



## **INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT**

October 2009 – April 2010

### **1. Executive summary**

The aim of the project is to introduce the Natura 2000 network in Albania through strengthening the role of the civil society component. The specific objective is to establish a group of work and a broader network with the necessary capacities for the Natura 2000 process that will start soon in Albania as part of the accession to the EU.

During the first period the work had been concentrated in the first step related to the organization of work, preparing the work plan, identifying the member of the working group for the Natura 2000 (N2000\_WG), the organization and holding the kick-off meeting and the preparation phase for the first training workshop.

All the activities planned have been implemented and the project is starting to have its information disseminated and the visibility in all the country territory.

### **2. Activities and results**

The organization of the project structure and the work plan, requested an intensive communication between the partners (WWF MedPO experts and INCA staff) for the establishment of the Steering Committee and an Advisory Board.

#### **Activity 1: Establish Natura 2000\_WG**

The partners of the project together elaborate the document related to the criteria of selection for the establishment of the N2000\_WG (Annex 1). For better discussing the issues INCA organized several round tables with the experts of the protected areas in Albania and others NGOs. At the end of this exercise a list of potential and interested civil society organizations were elaborated for final approval in the kick-off meeting. The meeting was decided to be held on 22 January 2010.

#### **Activity 2: Organize a kick-off meeting to establish Natura 2000\_WG**

The organization of the kick-off meeting was used for having two very important meetings with the main institutions in Albania, having the opportunity of the WWF MedPO representative in Tirana. On 20 January in the EU Delegation office in Tirana, a meeting with Mr. Stefano CALABRETTA, Coordination Civil Society and Horizontal Tasks and Mr. Antoine AVIGNON, Operation Section – Infrastructure and Economic Reform, was held. After some discussion the participants exchange a lot of information regarding the structure and the project implementation and decided to keep inform each other on the activities and the use of other EU tools in Albania.



The second important meeting was held on 21 January with the Minister of Environment, Forest and Water Administration, Mr. Fatmir MEDIU, informing him on the objectives and scope of the project. He gave its support for the project and agree on the possibility to signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding the implementation of Natura 2000 projects in Albania.

The kick-off meeting was held on Friday, 22 January 2010, at the Mondial Hotel meeting room. About 30 participants were present from different the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration, NGOs, Universities, experts, Academy of Sciences, etc(see Annex 2). There were present and take the floor for endorsing the meeting also Mr. Stefano Calabretta, Task Manager of the EU Delegation in Albania and Mr. Antoine Avignon, the Environmental Officer in the EU Delegation. Their speeches emphasize the ways on which the EU supports projects on nature conservation and biodiversity. The meeting went very smoothly and the participants of the civil society gave their support for the establishment of a network regarding the Natura 2000 and also approved the members of the N2000\_WG. Other conclusions were:

- The establishment and good management of representatives protected areas is a political priority in Albania, and Natura 2000 is an opportunity for that.
- In the framework of EMERALD, a lot of sound scientific work has been done; it represents a solid basis for the identification, establishment and management of Natura 2000 sites.
- The Natura 2000\_Network will take inspiration of existing examples of civil society networking (e.g. *Transboundary Skadar Forum*).
- The members of Natura 2000\_Network will take specific commitments through the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); a draft will be circulated among the participants that will have 5 days to submit their comments/suggestions. Afterwards, the MoU will be open for signature.
- Participants support the idea of a MoU with MoEFWA; a draft will be circulated among the participants that will have 10 days to submit their comments/ suggestions. Afterwards, the MoU will be sent to MoEFWA for signature.
- Participants support the idea to organize project's CB activities both in the north and in the south of the country.
- Based on good results of this phase, WWF is willing to submit in partnership with Natura 2000\_Network a project proposal under a significant budget line (e.g. IPA, others) in order to secure the continuation of the activities.

Activity 3: Organization of the first training workshop in Korça

Based on the decision made in the N2000\_WG that the two training workshop will be organized outside Tirana, and precisely in Korça and Shkodra, INCA start the work for the organization matters. The decision was made to have the same structure of training and involving two groups of participants, on in the south (Korça) and one in the north (Shkodra). In cooperation with the WWF MedPO experts a draft agenda was elaborated for both trainings (see Annex 3) and potential trainers were identified (the trainers are from WWF MedPO, University and INCA experts). There was also the willingness of the UNDP project for the Prespa Park to collaborate for the organization of the first training in Korça, decided to be held on the data 15-17 April, where about 30 people are invited to participate in the training related to Natura 2000, EIA and SEA and Advocacy.



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Until now we can confirm that everything is going well and all the planned activities were implemented. The feeling is that the interest of the experts is very high on the Natura 2000 issues understanding the importance of the problem but on the other hand there is still a lot of work to be done in raising the capacities and interest of the NGOs, particularly those outside of Tirana.

At the moment we do not see any risk regarding the project implementation. The participation of the invited persons in the training course will give us more information on the participations of the civil society members.

The only contract above 10,000 € was awarded to an agency for the organization of all the workshops, including the translation and the visibility activities. After publishing in our website and collecting offers from some companies, we proceed with the contract for the AlpeAdria Agency that keeps the offers on the limited planed budget. The “verbal process” is part of the financial documents forwarded.

### **3. Partners and co-operation**

The partnership between WWF and INCA is a very stabilized relationship that is growing not only under this project but also in other project proposal and in other field of civil society work like the public information, government transparency, etc.

On the other hand we had the opportunity to meet the Minister of Environment that gave a fool support of this project. The presence of all the member of the Nature Protection Directorate is a positive signal from the main environmental institution. We are looking on the signature of the MoU for the implementation of Natura 2000 network in Albania with the Ministry and hopping to have their interest in participating in the other activities of the project.

For the realization of the training workshop in Korca we had the full collaboration of the UNDP/GEF project regarding the protection of the Prespa Park. This is a transboundary project and had a PIU in Korça that help us very much in selecting active NGOs and institutions interested for this thematic.

### **4. Visibility**

As planned in the proposal the project will have a link on the INCA web site that is under construction. There is already open the windows in the main page regarding the Natura 2000 that will be open with more details in the next months.

Furthermore an article was published on the journal “Ekolevizja” that is the only environmental journal from 7 years, distributed free for the main related government institutions and in a lot of NGOs. The number of copies distributed is 600 pieces every 2 weeks. A similar informative article was published on the electronic environmental editorial “Mjedishi Sot” (Environmental Today), published by the Regional Environmental Center (REC) and distributed in about 2.300 e-mail



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address. Both these periodical publication are considered the most read journal for the environmental information.

The plan is to be more active regarding the new website and also the articles published in the daily journal. We will try to use also the EU information office, open recently in the center of Tirana, for the dissemination of our results and future activities planned.

**Zamir DEDEJ**

**P R E S I D E N T**



## **Annex 1**

### **CRITERIA FOR THE SELECTION OF THE N2000\_WG**

The establishment of Natura 2000 Network (“the Network”) in Albania needs a long process, whose main steps are

- i) understand what the Network is about,
- ii) understand which structure and functioning is needed to implement it.

In this regard, and in line with the efforts of enlarging and strengthening protected areas, the establishment of Natura 2000 Working group (N2000\_WG) will capacitate those environmental actors that can make Natura 2000 a reality in Albania.

The N2000\_WG will include all the active actors and build on both the national experiences on protected areas and on other projects dealing with such issue. Furthermore, the work done for the EMERALD Network, considered as a starting point for the process of Natura 2000, will be taken in due consideration.

N2000\_WG will be the structure for the implementation of the action and will be structured in the simplest possible way. INCA will play the role of Coordinator with the task to facilitate/support all the activities, WWF MedPO will act as Supervisor.

The selection of N2000\_WG members is fundamental for the success of the action and will be based on the selection criteria listed below:

1. Professional capacities & basic working experience on issues related to the establishment/management of protected areas;
2. Interest on, and basic knowledge of, national and EU policies related to nature conservation;
3. Previous activities on biodiversity conservation, experience on education activities and in working with local communities;
4. Capacity for scientific data collection;
5. Experience in civil society and NGOs advocacy;
6. Solid organizational structure;
7. Representing different geographical NGOs interest;
8. Capacity to work in English.

Selected participants are supposed to fulfil at least two of the above mentioned criteria but one of them should be related to their experience in the field and/or previous activities for nature and biodiversity protection.

It is worth stressing that this action will not intend to get into confrontation with decision makers, quite the opposite. N2000\_WG will be in the long term a precious tool for them. In the regard, the action will build and consolidate a constructive dialogue with the most relevant decision makers, such as the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration which has the overall authority to protect the environment, and all the related regional structure (Protected Areas Administration, REA, Water Basin Agencies, etc).



**Annex 2**

**List of Participants in the kick-off meeting**

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1	Nilhat DRAGOTI	Ministry of Environment Forests and Water Administration	068 20 81 240	<a href="mailto:ndragoti@moe.gov.al">ndragoti@moe.gov.al</a>
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## **Annex 3**

### **Training on Natura2000/EIA&SEA/Advocacy** **(\_\_\_\_\_ 2010)**

#### **DAY 1**

**9.00-9.20** Registrations of participants

**9.20-9.30** Welcome and introduction to seminar objectives (Zamir Dedej)

**9.30-10.30** (Andrea Stefan, WWF MedPO)

- Basic on biodiversity/nature protection in the EU – Environmental *aquis* and introduction to the Nature Directives, experience from other countries
- Q&A

**10.30-11.00** (Nihat Dragoti, Min. of Environment)

- Brief presentation on the present status of legislation in the field of protected areas in Albania
- Q&A

**11.00-11.30** Coffee break

**11.30-13.30** (Andrea Stefan)

- Guidelines on the designation process according to the Bird and Habitats Directive – procedures, criteria, bio-geographic seminars, timing, role of Government and NGOs, etc...
- Q&A

**13.30-15.00** Lunch break

**15.00-16.15** (Andrea Stefan)

- Guidelines on the methodologies for identifying biodiversity values and hotspots according to the Habitats Directive (SPAs + SACs=N2000)

**16.15-17.00** Wrap up and conclusion

#### **DAY 2**

**9.00-11.00** (Entela Cobani, lecturer at the Polytechnic University, Environmental Dep.)

- EIA and SEA processes - What are EIA and SEA? What is their value? Which questions do they answer? What to do with the answers? Assessment for N2000 sites?
- Q&A

**11.00-11.30** Coffee break

**11.30-13.30** (Mira Decka, INCA legal expert)





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- EIA and SEA legal references: i) Albanian national legislation on EIA and SEA, including regulations on environmental licensing ii) align Albanian legislation to EU standards/legislation for EIA and SEA; where are the gaps/problems?
- Q&A

**13.30-15.00** Lunch

**15.00-16.30** (Entela Cobani, Zamir Dedej, Genti Kromidha)

Working groups session – how to influence the EIA from the beginning (screening and scoping stages) and how to evaluate the quality of a given EIA following appropriate criteria

*Example:*

Assignment of a national case work - a EIA report will be provided to the participants (optimally from the country). Participants will have to:

- (i) review the quality, i.e. by analyzing whether:
  - Is the necessary information provided for each major component of the EIA report?
  - Is the information technically sound?
  - Is the statement of the key findings complete and satisfactory?
  - Is the information clearly presented and understandable by public and decision-makers?
  - Is the information sufficient for decision-making and setting conditions for the project

**16.30-17.00**

Presentations of the working groups

Wrap up and conclusions

### **DAY 3**

**9.00-11.00** (Mira Decka, INCA expert on advocacy)

- Basics of advocacy, why it is important, Aarhus convention, the role of NGOs, the challenges and the opportunities at national and EU level
- Q&A

**11.00-11.30** Coffees break

**11.30-13.30** (Mira Decka, Zamir Dedej, Genti Kromidha)

Working group session: how to write a position paper and/or organize a press conference

**13.30-15.00** Lunch

**15.00-16.00** Continued

**16.00-17.00** Presentations of the working groups and discussion  
Wrap up and conclusions



## Annex 4

The action plan of the project for the period April-September 2010

Nr	Activities	Month	Year 1												Year 2					
			Semester 2						Semester 3											
			7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6						
3.	Preparation of Training course	Apr																		
3.1	<i>Training course in Korça for N2000/ EIA &amp; SEA, Advocacy</i>																			
3.2	<i>Training course in Shkodra for N2000/ EIA &amp; SEA, Advocacy</i>																			
4.	Preparation and organization of the <i>Exchange visit in BiH</i>																			
5.	Preparation and organization of the <i>Technical workshop</i>																			
6.	Preparation of the doc <i>Natura 2000 Draft guidelines for Albania</i>																			
Project management and coordination for the implementation																				