnected world (1.8 million youth reached).</p> <p>Op. 1.3. Link established between youth in CEE and developing countries (i.e. Malaysia) through video production, internal communication channels and physical exchange.</p> <p>Op. 1.4. Communication to the wider population of target countries (i.e. regular bulletins).</p> <p>Outcome 2: Youth climate leaders are empowered and given a voice on CC and the interdependencies between the EU and developing nations through participatory and innovative approaches.</p> <p>Op. 2.1. YouTube channel with linkages to other social media (Facebook, Instagram etc.) used for both know-how sharing and dissemination of youth-produced videos on climate.</p> <p>Op. 2.2. Transferable youth empowerment and leadership skills package developed.</p> <p>Op. 2.3. Youth leadership programme in 7 CEE countries with 700 leaders trained, some of whom become mentors.</p> <p>Op. 2.4. Approximately 2000 youth videos produced.</p> <p>Op. 2.5. 3 national and 3 regional annual Green Oscars award events linked to Earth Hour and other events for maximum outreach.</p>



	<p>Outcome 3: Youth climate heroes are committed and engaged in developing climate-friendly lifestyles and climate policy agendas.</p> <p>Op. 3.1. Youth lifestyle changes initiated, including through gamification, and multiplied through promotion on social media.</p> <p>Op. 3.2. CEE youth-driven climate agenda communicated to decision makers.</p>
Main activities	<p>A 1.1.1. Sociological survey on youth and CC at project outset and conclusion (i.e. interest and understanding of CC and how to have positive impact).</p> <p>A 1.2.1. Communication campaign in all countries to recruit young leaders, engage them on CC and support them in reaching their peers via social media platforms (i.e. YouTube).</p> <p>A 1.3.1. Ongoing communication between CEE climate leaders and peers in Malaysia through YouTube channel and an exchange trip to the Green Oscars.</p> <p>A. 1.4.1. Communication activities on the project to the wider audience in target countries.</p> <p>A 2.1.1. Creation and maintenance of a youth powered YouTube platform for training and dissemination of climate videos for each country produced by youth, vloggers, celebrities.</p> <p>A 2.2.1. Development of a youth empowerment and leadership skills building package including workshops for green solutions (low-waste lifestyles, media, policy advocacy) prepared and delivered by the partnership.</p> <p>A 2.3.1. Three rounds of annual youth leadership programme in each country.</p> <p>A 2.4.1. Video production by youth.</p> <p>A 2.5.1. Green Oscars: award ceremony for best youth videos and knowledge exchange</p>

1.1.2. Description of the action

For historic reasons, youth in the CEE largely feel they have no power to contribute to positive societal change and lack experience in engaging in civil action (e.g. to influence EU policies). They, like much of the population, are not clearly aware of the impact their wasteful lifestyles have on other parts of the world and thus lack a sense of global responsibility, which also hampers engagement.

This project partnership of WWF, youth networks, and media organisations is united by a common vision and complementary skills for empowering youth to become active global citizens and make their contribution to halting climate change (CC).

Climate Heroes aims at making youth understand the interdependent reasons and global impacts of CC and at empowering youth leaders to engage their peers in creating positive impact. To that end, potential young influencers will be recruited, trained in leadership, mentoring and communication skills, and equipped with the knowledge of the causes and global impacts of CC and mitigation options (i.e. reduction of wasteful consumption). They will then create videos for their peers on what they have learned and their personal solutions, both in their private sphere and politically. The videos will be leveraged through social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram etc.) to maximise outreach and motivate a growing number of youth to take action themselves and communicate their views on CC. As we intend to teach the youth *how to think rather than what to think*, the paramount goal is to enable them to find their own unique voices when advocating for climate mitigation and sustainable development goals and to acquire practical skills and act as ambassadors for positive change. This will contribute to the implementation of the EU long-term climate goals by 2050 and to the national SDGs programmes to be completed by 2020.

The target group, as described in Section 1.2.3, is 15-24 years olds (approx. 10 million people) and active social media users, who have been shown to have low awareness and understanding of CC issues--only 25% think they are personally responsible for seeking positive CC solutions. Hence, this project will aim at raising awareness and understanding among youth, as well as motivating and empowering them, to take action on cross-cutting CC issues. In preparation, a focus group comprised



of teenagers who expressed the importance of being heard and the desire to directly drive change was identified.

Evidence will be collected through representative sociological studies at the beginning and upon completion of the project. Such studies will inform the design of training and communication strategies and enable the measurement of impacts. A two stage awareness raising campaign will be used to spark youth enthusiasm and encourage dialogue. To set the project in motion, a core group of young leaders will be recruited via a communications campaign and trained through YouTube and face-to-face leadership in 1) film-making, vlogging, effective communication 2) interdependent drivers and global impacts of CC and practical solutions and 3) climate policy advocacy and campaigning including the mechanisms to be active citizens and engage with authorities. The empowered youth will then produce climate engagement videos and be active in climate policy processes. They will experiment with lifestyle changes and encourage similar action from their peers through pledges, sharing their own solutions and green business plans, and peer-to-peer training via YouTube and other social media. Communication with their counterparts in ODA countries, like Malaysia and their authentic stories, will provide youth from the CEE with a real and immediate global perspective on how greenhouse gas emissions in Europe impact individual youth in emerging economies, thus building a sense of responsibility. The communication campaign, including the YouTube channel, is expected to reach approx. 1.8 million youth across the region who will be made aware of the effects of CC on developing countries, the 2030 Agenda and the global impact of individual consumption. Professional communicators from the consortium will advise the young film producers, support the targeted dissemination of videos and further the message. Quality and high impact youth produced videos will be recognized at the annually-held *Green Oscars*, celebrated in conjunction with the Global Earth Hour.

The project will be implemented in three years in order to allow for three rounds of youth empowerment training, involving experienced colleagues in mentoring younger members, thereby sharpening their leadership skills. The 3-year period is also crucial to provide youth with the chance to learn and become actively involved in the ongoing global policy processes such as the 2050 Low-carbon Economy roadmap review and update with Paris Agreement and the national SDGs programmes (completed by 2020). The project will have an inception phase for sociological surveys and development of the leadership training package and YouTube platform, 3 rounds of leadership programs, national and regional Green Oscars, ongoing communication and outreach.

1.2. Relevance of the action

1.2.1. Relevance to the objectives/sectors/themes/specific priorities of the call for proposals

The global objective of the call is to *ensure the commitment of EU citizens to development and contribute to sustainable lifestyle patterns of EU citizens* and the specific objectives are to develop awareness of *people and planet* issues and to *encourage active engagement* with solutions and initiatives to solve them on a global scale. Our proposed project will enable young EU citizens to understand their global responsibilities, voice them clearly and commit to adopting sustainable lifestyles. We will link youth across CC topics, locales (i.e. emerging economies in Southeast Asia) and media to ensure their ideas and commitment and provide lasting inspiration for their communities and future generations.

The proposal contributes to the Consensus and, in particular, to the successful achievement of the SDGs. It also promotes lifelong learning, sustainable production, positive consumption patterns and climate-resilient pathways, as well as the *emergence of local climate champions*. *Climate Heroes* engenders a longer term commitment to the international processes governing CC cooperation and achievement of the UN SDGs. The project is effectively contributing to SDGs 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 17 and especially to SDG Sub-Goal 13.3; *Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on CC mitigation, adaptation* with Indicator 13.3.2; promoting *individual capacity building*. With the strong youth-focus fostered in the project, it is in line with the aspirations of the Paris Agreement and UNFCCC.

Our proposal focuses on the priority issues of the call: *CC, youth and cross-cutting themes*. Youth will be encouraged to find independent voices and develop workable solutions to the biggest problem of their generation: CC. Our approach, identified as a New Power Approach (HBR, 2014), focuses on the





informal, networked and crowdsourcing method of problem-solving through leadership, empowerment and peer-mentoring of youth. Enabling youth to create and promote their own agenda is not just the means of delivery for our project; it also shapes dedicated, young activists with a lifelong commitment to a greener, healthier world. Alongside multimedia skills and tools for future career opportunities, the project will also help youth develop a clearer understanding of mutual collaboration, support and social responsibility, which they can apply to problems and initiatives throughout their lives. Our youth's place in civil societies should be central as this both transcends and promotes climate action and supports the EU's fundamental values of liberty, equality, solidarity and dignity for all affected by the climate crises in Europe and globally.

This global partnership is best suited to fully realize the project, as it brings together conservation and youth organizations, and communications companies across 7 CEE countries and Malaysia. To leverage outcomes and create synergies, the partnership is comprised of global networks active in CC (WWF), youth engagement (AIESEC and the Scouts) and in the SDGs (UN association). This is complemented by two communication companies in HU and CZ, one of which is youth-driven. FaceUp Technology CZ will bring in expertise on equality promotion and anti-bullying.

The project employs a combination of campaigns, science-based awareness raising, communication and outreach activities and informal learning. It applies robust and innovative communication and outreach tools, using a YouTube channel at the core of the project, apps (Waste Terminator game), multiple additional social media platforms, documentaries, teaching video material, involvement of popular vloggers and celebrities, public events (the Green Oscars), competitions, workshops and online training.

The project addresses to a significant extent the results referred to in the guidelines and in particular:

- **Outcome 1** contributes to result (i) on pan-European campaigns; to result (iii) on increased public awareness on Agenda 2030 and the Consensus; to result (iv) of better informed and empowered youth in relation to CC; to result (v) on increased awareness on the development issues; to result (x) in citizens' awareness on sustainable lifestyle and consumption patterns.
- **Outcome 2** contributes to result (iv) on better informed and empowered youth in relation to CC; to result (vii) on enhanced competences of youth to examine global interdependencies; result (viii) on better integration of development issues in non-formal education.
- **Outcome 3** contributes to result (vi) on increased commitment and engagement of European youth in climate and environment action, green economy and sustainable ways of living; to result (ix) on higher engagement to promote policy coherence for development.

1.2.2. Relevance to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries, region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)

CEE countries differ from other European countries in how their national governments and citizens perceive and engage in CC issues, the general public's awareness of these issues and their responsibilities in solving them. CO2 emissions per capita in Eastern Europe have remained stable or have not substantially decreased in the past decade despite existing EU policies. The economies of the region are growing at rates near or above 4% annually which directly corresponds to consumption growth. Currently, there is potential for a dangerous rise because of the increase in individual consumption of goods and services (including commodities from developing countries), introducing the potential for a rise in per capita emissions.

CEE governments, however, have shown limited political will in taking CC action. This is mirrored by low levels of awareness and civic engagement on climate and environmental topics throughout the region. According to the Eurobarometer, citizens in SK, HU, CZ and SI are least convinced that fighting CC and



boosting energy efficiency can positively impact economic and job growth (the most critical topic for youth entering the workforce).

Implementation of SDGs and CC conventions and agreements is often ignored while national and regional multi-stakeholder forums are rarely created leading to loss of engagement with the SDG processes. In those countries who voluntarily reported their SDG achievements in 2017 (i.e. CZ, HU, SK, RO) few or no ties to global processes and effective international cooperation initiatives are mentioned. These reports fail to recognize the role of these countries as part of the problem *and* the solution. This disconnect leads not only to a policy impasse but also to concrete changes in consumption patterns that links unsustainable production in ODA countries to uninformed and/or irresponsible consumption in CEE. For example, Malaysia is the world's second-largest palm oil producer after Indonesia and together the two countries account for nearly 90 percent of global palm oil production. Recent global initiatives such as the RSPO/CSPO certification have made major headway in swaying Western European consumers away from unsustainable palm oil products. In CEE, however, consumption has skyrocketed, with PL alone importing over 200,000 tons in 2016 with no reliable information on its origin and sustainability.

To address the problem of increasing individual consumption in the region, the action will focus on **individual energy and waste reduction (heating and cooling, transport, food waste, unsustainable wood and paper product consumption, plastics)**. Science-based data on the topics and proposed solutions to the problems will be integrated in the communications campaign, the content of the YouTube channel and the training programmes where climate heroes get engaged and empowered through creating videos, encouraging peers to reduce their climate footprint and engaging in the activities described above.

The action will showcase the nexus of individual consumption patterns in the EU, the implementation of global agreements and specifically how the 2030 Agenda influences the ODA countries. WWF Malaysia will provide on-the-ground examples of visible CC impacts as witnessed and documented by youth. Consumption patterns with the largest impact on CO₂ emissions and the possible leverage points of youth to reverse the trends harmful for climate and the environment will be highlighted.

The action will align with several national-level plans and processes in CEE:

1) Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans (2030 climate targets); 2) EU strategy on adaptation to CC presently in a review process, due May 2019 (horizontal for each EU MS); 3) 2050 Low-carbon Economy roadmap review and update with Paris Agreement, known as the strategy for long-term EU GHG reductions presently in review process; 4) National participation and contribution to the Commission's high level multi-stakeholder platform for follow-up of the UN SDGs in the EU.

The action will inform youth on the significance and the impacts of these processes, how these affect their future and how EU level decision-making affects the global agenda and the contributions of countries and individuals to it. A significant part of the trainings and awareness-raising YouTube videos will focus on building a higher level of civic engagement for climate through dissemination of these messages to a wider audience. Also, these processes will be explained in the policy trainings of the youth leadership programme.

The action is not a continuation of previous actions but will leverage impact by connecting with ongoing DEAR projects (Fish Forward 2) and sustainable seafood consumption promotion. It will build upon the results of other relevant DEAR projects (Don't waste, Map Your Meal and the Same World project).

Climate Heroes is in line with the renewed EU Youth Strategy proposed by the European Commission for 2019-2027, focusing on fostering youth participation in civic and democratic life, connecting youth across the EU and beyond to encourage voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity, intercultural understanding and supporting youth empowerment through innovation and recognition of their work. The action will align its key awareness raising events, workshops and face to face trainings with EU events such as the World Environment Day (June 5) and the International Youth Day (August 12). We will also link to other EU events (EU Sustainable Energy Week, EU Mobility Week, Climate Diplomacy Week, EU Green Week, EU Utility Week etc.), and national events (i.e.CZ: Ekofilm Festival, SK: Ekotopfilm festival).





1.2.3. Describe and define the target groups and final beneficiaries, their needs and constraints, and state how the action will address these needs

The target group are youth aged 15 - 24 years in the 7 CEE countries, which accounts for approximately 10 million people. It consists of two sub-groups: high school aged youth (15 -18 years) and university aged youth (19 - 24 years). The overall distribution of the target group is 51%/48% male/female and 57%/43% urban/rural. The project will aim at reaching 18-20% of the target population, totaling approximately 1.8 million youth. Both highschool and university youth have been selected as the most appropriate ages for providing leadership training and to allow the older youth mentorship opportunities. The wider communications campaign will reach out to youth who are unaware of the current CC situation and its consequences. The youth targeted for the leadership programme will be selected based on their interest in environmental topics and/or enthusiasm and leadership/mentoring potential; the topics providing a useful learning experience. One communication strategy will be to reach out to the youth through the existing networks of our partners including AIESEC, UNABG, the Scouts movement and national youth associations. Through the involvement of the participating organizations and their followers, the project will provide a useful network that the youth can use to reach out and share their views.

The beneficiaries are 92.6 million citizens of the targeted 7 CEE countries (BG, CZ, HU, PL, RO, SI, SK) which share a common history and a low awareness of the global impacts of CC, in addition to undergoing similar transformational societal processes (incl. ageing societies and immigration processes). These citizens will benefit from increased active citizenship, reduced brain drain and better prospects for the future as more motivated youth will stay in their countries and actively participate in democratic processes. The second group of beneficiaries are the citizens of developing world countries such as Malaysia (a partner in the project with a population of 32.4 million), who will benefit from the increased concern and awareness of EU youth about processes happening there and how they are interconnected.

Youth want to focus their strong desire for social and environmental impact into their daily activities. The Millennial generation is looking for *purpose over pay cheques*: 74% of job applicants want a job where they feel their work matters. The barriers to youth achieving these goals arise from a lack of knowledge, skills and tools to build a confident attitude and trust in their own abilities and need for acceptance from peers. Only 13% of the 15-24 years olds in the EU believe that the single most serious problem facing the world as a whole is CC. The percentage increases with the level of education, however. These numbers are lower in the CEE region as awareness of the problem is also lower. Only 24% of youth (15-24) think that they need to be personally responsible for action against CC; 39% think national governments should take actions (Eurostat). These trends are particularly acute in former socialist countries where the objectives of global thinking and active citizenship are less ingrained in the educational system than in more mature democracies. Youth in CEE feel unable to positively affect CC problems and lack knowledge of important CC issues such as irregular weather patterns, droughts, diseases and rise of sea levels. With this in mind we propose activities covering awareness raising and leadership training, including policy so that youth can directly reach out to decision-makers in an informed manner.

Young internet users most often seek leisure activities such as communication and entertainment. They are particularly active in social media and the level of recognition of vloggers is often higher than famous celebrities. Social media popularity is high in the CEE region with 40% (in CZ) to 60% (in HU) active social media users. Their annual growth is between 3% in BG and 13% in PL. YouTube is the second global social network after Facebook in all countries with 40% (CZ) to 56% (BG) of the internet users watching online videos daily. PR experts predict YouTube's popularity with the target group will only grow.

The action will reach a large spectrum of youth who are active in social media. With the innovative concept of creating climate leaders (heroes) who will drive the content, we will use the potential of the targeted channels to create and leverage content globally. We will link youth from Malaysia where CC effects are already visible, to youth in CEE countries in order to sensitize them and build awareness of their role as powerful actors whose choices matter for achieving global results such as the SDGs. Addressing CC together will encourage the participants to adopt and project positive role models,





lifestyle changes, and a sense of shared purpose beyond their immediate needs for social engagement or media entertainment.

Target groups are present in the partnership via youth organizations with wide outreach in the target countries. Already proven young leaders trained as part of finished programmes will support project implementation as advisors, steering members and mentors. Initially, students from media studies and similar programs will double-proof the content and contribute ideas. Once the first cycle of the programme is implemented and the first group of young climate heroes are trained, they will take part in the next cycles as trainers and mentors to the new wave of participants. As part of the quality control of the project and to ensure buy-in and wide reach for the messages and information, we will establish a group of youth designated from the participating youth organizations as the Steering Committee. They will join key events and working groups related to the design of the activities as well as evaluate and provide feedback to the outputs. The initiative will be made popular with the final beneficiaries through wider public exposure so that the general populations of the target countries can recognize the young climate heroes as change makers.

1.2.4. Particular added-value elements

The focus of Climate Heroes is on inspiring ideas and empowerment in a dynamic and engaged audience and providing a flexible, imaginative venue that encourages enthusiastic innovation and collaboration. We are mindful that all technological innovation we apply, from media creation to CC hacks, must include social innovation. In our case it revolves around inclusiveness and engagement, in mobilizing the youth who have the best potential to be sustainability and climate leaders. This project will empower and welcome participants regardless of gender or background, promoting inclusivity and equitable education for all. To build lifelong ambassadors of positive change, we will continue social innovation, rooted in transparent communication, a participatory approach and shared ownership.

The core project partners (WWF, the Scouts, AIESEC and UNABG) are highly recognized global networks that work on various cross-cutting topics such as SDGs, fundamental rights, equal opportunities and environmental issues. Their expertise and global reach will be leveraged, bringing best practice and added value to the project. We will also learn from the best practice of WWF Austria's Generation Earth programme (including SDG Target 4.7 trainings) and lessons learned from it (for youth engagement, SDGs and know-how exchange). UNABG's engagement with youth and SDGs will also be utilized (e.g. the Model UN approach). We will also link to WWF Malaysia's *Sembang Storytelling* platform, *Building Bridges for Sustainable Consumption and Production* event and the *International Eco-Schools Conference*.

