

Small Grants – Final Completion and Impact Report

Instructions: CEPF requires that each grantee report on project results and impacts at the end of their grant. To monitor CEPF’s global indicators, CEPF will aggregate the data that you submit with data from other grantees, to determine the overall impact of CEPF investment. The aggregated results of all grantees will be reported in our annual impact report and other communications materials. Your Final Completion and Impact Report will be posted on the CEPF website.

Ensure that the information provided pertains to the entire project, from start date to project end date.

Please complete all fields and respond to all questions listed below.

Organization Legal Name: Shoqata AlbNatyra

Project Title: Enhancing conservation and biodiversity monitoring in alpine pastures by supporting the shepherds in Rrajca region in Shebenik Park, Albania

Grant Number: CEPF-113756

Date of Completion of this Report: 24.11.2023

CEPF Hotspot: Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Strategic Direction: Strategic direction no. 3 -"Supporting traditional land use practices, necessary for the preservation of Mediterranean biological diversity, in the main corridors with high cultural and biodiversity values".

Grant Amount: 19,674.47 USD

Project Dates: 1st December 2022 to 31st October 2023

PART I: Overview

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

Regional Protected Areas Administration (RAPA) has played a pivotal role as the main partner in the project's implementation. As the administrator of Shebenik National Park, RAPA has been integral in coordinating and facilitating various project activities. This includes selecting shepherds for project participation, signing cooperation agreements, and overseeing the practical implementation of the project's objectives.

Shepherds as direct beneficiaries were also partners in this project. They were open to cooperate and to expand further the objectives for this project: to promote biodiversity protection in the

alpine pastures and the importance of engaging in eco-tourism to increase the socio-economic status of the locals, especially women and young people.

Local schools have always shown a high interest in participating in our projects. We were given the opportunity to share the project with the school children and to receive their interest in visiting the sheep stalls and learning more about live-stock breeding and its benefits.

2. Summarize the overall results of your project

The project has achieved notable success in advancing conservation, socioeconomic development, institutional strengthening, and community education in Shebenik National Park.

In close collaboration with RAPA, the project strategically concentrated on enhancing the management of alpine pastures, particularly in the previously unaddressed Rrajca region, situated in the southeastern part of the park. Noteworthy is the presence of a 300-year-old beech forest, a UNESCO-protected area, highlighting the ecological significance of this project extension.

This initiative, serving as a continuation of the preceding project, maintains a core focus on fostering sustainable practices and safeguarding biodiversity. The partnership with RAPA has been crucial, evident in a signed agreement outlining mutual responsibilities, logistics support, and a commitment to preserving the park's biodiversity values.

In terms of conservation impact, the project has worked towards its goal of expanding the area under sustainable livestock grazing from 18% to 50% within five years. In total there are 6760 ha alpine pastures, 610ha is around 9 % that has been improved by thanks to support provided to local shepherds. This initiative aligns with the overarching objective of doubling livestock numbers in the initial three years. Socioeconomic gains are evident through the engagement and support of shepherds—Isa Allkja, Agush Hasa, and Erion Bicaku—in alternative livelihoods, particularly eco-tourism. A comprehensive training session led by expert Elton Caushi equipped these shepherds with the information to transform traditional stalls into eco-friendly guesthouses. Looking ahead, the project has laid the groundwork for sustainable eco-tourism initiatives. The shepherds' training and a successful visit to a similar venture in Tragjas have provided practical insights, fostering enthusiasm for tourism as an economic activity. These shepherds also gained better living conditions by equipping their stalls with photovoltaic panels and batteries, also toilet equipment's (wc and showers).

Educational impact extends to the younger generation, with school presentations and field visits engaging 18 students. The initiative aims to instill an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between livestock breeding, biodiversity protection, and sustainable livelihoods.

AlbNatyra has undergone significant growth. A 5-year strategic plan was developed, and key decisions, including board restructuring and leadership transitions, were approved. Efforts in finance and human resources are actively underway, enhancing the NGO's internal framework.

The project successfully heightened community awareness regarding the conservation of endemic plants and biodiversity. Environmental expert Hasan Deliu played an important role in training sessions, emphasizing responsible plant collection practices and the vital role of biodiversity in Shebenik National Park.

In summary, the project has made significant strides across various dimensions, establishing a strong foundation for the future sustainability of Shebenik National Park continuing in the

foundations built in the first project. The holistic approach intertwining conservation, community engagement, and organizational growth positions the project as a catalyst for positive change.

3. Briefly describe actual progress towards each planned long-term and short-term impact (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each long-term impact from your proposal

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<p>Increasing the sustainable management of Shebenik Park by increasing the number of cattle that graze in the park, through the direct support given to the shepherds</p>	<p>Building on the foundation established in the first project, our continued collaboration with RAPA was instrumental in laying the groundwork for sustainable practices, including eco-friendly facilities for shepherds and the promotion of responsible grazing. This impact contributes directly to the long-term ecological balance of the park, ensuring the preservation of its unique flora and fauna. In parallel to this project, based also on the success of the first one, AlbNatyra received recognitions and was offered support from PONT with covering some activities in the alpine pastures management. Such activities were the building of the two new water-troughs (wooden material), clearing of 1.7 ha area in the alpine pastures invaded by shrubs. After this project shepherds feel more supported and that their needs are taken into considerations. This makes them more responsible to cooperate and the shepherds are now part of the monitoring group. It is important to emphasize that for the second year in row no wildfire was recorded in the park area. Thus, the long term impact are already visible and measurable.</p>
<p>Increased opportunities for engaging in tourism and for the younger generation to see livestock breeding as seasonal work or as a full engagement as directly linked to tourism.</p>	<p>The project has achieved a transformative long-term impact by diversifying livelihoods and reshaping perceptions among the shepherds and younger generation regarding livestock breeding. For such, besides the training very important was the study visits in a similar successful business where a family who are shepherds, built huts around their sheep-stall to accommodate tourists. This family from Tragjas Vlora also cooks for the tourists as the primary products come from livestock breeding. And, for sure this was a great example to motivate our shepherds. AlbNatyra is committed to supporting this initiative even after the project's closure. One of our strategies is to connect the shepherds with the local agencies and tourist guides to bring tourists in their sheep-stalls. This will help them to pave the first steps into this engagement and to</p>

	<p>grow as per the possibilities they have in a sustainable way also in environmentally friendly structures.</p> <p>As well, from the visits with the school children was ensured that the younger generation perceives livestock breeding as an integral component of tourism, fostering a symbiotic relationship between the two sectors. This paradigm shift ensures the sustainability of both traditional practices and modern economic opportunities.</p>
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b. Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<p>RAPA will increase its approach in the sustainable management of the Park by gaining knowledge on best practices of eco-tourism applied in northern shepherds stalls, and RAPA will serve in the future as a motivator to the Shebenik shepherds in applying the same.</p>	<p>The initial project, akin to the current one, laid the groundwork for collaborative efforts and conducted an in-depth study on pasture conditions. The first project-initiated discussions and established cooperation with RAPA, the key partner responsible for managing the alpine pastures in Shebenik National Park. Following up an agreement was signed on January 30th, 2023, between RAPA and AlbNatyra. Both parties agreed to cooperate in selecting three shepherds' stalls to receive support for improving their facilities. RAPA also committed to closely monitor all project activities and provide logistical support to ensure the values and integrity of the park's ecosystems are maintained.</p> <p>In August, an exploration of biodiversity unfolded, with the participation of young specialists from RAPA Elbasan. This exploration, conducted collaboratively with AlbNatyra, delved into the varied plant species thriving in the alpine pastures of Shebenik National Park. The shared goal was the recognition and conservation of these endangered plants, alongside their habitats, signifying the critical role of collaboration between shepherds, RAPA, and AlbNatyra.</p> <p>Additionally, during the visit to Tragjas, RAPA specialists actively engaged in gaining important insights and shared experiences in eco-tourism endeavors. The institution of RAPA has taken a proactive stance, devising safeguards to address the challenge of preserving these resources. The ongoing collaboration aims to synergize efforts in protecting and managing the natural resources of the park.</p>

<p>By the end of the project shepherds in the south-eastern part of the Park will be involved and work in a new alternative and sustainable livelihood economic activity</p>	<p>To enhance the shepherds' understanding of sustainable grazing practices, regular visits to the stalls were orchestrated. These on-site engagements provided practical demonstrations and facilitated open dialogues on the importance of responsible grazing for the overall health of the alpine pastures. The tailored discussions addressed specific concerns raised by the shepherds, ensuring a collaborative problem-solving approach.</p> <p>Furthermore, on August 21-22, 2023, AlbNatyra staff, in collaboration with Elton Caushi, the selected trainer and founder of Albanian Trip, embarked on a two-day visit to the shepherds' locations in NP Shebenik. During this visit, the shepherds received specialized training in the field of eco-tourism. They were equipped with essential knowledge on how to transform their traditional stalls into welcoming guesthouses but without losing their core values and traditions and keeping their living experience as it is. Elton Caushi's guidance and expertise and advice played a crucial role in this training initiative.</p> <p>Additionally, after the suggestion of Elton Caushi the project facilitated a visit to Tragjas, Sofra e Vjetër, on November 3, 2023, to explore a success story in the realm of tourist housing businesses. This visit was orchestrated to provide the shepherds with firsthand insights and inspiration from an established likewise eco-tourism endeavor. The intention behind these activities is to empower the shepherds with practical know-how and ignite their enthusiasm for embracing eco-tourism as a sustainable economic pursuit. It is worth mentioning that the shepherds valued the experience and was surprising to see the way of building with natural materials found in the surrounding area.</p> <p>The collaborative spirit fostered among the shepherds, AlbNatyra, and key partners like RAPA has set the stage for enduring positive impacts on both the ecological health of the park and the economic well-being of the shepherds involved.</p>
<p>By the end of the project at least 10 pupils will recognize livestock breeding and eco-tourism as future practices and source of income</p>	<p>AlbNatyra's team conducted meetings and presentations in local schools, including Vilson Blloshmi and Genc Leka. These sessions aimed to introduce students to the project and invite their participation in activities related to biodiversity protection, monitoring, and eco-tourism. The presentation increased the student's interest and 18 of them took part in the expeditions planned.</p>

	<p>These students from local schools participated in visits to the shepherds' stalls, providing them with a hands-on experience of the importance of livestock breeding, and the challenges faced by shepherds. These visits aimed to enhance understanding and foster a connection with the natural environment</p> <p>The holistic approach of integrating educational experiences with real-world exposure ensures that the younger generation is not only informed but also emotionally connected to the tapestry of biodiversity, sustainable practices, and the cultural heritage embedded in the Shebenik region.</p> <p>These activities go beyond textbook knowledge, fostering a genuine appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between the environment, livestock, and the local community. The spark ignited in these students promises a lasting impact, creating environmentally conscious and informed individuals who are poised to be stewards of their natural heritage.</p>
<p>AlbNatyra will increase its organizational capacities with the development of Finance and HR documents/policies</p>	<p>Recognizing the role of organizational development, AlbNatyra embarked on a strategic journey to enhance its capacities. Two board meetings were conducted, focusing on strategic planning, capacity enhancement, and identifying specific initiatives for AlbNatyra's progress. Discussions covered various aspects, including internal training needs and financial considerations.</p> <p>As these initiatives progress, AlbNatyra is making significant strides in building robust organizational capacities. After the conducted trainings, several financial procedures, including petty cash procedures, were established. This implementation improved functionality within the organization. The upcoming General Assembly holds promise as a platform for further validation and implementation of key decisions, marking a transformative phase in AlbNatyra's journey towards sustained growth and impact.</p> <p>Besides the above there were purchased furniture's and computer for the new office in Librazhd. This office is giving the opportunity to the staff of AlbNatyra to be close to the project site, be more visible and strengthen its role in the Shebenik area.</p>

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

A positive impact that emerged is the increased interest among local residents and stakeholders not directly involved in the project in the field of eco-tourism. The project's activities seem to have sparked curiosity and enthusiasm among community members who were not direct participants. Other shepherds of the area such as Urim Biçaku, Rrahman Biçaku and Fation but also local residents who follow AlbNatyra's activities expressed interest by posing questions about the visit to Tragjas and inquired about the construction methods employed in eco-tourism businesses. Some of them participated, discussed, and integrated into conversations with Elton during the trainings.

PART II: Project Products/Deliverables

5. List each product/deliverable as stated in your approved proposal and describe the results for each of them:

#	Deliverable Description	Deliverable Update
1.1	At least 3 RAPA staff will gain more knowledge in eco-toursim and how to motivate the sustainable tourism development in the future	Three specialists of RAPA team members participated in the visit made to Tragjas on November the third, where we visited a successful initiative in Eco-tourism. Through this firsthand exposure, RAPA team members and the shepherds gained a comprehensive understanding on the potential of eco-tourism as an alternative economic activity in the alpine pastures. They observed a successful case study, where a farmer had integrated his business from farming and cattle growing into housing business. Originating as a sheep farm, this enterprising family has transformed their establishment into a lovely destination offering accommodation and culinary experiences to tourists. Notably, their income from the tourism sector now surpasses that from traditional sheep farming, a paradigm shift that hasn't compromised the essence of their agricultural roots. The sheep, retained as both an attraction and a primary supply for their restaurant, embody a harmonious coexistence. This visit was able to provide practical insights and inspiring the shepherds and RAPA members to envision the potential of their stalls in Shebenik in the eco-tourism sector. It was nice to see their amazement as how simple and beautiful things can be made using just local, natural materials. During this visit we discussed the challenges and opportunities associated with eco-

		<p>tourism, and absorbed valuable knowledge that could be applied to the project's initiatives in Shebenik National Park.</p>
2.1	Improved conditions in 3 stalls	<p>Three shepherds—Isa Allkja, Agush Hasa, and Erion Bicaku—were carefully chosen to participate in the project. The Initial meeting took place on 21st of February, together with other shepherds to present the project and highlight the importance of the cooperation between all stakeholders to maintain a good management of the park and its ecological balance.</p> <p>The three selected shepherds were met personally by our team. On 30th of March was paid a visit in Isa Allkja place, in Librazhd-Katund, and was explained that he was selected as beneficiary for this project. Isa Allkja is the shepherd that the team of CEPF-RIT and PONT visited while being in the project area. On 31st of March was paid a visit to Agush Hasa sheepfold in Shkozet, Durres where he makes the transhumance during wintertime.</p> <p>On 6th of April was paid a visit to Erion Bicaku sheepfold in Kavaja where he makes the transhumance with his cattle.</p> <p>The procurement process was dedicated to acquiring items for the designated shepherds, including photovoltaic panels and sanitation facilities. Initially, voltaic refrigerators were planned, but due to unavailability in good conditions within Albania, a decision was made to replace them with showers. AlbNatyra undertook an identification and selection process, ensuring the purchased supplies adhered to the project's specifications but also harmonized with the overarching goals of improving shepherds' living conditions and promoting sustainable practices.</p> <p>In the months of August to October, after the purchase, AlbNatyra supervised and monitored the installation of the purchased supplies and equipment in the 3 selected shepherds' stalls.</p>
2.2	At least 5 shepherds have an increased knowledge on the importance of biodiversity protection through	<p>In this project were reached 8 shepherds altogether with the 3 selected as direct beneficiaries. Initially led by Lavdim Qoshi, subsequent meetings were transitioned to Hasan Deliu. Hasan, an expert in</p>

	<p>grazing, importance of not putting fires on the pastures, and developing/engaging in eco-tourism</p>	<p>forestry and environmental sciences, brought a wealth of knowledge to the discussions with the shepherds.</p> <p>Meetings were strategically organized, including sessions on June 30th, July 4th and 2nd of August where Hasan, accompanied by the project team, and Rapa conducted engaging sessions directly within the shepherds' stalls in Shebenik. During these sessions, the focus was on imparting a deeper understanding of the importance of specific plant species found in the park. Hasan facilitated a walk-in nature, allowing the shepherds to witness firsthand the significance of preserving these plants in their natural habitat.</p> <p>Several shepherds and individuals in the community are actively involved in collecting medicinal plants in the area. Recognizing this existing practice, discussions and training sessions were tailored to educate participants on the responsible and sustainable methods of collecting these plants. The emphasis was not only on the utilization of these resources but also on ensuring the well-being of the plants and their habitats.</p> <p>In August, an exploration of biodiversity unfolded, with the participation of young specialists from RAPA Elbasan. This exploration, conducted collaboratively with AlbNatyra, delved into the varied plant species thriving in the alpine pastures of Shebenik National Park. The shared goal was the recognition and conservation of these endangered plants, alongside their habitats, signifying the critical role of collaboration between shepherds, RAPA, and AlbNatyra.</p> <p>The institution of RAPA has taken a proactive stance, devising safeguards to address the challenge of preserving these resources. The ongoing collaboration aims to synergize efforts in protecting and managing the natural resources of the park.</p> <p>On August 21-22, 2023, AlbNatyra staff, in collaboration with Elton Caushi, the selected trainer and founder of Albanian Trip, embarked on a two-day visit to the shepherds' locations in NP Shebenik. During this visit, we meet with not only the shepherds who were selected but the interest grow</p>
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		<p>and more shepherds took part in the training such as Urim Biçaku, Denis Biçaku, Rrahman Biçaku where the last one even offered housing in his stall during the night. These shepherds received specialized training in the field of eco-tourism. They were equipped with essential knowledge on how to transform their traditional stalls into welcoming guesthouses but without losing their core values and traditions and keeping their living experience as it is. This was even more touchable do to the place where the training took place, in their own stall making it more livable by taking concrete examples. Elton Caushi's guidance and expertise and advice played a crucial role in this training initiative.</p> <p>Additionally, after the suggestion of Elton Caushi the project facilitated a visit to Tragjas, Sofra e Vjetër, on November 3, 2023, to explore a success story in the realm of tourist housing businesses. This visit was orchestrated to provide the shepherds with firsthand insights and inspiration from an established likewise eco-tourism endeavor. The intention behind these activities is to empower the shepherds with practical know-how and ignite their enthusiasm for embracing eco-tourism as a sustainable economic pursuit. It is worth mentioning that the some of the Shepherds that took part in this visit were not direct beneficial from the project but sparked interest in the concept of eco-tourism. They valued the experience and were surprised to see the way of building with natural materials found in the surrounding area.</p>
3.1	At least 10 young people from the school will increase knowledge about biodiversity protection and economic value for livestock breeding	<p>AlbNatyra team had a proactive engagement with local schools, conducting a series of meetings and presentations in institutions such as Vilson Blloshmi and Genc Leka. These sessions served as a bridge, introducing students to the aspects of the project and extending an invitation for their active participation in activities centered around biodiversity protection, monitoring, and eco-tourism.</p> <p>The outcome of these interactions was the expression of interest by 18 students—8 from Genc Leka and 10 from Vilson Blloshmi—who initially signaled their willingness to engage in visits to alpine pastures and shepherd-stalls. After the pioneering</p>

		<p>expedition with the Genc Leka school on September 9th with students from the 6th grade, the interest grew from Vilson Blloshmi, with an additional 4 students joining a subsequent expedition on October 29th.</p> <p>During these expeditions, students were immersed in the world of cattle breeding, gaining insights into the vital role of livestock, the importance of pasture maintenance, and medical care, including disease prevention and vaccinations. Armando Gjyshkaj, a veterinarian and AlbNatyra associate, passionately described the critical importance of maintaining animal health. The students had a firsthand experience visiting one of the stables in Shebenik, witnessing the entire process from sheep keeping to milk and its sub-product production, and gaining an understanding of the challenges inherent in this irreplaceable profession.</p>
4.1	Agreed on a 5-year strategic plan for the AlbNatyra	<p>The strategic planning process commenced with a board meeting convened on January 17th, 2023, in the Librazhd Office, where the spotlight was on shaping a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan for AlbNatyra. This session laid the groundwork for key discussions and decisions that would shape the organization's future trajectory.</p> <p>The momentum continued with another board meeting held on November 8, 2023 in Belsh, where crucial decisions were taken to instigate organizational changes:</p> <p>Board Restructuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approval in principle of the resignation of old board members. - Approval in principle of new board members joining, reducing the board to 7 members. <p>Leadership Transition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ndrçim Çela's transition from Executive Director to the Honorable President of the Board was announced. - The board approved changes to the AlbNatyra statute, reflecting the organizational restructuring. <p>General Assembly and New Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The General Assembly was scheduled for December 15, 2023, to discuss and ratify proposed changes. <p>Approval of 5-Year Strategy:</p>

		<p>- The board unanimously approved the organization's 5-year strategy, outlining the vision, goals, and key initiatives.</p> <p>The strategic plan will serve as a guide for the organization's growth and development.</p>
5.1	All reports submitted to CEPF on time.	Together with the final reports will be submitted the all the CEPF required tools.

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

The project products are the agreements with the RAPA team and MoUs signed with the Shepherds. These contractual documents outline the terms, responsibilities, and commitments of all involved parties, providing a robust framework for seamless collaboration. Visual documentation plays an important role in capturing the essence of project activities and so all the activities are accompanied by photos made in implementing the project. A 5-year strategy was drafted for AlbNatyra and certain financial procedures were put to use such as the use of cash- money. These measures ensure the efficient allocation of resources, promoting fiscal responsibility, and maintaining transparency in financial practices.

PART III: Lessons, Sustainability, Safeguards and Financing

Lessons Learned

7. Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building.

“Lessons learned” are experiences you have gained that you think would be valuable successes worth replicating or practices that you would do differently if you had the chance. Consider lessons that would inform project design and implementation, and any other lessons relevant to the conservation community. CEPF Lessons Learned Guidelines are available here: <https://www.cepf.net/sites/default/files/cepf-lessons-learned-guidelines-english.pdf>.

Seasonal Considerations for Shepherd Engagement: Recognizing the seasonal transhumance patterns of shepherds is crucial for project planning. Anticipating the timing of shepherds' return to alpine pastures and aligning project activities accordingly can ensure effective engagement. On this project we had to face some delays in implementing the project because of the late coming of the Shepherds to the pastures. This comes as consequence of Climate changing. This year the two shepherds that transhumance in Kavaja and Durres came very late in the alpine pastures, by the midst of month of June.

Flexibility in Project Scheduling: Unpredictable factors, such as climate change affecting the return of shepherds or other external factors, underscore the importance of flexibility in project scheduling. Being adaptable to changes in timelines can help mitigate potential disruptions. As mentioned, the cold season lasted till the end of May therefore the activities were mostly postponed in the months of July-November since the shepherds came late in the alpine pastures.

Community Engagement Strategies: Refining community engagement strategies based on the feedback and concerns expressed by shepherds. Understanding their perspectives and involving them in decision-making processes can enhance the success and acceptance of project interventions.

For the future is important to have continuous meetings with the shepherds as they have perspectives from the base, and it will be with great benefit that this partnership continues. We have observed during the project implementation that the shepherds wanted to be involved and to be heard in sharing their ideas. In some discussions they directed us to continue improving the infrastructure with more water facilities in certain areas where they graze the cattle and is an important landscape as well for the hikers to stop by. Also, they had questions about how to engage in eco-tourism and how this entrepreneurship works.

Sustainability / Replication

8. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

Following the footsteps of the initial project, through this project we have strategically addressed biodiversity threats in Alpine Pastures by investing in sheep stalls in the Rrajca region and actively encouraging livestock breeding. This initiative, aimed at countering the decline in pastoral activity, ensures both environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, the emphasis on tourism development emerges as a significant achievement. Collaborations with local tourist agencies showcase efforts to attract hikers and adventurers to the alpine pastures, fostering economic benefits. This not only creates a new revenue stream for shepherds but also introduces a youth-engaging element. The growing number of daily visitors and campers signifies a rising interest in the area, laying the foundation for sustained tourism activities.

The educational impact on the younger generation, achieved through school presentations and field visits, instills a sense of responsibility towards biodiversity protection and sustainable practices. By engaging 18 students in the initial phase and subsequently increasing interest, the project lays the groundwork for a generation that values and actively participates in conservation efforts. This educational component serves as a replicable model for similar projects targeting youth involvement.

While the project has made significant strides in education, capacity-building, and on-the-ground interventions, effective monitoring and enforcement of sustainable practices pose ongoing challenges. Ensuring that shepherds adhere to sustainable grazing practices, prevent fires on pastures, and actively engage in eco-tourism requires continuous oversight.

The reliance on daily visitors and small camping groups highlights the need for broader awareness and marketing strategies to attract a more extensive tourist base. Addressing infrastructure challenges, such as providing amenities for a larger influx of tourists, will be crucial for long-term sustainability.

Safeguards

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

The project did not trigger any specific safeguards; however, AlbNatyra proactively implemented measures to ensure social and environmental responsibility. As part of the transparency initiative, AlbNatyra published the project's objectives and provided contact details on its website. This proactive approach allows for addressing any concerns related to the project's implementation promptly. Waste disposal, a critical aspect of environmental safeguards, was managed responsibly. All the disposable waste was collected and disposed of in Librazhd, ensuring proper waste management practices.

AlbNatyra together with RAPA representatives completed the METT tool as a means of evaluation at the end of the project. From last year METT Shebenik Park has an increase of its surface from 33,928ha to 34,500ha. This increase has also exposed the need for more resources and study of the newly added area. Grazing and livestock activities are evaluated with the same score. Even though there are improvements from the project those are still in the first steps and the outcome is expected to be reached in 3 to 5 years.

Additional Funding

10. Provide details of any additional funding that you have secured to support this project.

a. Total additional funding (US\$)

b. Type of funding

Please provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source.

Donor	Type of Funding	Amount

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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

To continue putting attention to Shebenik Park through conservation projects and capacity building in conservation initiatives. Shebenik is one of the biggest parks in Albania and there is an absolute need to continue in studying and monitoring its biodiversity also for the new territory that is lately added to the park area. Shebenik was given more interest in the last 4 to 5 years, and this projects have had a positive impact.

PART IV: Impact at Portfolio and Global Level

Contribution to Portfolio Indicators

12. In order to measure the results of CEPF investment strategy at the hotspot level, CEPF uses a set of Portfolio Indicators which are presented in the Ecosystem Profile of each hotspot. Please list these below and report on the project’s contribution(s) to them.

Indicator	Actual Numeric Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
2.0_Outcome 2_Number of hectares of KBAs with enhanced protection or management	610 ha	The project overall is contributing long term in 610 ha of alpine pastures in the south-east part of the Shebenik park. In this area graze the flocks of 6 shepherds. From them 3 received direct support and training in importance of livestock breeding and eco-tourism. The shepherds are now part of the monitoring group by playing a vital role in the protection of the park and alpine pastures. RAPA new staff was also trained in the alpine pastures management, threatened plants and how to monitor these plants.
3.3_Outcome 3_Number of Local Authorities recognizing	1	The sole local authority actively recognizing and

and supporting traditional practices in favor of biodiversity		supporting traditional practices in favor of biodiversity is RAPA Elbasan. The genesis of this project stems from collaborative discussions with RAPA, initiated while collectively addressing concerns related to the diminishing livestock numbers and observed challenges in the alpine pastures.
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Contribution to Global Indicators

Please report on all Global Indicators that pertain to your project.

13. Benefits to Individuals

13a. Number of men and women receiving structured training.

Report on the number of men and women that have benefited from structured training due to your project, such as financial management, beekeeping, horticulture, farming, biological surveys, or how to conduct a patrol.

# of men receiving structured training *	# of women receiving structured training *	Topic(s) of Training
8 (Shepherds, farmers)	7 (shepherds, farmers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studying the deteriorated pastures and recognizing the threat. - Sustainable grazing practices. - Eco-tourism training
2 (Rapa team)	3 (RAPA Team)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alpine pastures management - Threatened plants in the alpine pastures (locally) - Threatened plants in the Shebenik Park
13 (Students)	9 (Students)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Importance of livestock breeding in biodiversity - Taking care of the livestock health

		- What does the cattle provide and how the milk is processed in the sheep-folds
Total trained men 23	Tota trained women 19	

**Please do not count the same person more than once. For example, if 5 men received structured training in beekeeping, and 3 of these also received structured training in project management, the total number of men who benefited from structured training should be 5.*

13b. Number of men and women receiving cash benefits.

Report on the number of men and women that had an increase in income or cash (monetary) benefits due to your project from activities such as tourism, handicraft production, increased farm output, increased fishery output, medicinal plant harvest, or payment for conducting patrols.

# of men receiving cash benefits*	# of women receiving cash benefits*	Description of Benefits
3	3	The project took significant strides in empowering shepherds through the strategic provision of essential equipment. Isa Allkja, Agush Hasa, and Erion Bicaku, the selected shepherds and their families, were equipped with solar panels and upgraded toilet facilities. These tools were specifically chosen to enhance the living conditions of the shepherds while aligning with sustainable practices. -Photovoltaics to provide electricity, light, and power for charging the phones, tv and internet -Shower, wc and toilet materials for construction

**Please do not count the same person more than once. For example, if 5 men received cash benefits due to tourism, and 3 of these also received cash benefits from increased income due to handicrafts, the total number of men who received cash benefits should be 5.*

14. Protected Areas

Number of hectares of protected areas created and/or expanded

Report on the number of hectares of protected areas that have been created or expanded as a result of your project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of PA*	Country(s)	Original # of Hectares**	# of Hectares Newly Protected	Year of Legal Declaration/ Expansion	Longitude***	Latitude***
Parku Kombëtar Shebenik	Albania	34,500		21/05/2008	N 41° 10' 0"	E 20°30' 0"

* If possible please provide a shape file of the protected area to CEPF.

** Enter the original total size, excluding the results of your project. If the protected area was not existing before your project, then enter zero.

*** Indicate the latitude and longitude of the center of the site, to the extent possible, or send a map or shapefile to CEPF. Give geographic coordinates in decimal degrees; latitudes in the Southern Hemisphere and longitudes in the Western Hemisphere should be denoted with a minus sign (example: Latitude 38.123456 Longitude: -77.123456). To obtain the latitude and longitude of your protected area, use googlemap, right click on the center of your protected area, and select "What's here?", and copy the latitude and longitude appearing in the popup window.

15. Key Biodiversity Area Management

Number of hectares of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) with improved management

Report on the number of hectares in KBAs with improved management, where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation, as a result of your project. Examples of improved management include, but are not restricted to: increased patrolling, reduced intensity of snaring, invasive species eradication, reduced incidence of fire, and introduction of sustainable agricultural/fisheries practices. Do not record the entire area covered by the project - only record the number of hectares that have improved management.

If you have recorded part or all of a KBA as newly protected for the indicator entitled "protected areas", and you have also improved its management, you should record the relevant number of hectares for both this indicator and the "protected areas" indicator.

Name of KBA	KBA Code from Ecosystem Profile	# of Hectares Improved *
Parku Kombëtar Shebenik		The project was focused in the alpine pastures covering 610 ha to improve the management of the pastures through increasing knowledge on

	ALB19	the importance of the increasing of cattle breeding through direct support to the shepherds and introducing to eco-tourism concept for attracting young people and women in this business. Besides this there was organized a clearing (1.7 ha) campaign from the invasive shrubs and clearing the paths that help in the times of fire.

** Do not count the same hectares more than once. For example, if 500 hectares were improved due to implementation of a fire management regime in the first year, and 200 of these same 500 hectares were improved due to invasive species removal in the second year, the total number of hectares with improved management would be 500.*

16. Production landscapes

Number of hectares of production landscape with strengthened management of biodiversity

Please report on the number of hectares of production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity, as a result of your project. A production landscape is defined as a landscape where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

- For an area to be considered as having "strengthened management of biodiversity," it can benefit from a wide range of interventions such as best practices and guidelines implemented, incentive schemes introduced, sites/products certified, and sustainable harvesting regulations introduced.
- Areas that are protected are not included under this indicator, because their hectares are counted elsewhere.
- A Production Landscape can include part or all of an unprotected KBA.

Name of Production Landscape*	# of Hectares with Strengthened Management**	Latitude***	Longitude***	Description of Intervention

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** If the production landscape does not have a name, provide a brief descriptive name for the landscape.*

***Do not count the same hectares more than once. For example, if 500 hectares were strengthened due to certification in the first year, and 200 of these same 500 hectares were strengthened due to new harvesting regulations in the second year, the total number of hectares strengthened to date would be 500.*

**** Indicate the latitude and longitude of the center of the site, to the extent possible, or send a map or shapefile to CEPF. Give geographic coordinates in decimal degrees; latitudes in the Southern Hemisphere and longitudes in the Western Hemisphere should be denoted with a minus sign (example: Latitude 38.123456 Longitude: -77.123456). To obtain the latitude and longitude of your production landscape, use googlemap, right click on the center of your production landscape, and select "What's here?", and copy the latitude and longitude appearing in the popup window.*

17. Benefits to Communities

CEPF wants to record the non-cash benefits received by communities, which can differ to those received by individuals because the benefits are available to a group. CEPF also wants to record, to the extent possible, the number of people within each community who are benefiting. Please report on the characteristics of the communities, the type of benefits that have been received during the project, and the number of men/boys and women/girls from these communities that have benefited, as a result of your project. If exact numbers are not known, please provide an estimate.

Please provide information for all communities that have benefited from project start to project completion.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics (mark with x)							Country of Community	Type of Benefit (mark with x)								# of Beneficiaries			
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists / nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Other*		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	Improved access to ecosystem services	# of men and boys benefiting	# of women and girls benefiting	
Shepherds in the Alpine Pastures				x			x								x			x	101	92

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

Direct benefit was given to the selected shepherds with photovoltaics, wooden-showers, and sanitary equipment for improving the hygiene in the sheep-stalls. Besides this there were delivered training on eco-tourism for the shepherds and their family members and was organized a visit study in a very successful sheep-stall where accommodation huts were built and a kitchen to cook for the tourists who want to experience and eat fresh diary and meat products.

The shepherds were trained in the importance of livestock breeding not only as a business activity but also for the maintenance of the alpine pastures and how grazing is connected to an array of benefits.

RAPA also benefited from this project directly and indirectly. The conditions for the shepherds are improved and they are more cooperative with the RAPA team. For the second year there was recorded no wildfire in Shebenik park. Students were introduced to the benefits of the livestock breeding and how important it is not only as an economic tool but also for the biodiversity.

*Others include RAPA team, the students, community of the area (these pastures serve also for the villages of Bardhaj, Skenderbej, Qarrishtë, Kokrevë), and tourists.

18. Policies, Laws and Regulations

Report on policies, laws and regulations with conservation provisions that have been enacted or amended, as a result of your project. “Policies” pertain to statements of intent formally adopted or pursued by a government, including at sectoral or sub-national level. “Laws and regulations” pertain to official rules or orders, prescribed by authority. Any law, regulation, decree or order is eligible to be included.

18a. Name, scope and topic of the policy, law or regulation that has been amended or enacted as a result of your project

No.	Name of Law, Policy or Regulation	Scope (mark with x)			Topic(s) addressed (mark with x)																
		Local	National	International	Agriculture	Climate	Ecosystem Management	Education	Energy	Fisheries	Forestry	Mining and Quarrying	Planning/Zoning	Pollution	Protected Areas	Species Protection	Tourism	Transportation	Wildlife Trade	Other*	
1																					
2																					
...																					

* If you selected “other”, please give a brief description of the main topics addressed by the policy, law or regulation.

18b. For each law, policy or regulation listed above, please provide the requested information in accordance with its assigned number.

No.	Country(s)	Date enacted/ amended MM/DD/YYYY	Expected impact	Action that you performed to achieve this change
1				
2				
3				

19. Biodiversity-friendly Practices

Number of companies that adopt biodiversity-friendly practices

Please list any companies that have adopted biodiversity-friendly practices as a result of your project. While companies take various forms, for the purposes of CEPF, a company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

No.	Name of Company	Description of biodiversity-friendly practice adopted during the project	Country(s) where the practice has been adopted by the company
1			
2			
...			

20. Networks & Partnerships

Number of networks and/or partnerships created and/or strengthened

Report on any networks or partnerships between and among civil society groups and other sectors that you have created or strengthened as a result of your project. Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable. Examples of networks/partnerships include: an alliance of fisherfolk to promote sustainable fisheries practices, a network of environmental journalists, a partnership between one or more NGOs with one or more private sector partners to improve biodiversity management on private lands, or a working group focusing on reptile conservation.

Do not list the partnerships you formed with others to implement this project, unless these partnerships will continue after your project ends.

No.	Name of Network / Partnership	Year established	Did your project establish this Network/ Partnership? Y/N	Country(s) covered	Purpose
1	RAPA-AlbNatyra	2021	P (this partnership was established in the first CEPF supported project)	Shebenik Park, Librazhd, Albania	This partnership emphasizes a shared commitment to sustainable practices, biodiversity protection, and the overall well-being of the alpine pastures. The

					collaboration between AlbNatyra and RAPA serves as a model for effective cooperation between non-governmental organizations and governmental bodies, contributing to the holistic development and conservation of Shebenik National Park
2	Shepherds-AlbNatyra-RAPA	2023	Y	Shebenik Park, Librazhd and Prrenjas, Albania	<p>The shepherds are now part of the volunteering monitoring group in the Shebenik Park. They received training and guidance how to communicate in case of threats to biodiversity and were provided with walkie talkie radios for improving the communication.</p> <p>As well, developing eco-tourism in the shepherds' stalls was one important activity to introduce the shepherds with a new way for improving economic status and to attract young people and women to engage in this activity. This way ensuring the livestock breeding as a sustainable activity in the alpine pastures.</p>

21. Sustainable Financing Mechanism

List any functioning sustainable financing mechanisms created or supported by your project. Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem service (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation. To be included, a mechanism must be delivering funds for conservation.

21a. Details about the mechanism

No.	Name of Financing Mechanism	Purpose of the Mechanism*	Date of Establishment**	Description***	Countries
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1					
2					
3					

**Please provide a succinct description of the mission of the mechanism.*

***Please indicate when the sustainable financing mechanism was officially created. If you do not know the exact date, provide a best estimate.*

****Description, such as trust fund, endowment, PES scheme, incentive scheme, etc.*

21b. Performance of the mechanism

For each Financing Mechanism listed previously, please provide the requested information in accordance with its assigned number.

NO.	Project intervention (mark with x)			Has the mechanism disbursed funds to conservation projects?
	Created a mechanism	Supported an existing mechanism	Created and supported a new mechanism	
1				
2				
3				

22. Red List Species

If the project included direct conservation interventions that benefited globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU), as per the IUCN Red List, add the species below.

Examples of interventions include: preparation or implementation of a conservation action plan, captive breeding programs, species habitat protection, species monitoring, patrolling to halt wildlife trafficking, and removal of invasive species.

Genus	Species	Common Name (Eng)	Status (VU, EN, CR or Extinct in the Wild)	Intervention	Population Trend at Site (increasing, decreasing, stable or unknown)

Part V. Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

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

Provide the contact details of your organization (organization name and generic email address) so that interested parties can request further information about your project.

Organization Name: **Albnatyra Association**
Generic email address: **racfp.org@gmail.com / info@albnatyra.org**