

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Instructions to grantees: please complete all fields, and respond to all questions, below.

Organization Legal Name	<i>Qendra për Ruajtjen dhe Mbrotjen e Mjedisit Natyror në Shqipëri</i>
Project Title	Land of Eagles and Castles: Pilot Sustainable Tourism Model for the Albanian Adriatic Coastline
CEPF GEM No.	62721
Date of Report	27 July 2017

CEPF Hotspot: The Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot

Strategic Direction 1: Promote civil society involvement in Integrated Coastal Zone Management to minimize the negative effects of coastal development in three priority corridors (Southwest Balkans; Cyrenaican Peninsula; and Mountains, Plateaus and Wetlands of Algerian Tell and Tunisia), and in 20 coastal and marine priority key biodiversity areas in other corridors

Grant Amount: 268623.00 USD

Project Dates: 2013/7/1 - 2017/6/30

1. Implementation Partners for this Project (*list each partner and explain how they were involved in the project*)

Bulgarian Society for Protection of Birds (BSPB) / BirdLife Bulgaria

BSPB is the partner beneficiary of the “Land of Eagles and Castles” project and had a very active and important role in its implementation. Officially BSPB had a portion of the budget and specific components to accomplish, however BSPB helped in the implementation of the entire project activities, through ideas and experience sharing. BSPB lead some of the most important project components such as the ornithological research, creation of tourism brands, training and capacity building on bird monitoring and conservation etc. BSPB has played a very active role in increasing the capacities of PPNEA in both organizational and technical point of view. Ornithologists from BSPB organized and realized all the components of the ornithological research and raised the capacities of PPNEA’s staff and other stakeholders in Albania. In the same time, BSPB organized and implemented the process of touristic brand creation, field in which PPNEA didn’t have any previous experience at all. BSPB realized some of the project components that PPNEA could not implement alone due to lack of capacities. All in all BSPB has participated and was consulted for the implementation of almost every single activity implemented within this project.

Conservation Impacts

2. Describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF investment strategy set out in the ecosystem profile

This project has contributed through enabling the following achievements:

1. *Research and Monitoring*

Research and monitoring constitutes an important part of this project. Both primary and secondary data have been gathered. Dedicated research has been carried out on the avifauna. Monitoring of birds has been realized along breeding, migration (both spring and autumn) and wintering. This represents the most complete and reliable monitoring of birds that it is ever implemented in the target areas and constitutes a reference moment for future monitoring of these areas and will serve to build a system of monitoring impact and environmental quality for this KBAs. In addition research and monitoring has been realized on particular flag species such as the Egyptian vulture in Albania providing reliable results on the state of the population and threats.

2. *Informing conservation actions, management and policies*

Research and monitoring work carried out along this project has provided enough results to guide the future conservation actions in the three KBAs and on high conservation interest species such as the Egyptian vulture. The research reports have been sent to the management bodies of the KBAs to inform their management actions in the specific KBAs. In addition, data gathered within this project enabled the recognition of 3 KBAs within the 2016-2017 CEPF Ecosystem Profile Update and recognition by BirdLife International of 1 Global Important Bird Area. Moreover thanks to this component of the project local relevant institutions have been furnished with data to form argumentation to ask a protection status for high nature value sites, such as for instance the roost of the Lesser kestrel (*Falco naummani*) in Drino valley. Ornithological data have also contributed for the European Breeding Bird Atlas 2.

3. *Direct and indirect conservation actions*

Along this project there are realized indirect and direct conservation actions for species and habitats. The research work has contributed to detect the state of species and habitats and threats which are crucial for informing conservation actions in the future. All the work realized for development and promotion of eco-tourism in the areas, has an impact on understanding the importance of biodiversity and socio-economic benefits coming from its sustainable use and conservation – this has also an indirect impact in lowering the pressure towards unsustainable use of biodiversity and habitats. In addition, direct conservation actions for Egyptian vulture are implemented, such as for instance the construction of one supplementary feeding station for the Egyptian vulture which will also have an impact on the other birds of prey.

4. *Education and capacity building*

This project has had a significant impact on building capacities in Albania on the field of bird conservation and research. Thanks to this project, two staff members of PPNEA are now able to carry out independently field work on bird monitoring, and 10 others have received training in bird identification. Thanks to the capacities build within this project PPNEA is working more and more on the study and conservation of birds. In addition, a number of 18 relevant local stakeholders have received a fellowship by the project enabling them to receive training through the on-job learning technique. More than 100 stakeholders have been significantly involved in different project activities. Local organizations have received training on proposal writing etc. Thanks to this project, for the first time ever, has been prepared and published in 3 000 copies, the complete field guide for birds of Albania, containing all the 351 species reported in the country. Moreover within the LEC project has been published and distributed a second guide book, aiming to prevent the illegal trafficking of wild birds.

5. Awareness raising

Tens of activities have been implemented aiming to raise proud and awareness of local people and other stakeholders on the socio-economic benefits coming from the sustainable use of the natural resources. Different means have been used to achieve such objective, such as mass media, internet, workshops, face to face meetings, leaflets etc. The project has carried out education and awareness raising activities in almost all the schools situated closed or inside the borders of the KBAs. We have designed the largest graffiti in the country, showing an Egyptian vulture, one of the rarest species of Vlora region, which is now become like a touristic attraction for the city of Vlora. The three KBAs have been highly promoted within the project and this has raised proud of local people in particular but also to the general public. Egyptian vulture is now known by the general public as a very important and rare species, one of the symbols of the Albanian nature.

6. Networking and collaboration

This project enabled the networking and collaboration among a high number of different stakeholders, such as central GOs, local GOs, International and local NGOs, donors etc. A considerable number of the project activities have been realized in close collaboration with the relevant GO and NGO institutions. The aim was to give direct responsibility and stakes to this insertions and create a new climate and philosophy of doing things in the field of conservation. 10 % of the project budgeted has been re-granted to 8 local NGOs, which used them to give live to local ideas on sustainable livelihood activities and other actions contributing to nature conservation. Two new alternative livelihood activities have been created within this project employing along the tourism season at least 20 people, most of them local women and girls. Collaboration with local schools in one of the KBAs has successfully implemented a plastic recycling system, where household redundant plastic is gathered by pupils which bring them at school at the weekly “recycling day”. The same day the plastic is bought by a retailer, and the revenues go for teaching logistics and outdoor activities. Almost all the project activities have been carried out in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.

7. Investments

A considerable number of investments have been carried out along this project in order to improve the information and touristic infrastructure in the three KBAs under the focus of the

project. For the first time, these KBAs have been equipped with road boards containing information for touristic and natural values of the areas. These road boards have been placed in all the main entrances for each of the KBAs. One new tourism office in one of the KBAs has been built and is operating thanks to this project. Another tourism office has been improved with the necessary infrastructure. Hiking trails have been marked and equipped with information infrastructure in all the KBAs. One bird watching tour has been built in Butrint National Park. Local schools and city of Orikum have been equipped with rubbish bins, more than 100 trees have been planted etc.

8. Tourism development and promotion

Along the lifetime of the project, the target areas have been highly promoted, in different national and international TV channels, radios, newspapers, magazines, website, social networks etc. Several short video clips have been prepared and released. Tourism brands have been created for the three KBAs. In addition, the project has created contacts with European eco-tourism agencies which are now bringing their tourists in the KBAs, experiencing the products designed by this project. A promoting clip has been produced and will be broadcasted in some TV in Albania and in some EU countries. The number of tourists visiting the sites is increased, for instance the National Park of Butrint it is regularly receiving tourists for bird watching for the first time in the tourism season of 2017.

3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

Long term impact 1: Sustainable management of the KBAs under the focus of the project

Long term impact 2: Increased capacities of the relevant stakeholders

Long term impact 3: Long-term resolving of key threats for the habitat and species

Long term impact 4: Economically viable local livelihoods

Long term impact 5: Development of Tourism Brands and Products

Long term impact 6: Contribution of the project to Natura 2000 process

4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion

Progress towards the long term impact 1: Sustainable management of the KBAs under the focus of the project

- a) The project has achieved to generate a complete set of data on the main biodiversity components and socio-economic components gathered through scientifically based

methodology and experienced professionals. This data serves to inform the management actions and monitor their impacts in the target KBA areas. More specifically within the project are gathered the following data:

- i. All the available secondary data on the characteristics of the habitat, flora and fauna for all the KBAs.
- ii. Secondary data on the socio-economics.
- iii. Data on the ornithofauna for all the KBAs, including breeding, migration and wintering.
- iv. Data on the state of the population and threats for the globally endangered species Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) in Albania.
- v. Data on the potentials and barriers for developing community driven nature based tourism in all the three KBAs.

The above listed group of data are compiled in specific reports in electronic form which were made available for all interested stakeholders.

- b) The gathered data have enabled to: (i) confirm 2 out of three KBAs under the focus of LEC project as KBAs in line with new CEPF Ecosystem Profile Update criteria, (ii) to identify a new KBA and global IBA, (iii) for a part of the new identified KBA, regional agency of protected areas of Gjirokaster, has proposed to the government to give it a status of protection.

Progress towards the long term impact 2: Increased capacities of the relevant stakeholders

- a) As a merit of this project, at least 1 NGO in Albania got specialized in carrying out independent work for the conservation and monitoring of birds in Albania. PPNEA is now working and it is involved in other projects and initiatives aiming to study and save the birds in Albania. PPNEA is now able to provide training on bird monitoring and conservation and it is already doing through training the staff of the newly created National Agency of Protected Areas in Albania.
- b) PPNEA, thanks to this project has now the capacities to work on sustainable tourism development projects.
- c) Around 20 people received training on bird identification. Few of them are continuing to develop their capacities and are involved on relevant activities time to time.
- d) 8 local NGOs were supported via small-grants through the project. The aim of the small grants was to implement concrete conservation and development actions and raise the capacities of the NGOs through the on-job learning technique.
- e) Representatives from local institutions managing the KBAs have participated and received training along the project implementation. Now they are carrying out some project activities independently.

- f) Members of the local community have received training, particularly on sustainable livelihood activities. Due to this, they are currently running some of such activities.
- g) The first ever complete field guide for birds of Albania, in a number of 3 000 copies has been published thanks to this project. This is expected to have a wide long term impact on improving skills and interest on bird watching and bird monitoring and conservation.
- h) A second publication aiming to prevent the illegal trading and trafficking of wild birds in Albania has been prepared under this project and distributed to the relevant institutions. This is expected to have a long-term impact in diminishing the cases of wildlife crime through teaching the respective law enforcement officer how to identify and punish such cases.

Progress towards the long term impact 3: Long-term resolving of key threats for the habitat and species

- a) Reference database for building a system for monitoring the environment quality of the KBAs.
- b) Confirmation of 3 new KBAs within the new CEPF Ecosystem Profile Update.
- c) Recognition by BirdLife of 1 new Global IBA.
- d) Introduction of new sustainable livelihood activities and promotion of tourism.
- e) Complete study on distribution, trend and threats of the globally endangered species Egyptian vulture in Albania. These data will inform the future conservation actions for this species.

Progress towards the long term impact 4: Economically viable local livelihoods

- a) The project contributed to open two alternative sustainable livelihood activities which seasonally employed around 25 local people.
- b) Due to the promotion of the KBAs by the project now organized tours are getting implemented. Along the year 2017, several bird watching tours are occurring in some of the project areas. These tours have been conceived and sometimes guided by the project staff.
- c) Creation of tourism brands for the three KBAs hopefully will serve to local to promote and trade their products and services.

Progress towards the long term impact 5: Development of Tourism Brands and Products

- a) Three tourism brands have been created, one per each of the KBAs. The tourism brands are under promotion. Some tourism operators from Albania and other foreign countries are using these brands already. The promotion of the created tourism brands is taken over by a new Interreg project that will be implemented by the Agency of protected areas in Albania.

Progress towards the long term impact 6: Contribution of the project to Natura 2000 process

- a) Some of the most complete and acquired data on the avifauna of the three KBAs have been collected along this project. These data has been sent to the relevant institutions and to the current Natura 2000 project in Albania to make use of them.
- b) The new high nature value site, identified and reported by the project and already recognized as GIBA by BirdLife, fulfils the criteria to be recognized as Natura 2000 site in the future.
- c) The PPNEA's project staff which increased capacities thanks to the LEC are now giving contribution to the Natura 2000 project in Albania.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

Short term impact 1: Holistic model tourism products developed

Short term impact 2: Tourism infrastructure in the three project KBAs will be improved.

Short term impact 3: Scientifically sound monitoring programme developed

Short term impact 4: Raising awareness and encouraging local stakeholders for practicing sustainable nature-friendly tourism activities.

5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion

Progress towards the short term impact 1: Holistic model tourism products developed

- a) Three tourism brands have been created, one per each KBA. Some of the products under this brands are already getting used. Hopefully the promotion and implementation of the created tourism brands will continue at least until year 2019 through the Interreg project DestiMed.

Progress towards the short term impact 2: Tourism infrastructure in the three project KBAs will be improved

- a) 8 hiking trails have been marked partly equipped with signboards. Ready to be used by tourists and visitors.
- b) One new tourism office has been built and operates along the tourism season.
- c) One tourism office has been improved with the necessary infrastructure.
- d) 10 new guest house have been created under this project and are operating.
- e) One bird watching tour has been built within this project in one of the KBAs.
- f) One supplementary feeding station for vultures is build, which potentially may serve as a touristic attraction for wildlife photographers and other bird lovers.

Progress towards the short – term impact 3: Scientifically sound monitoring programme developed

- a) Three monitoring programs for birds have been developed and implemented: migration; breeding and wintering.
- b) Research has been carried out in order to identify the barriers and potentials for development of Eco-tourism in the three KBAs.
- c) Research has been carried out to identify distribution, productivity and threats of the Egyptian vulture population in Albania.

Progress towards the short term impact 3: Raising awareness and encouraging local stakeholders for practicing sustainable nature-friendly tourism activities.

- a) Two new livelihood activities have been created and are operating.
- b) 6000 leaflets in the form of calendar have been distributed
- c) 3000 bird guide books have been prepared
- d) 18 big sign boards have been so far placed in the KBAs
- e) One big graffiti in the central of Vlora
- f) 1000 maps have been so far printed and available for distribution at the tourism office
- g) 12 education boards have been placed inside the schools
- h) 300 copies of guide book to prevent the illegal trafficking of birds.
- i) Tens of articles in journals, web; tens of interviews and tv shows, short-movies etc.

All this activities have enabled raising awareness of many members of local communities and visitors.

6. Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impacts

Successes:

- a) Raised capacities in Albania for Bird Monitoring and Conservation*

This is one of the most important long-term impacts of this project. Prior to this project, Albania had only one professional ornithologist and only one NGO able to carry out work in bird monitoring and conservation. In the meantime, the need to work for monitoring and conservation of birds in Albania is high. This is due to the high diversity of bird species present in the country and high threats that this group of fauna is facing. The implementation of this project enabled the capacity building of PPNEA to carry out independent work in this field. This has been achieved thanks to the design of this project: partnership BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria and PPNEA. Currently PPNEA is involved in several projects aiming to study and monitor birds and it will continue like this in the future. Bird study and conservation is now one of the strongest pillars of PPNEA, which just four years ago (prior to this project) was involved only in the research and conservation work for mammals. Moreover, PPNEA is taking all relevant opportunities for building new capacities in the country on this field.

b) Secured a complete and reliable reference database for informing management and conservation actions and monitoring their impacts

Thanks to this project, for the first time, it has been carried out a complete monitoring for the avifauna of the three KBAs. This is one of the most important actions to secure scientifically informed management and conservation actions in this KBAs and to build a system for monitoring the impacts. One of the biggest problems in conservation in Albania it has been and still continues to be, the lack of data. Very few data are gathered in the country based on scientific methodology and reliable experts. This has continuously brought a considerable cost to conservation, through misleading management actions and policies. For instance Red List of Albanian Fauna it is designed not based on solid data, but mostly based on the opinion or sporadic data. Because of this the Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) for instance holds the status “Vulnerable” whereas other much less endangered species, such as for instance the European Bee-eater, holds the status “Endangered”. This example was mentioned, to illustrate how much important it is in Albania to collect data based on scientific methodology and make this data available to the institutions and all the relevant stakeholders. Thus the success of this action, does not only stand on gathering data for the above mentioned purpose but also gives the example on how things should be done in order to reach the desired impact.

c) Enabled recognition of 3 KBAs in the CEPF Ecosystem Update

The data collected along this project, justified the recognition of 3 KBAs within the new CEPF Ecosystem Profile Update. This assures the eligibility of these areas to receive funds from CEPF, and enable the implementation of development and conservation actions.

d) Enabled recognition of 1 GIBA

Thanks to this project, data have been gathered to justify the recognition by BirdLife International of one new Globally Important Bird Area. This GIBA is called “Drino Valley” and holds pre-migration gatherings of Lesser kestrel (*Falco naummani*) up to 2 % of the global population.

e) Conservation of the Egyptian vulture in Albania

Thanks to this project, we managed to collect a complete set of data much necessary for the conservation of the globally endangered Egyptian vulture. This data will be used to inform all our future conservation actions for this species.

f) Build network and work together with relevant stakeholders

Along this project, we believe that we gave the best example in Albania, on how the work in conservation should be carried out. We re-granted more than 10% of the total project budget to local NGOs involving them in concrete activities related to the project. All the activities designed and implemented at local level, were done in close collaboration with the relevant institutions. We published all our reports in the project web-page and PPNEA web-page in order that everyone can download. This is a good example in a country where everyone was keeping the data for him/her self and not sharing with the relevant stakeholders which could make use of them.

g) Raised awareness and pride of local communities on the high natural values of the areas where they are living (the KBAs).

Along this project it has been carried out a considerable work for informing every single member of the local community about the natural values of the KBAs and the socio-economic impacts sourcing from their sustainable use and management. This has been achieved through a diverse set of means such as road boards, workshops, tv shows, radio shows, magazines, journals, social networks, graffiti etc.

h) Started the way towards sustainable eco-tourism development in the KBAs

Within this project are created one tourism brand for each KBA. The tourism brands are created in a very good quality through a professional company following a participatory approach. The tourism brands will be promoted and implemented and we expect a considerable contribution for the development of eco-tourism in this areas.

Challenges:

a) Training seminar on illegal trade of wildlife in Albania

We could not finalize this activity. Time was too short and coincided with the time of elections in Albania along which the institutions were distracted. This has a considerable impact at short and long-term, as the risk for trafficking of protected bird species remains the same. We will try to implement this activity through a new project within year 2017.

b) Insulation of several dangerous pylons in the Egyptian vulture territories.

We could not finalize this activity. We could not get yet the permission by the authorities for making such intervention despite we have bought all the necessary infrastructure. This has a considerable impact short and long term impact as the risk of electrocution of birds remains the same. We will try to implement this activity through a new project as soon as possible.

7. Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

- a) Recognition of 3 KBAs within the new CEPF Ecosystem Profile Update
- b) Recognition of 1 New Global Important Bird Area
- c) One new project (DestiMed) got granted to follow up the work realized within this project.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

8. Describe the results from Component 1 and each product/deliverable

Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

COMPONENT 1: SECURE SOUND BASIS FOR INFORMED BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION INTERVENTION AND PROJECT PLANNING (LEAD BY PPNEA, COLLABORATING WITH BSPB)

1. *Finalized preliminary report (desk research) on; biodiversity, socio-economic context and management organization structure for KBA Butrinti*

Result: Report in PDF format, entitled “Preliminary Report for the Key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti”.

2. *Finalized preliminary report (desk research) on; biodiversity, socio-economic context and management organization structure for KBA Narta*

Result: Report in PDF format, entitled “Preliminary Report for the Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon”.

3. *Finalized preliminary report (desk research) on; biodiversity, socio-economic context and management organization structure for KBA Karaburun - Çika Mountain*

Result: Report in PDF format, entitled “Preliminary Report for the Key Biodiversity Area of Vlora bay – Karaburun – Cika Mountain”.

4. *Methodological protocol for the participatory workshops designed*

Result: Report in PDF format entitled “Approach for the Implementation of the Participatory Workshops”

5. *Participatory Workshop for the KBA Butrint realized*

Result: PW realized, Report of the workshop available in PDF format

6. *Participatory Workshop for the KBA Narta realized*

Result: PW realized, Report of the workshop available in PDF format

7. *Participatory Workshop for the KBA Vlora bay - Karaburun and Çika mountain realized*

Result: PW realized, Report of the workshop available in PDF format

8. *Thematic Working Groups established*

Result: Two thematic working groups have been established. One group was involved in mainly on the ornithological research and the other in the socio-economic research.

9. *Report on findings for the Participatory Workshop for the KBA of Butrinti*

Result: Report in PDF format

10. *Report on findings for the Participatory Workshop for the KBA Narta*

Result: Report in PDF format

11. Report on findings for the Participatory Workshop for the KBA Karaburun - Çika mountain

Result: Report in PDF format

12. Field research (ornithological and Socio-economical) program

Result: Field research realized and results are gathered in the following reports:

Report 1, entitled “Breeding Ornithofauna of Key Biodiversity Area Karaburun-Cika” Mountain”

Report 2, entitled “State and Distribution of the Breeding Avifauna in Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon, Albania 2016”

Report 3, entitled “Breeding and Migrating Birds Research in key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti, Albania”

Report 4, entitled “Bird Migration along the Adriatic Flyway – Spring 2014”

Report 5, entitled “Soaring Bird Migration along the Adriatic Coast of Albania – Season 2104”

Report 6, entitled “International Winter Bird Census 2014 for KBAs of Narta Lagoon, Orikiumi and Butrint”.

Report 7, entitled “Mid-Winter Waterbird Census 2016 in Butrint KBA, Albania

Report 8, entitled “Monitoring the Egyptian Vulture Breeding Population in Albania, April 2017”

Report 9, entitled “Opportunities and Barriers for Development of Community Driven Nature Based Tourism in the Key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti”

Report 10, entitled “Opportunities and Barriers for Development of Community Driven Nature Based Tourism in the Key Biodiversity Area of Karaburun – Cika Mountain”

Report 11, entitled “Opportunities and Barriers for Development of Community Driven Nature Based Tourism in the Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon”

13. Report on the results from the first bird monitoring season

Results:

Report 1, entitled “Bird Migration along the Adriatic Flyway – spring 2014”

Report 2, entitled “Soaring Bird Migration along the Adriatic Coast of Albania – Season 2104”

Report 3, entitled “International Winter Bird Census 2014 for KBAs of Narta Lagoon, Orikiumi and Butrint”.

14. One report including findings from the overall research process for KBA Butrinti

Result: Report in PDF format

15. One report including findings from the overall research process for KBA Narta

Result: Report in PDF format

16. One report including findings from the overall research process for KBA Karaburun - Çika mountain

Result: Report in PDF format

17. Final and detailed Project Action Plan written

Result: Report in PDF format

18. ==AMENDMENT APRIL 2016== Report on the monitoring of the breeding birds in the project focus areas.

Report 1, entitled "Breeding Ornithofauna of Key Biodiversity Area Karaburun-Cika" Mountain"

Report 2, entitled "State and Distribution of the Breeding Avifauna in Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon, Albania 2016"

Report 3, entitled "Breeding and Migrating Birds Research in key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti, Albania"

Report 4, entitled "Monitoring the Egyptian Vulture Breeding Population in Albania, April 2017"

9. Repeat point 8 above for each Component in your approved proposal

COMPONENT 2: DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRODUCTS TO SUPPORT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE LOCAL LIVELIHOODS (LEAD BY PPNEA, COLLABORATING WITH BSPB)

1. Three touristic products (one per KBA): - The Mysterious Forest (touristic product for Karaburun) - The Land of Castles and Eagles (touristic product for Butrinti) - The Bird Lagoon (touristic product for Narta)

Results: Packages of touristic products have been designed for the three KBAs.

2. Information packages (printed and electronic materials such as guidebooks, attractive touristic maps, web-based touristic portal, electronic newsletter); - 1000 Guide Books for the Albanian Adriatic coast - 1500 touristic Maps (500 per KBA) - 6000 leaflets (2000 per KBA)

Results:

3000 Guide Books for Birds of Albania

300 Guide books for preventing the illegal trafficking of wild birds

6000 leaflets in wall calendar shape + 300 normal leaflets

1000 Touristic maps

2 Electronic newsletters

3. *KBA-specific touristic brands Three touristic brands (one per KBA): (1) Touristic brand developed for the The Mysterious Forest of Karaburun (2) Touristic brand developed for Butrinti (3) The Land of Castles and Eagles Touristic brand developed the Bird Lagoon in Narta*

Results: 3 tourism brands have been designed

4. *Touristic infrastructure (hiking trails, sight-seeing and bird watching observation points) on place for the three KBAs - Six hiking trails (2 per KBA) - Three bird observation points (1 per KBA)*

Results:

8 hiking trails marked

30 information panels placed in the KBAs

1 observation tower for birds

5. *Local tourist accommodating opportunities (traditional guest houses and restaurants) available at the three KBAs - Support of three local restaurants (one per KBA) - Support of six local guesthouses (two per KBA)*

Results: 10 local guest houses created and are currently operating

6. *Improved existing and created new touristic information offices established and operational - Creation of one new information center - Support for one already existing information centre*

Results:

1 new tourism office build in the KBA of Narta Lagoon. This is the only tourism office for this area, and for 2 years served as the only tourism office in the whole region of Vlora.

1 tourism office (the one situated in Llogora National Park) improved with necessary infrastructure.

7. *Introduced of New Sustainable Livelihoods and Revitalized Traditional Sustainable Livelihoods*

Two livelihood activities created and operating, employing seasonally around 30 people in all the three KBAs. "Traditional Flavor" eco-business is employing 8 local women during the tourism season. Traditional food products are home made and sold in small pieces, to more than 200

thousand tourists visiting the Butrinti ancient city. The second livelihood activity, consists on adapting 10 local houses into guest houses, which are receiving tourists every season.

8. Greened Local Tourist Services (Guest House, Restaurant)

On regard to this deliverable, the work that has been done consists on raising awareness of local tourism service units (restaurants, guest houses, hotels) to use sun energy as an option providing economic and environmental benefits.

9. Integrated waste management system for one specific locality in on of the KBAs

One plastic recycling scheme was created and tested.

Pilot plastic recycling system has been implemented in one of the KBAs. One local NGO worked with school children of different schools to create a system for plastic collection and recycling. These schools have created the weekly "Recycling Day", where all children bring the plastic waste from their household. The collected plastic is directly sold to a recycling company, and the revenues received are used by schools to improve teaching logistics or infrastructure (by new books for the library, make outdoor education trips etc).

10. ==AMENDMENT APRIL 2016== Continuing the operation of the new tourism office created and smooth transfer of it to the municipality of Vlora!

Tourism office operated along the lifetime of the project and currently it is under the process of transfer to the local institutions.

COMPONENT 3: AWARENESS RAISING AND CAPACITY BUILDING AMONG LOCAL COMMUNITIES (LEAD BY PPNEA, COLLABORATING WITH BSPB)

1. Raised Awareness and Capacity Building of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: "Importance of Protected Areas for Nature Conservation and Economic Benefits of Protected Areas"

Results:

Around 30 tv shows and tv interviews

Around 400 articles in different portals, magazines, newspapers magazines etc.

Around 20 radio shows

3 short movies

6300 leaflets

1 large graffiti

3 participatory workshops

2. Raised Capacity of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: "Albanian and International Standards for Managing Protected Areas"

Results:

Information for this purpose it has been included in the products of the Deliverable 3.1 above.

3. Raised Capacities of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: "Proposal Writing and Reporting on Projects Related to Nature Conservation and Eco-tourism Development"

Results:

1 workshop

8 local NGOs supported

4. *Raised Capacity of Tourism officers*

Results: 1 tourism officer employed and gained experience through working in the tourism office of the project

5. *Raised Awareness and Built Capacities of Relevant Local Stakeholders on "Traditional and Sustainable Livelihoods as Important Components for Eco-tourism Development"*

Results:

2 new livelihood activities created and operating. The local stakeholders learned by practicing concrete new sustainable livelihood activities.

6. *Raised Capacity of Relevant Local Stakeholders on : "Adapting Local House into a Guest House"*

Results: 10 local houses adapted into guest house and are operating

7. *Raised Awareness and Built Capacity of Relevant Local Stakeholders on; "Using Renewable Energy Sources"*

Results: Information for this purpose it has been included in the products and activities described for the Deliverable 3.1 above.

8. *Raised Awareness and Built Capacity of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: "Integrated Waste Management"*

Results: Integrated waste management activities implemented in two project sites. Please see deliverable 2.9 above.

9. *Built Capacity of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: "Introducing and Adopting New Traditional and Sustainable Livelihoods"*

Results:

2 new livelihood activities created and operating

10. *Raised Capacities of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: "Field Data Collection for Fauna"*
==AMENDMENT APRIL 2016== Continue the training process along 2016-2017

Results:

18 people involved in the processes of the ornithological and socio-economic research

At least 1 NGO in Albania is now specialized on carrying out work for the conservation and monitoring of birds.

11. Raised Capacities of Relevant Local Stakeholders on: " Socio - Economic Field Data Collection"

Results: 9 representatives of local institutions received training

12. ==AMENDMENT APRIL 2016== Continue the support on the new created livelihood activities, and creation of new ones.

Results: It has been realized a continuous communication with local stakeholders involved the new created livelihood activities.

COMPONENT 4: COOPERATION AND SYNERGIZING (LEAD BY PPNEA, COLLABORATING WITH BSPB)

1. Improved National Tourism Development Strategy 2013-2020

Results: Project staff participated in the meetings called from the ministry and gave recommendations

2. Report on possible enhancement of cooperation between Albanian institutions managing protected areas

Results: Only the Terms of Reference for this study have been prepared. The study was too ambitious to be carried out within the means and capacities available.

3. System for monitoring impact of nature-based tourism on PAs and other biodiversity-rich territories

Results: Reference database for biodiversity components it is produced by the project.

4. Tourism products developed integrated in Albanian Development Programme and the updated National Tourism Development Strategy

Results: Tourism product developed but it was not possible to integrate them in the NTDS. This was out of the project power as no review was more accepted at the time when tourism products were developed.

5. Sectorial cooperation strategy for biodiversity protection developed and introduced to local stakeholders

Results: Only the Terms of Reference for this study have been prepared. The study was too ambitious to be carried out within the means and capacities available. Terms of Reference available in PDF format.

COMPONENT 5: REGIONAL KNOW-HOW EXCHANGE BETWEEN BULGARIA AND ALBANIA (LEAD BY BSPB) (THIS COMPONENT IS IN FACT A HORIZONTAL COMPONENT, DISPERSED WITHIN THE ACTIONS OF ALL OTHER COMPONENTS)

1. Know - How exchange

Results: 1 visit of 12 Albanian stakeholders in Bulgaria

2. Development of the component 2

Results: Experience exchange through joint implementation of many project activities with BSPB

COMPONENT 6: ==AMENDMENT APRIL 2016== NEW COMPONENT: PILOT STEPS TOWARDS CONSERVATION OF EGYPTIAN VULTURE IN SOUTHERN ALBANIA

1. Technical report on the state and threats for Egyptian vulture population in Albania.

Results: Report in PDF format

2. Construction of 2 Supplementary Feeding Stations in two different territories of Egyptian vulture in Albania.

Results: 2 Supplementary feeding stations built

3. Training seminar on illegal trade of wildlife in Albania.

Deliverable not realized

4. Participation of relevant Albanian stakeholders in a training seminar against Bird Crime in Bulgaria.

Results: 3 local stakeholders from Albania participated a training seminar in Bulgaria on the topic of preventing and fighting the Bird Crime.

5. Preparation of an illustrated handbook (for recognizing cases of illegal trade of birds) for custom officers.

Results: Guide book published in 300 copies

6. Insulation of several dangerous pylons in the Egyptian vulture territories.

Results: Materials for insulation of 30 pylons bought and hopefully will be installed soon after the project end.

7. Design and implementation of an information package for stakeholders

Results: information package designed and available in PDF form. Information package implemented through different activities.

8. *Design and implement an education package for school children in all active Egyptian vulture territories.*

Results: Several activities have been organized at local schools for this purpose

9. *Organization of International Vulture Awareness Day in Albania for 2016th*

Results: Several events have been realized in local schools around the EV territories

10. *Organization of World Migratory Bird Day for 2017th.*

Results: Several events have been realized in local schools around the EV territories

11. *Preparation and publish of a scientific paper with results from the research phase.*

Results: 1 paper submitted for review to *Acrocephalus Ornithological Journal* and a second paper is ready to be submitted. With the results of this project we plan to write and publish a total number of 7 research papers.

10. If you did not complete any component or deliverable, how did this affect the overall impact of the project?

The activities that have not been finalized are as follows:

Deliverable 4.2. Report on possible enhancement of cooperation between Albanian institutions managing protected areas.

We estimated that this is an ambitious deliverable for this project and we did accomplish only the Terms of Reference part for this study. We estimate that this does not affect the impact of the project. We had planned to carry out this study but we could be never sure or able to make the institutions implement it. Thus, there was a high risk that the work for this deliverable to have no value at the end.

Deliverable 4.5. Sectorial cooperation strategy for biodiversity protection developed and introduced to local stakeholders.

We estimated that this is an ambitious deliverable for this project and we did accomplish only the Terms of Reference part for this study. We estimate that this does not affect the impact of the project. We had planned to carry out this study but we could be never sure or able to make the institutions implement it. Thus, there was a high risk that the work for this deliverable to have no value at the end.

Deliverable 6.3. Training seminar on illegal trade of wildlife in Albania

We could not finalize this deliverable. Time was too short and coincided with the time of elections in Albania along which the institutions were distracted. This has a considerable impact on the

achievements of the objectives of the second phase of the LEC project, as the risk for trafficking of protected bird species remains the same. We will try to implement this activity through a new project within year 2017.

Deliverable 6. 6. Insulation of several dangerous pylons in the Egyptian vulture territories.

We could not finalize this deliverable. We could not get yet the permission by the authorities for making such intervention despite we have bought all the necessary infrastructure. This has a considerable impact on achieving the objectives of the second phase of the LEC project as the risk of electrocution of birds remains the same. We will try to implement this activity through a new project as soon as possible.

11. Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results

- Report 1, entitled “Breeding Ornithofauna of Key Biodiversity Area Karaburun-Cika” Mountain”
- Report 2, entitled “State and Distribution of the Breeding Avifauna in Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon, Albania 2016”
- Report 3, entitled “Breeding and Migrating Birds Research in key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti, Albania”
- Report 4, entitled “Bird Migration Along the Adriatic Flyway – Spring 2014”
- Report 5, entitled “Soaring Bird Migration along the Adriatic Coast of Albania – Season 2104”
- Report 6, entitled “International Winter Bird Census 2014 for KBAs of Narta Lagoon, Orikiumi and Butrint”.
- Report 7, entitled “Mid-Winter Waterbird Census 2016 in Butrint KBA, Albania
- Report 8, entitled “Monitoring the Egyptian Vulture Breeding Population in Albania, April 2017”
- Report 9, entitled “Opportunities and Barriers for Development of Community Driven Nature Based Tourism in the Key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti”
- Report 10, entitled “Opportunities and Barriers for Development of Community Driven Nature Based Tourism in the Key Biodiversity Area of Karaburun – Cika Mountain”
- Report 11, entitled “Opportunities and Barriers for Development of Community Driven Nature Based Tourism in the Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon”
- Result: Report in PDF format, entitled “Preliminary Report for the Key Biodiversity Area of Butrinti”.
- Result: Report in PDF format, entitled “Preliminary Report for the Key Biodiversity Area of Narta Lagoon”.

- Result: Report in PDF format, entitled “Preliminary Report for the Key Biodiversity Area of Vlora bay – Karaburun – Cika Mountain”.
- Report in PDF format entitled “Approach for the Implementation of the Participatory Workshops”
- Report on the findings from the Participatory Workshop for the KBA of Narta Lagoon
- Report on the findings from the Participatory Workshop for the KBA of Vlora bay – Karaburun – Cika mountain
- Report on the findings from the Participatory Workshop for the KBA of Butrint
- Terms of Reference (ToRs) for sectorial Cooperation Strategy (SCS) for Biodiversity Protection
- Report on the proposed trails to be improved in the three KBAs
- Report on the Environmental Impact Assessment for improving walking trails in Vjosë - Nartë KBA
- Report on the Environmental Impact Assessment for the construction of the tourism office in the KBA of Narta Lagoon
- Tourism brands
- Bird guide book
- Guide book to prevent the illegal trafficking of protected bird species
- Video 1: Importance of Protected Areas
- Video 2: Bringer of Spring
- Video 3: Explore Albania
- Touristic Map of Narta

Benefits to Communities

12. Please describe the communities that have benefited from CEPF support

Please report on the size and characteristics of communities and the benefits that they have received, as a result of CEPF investment. Please provide information for all communities that have benefited **from project start to project completion**.

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
	Subsistence economy	Small landowners	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists / nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Other*	Size of Community				Increased access to clean water	Increased food security	Increased access to energy	Increased access to public services (e.g. health care, education)	Increased resilience to climate change	Improved land tenure	Improved recognition of traditional knowledge	Improved representation and decision-making in governance forums/structures	Improved access to ecosystem services
								50-250 people	251-500 people	501-1,000 people	Over 1,001 people									
Narta - Zvernec	X										X							X		X
Dukat	X	x									X							X		X
Ksamil	X					x					X									
Xarre		X									X							X		X

*If you marked "Other" to describe the community characteristic, please explain:

Lessons Learned

13. Describe any lessons learned related to organizational development and capacity building.

a) Partnership with more experienced and developed NGO

One of the main success factors bringing the desired results from this project was the partnership between PPNEA and BSPB. BSPB/BirdLife Bulgaria, thanks to its longer experience in terms of the organisational point of view and technical skills, played a very important role in building capacities of PPNEA in both technical and organisational. Within this project thanks to the help of BSPB, PPNEA designed for instance standard general documents such as: grant writing form, evaluation form, project reporting form etc. BSPB built capacities of PPNEA in bird conservation and monitoring. Many activities and initiatives that PPNEA could not implement alone, managed to do this through the guidance and help from BSPB.

14. Describe any lessons learned related to project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)

a) Shared responsibility and work for each component between PPNEA and BSBP.

This assured a better organization and implementation of all the project activities through experience and knowledge sharing.

b) Final action plan written after the first phase of the project

Along the first phase of the project, we carried out intensive research to know and understand the local context in each KBA. Once we had a clear picture of the context we reviewed the planned activities in order to give more value to our grant through avoiding duplication of the activities, implementing higher impact activities etc. For instance the Field Guide of Birds of Albania, one of the most important products resulting from this project, it was not planned in the beginning but instead it was planned to be written a Tourism Guide Book for the three KBAs. After checking the market, we realized that there are several Tourism Guide Books for these areas, thus it was no point to make another one.

15. Describe any lesson learned related to project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)

a) Learning by doing or on-job training

It showed to be a very cost-effective training technique, yielding necessary data and providing a very good training opportunity.

b) Re-granting

Re-granting, resulted to be a great approach to increase the value of the grant, build capacities, raise awareness, increase the visibility of the project, make more activities that planned and reach more results. When re-granting, it is assured the contribution of a much high number of people knowing very well the

local context and in the meantime it is given life to local ideas. Re-granting, increases the sustainability of the investments as well, as people care more about the things they do themselves.

16. Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

- a) All lessons mentioned in sections “14”, “15” and,
- b) Create a project local network with the relevant stakeholders, particularly the local GOs. Involve the institutions in relevant activities through giving stake and responsibility. It is very good when they feel real part of the project and when the investments realized at local level hold their signature as well.

Sustainability / Replication

17. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated

- a) The work for Tourism Development started within LEC, will continue via the new DestiMed project at least until year 2019.

Under this project we created Tourism Brands for each of the KBAs. We applied for a new Interreg project aiming to test and implement these Tourism Brands. The project got granted and will be implemented by the National Agency of Protected Areas until year 2019.

- b) Results from the research component will be used in the future for writing new proposals, informing management actions and monitoring impact within the KBAs.
- c) Tourism infrastructure (2 Tourism office, guest houses, hiking trails, bird watching tower, information road boards, maps, web etc) will continue to operate in the future and serve to the development of tourism in the KBAs.
- d) Supplementary feeding station for vultures, built within the LEC project will continue to operate long-term and serve to the conservation of Egyptian vulture and other birds of prey in Albania.

18. Summarize any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability

- a) Build of the largest graffiti in Albania
- b) Field Guide for Birds of Albania

Safeguards

19. If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social and environmental safeguards that your project may have triggered

The project has carried out several investments requiring special attention to the social and environmental safeguard such as: the placement of infrastructure into the hiking trail, construction of the tourism office, construction of a bird watching tower, creation of new sustainable livelihood activities and implementation of a pilot plastic recycling action in one of the KBAs.

For some of the above mentioned actions on which was estimated that specific Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was needed, the project prepared it and send for approval. All the guidelines included in these final EIA reports were carefully implemented during the investment phase. For the rest of the actions, not necessarily needing an EIA document, the project has paid the need attention to the safeguard issues.

For one planned action “construction of a bird watching tower” in one of the touristic trails in the KBA of Narta Lagoon, the project withdrew from investment due to potential environmental safeguard issues that it could bring (this tower could have been used also by hunters). The investment has been realized instead, in the KBA of Butrint in a very suitable site (for watching birds and landscape) where there was no concern at all about the safeguard issue mentioned above.

Additional Funding

20. Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of CEPF investment

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
ACE foundation	B	3000 £	Supporting the work for the conservation of the Egyptian vulture
Interreg Funds	C	140 000 Euro	New project granted for testing and promoting the tourism brands created under the "Land of Eagles and Castles" project.

* Categorize the type of funding as:

- A *Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B *Grantee and Partner Leveraging (other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project)*
- C *Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

Additional Comments/Recommendations

21. Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF

The work started within this project must continue in the future, particularly some of the components such as for instance: (i) the test and promotion of the tourism brands and (ii) conservation activities for the Egyptian vulture and lesser Kestrel in the project areas.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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