**UNDP/ GEF Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness**

***of* Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Project**

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Albania

**Strategic Concept Note**

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Executive summary 3

Acknowledgements 5

Acronyms and abbreviations 6

Objective, rational and audience 7

1. Situation analysis 9

1.1. Geographic and biodiversity context 9

1.2. Socio-economic context 11

1.3. Key drivers of the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems services 15

1.4. Legal, institutional and policy frameworks for the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity 16

1.5. The Albanian network of marine and coastal protected areas in 2016 19

1.6. Main barriers to marine and coastal biodiversity conservation/sustainable management 20

1.7. New projects contributing to marine and coastal conservation in Albania 23

1.8. Potential funding opportunities 25

2. Project description and progresses 34

2.1. Project start and duration 34

2.2. Project oversight and coordination mechanism 34

2.3. Project stakeholders 34

2.4. Project partnerships 40

2.5. Project Results Framework - progresses 40

2.6. Project best practices and lessons learned 44

3. Appropriateness of project-end results 46

3.1. Project effectiveness and efficiency 46

3.2. Stakeholder engagement and communication 46

3.3. Project relevance 47

3.4. Project sustainability 47

4. Conclusion and Recommendations 48

4.1. Corrective actions for the current project 48

4.2. Follow-up actions follow-up or reinforce initial benefits from the project 48

4.3. Future directions underlining main objectives 48

Annexes 49

Annex 1 49

Annex 2 50

Annex 3 51

Annex 4 55

Annex 5 57

Annex 6 62

## Executive summary

In early June 2016, UNDP has contracted with an international advisor to assess the current status of the UNDP/GEF *“Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas”* Project (MCPA Project), to inform and strengthen the outcomes achieved to date, as well as provide direction for future projects aimed at continuing to advance coastal and marine resource management in Albania after the conclusion of this project.

As a result, this Strategic Concept Note was developed by the international advisor in collaboration with a senior expert in marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs). The Strategic Concept Note is anchored to the original UNDP/GEF MCPA Project document and it frames the process to develop a set of project proposals for securing the long-term protection of Albania’s coastal and marine biodiversity after project-end. The recommendations outlined in this Strategic Concept Note are informed by a combination of the findings that emerged from consultations with project stakeholders, an *Authorities and Interested Stakeholders Assessment Survey* and analytical work.

The UNDP/GEF MCPA Project was developed in 2009 to improve the coverage and management effectiveness of Albania’s network of MCPAs as an essential complement to its network of terrestrial protected areas. The project will terminate at the end of 2016. The project was designed to contribute to Albania’s obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and to assist with the EU accession process on protected areas and marine conservation. Albania is committed to the CBD’s Programme of Work on Protected Areas, which has the objective of supporting the establishment and maintenance of comprehensive, effectively managed, and ecologically representative national and regional marine protected areas by 2012.

To realize this target, project activities at the systemic level have helped to secure the enabling environment for progressive expansion of the country’s MCPA network, through: the revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) to integrate a Strategic Plan focused on MCPAs (SPMCPAs); the amendment of the “Law on Protected Areas” to remove legal barriers to effective MPA management; and the development of legal instruments for new MPAs gazetting/official declaration. Project actions at the site level have enabled stakeholders to pilot the new legal and policy frameworks, and test and develop new tools for enhancing MPA management effectiveness in the Karaburuni-Sazani marine area (Vlora region), which was designated as an MPA in 2010 and is today the first and only MPA in Albania.

Overall, partner reflections on the project indicate success in terms of the participatory process to create a model Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. There is strong interest in replicating this model and expanding it to an ecologically representative network of MCPAs, starting with Porto Palermo MPA and Cape of Rodoni MPA. However, there are indications that institutionally and operationally there is still work to be done. And, for this to be a truly replicable model, lessons learned and best practices should be well documented and made easily accessible.

Many of the barriers identified at the beginning of the project have not been addressed, yet are key to MPAs, and any other resource management efforts, realizing successful conservation benefits. Since the Project Inception Phase in 2011, Albania has gone through important institutional, political and legal reforms that have furthered the advancements promoted by the UNDP/GEF MCPA Project. The establishment of a new Ministry of Environment (MoE) and two new National Agencies dedicated to Protected Areas and the coastal zones, are important steps that the Albanian Government has taken to deliver more effectively on its international commitments. The revision of the “Law on Biodiversity” and of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, the development of a new “Law on PAs” and “On tourism” are, amongst others, all clear signs of a new positive dynamic, following years of political stalemate.

Despite these important developments, the following barriers need still to be addressed:

1. *Poor bio-geographical representation of marine biodiversity.*

* Albania has almost reached the 6% target of marine areas protected as required by the CBD/Aichi target: however, the identified MCPAs system in the SPMCPA is not ecologically representative nor fully implemented;
* good and reliable scientific data on species and habitats of concern are still scarce: data are not yet centrally and systematically recorded and processed for management purposes;
* monitoring of environmental indicators is still fragmented and poorly managed;
* the first and only MPA in Albania, Karaburuni-Sazani Marine National Park, is still far from being an exemplary model for future MPAs;
* despite an increased interest in coastal and marine areas among Albanians, the understanding of these fragile ecosystems is still limited and the negative impacts of human activities ignored;

1. *Weak institutional framework for marine and coastal PA governance and poor capacities at institutional and individual levels.*

* cross-sectorial dialogue has not been effectively established: no platform exists to address conflicts among sectors related to conservation and socio-economic development;
* inter-institutional coordination is still limited and undermining the possibility to effectively address the complex interactions between human activities and coastal and marine ecosystems;
* short-term profits are still the main driver of most of the investments along the Albanian coast, particularly in the tourism and real estate sectors;
* despite being recognized as an emerging tourist destination, Albania is still unprepared to host international visitors and provide them with quality tourism services and infrastructures;
* human resources and capacities of relevant institutions and administrations are still largely insufficient to ensure effective MCPA management;
* high turnover rates at all governance level, particularly following political elections, impede PA staff capacity building and undermine the sustainability of any conservation efforts;
* financial resources for marine and coastal resource management are still limited and largely dependent on state budget and international projects donors.

At the same time, the main drivers that are causing changes in coastal and marine ecosystems described in the UNDP/GEF MCPA project, that is unregulated tourism and urban development, unsustainable harvest of natural resources, and climate change, are still relevant and new ones (e.g., on-shore O&G drilling, recreational fishing) are emerging at an alarming pace.

Through strategic partnerships and active engagement of all stakeholder groups, UNDP has maximized complementary and synergistic relationships with other national, local and international projects and created a positive momentum in support to MCPAs in Albania. A set of new actions are to be launched soon that will build off of the results of the UNDP/GEF MCPA project. However, more projects need to be developed and implemented before all barriers to effective coastal and marine areas management are removed, and active and effective resource management is in place and reflecting positive conservation results.

Most of the project partners and stakeholders concurred that it is important to build off of the accomplishments to date by expanding efforts to create an ecologically representative network of MPAs; address uses and user conflicts across the entire coastal and marine environment in Vlora Bay; and to address human uses and associated impacts occurring in upland areas of the watershed that are impacting the coastal and marine environment. These priority future actions have been taken into consideration in the drafting of the following four project proposals:

1. "Karaburuni-Sazani MPA is a Model of Practice for future MPAs development in Albania" (K-S MPA proposal)
2. "Designing a Results-based Network of MCPAs for Albania" (MCPA network proposal)
3. "Creating a Replicable Marine Spatial Planning Pilot Project for Vlora Bay" (MSP proposal)
4. "Ridge to Reef Management: From the Vlora Mountains to the Bay" (R2R proposal)

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This Strategic Concept Note makes use of the work of the UNDP/GEF “*Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Project”* team and has not undergone a full academic peer review. Views or opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of UNDP office sponsoring the work.

Cover photo: A view of the Karaburuni Peninsula.

Cover photo credit: Alessandra POME’.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ACCOBAMS | Agreement on the Conservation of Cetacean of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area |
| BD | Biodiversity Directorate within the MoE |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| DCM | Decision of Council of Ministers |
| DFP | Directorate of Fishery Policy |
| DFS | Directorates of Forestry Service |
| EIA | Environment Impact Assessment |
| EU | European Union |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations |
| FMO | Fisheries Management Organisation |
| GEF | Global Environmental Facility |
| GoA | Government of Albania |
| G&O | Gas and Oil |
| IMOC | Inter-institutional Maritime Operational Centre |
| IPA | Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance |
| IPA CBC | IPA Cross-border Cooperation |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources |
| MAP | Mediterranean Action Plan |
| MCPAs | Marine and Coastal Protected Areas |
| MEFWA | Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration |
| METT | GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool |
| MPA | Marine Protected Area |
| MoE | Ministry of Environment |
| NAPA | National Agency for Protected Areas |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PA | Protected Area |
| RAC/SPA | Regional Activity Center/Specially Protected Areas (Tunis) |
| RAPA | Regional Administration for Protected Areas |
| SPMCPAs | Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNEP | United Nations Environmental Program |
| UNEP/MAP | United Nations Environmental Program/Mediterranean Action Plan |
| UNFCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WB | World Bank |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

## Objective, rational and audience

In June 2016, UNDP has contracted with an international advisor to assess the current status of the *UNDP/ GEF Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Project* (UNDP/GEF MCPA Project). The purpose of the assessment was to identify major achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and project needs and gaps. The assessment was also to inform on the strengthen of the outcomes achieved to date, as well as provide direction for future projects aimed at continuing to strengthen and improve coastal and marine resource management in Albania.

The expected deliverables were:

* a Strategic Concept Note on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs), including project results assessment and recommendations for future actions
* 1 to 3 project proposals

The Strategic Concept Note is anchored to the original project document of the UNDP/GEF MCPA project and it frames the process to develop project proposals for securing the long-term protection of Albania’s unique coastal and marine biodiversity for current and future generations. The recommendations outlined in this Strategic Concept Note are informed by a combination of the results that emerged from consultations with project stakeholders, an *Authorities and Interested Stakeholders Assessment Survey* and analytical work, as outlined in the **Conceptual Model** below:

**I. SETTING THE STAGE**

**II. ASSESSMENT**

**PHASE**

**III. PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**Review all relevant documents, reports and strategic plans**

**Distribute**

**stakeholder**

**survey**

**Integration of data points (survey, interviews, inventory)**

**Identify relevant authorities and key stakeholders**

**Develop**

**Stakeholder**

**survey tool**

**Conduct**

**informal stakeholder interviews**

**Inventory potential donors and profile interests**

**Synthesize data and conduct preliminary assessment**

**OUTPUT:**

**Strategic Concept Note**

**OUTCOME:**

**Assessment on lessons learned, gaps, challenges**

**OUTPUT:**

**Stakeholder list & survey tool**

**OUTCOME:**

**Consolidation of key project data points**

**OUTPUT:**

**Proposal for pilot projects**

**OUTCOME:**

**Articulated direction for coastal and marine protection for Albania**

**Cross reference survey/mission input with donor interests**

**Develop proposal for new pilot projects**

The detailed *Roadmap and Timeline* of the assignment and the *agenda* of the mission in Albania can be found in Annexes 1 and 2; the *Authorities and Interested Stakeholders Assessment Survey* in Annex 3; the *list of documents* reviewed in Annex 4.

The Strategic Concept Note is intended mainly for *UNDP staff*. However, it can be used to inform both internal and external audiences and enhance coordination among main national and international actors in the field of marine and coastal conservation and sustainable management.

## Situation analysis

### Geographic and biodiversity context

Albania is well known for its high diversity of ecosystems and habitats and its coastal area (427 km long) is one of the hot spots for biodiversity in the Mediterranean Sea. This diversity is attributable to the unique country’s geographical position as well as to its geological, hydrological, climatic, soil and relief characteristics. Stretching along the Strait of Otranto, which links the Adriatic Sea to Ionian and Mediterranean Sea, and encompassing the three bio-geographical sectors of the Mediterranean (Western, Eastern and Adriatic), the Albanian marine and coastal areas are particularly rich in species and habitats and highly heterogeneous, including lagoons, wetlands, sand dunes and river deltas.

Albanian coastal and marine areas feature the following Globally Threatened species and Critical habitats:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Globally threatened fish species | sturgeons (*Acipenser sturio, Acipenser nacarii, Huso huso*)  sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)  great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*)  blue shark (*Prionace glauca*)  sharpnose sevengill shark (*Heptranchias perlo*)  porbeagle (*Lamna nasus*)  basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*)  thornback skate (*Raja clavata*)  giant devilray (*Mobula mobular*) |
| Globally threatened mammal species | striped dolphin(*Stenella coeruleoalba*)  Cuvier´s beaked whale(*Ziphius cavirostris*)  common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncates*)  short-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)  sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*)  The last three are also identified by ACCOBAMS as the species in greatest danger of disappearing from the Mediterranean |
| Globally threatened bird species | Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*)  pigmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*)  white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*)  Eurasian spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*)  several species of predatory birds (Falconiformes) belonging to genera such as Aquila, Falco, Circus, and Buteo |
| Globally endangered reptile species | loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*)  leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)  green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) |
| Critically endangered species | Mediterranean seal (*Monachus monachus*) |
| Critical habitats | Meadows of seagrass (*Posidonia oceancia*) cover a total of about 3 000 ha of the shallow coastal area (Pititto et al., 2009), sheltering a rich benthic fauna |
| Reef habitat types:  *Lithophyllum byssoides* rims in the medio-littoral stage  Fucal forests (biocenoses with Cystoseira) in the infra-littoral stage  coralligenous in the circa-littoral stage |
| Sand dunes and their associated ecosystems |
| Coastal lagoons and their associated ecosystems |

Despite their importance, in Albania distribution and conservation status of these species and habitats of concern, as well as the major threats to these resources, are not systematically recorded and monitored. This lack of information limits the ability to identify priority management zones, objectives and targets. Moreover, many of the scientific data produced through international funded projects are rarely made available to the Albanian institutions.

Over the years, Albanian Government has attempted to streamline its environmental monitoring and reporting system. In 2002, a Decision of the Council of Ministers outlined the list of environmental state indicators to be measured, as well as the institutions responsible for performing the duties set in the National Environmental Monitoring Programme. In 2005, various biodiversity indicators were identified along with the frequency of measurements and institutions engaged. The Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) on environmental monitoring (No. 1189 from 18 Nov. 2009) and the DCM on the establishment of the National Environment Agency include provisions for environmental monitoring functions. However, the existing DCM on environmental monitoring, which contains the list of environmental indicators, needs to be revised and updated with input from the scientific community.

The UNDP/GEF MCPA project contributed to the assessment and the development of Buffer Zones for 9 Coastal PAs along the Albanian coast[[1]](#footnote-1). It also contributed to the assessment of marine biodiversity and ecology, zoning and demarcation of sensitive areas, drafting the set of regulatory instruments to proclaim Cape of Rodoni a MPA[[2]](#footnote-2).

Other UNDP partners and international organizations have been supporting an increasing number of marine and coastal assessment in the hope of advancing the creation of MCPAs in Albania. Amongst others:

* The Waitt Foundation, in collaboration with the University of Tirana and the Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania (APAWA), as well as other international research centers and universities, has supported a number of expeditions to collect and provide baseline survey information to the Albanian. In 2008, a team of divers explored and documented an ancient shipwreck from the 3rd century BCE to help evaluate its potential for a future archaeological excavation and further study of its features. In 2013, a study generated high-resolution habitat maps, collected baseline data and tested hypotheses to discern the differences in fish communities on the various habitat types in Ksamil Bay and to elucidate how fish use different features on artificial reefs and surrounding habitats. In 2015, dive surveys were conducted along the Albanian coast, from Cape of Rodoni to the southern board with Greece and focused mainly on the areas identified as potential MPAs (7 + 2 new areas in Lukova, half way between Porto Palermo and Saranda). In 2016, a new project was launched to promote fish recovery in Karaburuni-Sazani MPA based on the scientific findings of the 2015 expedition, and on national fisheries statistics and data from fishermen community in Vlora[[3]](#footnote-3). However, so far, no report has been made publicly available.
* The Conservatoire du Littoral has conducted a series of marine assessments and marine habitats mapping efforts in the marine area around the Sazani island within the “Mediterranean Small Islands” initiative. In 2017, ecological assessments will be extended to 5 small islands in the South of Albania (in Ksamil bay).
* UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA contributed to the assessment of the ecological values of the area of Porto Palermo within the Regional Project for the Development of a Mediterranean Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MPAs) Network through the boosting of MPA creation and management (MedMPAnet project). Findings of these assessments informed the development of a preliminary management plan of this future MPA[[4]](#footnote-4).

### Socio-economic context

With a population of about 3 million, Albania is today a middle-income country that provides universal health care system and free primary and secondary education. Over the last two and a half decades, Albania has made enormous strides in establishing a credible, multi-party democracy and market economy. Emigration and urbanization brought a structural shift away from agriculture and toward industry and service, allowing the economy to begin producing a variety of services - ranging from banking to telecommunications and tourism. Despite this shift, *agriculture* remains one of the largest and most important sector, main source of employment and income – especially in the country’s rural areas. A significant part of Albania's national income also comes from *tourism*, which accounted for about 6% of its GDP in 2015. Outside of agriculture and tourism the economy is dependent largely on textiles, mining, lumber and hydro-power as well as remittances from migrant workers residing in largely Greece and Italy.

Before the global financial crisis in 2008, Albania was one of the fastest-growing economies in Europe. Important structural reforms, including in public financial management, energy and pensions, have recently created the conditions for rebounding business confidence and domestic demand. The Albanian Government has also recently finalized an important *Administrative-Territorial Reform[[5]](#footnote-5)* by re-organizing 373 Local Government Units into 61 municipalities. The new territorial organization aims to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the public services. Moreover, the 61 new municipalities have now the possibility to directly benefit from international cooperation projects, they have direct access to EU and other donors’ funds and enjoy larger leverage vis-à-vis the central government, as well as a greater scope for inter-municipal cooperation.

Furthermore, in 2015, an *Integrated Cross Sectorial Coastal Plan* was designed by the Ministry of Urban Planning and the National Territorial Planning Agency*[[6]](#footnote-6)*. The Plan integrates all major policies and Directives of the EU and it is a preliminary attempt to spatially plan for conflicting human activities along the Albanian coast.

As described in the second National Strategy for Development and Integration (2014-2020)[[7]](#footnote-7), the Albanian Government is committed to supporting economic recovery and growth by focusing on the development of *transport* and *energy infrastructures* (including ports, marinas, sea lines, gas pipeline), tourism and agribusiness as priority sectors, while broadening and sustaining the country’s social gains.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Primary economic sectors of concern for coastal and marine areas** | |
| **Fishery and aquaculture sector** | **Tourism sector** |
| *Fishing* in Albania is primarily marine fisheries, which developed mainly along the continental shelf zone (up to 25 miles on the Adriatic Sea, up to 2-4 miles on the Ionian Sea). Lagoon and inland fishing is also traditionally performed, however on a more limited scale.  Along the Albanian coastline there are about 1400 registered fishermen and 510 registered fishing vessels/boat. Taking into account the artisanal fishing boats in lagoons (about 200) and the illegal fishing boat the total adds up to 900. The fishing fleet concentrates in four main ports: Durres, Vlora, Shengjini and Saranda and it mainly concentrates on trawl fishing (it accounts for about 62 percent of the fishing vessels are used)[[8]](#footnote-8).  Most of the fishermen (71%) live in cities or towns, and about 25% of them live in the village/countryside. The highest number of fishermen is in the south urban areas from Vlora to Saranda and they are mostly artisanal fishermen.  Key commercial target species are: European hake (*Merluccius melucius*), Sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), Red mullet (*Mullus barbatus*), Common dentex (*Dentex dentex*), Barracuda (*Sphyraena barracuda*), Common cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*), Red porgy (*Pagrus pagrus*), Common sole (*Solea solea*), Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), several crustaceans (lobsters, crabs, etc.).  Comparing to other agricultural sectors, *aquaculture* subsectors still have modest economic importance and weight in Albania, despite the variety of water resources, including lakes, rivers, irrigation reservoirs, costal lagoons and marine coastline, give opportunity for cultivation of different species, using different cultivation methods.  In 2012, aquaculture production amounted to 2020 tones, of which 38% were mussels. In recent years, efforts have been made to improve existing legal framework in order to encourage further development of this activity. Licensing procedures have been simplified, potential sites have been valued and included in physical planning. The number of fish farms and the production is steadily increasing particularly along the Ionian coast.  *Recreational fishery* is not so popular in Albania. Although a legislative framework is in place that regulates this kind of activity, very few people apply for this kind of permission. Most of the recreational fishery is done illegally and with no restrictions. It is therefore difficult to assess the impact that this activity has on the fish stocks and the marine habitats more in general[[9]](#footnote-9). | *Tourism* has grown significantly in Albania over the past years. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was 6.0% of total GDP in 2015. In 2015, the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, was 19.3% of total employment (180,000 jobs). Visitor exports generated 33.5% of total exports in 2015. Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) generated 79.2% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2015 compared with 20.8% for business travel spending[[10]](#footnote-10). Number of foreign visitors to Albania increases 24.9% from Q2 2013 to Q2 2014 (INSTAT). About 80% of the visitors to Albania came from Kosovo (46%), FYROM and Southern Europe.  Albania is heavily dependent on the summer season, with 50% of tourist arrivals occurring in July and August. Coastal tourism in Albania has been the main product. It is limited to beach and sun tourism and is characterized by high seasonality.  *Nature and Rural Tourism* are still small but have good potential for development both for domestic and foreign markets. Strategies for rural tourism development at regional or local levels have been prepared with the support of different donors and assistance is provided for implementation of integrated projects.  *Nautical tourism and marine recreational activities* are also expected to grow following the recent lifting of a moratorium on boat and yachts in Albania. Already a number of boat excursions have developed in Vlora Bay  In 2015 a Strategy for Development of Tourism 2014-2020 was developed by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism. It is accompanied by the new Law on Tourism (No. 93/2015), which harmonizes the work of the government in the domain of tourism.  Both the Strategy and the new Law promote sustainable tourism development in Albania. The Law on Tourism states that tourism development plans should be developed in accordance with the Law on Territorial Planning and Development, and development and operation of touristic enterprises in priority areas should be achieved in accordance with the national sectorial plans for tourism, categories and management plans of protected areas and regulations for territory development. |
| Main issues:  Resource and fleet management continues to suffer from a lack of clearly defined tasks and responsibilities, institutional coordination and capacity. The vessel registeration is not updated continuously. Fish landing statistics remain inaccurate, particularly with regard to data on small fishing from coastal waters, lagoons and inland waters.  Illegal fishing remains a priority issue to be addressed in coastal water. Some progress was made in preventing illegal or unregulated fishing in the main lakes. However, the Department for Fisheries Services and Aquaculture, within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development, continues to lack the necessary resources and coordination with other bodies to ensure effective deterrence of illegal fishing practices, particularly in marine waters. The functioning of the Vessel Monitoring System, set up in 2011, has been subject to interruptions due to delays in procurement procedures for the provision of services. This jeopardizes viable and long-term solutions for its maintenance and operation.  With regards to state aid, direct government support for aquaculture continues, with subsidies of up to 25 % of the cost is paid for fingerlings and feed. The government also adopted a decision to exempt fishing vessels from the carbon tax and from VAT on fuel.  In regards to international agreements, Albania continues to cooperate with the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and participates regularly in the meetings of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM). However, gaps in the implementation of GFCM decisions and difficulties in data transmission by Albania were reported. | Main issues:  The development of tourism in Albania is constrained by the lack of adequate quality of accommodations and catering facilities, underdevelopment of tourist attractions, poor tourism development planning and poor governance.  In recent years, unregulated and unplanned tourism development has rapidly claimed wide stretches of coastal land, triggering irreversible consequences for coastal habitats and compromising ecosystem services that are vital for the well-being of local communities. Over fishing of commercial species to supply the restaurants, increase in contaminants and eutrophication from the sewage and polluted waters discharged in the environment from tourist facilities, noise pollution and littering, direct damage to marine benthic communities (diving and anchoring) are among the most common problems caused by unsustainable tourism development. |
| Future trends and priorities:  Since the 1980s, the number of fishing vessels has been increasing in Albania. Nevertheless, it is unlikely to expect a large increase in catches in the next 15 years, while it is more feasible to expect an initial transition period with some contraction in the fishing sector due to the recovery process of key commercial fish populations and the adjustments to EU regulations.  Projections based on FishStat Data show an increasing trend in the aquaculture sector, both for shellfish farming and fish farming. In Albania, as many other countries in the Adriatic Sea, the sector is facing environmental and spatial constraints as the locations suited for the installation of offshore farms are getting progressively less available and/or conflicting with other uses (primarily, MPA and tourism)[[11]](#footnote-11).  In the coming year, priority should be given to:   * strengthening administrative capacity to ensure appropriate management of fish resources and enforcement of regulations; * development of sustainable fishery-specific management plans; * implementation of co-management approaches applied to fisheries, including in MPAs; * a reduction of fishing mortality to the recommended levels through a combination of measures including spatial management measures (time/area closures); * since aquaculture requires high levels of skill and professionalism, investment in educational and training programs for fish producers; * encourage cage settlement in deeper waters (offshore) when feasible; * limit cage settlement in areas with significant communities of seagrass meadows and coralligenous formations and/or important fish habitats, spawning grounds and nursery areas; * allow only marine aquaculture farms without a detrimental effect on designated protected areas and habitats of concern. | Future trends and priorities:  The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is forecast to rise by 5.7% in 2016, and to rise by 5.4% pa, from 2016-2026, to 7.9% of total GDP in 2026. The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, is expected to rise by 3.1% in 2016 to 185,500 jobs and rise by 3.6% pa to 265,000 jobs in 2026 (25.4% of total). Visitor exports is forecast to grow by 5.7% in 2016, and grow by 5.5% pa, from 2016-2026, to 36.0% of total.[[12]](#footnote-12)  Albania today features among the top tourism destinations in many internationally known travel guides (Rough Guide, Lonely Planet, etc.) and attracts an increasing number of foreign tourists.  The draft Strategy for the Development of Tourism 2014-2020 and Action Plan reflects the Albanian government's intent to invest in sustainable tourism development and to halt the current unplanned and uncoordinated mass tourism development along the coast. However, the implementation of this strategy will bring new challenges for the relevant administrations and sector operators (as they mostly lack the necessary skills and capacity, as well as the financial resources), and potential conflicts with other sectors, particularly with the fishery and aquaculture sector and MPAs.  In the coming years, priority should be given to:   * strengthening administrative capacity to ensure appropriate tourism management; * improve the quality of the tourism offerings, through adopting international standards and certification schemes, training and exchanges; * promote sustainable tourism, which reinforces social cohesion and cultural and economic development; and strengthens synergies with other economic sectors, especially agriculture, rather than mass “sun and beach” tourism; * minimize the adverse territorial and environmental impacts of tourism, especially in existing coastal tourist areas; * increase the added value of tourism for local communities and for actors in developing countries; * improve governance for sustainable tourism. |

Future trends of other relevant sectors[[13]](#footnote-13):

Trends in the development of *maritime shipping* activities seem to lead to an increased density of traffic in the Mediterranean in the next years, particularly in traffic hotspots such as the southern part of the Otranto strait. Changes in the nature of traffic are also expected, with a significant increase in the volume of transport of oil and other harmful substances, including liquefied natural gas (LNG). Marine pollution from maritime transport, marine noise and the introduction of invasive species through ballast water are some of the impacts that might seriously affect marine and coastal biodiversity and thus tourism and fishing activities along the Albanian coasts. Conflicts for space may also arise with the aquaculture and fisheries sectors that may be affected by maritime traffic.

*Oil and gas production* (O&G) in the Adriatic is expected to increase rapidly in the near future, coupled with the development of new pipelines across the Adriatic, such as the TAP pipeline between Italy and Albania. Oil and gas exploration and production may produce three main categories of impacts on ecosystems: i) those resulting from exploration, ii) those resulting from the drilling and production infrastructures and associated waste resulting in impacts on water quality and benthic habitats and species; iii) those resulting from accidental or operational oil spills. Additional impacts of the O&G sector may occur on the fisheries, recreational uses and transport sectors, due to the navigation restrictions within drilling and operation areas.

*Mining* activities are in the exploratory stage in the Mediterranean, however future development may lead to potential conflicts with activities such as oil and gas exploration and extraction, and wind farms. But it may also affect other sectors by impacting living organisms, for instance commercial fisheries populations could be impacted by noise, bottom sediment disruption or pollution. Similarly, *dredging and sand extraction* activities may enter into conflict with the tourism sector if the activities are carried out near or along the coast and with the oil and gas sector.

### Key drivers of the loss of marine and coastal biodiversity and ecosystems services

In the last 20 years, Albania has undergone profound transformation in terms of spatial distribution of human activities, and in the standard of living in urban areas, especially for those areas that are growing rapidly[[14]](#footnote-14). Migration towards coastal areas combined with rapid and largely unregulated urban, tourism and industrial development have led to water pollution, soil erosion, drainage of wetlands, extensive solid waste dumping and over fishing, threatening marine and coastal biodiversity and the sustainability of ecosystem goods and services. This has resulted in one of the highest rates of biodiversity loss in Europe.

The main drivers that are causing changes in coastal and marine ecosystems and ecosystems services described in the UNDP/GEF MCPAs project are today still relevant, particularly considered the future development trends outlined in the previous chapter. That is:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1. Degradation of Coastal Areas** | extraction of inert materials (gravel and sand) from sandy beaches for construction materials, irrational tourism and recreation construction along the coast, deforestation of large coastal areas (even inside protected areas) and agricultural development, coastal erosion, reclamation, drainage and irrigation works in coastal wetlands areas, change in the water regime in the remaining wetlands and coastal lagoons |
| **2. Uncontrolled Harvest of Coastal and Marine Resources** | increased demand and exploitation of marine and coastal resources, particularly fish resources, with depletion of major breeding grounds of *Sparidae, Soleidae, Mullidae* and other commercial fish families, illegal fishing and harvesting of bivalves and crustaceans of high commercial value, bycatch and accidental catches of sea turtles, dolphins, sharks and otters, uncontrolled hunting, unsustainable aquaculture |
| **3. Pollution of Marine and Coastal Waters** | major share of pollution comes from urban and industrial wastes, sewage, and chemicals used in agriculture and affect seagrass meadows and water quality more in general |
| **4. Climate Change** | evidence of sea level rise, lagoon regime changes, highly increased frequency and intensity of floods, introduction of alien and invasive species from warmer regions, and decrease of some marine and coastal populations of fish and invertebrates (particularly stenotherm organisms) |
| **5. Future drivers** | extraction of sand from sea bottom (20-30 m) in southern Ionian coast, off-shore O&G drilling, invasive species (*Caulerpa taxifolia*), recreational fishing, pollution from increased maritime transportation |

### Legal, institutional and policy frameworks for the conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity

One of the major contributions of UNDP/GEF MCPAs project has been to advance the legal and policy framework for the effective conservation of marine and coastal biodiversity in Albania. Major institutional changes, following the national election and the Administrative and Territorial reform in 2015, have further contributed to the removal of systemic and regulatory barriers. An important driver of these changes has been the quest of Albania to become a Candidate country to the European Union (EU): status that was granted in 2014 and confirmed in 2016. In 2012, 80% of Albanians wanted to be part of the EU[[15]](#footnote-15). They demanded for political consensus and reforms to bring Albania close to EU standards as an opportunity to finally improve the quality of their life.

1. The *Ministry of Environment* (MoE) is the responsible authority for environmental management and policy at the national level. The MoE’s main tasks include: implementing relevant national policies, defining priority environmental and forestry investments, developing national research programs in the field of environment, and coordinating environmental protection activities with other ministries and local authorities. In terms of organization, the MoE has four structural functions (policy, inspection, permits and support services) along with four sub-sector functions (environment and pollution prevention, forestry, nature and water protection). The MoE also works closely with the new Ministry of Urban Development on land use decision-making in and around protected areas, the Ministry of Interior on the management of hunting activities in protected areas and the Minister of State for Local Government on the management and use of natural resources on communal lands located within protected areas.
2. Negotiations with the European Union raised the issue of the capacity of the MoE to manage the protected area system and the future demands associated with the establishment and administration of a Natura 2000 network. As a consequence, in 2015, the Government of Albania gazetted a ‘*Decision on establishing and organisation and functioning of the national agency for protected areas and regional administration for protected areas’*. The Decision (No. 102, dated 4/2/2015) envisaged the establishment of a *National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA)* as a public state budgeted entity subordinate to the Ministry of Environment (MoE). MoE established as well the National Environment Agency and the National Environment Inspectorate and their regional branches.
3. The *National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA)* has the status of a General Directorate in the MoE and is organised with Regional Protected Area Administrations (RAPA) at the regional level. The first General Director of NAPA and other key staff were appointed in February 2015. The agency currently employs approximately 200 staff, including support and logistic staff, and it is rapidly expanding. Both the central office and the regional branches will have conservation management and monitoring functions as well as legal, financial management and communications capacity. NAPA is a state budget dependent institution but it is empowered to supplement its budget through donations as well as other legal sources of income such as generating revenue through providing services to third parties.
4. *Forestry management* funds and roles were decentralized on January 1st, 2016. Forestry is now under the jurisdiction of the new 61 municipalities. This provides an environment that enables co-management approaches for protected areas and habitat management at the local level.
5. The *National Coastal Agency* was established in January of 2014 with the mission to protect, preserve, and promote the coastlines in Albania. The agency’s projects include the sustainable development of Albania’s beaches, as well as increased infrastructure for the promotion of research on both Albania’s coasts and biggest island, Sazani. It is housed under the Ministry of Economy, Tourism, Trade, and Entrepreneurship of Albania.
6. In June 2014, the European Council granted Albania candidate status. In the past years, Albania has implemented smoothly its obligations under the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA). The national legislation on environment is currently undergoing an intensive phase of reform through inclusion of EU Directives on the environment. The conditions for nature protection acquis include: establishing a NATURA 2000 network of sites; effective implementation of the management plans for protected areas; restructuring and strengthening of management structures for protected areas; as well as the promotion and application of economic incentives in the field of nature protection and protected area management.
7. To fulfil Albanian Government’s commitment to the COP 10 decision[[16]](#footnote-16) on Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its obligations under the SAA, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2012 – 2020), which was first prepared in 1999, was revised to fully incorporate the Aichi targets and EU policies with a special focus on increasing the marine PA coverage. To this end, a Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (SPMCPA) was developed, approved by the Council of Ministries in 2015 and fully integrated into the NBSAP. The NBSAP is the main strategic document guiding the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity requirements in Albania.
8. In 2014, the “Law on biodiversity” was revised establishing the legal framework for the establishment of a Natura 2000 network in Albania.
9. Consecutively, the “Law on Protected Areas” (N. 8906 of 2002, as amended), which establishes the legal context for the declaration, conservation, administration, management and use of the protected areas, was also revised to integrate the findings of an in-depth review of all legal acts pertinent to environment conservation and management, possible MCPA management and financing models and mechanisms. The new Law is still waiting final approval from the Ministry of Environment and the Council of Ministries.
10. The first Marine Protected Areas (Karaburun-Sazani) was declared through a Decision of Council of Ministers no. 289 date 28 April 2010 and the legal instrument serves as a model for future MPAs in Albania.

Other relevant legislations promoting nature protection in Albania include:

* “Law on Environmental Protection" (No. 10431 of June 2011), which defines the principles underpinning all environmental protection activities in the country. The Law on Environmental Protection allocates responsibility for environmental policy and management to the Ministry of Environment (MoE). It also outlines the relationship between the MoE, the National Environmental Agency (NEA) and its Regional Environmental Agencies (REAs), and the Environmental Inspectorate.
* “Law on Inspection in the Republic of Albania” (No. 10433, June 2011), which determines the structure and organization of the Environmental Inspectorate. Specific national legislation has been developed to regulate aspects of environmental management such as air and water quality management, waste management, environmental impact assessments, chemicals and hazardous waste management, as well as the conservation of biological diversity and the protection of flora and fauna.
* “Law on Fishery” (64/2012, 31.05.2012), which responds to the requirements of the EC regulation 1967/2006 (21.12.2006) concerning management measures for the sustainable exploitation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean Sea. It ensures a rational and accountable exploitation of aquatic biological resources and development of aquaculture; to better organize management of the fishing and aquaculture sectors; to provide protective conservation measures in order to ensure the protection of biological water resources; to support the sustainable development of the fishery and aquaculture sectors, as well as create better social-economic conditions for producers; to insure consumers’ demand and interests by introducing to markets, fishery products permissible for human consumption; and to promote and regulate scientific and technological research in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. It establishes the central consultative *Fishery Management Organization*, with national and local branches. It also defines fishing “protected areas” that are geographically defined sea areas in which all or certain fishing activities are temporarily or permanently banned or restricted, in order to improve the exploitation and conservation of living aquatic resources or the protection of marine ecosystems, based on a precautionary approach. There is a chapter on management of lagoons and other estuarine waters where the agreements on management are listed (including no fishing zones in a specific area around river mouths or natural or artificial lagoon openings). This management decision covers about 1% of the territorial waters. Inspections for enforcement of this law and relevant ensuing regulations are undertaken by the Fishery Inspectorate (Article 36 of this law). The Fishery Inspectorate will cooperate with the Inspectorate of Environmental Protection, public and financial police, harbour offices, military forces and any other organs as directed by the government. The Fishery Inspectors, when encountering transgressions of this law and ensuing by-laws, have the duty and the right to: arrest the violator and possibly seize the vessel on which the violations are evidenced.
* A new “Law on tourism” (no 93/2015, 27 July 2015), aims to promote and attract strategic domestic and foreign investment in tourism, in line with the Law “On Strategic Investment” (no 55/2015) was approved by the Parliament in May 2015.
* “Law on Wild Fauna Protection” (Law 10006; amended with Law 41/2003 in February 2013), “Law on rules and procedures for international trade of endangered species of flora and fauna” (Law 9867), “Law on hunting” (Law 10253) and a new “Law on hunting moratorium”, the “Law on forest logging moratorium”, the “Law on chemicals” and the respective bylaws.

### The Albanian network of marine and coastal protected areas in 2016

In addition to the notable reforms in nature protection policy, governance and legislation, Albanian has made significant progress in improving the coverage of its protected area system, effectively doubling the extent of the protected area extent over the last 10 years: from 238,347 ha in 2005 to 460,060 ha in 2015.

The protected area system covers an area of 460,060ha, some 15.83% of the total surface area of the country. National Parks (~46% of the total area of the protected area estate), Managed Natural Reserves (~28%) and Protected Landscapes (~21%) collectively represent almost 95% (433,545ha) of the total extent of the protected area system. The first Marine Protected Area (MPA) in Albania was designated in 2010 as the “Karaburuni-Sazani” Marine National Park (124.3 km2).

The SPMCPA identified the following new 11 priority areas to be assessed for protection:

1. The Bay of Porto-Palermo
2. The area from Vjosa river mouth to Sazani and Karaburuni (the entire Vlora Bay)
3. The area from Cape Rodoni to Patoku lagoon
4. The coastal area from Buna river mouth to Viluni lagoon
5. Bay of Drini and Mati (this area includes all three previous areas)
6. The area from Kalaja e Turres to Spille
7. The area in front of Himare-Porto-Palermo-Borsh
8. The area north of Durres (currila) to Bishtpalla
9. Southern bay of Saranda-Butrint
10. Northern Bay of Saranda
11. The coastal area in front of Kune-Vain Lagoon

The selection involved the following 3-stage process:

1. *Identification of sites according to ecological criteria*: i) high natural biological diversity, ii) representativeness, iii) productivity and iv) important for a species.
2. *Prioritization of sites for designation*: i) species or habitats endangered, declining or threatened with extinction, ii) important for a habitat/biotope according to N2000 list of habitats, iii) important for species according to N2000 list of species of concern, iv) sensitivity, v) naturalness.
3. *Practical considerations*: i) size, ii) cultural/recreational values, iii) degree of acceptance, iv) potential for restoration and v) success of management measures.

However, due to major information gaps on the distribution and conservation status of important species and habitats along the Albanian coast, only habitats and species which are already considered threatened or endangered (NATURA 2000, National red lists) were considered in the selection process.

While the distribution of *Posidonia* beds, sand dunes and coastal lagoons along the Albanian coast is well documented, there is little knowledge about the extension of different types of reefs. Reef distribution was therefore defined based on expert judgement using the physical map of Albania. No adequate and detailed information about the conservation status of all these habitats exists to date. For the distribution range of mammals and fish, the IUCN Red List Spatial Data was applied, while for birds, the “Bird species distribution maps of the world. Version 2.0” was used (courtesy of BirdLife International and NatureServe).

Due to these limitations, the MCPAs system identified in the SPMCPA is still far from being a representative network of MCPAs as required by the CBD and the Aichi target[[17]](#footnote-17).

### Main barriers to marine and coastal biodiversity conservation/sustainable management

The establishment and effective management of a representative system of protected areas is an integral aspect of Albania’s overall strategy to:

1. adequately protect its marine, coastal and terrestrial biodiversity;
2. address the key threats to biodiversity and root causes of biodiversity loss.

During the Inception phase, the UNDP/GEF MCPA project identified the following 3 major barriers to marine and coastal biodiversity conservation:

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| --- | --- |
| **1. Poor Bio-geographical Representation of Marine Biodiversity** | In 2009, Albania featured only 9 coastal PAs and no marine PAs. Data on species and habitats distribution and conservation status were limited. The available information did not allow for prioritizing sites for designation as MCPAs. In addition, there was little knowledge of what a marine park should be like, what the protection regimes should be for its core areas, and how buffer areas should be managed. There was the need to finalize the legislative improvement process and translate ecological gap analysis into a system plan for MCPA expansion. |
| **2. Weak Institutional Framework for MCPA Governance** | In 2009, inter-sectoral coordination among relevant institutions was poor and responsibilities and reporting lines between all PA institutions remained ambiguous. The staffing profile of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration (MEFWA) made it difficult to ensure good communication horizontally (with sister ministries) as well as vertically (between MEFWA, as a central institution, regional branches and site administrations). |
| **3. Capacities at the Individual and Institutional Levels** | In 2009, the MEFWA, in spite of being the main environmental authority, lacked capacities to plan for the expansion of MCPAs, enforce legislation, increase ecological representation and conservation effectiveness of the network of PAs, and monitor site performance. At the site and regional levels, knowledge and capabilities to develop and implement site management plans and business plans were very limited. |

The UNDP/GEF MCPAs Project, together with the legal, institutional and policy reforms carried out by the Albanian Government in recent years, have addressed these barriers. Steps have been made in the right direction, however, barriers have not been completely lifted yet.

| **Barriers in 2009** | **UNDP/GEF MCPA project direct contribution** | **National - Regional initiatives** | **… in 2016** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. Poor Bio-geographical Representation of Marine Biodiversity** | The NBSAP was revised to fully incorporate Aichi Targets.  The SPMCPA was developed and integrated into the NBSAP.  Baseline assessment studies and development of a management plan in Karaburuni-Sazani MPA.  Assessment report on marine and coastal areas buffer zone is prepared, including guidelines/ recommendations on setting up buffer zones for MPAs.  Processes for the designation of Porto Palermo and Cape of Rodoni MPAs started as indicated in the SPMCPA, including ecological evaluation, public hearing organized with MoE, relevant document for designating the areas, meetings with stakeholders, informative materials/posters accomplished  Management plan of Porto Palermo MPA was developed, including site zoning and boundaries.  Zoning process started in Cape of Rodoni MPA. | The revised NBSAP and the SPMCPA were approved by the Council of Ministries.  The draft Decision of Council of Ministers for Porto Palermo foresees the status of Natural Park for a surface of 2,067.75 ha. It is planned to be proclaimed by 2016. | The system of MCPAs identified in the SPMCPA is far from being ecologically representative.  A number of assessments of habitat and species distribution and conservation status as well as of fish abundance have been conducted in recent years by local NGOs, local and international researchers with the support of international donors (APAWA, Royal Albanian Foundation). However, data are not contributing to a national system of data collection and monitoring system and no coordination has been put in place yet.  The MoE is committed to continue with the expansion of the PA system with the establishment of the Porto Palermo and Cape of Rodoni MPAs to fulfil its obligations within CBD/Aichi target.  The National Environment Agency is committed to inventorize and profile the fauna and flora located within the entire PA system and will develop an environmental monitoring system for PAs. |
| **2. Weak Institutional Framework for MCPA Governance** | The Cross-sectoral Forum was never established despite specific ToRs were developed and made available since 2012.  A Project Board was established and merged into the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA management Committee in Vlora since most of the participants to the two committees were the same. For several reasons, the Board/MPA Committee did not operate as the Forum was planned to. Relant sectors and institutions (for example, Ministry of Urban planning, Ministry of Defence, etc.) were invited depending on the agenda. The committee mostly addressed regional and local issues mainly related to Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. | In 2013 the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration became the Ministry of Environment.  The National Agency for Protected Areas and its Regional Administrations were established and set operative in 2015  The National Coastal Agency was established and set operative in 2014.  The “Law on Biodiversity” was revised  The “Law on Protected Areas” were revised (the latter is not yet approved) | Inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination is still limited.  The Project Board/Karaburuni-Sazani Management Committee represents a first step towards an improved coordination.  The MoE is committed to further facilitate management committees at each PA. |
| **3. Capacities at the Individual and Institutional Levels** | A total of 45 local MCPA practitioners, administrators and 5 MoE experts were trained in 2013-14.  A training manual on integrated management of MCPAs published.  4 rangers, equipment, office space, an information centre and a set of activities of the management plan are currently supported.[[18]](#footnote-18) | Training manual was never officially approved/adopted by MoE. | The administrative capacity and professional standards of bodies charged with the implementation of the EU acquis needs to be strengthened and the independence of regulatory bodies safeguarded. Challenges include limited enforcement, due to the weak capacity of the environmental authorities at both the central and regional levels, and a lack of resources for monitoring and ensuring full compliance with environmental standards.[[19]](#footnote-19)  NAPA employs today about 200 people (of which 7 officers work in RAPA in Vlora, together with 9 rangers) and new staff will be hired in the coming years.  However, Albanian PAs are still very poorly resourced and severely understaffed.  Most of the staff needs continuous capacity building, through training, exchange programs and study visits to more advanced MPAs in the region.  Moreover, turnover rate within public administration remains high, particularly following political elections. New elections are planned for 2017. This might have an impact at the governance level. However, no further territorial changes are foreseen in the near future. So at national and local level the current operational structure in place will remain unchanged.  The MoE is committed to deliver a series of professional and technical training workshops for PAs staff and will facilitate study visits and staff exchange programs. |

Another important barrier to achieving effective management of marine and coastal areas is the **lack of sufficient, long-term and stable financial resources for PAs**. While the Decision No. 102 (4/2/2015) makes provision for NAPA to source funding from the state budget, donors, delivery of ‘services’ and ‘other legal sources’, the current funding baselines for the Albanian PA system, and the capacities to administer and improve PA revenue streams, are still well below the levels required to ensure that the protected area system can properly serve its function as an important tool to protect biodiversity. So, if NAPA is to fulfil its protected area mandate, it will need to have the ability to: (i) secure sufficient, stable and long-term financial resources for protected areas; (ii) allocate these resources in a timely manner and appropriate form to cover the full costs of protected areas; and (iii) ensure that the protected areas are managed effectively and efficiently with respect to conservation and other complementary objectives

### New projects contributing to marine and coastal conservation in Albania

UNDP and other national and international organizations are currently launching new actions contributing to the conservation of the marine and coastal areas in Albania. Below a brief summary of the main projects:

* UNDP/GEF project *“Establishing Albania’s Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System Aligned with the Global Reporting”* (2015-19) aims to strengthen capacity for environmental monitoring and information management in Albania by establishing an operational environmental information management and monitoring system (EIMMS). The project will address the need for an environmental monitoring system that is integrated throughout relevant government institutions and that uses international monitoring standards for indicator development, data collection, analysis, and policy-making. It will also build on existing technical and institutional capacity in Albania to align its management and monitoring efforts with global monitoring and reporting priorities. Increased capacity in this area will improve reporting to the Rio Conventions and lay the groundwork for sustainable development through better-informed environmental policy.
* The "*Strengthening capacity in National Nature Protection - preparation for Natura 2000 network* " project (2015-19) aims to halt the loss of biodiversity in Albania through improved Management of Protected Areas of the Country. The project is funded by the European Commission (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance program - IPA 2013). The project will promote, amongst others, data collection and information sharing, preparation of tabular and spatial databases of conservation values, species and habitat for the selected PAs (that will include habitat maps for each area), the elaboration, also building on the results of the Emerald process, of the preliminary list of Natura 2000 sites for Albania; and the preparation of standard Natura 2000 files in view of their submission to the EC.
* UNDP/GEF “*Enhancing financial sustainability of the protected area system in Albania*” (2016-20) seeks to assist the Albanian Government reducing existing funding gaps for the system of protected areas, improving the management of individual protected areas, improving cost-efficiencies in individual protected areas and building the financial management capacities of protected area staff in the NAPA. The project will focus on: (i) building the financial management capacities of NAPA; and (ii) demonstrating the efficacy of different financing strategies in a sub-set of individual protected areas (including Karaburuni-Sazani MPA).
* The European Union (EU) Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) funded project “*Strengthening environmental legislation and enforcement in Albania*” (SELEA) project (2011-14) is supporting the preparation of management plans for six protected areas.
* The Italian Cooperation (in partnership with IUCN) funded project “*Institutional Support to the Albanian Ministry of Environment for Sustainable Biodiversity Conservation and Use in Protected Areas and the Management of Waste*” (2012-14) is supporting the development of guidelines for participatory park planning, and will assist in the preparation and implementation of management plans for 2 PAs.
* The project “*Integrated sustainable development of the southern coastal region*” (2015-17), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), is supporting rural development in the area covered by municipalities of Vlora, Himara and Saranda, with focus on rural tourism. Sustainable economic development of the southern coastal region and creation of prospects for the rural population is the overarching objective of the project. Expected results are: A regional spatial development plan for the southern coastal region is in place, and is based on a common understanding of national and local stakeholders for the sustainable development of the region; The three municipalities have strategies in place for the development of a diversified tourism economy; Different models and products for rural tourism are used by local communities to enhance income from tourism.
* Building off the results of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (MedPartnership) project, UNEP/MAP has recently developed a Medium-sized GEF project on Marine Spatial Planning concerning Albania and Montenegro: “*Implementation of Ecosystem Approach in the Adriatic Sea through Marine Spatial Planning*”. Details on the project content are to be found at the following link:

<http://addis.unep.org/projectdatabases/01423/project_general_info>

### Potential funding opportunities

UNDP Albania partners with a number of international development organizations who provide the majority of funding for its programme areas, as articulated in the Government of Albania-United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016.

Major donors are:

1. Governmental donors (Government Cost-sharing and/or Governmental Aid Agencies). Main donor countries are: Albania, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Austria, USA and Japan.
2. Multilateral and international institutions (European Union, World Bank)
3. Private sector (individual, foundations, NGOs etc.)
4. United Nations system (Core funding[[20]](#footnote-20), UN Coherence Fund[[21]](#footnote-21), etc.)
5. *Governmental donors (Government Cost-sharing and/or Governmental Aid Agencies).*

Since 2005, the Albanian government has adopted an Integrated Planning System (IPS), a planning and monitoring system aimed at harmonizing and streamlining the implementation of development strategies. The IPS aims to give greater coherence to development programmes, coordinating national financial resources and international assistance within an integrated strategy, focusing on the process of EU integration and in line with the country’s medium-term financial resources. For the period 2007-2013, the key documents for the implementation of the IPS are the National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI) and the Medium-Term Budget Programme (MTBP). The first, defined on a seven-year basis by the government in coordination with international donors, is a strategic document that sets out the medium and long-term objectives and the sectorial lines of action at a countrywide level. The second is a three-year planning document of the expenditure forecast by each ministry. In order to give Albania an organic framework for development strategies and European integration consistent with the planning cycle of the European Union, the refinancing of the IPS Programme is supporting the reformulation of the NSDI and the MTBP for the 2014 -2020 period.

In Albania, all major Governmental donors and the EU delegation have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which recognizes the lead donor for each sector, as follows:  
- Austria: Water

- Germany: Rural Development and Agriculture (GTZ); Energy (KfW)

- EU Delegation: Civil society; Justice and Home Affairs; Quality and Internal Market

- Italy: Private Sector Development

- Sweden: Environment; Statistic

- Switzerland: Decentralization and Regional Development; Education and Vocational Training

Switzerland: It mainly supports Albania’s transition efforts and contributes to effective democratic systems and a socially inclusive, competitive market economy in support of its European integration through investments in 4 priority areas: i) Democratisation, Decentralisation and Local Governance (formerly “Democratisation and Rule of Law”), ii) Economic Development, iii) Urban Infrastructure and Energy (formerly in the Economic Development Domain), iv) Health. Gender and Governance are cross-cutting themes[[22]](#footnote-22).

Sweden: The overarching goal of the Swedish reform work in Albania is to assist with the reforms needed to achieve candidate status and eventually an EU membership. Sweden supports Albania with about 80 million SEK per year and has provided aid for 15 years. Recent years’ development efforts have focused on two areas: i) Democratic Governance and Human Rights and ii) **Natural Resources and Environment**. The development cooperation, for which the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is responsible, is guided by a Results strategy for Sweden´s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey for the period 2014–2020[[23]](#footnote-23).

Specifically, for the environment, Sweden expects to increase partner countries’ compliance with EU regulations and international agreements on the environment, climate and energy; enhanced environmental responsibility among the general public, the business sector and civil society and more sustainable public services in areas such as water and sewage, waste management, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Italy: It is one of the major donors for Albania. Today, over €300 million are spent in projects throughout the country. Over 40 active projects in 11 policy areas. Priority areas are: i) Energy, ii) Transport, iii) Private sector development, iv) Water and Sanitation, Debt for Development Swap, v) Agriculture and rural development, vi) Health, vii) Education, and viii) **Environment**[[24]](#footnote-24). As for the environment, Italy currently supports two projects for a total of 2.62 million Euro and has recently launched a new project “Strengthening capacity in National Nature Protection - preparation for Natura 2000 network” (co-funded by the European Commission – IPA 2013) aimed to halt the loss of biodiversity in Albania through improved PAs management.

In 2016, the Italian Cooperation Agency was establishing providing to the country offices more operational flexibility and independence. The Agency is also able to leverage additional funds through bi-lateral agreements with the EU and development banks such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

The Italian-Albanian Development Cooperation Programme includes the Debt for Development Swap Agreement (IADSA), which is meant to support the implementation of projects in the social sector proposed by the concerned Albanian Public Institutions and jointly agreed within the framework of the Italian-Albanian Development Cooperation Programme. Eligible Projects must be based on the strategic priorities included in the National Strategy for Development and Integration, updated sectoral and crosscutting strategies and National Action Plan for Implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) and related to the following priority sectors: education, VET, public health, social inclusion, employment generation, sustainable development of the territory in a long-term perspective in order to support job creation also in the rural areas of the Country. Projects are selected through Calls for Proposals, periodically launched, open to Albanian Public Institutions. Collaboration or partnerships with Albanian and/or Italian NGOs, and/or Italian Regions and Local Authorities and/or International Organizations (IIOO) are permitted for the partial or total implementation of the projects.

Germany: Albania is one of Germany's development cooperation partner countries since 1988. Germany is highly regarded as a supporter of Albania's reform efforts. In 2014 and 2015, Germany provided financial cooperation loans and grants totalling around 23 million euros and also around 12 million euros in technical cooperation[[25]](#footnote-25). Priority areas are: energy; drinking water supply, sanitation and waste management; and sustainable economic development. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) operates in Albania through its two agencies: GIZ and KfW. BMZ is providing additional funding for regional biodiversity and climate programmes in which Albania is involved. GIZ’s work focuses on sustainable economic development (tourism development); water sector reform and agricultural and rural development. Kfw focuses on energy and water and waste water management.

Albania is also receiving further assistance from the multi-country Open Regional Funds for South-East Europe (ORF)[[26]](#footnote-26). This is a flexible instrument that BMZ uses to promote legal reform, foreign trade, integration into the EU, the modernisation of municipal services, and energy efficiency and renewable. The only prerequisite is that projects must involve cooperation between several countries and should support their efforts to move closer to the EU. All projects must support the implementation of the relevant Stabilisation and Association Agreements with the EU or promote compliance with the *acquis communautaire* – the body of European laws, rules and policies with which all EU Member States must comply.

United States of America: Since 1992, the U.S. Government has delivered foreign aid to support Albania’s development, stability and integration into Europe. U.S. aid has helped Albania transition from the most isolated and repressive communist state in Europe to a democracy with a market-oriented economy. The current program works with the Government of Albania and the private sector on transformational reforms to strengthen democratic institutions and sustain economic growth. Specifically, USAID helps Albania to:

* Strengthen rule of law by building the skills of lawyers and judges, and ensuring that courts function properly
* Increase the ability of local governments to raise revenue and provide more effective services to citizens in areas ranging from health care to clean water
* Improve business competitiveness while strengthening the financial sector to better support economic development and financial security[[27]](#footnote-27).

In 2015 USAID launched, in collaboration with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), a Call for proposal to implement activities to promote **sustainable tourism** in Albania. The purpose of the activities is to contribute to improvements in tourism sector, including improvements to Albania’s business enabling environment and workforce capacities, to serve as catalysts for job creation and economic growth.

Japan: The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provides assistance, through its Balkan office, on agriculture, infrastructure development, medical care, education and the **environment**. They mostly fund UNDP regional offices. Sometime JICA funds are earmarked to a specific country.

Austria: Based on Austria’s current ODA contributions to Albania (1995–2013: EUR 99.47 million) and the experiences of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), and in reference to the challenges of the reform process, Albania’s EU accession and regional cooperation in the coming years, Austria will increasingly focus on capacity development, know-how transfer and public administration reform. A new country strategy for 2015–2020[[28]](#footnote-28) was recently finalized, identifying the following Thematic priority areas: i) Governance and Rule of Law, ii) Integrated Water Management, iii) Labour market-oriented Vocational Education /Employability, and Cross-cutting issues: i) Social Inclusion, ii) Gender Equality, iii) **Environment/Climate Change**. As for the support of the sustainable development of the country, Austria is particularly interested in enhancing its potentials in the tourism and agriculture sector.

1. *Multilateral and international institutions (European Union, World Bank)*

European Union: The European Union is one of the largest contributors of biodiversity finance to developing countries. EuropeAid alone has provided official aid funds for biodiversity-related interventions of around €1.3 billion from 2007 to 2013, of which around €1 billion from 2010 to 2013.

*EuropeAid – Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)*

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) is the means by which the EU supports reforms in the 'enlargement countries' with financial and technical help. The IPA funds build up the capacities of the countries throughout the accession process, resulting in progressive, positive developments in the region. IPA II will build on the results already achieved by IPA I and will invest € 11.7 billion for the period 2014-2020. The Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA II) Funding allocation to Albania, as a Candidate Country to the EU, is €649.4 million for the period 2014-2020. The priorities for funding within the “Environment & climate action” are: i) sector alignment with EU law and standards, ii) better treatment of waste and water and iii) controlling air pollution. Albania is at a very early stage of alignment with the *acquis* in this sector and the challenges are still manifold.

The assistance in the first period of IPA II (2014-2017) will support Albania with the objective to:

(a) build capacities for managing the sector in line with EU policies and consolidate earlier efforts and

(b) operate and maintain existing and new public infrastructure investments in a sustainable and efficient way.

An additional objective is to prepare a pipeline of feasible, mature, and implementable environmental infrastructure investments.

In the second period of IPA II (2017-2020), it is envisaged to provide additional support for actual investments in priority areas.

The IPA II funding will support (indicatively) the following actions:

* Further development of capacities at both central and local level government for developing and implementing policies
* Further alignment with the EU environment and climate policies, legislation and best practices, with effective implementation ensured (particularly for climate legislation, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gases emissions; effort sharing decision; fluorinated gases; ozone-depleting substances; vehicle efficiency and fuel quality standards; carbon capture and storage and other relevant legislation);
* Infrastructure investments, notably in water, flood and waste management
* Climate change actions

In terms of the action to be supported, a differentiation is needed between:

(a) development of policies, legislation, planning and preparation of investments and

(b) the support to implementation of policies and actual investments, incl. ensuring their operation and maintenance.

*Sector budget support* is the preferred type of financing in the environment sector, or respective sub-sectors such as water or waste management, if the conditions are met. It consists of financial transfers to the national treasury account of an IPA II beneficiary and requires performance assessment and capacity development, based on partnership and mutual accountability. It is delivered through Sector Reform Contracts.

The development and implementation of the environment and climate action policies, as well as the approximation of the regulatory framework with the EU legislation, will be supported through technical assistance, provided via *twinning, service contracts, TAIEX and international specialised agencies*.

Regarding investments, a coordinated approach to blending of IFI loans with IPA grants is foreseen through the Western Balkan Investment Framework. The participation in relevant Union Programmes will be supported and details decided later at the time of programming.

Beside the IPA II, UNDP might receive EU funds through the following funding lines:

* The Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement between the European Community and the United Nations.
* The Directorate General for the Environment’s LIFE fund programme, only in partnership with lead partners legally established in a EU member state
* The Directorate general for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, based on Annual Work Programmes, only in partnership with lead partners legally established in a EU member state

1. *Private sector (individual, foundations, NGOs etc.)*

Waitt Foundation: The Waitt Foundation funds initiatives globally with a focus on marine protected areas and sustainable fishing policy and practice.  They provide grants, technical assistance, strategic advice, and support innovative ocean science through partnerships with unique coalitions of governments, funders, NGO, academics, and businesses. Since 2008, Waitt Foundation has been funding research expeditions to collect and provide baseline survey information to the government of Albania in the hopes of advancing the creation of Marine Protected Areas. Beneficiaries of the Waitt funding have been mainly local NGOs, such as the Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania (APAWA) and the University of Tirana. The Waitt Foundation has recently started to work also with MedReAct, a group of senior campaigners and NGOs that promotes a strong reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), to promote fish recovery in the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. So far, UNDP has only been involved in technical work, and never tried to access the Foundation’s funds.

MAVA Foundation: MAVA’s final grant-making will be in 2022, at which time the foundation will wind down its activities. Between 2016 and 2022, MAVA will strengthen its focus on key priorities, build on the past achievements, and address some of the key conservation challenges in its traditional areas of work. It will continue working on freshwater and coastal ecosystems in the Mediterranean and West Africa but through more focused strategies in both regions. A greater emphasis will be given on funding broader clusters of projects which are delivered by communities of partners working together. MAVA has never funded UNDP’s projects, neither it has invested in MPA work in Albania.

Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF): It works with all actors engaged in conservation and development activities in Mediterranean Basin countries to foster partnerships in priority corridors and sites. In the Mediterranean, CEPF investment focuses on six biodiversity conservation corridors with 50 of the highest-priority key biodiversity areas, amongst which the Southwest Balkans, and 70 key biodiversity hot spots (Karaburuni-Sazani MPA being one of them). Two out of the 5 Strategic Directions are of particular interest as funding opportunities for UNDP/GEF MCPA project follow up actions, that is:

* Strategic Direction #2 (“Establish the sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources with a focus on the priority corridors of the Atlas Mountains, Taurus Mountains, Orontes Valley and Lebanon Mountains and Southwest Balkans.”) might support UNDP work on the “Ridge to Reef” and “Marine Spatial Planning” approach in Vlora bay;
* Strategic Direction #3 (“Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas”) might support work on the review of the current MCAP system and the operationalization of “Karaburuni-Sazani MPA.

Green Climate Fund: The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was adopted as a financial mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the end of 2011. It was established by 194 governments to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries, and to help adapt vulnerable societies to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Over time it is expected to become the main multilateral financing mechanism to support climate action in developing countries. The Fund aims to mobilize unprecedented levels of funding to invest in low-emission and climate-resilient development on our home planet.

All developing country Parties to the Convention are eligible to receive resources from the GCF through National Designated Authorities (NDAs), which are:

* accredited national, sub-national and regional implementing entities and intermediaries, including NGOs, government ministries, national development banks, or other domestic or regional organizations that can meet the Fund’s standards;
* through accredited international and regional entities (such as multilateral and regional development banks and UN agencies) under international access.

Some funds will be distributed through Enhanced Direct Access, in which developing country-based accredited institutions receive an allocation of GCF finance and then make their own decisions on how to program resources. The EDA model differs from other arrangements, in which finance is only accessible through discrete projects and programs approved by the GCF board.

GCF's Governing Instrument makes clear that the Fund will adopt a country-driven approach and strengthen program coherence and stakeholder coordination at the national level. To this end, in each National Designated Authorities (NDAs) there is a Focal Point who is the interface between each country and the Fund. The Focal Point communicates the country’s strategic priorities for financing low-emission and climate-resilient development across its economy. The NDAs ensure that investments are aligned with local needs and existing climate change planning.

As of August 2016, the NDA focal point in Albania was Mrs. Ardiana Sokoli, Director of the Directory of EU Integration and Coordination of Projects, Ministry of Environment.

The GCF will support projects, programs, policies and other activities in all developing country parties to the UNFCCC. The GCF finances activities to both enable and support adaptation, mitigation (including REDD+), technology development and transfer (including CCS), capacity-building and the preparation of national reports. Countries will also be supported in the pursuit of project-based and programmatic approaches in accordance with strategies and plans (such as low-emission development strategies, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions, National Adaptation Plans of Action, National Adaptation Plans and others).

Main features to date:

* Initial resource mobilization has raised more than USD 10 billion and is ongoing.
* Commitment to aim for 50:50 balance between mitigation and adaptation investments over time.
* At least 50% of adaptation funding goes to the most vulnerable countries, including LDCs, SIDS, and African States.
* Direct private sector engagement in transformational climate-sensitive investments through the Private Sector Facility (PSF).
* Risk-bearing capacity, allowing the Fund to support innovation and leverage and crowd in additional financing.
* Variety of financial instruments available, including grants, concessional loans, subordinated debt, equity, and guarantees, giving flexibility to match project needs.
* Balanced governance structure that ensures consensus-based decisions between 12 developed and 12 developing countries.

In the absence of agreement on long-term sources of climate financing, the biggest challenge of the GCF will be to secure adequate and sustained funding. There are more than 50 issues that the Board will have to address through its work programme, and some stakeholders have highlighted the need to find inclusive and accountable processes to reach agreement on priorities for fund.

Additionally, some stakeholders have expressed concern about the GCF process, including the transparency and diversity and balance of the GCF’s accredited entities. Applicant identities are only revealed after Board approval, in part to avoid reputational impact if they are not accredited, and independent third-party views on the track record of applicant entities are not part of the Accreditation Panel review process.

Summary of the potential funding opportunities for future UNDP projects on MCPAs and other priority recommended actions:

| **Donor** | **Strategy of reference** | **Priorities** | **Financing mechanisms** | **Relevance for project proposals** | **Recommended action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Governmental donors** | | | | | |
| Austria (Austrian Development Cooperation) | Country strategy for 2015–2020[[29]](#footnote-29) | i) Governance and Rule of Law, ii) Integrated Water Management, iii) Labour market-oriented Vocational Education /Employability, and Cross-cutting issues: i) Social Inclusion, ii) Gender Equality, iii) Environment/Climate Change  Special interest in tourism and agriculture | Call for proposals (grants) | R2R and  K-S MPA proposals | Organize bilateral meeting(s) to investigate ADC’s interest in UNDP project proposals. |
| Italy (Italian Cooperation Agency) | Italian-Albanian Development Cooperation Programme[[30]](#footnote-30) | i) Energy, ii) Transport, iii) Private sector development, iv) Water and Sanitation, Debt for Development Swap, v) Agriculture and rural development, vi) Health, vii) Education, and viii) Environment | * Debt for Development Swap Agreement * Call for proposals (grants) | All 4 proposals | Contact new Director of Local Technical Office of Italian Cooperation in Tirana and organize a meeting. |
| Germany (GIZ and KfW) |  | Energy; drinking water supply, sanitation and waste management; and sustainable economic development. | * Call for proposals (grants) * Multi-country Open Regional Funds for South-East Europe (ORF) | R2R proposal | Further investigate UNDP eligibility to ORF funds Identify potential cooperation with other countries in the region (Croatia, Montenegro) to develop joint proposal on MSP or tourism development in MCPA network. |
| Japan (JICA) | No country strategy. | Agriculture, infrastructure development, medical care, education and the environment | Call for proposals (Grants) | All 4 proposals | Organize bilateral meeting(s) to investigate JICA’s interest in UNDP project proposals. |
| Sweden (Sida) | Results strategy for Sweden´s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey for the period 2014–2020[[31]](#footnote-31) | Democratic Governance and Human Rights; Natural Resources and Environment | Call for proposals (Grants) | All 4 proposals | Organize bilateral meeting(s) to investigate Sida’s interest in UNDP project proposals. |
| USA (USAID) |  | 1. Strengthen rule of law by building the skills of lawyers and judges  2. Improve business competitiveness while strengthening the financial sector to better support economic development and financial security  3. Sustainable tourism development (in collaboration with Sida) | Call for proposals (Grants) | K-S MPA proposal | Further check UNDP’s eligibility to USAID-Sida grants. |
| **Multilateral and international institutions** | | | | | |
| European Union (EuropeAid) | Indicative Strategic Paper for Albania (2014-2020)[[32]](#footnote-32) | 1. Further development of capacities at both central and local level government for developing and implementing policies  2. Further alignment with the EU environment and climate policies, legislation and best practices, with effective implementation ensured (particularly for climate legislation, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gases emissions; effort sharing decision; fluorinated gases; ozone-depleting substances; vehicle efficiency and fuel quality standards; carbon capture and storage and other relevant legislation);  3. Infrastructure investments, notably in water, flood and waste management  4. Climate change actions | * Sector budget support * Service contracts * Twinnings * IPA II Call for Proposals (grants) * Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement between the European Community and the United Nations * DG Environment’s LIFE fund programme (only in partnership with lead partners legally established in a EU member state) * DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, based on Annual Work Programmes (only in partnership with lead partners legally established in a EU member state) | R2R, MSP and MCPA network proposals | No relevant calls foreseen in 2016 within the IPA II Call for proposals.  Assess possibility to raise funds through the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement between EU and UNDP. |
| **Private donors** | | | | | |
| Waitt Foundation | No specific country strategy | Scientific research to promote new MCPA establishment and effective management | Grants, technical assistance, strategic advice, and support | MCPA network proposal | Organize bilateral meeting(s) to investigate Waitt Foundation’s interest in UNDP project proposals. |
| MAVA Foundation | Strategy 2016-2020 Mediterranean Basin programme[[33]](#footnote-33) | 1. Promote sustainable water use by significantly reducing the impacts of water abstraction and minimising the threats caused by construction and poor management of water control structures  2. Promote sustainable coastal development by minimising the development threats affecting coastal wetlands and related critical marine habitats  3. Make fishing more sustainable by limiting the impact of selected fisheries on priority species and habitats, and reducing the fishing pressure on high trophic level fish species  4. Promote sustainable land-use practices that foster high biodiversity at landscape level  5. Improve the status of priority species by reducing human-induced direct mortality on these species | Call for Proposals (grants) | All 4 proposals | Until mid-2017 MAVA won’t accept any unsolicited requests for funding. From then through to 2022 it will establish a mechanism for receiving ideas, though there will be limited funding for this kind of proposals. Moreover, MAVA will most likely favour time-honoured, trusted partners. |
| CEPF | Mediterranean Basin strategy[[34]](#footnote-34) | 1. Promote civil society involvement in Integrated Coastal Zone Management to minimize the negative effects of coastal development in three priority  2. Establish the sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources with a focus on the priority corridors (Albania’s coastal areas represent one of these priority corridors in the Southwest Balkans) 3. Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas (Karaburuni-Sazani MPA is one of these areas) | Call for proposals (grants) | R2R, MSP and K-S MPA proposals | To date, CEPF has invested in MPA and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) work in Albania through its partnership with INCA.  In principle, UNDP is eligible but this needs to be further checked. |
| Green Climate Fund | No specific country strategy. | Enable and support adaptation, mitigation (including REDD+) technology development and transfer (including CCS), capacity-building and the preparation of national reports to UNFCCC | Project proposals submitted to NDA | MCPA network proposal | This funding opportunity is not relevant for the proposed project proposals. However, UNDP should organize a meeting with the Focal Point at the Ministry of Environment to further discuss future opportunities. |

## Project description and progresses

### Project start and duration

The UNDP/GEF MCPA Project started in March 2011 and it is expected to end in December 2016.

### Project oversight and coordination mechanism

The project is implemented by UNDP Albania Country Office through a National Implemented Modality. The MoE (former MEFWA) is the Executing Agency (EA). However, at the written request from the MoE, the more administrative functions of an EA have been transferred back to UNDP. The MoE and UNDP have been working in close cooperation throughout project implementation.

The project organization structure consists of:

Project Coordination Unit (PCU): it includes a National Project Manager (NPM), one permanent technical staff (National Technical Expert) and an Administrative/Financial Assistant, all based in Tirana.

Field project staff: it includes a part-time field moderator and a part-time Local Expert who are supporting the PCU in day-to-day liaison with MPA Administration and local stakeholders in Vlora Region. The presence of field personnel greatly contributed to enhance collaboration with local stakeholders and beneficiaries and to raise awareness on project activities and MPAs more in general.

Project Board: it was originally established to advise the PCU, and monitor and evaluate project implementation. It consisted initially in 7 members representing the diverse stakeholders of the project (MoE, UNDP, local government, private sector, universities, CSO) and met at least twice a year. This was subsequently merged with the Management Committee of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. As the Project Board - MPA Management Committee is cross sectorial, it played the role of a local “Cross-sectoral Forum”. NAPA is today called to establish a cross-sectoral/institutional forum or other mechanism in national level.

### Project stakeholders

During the design of the project, key stakeholders were identified and extensive consultations with stakeholders were carried out clarifying their involvement in the proposed action. During the Inception workshop review of key stakeholders were presented along with their roles and possible contributions to the project. Two key stakeholder groups were considered priority for their pivotal role in sustainable protected area management and administration. These two groups are (a) private sector - represented by the Organization of fishery management of Vlora (OFM) and hotel and tour operators and (b) local communities that live coastal areas in vicinity of MPA and whose livelihoods are interwoven with use of natural resources in limited use of MPA and its potential buffer zone.

The project has reached out to both groups of stakeholders and has sought maximum engagement in its activities, mainly through training and by adopting a participatory approach to the development of the Management Plan of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA.

The following table lists the project stakeholders, their mandate and future priorities assessed so far:

| **Stakeholders** | **Mandate** | **Priorities for future developments** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GOVERNMENT** | | |
| Council of Ministers | The Council approves all enabling legislative and regulatory frameworks for the functioning of the protected area system; including NAPA. |  |
| Ministry of Environment | The Ministry is the focal point institution for the implementation of the CBD, and the implementing partner for this project. It is responsible for preparing the enabling legislative and regulatory framework for project activities and ensuring that they are presented to the Council of Ministers for approval.  The Ministry is responsible for creating the enabling conditions for implementation of all project activities and it will facilitate the establishment, staffing and resourcing of the NAPA.  The Ministry will develop and present a motivation for an increase in funding from the state budget for the protected area system. | Designation of new MPAs: only 3% of marine areas needs be protected to reach the CBD/Aichi Targets (for a total of 6% of the national waters)  Review the criteria and run a gap analysis to identify a truly representative network of MPAs: to date, MoE lacks funding to complete the necessary assessments  Porto Palermo should be soon gazetted  Cape of Rodoni could also follow  Securing sustainable funding for MPAs to ensure sufficient human capacity: MoE plans to ensure management body for each MPA (to this end it will also explore NGO-private-public agreements)  Designation of N2000 sites (addressed by EU/ItaCoop/IUCN project)  Capacity building of MoE and all operation structures (NAPA-RAPA-National Coastal Agency)  Strengthen surveillance/enforcement/management implementation    The government priority in improving environmental monitoring and management in biodiversity conservation is evident by the institution of new laws and policies favoring the environmental conservation such as a new law on hunting moratorium, the law on forest logging moratorium, the law on chemicals, etc. As well as the institutional reform where NEA, NAPA and the State Inspectorate of Environment were instituted. |
| National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) | The NAPA is the key institution to benefit from the project, and will be responsible for the sustainability of all project activities. | NAPA would focus on the following actions:  Operationalize K-S management plan  Create the first CMPAs from Llogara to Sazani as the first example of coastal marine spatial planning process in Albania  Advance the designation process in Cape of Rodoni MPA: develop preliminary management/financial plan (following K-S approach)  While waiting for official gazetting (by 2016 normally), develop management/tourism plan for Porto Palermo MPA (following K-S approach)  Revise and update the current MCPA system as proposed by the SPMCPA. |
| National Environmental Agency/ Regional Environmental Agencies | The NEA issues any required environmental permits in protected areas during the project and will enforce provisions of environmental legislation relating to EIAs, environmental permitting and coordination of monitoring activities in protected areas | The Regional Environmental Agencies urgently need to upscale their services through the establishment of in-house laboratories to run monitoring activities, purchase of new equipment (car, PCs), capacity building on monitoring, EIA, general biology/ecology.  They also believe that public awareness on environmental issues should be increased and public hearings, which are mandatory, should be organized systematically for any new development projects. |
| State Inspectorate of Environment, Forests and Water | The SEIFW supports the enforcement of legislation on environmental protection, forest, water and fisheries activities in protected areas. |  |
| Ministry of Urban Development | The Ministry supports ensuring the compliance of development and construction activities in protected areas with approved management plans. | The Ministry, together with the National Spatial Planning Agency is developing an inclusive/integrated plan, which will guide the development of the economy and the territory along the Albanian coast (Inter-sectorial Integrated Plan of the Coast). The Plan will be implemented in the territory through development programs and comprehensive plans of the regions and municipalities as well as pilot projects. |
| National Spatial Planning Agency | It develops planning standards and supervise implementation of spatial planning instruments. |  |
| National Urban and Construction Inspectorate | The Inspectorate assists protected areas in the development and management of waste management facilities, water supply and sewerage. Law enforcement related to spatial planning and constructions. |  |
| Inter-institutional Operational Maritime Centre (IOMC) | With the new amendment made to the law, the Coastal Guard functions through the Inter-institutional Operational Maritime Center (IOMC). This center is composed of all the institutions as provided in the article 32 of the SEA Code (mainly line ministries). The center is a much specialized institution and can manage the entire situation, with the power to control all the activities in the marine environment through a very specific, newly established system. |  |
| Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship | It is responsible for setup, implementation and monitoring of the National Tourism Strategy; legal framework for tourism development, related planning and development process; support for regional administration and tourism organization at the national, regional and local level. |  |
| Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Protection | It is responsible for covering the problems of agriculture, food and protection of the consumers. |  |
| Service Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture | It is responsible for all services related to infrastructure management and data collecting of fishing and aquaculture activities and ensuring compliance with legal requirements on the protection of fisheries and aquaculture in Albania.  It includes the Aquaculture Sector, the Finance Sector, Services Sector, the Ports Management and Monitoring and Control Division. |  |
| Ministry of Defence | It controls the military bases located at Karaburuni peninsula and Sazani island. |  |
| National Coastal Agency | It is responsible for coastal protection, promotion and monitoring of projects for the development of the coastal zone. Cooperation on new MPAs. |  |
| National Tourism Agency – NTA | It carries on the functions related to promotion and marketing in tourism, e.g. production and distribution of promotional publications, official tourism portals, familiarization tours, PR, tourism trade fairs, etc. |  |
| National Water Council | It is a central decision-making authority and it determines the national policy over water resources. The Prime Minister chairs the National Council of Water. NWC has its Technical Secretariat as its executive authority. |  |
| **STATE ORGANIZATIONS** | | |
| Regional Agency for Protected Area (RAPA) | Responsible for the management of PAs. | Sustainable fisheries management plan for K-S MPA and the Vlora bay.  Organize/launch new recreational activities within the park (trails, sports, etc.)  Establish a diving centre  Replicate K-S MPA approach to Porto Palermo  Coastal Marine Spatial Planning process to the Vlora bay (from Llogara to Sazani)  Establish an information centre in Vlora |
| Regional Environment Inspectorate | Law enforcement, controlling illegal activities; fire protection. |  |
| Regional Environment Agency | Present in each Prefecture; implementing procedures related to environmental licenses; collecting environmental data. | See National Environment Agency’s priorities. |
| Fisheries Inspectorate Vlora | It has responsibility for surveillance of fisheries activities, including the MPA. |  |
| Border Police and Immigration | It has responsibility in MPA as well (controlling access to the area). |  |
| **RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS** | | |
| University of Tirana/ The museum of natural sciences | This is the highest scientific body that performs research and education on marine ecosystems, marine habitats and species. The museum of natural sciences is under this university and provides several practical training and know how on this regards |  |
| University of Vlora, Shkodra and Durres | These are regional universities that provide curricula on tourism, navigation and also on marine biology. Yet, the vocation/curricula level is much modest than that of university of Tirana. Little coordination so far with RAPA. | The University of Vlora is interested in enhancing its collaboration on baseline studies and monitoring activities within Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. |
| University “Ismail Qemali” | Natural science and Tourism Departments |  |
| Academy of Sciences | Provides scientific justification for accepted decisions in all areas including the sustainable use of nature resources and biodiversity conservation |  |
| **LOCAL GOVERNMENTS** | | |
| The local authorities and administrative bodies | Local government authorities, municipalities and communes, represent an administrative and territorial unit covering the urban and rural areas respectively. The local government structures are required to fulfil joint obligations with regard to the protection of the environment and implementation of environmental law. These authorities are empowered with the designing of environmental action plans in accordance with national environmental strategies and the technical assistance provided by the Ministries. |  |
| Vlora Prefecture | It supervises legal framework implementation and controls local government authorities. | Ensure the long term financial sustainability of K-S MPA and other new MPAs.  Ensure the protection of key sites of high tourism interest  Replicate K-S MPA model in other areas (particularly, in Porto Palermo): allocate staff/budget, develop management plan and build capacity  Increase public awareness on MPAs.  Promote sustainable tourism development in the region. |
| Vlora County Council | It develops and implements regional policies and coordinates with central and local government authorities |  |
| Vlora Municipality | It is responsible for local governance, management and administration of resources (including nature resources) in the areas of Vlora bay. Also, it is the main structure from the institutional point of view with a significant role in administration of the sea and coastal matters. Decides over local development (businesses). |  |
| Orikumi Administrative Unit | This used to be the main local governance body whose territory is part of the watershed of Vlora bay. Following the Administrative and Territorial Reform, it is now a unit within the Vlora Municipality. |  |
| Saranda municipality and Ksamil municipality | These are the southern most local authorities of Albania, closely coordinating and assisting the Butrinti national park on management and administration of the Butrinti ecosystem and cultural /historical resources. They are crucial actors in forthcoming planning and development towards new MPAs (Porto Palermo) and their institutional setup. |  |
| Qender Administrative Unit | Responsible for Sazani island, but the Ministry of Defence is still the main authority on the island. |  |
| PUBLIC ENTITIES | | |
| Harbour Master Vlora | Once the entrance into the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA is regulates, it could become more important. |  |
| Harbour District Vlora | Port authority in Vlora, at the moment does not provide moorings for nautical tourists. |  |
| **LOCAL AND NATIONAL NGOS /FORUMS** | | |
| Small Grants Programme of GEF | It provides financial and technical support to community-led action on global environmental conservation |  |
| Divers association “Ekspedita blu’ | Local association based in Vlora that gathers the professional and amateurs divers as well as promotes and develops diving education and practice in coastal area of Albania (mainly the southern part) |  |
| Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania (APAWA) | A non-profit organization based in Tirana which develops and implements projects and activities with focus on aquatic life and conservation wildlife and biota in water ecosystems. | Review the current CMPAs system in Albania: the identification dates back to 1999. Most of the areas are undersized. The expedition organized by APAWA together with Waitt Foundation might provide the baseline information to review the current MPA system. Report will be finalized summer 2016.  Operationalize K-S management plan  Replicate K-S management planning process to Porto Palermo. Advance designation process in Cape of Rodoni and Pagane-Kepi i Stillos (for Saimir the latter should be reconsidered as it has many ecological values that are impacted by water eutrophication due to intensive aquaculture in the area). |
| “Adriatic” association | A local association based in Vlora district involved with urban environment, nature conservation and community development in Vlora area. | All these associations have been actively engaged in the UNDP/GEF project. Their priorities for future development are:  - promotion of MPA (particularly of K-S MPA as a Model MPA) particularly by public administration  -increase awareness (general public and local administrations) and include modules on MPAs in high school curricula  - improve inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial cooperation/coordination: other ministries should be included  - strengthen enforcement (through cooperation with civil society)  - improve fishery management (for example, 60% of fishermen do not have permits in the Vioje-Narte lagoon)  - ensure follow up to UNDP/GEF project by promoting sustainable economic activities. |
| Organisation for Environmental Education – SEEP | Association focused mainly on public information and education. |
| Association for Vlora Bay Protection |  |
| Centre for Research, Cooperation and Development - CRCD | Association dedicated to public awareness and education, research and capacity building on issues related to sustainable development and nature conservation. |
| INCA | A non-profit organization dealing with several biodiversity conservation programs, nature protection and also coastal zone management activities. It is the main NGO to work on marine issues in Albania. | Develop and set operative an Information centre at K-S MPA: starting from the provisions on how to develop/implement the centre that are included in the management plan and the project concept for a multi-functional centre of Orikum.  Sustainable fishery management plan for K-S MPA  Participatory management and financial planning at Porto Palermo MPA (so far, preliminary management/financial plans are available for official designation – proposal still at the MoE level, not yet officially declared (hopefully by end of 2016) – main issues: aquaculture + unplanned tourism development.  Further assessments in Cape of Rodoni MPA (land ownership issues as part of the land is owned by the Church + waste management)  Improving monitoring  Representative network of MPAs: it is a priority but no funding.  Improve data collection and sharing on marine and coastal species and habitats to support also education and awareness activities. |
| ECAT Tirana | A non-profit organization engaged in environment management programs. Among others, it has also implemented projects on coastal zone management and planning (PLANCOAST) as well as actually undertaking an IPA joint application with other Mediterranean countries on coastal zone management |  |
| Albanian Network for Study of Marine and Lagoon Ecosystems (MarLagunAlb) | A recently established forum of professionals whose main area of activities is research and monitoring of aquatic life and ecosystems |  |
| REC-Albania | Regional organization focusing public awareness, environment education and information nationwide |  |
| LOCAL COMMUNITY | | |
| Local communities | Local communities live coastal areas in vicinity of MPA and their livelihoods are interwoven with use of natural resources in limited use of MPA and its potential buffer zone. In terms of subsistence fishing, there are 500 small scale vessels and nearly 1,000 persons involved in this activity. Other important activities taking place in the coastal zone include farming and livestock (mainly sheep) rearing in coastal areas and its mountainous zone. |  |
| BUSINESS SECTOR | | |
| Tour and Hotel Operators | Although recently opened to the international market the traditional “sun and sand” tourism is the main tourism product offered by the hotel and tour operator in Vlora region.  Nature areas (in particular protected areas) are one of the three “jewels in the crown” of Albanian tourism. The country cannot be successful in the long term without significant investment in upgrading and continued maintenance of the core natural assets that form the underlying basis for the tourism sector. |  |
| Organisation of Touristic Operators | Tourism agencies |  |
| Marina of Orikum | Private marina, cca 600 berths, fully equipped, organises regattas |  |
| OaziBlu | Diving CSO |  |
| USER ASSOCIATIONS | | |
| Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vlora | Association of private businesses in Vlora, potential for promotion |  |
| Fisheries Management Organisation – OMP | UNDP has signed an agreement with OMP to provide for 3 rangers, fuel and logistics, who in turn write weekly reports; for the time being, due to technical and financial constraints, rangers can only record illegal activities from land. |  |
| Organization of fishery management of Vlora (OFM) | This is an economic operator licensed by the MoE for the management of the fishery resources of Vlora region, in compliance with the fishery law and other economic /fiscal regulatory provisions in Albania. Recently re-established following 2 years of inaction. |  |
| INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS | | |
| European Union | It supports biodiversity conservation in the country.  Main organizer of the Albanian Environmental Film Festival. | It is launching the IPA II, whose priorities are:   * Further development of capacities at both central and local level government for developing and implementing policies * Further alignment with the EU environment and climate policies, legislation and best practices, with effective implementation ensured (particularly for climate legislation, monitoring, reporting and verification of greenhouse gases emissions; effort sharing decision; fluorinated gases; ozone-depleting substances; vehicle efficiency and fuel quality standards; carbon capture and storage and other relevant legislation); * Infrastructure investments, notably in water, flood and waste management * Climate change actions |
| Italian Cooperation |  | It recently launched a EC supported project on Natura 2000 terrestrial and marine sites.  Major donor for environmental projects in Albania. |
| World Bank | It has supported a number of projects aimed at delivering an immediate alleviation of poverty and at providing sustainable tools and long-lasting development to foster further growth. It has promoted integrated coastal zones management and sustainable economic development. |  |
| WWF | International NGO mainly supporting capacity building for protected areas, K-S MPA management planning process (within the framework of UNDP-WWF MoU), sustainable financing of MCPAs. | It will raise funds (mainly, from the French GEF) to continue its work with INCA on sustainable tourism management in coastal areas and capacity building. |
| MedPAN | Supporting MPA regionally. Small grant programme. Mediterranean Trust Fund | It will continue to support the newly established MPA and relevant authorities through its Small Grant Programme. |
| CEPF | Donor supporting INCA’s project on sustainable tourism management in Vlora area. | It will support INCA’s work on Marine Spatial Planning. |
| Waitt Foundation | Donor supporting baseline marine and coastal features assessments/surveys to advancing the creation of MPA in Albania. |  |
| Conservatoire du Littoral | It supports the MoE in the designation of small islands a PAs and promoting their sustainable management and development | CdL signed a MoU in 2014 with the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, the National Coastal Agency, the French Embassy and the University of Tirana/APAWA to further the sharing and transfer of knowledge on ICZM and promoting the gazetting of Sazani Island as protected area.  CdL is committed to:   1. support the National Coastal Agency to boost its effectiveness. 2. engage little islands off the southern coast of Albania in the CdL’s Sustainable Island program. 3. contribute to a better MPA governance in Albania through training, exchange programs, study visits. 4. improve data collection and sharing on marine and coastal species and habitats. 5. promote sustainable tourism development (particularly rural tourism, by connecting sun and beach tourism to more rural/inland tourism offer). |

### Project partnerships

During project implementation, to maximise synergies and complementarities with other actions, UNDP signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) outlining the nature of the collaboration with the following institutions and organizations:

* INCA – on the development of sustainable tourism management plan of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA (within WWF’s SEA-Med project)
* Orikumi Municipality – on project activities implementation in Orikumi Municipality
* WWF – on the development of the management plan of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA (within WWF’s SEA-Med project)
* Fishery Management Organization (FMO) in Vlora to contribute to the baseline assessment and monitoring of fish abundance in Karaburuni-Sazani MPA and the monitoring of illegal activities in the area
* A Letter of Agreement / Framework for project implementation was signed at the beginning of the project with the Moe MoE (former MEFWA) on overall project implementation

Since the establishment of NAPA in 2015, UNDP has signed exclusively one MoU with the Agency. All partnerships/collaborations on MCPAs are centrally coordinated by NAPA.

### Project Results Framework - progresses

The UNDP/GEF MCPAs project contributed to the achievement of the **Country Programme Outcome “Policies developed and implemented that support the achievement of MDGs”** as defined in the CPD for Albania (2006-2010) (Country Programme Outcome Indicators: 2.1.3 National Development plans reflect regional priorities).

**Primary applicable Key Environment and Sustainable Development Key Result Area:** Improve management effectiveness of Albania’s marine and coastal protected areas

**Applicable GEF Strategic Objective and Program:**

Strategic Objective 1 (SO-1) Catalyzing Sustainability of Protected Area Systems at national levels

Strategic Priority 2: Increasing Representation of Effectively Managed Marine Protected Areas in Protected Area Systems

**Applicable GEF Expected Outcomes and Indicators:**

* Increase in surface coverage of marine protected areas within the national protected area system that enhances marine ecosystem representation (Increase in coverage of MPAs by at least 12,570.82 hectares)
* Enhanced management effectiveness of the new MPA and existing 9 coastal PAs as measured by METT (Achievement of METT target scores for Karaburuni-Sazani MPA and for the existing 9 coastal PAs).

**Project Objective:**

To improve coverage and management effectiveness of Albanian marine and coastal protected areas.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Baseline level at project inception** | **Target level at end of project (original and revised in 2014)** | **Level at 30 June 2016** |
| Area under protection as Coastal and Marine Protected Areas | 100,236 ha (existing coastal protected areas - mainly coastal wetlands) | An additional 12,570.82 ha declared as Albanian first MPA (Karaburuni - Sazani).  An additional 3,500 ha in the process of being declared as MPAs (Rodoni Cape-Lalzi Bay and Pagane-Kepi i Stillos) | In 2010 Karaburuni-Sazani is designated as MP. Two other MPAs, Porto Palermo and Cape of Rodoni, are in the process to be proclaimed. Assessment and public hearing are conducted in the two areas. For Porto Palermo is foreseen the status of Natural Park and the documents for proclamation of the Park (with a surface of 2,067.75 ha) have been shared with relevant ministries. |
| Enabling environment created for revision of the existing MCPA status, facilitated by the project | Weak capacities for revising MCPAs status | At least 2 MoE experts capable for conducting revision of MCPA according to international standards.  Marine and coastal protected area targets are fully incorporated into Albania's National biodiversity strategy and action plan for 2020 by the end of 4th year of project. | 45 officers from MoE and relevant institutions have been trained on issues related to MPA designation and management. Curricula and 8 training modules on marine biodiversity conservation and management are developed. About The Manual on Training on Integrated Management of MCPAs is published. They are currently used as reference material in several training organized in the country also from NAPA, NGOs, and others.  A SPMCPA is developed, including a list of priority coastal and marine areas to be protected. The SPMCPA is incorporated in the NBSAP, approved by the Government in January 2016. |
| Increased Systemic, Institutional and Individual capacities for establishing and managing an MCPA system | See UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for baseline  Systemic - 37% Institutional - 29% Individual - 38% | See UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for target  Systemic - 90% Institutional - 87% Individual - 95%  Karaburuni-Sazani MPA management effectiveness assessed by METT score at least doubled compared to baseline by the end of 5th year of project. | Systematic 67% - Institutional 67% - Individual 67%  Compared with 2015, the UNDP Capacity Development Scorecard for MCPAs shows an increased systematic, institutional and individual capacity. The legislation is under development and the SPMCPA is approved. A new institution is established, NAPA, which shows a stronger political support to PAs. NAPA will help building consensus among all institutions and stakeholders, mobilize information and knowledge and increase capacity to manage, monitor, evaluate, and report. Compared to the baseline level there is an increase of about 50 %. |

**Outcome 1**: Improved bio-geographical representation of MCPAs.

Output 1.1

*Support to revision of National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan for 2020 (Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas - SPMCPA).*

To avoid duplications and fragmentations of national plans, a comprehensive Strategic Plan for Albania’s Marine and Coastal Protected Areas[[35]](#footnote-35) (SPMCPA) was developed, outlining a ten-year strategy for enhancing coverage and management effectiveness of MCPAs system. The SPMCPA was integrated to the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which was originally developed in 1999 and recently revised to respond to the Albanian Government’s commitments to the CBD/Aichi Targets and EU policies. By-laws and regulations necessary for effective management and enforcement of MCPAs were also developed.

The National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) has operationalized the SPMCPA through the development of a “Short- and mid-term Strategic Program” (2015-2020) outlining NAPA’s vision, goal, objectives and priority actions for the next 5 years.

Output 1.2 *Building Karaburuni-Sazani MPA Administration capacities.*

In 2010, the Albanian government established the marine area near Karaburuni peninsula and Sazani island as MPA. The Project’s Outputs were adapted accordingly to support the government in establishing and building the capacity of the newly established administrations responsible for PAs (namely, the National Agency of Protected Areas and its Regional Administration), within the new Ministry of Environment (MoE).

The UNDP project provided technical support to the MoE in the definition of the new MPA management structure, roles and responsibilities key personnel, and in the establishment and operationalization of the Administration unit for Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. A new “Law on Protected Areas”, including clear mandate and responsibilities of MCPA Administrations, recommendations on financial mechanisms for MCPAs, etc., based on the lessons from the project and specifically the Karaburuni- Sazani MPA, is in the process of being approved by the MoE. The new takes into account the following concerns:

* The use of terminology should be clear, easily understood by all stakeholders, and reflecting the objectives of MPAs
* The legal instrument should provide for the drafting of the management plan and the business plan of the MPA and for its inclusion in the national development strategy
* Public participation should have an important part in the legal instrument
* Compensation requirements and process should be estimated and provided before the adoption of the legal instrument, if the need for such compensation arises
* Clear competencies among the involved institutions should be provided
* Coordination issues should be clear and well defined
* Supremacy of different pieces of legislation should be provided in the legal instrument establishing the MPA
* International principles, commitments and obligations should be taken into consideration
* Penalties and enforcement provisions should have an important place in the legal instrument, and, in addition should be clear and effective
* Financial resources need to be clearly defined and included in the legal instrument before its adoption

Output 1.3 *Buffer zones for the MPA is identified and demarcated and management actions integrated into MPA and local development plan*.

The project provided financial and technical support to the development of the Management Plan of Karaburuni- Sazani MPA. A fully participatory process was adopted and lessons learned, recommendations and best practices fed into relevant by-laws and regulations.

The project has also reviewed the buffer zones for all 9 MCPAs in Albania and produced guidelines for buffer zones management.

**Outcome 2:** *Improved management arrangements for MCPAs based on clear institutional responsibilities and development of capacities.*

Output 2.1 *Cross-Sectoral Forum on Protected Area management is created.*

A *Cross-sectoral Forum,* which was conceived as an advisory body bringing together key sectors and institutions (e.g., fisheries, agriculture, tourism, physical planning), protected area site managers, NGOs, and representatives of the main user groups, has not been established. Instead, the Project Board was integrated into the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA Management Committee and considered as a first step towards inter-sectoral coordination. The Project Board/MPA Management Committee includes representatives from most of the relevant stakeholder groups, but missing key ones, such as Ministry of Agriculture and relevant Fisheries Directorates (Fisheries Policies Directorate + Control/Monitoring/Services Directorate), National Federation of Fishermen, fisheries management organizations (FMO), Ministry of Urban Development, the Agency for territorial planning, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, amongst others. The committee is delivering in the Vlora district, but can’t be considered relevant at national level.

The Cross-Sectoral Forum was proposed to avoid confusion and duplication of tasks and duties among administrations with authority on the coastal and marine areas, as well as to address and minimize current or future inter-sectoral conflicts. The project was supposed to support the Forum by focusing initially on the effective management of MCPAs and then gradually expand it to cover all Albanian PAs. The Forum was also meant to raise awareness on MCPAs in Albania.

NAPA is mandated to establish MPA Management Committee in each PA. These are currently only advisory bodies. The plan is to transform them into decision-making bodies. However, as these last years have seen too many changes at political, governance and territorial level, this transition won’t be pursued in the near future

Output 2.2 *System for joint surveillance and monitoring of the network of MCPAs to track biodiversity impacts and management effectiveness is piloted.*

The project aimed originally to assist Karaburuni-Sazani MPA implementing the MCPA monitoring system developed under *Output 1.1.* Instead, the METT, which was originally used to monitor project results and impacts, was adapted, systematized into an online software and adopted by the MoE to monitoring and evaluating PAs management effectiveness. In the PPG stage, the METT was only completed for the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA pilot site to determine baseline and target METT scores. During the early stages of project implementation, the METT was also applied to all 9 coastal PAs. Annual reports, monitoring reports, and results of field visits have been documented, as the findings of the independent mid-term evaluation. Progress in METT scores were assessed annually starting from end of the 2nd year of the project onward.

UNDP succeeded to enable the MoE /NAPA to apply METT, which was introduced in Albania by UNDP, and is being adopted by all other projects in the PAs. NAPA has improved the online application with additional indicators.

Output 2.3 *Technical extension services for site managers on cost-effective management and conservation approaches.*

A set of training modules on management of MCPAs were developed by the project to build the capacities and skills of managers for effective MCPA management. Topics considered included:

* marine biodiversity conservation measures and monitoring of impacts on biodiversity,
* PA management planning,
* PA business planning (including issues such as building relations with donors and the private sector, understanding of intra-governmental roles and responsibilities, identification, marketing and implementation of new revenue generation opportunities, reducing costs of PA management),
* Ecotourism
* Ecological education for general public
* Setting and running participatory PA Management Boards,
* Use of the METT, and
* Approaches to conflict resolution.

The modules were delivered through seminars and workshops. About 10 central level staff of the MoE (former MEFWA) and 15 site managers of all MCPAs and 20 representatives of the Regional Environmental Agencies were trained. A manual with the training modules was produced to serve as a resource for site managers.

Output 2.4 *Management and business planning demonstrated at the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA*.

A Financial Plan (FP) was developed for the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA through participatory process, including an assessment of the market and non-market based mechanisms to meet the MPA funding needs.

An economic valuation of the critical marine ecosystem services delivered by Karaburuni-Sazani MPA is currently being finalized as a baseline study to the definition of a long-term strategy to finance the Albanian MCPAs network. The results of the evaluation will also contribute to the strengthening of local decision-makers and local stakeholders’ buy-in to the MPA. It will also facilitate the implementation of specific management actions, the selection of the most relevant financial tools for the MPA and the enhancement of its management effectiveness.

Following the official approval of the Management Plan of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA by the MoE, the Project started the implementation of high priority and visible actions identified during the consultative process. Specifically, the following actions will be implemented before the end of the project in 2016:

* Information Centre of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA (construction and equipment)
* Design, production and setting-up of information boards and their maintenance
* Communication and information
* Purchase of equipment for tagging the sea turtle and of a speed boat
* Preliminary assessment, design and deployment of underwater and terrestrial trials for diving sites and hiking itinerary
* Set up of buoys to delimit the MPA boarders
* Repair and maintenance of existing docks.

A guidance document on how to elaborate a management and business plan for a MCPA was produced and lessons emerging from the development of the Management and Business Plan for Karaburuni-Sazani were integrated into the extension services program under Output 2.3.

The Regional Administration (RAPA) in Vlora is responsible for the daily implementation of the Management and Financial Plans of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA, under the supervision and guidance of the MPA Management Committee.

The project did not achieve the following expected target values:

* The status of *Posidonia* beds and of medio and infralittoral communities (mainly focus on species richness and abundance of species of international concern) along Karaburuni-Sazani and the Ionian coast of Albania has not been monitored due to technical and resources limitations. Two new indicators were suggested by the project’s Mid-term Evaluation:
  + A baseline understanding of the fish resources of K-S MPA.
  + Awareness of inhabitants and stakeholders adjacent to the MPA (and countrywide) of marine biological diversity values

A summary of project’s achievements against the Project Results Framework, revised in 2011 during the Inception Phase (based on the Project Implementation Review 2016), can be found in Annex 5.

### Project best practices and lessons learned

Project best practices identified so far:

* The GEF Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) has been adopted by the Project to monitor progress on increasing the management effectiveness of MCPAs. During project development, the METT has been completed for the MCPA where demonstration activities are to take place – Karaburuni-Sazani. During project implementation, the use of the METT was developed into an online software and institutionalized as a system-level tool for measuring and monitoring PAs management effectiveness, and it was applied to all PAs in Albania (to access the system: <http://www.mett-undp.al/> ). The online METT centralizes monitoring inputs from the Albanian PAs system and is managed by NAPA and collects data clustered in the following categories: i) tourism, ii) natural monument, iii) damages. The coming EU-funded "*Strengthening capacity in National Nature Protection - preparation for Natura 2000 network* " Project might create a new layer for N2000 sites/indicators;
* A Training Manual with the curricula developed within the project was made available to be applied by the relevant institutions for PAs (NAPA and RAPA) and other NGOs or associations in Albania. They are available in Albanian but so far not endorsed and used by NAPA/MoE.
* MPA management planning guidelines were developed before the UNDP/GEF project based on IUCN guidelines and officially adopted by MoE.
* MPA financial planning guidelines are planned by UNDP with a project with Montenegro.

The Project has also generated important experiences and lessons learned that should be considered in the development of future actions. These include:

* The project’s inception phase was highly beneficial to refine the project strategy and to strengthen the linkages/involvement with both institutes and NGOs at a national and local level. Again this consultative process undertaken by the PCU was highly beneficial to the overall project;
* A participatory approach was adopted at all stages of project implementation to engage stakeholders and project partners and allow for strong ownership and buy-in in the project activities;
* Continuous communication on project objectives and strategies has also been carefully carried out to ensure transparency and maintain stakeholders’ commitment to the project. Despite these efforts, however, key stakeholder groups have only marginally participated to the project activities and key institutions and economic sectors are still far from actively contributing to the management of the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA;
* The project use of formal ‘memorandum of understanding’ (MoUs) between the project and partner stakeholders created a constructive reaction amongst the partners. This engendered an ownership and formalises involvement with the project’s activities and goals;
* The PCU proved capable to adopt an adaptive management approach to project execution by addressing evolving needs and expectations. The result of these revisions is a project that is well suited to the political and institutional environment in Albania;
* The project (PCU, UNDP and MoE) has benefited from the use of a roster of approved consultants that was established at the start of the project. This has enabled activities to be executed and consultants appointed in a more reactive manner to evolving priorities.

## Appropriateness of project-end results

In June 2016, a series of interviews were conducted with key project partners to assess the current status of the UNDP/ GEF MCPA Project during a two-day mission in Tirana and the project pilot site in Vlora Bay. Information generated from these interviews was cross-referenced with the information generated from the *Authorities and Interested Stakeholders Assessment Survey* which was sent out to all relevant authorities and stakeholders at national and local level.

The survey questions targeted key components of the project and tried to provide a better understanding of whether the overall purpose, need and intended accomplishments of the UNDP/GEF MCPA Projectwere achieved. There were twelve respondents to the survey, eleven of which are represented in the synthesis Table in Annex 6. For various reasons, more than half of the respondents did not answer all of the questions. One reason for this was that not all respondents were involved in all project components. The survey was primarily designed around a question-answer rating format. However, in some cases, in addition to the rating system, respondents were requested to elaborate on their response. This request was seldom addressed by respondents in the survey. The survey sample is not considered robust by any means, however, is a good cross-representation of the current thinking of project partners. The synthesized results of the survey have not been quantified due to the small size of the data set, rather interpreted and coupled with similar questions/answers that were responded to during the mission interviews in June 2016.

Collectively, the survey and mission interviews represent a range of partner perspectives that contribute to better understanding the outcomes, and future needs and priorities for this project. It is clear the responses are not necessarily aligned nor do they necessarily display a clear pattern in terms of perceived results from this project or how to move forward. When that opportunity was provided in the surveys for further elaboration, it was rarely taken advantage of. The interviews allowed for a more in-depth discussion.

The following findings from the survey and mission interviews are extracted from the Table in Annex 6:

### Project effectiveness and efficiency

*How well did the project meet its original objectives and outcomes?*

For Outcome 1, in general, success at meeting the following outputs is considered good to very good:

* Support for revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020
* Building Karaburuni-Sazani MPA administration capacity
* Buffer zones identified and demarcated, associated actions integrated into MP

With the focus on Karaburuni-Sazani MPA, and to some degree Porto Palermo MPA, in general, it was felt that these efforts improved the interest and understanding of the needs and how to move forward with the gazetting and management of MPAs in Albania.

For Outcome 2, in general, success at meeting the following outputs is considered good to very good except for technical extension services which was rated lower:

* Cross-sectoral forum for MCPA management
* System for joint surveillance and monitoring is piloted
* Technical extension services for site managers on cost effective and conservation management
* Management and business planning in K-S

The survey results and interviews are incongruous on this outcome. Although management arrangements for Karaburuni-Sazani MPA have improved, there are still some significant barriers, including cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration and required technical expertise for managers.

### Stakeholder engagement and communication

*How well did the project collaborate with and meet the needs and interests of stakeholders?*

There was general agreement that the coordination and communication of this project were well managed, and of some mutual benefit to each participating organization. The most valued components of this project were focused on the development of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA, including the associated management and financial planning processes and documents.

### Project relevance

*How well did the project address some of the major threats to the coastal and marine environment?*

In regards to the major threats identified in the beginning of the project, they remain much as they were at that time, with some pressures increasing particularly in the coastal zone. The project put little emphasis on directly addressing these threats, although the awareness of these threats in general does appear to have increased as a result of the project. The one exception is climate change, which received little to no attention.

*How well did the project address some of the major barriers to effective management?*

The most clearly defined barrier throughout this assessment continues to be the lack of inter and intra-institutional coordination and collaboration. Additionally, other institutional/operational issues such as the need for identifying sustainable financing mechanisms from within the government, still remain unresolved. There is also a need to move from stakeholder-based advisory bodies to decision-making bodies for MPAs. And finally, a general need to improve the capacity of individuals and institutions.

### Project sustainability

*How well are the outcomes achieved through this project secured for the long term?*

**Institutional Sustainability**

At a most basic level, required competencies (experience levels, skills and knowledge base) have never been identified at the various levels of government in order to designate and effectively manage MPAs. And, as mentioned above in the barriers, institutional stability as a whole is still under construction at different levels of government. For example, at the MoE level the “Law on PAs” has not declared a commitment to appropriate funding for MPAs. At the NAPA level, they have made a commitment to hire a large number of new staff, many coming from the project itself, but show no apparent commitment to developing the capacity of that staff.

**Financial Sustainability**

Whether funds are appropriated through the MoE and/ or there is the use of a trust fund mechanism, financial sustainability continues to be a challenge for MCPAs in Albania. It is not apparent from the information collected from project partners that there is any secured plan in place for committed funding and/ or developing an income generation scheme for the MCPA system. The new UNDP/GEF “*Enhancing financial sustainability of the protected area system in Albania”* project was conceived to address the financial sustainability of system of PAs in Albania and includes pilot actions targeting the PA complex of Llogara-Karaburuni-Sazani.

**Replicability**

There seems to be no question that all the partners who provided input feel the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA is an exemplary and replicable model. However, with the exception of the project reports, there seems to be no documentation on lessons learned or best management practices (BMPs). There is also some question on whether the project partners actually have the capacity to apply the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA to other sites. Finally, there is some question as to how this model is actually being applied to or influencing the necessary policies and laws for scaling up to a larger network of MPAs.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Corrective actions for the current project

It was a little bit difficult to make a clear distinction between corrective actions and follow-up actions, we have done our best to do so in this report. Three areas still need to be addressed as corrective actions:

1. No MPA management effectiveness framework has been established, including standardized indicators of success, monitoring programs, reporting systems;
2. The cross-sectoral forum did not occur and therefore there seems to be a lack of coordination and collaboration amongst and between relevant authorities;
3. Although Karaburuni-Sazani MPA appears to be an outstanding model of collaborative planning, there is no repository for lessons learned.

### Follow-up actions follow-up or reinforce initial benefits from the project

The list appears to be a progression and is as follows:

1. Operationalize the Management Plan of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA;
2. Replicate the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA participatory planning process by first applying to Porto Palermo MPA;
3. Gazette Porto Palermo MPA;
4. Operationalize Porto Palermo MPA;
5. Develop financial sustainability plan for Karaburuni-Sazani MPA and Porto Palermo MPA;
6. Consider using tourism fees and enforcement revenues as a source of income generation for MCPAs;
7. Strengthen mechanisms for addressing over-exploitation of fisheries resources;
8. Build the capacity of both individuals and institutions to manage MPAs.

### Future directions underlining main objectives

All four future actions listed below appear to garner equal interest from both interviewees and survey respondents, with the exception of third recommendation (integrated management between watersheds, coastal zones and MCPAs) for which there was no mention during the interviews, although was favoured in the survey results.

The four recommendation are as follows:

1. Develop the capacity, institutional support and management effectiveness (including measureable results) of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA in order to build a Model of Practice (standard) for future MPA development in Albania.
2. Focus on design and development of a comprehensive MPA network that protects habitats hosting critically endangered, threatened and near-threatened species.
3. Create the institutional and policy frame work and pilot project for integrated management between watersheds, coastal zones and MCPAs.
4. Develop a comprehensive and inclusive marine spatial planning process with the MPA network as the centerpiece.

## Annexes

### Annex 1

Roadmap and timeline

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE** | **ACTIVITY** |  |
| **SETTING UP THE STAGE FOR THE ASSESSMENT PHASE** | |  |
| 13 June 2016 | Signing of the contract |  |
|  | Compile and review all documents, reports and strategic plans |  |
|  | Draft list of stakeholders |  |
|  | Prepare the first mission (agenda, ..) |  |
|  | Develop conceptual framework for project assessment |  |
|  | Develop stakeholder survey tool |  |
| **19-22 June 2016** | **FIRST MISSION** |  |
|  | *Meeting with UNDP project manager : discuss/review/finalize project assessment framework – roadmap – timetable – priority stakeholders/donors to be addressed ; Preliminary meetings with key stakeholders : informal individual and group interviews following survey (see Agenda in Annex 2)* |  |
| **ASSESSEMENT PHASE** | |  |
| 23 June 2016 | Finalize stakeholder survey tool |  |
|  | Review and translate the survey (UNDP PCU) |  |
| 30 June 2016 | Send out survey to identified stakeholders/organize workshops in Vlora (UNDP PCU) |  |
| **20 July 2016** | **Deadline to receive stakeholder surveys** |  |
|  | Synthesis of findings from stakeholder surveys |  |
|  | Further interviews to key stakeholders |  |
| July – August 2016 | Identify project achievements, barriers, challenges, lessons learned and best practices |  |
|  | Identify preliminary needs and gaps to achieve conservation objectives |  |
|  | Identify preliminary recommendations to move UNDP Project forward |  |
|  | Analyse potential donors' areas of interests, strategic priorities and identify priority funding opportunities (if any donor has been identified by UNDP) |  |
| 30 August 2016 | *First draft of Strategic Concept Note* |  |
|  | *First draft of project proposal(s)* |  |
| 30 September 2016 | **Final Strategic Concept Note** |  |
| **PILOT PROJET PROPOSAL** | |  |
| September – October 2016 | Develop project proposals that take into account the results of the assessment phase, the inputs from all stakeholders and match key donor's interests/priorities |  |
| Mid-November 2016 | **Final Project proposals** |  |

### Annex 2

**Programme of the First Mission (20-21 June 2016)**

(Prepared by UNDP Project Coordination Unit)

**June 20, 2016**

09.00 Meeting at the Project Office / UNDP CO

11.00 Meeting with NAPA General Director, Mr. Zamir Dedej

12.00 Meeting with Director of Biodiversity at MoE (Mrs. Klodiana Marika, and Head of Biodiversity Mrs. Elvana Ramaj)

14.00 Meeting with the Head of Environmental at UNDP, Mrs. Elvita kabashi

14.30 Meeting with UNDP environment projects

* Climate Change project, Mrs. Mirela Kamberi
* Environment monitoring and information – Mrs. Odeta Cato

15.30 Meeting with INCA – NGO

16.30 Meeting with Dr. Saimir Beqiraj – Marine biologist / University of Tirana

**June 21, 2016**

08.00 Departure to Vlora

10.00 Meeting with local project staff

* Petrit Dervishi, Local Moderator
* Doreid Petoshati, Communication specialist

11.00Meeting at Municipality of Vlora with**:**

* Forestry Service Department, Head of Department, Mr. Gjoncaj
* Regional Environment Directory, Director, Mr. Kreshnik Lilaj

12.00 Meeting at Prefecture of Vlora, Department of Environment

* Specialist of Department Mr. Mariel Halili

13.00 Meeting with Biology Department of Vlora University

* Chairman of Department, Mrs. Denada Kasemi
* Meeting with local NGOs

15.00 Meeting with Director of Regional Agency of Protected Areas, Mrs. Lazaj

16.00 Meeting in Orikum Administrative Unit

* Round table with the PAs Monitoring Department, Mr. Nexhip Hysolakoj and different local stakeholders

### Annex 3

**Stakeholders survey**

**AUTHORITIES AND INTERESTED STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT SURVEY**

***for the***

**UNDP/ GEF Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness**

***of* Marine and Coastal Protected Areas Project**

The collective results of the following survey will be used to identify major achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and program needs and gaps - from the vantage point of the project partners. Your input will not only be used to assess the current project, it will also be used to inform and strengthen the outcomes achieved to date, as well as provide direction for future projects aimed at continuing to improve coastal and marine resource management in Albania.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A. Respondent Information and General Level of Engagement** | | |
| Name: | Title: | |
| Organization: | | |
| Email: | Tel. | |
| Level of Engagement in Project (please check):   * Project Preparation phase * Inception Phase - Inception Workshop * Project Board and MPA Management Committee * Strategic Plan for MCPAs * Buffer Zone Assessment of 9 Coastal PAs * Assessment of Proposed MPA for Rodoni Cape * Assessment of Proposed MPA for Palermo-Llami Bay * Management Plan for Porto Palermo-Llami Bay * Financial Planning for Porto Palermo-Llami Bay * Management Plan for Karaburuni-Sazani MPA * Financial Planning for Karaburuni-Sazani MPA * Training Needs Assessment * Training workshops * Monitoring activities * Tourism and Ecotourism Potential for Karaburun-Sazan MCPA | | |
| Describe any specific focal areas of engagement of your organization: | | |
| General time span of engagement: From to | | |
| Project supported trainings and/or capacity development workshops you participated in: | | |
| 1. | | 4. |
| 2. | | 5. |
| 3. | | 6. |
| Describe any other related projects your organization has been and/or is still engaged in: | | |
| Project title: |  | |
| Project leader: |  | |
| General time span of engagement: From to | | |
| Role of your organization within the project: | | |
|  | | |
| Project title: |  | |
| Project leader: |  | |
| General time span of engagement: From to | | |
| Role of your organization within the project: | | |
|  | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **B. Collaboration with Authorities and Interested Stakeholders** | | | | |  |  |
| *How well did the project collaborate with and meet the needs and interests of stakeholders?* | Increasing Level of Success  (please circle one number for each question) | | | |  |  |
| 1. Did communication take place on a regular basis? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Did you receive appropriate and needed information to be able to effectively engage in parts of the project? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Did you feel like you or your organization had the necessary capacity to effectively engage in parts of the project? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Was your organization’s input to project components well received and reflected, as appropriate, in project outcomes? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Was there value to your organization by your participation in parts of this project? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. How well do you think this project assisted your organization and Albania in meeting the MDG goals? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. What were the key components of the project that were most valuable to your organization? | | | | |  |  |
| 8. What components of this project will your organization continue to support in moving them forward? | | | | |  |  |
| 9. Were there components of this project you feel should be modified or eliminated? | | | | |  |  |
| 10. Are there other authorities or interested stakeholders you believe should have been part of the project? | | | | |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **C. Project Results** | | | | |
| *How well did you feel the project meet its original objectives and outcomes?* | Increasing Level of Success  (please circle one number for each question) | | | |  |  |
| **Outcome 1: Improved bio-geographical representation of marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs).** | | | | |
| 1. Output 1.1: Support to the revision of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for 2020 (for MCPA part) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Output 1.2: Building Karaburuni-Sazani MPA administration capacity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Output 1.3: Buffer zones for the MPA are identified and demarcated; and associated management actions integrated into the MPA and local development plans | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **Outcome 2: Improved management arrangements for MCPAs, clarifying institutional settings and capacity building.** | | | | |  |  |
| 4. Output 2.1: Cross-Sectoral Forum for MCPAs management created | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Output 2.2: System for joint surveillance and monitoring of the networks of MCPAs to track biodiversity impacts and management effectiveness is piloted | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Output 2.3: Technical extension services for site managers on cost-effective management and conservation approaches | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Output 2.4: Management and business planning demonstrated in the Karaburuni - Sazani MPA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *How well do you feel this project addressed some of the major threats to the coastal and marine environment?* | Increasing Level of Success  (please circle one number for each question) | | | |  |  |
| 8. Degradation of coastal areas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |
| 9. Uncontrolled harvest of coastal and marine resources | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |
| 10. Pollution of marine and coastal waters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |
| 11. Climate change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |
| *How well do you feel this project addressed some of the major barriers to effective management:* | Increasing Level of Success  (please circle one number for each question) | | | |  |  |
| 12. Need to improve knowledge of what a marine park should be like, what the protection regimes should be for its core areas, and how buffer areas should be managed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |
| 13. PA responsibilities, communication and reporting lines between all PA institutions (vertically and horizontally) needs to be articulated and improved | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |
| 14. Capacities at the individual and institutional levels need to be strengthened (from the national to local level) for the creation and expansion of MPAs, day-to-day management, and successful implementation of management activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| *Explain basis for score:* | | | | |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **D. Sustained Capacity** | | | | |  | |  |
| *Do you believe the outcomes achieved through this project are secured for the long term?* | Increasing Level of Success  (please circle one number for each question) | | | |  | |  |
| **INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY** | | | | |  |  |
| 1. The Ministry of Environment has sufficient operational structures in place to ensure effective management of MCPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. The National Agency of Protected Areas has the resource and capacity for operational management of MCPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. The Regional Agency of Protected Areas has the financial, equipment and personnel capacity to effectively manage Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. The required competencies of relevant authorities for MCPAs management are clearly defined. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Effective inter- and intra-ministerial coordination is in place. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Inter-sectoral coordination is favored and streamlined to effectively contribute to MCPAs management. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. The private sector has the ability and interest to contribute to MCPA awareness and education activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **POLITICAL SUSTAINABILITY** | | | | |  | |  |
| 8. Government of Albania is committed to meeting the Convention on Biological Diversity/ Aichi targets. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Government of Albania is committed to meeting EU environmental standards as it seeks accession to the EU. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY** | | | | |  | |  |
| 10. Sustainable sources of funds are available to support the administration and maintenance of MCPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. There is the opportunity for revenue generation through the tourism industry and/or activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. There is an environmental fund in place that receives revenues from enforcement violations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **REPLICABILITY** | | | | |  | |  |
| 13. The political, legal, regulatory and technical barriers for establishing new MCPAs have been addressed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Project partners have the capacity to effectively replicate best practices, approaches and lessons learned from project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Project best management practices (BMPs) and lessons learned are well documented and shared. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. Lessons learned are integrated into policies, laws and programmatic priorities to support scaling up (7 additional MPA sites have been identified). | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **E. Building Off of Achievements to Date** | | | | |  |  |
| *What do you believe should be the priorities for securing the long-term protection of Albania’s unique coastal and marine biodiversity for current and future generations?* | Increasing Level of Importance  (please circle one number for each question) | | | |  |  |
| **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR THE CURRENT PROJECT** | | | | |  |  |
| 1. Need for review of targets and indicators for measuring conservation-based management effectiveness results. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Develop an inter-ministerial and Inter-sectoral forum to address competing interests and authorities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Create a coordinated surveillance and monitoring patrol system. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Create a repository of project lessons learned and best practices and promote their dissemination and replication. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Other: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Other: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS** | | | | |  |  |
| 7. Operationalize the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA management plan. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Replicate Karaburuni-Sazani MPA participatory management and financial planning process in other identified MPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Operationalize the Porto Palermo MPA management plan. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Design and establish a sustainable financial management system for MCPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Pilot concrete revenue-generation mechanisms at Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Pilot concrete revenue-generation mechanisms at Porto Palermo MPA. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. Engage with the tourism sector to develop sustainable tourism plans and explore income-generating opportunities for MCPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Continue to strengthen PA responsibilities and reporting lines between all PA institutions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Establish a mechanism for working with key stakeholders on addressing impacts and developing best management practices (BMPs) for coastal development. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 16. Strengthen institution mechanisms (legal, policy) for effectively addressing over exploitation of fisheries resources. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. Strengthen mechanisms (legal) and approaches (BMPs) for addressing land-based sources of pollutants. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. Contribute to the accession process to the EU through work on Natura 2000 network. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Continue to build the capacities of individuals and institutions for ensure more effective coastal and marine resource management. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. Other: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. Other: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **FUTURE DIRECTIONS** | | | | |  |  |
| 22. Develop the capacity, institutional support and management effectiveness (including measureable results) of Karaburuni - Sazani MPA in order to build a Model of Practice (standard) for future MPA development in Albania. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. Focus on design and development of a comprehensive MPA network that protects habitats hosting critically endangered, threatened and near-threatened species | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. Create the institutional and policy framework and pilot project for integrated management between watersheds, coastal zones and MCPAs. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. Develop a comprehensive and inclusive coastal and marine spatial planning process with the MPA network as the centerpiece. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. Other: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. Other: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

### Annex 4

**List of document reviewed**

All project reports and relevant documents which have been saved in the dedicated IW:LEARN webpages (<http://mcpa.iwlearn.org/docs)>. Specifically:

* UNDP Project Document (2009)
* Inception report (2011)
* Capacity Development Score Card (July 2014)
* Mid-Term Evaluation (2014)
* Annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2015
* Project Board and Management Committee Meeting Minutes (2016)
* Strategic Plan on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (SPMPAs) and short- medium action plan 2015-20
* Socio-economic assessment of Sazan - Karaburuni marine and coastal protected area
* draft report for potential MPA under assessment namely Porto – Palermo and Rodoni Cape.
* Training Needs Assessment and guidelines
* The METT system (<http://www.mett-undp.al/> )

Other relevant documents, websites and reports reviewed:

* UNDP/GEF Establishing Albania’s Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System Aligned with the Global Reporting (Inception Report) (2016)
* UNDP/GEF Enhancing financial sustainability of the protected area system in Albania (Project document) (2015)
* UNDP project on floods and CC:

<http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/democratic_governance/project-document-and-agreement--eu-flood-protection-infrastructu>

* UNDP Transboundary Drin Project:

<http://drincorda.org/gef-supported-drin-project/project-components>

* “The Integrated Cross Sectorial Plan for Coast” (still draft)
* The National Agency for Territorial Planning site: <http://www.planifikimi.gov.al/?q=sq>
* Economic valuation of the Karaburun-Sazani MPA – First draft - May 2016 – Vertigo Lab
* The report on fishing activities in MCPA Sazan-Karaburuni , developed from the Royal Albanian Foundation namely prof. Rigers Bakiu
* Adriatic IPA cross border cooperation 2007-2013:

<http://www.shape-ipaproject.eu/> the WP4 report:

<http://www.shape-ipaproject.eu/Download.asp?p=documents-download&id=wp4-action-4-1>

* UNDP Prespa Park project report
* INCA/WWF SEA-Med project documents
* WWF Netherland under Project Number 200/2015/NL201070. “Sustainable Financing of Albanian MPAs” and the SEA-Med Project (“Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas”), led by WWF Mediterranean.
* WWF Switzerland IMPACT Venture “Investing in marine recreational tourist opportunities to support a newborn MPA in Albania”
* Binet, T., Diazabakana, A., Hernandez, S. 2015. Sustainable financing of Marine Protected Areas in the Mediterranean: a financial analysis. Vertigo Lab, MedPAN, RAC/SPA, WWF Mediterranean. 114 pp.
* RAC/SPA – UNEP-MAP, 2015 Financial planning for the Porto Palermo Marine Protected Area in Albania by Thomas BINET and Ambre DIAZABAKANA, Vertigo Lab, Ed. RAC/SAP – MedMPAnet Project, Tunis:37 p. + annexes.
* RAC/SPA - UNEP-MAP, 2015. Management Plan of “Porto-Palermo-Llamani Bay” Protected Area in Albania. By Zamir DEDEJ, Genti KROMIDHA and Nihat DRAGOTI. Ed. RAC/SPA - MedMPAnet Project, Tunis: 84 p + annexes.
* Conservatoire du Littoral – Synthesis of Sazani Island Management plan (2015)
* Territorial and administrative reform, a strategic priority of the Albanian Government. The Albanian Parliament approved on July, 31, 2014 Law 115/2014 “On the Administrative and Territorial Division” of local government units in the Republic of Albania” and with the new map of 61 Municipalities, certified also in December 2014 by the Constitutional Court
* INCA 2013 “Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (SPMCPAs)” developed with the support of UNDP in the frame of the Project “Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas ”
* UNDP-Albania strategic plan (draft)

### Annex 5

**Project’s achievements against the Project Results Framework revised in 2011 during the Inception Phase *(based on the Project Implementation Review 2016)***

|  | **UNDP project document**  **Outcomes/Outputs**  **2011** | **Original Project Results Framework Indicators/targets**  **2011** | **Mid-term evaluation (MTE)**  **Level at July 2014** | **Project Implementation Review**  **2016** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome 1: Improved bio-geographical representation of marine and coastal protected areas (MCPAs).** | | | | |
| **Output 1.1** | Develop SPMCPA 10-years plan to expand the MPA network, including specific action plan for each new area | SPMCPA developed and approved by Inter-ministerial Council of Ministers and fully incorporated into National Biodiversity Strategy and action plan 2020 | SPMCPAs developed.  The process of updated NSBPA is under leadership of the Ministry of Environment.  SPMCPA is being taken into consideration.  Awareness campaign on the values and needs of CMPA  International Environmental Days celebrated and covered through the media  Photo exhibition from Coastal and Marine PAs | The SPMPCA is part of the Strategic Document of the Biodiversity Protection and Action Plan approved by the Government of Albania with the DCM No 31, date 20.01.2016. The document was delivered to the Convention of Biodiversity. |
|  | Legislative/Regulatory framework:  - amendments PA law to remove legal barriers to effective MPA management  - stipulations on funding sources: i) budget allocations ii) revenue raised by PAs iii) donor funding  - promotion and communications on new legal framework  - review of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) |  | Legal expert and others have prepared analysis submitted to MoE  The new government (MoE), has reviewed the law on biodiversity (approved by the Parliament) and after a legal analyses on PAs and MPAs (conducted by the project), it has concluded to proceed with the revision of the law on PAs including the MPAs.  The law on biodiversity is revised establishing the legal frame for the EU Natura 2000 network  Legal opinion regarding the management of the MPA (institutional, legal and financial aspects) considering the EU approximation process. |  |
| **Output 1.2** | Legal instruments for new MPAs gazetting/official declaration | Legal instrument for K-B MPA approved by Inter-ministerial Council of Ministers  Legal instruments incorporate best practices and serve as model for future MCPAs | The first Marine Protected Areas (Karaburun-Sazani) was declared through a Decision of Council of Ministers no. 289 date 28 April 2010.  The park administration structure proposal and job description has been developed (still to be adopted by the MoE). | The “Law on biodiversity” Nr. 9587, date 20.7.2006 is amended/ gazetted Nr. 68/2014.  NAPA established.  Ongoing assistance to the review of the Albanian legal framework pertinent to PAs.  A new “Law on Protected Areas” is under preparation and is going to be approved within 2016.  The Management Plan for Karaburuni Sazani MPA developed through a participatory approach. It was approved with a Minister of Environment decree Nr. 750, date 24.11.2015. The Business/financial plan was also developed and shared with all stakeholders. |
| **Output 1.3** | Buffer zones defined + management plans for 9 Coastal PAs | Buffer zones + management plans defined | Assessment report on marine and coastal areas buffer zone is prepared, including guidelines/ recommendations on setting up buffer zones for MPAs. | The assessment report on the establishment of Buffer Zones in 9 marine and coastal PAs was completed, including guidelines/ recommendations on setting up buffer zones for MPAs.  This contributed to NAPA’s effort in verifying and redefining the borders of the Albanian terrestrial and coastal PAs, including zoning updating. |
|  | Ecological assessment of 2 new MPAs (Rodoni Cape-Lasli Bay and Pagane-Kepi i Stillos) | Designation process completed + consultation process initiated | The process of consultation has started for the additional MPAs.  The project is assisting preparation of the strategic plan for the MCPAs.  The designation of two additional MPAs: Porto Palermo (approx. 6,100 ha) and Cape of Rodoni (approx. 27,700 ha) is proceeding | Two other MPAs, Porto Palermo and Cape of Rodoni are in the process to be proclaimed. Assessment and public hearing are conducted. For Porto Palermo is foreseen the status Natural Park (covering an area of 2,067.75 ha) and the set of the regulatory documents (including the Management and Financial Plans) have been finalized within the MedMPAnet project of UNEP/MAP RAC/SPA. Valuation of ecosystem services (ES) is undertaken as an assessment tool. In this framework it was developed a study with focus on rapid economic valuation of ES, beneficiary identification and financing instruments for MPAs. This enabled the assessment of the economic valuation of critical marine ecosystems and determination of the potential for long-term financing of the Albania MCPAs system. The same methodologies and approaches were also applied to assess the range of ecological goods and services within the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA.  In addition, options are explored for multi-criteria valuation of ecosystem services provided by the marine areas, assessing the equity and efficiency of the payments, as well as compensation schemes. |
| **Outcome 2: Improved management arrangements for MCPAs, clarifying institutional settings and capacity building.** | | | | |
| **Output 2.1** | Cross-sectorial Forum:  - ToRs defined  - capacity strengthened | Inter-institutional agreements on management of threats to MPAs (at least 2) signed | The MoUs with Orikumi Municipality and the RAPA in Vlora allowed for effective gathering of data on illegal activities (monthly reports delivered to MoE), improving law enforcement through better patrolling of K-S MPA.  The MoU with INCA contributed to the implementation of priority actions of the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA management plan.  Cooperation with Vlora Prefecture, Regional Directorate of Environment Vlora, National Coastal Agency is ongoing. | A successful instrument applied for enforcement purpose was the MoUs between: 1) UNDP and Orikumi municipality on control and supervision of the illegal activities in and around MPA 2) UNDP and National Agency of Protected Areas, which has secured efficient control and management in the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. 3) UNDP and INCA/WWF on implementation of priority actions of the K-S MPA management plan.  Very successful patrolling of the area is accomplished by 6 rangers who report periodically and assist with information and raising awareness for the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. |
|  | Site-level management boards established | Management boards established at 2 MPAs | The MoE has established the Management Committees for all PAs as an advisory and decision support body | The Management Committees (MCs) have been established for all Coastal PAs and meetings are organized annually. MC of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA is a cross-sectorial body, which hosts representatives of the main central and local relevant authorities, NGOs, user groups and other stakeholders. It has functioned also as project board convened each semester, discussing the management plan, project progress, main problems, as well as financial issues. Its 6th meeting was held on 15 January 2016. |
| **Output 2.2** | Monitoring system for CMPA network defined |  | 2 training sessions were conducted in Vlora and Lezha with PAs administrators on METT preparation. | Curricula and 8 training modules on marine biodiversity conservation and management were produced and training sessions conducted. The 'Manual on Training on Integrated Management of MCPAs' is published and used by NAPA, NGOs and others organizations. It is also considered a valuable source for the extension services in both terrestrial and coastal PAs. In addition, two other publications on touristic guide and rangers information support are produced to facilitate the daily work of the rangers and tourists/ operators access. (Ref. 'Orik guide' and 'In Blue'). |
|  | Roles and responsibilities defined among all institutions responsible for ecological/management monitoring |  |  |  |
|  | METT implemented at each site | Management effectiveness of 9 CPAs (METT system) monitored annually | METTs for 9 Coastal PAs are prepared: Sea Landscape Vjose-Narte 27%; National Park Llogara 34%; Managed Reserve Karaburun 19 %; National Park Divjake –Karavasta 28%; Managed Reserve RNM Velipoje 49% ; Kune Vain Tale PA 48% ; Sea landscape Bune river Velipoje 39%; Managed Natural Reserve Shkodra lake 45%; Patok - Fushe-Kuqe PA 35% | METT as an assessment of management effectiveness tool continued to be applied at national scale with involvement of all PAs personnel, including Karaburun-Sazani MPA.  METT score for Karaburun-Sazani was 47% in 2015.  The methodology and assessment forms were adopted and incorporated in an online platform http://www.mett-undp.al The website was further enriched with info and reporting entries from the PAs related to visitors survey, illegal activities, nature and culture monuments etc. The web based METT tool is now established and operational, allowing links with project website and other relevant sites, contributing to make this assessment tool more user friendly (website pattern, navigation structure etc) |
|  |  | Status of *Posidonia oceanica* along Karaburuni-Sazani and the Ionian coast of Albania improved\*  At least 5% increase of surface of 4-6 meadows in Ionian coast | Detailed examination of this indicator (and target) confirmed that it is not appropriate and excessive due to inappropriate indicator measurement (technically and financially) as well as not appropriate in view of the expected phenomena / process within given time frame (max 5 years). Such indicators would require a disproportionately high level of effort to monitor progress.  MTE proposed amendments in the two of the LFA indicators. The new indicators were approved in 2015.  New indicator:  The baseline understanding of the fish resources of K-S MPA. | The socio-economic study on MPA area has included an assessment on fishery resources and fish stock. A recent study coordinated and supported by the project focused on fish stock population in the Vlora bay including the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. It focused on improving artisanal management fishing in MPA based both on outputs from the present study and experience gained from long term fishery scientific programs in the area. The study was conducted by The Royal Albanian Foundation and the University of Tirana, Aquaculture Department.  The Waitt Foundation supported marine assessment along the Albanian coasts.  The final report reveals information and analyses from all Albanian marine area, with comparative analyses of main marine habitats; the results on *Posidonia*, coralliganeous and water quality in the Karaburuni-Sazani MPA indicate a very good status. |
|  |  | State of medio and infralittoral communities (richness and abundance species of international importance) in K-S MPA improved\*  Information provided, ecological state assessed and framework monitoring programme prepared. | New indicator:  Awareness of inhabitants and stakeholders adjacent to the MPA (and countrywide) of MBD values.  The analyses for revision / amendment of this indicator considered the progress and NGO knowledge/ information, status of the information (communication tools, websites, or advocacy and education work plan available, or local media approached to this issue)- there seem one or two local media that cover all Vlora region in addition to national media. None of the local media has run programme on issues linked with MBD and /or MCPA and find to be rather blind on environmental issues. In this respect we believe that involving local media will have wider awareness impact and close collaboration and changing the local media attitude toward pro-active MBD conservation, including Karaburun-Sazani ecosystem | Articles published in 2 national newspapers ('Telegraf' and 'Dita').  A video documentary produced on project achievements and MCPA values and role.  Awareness campaign, leaflets, eco-guide and branding materials, targeting stakeholder as well as the wider public were organized throughout project implementation.  Several awareness campaign, public hearing, thematic classes and site visits were conducted in close cooperation with the regional education public institutions, Vlora University and local NGOs. Other productions are:  - a photo-album of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA  - a guide for the MCPAs titled In Blue eco-guide  - information tables, branding materials were prepared and distributed  - the International Biodiversity Day and World Environmental Day were celebrated  - an information tool iVlora was developed and published through website and apps providing an information platform for communities and visitors on environmental issues, sustainable tourism, PAs of the Vlora region particularly of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA.  - the project the website is http://mcpa.iwlearn.org |

Other important achievements are:

* Key equipment (speed boat, buoys, ranger uniforms, etc.) was purchased to boost patrolling and field observations in Karaburuni-Sazani MPA. This will strongly contribute to the successful establishment of the park administration and will enhance the monitoring activities in the area.
* 6 rangers are in place and patrolling Karaburuni-Sazani MPA on a regular basis, reporting on illegal activities, contributing to awareness raising and the protection of forests in the coastal area. Joint patrolling missions are conducted periodically with participation of Guard Coast, Delta force (border policy) and other inspection bodies.
* Project’s main local partners are today the Vlora Regional Administration of Protected Areas (local branch of NAPA) and the Municipality of Vlora. Relevant MoUs were accordingly revised to address additional activities such as: (1) the establishment of an information center to increase the MPA visibility, coordinate information and awareness raising activities; and (2) extended patrolling (yearlong) with respective rangers patrolling and reporting.
* A new MoU is under implementation with INCA to accomplish some priority actions of Karaburuni-Sazani MPA Management Plan, such as: (1) feasibility study for underwater and terrestrial trails in the MPA buffer zone; (2) works for establishing the mooring buoys and to repair the existing docks; (3) realisation of the underwater and terrestrial trails.
* Through the Ecosystem Value Transfer, which was conducted identified the value of the ecosystem services, exploring options for multi-criteria valuation of ecosystem services provided by the marine areas and assess the equity and efficiency of the payments and compensation schemes.

### Annex 6

**SYNTHESIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS FROM THE MISSION INTERVIEWS (JUNE 2016) AND**

**AUTHORITIES AND INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY (JULY 2016)**

*(Please note that any blank boxes in the table only indicate that subject was not covered, or the comment on the subject was found to be more relevant to another survey question.)*

| **ASSESSMENT**  **(PROJECT) COMPONENT** | **SYNTHESIZED REPSONSES FROM SURVEY** | **KEY POINTS FROM MISSION INTERVIEWS** | **KEY POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION (INTERPRETATION)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A. GENERAL LEVEL OF PROJECT ENGAGEMENT** | | | |
| **1. Focal Areas of Engagement** | The list of primary areas of engagement in descending order:   * Management plan for K-S MPA * Financial plan for K-S MPA * Tourism and ecotourism potential for K-S * Assessment for Porto Palermo MPA * Management plan for Porto Palermo MPA | Responsible for policy and legislation. (3)  Managing new GEF/UNDP environmental monitoring project. (4)  Responsible for SEA-Med and UNDP/GEF MCPAs project. (5)  Collaborating on management plan of Sazani Island. (6)  Project board/MPA committee. (8)  Coordinate all institutions in Vlora region. (8)  Running socio-economic assessment of Vlore Bay. Working on education, public awareness activities in the new MPA (K-S)(9)  K-S management plan (10) | Focal point of engagement of stakeholders in this project was around K-S MPA as a model for MPA management, primarily in regards to the development of the management financial plans as replicable models. Porto Palermo MPA also involved a considerable number of stakeholders, although to a lesser degree than K-S MPA. |
| **2. Engagement in Trainings or Other Capacity Development** | The list of primary areas of participation in descending order:   * Management plan for K-S MPA * Financial planning for K-S and PP * Potential tourism and ecotourism for K-S | Staff attended and participated in all workshops and trainings organized by the project. (9) | Primary capacity development engagement by stakeholders was focused on 3 K-S planning processes: management, financial and tourism planning. |
| **B. COLLABORATION WITH AUTHORITIES AND INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **1. Communication** | In general, the response to the questions on collaboration were split between good and very good. The one area of strongest rating was in regards to the value to organizations from their participation in the project (question #5). |  | There was general agreement that the coordination and communication of this project was well managed, and of some mutual benefit to each participating organization. |
| **2. Information Transfer** |
| **3. Engagement** |
| **4. Receipt of Input** |
| **5. Value From Participation** |
| **6. Meeting of MDG Goals** |
| **7. Key Components of Project of Value to Organizations** | * Building administrative and management capacities of K-S MPA * Improving management and coverage of MCPAs in Albania * Setting up financial mechanism for users of the MCPA | The national context has changed positively. A significant development has been a large biodiversity project Natura 2000 that has begun implementation on establishing the Natura 2000 network in Albania, and is supporting the National Agency of Protected Areas to establish a Protected Areas and Biodiversity database. This development impacts slightly on the original focus of the project which stated that biodiversity was the projects main entry point. The project log frame is thus not impacted and only improved from a matter of semantics. (4) | The most valued components of this project were focused on the development of K-S MPA, including the associated planning processes and documents**.** |
| **8. What will your org continue to support moving forward** | * Improved management of MCPAs * Promoting MCPAs with local communities * Implementation of K-S management plan * Declaration of Porto Palermo MPA | UNDP might be involved in the implementation of certain activities of the new GEF/UNDP Sustainable Financing of PAs project. (3)  To develop a cross sectoral environmental management and information system (EIMMS) with emphasis to comply with global reporting to the three MEAs (CC, CBD, Land degradation), incorporating an evidence base and establishing a technical coordination and management system for participatory national level policy action. (4)  Priorities: 1. Information centre at K-S MPA, 2. Sustainable fishery plan for K-S MPA, 3. Participatory management and financial planning at PP MPA, 4. Further assessments of Cape of Rodoni MPA, 5. Improving monitoring, 6. Representative network of MPAs. (5)  REA sees the MPA (K-S) as an opportunity for economic development. (7)  Promotion of K-S as a model MPA, increased awareness, improved inter-sectoral and intra-ministerial cooperation and collaboration, strengthen enforcement, improve fishery management, promoting sustainable economic activities. (9) | Interest in continuation if organizational support is primarily focused on strengthening newly established MPAs and expanding the network using work done to date as the model.  More specific activities are primarily support mechanisms for strengthening the MPAs such as improving governance structures and policies, system-wide monitoring and data frameworks, strengthening enforcement, improving fisheries management and building an information center. |
| **9. Components to be modified or eliminated** | * Solutions to strengthen implementation of the K-S management plan * Not useful learning process |  | For the most part, few components of the project need to be modified or eliminated. |
| **10. Who else should have been part of the project** | * NGOs (especially environmental) * Research sector * Albania National Coastal Agency * Environment and Fishery Inspectorate * Ministry of Defense |  | The missing project partners are also a reflection on the gaps and/or weaknesses of project. |
| **C. PROJECT RESULTS** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **Outcome 1: Improved biogeographical representation of MCPAs** | In general, success at meeting the following outputs is considered good to very good:   * Support for revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2020 * Building K-S administration capacity * Buffer zones identified and demarcated, associated actions integrated into MP | National context has changed positively. (4)  Priority for supporting representative network of MPAs. (5)  Positive results of project so far: 1. NAPA/RAPA establishment, 2. K-S declaration, 3. Porto Palermo preliminary management plan, 4. Increased capacity in MPA management. (8) | With the focus on K-S MPA, and to some degree Porto Palermo MPA, in general, it was felt that these efforts improved the interest and understanding of the need and how to move forward with the gazetting and management of MPAs in Albania. |
| **Outcome 2: Improved management arrangements for MCPAs** | In general, success at meeting the following outputs is considered good to very good except for technical extension services which was rated lower:   * Cross-sectoral forum for MCPA management * System for joint surveillance and monitoring is piloted * Technical extension services for site managers on cost effective and conservation management * Management and business planning in K-S | Cross-sectoral forum was never established mainly due to political barriers (conflicting interests among Ministries). Instead, a Project Board-MPA management committee was established in Vlora for the K-S complex PAs, including representatives from most of the relevant stakeholders (but missing key ones). The committee is delivering in Vlora district, but it is not relevant at national level. (1) | The survey results and interviews are incongruous on this outcome. Although management arrangements for K-S MPA have improved, there are still some significant barriers including cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration and required technical expertise for managers. |
| **How well do you feel this project addressed some of the major threats to the coastal and marine environment?** | | | |
| **8. Degradation of Coastal Areas** | In general, success at addressing this threat is considered good to very good.  Comment: Since designation of K-S MPA, less risk of illegal activities and increased interest in towards sustainable development. | Challenge of increased tourism activities. (8)  Priority to ensure sustainable tourism development. (8)  Locally community more interested in urban development than nature protection. (9) | The survey results and interviews are incongruous on this threat. Coastal development, particularly in regards to tourism, appears to be an increasing threat. Although, the understanding of the need to manage impacts in the coastal zone appears to be improved. |
| **9. Uncontrolled Harvest of Coastal and Marine Resources** | In general, success at addressing this threat is considered good to very good.  Comment: Project provided picture of overexploitation of natural resources and thereby increasing awareness. | Sustainable fishery plan needed for K-S MPA. (5)  Weak enforcement of existing laws. (9)  Preliminary monitoring of illegal activities (through the work of ranger, which is done exclusively from land): use of dynamite for fishing has almost disappeared + illegal harvest of date mussels is almost over. Greater awareness among tourism operators/professionals. (10)  Illegal fishing and hunting remain a challenge. There are 7 fish farms in Vlora Bay, 10 in the future. (10) | The survey results and interviews are incongruous on this threat. Appears to be increasing awareness of this threat, yet enforcement continues to be weak. There is also a need to develop fisheries management plans specifically for MPAs in Albania. |
| **10. Pollution of Marine and Coastal Waters** | In general, success at addressing this threat is considered good to very good.  Comment: The new MPA might promote alternative, more sustainable development projects along the Vlora Bay. | Major impacts in the Vlora region are harbor, oil industry and aquaculture. (7) | This was not identified as a continued major threat, although no connection was made between this and coastal development (or upland uses). |
| **11. Climate Change** | In general, success at addressing this threat is considered poor to good.  Comment: Has been an important topic at round table discussions. | Little or no coordination/collaboration between the UNDP/GEF MCPA project and other ongoing/planned UNDP on Climate Change. (1)  UNDP’s adaptation and vulnerability plan should be integrated into the 2015 The Integrated Cross Sectoral Plan for the Coast. No other information shared that are relevant for the work on PAs. (4) | In general, this issue never received much attention in this project even though it was identified as a major threat at the beginning of the project. |
| **How well did you feel this project addressed some of the major barriers to effective management?** | | | |
| **12. Need to improve knowledge of MCPAs** | In general, success at addressing these major barriers is considered good to very good. | Need for new MPAs to protect key sites of high tourism interest. (8)  Priority to increase awareness (general public and local administration) on MPAs, including modules for high schools (9) | In general, at least amongst the stakeholders engaged in this project, the awareness of MPAs has improved significantly. There are areas outside of the project that have been identified as key targets for improving education on MPAs (e.g., high school curriculum).  PA responsibilities, at least for K-S MPA, are well understood, although there is a need for continuing the capacity development of institutions and individuals. |
| **13. PA responsibilities (vertically and horizontally) articulated and improved** |  |
| **14. Capacities at the individual and institutional levels strengthened** | Training Guidelines: the MoE has never promoted these guidelines/manuals. They are available in Albanian but so far not endorsed and used by NAPA/MoE. (1)  Capacity building needed on monitoring, EIA, general biology/ecology. (7) |
| **D. SUSTAINED CAPACITY** | | | |
| **Institutional Sustainability** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **1. MoE has sufficient operational structures in place to ensure effective management of MCPAs** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered good. | PA law (which includes all types of PAs, funding mechanisms etc. Still under discussion at MoE. (2) | Operational structures for MPAs are in the works, but still not conclusive. |
| **2. NAPA has resources and capacity for operational management of MCPAs** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered fair. | NAPA is mandated to establish MPA management committee in each PA. These are currently only advisory bodies. The plan is to transform them into decision-making bodies. (1)  NAPA is recruiting all personnel from UNDP projects and former admin people at local level.  Annual overall budget is about 1 bill USD for about 200 officers in total. (2) | Although there is an advisory body structure in place, there is no formalized stakeholder-based decision-making body in place. Having said that, NAPA is gearing up for hiring a significant number of new personnel, although no accompanying capacity development program is apparent. |
| **3. RAPA has the capacity to effectively manage K-S MPA** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered good. |  | No detailed comment, perhaps because day-to-day management has not been fully executed by RAPA since this has been under the project purview up to this point. |
| **4. Required competencies of relevant authorities for MPAs clearly defined** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered good. |  | No indication that specific competencies have been identified. |
| **5. Effective inter and Intra- ministerial coordination is in place** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered poor. | Cross-sectoral forum was never established mainly due to political barriers (conflicting interests among Ministries). (1)  Priority for improving inter-sectoral and intra-ministerial coordination and collaboration. (9)  Overlapping of competencies among agencies/institutions (NAPA-Coastal Agency)  Weak collaboration with other Ministries/sectors: Project Board/MPA committee is still too weak/underrepresented. (10) | Ministerial coordination was never addressed formally through this project. |
| **6. Inter-sectoral coordination is streamlined** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered fair to good. | Cross-sectoral forum was never established mainly due to political barriers (conflicting interests among Ministries). (1)  Priority for improving inter-sectoral and intra-ministerial coordination and collaboration. (9) | Streamlining sectoral coordination was never addressed. |
| **7. Private sector has ability and interest to contribute to MCPA public awareness and education activities** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered fair and very good. | UNDP/GEF MCPA project is currently investing in one Information Center for K-S MPA (2)  Priority for information center at K-S MPA. (5)  Priority to increase public awareness. (8)  Establish an information center. (10) | The focal point for improving public awareness and education is the proposed Information Center for K-S MPA. |
| **Political Sustainability** (note: for the most part there was widespread response, information below indicates majority opinion) | | | |
| **8. Albania committed to meeting CBD-Aichi targets** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered very good. | Committed to CBD/Aichi targets (only 6% of marine area as they could not reach 10%) -> missing 3% only. (3) | This project has clearly made a contribution towards the 10% target and improving management effectiveness of K-S MPA. |
| **9. Albania committed to meeting EU standards** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered very good. | Priority to designate N2000 sites (addressed by EU/Ita Coop/IUCN Project) (3) | This project has made a contribution towards meeting the priority to designate N2000 sites. |
| **Financial Sustainability** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **10. Sustainable source of funds to support MCPAs** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered poor and good. | PA law (which includes all types of PAs, funding mechanisms etc.) still under discussion at MoE. (2)  MoE is thinking to establish a National Trust Fund for PAs (this idea will be further explored within new UNDP/GEF project on financial mechanisms for PAs). But so far they did not receive the mandate/greenlight from the Ministry of Finance. (3)  Need to secure sustainable funding for MPAs to ensure sufficient human capacity -> ensure management body for each MPA (explore NGO-private-public agreements) (3)  Sustainable financing continues to be a challenge. (10) | Whether appropriated funding by MoE, and/or through the development of trust fund mechanisms, funding has not been secured for MCPAs in Albania. |
| **11. Opportunity for revenue generation through tourism** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered very good. | Priority to ensure sustainable tourism development. (8)  New boats have been purchased by local restaurants/hotels to organize visits to Sazani/MPA. In 2015, about 10 000 people visited the area. A new underwater trail is in the process of being established. (10)  Main to ensure that any boat that enters the MPA pays a fee. (10)  Organize/ launch new recreational activities within the park. (10) | While it is apparent tourism is increasing in the coastal areas of Albania, there is no formal plan for income generation for MPAs. |
| **12. Environmental fund in place that receives funds from enforcement violations** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered poor. |  | No response was made to using enforcement violation funds as a source of income generation for MPAs. |
| **Replicability** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **13. Barriers to establishing MCPAs addressed** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered good. | Major challenges/barriers to project implementation are related to inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral coordination which is lacking. (1) | The main barriers to establishing MPAs at this time appear to be institutional in nature. |
| **14. Project partners have capacity to replicate BPs, approaches and lessons learned from project** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered fair and very good. |  | Although there is a clear indication that K-S MPA provides a replicable model for MPAs in Albania, it is not clear that the existing project partners have the capacity to apply to model to additional sites. |
| **15. BMPs and lessons learned well documented and shared** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered very good. |  | Looking beyond the results of the survey and interviews, the primary form of documentation is project reports. |
| **16. Lessons learned integrated into policies, laws and program priorities to support scaling up MPAs** | Generally, outcomes achieved through this project having a likeliness of success for the long term is considered very good. |  | Neither survey responses or interviews gave any indication that lessons learned are influencing policies and laws in regards to scaling up MPAs. |
| **E. BUILDING OFF OF ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE** | | | |
| **Corrective Actions for the Current Project** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **1. Review of targets and indicators for measuring conservation effectiveness** | Level of importance for this corrective action is considered of medium high to high importance. | METT system: within the GEF/UNDP project, a METT software was developed to centralize monitoring inputs from the Albanian national system of PAs. The system is managed by NAPA and collects data clustered in the following categories: i) tourism, ii) natural monument, iii) damages. (1)  Priority for data collection and review criteria to review current system of MPAs (3)  Priority for improving monitoring. (5) | Appears there continues to be a need to align standards, targets, indicators and monitoring programs for measure management effectiveness. |
| **2. Inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral forum to address competing interests and authorities** | Level of importance for this corrective action is considered of low and high importance. | Cross-sectoral forum was never established mainly due to political barriers (conflicting interests among Ministries). (1)  Priority for improving inter-sectoral and intra-ministerial coordination and collaboration. (9) | Although the survey indicated that cross-sectoral forum is both of low and high importance, throughout the interviews this need was echoed. |
| **3. Coordinated surveillance and monitoring program** | Level of importance for this corrective action is considered of medium high to high importance. | Priority for surveillance/ enforcement/ management implementation (3)  Need to strengthen enforcement through cooperation and civil society. (9) | Although the survey indicated that the need for surveillance is relatively high, the only indication of where there is a need is in regards to fisheries and coastal development. |
| **4. Repository of project lessons learned and BMPs** | Level of importance for this corrective action is considered of medium high to high importance. |  | Clear indication of the need to document and make available lessons learned from this project, particularly in regards to the K-S MPA. |
| **Follow-up Actions** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **7. Operationalize K-S MPA management plan** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | *Strategic priorities for next 5-10 years:*  NAPA would focus on operationalize K-S management plan (2)  Priority to operationalize K-S management plan. (6) | There appears to be consensus that a priority follow-up action is to operationalize the K-S management plan. |
| **8. Replicate K-S MPA participatory management and financial planning process in other MPAs** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high to high. | Create the first CMPAs from Llogara to Sazani -> first attempt of CMSP process at reduced scale. (2)  Priority to replicate K-S management planning process for PP MPA. (6)  Priority to ensure long-term sustainability if K-S MPA and new MPAs. (8)  Replicate K-S model in other areas. (8)  K-S management plan considered positive result of project. (10)  Replicate K-S MPA approach for PP MPA. (10) | The need to replicate the K-S planning process to create a larger network of MPAs is viewed as a high priority by all respondents. |
| **9. Operationalize Porto Palermo MPA management plan** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high to high. | *Strategic priorities for next 5-10 years:*  NAPA would focus on develop management/tourism plan for PP MPA (following K-S approach) (2)  Porto Palermo should be soon gazetted. (3)  Priority for participatory management and financial plan for PP MPA. (5)  Priority to replicate K-S management planning process for PP MPA. (6)  Replicate K-S model in other areas. (8) | There is a strong interest in applying the K-S MPA model to Porto Palermo. |
| **10. Design and establish financial management systems for MCPAs** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high to high. | MPA financial planning guidelines: a consultant is currently working on these within a project with Montenegro. (1)  Priority to ensure long-term sustainability if K-S MPA and new MPAs. (8) | A follow-up priority is to create financial security for K-S MPA and MPAs as a whole in Albania. |
| **11. Pilot concrete revenue-generation mechanisms at K-S MPA** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | Sustainable financing continues to be a challenge. (10) | The need for financial sustainability for K-S MPA is considered high, but the how has not been determined even though there is a financial plan for K-S MPA. |
| **12. Pilot revenue generation mechanisms at Porto Palermo MPA** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high to high. |  | The need for financial sustainability for PP MPA is considered high, but the how was not mentioned even though there is a financial plan for K-S MPA. |
| **13. Engage with tourism sector to develop sustainable tourism and income generation plans** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | Need for new MPAs to protect key sites of high tourism interest. (8)  Priority to ensure sustainable tourism development. (8) | Tourism-based income generation plans are considered an important follow-up activity. |
| **14. Strengthen PA responsibilities and reporting lines between all PA institutions** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. |  | Although considered of high importance to survey respondents, there were no comments from interviewees except those applying to the need for cross-sectoral coordination and collaboration. |
| **15. Work with stakeholders on developing BMPS for coastal development** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high. | Priority to ensure sustainable tourism development. (8)  Organize/ launch new recreational activities within the park. (10)  Challenge of increased tourism activities. (8)  Priority to ensure sustainable tourism development. (8)  Locally community more interested in urban development than nature protection. (9) | Although there was a significant amount if issue taken with impacts from coastal and tourism development, the focus did not seem to be on working with stakeholders on BMPs. |
| **16. Strengthen institutional mechanisms for over-exploitation of fisheries resources** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | Priority to improve fishery management (enforcement) (9)  Sustainable fisheries plan needed for K-S MPA and Vlora Bay. (10) | The issue of over-exploitation of fisheries is high, with the focus primarily on it as an enforcement issue and the need to have a plan within K-S MPA. |
| **17. Strengthen mechanisms and approaches for addressing land-based sources of pollutants** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high to high. | Challenge of increased tourism activities. (8)  Priority to ensure sustainable tourism development. (8)  Locally community more interested in urban development than nature protection. (9) | Although survey respondents placed a high importance on addressing land-based sources of pollutants, there was no specific mention by interviewees. |
| **18. Contribute to accession process to the EU** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high. |  | Little emphasis was placed on EU accession. |
| **19. Build capacities of individuals and institutions for more effective coastal and marine resource management** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered medium high to high. | Training Guidelines: the MoE has never promoted these guidelines/manuals. They are available in Albanian but so far not endorsed and used by NAPA/MoE. (1)  Priority for capacity building on monitoring, EIA, general biology/ecology. (7) | Building capacity of institutions and individuals is a highly rated follow-up action both in general and targeted areas. |
| **20. Other** |  | Porto Palermo is the most advanced: however, following preliminary management/financial plan (RAC/SPA project) the gazetting is lagging behind because Min of Agriculture is promoting fish farming in the area thus blocking official designation. Meanwhile, uncontrolled tourism is already sprawling with negative impacts on the coastal/marine ecosystems. (2) | Interviewees indicate there is still a challenge with gazetting PP MPA, yet human uses are creating increasing pressures in the area. |
| **21. Other** |  | Cape of Rodoni: only assessment so far. Not high ecological values. Serious waste management problem. Some coastal areas are owned by the church, so designation process is lagging behind. A couple of hearings organized. Community is informed. (2)  Pagane-Kepi I Stillos MPA should be reconsidered as priority as high ecological values but fish farming is already having detrimental impacts on ecosystem (eutrophication). (2) | Interviewees indicate additional challenges with Cape of Rodoni ad Pagane-Kepi MPAs that need to be addressed. |
| **Future Directions** (note: for the most part there was widespread response from survey, information in column 2 below indicates majority opinion of survey respondents) | | | |
| **22. Develop the capacity of K-S MPA to become a model of practice for MPAs in Albania** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | Priority to replicate K-S management planning process for Porto Palermo. (6)  Replicate K-S model in other areas. (8) | Clear indication that one future direction priority is is develop the capacity of K-S MPA to become a model of practices. |
| **23. Design and develop a comprehensive MPA network that protects critical habitat protected species** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | Revising MPA system (7 MPAs): complete assessments/gap analysis -> not convinced as too expensive. (2)  Advance designation process in Cape of Rodoni MPA : develop preliminary management/financial plan (following K-S approach) (2)  Create the first CMPAs from Llogara to Sazani -> first attempt of CMSP process at reduced scale. (2)  MoE is interested in review the criteria and running a gap analysis to identify a representative network of MPAs but it lacks funding to complete the necessary assessments. (3)  Priority to create representative network of MPAs, but no funding. (5)  Priority to review current network of MPs, the identification dates backs to 1999. Most areas are undersized. (6)  Need for new MPAs to protect key sites of high tourism interest. (8) | High interest in the future direction to continue to expand the MPA network to a representative network, following the K-S planning model. |
| **24. Create institutional and policy framework and pilot project for integrated management between watersheds, CZ and MPAs** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. |  | Although the “ridge to reef” planning model is considered of high importance to the survey respondents, it was not specifically mentioned by the interviewees. |
| **25. Develop a comprehensive and inclusive MSP process with the MPA network as the centerpiece** | Level of importance for this follow-up action is considered high. | Create the first CMPAs from Llogara to Sazani -> first attempt of CMSP process at reduced scale. (2)  Coastal and marine spatial planning process for Vlora Bay (from Llogara to Sazani) (10) | High interested shown in moving towards developing a scaled-down marine spatial planning model for Vlora Bay. |
|  |  |  |  |

**Key to Interviewees:**

1. UNDP

2. NAPA General Director, Mr. Zamir Dedej

3. Head of Biodiversity, MoE, Mrs. Klodiana Marika, Mrs. Elvana Ramaj

4. UNDP Environment Projects, Environment Monitoring and Information, Mrs. Odeta Cato

5. INCA NGO, Executive Director, Mr. Nihat Dragoti

6. University of Tirana, APAWA, Dr. Saimir Beqiraj

7. Regional Environment Directory, Director, Mr. Krechnik Lilaj

8. Prefecture of Vlora, Department of Environment, General Secretary; Specialist, Mr. Mariel Halili

9. Local NGOs/ Associations at the Center for Research Cooperation and Development: Director of CRCD, Madlina Puka; Director of Social Education and Environmental Protection, Simo Ribay; Director of Environmental Conservation and Nature Protection Association, Niko Dumani

10. Regional Agency of Protected Areas (Orikum Administrative Unit): Director, RAPA, Ms. Lorela Lazaj; Pas Monitoring Dept., Mr. Nexhip Hysolakoj; Specialist, Ms. Ilva Alushi; plus 9 rangers

**List of stakeholders reached by the survey and survey respondents** (note: The Table above does not show individual responses from survey respondents):

| **Institution** | **Name** | **Position** | **Project Board – Karaburuni-Sazani MPA Management Committee** | **Survey filled in** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ministry of Environment | Klodiana Marika | Director Biodiversity | X |  |
| Ministry of Environment | Elvana Ramaj | Head of Biodiversity |  |  |
| National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA) | Zamir Dedej | Director | X | YES |
| Regional Administration for Protected Areas (RAPA) Vlora | Lorela Lazaj | Director |  | YES |
| Regional Environmental Agency | Kreshnik Lilaj | Director |  |  |
| State Inspectorate of Environment, Forests and Water – Vlora region | Gjergji kokuri | Director |  |  |
| Inter-institutional Operational Maritime Centre (IOMC) | Gen. Maksim Malaj | Director |  |  |
| National Coastal Agency | Auron Tare | Director |  |  |
| UNDP | Elvita Kabashi | Head of Environment |  |  |
| UNDP | Mirela Kamberi | Climate Change project |  |  |
| UNDP | Odeta Cato | Environmental monitoring and information |  |  |
| INCA - NGO | Marinela Mitro | INCA PAs Project coordinator |  | YES |
| APAWA association (Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife of Albania) | Sajmir Beqiraj | Chairman |  |  |
| European Union Information Centre Vlora – EUIC |  |  |  |  |
| Divers association “Ekspedita blu’ | Pajtim shpata |  |  |  |
| REC-Albania | Mihallaq Qirjo |  |  |  |
| Organisation for Environmental Education – SEEP | Simo RIbaj | Director |  | YES |
| Centre for Research, Cooperation and Development - CRCD | Alba Naci | Project officer |  | YES |
| PineFlag NGO |  |  |  | YES |
| PPNEA Vlora | Niko Numani | Representative | X | YES |
| Municipality of Vlora | Dritan Leli | Mayor | X |  |
| Abdulla Shimi | Forest Inspector |  | YES |
| Llazar Gjoncaj | Head of Forestry Service Department |  |  |
| Kreshnik Lilaj | Head of Regional Environmental Directory |  |  |
| Vlora Prefecture | Vladimir Haxhi | Specialist of Environment Department |  | YES |
| Vlora County Council | Mandi Karrocieri | Specialist in planning and development |  |  |
| Orikum Administrative unit | Melazime Selamaj | Orikum Administrator | X |  |
| Fisheries Inspectorate Vlora | Reshat Xhelili | Chef Inspector |  |  |
| Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vlora | Merita | Specialist |  | YES |
| Fisheries Management Organisation – OMP |  |  |  |  |
| University of Tirana | Spiro Drushku | Dean | x |  |
| University of Vlora, Biology Department | Mariel Halili | Specialist Department |  |  |
| Denada Kasemi | Chairman Biology Department |  |  |
| WWF Mediterranean Programme | Zeljka Rajkovic |  |  | YES |
| Conservatoire du Littoral | Céline Damery | Europe &amp; International project officer |  | YES |
| MedPAN | Marie Romani | Director |  |  |
| UNEP-MAP RAC/SPA | Souha El Asmi | Programme officer SPAs |  | YES |

1. UNDP, 2013. Buffer Zone Assessment with Relevance on Marine and Coastal Protected Areas in Albania. By Adrian VASO. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UNDP, 2015. Assessment of marine natural values and rationale for the proposed MPA of Rodoni Cape. By Sajmir BEQIRAJ and Lefter KASHTA. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Waitt Foundation website: http://waittfoundation.org/ocean-expeditions/albania-2/ [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. UNEP-MAP, 2015. Management Plan of “Porto-Palermo-Llamani Bay” Protected Area in Albania. By Zamir DEDEJ, Genti KROMIDHA and Nihat DRAGOTI. Ed. RAC/SPA - MedMPAnet Project, Tunis: 84 p + annexes. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Albanian Parliament approved on July, 31, 2014 Law 115/2014 “On the Administrative and Territorial Division” of local government units in the Republic of Albania” and with the new map of 61 Municipalities, certified also in December 2014 by the Constitutional Court. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.akpt.gov.al/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Second National Strategy for Development and Integration (NSDI II) of Albania (2014-2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Flloko, A. 2004. Fish marketing and trading in Albania. In: AdriaMed. 2004. Aspects of Fish Markets in the Adriatic Sea. Report of the AdriaMed Meeting on Aspects of Fish Markets in the Adriatic Sea. FAO-MiPAF Scientific Cooperation to Support Responsible Fisheries in the Adriatic Sea. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. INCA 2013 “Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (SPMCPAs)” developed with the support of UNDP in the frame of the Project “Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas ”. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2016 – Albania (http://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2016/albania2016.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Randone, M. 2016. MedTrends Project: Blue Growth Trends in the Adriatic Sea - the challenge of environmental protection. WWF Mediterranean. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://www.wttc.org/-/media/files/reports/economic-impact-research/countries-2016/albania2016.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Randone, M. 2016. MedTrends Project: Blue Growth Trends in the Adriatic Sea - the challenge of environmental protection. WWF Mediterranean. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. World Bank (2016) website: http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. http://ec.europa.eu/archives/commission\_2010-2014/fule/docs/articles/20121010\_albania\_article.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Decision X/2 of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), to which Albania is a party, adopted the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011‑2020 and the associated Aichi biodiversity targets. In the same decision, the COP urged Parties and other Governments to develop national and regional targets, using the Strategic Plan as a flexible framework, and to review, update and revise, as appropriate, their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) in line with the Strategic Plan and the guidance adopted in CBD Decision IX/9. The COP also urged Parties and other governments to support the updating of NBSAP as effective instruments to promote the implementation of the Strategic Plan and to use the revised and updated NBSAP as effective policy instruments for the integration of biodiversity targets into national development and poverty reduction policies and strategies, national accounting, economic sectors and spatial planning processes. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Albanian internal waters represent 735 km2 and the territorial waters (extending from the internal waters to 12 nautical miles offshore) represent 5,322 km2. The total is about 6,000 km2, and the country needs to declare 600 km2 to comply with the 10% MPAs requirement of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Aïchi targets, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. UNDP/GEF MCPAs project is currently supporting 4 rangers, fuel and other operational expenses, the establishment of an Information Centre (construction, basic supplies and equipment), basic monitoring and communication and information activities, equipment for tagging the sea turtle, a study visit, a speed boat, underwater and terrestrial trails, a buoys system demarcating the MPA, information boards and sign posting. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. This was identified and highlighted in the EU Commission progress report for Albania (2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. UNDP's core resources are used as seed funding to kick start programmes, demonstrate initial results and to leverage funding for scaling up of critical interventions (http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/operations/funding\_delivery.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. The Albania One UN Coherence Fund is meant to streamline, simplify and increase harmonization and predictability of resources. Donors to the Coherence Fund are encouraged to contribute during the early stages of programme development and implementation and on a multi-year basis to the extent possible. This enhances predictability and helps ensure a strategic programme where funding decisions are driven by the highest national development priorities and strategies as contained in the One UN Programme. The Albania One UN Coherence Fund is administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF Office) of UNDP in accordance with its financial regulations and rules. It supports the achievement of the outcomes articulated in the Government of Albania-United Nations Programme of Cooperation 2012-2016. The UN system has aligned its support to the European integration and development goals of Albania while complementing the assistance provided by other multilateral and bilateral development partners. Through the One UN Programme, in partnership with the Government and other development stakeholders in civil society and private sector, the UN system delivers focused and value-added results in development assistance as a harmonized organization with unity of purpose, coherence in management and efficiency in operations.  [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Swiss Cooperation Strategy 2014-2017https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/laender/cooperation-stragegy-albanien\_EN.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Results strategy for Sweden´s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey for the period 2014–2020

    http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/12a89180bafb43e3823b6c6f18b6d86a/results-strategy-for-swedens-reform-cooperation-with-eastern-europe-the-western-balkans-and-turkey-2014-2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Italian Cooperation in Albania

    http://www.italcoopalbania.org/pdf/20131015111514\_2italian\_development\_cooperation\_in\_albania.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. http://www.tirana.diplo.de/Vertretung/tirana/de/Startseite.html [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. https://www.giz.de/expertise/downloads/giz2014-en-orf-south-east-europe.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1863/CDCS\_USAID\_Albania.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. http://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user\_upload/Dokumente/Publikationen/Landesstrategien/CS\_Albania\_2015-2020.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. http://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user\_upload/Dokumente/Publikationen/Landesstrategien/CS\_Albania\_2015-2020.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. http://www.italcoopalbania.org/mat.php?idr=5&idm=9&l=e [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Results strategy for Sweden´s reform cooperation with Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey for the period 2014–2020

    http://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/12a89180bafb43e3823b6c6f18b6d86a/results-strategy-for-swedens-reform-cooperation-with-eastern-europe-the-western-balkans-and-turkey-2014-2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\_documents/2014/20140919-csp-albania.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. http://en.mava-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Mediterranean-Strategy-SUMMARY-270516-FINAL.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. http://www.cepf.net/where\_we\_work/regions/europe\_central\_asia/mediterranean/Pages/default.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. INCA 2013 “Strategic Plan for Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (SPMCPAs)” developed with the support of UNDP in the frame of the Project “*Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)