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WWF

**EU ACCESSION PROGRAM IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE DINARIC
ARC/WESTERN BALKANS (CROATIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA,
SERBIA, MONTENEGRO AND ALBANIA)**



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DINARIC ARC: A UNIQUE WORLD WHERE EASTERN EUROPE MEETS THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Dinaric Arc is a region of south-eastern Europe with a surface of approximately 100,000 km² and more than 6,000 km of coastline, encompassing the whole region facing the eastern Adriatic Sea, from the city of Trieste (Italy) to Tirana (Albania). It includes portions of the following countries: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Albania.

POLITICAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF THE DINARIC ARC

This region of the world has been the melting, and unfortunately also the boiling pot of Europe. A complex mountainous terrain produced strong local cultural identities. These identities were additionally coloured by larger outside influences, from ancient Rome and later Byzantium to the Venetian Republic, the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires, resulting in a complex matrix of several languages, three major religions and countless differing world-views. At times uniting,

at times divisive, this cultural diversity is one of the many fascinating features of the Dinaric Arc.



KEY CHALLENGES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN DINARIC ARC

Even though people live in a region of great natural beauty and high cultural and social capital, most of them have yet to benefit from the ongoing changes. Although there is strong awareness that, for the future, the main competitive advantages of the countries in the region are their natural and human resources with relatively high levels of education, significant challenges exist in the efforts to put the environmental, social and cultural capital to work for the improvement of livelihoods and to create competitive advantage for the economies in the region¹.

Currently, **short-term economic gains** seem politically more attractive than the long-term benefits associated with integration of sustainability requirements into policy making. This results in strong, often uncontrolled intensification of pressures on precious natural resources, the most recent manifestations being **uncontrolled land-use changes** (terrestrial), **hydropower generation** (freshwater, biodiversity hotspots in canyons) and **tourism development** (coastal/marine and to a lesser extent mountains).

¹ Environmental policy in South-Eastern Europe, J. Stritih et al., 2007

EU PERSPECTIVE

The EU perspective is currently the main political driver, and EU accession is the principal objective for countries in the region. Strong economic growth and progressing integration of the region into the EU are set to bring the stability, security, and prosperity that the peoples of the region are hoping for.

However, this process will only be successful if it preserves and enhances the environmental and social capital of the region rather than sacrificing it. The challenge for the environmental sector is not just the transposition of EU environmental law, but also how it can make a positive contribution to political and economic development.



There is significant scope for stronger leadership in developing a positive vision of development that would focus on the quality of life of the citizens based on the economic, social and environmental capital.

BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT SUCH VISION IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL REALM IS THE CORE OF WWF'S WORK IN THE REGION

WWF WORK IN THE DINARIC ARC REGION

The WWF network is generally organized in a series of national organizations and Programme Offices that are responsible for coordinating and implementing WWF's conservation activities in priority ecoregions around the world.

WWF's conservation work in the Dinaric region is coordinated by two Programme Offices:

- WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, covering the territory from southern Poland to Bulgaria, and the Danube regions of Serbia to Ukraine and the Black Sea.
- WWF Mediterranean Programme, covering the Adriatic Sea and the Dinaric Arc Mountains - Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania.

The two programmes are defined by discrete ecoregion borders, but overlap in terms of the countries they cover in the case of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia.

WWF Mediterranean Programme Office (MedPO) was established by WWF International to pursue the conservation and sustainable management of forest, marine and freshwater ecosystems in the Mediterranean, with a special focus on the Dinaric Arc and South West Mediterranean priority ecoregions, and on critical regional policies.

WWF MedPO is headquartered in Rome, Italy, and employs over 45 people from 16 different nations, implementing projects in 12 countries.

WWF MedPO has been active in the Dinaric Arc ecoregion for over 10 years, and currently has employees in every country in the region.

WWF GOAL IN THE DINARIC ARC:

The creation of an ecoregion-wide system of conservation and sustainable resource use areas (encompassing terrestrial, marine and freshwater systems) capable of ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and ecological processes, and giving a well organized support to the livelihood and welfare of people living in the region.

STRATEGIC APPROACH:

WWF MedPO approach to supporting sustainable development and biodiversity conservation in countries of the Dinaric Arc is based on:

- 1. ADDRESSING REGIONAL DRIVERS OF CHANGE AND KEY POLICIES.**

Supporting countries in the implementation of EU nature protection legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive) and other international agreements, such as Convention on Biological Diversity (Program of Work on Protected Areas), Barcelona Convention, and Bern Convention.

- 2. BUILDING CAPACITY OF ACTORS.**

Generating and multiplying conservation impact by strengthening the capacity of individuals and organizations through the enhancement of their technical, organizational and strategic planning skills.

- 3. ADDRESSING THREATS AND DEMONSTRATING SOLUTIONS.**

Linking lessons learned to policy development by demonstrating site-based solutions to most urgent threats issues that can be replicated and amplified.

- 4. ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS FOR CONSERVATION.**

MedPO pursues a policy of partnership building with NGOs sharing the same goals, with:

- a.) International organizations (UNESCO-BRESCE, UNDP, UNEP, IUCN, the Council of Europe, FAO, Euronatur, ECNC, REC and SNV through the **Dinaric Arc**

Initiative (DAI) and The Nature Conservancy) whose agendas converge with that of WWF,

- b.) Local NGOs.- MedPO has developed partnerships and implemented projects with a number of national NGOs, including Youth Centre Livno and CESD (BiH), Green Home and Natura (Montenegro), SUNCE and Green Action (Croatia), Young researchers of Serbia (Serbia)
- c.) Governmental institutions that commit to conservation objectives - WWF MedPO work in the region is framed by **Memoranda of Understanding** we have signed with governments of Slovenia, Croatia, BiH, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania,
- d.) Private sector actors that promote sustainable use of natural resources and with local communities that engage in conservation.

WWF'S ROLE:

- 1. Strategic support to government agencies / capacity building
- 2. Awareness raising / strengthening civil society / facilitating public participation
- 3. Transfer of experience from the EEA-area

Within this framework, WWF is currently undertaking or developing a number of projects, a brief summary of which is given in the Annex. This portfolio of projects is allowing WWF to build a regional platform for supporting countries' aspirations towards joining EU, establishing and promoting links between individuals and institutions in the region (contributing to regional stability), and assuring that lessons learned and experiences are effectively disseminated through the region.

ANNEX

Brief Overview of WWF MedPO current and developing project portfolio in Dinaric Arc (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania)

Project title

PROTECTED AREAS FOR A LIVING PLANET

Project Manager: Stella Šatalić, ssatalic@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team: National Project Coordinators in Slo, Cro, BiH, Mne, Al

Partners: Environmental Ministries of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania

Project area: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Albania

Project duration: 2007-2011

Budget and funding source: MAVA Foundation (EUR 1.2 M)

Project vision

This is a 5-year WWF project with a goal to create the enabling conditions for the successful implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity Program of Work on Protected Areas in the five countries of the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion.

The work on the Natura 2000 network is in line with the CBD Programme of Work. Both the EU Action Plan and the Programme of Work fixed a common objective of having a complete network of terrestrial protected areas by 2010 and for the marine environment by 2012. Both instruments have objectives related to integration of protected areas into the wider land-and seascapes and agree on the need to create a favourable enabling policy, including the integration of sectoral policies. The issue of finding sufficient financial resources is of concern to both instruments.

Objectives of the project

1. **Information** - The project will gather, elaborate, produce and make available the basic pieces of information that are needed in order to feed decision-makers and other stakeholders, and to set the basis for the implementation of the PoWPA (Red Lists, ecological gap analysis).
2. **Capacity** - The project will build the capacity and increase the skills of those stakeholders who have the ultimate power to translate the PoWPA into concrete conservation results. The plan will encourage the establishment of trans-national links between nature conservation institutions in the ecoregion.
3. **Institutional setting and stakeholder buy-in** - The project will ensure that PowPA receives a greater attention in the political agenda of all the five countries, and that it is mainstreamed into existing strategies and plans.

4. **Protected area financing** - A training module on economics PAs and a business plan for the main PAs existing in the five countries will be developed by end of 2011. A donor conference will be called in each country to secure financial support for business plans.

As part of this project, a high-level event for Environmental Ministries of the six countries of the Dinaric Arc was organized at the CBD COP-9 in Bonn in May 2008, where countries made commitments on their work on Protected Areas over the next three years.



Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (Albania), Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Culture (Croatia), Ministry of Tourism and Environment (Montenegro), Ministry of Environmental Protection (Serbia), Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning (Slovenia), WWF Mediterranean Programme Office staff

Project title:

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SECTOR IN SERBIA AND IN MONTENEGRO TO ADAPT TO EU NATURE PROTECTION AQUIS

Project Manager: Alessandro Badalotti, ABadalotti@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team: NGO YRS (Serbia), NGO Green Home (Montenegro), Andrea Stefan, Duska Dimovic (WWF Danube-Carpathian Office)

Partners: DAPHNE, State Institute for Nature Protection (Montenegro)

Project area: Montenegro and Serbia

Project duration: 2009-2011

Budget and funding source: Norwegian MFA, MedPO (EUR 750.000)

Project vision

Republic of Serbia and Republic of Montenegro are transposing and implementing EU nature protection legislation (Habitats and Birds Directive) and support regional cooperation to meet international commitments for halting the loss of biodiversity.

Objectives of the project:

1. Support to State Institute for Nature Protection of Montenegro in establishing a functional N2000 database with mapped, updated and field-verified data.
2. Non-governmental sector in Serbia and in Montenegro is trained, empowered and organized to carry out its role in nature-related EU accession processes.
3. Key government sectors in Montenegro and in Serbia understand EU conservation policy, establish communication and begin integrating EU nature conservation requirements into policy making.
4. National legislative and international funding frameworks support sustainable development and nature conservation in Serbia and in Montenegro.

Project title:

LIVING NERETVA*

Project Manager: Francesca Antonelli, FAntonelli@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team: Branko Vučijak, Semra Fejzibegović, Raffaele Manzini, Chantal Menard, Irene Mosquiera

Partners: BiH Water Administration (underlining River Basin Agencies), NGO Centre for Environmentally Sustainable Development (CESD)

Project area: Bosnia and Herzegovina (focus at Neretva river basin)

Project phase IV duration: July 2009- June 2010

Budget and funding source: Norwegian MFA (EUR 173.000)

Overall project vision

Neretva river basin in BiH stands out as an example for proper Water Framework Directive (WFD) alignment in the Western Balkans.

Objectives of the project

1. Complete characterisation of ecological status for water bodies.
2. Environmental flow requirements established and maintained for the Neretva river basin.
3. Relevant sub-laws and regulations in line with the new water law, reflecting WFD-requirements.
4. Priority cost-efficient measures have been identified and pilot measures are under implementation, including those relating to reduced discharge of wastewater effluents.
5. Civil society organisations are actively voicing public concerns, public participation is integrated in the new water management bodies as well as into the development process of the river basin management plan (targeting also improved sustainable use of water resources), and implementation sensu WFD.
6. Neretva river basin management plan, including program of measures for achieving WFD goals, drafted (adapted to the BiH context and taking into accounts its transboundary component).

*The project has consisted of three previous phases, implementation started in 2006. The first phase that ended in Dec 2007 has foreseen to use Neretva basin as a pilot for introduction of Habitat Directive and WFD principles; second phase (Jan-Jun 2008) focused on ecological flow, economical valuation of water according to key WFD principles, and supporting public participation, and third phase (Jul 2008 - Jun 2009) focused on delivering EU standards in the management of Neretva river basin (BiH): linking water management and biodiversity conservation.

Project title:

EUROPE'S LIVING HEART (PHASE III*)

Project Manager: Francesca Antonelli, FAntonelli@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team: Branko Vučijak, Semra Fejzibegović, Raffaele Manzini, Chantal Menard, Irene Mosquiera

Partners: BiH Environment Administration, NGO Centre for Environmentally Sustainable Development (CESD)

Project area: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project duration: 2009-2010

Budget and funding source: Norwegian MFA (EUR 182.000)

Project vision:

BiH stands out as an example for proper alignment with EU nature protection standards (Habitats Directive and Birds Directive) providing an example for potential EU candidate countries; and supports regional cooperation to meet international commitments for protection of biodiversity.

Objectives of the project

1. Identification and selection of potential sites for the EU Natura 2000 network in BiH (based on Habitats Directive and Wild Birds Directive).
2. Pilot examples: 1 pilot site in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 1 pilot site in Republika Srpska (at least one of these sites belonging to Neretva basin) exists introducing Natura 2000 protection standards and management.
3. Resource materials: Basic guidelines and tools for adaptation to Natura 2000 standards in biodiversity hotspots are in place for main stakeholders.
4. Capacity for the implementation of the EU biodiversity standards is built within staff of the relevant authorities and other stakeholders.
5. Regional cooperation transferring BiH (as well as Croatian) experience on adaptation to EU nature protection standards is taking place in the Western Balkans (potential recipients: Albania, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia).
6. A similar process of adaptation to EU biodiversity protection standards has been initiated in at least two more countries in the Western Balkans.

*The project is done in two phases, second one is ongoing and the third phase is planned to start in 2010. The annual budget is around EUR 200.000.

Project title:

SUPPORT TO THE CREATION AND PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE TOURIST ITINERARIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Project Manager: Serena Arduino, serena.arduino@gmail.com

Project Team: Zoran Mateljak, Alessandro Badalotti

Partners: National Park Sutjeska, Nature Park Hutovo Blato, UCODEP

Project area: NP Hutovo Blato in the Neretva Valley and NP Sutjeska in the Drina Valley, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Project duration: 2009-2012

Budget and funding source: Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Ministero degli Affari Esteri (MAE)(EUR 300.000)

Project vision:

The project will deliver economic valuation of cultural and natural resources of NP Hutovo Blato and NP Sutjeska, as well as socio-economic analysis of the willingness to pay of tourists, development of guidelines for sustainable tourism and activities to raise awareness of civil society to promote the guidelines in these two protected areas. The products of these studies will provide invaluable input into the development of business plans for these two areas.

Objectives of the project

1. Mapping of natural resources (flora, fauna and ecosystems) of two protected areas.
2. Economic valuation of the two protected areas.
3. Development of guidelines for sustainable tourism in the two protected areas and activities to raise awareness of civil society to promote the guidelines.

Project title:

WESTERN BALKANS REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION - Sustaining Rural Communities and Their Traditional Landscapes through Strengthened Environmental Governance in Transboundary Protected Areas of the Dinaric Arc

Project Manager: Emira Mešanović, emesanovic@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team: Deni Porej

Partners: IUCN, SNV, WWF

Project area: 5 transboundary areas - NP Una / NP Plitvička jezera (BiH/HR), Mt. Dinara (BiH/HR), Delta Neretva (BiH/HR), NP Tara / Drina (SRB/BiH), NP Durmitor / NP Sutjeska (MNE/BiH), NP Prokletije / Bjeshkët e Namuna (MNE/AL)

Project duration: 2009-2012

Budget and funding source: Finland Ministry of Foreign Affairs (EUR 1.8 M)

Project vision

The programme aims to foster the sustainable development of rural communities on the basis of conservation of biological diversity and traditional landscapes in Transboundary Protected Areas by improving regional cooperation and strengthening environmental governance, including the involvement and empowerment of civil society and local communities.

Objectives of the project:

(WWF MedPO is involved in Programme objective 1)

Create an effective platform for supporting trans-boundary collaboration initiatives expressed in the Big Win for the Dinaric Arc and transfer lessons learned to other locations in Dinaric Arc countries and beyond.

Project title:

PROTECT BIODIVERSITY - EMPOWER ALBANIAN NGOs FOR PROMOTING NATURA 2000

Project Manager: Raffaele Mancini, rmancini@atw-wwf.org

Project Team: Zamir Dedej (INCA); Alberto Arroyo Schnell, Christoph Stein, Andrea Stefan (WWF, to be determined), representatives of regional/national NGOs

Project area: Albania

Project duration: 2009-2010

Budget and funding source: EC, Government of Catalonia, MAVA Foundation, Municipality Barcelona & Gerona (Spain), WWF EPO – Rome Branch (EUR 100.000)

Project vision:

Albania as a potential candidate country for EU accession is committed to “...combating environmental degradation.... and to develop and strengthen collaboration (with EU countries) on priority areas related to the Community *acquis* in the field of environment”.

By supporting this commitment aim is to protect Albanian biodiversity by advocating for Natura 2000 through support to the government to adapt its environmental legislation to the Community *acquis* when it comes to nature conservation. To this end, a Working Group on Natura 2000 Network (N2000_WG) composed by regional/national NGOs will be established and its capacity strengthened so to enable its members to advocate for Natura 2000.

Objectives of the project

1. To contribute to the protection of Albanian biodiversity by promoting the implementation of Natura 2000 through capacity building activities.
2. To support the current efforts of the Albanian government to fill up the gaps between national environmental legislation and EU biodiversity standards.
3. Increase the capacity of regional/national environmental NGOs on Natura 2000, EIA/SEA and Advocacy, techniques and EU biodiversity standards is increased.

Project title:

PILOT PROJECT CORATIA - MedPAN SOUTH PROJECT

Biodiversity Component of the GEF Full-Sized project “Strategic partnership for the Mediterranean sea large marine ecosystem”

Project Manager: Alessandra Pomè/Marina Gomei, MGomei@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team in Croatia: Association SUNCE is the local coordinator of the Pilot Project and WWF-MedPO is the leader of the MedPAN South project.

Project area: **Croatia**

Partners in Croatia: Ministry of Culture, State Institute for Nature Protection, 5 MPAs (NP Brijuni, NP Kornati, NP Mljet, NP Lastovo archipelago, and NP Telašćica)

Project duration: 2008-2012

Budget and funding source: MAVA (EUR 550.00)

Project vision

The maintenance the long-term function of the Mediterranean Large Marine Ecosystem through the use of an ecologically-coherent network of protected areas combined with the sustainable use of renewable marine resources.

Objectives of the project in Croatia

The objective in Croatia is to assist the management bodies and relevant institutions of the five existing MPAs in Croatia in developing concerted management plans and by promoting their networking and full integration in MedPAN network of managers of Mediterranean MPAs. MPAs managers and relevant institutions will be guided in the step-by-step development of the management plans through thematic and training workshops and provided with the necessary financial support to run complementary studies and the technical assistance required for the implementation of the plan.

Project title:

SHARING WATERS: PROTECTION OF PRIORITY WETLANDS FOR BIRD MIGRATION (ADRIATIC FLYWAY) IN THE DINARIC ARC ECOREGION THROUGH INTEGRATED SITE AND RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

Project Manager: Francesca Antonelli, FAntonelli@wwfmedpo.org

Project Team: Zoran Mateljak, Mato Gotovac, Jelena Marojević

Partners: Euronatur, NGO Youth Centre Livno, NGO Geen Home (Montenegro)

Project area: Livanjsko Polje, Neretva River (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Skadar Lake (Montenegro/Albania)

Project duration: 2008-2010

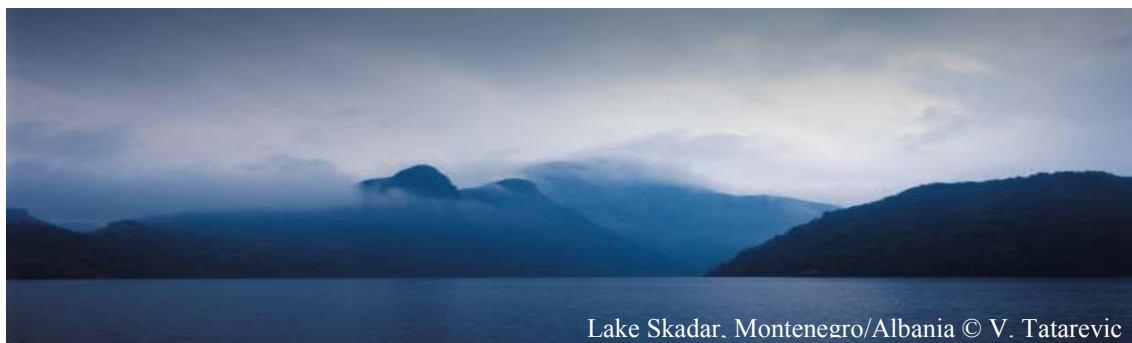
Budget and funding source: MAVA

Project vision

The Western Balkans has been defined as one of the most important freshwater ecoregions worldwide. Apart from its riverine biodiversity, this area is rich in wetlands, which play an important role in the protection of migrating birds (Adriatic Flyway). The goal of the project is to improve the protection of three selected priority sites – Livanjsko Polje, Neretva (BiH) and Skadar Lake (Montenegro) through improved site management and by mitigation and elimination of impacts originating from unsustainable river basin management.

Project objectives

1. A basin-wide platform of non-governmental, non-profit and politically independent environmental organizations was created with the aim of taking part to decision making processes and encouraging cooperation with the government.
2. A technical analysis of the implications of building new hydropower dams along the rivers will be carried out by looking at alternative options.
3. Awareness raising actions will raise the profile of natural and cultural resources within project sites.
4. Building up the understanding among members of the environmental groups on i) what IRBM means and its value ii) potential impact of dams and mitigation measures iii) the necessary skills and knowledge to advocate successfully for a sustainable development strategy.
5. In addition, a whole range of activities directed to monitoring of bird populations, development of management plans and hunting pressure reduction are being implemented.



Lake Skadar, Montenegro/Albania © V. Tatarevic

Project in development:

THOUSAND ISLANDS: CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATURA 2000 IN CROATIA

Project area: Croatia and the Adriatic Sea

Project duration: 2010-2011

Objectives of the project:

Support the efforts of the State Institute for Nature Protection (SINP) to establish Natura 2000 network in Croatia by:

1. Identifying priority actions and developing a multi-stakeholder process/proposal to strengthen the scientific knowledge on marine biodiversity features in Croatia and the Adriatic Sea, as a prerequisite for the designation of marine N2000 sites and ecologically representative networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) as per the EU's nature protection legislation and other major international commitments (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity)
2. Extending the ongoing N2000 consultation process to the groups of interest that has a direct or indirect stake in the management of marine species and habitats (fisheries sector). This will ensure transparency and full buy-in in the marine N2000 sites designation process at its very outset and prevent future conflicts on the conservation goals and management of these sites.



Croatian islands @ A. Pome