

## **CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report**

<b>Organization's Legal Name:</b>	Milieukontakt Macedonia
<b>Project Title:</b>	Enhancing Dojran Lake Unique Biodiversity through Engagement of all Stakeholders and Implementation of Ecosystem-Based Approaches
<b>Grant Number:</b>	CEPF-109162
<b>Hotspot:</b>	Mediterranean Basin II
<b>Strategic Direction:</b>	2 Support the sustainable management of water catchments through integrated approaches for the conservation of threatened freshwater biodiversity
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$193,358.61
<b>Project Dates:</b>	July 01, 2019 - March 31, 2024
<b>Date of Report:</b>	May 06, 2024

### **IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS**

The project was implemented with two partners - CSO POLymath13 and Municipality of Dojran. Polymath13 staff received training and performed the long-term monitoring of water quality of Lake Dojran.

Municipality of Dojran represented both a partner and a direct beneficiary of the project. In the role of a partner, Municipality of Dojran has been actively involved in all project activities, most notably:

- Preparation of technical documentation for rehabilitation of the coastal path by staff from the local administration and provision of external supervision of the construction works.
- Correspondence for the purpose of establishment of the Stakeholder Council and the Scientific Council of Lake Dojran
- Consultations and data provision for preparation of the Management Plan with Action Plan of Lake Dojran
- Official correspondence with the Ministry of environment and physical planning regarding all Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment procedures
- Approval and adoption of official documents
- Assistance to project team with organization of trainings
- Organization and attendance of meetings with Greek competent authorities of Lake Dojran
- Collaboration on external events, arising from the project, regarding Lake Dojran (e.g. World Wetland Day, Fundraising event on Lake Dojran etc.)

The project team actively collaborated with at least 9 out of 17 employees that work in different departments of Dojran Municipality

Thanks to the project implementation, the local administration of Dojran Municipality and Milieukontakt Macedonia (MKM) developed open communication, common trust and strong partnership. Dojran Municipality came to appreciate the expertise Milieukontakt brings for better protection and management of Lake Dojran. This is attested by the joint application on three more project calls and continuation of the partnership outside of this project

## CONSERVATION IMPACTS

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<p>The management of Dojran Lake area (covering 4310 ha) is improved in terms of biodiversity conservation, with implementation of the Management Plan and strengthened capacities of management authority.</p>	<p>The project has significantly improved the management of the entire protected area – 4310 ha of Dojran Lake, through the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed Revalorization Study of Lake Dojran, that defines individual protection/management zones (strict zone, active management zone and sustainable management zone) within the protected area.</li> <li>- Developed Management Plan with Action Plan for Lake Dojran.</li> <li>- Raised awareness and knowledge of competent authorities – Dojran Municipality and MoEPP regarding the poor ecological condition of Lake Dojran and main pollution sources</li> <li>- Enhanced management knowledge and skills of competent authority</li> <li>- Incentivization of competent authorities to implement measures from the Management Plan to improve Lake Dojran condition. These included raising of additional 4.402.788,00 Euro to prevent pollution from wastewater, through: construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) for 3000 PE for Nov Dojran-Star Dojran-Sretenovo, construction of a sewer system in v. Crnichani, construction of two constructed wetlands in v. Furka and v. Crnichani, and rehabilitation of main sewer line (8km). Construction of sewer in Crnichani has been finalized, while the WWTP and construction wetlands will be completed by end of 2024 and May 2025, respectively.</li> </ul>
<p>At least 5 (<i>Alburnus macedonicus</i> CR; <i>Pelecanus crispus</i> VU; <i>Vormela peregusna</i> VU; <i>Spermophilus citellus</i> VU; <i>Alburnus</i> sp. nov. 'Volvi' NT) freshwater species status will be improved at site level, thanks to improved management of lake, gradual recovery of ecosystem</p>	<p>The project made progress towards this impact, by creating an enabling environment to improve the status of Dojran Lake freshwater species in the long run. In particular, through creation of the protection zones (Revalorization study of Dojran Lake), implementation of the Management Plan of Lake Dojran and implementation of the above mentioned activities which (will) halt wastewater pollution and improve lake water quality.</p>

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Communities of Dojran Lake (circa 3,500 people) benefits from maintained ecosystem services and get economic benefit from activities compatible with conservation of biodiversity of Lake Dojran.	The project contributed towards this long-term impact, notably through the development of the Management Plan with Action Plan for Lake Dojran and implementation of first measures from the plan. This include planned construction of two constructed wetlands and a new Wastewater treatment Plant, which will prevent wastewater pollution and will improve the quality of lake water. This in turn will improve the prospects for development of tourism and will provide improved potential for economic benefits to the entire community of Dojran municipality.
A trans-boundary cooperation process is initiated with partners and authorities from the Greek side of Dojran Lake	Partial progress was made towards this impact. The project team and the Mayor of Dojran Municipality have taken an initiative to establish communication with Greek authorities for a trans-boundary cooperation, however, this was not particularly successful due to lack of interest by the Greek authorities. We will pursue further actions and try different official approaches to establish an official trans-boundary cooperation.
The Local government authorities enhance their actions to preserve the environment of Dojran Lake, with decision-makers sensitized and at least 5 persons from the local government trained in PA management, monitoring and IRBM best practices	The project has made significant progress towards this long-term impact. More than 13 persons from the local administration of Dojran Municipality were trained for Protected area management and IRBM practices, and moreover the local administration took concrete actions to improve protection of Dojran Lake - additional funds were secured and currently Dojran Municipality together with Milieukontakt implement large-scale activities for construction/rehabilitation of wastewater collection systems and treatment facilities.
The local authorities have good knowledge on the pollution sources and of ecosystem-based techniques that can improve the water quality and hence the status of the threatened biodiversity.	This impact was fully accomplished. With the monitoring of the water quality we were able to identify the main pollution sources. Based on this findings, a "Plan for revitalization of Dojran Lake shoreline, using nature-based solutions, for improved protection against pollution from land" was developed.

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
At least 60 members of the local community are better informed and sensitized about Biodiversity of Dojran Lake	This impact has been fully achieved and more than 63 people from the local community are now better informed and sensitized about the importance of biodiversity of Lake Dojran: 8 farmers, 1 agriculture cooperative, 16 employees of the local administration of Dojran, 2 people of the Public Utilities of Dojran, at least 29 people from the local community, 4 local fisherman and 3 local

Impact Description	Impact Summary
	businesses. This was achieved through delivery of trainings, meetings and the conference on Dojran Lake held 21.06.2021. In addition, we were able to raise the awareness about importance to take urgent actions to protect Lake Dojran's biodiversity on a national level, among national and international stakeholders.
One national organization (Milieukontakt Macedonia) and at least one local organization have better capacities to engage for the protection of environment in North Macedonia	This impact has been achieved. Because of the project, the national organization Milieukontakt Macedonia now has improved capacities to engage in environmental protection. In particular, we further developed staff's skills and experience in fund raising, competencies for negotiations and cooperation with local and central authorities, awareness raising, conflict solving, proficiency of the legal system and legal requirements for nature protection. The local CSO organization Polimat 13, has acquired skills and knowledge for monitoring of water quality.
A management plan, designed with participation of men and women of the Dojran Lake community, is approved by 2020, addressing the current threats to Dojran Lake biodiversity and needs of local communities	This impact has been partly accomplished. The Management Plan has been developed, but has not been approved due to delays in finalization of the Revalorizacion study of Lake Dojran (which has been part of a previous CEPF-funded project implemented by REC Macedonia). The project team is committed to continue the procedure for official adoption of the Management Plan of Lake Dojran, also after completion of this project. As part of the activity for development of a Management Plan for Lake Dojran, the project team remains committed to finalize implementation of the started legislative procedure for Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Management Plan.
An Operational Plan is developed for construction of artificial wetlands as means to improve quality of water (taking environmental impact into consideration), and good prospects exist for future funding	This project impact has been fully accomplished and a "Feasibility study for wastewater treatment in Dojran Municipality, using nature-based solutions" has been developed. The project team took various actions and managed to secure funding for financing of two constructed wetlands that were proposed in the Feasibility study. These two constructed wetlands, in village Furka and Crnichani, will be constructed as part of the jointly funded project "Enhancement of protection of Monument of Nature – Dojran Lake, through improved wastewater treatment in Dojran Municipality" funded by Dojran Municipality and the Center for International Cooperation and Development of the R. of Slovenia. Technical documentations for both constructed wetlands have been finalized and we expect to finish the construction works by May 2025. We have implemented Safeguard procedures, consisting of CEPF Environmental Impact

Impact Description	Impact Summary
	Assessment (EIA) Report and an official EIA as required by law, to mitigate any potential negative impacts of activities proposed in the "Feasibility study for wastewater treatment in Dojran Municipality".
Report that fills the knowledge gap on the ecosystem of Dorjan Lake and provides recommendations for appropriate techniques to improve water quality of the lake and with that indirectly improves the status of freshwater species.	The impact has been fully achieved. The project team has conducted the first ever long-term (1.5 years) monitoring of the water quality of Lake Dojran. The monitoring enabled to acquire a comprehensive overview of the ecological condition of the lake, to identify the major pollution resources and to define appropriate recommendations to improve protection and conservation of Lake Dojran. The results were summarized in the " Report on the assessment of the ecological condition of the monument of nature Lake Dojran".
At least 2 km of Lake-shore are restored using bio-technical stabilization techniques	This impact has been achieved and the most heavily-destroyed part of the coastal path has been stabilized and reconstructed applying nature-based solution. The activity was conducted with assistance from Dojran municipality's architect. Safeguard documents related to this activity for mitigation of potential negative effects were prepared in coordination with the Ministry of environment and physical planning.
20% of the 10 local fishermen trained by the programme apply sustainable fishing practices	The impact was not achieved. Related activity - "biomanipulation by fish removal" was canceled, because existing background data and scientific knowledge was deemed insufficient to safely perform this activity.
20% of the 10 local farmers trained (including at least 1 women) apply sustainable farming practices introduced by the project, covering 1,5 ha of productive land	The impact was fully achieved. We have conducted a 2-day training on sustainable agricultural practices for the farmers of Dojran. Through the training we have directly educated 8 farmers, of which one was a woman. In addition, with the training we have reached 1 agriculture cooperative. Sustainable (organic) farming is practiced already before the start of the project by six of the participating farmers, including 1 woman, on an area larger than 1.5 ha surrounding Lake Dojran.

### Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Unexpected positive impact of the project was that, due to our presence in Dojran because of the implementation of the project, the project team was able to intercept and halt a large-scale activity that would have had very harmful impact on the ecosystem of Lake Dojran. The activity was about extraction of large quantities of sediment from Lake Dojran, for the purpose of presumed mitigation of eutrophication of the lake. We learned that the same activity was also to be implemented at Prespa Lake (also a nationally protected site). The activity was supposed to be implemented by the local administrations of Dojran and Resen (management authority of Lake Prespa), using funding from the central government. We made an immediate inquiry and realized that there are many procedural and legal

omissions, and more importantly absence of any kind of scientific or technical study/recommendations to support this activity. We have contacted external and internal scientific experts, all of which confirmed that such poorly planned activity – without any background of scientific research, could create irreversible damages to the ecosystem and biodiversity of the lakes, and would also undermine the efforts of our project to protect and enhance lake's biodiversity.

We have identified the following crucial omissions in the planned activity: no prior consent from the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP), lack of any background scientific research (that would determine the necessity/benefits of the extraction, the quantities of deposited sediment, the composition of the sediment and quantities of phosphorous, the treatment of sediment after extraction), lack of any technical plan that would specify the locations and amounts of sediment to be extracted, absence of working procedures, lack of Environmental Impact Assessment and no requirements for expert staff in the tender requirements that would lead and supervise the extraction.

When we intercepted it, the activity was already in a tendering procedure and hence urgent actions were needed to prevent potential damage to the lake ecosystem. For this purpose, MKM informed the network of environmental civil society organizations and the Aarhus center, and the project team organized and led a joint action. As part of the joint action, we organized many meetings with different authorities and sent letters of concerns regarding the irregularities in the procedure to the MoEPP, the Government of R. of North Macedonia, the Municipalities of Dojran and Resen and the Public Procurement Bureau. In addition, we have raised our concerns with the media and journalists and the Cabinet of the Minister for Environment and Physical Planning and the Major of Dojran Municipality. The project team also informed CEPF about the potential threat and the activities we plan to undertake.

The joint action had a positive outcome and the activity for sediment extraction was halted by the MoEPP, due to the numerous legal irregularities and violation of legal procedures, stating that the current design of the activity would only pose harm to Lake Dojran, as well as Prespa Lake. Milieukontakt's presence in Dojran region and the close collaboration with MoEPP and Dojran Municipality, established because of the CEPF-funded project, played a crucial role for prevention of this harmful activity .

Once the activity was stopped, Milieukontakt helped Dojran Municipality to develop a new plan for reallocation of the available finances from this activity. The new plan included prevention of pollution of Lake Dojran from wastewater, and currently, this budget is used to finance construction of a new Wastewater Treatment Plant for Nov Dojran-Sretenovo-Star Dojran, a sewer system in v. Crnichani and two constructed wetlands in v. Furka and v. Crnichani.

## **PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES**

### **Overall results of the project:**

The project has made significant contribution to improve protection and management of the monument of nature Lake Dojran. The project achieved the following overall results:

- The project provided first time comprehensive data on the biodiversity of fish population and quality of lake water, thus increased the knowledge on the ecological condition of Lake Dojran.
- Responsible institutions at the local and central level, the local community of Dojran as well as international stakeholders improved their knowledge on the importance of Lake Dojran biodiversity and now have increased awareness of the need to take urgent measures to improve the ecological condition of the Dojran Lake.

- The project developed two most important, legally-required, documents for protection and sustainable management of Lake Dojran - the Revalorization Study of Lake Dojran and Management Plan with Action Plan, which set the objectives, the individual protection zones and which define the measures and activities for better protection and sustainable management of Lake Dojran.
- The project strengthened the capacities of the competent authority - Dojran Municipality, for protection and management of Lake Dojran.
- The project developed nature-based solutions for pollution prevention from land and wastewater.
- The project incentivize the competent authority to implement urgent actions from the Management Plan with Action Plan for Lake Dojran, which included raising of additional funds to finance implementation of actions for prevention of wastewater pollution of the lake i.e. construction of two nature-based solutions for wastewater treatment in two villages, construction of a sewer system in one village, construction of a wastewater treatment plant for the towns of Nov Dojran-Sretenovo-Star Dojran and a rehabilitation of the main sewer line.
- The project raised awareness of the local and central competent authorities for the need of trans-boundary cooperation on Lake Dojran, and first steps for a trans-boundary dialogue with Greek authorities were taken.
- The project contributed to establishment of close collaboration between different actors - civil society sector, local administration and a central government institution, for the purpose of protection of Lake Dojran, as well as establishment of a long-term partnership between Milieukontakt Macedonia and Dojran Municipality on Lake Dojran protection, going beyond this project.

**Results for each deliverable:**

<b>Component</b>		<b>Deliverable</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Results for Deliverable</b>
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.1	Protected Area Management Plan with Action Plan	The Protected Area Management Plan with Action Plan of Lake Dojran has been developed by the project team. Pertaining to the official legislative procedures, the Protected Area Management Plan with Action Plan will be submitted for adoption to the Ministry of Environment in North Macedonia, once the document on Revalorization study of Dojran is officially approved. As part of the procedure for adoption of the Management Plan, we will organize a Public Hearing and will also submit the document to the Greek authorities to comply with the ESPOO convention requirements on environmental impact assessment in trans-boundary context. Although the project will be already finished, the project team is committed to bring to completion the Management Plan procedure and provide the competent authority Dojran Municipality with assistance during the whole procedure.
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.3	Protocols for protected area monitoring (Standard Operational Procedure (SOP))	The protocols for protected area monitoring have been developed by the project coordinator and presented to the Municipality of Dojran. The protocols were developed in accordance with the provisions of the national Law on water.



Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.4	Guidance on best IRBM practices	Guidance on best Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) practices has been timely and successfully developed, by the external expert Dr. Biljana Puleska (September 2020). The Guidance (106 pages) focuses on the national Law on Water, the EU Water Framework Directive and other legislation related to water issues, and it compiles all legal responsibilities, requirements and procedures that the management authority of Dojran Lake should undertake/follow for successful management and protection of Lake Dojran. The project activity was accompanied by a two-day training on IRBM for the local administration of Dojran Municipality (please see below).
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.5	Report on training program for local administration	The training IRBM program for the local administration has been successfully delivered on 17 – 18.09.2020. The Training was attended by 13 representatives of the local administration and Public Utility of Dojran Municipality. The training revealed that the competent authority of Lake Dojran has very little prior knowledge on legislative procedures, obligations and requirements relevant for the management and protection of Lake Dojran. The training program has provided the local administration with solid background on this topics, and the participants evaluated the training as successful and crucial for enhancing their

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				knowledge. However, both the project team and the local administration believe that additional trainings are needed in order to further strengthen their capacities for lake's protection and management.
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.6	Meeting minutes on initiated dialogue for proper water abstraction regulation with the Greek management authority	We have implemented quite a few actions towards this deliverable, however the project team is not fully satisfied with the outcome. The undertaken actions include meetings with the local administration and Mayor of Dojran Municipality, consultations with the Cabinet of the Minister for environment, meetings with representatives of the Biotop/Wetland Center responsible for monitoring of freshwater protected areas in Greece, a meeting with the Mayor of Kilkis municipality in Greece and a meeting between the Mayor of Dojran and the Ambassador of Greece in North Macedonia. Despite all this, we were not particularly successful to establish a dialog with the counterpart Greek authorities. We will continue our efforts to establish solid communication with the Greek management authorities and aid Dojran Municipality to achieve long-term trans-boundary cooperation on Lake Dojran with Greece.
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.7	Meeting Minutes with Greek authorities on experience exchange on protected areas management	The deliverable was achieved and two meetings with representatives from the Biotop/Wetland Center ( <a href="http://www.ekby.gr/ekby/en/EKBY_home_en.html">http://www.ekby.gr/ekby/en/EKBY_home_en.html</a> ) - Ms. Vassiliki Tsiaoussi and Ms. Helen

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				Fitoka, responsible for monitoring of freshwater protected areas in Greece were held on 19.11.2020 and 24.11.2020. The meetings were successful and we exchange experiences on protected areas management.
2.0	Achieving sustainable management, conservation and restoration of the lake through implementation of ecosystem-based practices	2.1	Operational plan for construction of artificial wetlands as means to improve water quality of Dojran Lake	<p>The deliverable was successfully accomplished through the development of a "Feasibility Study for treatment of wastewater and sludge at Dojran Municipality using nature-based solutions" by the hired company Limnos. The project team developed an EIA Safeguard document and initiated an official EIA procedure, at the Ministry of Environment in North Macedonia, relating to the Feasibility study document.</p> <p>The project team conducted extra activities to raise additional funds for implementation of the wastewater treatment solutions developed in the Feasibility Study (in total 550.299,00 Euro). As part of this, the technical documentation for both constructed wetlands have been already finalized by a construction design company, while the construction of the two constructed wetlands in v. Furka and v. Crnichani is expected to be finalized by May 2025. Additionally, we have secured funds (371.110,00 Euro) to build a sewer system to collect the wastewater in v. Crnichani, which was constructed in December 2023.</p>
2.0	Achieving sustainable management, conservation	2.3	Report on lake ecosystem analyses and pollution	The deliverable was fully achieved. The project team developed a comprehensive "Report on

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
	and restoration of the lake through implementation of ecosystem-based practices		sources with recommendations for techniques to improve lake water quality	the assessment of the ecological condition of the monument of nature Lake Dojran”, which compiles biogeochemical data from the first long-term monitoring (18 months) of the water quality of Lake Dojran.
2.0	Achieving sustainable management, conservation and restoration of the lake through implementation of ecosystem-based practices	2.4	Training program on sustainable agricultural practices for improving lake quality	The deliverable was successfully achieved. The training of local farmers on sustainable agriculture practices with the aim to prevent agriculture pollution of the lake and to improve the ecological condition of Lake Dojran was held 16 – 17.10.2020 in Star Dojran, by the expert Ms. Stole Georgiev. The training was attended by 7 individual farmers and one representative of a farmer’s cooperative that apply agriculture practices on the territory of Dojran Municipality.
2.0	Achieving sustainable management, conservation and restoration of the lake through implementation of ecosystem-based practices	2.5	Report on applied nature-based solutions for bio-technical stabilization	The deliverable was successfully accomplished in close cooperation with the staff from the local administration of Dojran Municipality in December 2020. Related to this activity, we have conducted an officially required Environmental Impact Assessment procedure and have developed an EIA Safeguard.
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.1	Minutes of CEPF grantee meetings and exchanges	The CEPF grantees meeting has been canceled by CEPF.
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.2	Minutes of Project kick-off meeting	The project kick-off meeting took place on the 26th of August 2019, and this deliverable has been accomplished.

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.7	Report on Final Project Event	In communication with the donor, it was agreed that the Final Project Event will be postponed.
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.3	CSTT/GTT filled up and submitted to CEPF at beginning and end of project	The deliverable has been accomplished. CSTT and GTT assessments have been completed at the beginning and at the end of the project.
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.4	METT filled up and submitted to CEPF	The deliverable has been accomplished. METT assessment has been completed at the beginning and at the end of the project.
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.5	Report on the implementation of the Process Framework	The deliverable was accomplished and a total of four (4) Reports on the implementation of the Process Framework have been developed and timely submitted to the donor.
1.0	Strengthening governance at catchment management zone	1.2	Strategic Environment Assessment on the Management Plan	The deliverable could not be accomplished fully, due to delays in the official adoption of the related document - Revalorization Study of Lake Dojran. The first steps of the SEA procedure have been finalized; however, the project team remains committed to complete the SEA adoption procedure also after the conclusion of this project.
2.0	Achieving sustainable management, conservation and restoration of the lake through implementation of ecosystem-based practices	2.2	Environmental Impact Assessment on the Operational Plan for construction of artificial wetlands	The deliverable was accomplished. The project team developed an EIA Safeguard document and initiated an official EIA procedure at the Ministry of Environment in North Macedonia, related to the Feasibility study document.

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
3.0	Project Communication, Promotion, Project Management and Capacity Building	3.6	Six-monthly report on the advancement of the Environmental Assessment and actions related to Environmental Safeguards	<p>Deliverable has been accomplished and we have timely developed and submitted four (4) regular EIA Safeguards, as well as three (3) EIA Safeguard Reports for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Plan for revitalization of Dojran Lake shoreline, using nature-based solutions, for improved protection against pollution from land"</li> <li>- "Feasibility Study for treatment of wastewater and sludge in Dojran Municipality using nature-based solutions"</li> <li>- activity on "Restoration of the coastal path of Lake Dojran".</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the project team has developed/initiated two nationally required Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Plan for revitalization of Dojran Lake shoreline, using nature-based solutions, for improved protection against pollution from land" (completed)</li> <li>- Management Plan with Action Plan for Dojran lake (SEA procedure initiated; please also see above).</li> </ul>

**Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:**

Within the project we have developed three tools in form of Manuals for management of protected areas, Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) and Protocols for monitoring of monument of nature Lake Dojran:

- "Best Practices Manual For Integrated River Basin Management - for the protection, conservation and proper management of Dojran Lake", by Prof. Dr. Biljana Puleska

- "Manual for protected areas management", by Aleksandra Karakashova Sachkarska and Dr. Petra Pop Ristova
- "Protocols for monitoring of monument of nature Lake Dojran", comprising a compilation of previously published and validated protocols for monitoring of species and ecological parameters in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive

The Manuals compile and describe best practices and legislative provisions and obligations regarding management of protected areas and water resources in a user-friendly and simple non-lawyer language. The Manuals are primarily intended for the local authorities responsible for implementation of IRBM practices and nature protection on a local level; however the Manuals are useful for any environmental practitioners.

Other important documents developed within the project, for assessment of the current ecological condition of the lake, management of the lake and prevention of pollution of the lake, include:

- "Plan for revitalization of Dojran Lake shoreline using nature-based solutions, for improved protection against pollution from land", developed by LIMNOS
- "Feasibility study for treatment of wastewater and sludge at Dojran Municipality, using nature-based solutions", developed by LIMNOS  
(both documents propose solutions for prevention of pollution of Lake Dojran)
- "Management Plan with Action Plan for monument of nature Lake Dojran" (not yet adopted)
- "Study of revalorization of the natural values of the monument of nature Lake Dojran" (this document was developed by CSO REC during a previous CEPF funded project and was now, as part of our project, further updated and modified by the project team; the document is currently waiting for an approval by the Ministry of environment and physical planning).
- "Report on the assessment of the ecological condition of the monument of nature Lake Dojran", by Dr. Petra Pop Ristova
- "Assessment of fish stock of Lake Dojran (North Macedonia)", by Spase Shumka, Laura Shumka and Kosta Trajche

In addition, at the request by the Ministry of environment and physical planning, Milieukontakt developed an "Study for valorization of plane trees (*Platanus orientalis* L) at the main square of Star Dojran". This Study was prepared in order to re-establish the official national protection of the previously protected three plane trees in Star Dojran and re-proclaim them as natural rarity - monument of nature.

## **PORTFOLIO INDICATORS**

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
2.0	Number of KBAs under improved management and number of hectares covered			3,297	<p>Activities that contributed towards enhancement of protection and management of KBA Dojran Lake, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed Revalorization study for Lake Dojran that defines protection zones with different type of management objectives i.e. strict protection zone, active management zone, and zone with sustainable management</li> <li>- Developed Feasibility study for wastewater treatment using nature-based solutions</li> <li>- Developed Management Plan with Action Plan, which is pending official adoption. Nevertheless, competent authority has already started implementation of urgent measures of the Management Plan with Action Plan (please see points below)</li> <li>- Developed Urban project outside the scope of the urban plan for purpose E1.6</li> <li>- Sewage infrastructures: wastewater treatment plant</li> <li>- Constructed sewer system for 221 inhabitants in v.</li> </ul>



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					<p>Crnichani for wastewater collection, to prevent pollution of Lake Dojran</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Developed technical documentation for wastewater treatment based on constructed wetland technology for v. Crnichani (300 PE) and v. Furka (725 PE)</li> <li>- Secured funds for construction of two constructed wetlands in v. Crnichani and v. Fruka. Planned finish of construction works by May 2025.</li> <li>- Developed a Feasibility study and Technical documentation for construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant for Star Dojran - Sretenovo - Nov Dojran, with 3000 PE capacity. Contract for construction has been signed and finish of construction work is planned by December 2024.</li> </ul>
2.4	Number of Freshwater KBAs in priority CMZ with improved information on			1	<p>Activities contributing to the portfolio indicator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assessment of fish population of Lake Dojran, that provided first comprehensive data on</li> </ul>

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	biodiversity, shared with stakeholders				<p>Lake Dojran fish biodiversity, in accordance with EU Water Framework Directive provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long-term monitoring of water quality of Lake Dojran</li> <li>- Conference "State of the Dojran Lake ecosystem and measures for sustainable management and protection" held on 21 June 2021, organized by Milieukontakt Macedonia in collaboration with GTI. Conference was attended by 20 participants (12 women and 8 men)</li> <li>- "World Wetland Day" national event, celebrating 50 years of Ramsar convention, entitled as "Towards better improvement of Ramsar site Lake Dojran". The event was organized by the Ministry of environment and physical planning and Milieukontakt Macedonia. The event took place on the 02.02.2021 and was attended by 61 participants (33 women and 28 men)</li> <li>- Fundraising event "Improving of ecological</li> </ul>

<b>Portfolio Indicator Number</b>	<b>Portfolio Indicator Description</b>	<b>Expected Numerical Contribution</b>	<b>Expected Contribution Description</b>	<b>Actual Numerical Contribution</b>	<b>Actual Contribution Description</b>
					condition of monument of nature Lake Dojran”, convened on 06.05.2022.The fundraising event was organized by Milieukontakt Macedonia on behalf of the Minister of environment and physical planning Mr. Naser Nuredini. The event was attended by 11 representatives (5 women and 6 men) of the European Delegation, the Swiss Embassy i and the Ambassador of R. of Slovenia in North Macedonia. - Facilitation of data exchange between CEPF grantee (GTI) and Dojran Municipality, for inclusion in the Revalorization Study of Lake Dojran.
1.1				2	The actions that were taken are based on the provision of the national laws for spatial planning, and included development of a proposal Urban project outside the scope of the urban plan for purpose E1.6 – Sewage infrastructures: wastewater treatment plant, consultation and

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
					approval by stakeholders (public companies and national institutions competent for national water and energy management, telecommunications, environment etc.) and development of a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Urban project, for a total area of 2.3 ha, was officially approved by all public institutions and was adopted by Dojran Municipality.

## GLOBAL INDICATORS

### Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the 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 Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion

\*World Database of Protected Areas

\*\*If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

\*\*\* This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.



## Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management
Lake Dojran	MKD04		3,297

## Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention
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## Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training
14	9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Best practices for implementation of Integrated River Basin Management for protection and improved management of Lake Dojran</li> <li>2. Sustainable agriculture practices for prevention of pollution of Lake Dojran</li> <li>3. Management of protected areas</li> <li>4. Monitoring of water quality (biogeochemical parameters)</li> </ol>

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits

## Benefits to Communities

View the <b>characteristics</b> column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the <b>benefits</b> column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Type of Benefit									Country	Number of Males Benefitting	Number of Females Benefitting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i			
Crnichani	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Macedonia	108	112
Star Dojran-Sretenovo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Macedonia	332	346
Nov Dojran	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Macedonia	539	561
Furka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	North Macedonia	279	291

### Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

- Crnichani: Rural community/village
- Furka: Rural community/village

## Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the <b>topics</b> column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	Name of Law	Scope	Topics															
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	Urban project outside the scope of the urban plan for purpose E1.6 – Sewage infrastructures: wastewater treatment plant	Local	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**“Other” Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:**

No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment
1	North Macedonia	December 01, 2023	Urban project outside the scope of the urban plan for purpose E1.6 – Sewage infrastructures: wastewater treatment plant proposes changes in spatial planning and land use to enable construction	The actions that were taken are based on the provision of the national laws for spatial planning, and included development of a proposal Urban project outside the scope of the urban plan for purpose E1.6 – Sewage infrastructures: wastewater treatment plant, consultation and approval by stakeholders (public companies



No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment
			of Wastewater Treatment Plant, comprised of two modules each with capacity of 3000 PE for the population of Nov Dojran, Star Dojran and Sretenovo in Dojran Municipality. Construction of the Wastewater Treatment Plant will provide efficient treatment of the wastewater before it is discharged in Lake Dojran and thus will improve protection Lake Dojran.	and national institutions competent for national water and energy management, telecommunications, environment etc.) and development of a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

### Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

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.

Name of Company	Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice	Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted
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## Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose
Memorandum of cooperation for the joint implementation of projects for conservation of natural values of Lake Dojran	2019	North Macedonia	Yes	The partnership between Dojran Municipality and Milieukontakt Macedonia was established with the purpose to pool capacities and jointly implement projects and activities for conservation of natural values of Dojran Lake.

## Sustainable Financing

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 services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?
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## Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
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## LESSONS LEARNED

During our work on implementation of the project we have stumbled upon an activity - already in the stage of a tender procedure, that would have had very harmful effects on the ecosystem of Lake Dojran. In response, we took specific measures that proved effective not only to halt this harmful activity but also to reverse the situation and improve the protection of the lake. We gained invaluable experience from this situation, and we believe the following learned lessons could be of help to others when dealing with similar situations and working in the field of environmental protection:

- Harmful activities are best halted with legal arguments - have an excellent knowledge of the legislative provisions, obligations, and procedures on nature protection
- Monitor public procurement systems (tender dossiers), and cross-check if/how legal procedures for nature protection are implemented e.g. Environmental Impact Assessment procedure (including development of EIA/SEA Report, scope of the Report, public hearing, timely notification of all responsible authorities)
- Demand your rights as public to access to environmental information and access to justice in environmental matters (Aarhus convention)
- Get support from the local/regional Aarhus Center and other Civil Society Organizations
- Address all institutions that could have legal authority on the matter
- Develop excellent negotiation and conflict management skills
- Offer solutions to the problem

## SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

The project team, in partnership with Dojran Municipality, was successful to enable sustainability of the project results. In this regard, we were able to secure 2.676.556,00 \$ of additional funding, from the Centre for international cooperation and development of Republic of Slovenia and the Government of R. North Macedonia/Ministry of environment and physical planning to implement urgent actions from the Management Plan of Lake Dojran that are based on the nature-based solutions for wastewater treatment that were developed in this CEPF-funded project.

Solutions developed in this project for pollution prevention from land and for nature-based treatment of wastewater can be easily replicated and adapted for other locations in the country and the region, and are especially suitable for any type of protected areas where water-based pollution is an issue.

In North Macedonia, and likely broadened in the region, local administrations have very weak capacities (knowledge, expertise, finances and skills) for nature protection. Although not a "result" per se, the close partnership between the Municipality of Dojran and Milieukontakt Macedonia can be used as a good model for cooperation between local administration and the civil society sector, and can be easily replicated in other protected areas to enhance capacities of local authorities for nature protection.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

Environmental Safeguards have been developed as individual project components, and have been previously submitted. We have implemented and submitted four (4) regular EIA Safeguards, as well as three (3) EIA Safeguard Reports related to the following project activities:

- "Plan for revitalization of Dojran Lake shoreline, using nature-based solutions, for improved protection against pollution from land"
- "Feasibility Study for treatment of wastewater and sludge in Dojran Municipality using nature-based solutions"
- Activity on "Restoration of the coastal path of Lake Dojran".

In addition, the project team developed/initiated two nationally required Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) for the:

- "Plan for revitalization of Dojran Lake shoreline, using nature-based solutions, for improved protection against pollution from land" (completed)
- Management Plan with Action Plan for Dojran lake (SEA procedure has been initiated, but procedure is pending and can be finalized once the Management Plan with Action Plan is adopted).

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

CEPF is the best donor that we ever worked with. Based on our experience working on this project, CEPF offers flexibility, CEPF is results-orientated and provides for great support to grantees, especially through the RIT teams, which makes it easier for the grantees to succeed to implement a successful project. Rather than having any recommendations for CEPF, the project team wishes that other donor agencies adopt CEPF practices for work with grantees.

## ADDITIONAL FUNDING

<b>Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)</b>	\$4,748,419.00
<b>Breakdown of Additional Funding</b>	<p>The project team in partnership with Dojran Municipality secured additional funding to finance implementation of measures developed/identified in the CEPF-funded project. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Project "Enhancement of protection of monument of nature - Dojran Lake through improved wastewater treatment in Dojran municipality" Applicants: Dojran Municipality in partnership with Milieukontakt Macedonia Donor: Centre for international cooperation and development of Republic of Slovenia and Government of R. North Macedonia/Ministry of environment and physical planning</li></ol>

	<p>Budget: 2.676.556,00\$ (1. Wastewater treatment plant with 3000 PE capacity for Nov Dojran, Star Dojran and Sretenovo - 1.659.260,00 \$; 2. Construction of constructed wetland in v. Furka - 467.531,00 \$; 3. Construction of constructed wetland in v. Crnichani - 150.827,00 \$; 4. Construction of sewer system in v. Crnichani - 398.938,00 \$)</p> <p>2. Project "Preparation of technical documentation for the improvement of the wastewater treatment system in New Dojran"  Applicants: Dojran Municipality in partnership with Milieukontakt Macedonia  Donor: UNDP North Macedonia  Budget: 20.000,00 \$</p> <p>3. Activity "Rehabilitation of main sewer line (8km) in Dojran Municipality"  Implementer: Dojran Municipality  Donor: Finances provided to Dojran Municipality by the Ministry of environment and physical planning and Government of R. North Macedonia  Budget: 2.051.863,00 \$</p>
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**INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY**

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

Association for sustainable development Milieukontakt Macedonia; email: info@mkm.mk