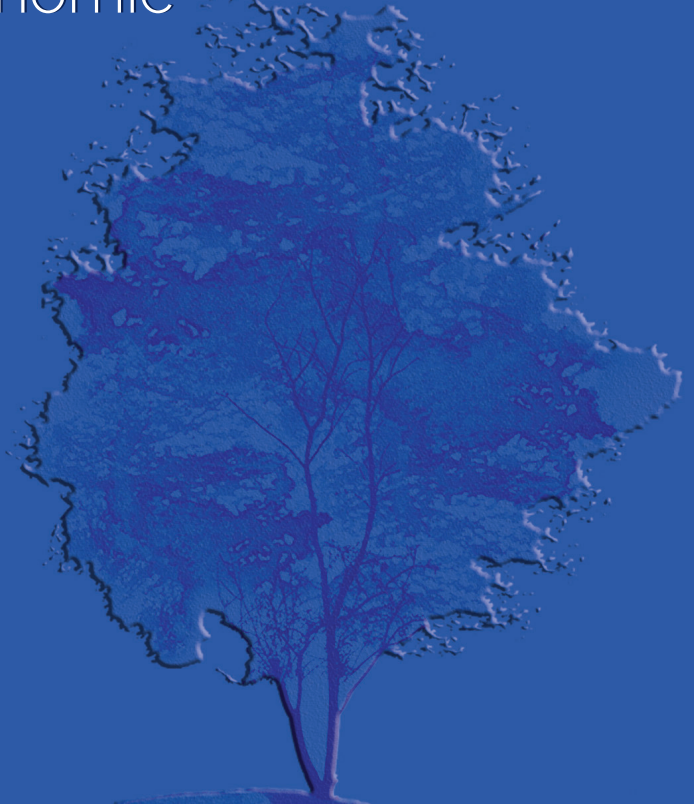




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Creating a Cross-Border Network for Socio-Economic Sustainability through Protection of **Nature**



Agencija za upravljanje
zaštićenim područjima
— Podgorice —



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Agencija za upravljanje
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0. Introduction

The project partners appreciate the opportunity to implement this project, bringing together as it does NGOs and local governments from Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro to discuss urgent issues in the area of nature protection, and thank the Western Balkans Fund (WBF) for providing the financial support to do so. The cooperation among the partners and participants has been excellent.

1. Project overview

The project Creating a Cross-Border Network for Socio-Economic Sustainability through Protection of Nature was conceived and implemented by the Foundation for Local Autonomy and Governance (FLAG)¹, the Agency for Management of Protected Areas (AMPA)² of Podgorica and the Kosovo NGO Environment and Youth Capacity Development (EYCD)³. It was funded by the Western Balkans Fund (WBF), in the framework of the 4th Call for Proposals, the first to be co-funded by the European Union (EU) through the its Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The project aligns with the EU strategic agenda 2019–2024, aiming to build a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe, following the European Green Deal and the Glasgow Climate Pact (COP26).

The project arose from the realisation that much work to address sustainable development has been undertaken in individual projects implemented by NGOs and local governments, but whereas central government agencies and local governments have received training in certain aspects covered by the call, many CSOs are still to benefit from these experiences. Sharing this wide range of experiences will fill a gap in the potential for actions to be taken (including voluntarily) by separate members of a community, by a community together and by communities working together. This project is an effort to lift the obstacles posed by localism and restricted radius of action.

The impacts of the extreme weather Europe experienced in 2021 highlights the great importance of volunteer organisations in aiding affected communities. This volunteering attitude should be encouraged and facilitated more widely, including in the Western Balkans. Having a closer connection with the local communities gives organisations great assistance in the event of civil emergencies. Brought together in a network and having the possibility to discuss with local authorities individual and shared approaches to address sustainability challenges and emergency responsiveness, CSOs have an opportunity to expand their actions of volunteering beyond their local boundaries and across borders.

¹FLAG was set up in Tirana in 2003. Its mission is to encourage achievement of the most advanced standards in decentralised and democratic governance.

²AMPA was set up in 2018. Its mission is the protection, sustainable development and promotion of all protected areas in the entire territory of Podgorica Municipality.

³EYCD has been an active since 2017 in improving social and environmental conditions in Prizren, enhancing capacities for WM towards a sound material-cycling society.

Sustainable development includes importantly actions that limit climate change. That countries were able to reach an agreement at COP26 to reduce coal-powered energy production is testament to cross-border willingness to work together. Forest fires, illegal logging and poor waste management all impact directly the sustainability of natural habitats and also the communities dependent upon those habitats for provision of natural resources, including for tourism development. Indiscriminate casting away of waste impacts local communities and further afield, with health threatened and the numbers of tourists reduced, particularly where toxic waste is carelessly discarded into the environment.

The local authorities in Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro have much to offer given their experience in the areas of forest protection and waste management. By participating together in the workshops held as part of the project Creating a Cross-Border Network for Socio-Economic Sustainability through Protection of Nature, common understanding and trust is developed, not only among NGOs and local authorities, but also among the three countries over future cooperation, supported by the national agencies.

The overall objective of the project is to build a network of NGOs (and local authorities) in Western Balkans in order to share experiences in environmental protection, undertake joint actions and facilitate cooperation in the future.

More specific objectives include the following:

- » Create a network of NGOs in Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro
- » Increase knowledge and awareness in the communities of the need for environmental protection and of actions that can be taken to protect the environment and enhance their socio-economic sustainability
- » Increase capacities of NGOs to cooperate together and with local authorities in areas of shared concern
- » Develop a database of CSOs to facilitate cooperation in undertaking activities that address issues of shared concern
- » Raise awareness of the need to protect the environment in general and protected areas in particular
- » Raise awareness of the role of forests, biodiversity and land use to enable the world to meet its sustainable development goals, as specified at COP26 in Glasgow in 2021

Target groups

- » 30 NGOs from Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro dealing with nature promotion and preservation
- » 3 local authorities (one per country)
- » Public agencies in Montenegro (AMPA), Albania (Shkodër Municipality Nature Protection Directorate, and Culture Directorate) and Kosovo (Sharri National Park)

Implementation of the project led to the following beneficial results:

- » Three workshops held
- » 50 participants in three meetings, including representatives of 25 NGOs, as well as local government officials, brought together to discuss issues of shared concern
- » Civil society (25 NGOs and volunteers) introduced to local governments, environmental protection departments and regional protection agencies (Montenegro, AMPA; Albania, Shkoder Municipality Nature Protection Directorate and Culture Directorate)
- » Experiences, knowledge, gaps and good practices shared among 50 workshop participants
- » Cooperation among 25 NGOs established for sustainability of natural resources
- » Network of NGOs and local authorities in Western Balkans created, and prepared to work together (including voluntarily) to enhance sustainable development of their communities

The three implementation partners conducted several activities to achieve the creation of a network for socio-economic sustainability through environmental protection. The main activities include the following:

- » Research to identify and select NGOs in the three countries with an environmental protection profile and experience
- » Joint PR campaign to promote the project using social media and the partners websites to ensure project activities promotion, raising-awareness among the community and the visibility of the EU and WBF contribution
- » Organization of workshops in Podgorica, Prizren and Shkodër to share experiences among local NGOs with regard to disaster risk management in forestry, waste management and natural protection
- » Delivery of final workshop in Albania to summarise the work completed and promote the joint database of NGOs as an opportunity for future cooperation among the three countries

The database was developed based upon selective research of civil society organizations that have been established and operate with the aim of contributing to environmental protection. The data presented here have been verified through individual contacting of each organization. Therefore, all listed organizations are potential actors for implementing joint initiatives in the respective locations, as well as in the cross-border region, to ensure broader and more sustainable results.

2. Networking among NGOs and local authorities

The workshops delivered in the three countries were welcomed by the local authorities and achieved satisfactory participation and contribution by the civil society organizations. The following summaries of the discussions provide an interesting overview of the challenges the environment and the communities are facing each day and in times of natural disaster, the acknowledged causes and the adverse consequences as observed and perceived. The participants in all three workshops identified some of the main obstacles with regard to project work in the area, summed up as follows: poor capacities of local level authorities, resistance of the local population due to lack of awareness and understanding and fear, lack of data and knowledge on the state of the environment, and low capacities and interest for project sustainability.

2.1 First Workshop: Podgorica, June 2022

On June 16th, 2022, the first workshop within the scope of the WBF project Creating a Cross-Border Network for Socio-Economic Sustainability through Protection of Nature was held in Podgorica, Montenegro. The main purpose of the workshop was to gather representatives of relevant NGOs in order to establish a network that will collaborate on tackling the major sustainability issues in the cross-border (CB) area between Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. The workshop was held on the premises of the Assembly building in Podgorica, and was hosted by project partner AMPA, gathering six representatives of project partners and nine local NGOs.

In the first session, Mr Drago Djekovic shared the experiences and challenges AMPA has faced, the collaboration with stakeholders and projects carried out so far. The project itself was presented by Ms Gejla Shehaj, FLAG Project Manager, and the work and experience of FLAG was presented by Dr Iain Wilson, while Mr Mirsad Aliti presented the work undertaken in Kosovo by EYCD. The participants were introduced to the IPA CBC programme and examples of successful CB cooperation projects by the programme representative Mr Nikola Djonovic.

The second session of the workshop was participative, with the gathered representatives of NGOs and institutions having an opportunity to share their experiences and opinions. The discussion was facilitated by Ms Marija Vugdelic and aimed at obtaining concrete inputs and ideas about possible future projects that the NGO partnership network can implement. The participants shared their experiences in the CB area, elaborating difficulties encountered, partnerships, project achievements, and providing concrete ideas for future work considering both the challenges of working in the CB environment and the benefits of such cooperation.

The projects presented by the organisations at the workshop collectively cover most of the CB area, typically in the area of Skadar (Shkodër) Lake and its vicinity (Tuzi), Prokletije Mountains and Bojana River, along with some experiences in the Valbona Valley and in Kosovo (Rugova Valley), with the main focus on waste management, capacity building and education (various stakeholders groups), rural development (focus on sustainable tourism and forestry), empowering women and tackling gender issues, youth work, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and biodiversity protection.

The NGOs had cooperated with a wide range of stakeholders, including municipalities, ministries, other NGOs, national institutions and protected areas management and development agencies.

The main outputs from these projects are in the form of various novel studies for informing the decision-making processes (e.g. waste management plans, endangered species survey results, potential for tourism products), educational programmes (workshops, study visits) and waste removal (illegal dumps, cleaning of channels). The projects were also used to enhance organisational capacities, primarily through the supply of equipment and qualification of staff.

It was clear to all participants that through the collective experience reported above, they have covered the whole CB area and beyond, established cooperation and contacts with a wide range of stakeholders and encountered similar barriers to project implementation and sustainability.

In the third, but equally important, session of the workshop, the participants proposed the issues and problems they considered a priority to be addressed in the future. Through discussion guided by Ms Vugdalic they analysed the consequences of the problems, and tried to identify the immediate and root causes, as summarised in the table below.

Root cause →	Immediate cause →	Challenge →	Consequence
Overall socio-economic situation in the region Short-term planning and thinking Political context Lack of political and personal will Degradation of the value system Degradation of the educational system Trends and demands of the modern lifestyle Mentality Lack of accountability for poor decisions or actions	Inefficient law enforcement Lack of adequate infrastructure Poor administrative, human and other capacities of relevant institutions Low level of public awareness	Waste	Pollution Habitat destruction and species declines Destruction of landscapes and loss of aesthetic values Consequences for the health of humans and farm animals
	Poor surveillance Lack of legal power by the protected area managers Deficient legislation Conflicts with various area users Lack of communication and cooperation with the local communities Lack of understanding of protected area objectives by the local communities No benefit flows from protected areas to local communities	Illegal activities in protected areas	Destruction of habitats and biodiversity decline Destruction of the ecological integrity of ecosystems Loss of values Reduction in visits and visitor experience, and thus income generation
	Inappropriate forestry policies Unsustainable communities Markets and prices Lack of appropriate control mechanisms	Unsustainable forestry	Destruction of habitats and biodiversity decline Increase in occurrence of hazards (fires, landslides) Drying-up of water sources Loss of economic revenues Public expenditures for revitalisation of devastated areas Bribery and corruption

	<p>Inappropriate policies</p> <p>Ineffective law enforcement and punitive actions</p> <p>Bribery and corruption</p> <p>Lack of awareness</p>	Wildlife poaching	<p>Effects on biodiversity: population declines, disturbance</p> <p>Bribery and corruption</p>
	<p>Degraded and deficient educational system</p> <p>Lack of technical capacities</p> <p>Lack of educational opportunities (outside the formal system)</p> <p>Lack of interest/inertia</p>	Lack of public awareness, education	<p>Persistence of problems and issues</p> <p>Passive and active resistance towards environmental actions</p> <p>Inertia</p>
	<p>Lack of capacities</p> <p>Interlinked society (everyone knows each other)</p>	Poor law enforcement	<p>Persistence of problems and issues</p> <p>Intensification of environmental degradation</p>
	<p>Perceptions of projects as activities and not as an action to make an impact or bring about change</p> <p>Financing as the main motivation for project applications</p> <p>Lack of interest in ownership of project results and impacts</p> <p>Lack of capacities</p> <p>Frequent change in policies and plans due to political instability and high staffturnover</p>	Project sustainability	<p>Stagnation</p> <p>Poor effects of the invested funds</p> <p>Purchased equipment not used for what was intended: e.g. generating new data, education</p>
	<p>Lack of appropriate knowledge</p> <p>Staff hiring by political criteria and not by expertise</p> <p>Lack of educational opportunities for specific knowledge and skills</p> <p>Political priorities not aligned with environmental needs</p>	Lack of awareness of decision makers	<p>Marginalisation of environmental issues in their work</p> <p>Persistence of problems and issues</p> <p>Endorsement of policies or decisions that are not good for the environment</p>
	<p>Lack of communication and cooperation between institutions</p> <p>Lack of data sharing</p> <p>Lack of finances for generating new data</p> <p>Brain drain</p>	Lack of data and up-to-date information and knowledge	<p>Poor decisions and plans, based on outdated data and information</p> <p>Poor evaluation of the state of the environment and the achievements</p> <p>Lack of reporting</p> <p>Lack of accountability</p>

The participants further discussed which of the issues were cross-border in nature (and can, thus, be solved only through cross-border cooperation), and which are shared issues (i.e. same problems occurring on both sides of the border that can be tackled at the national level, with the assistance of CB partnerships). The issues of waste, illegal activities in protected areas, unsustainable forestry practices and the lack of public awareness and knowledge were identified as CB problems, and as such a good basis for future collaborative projects.

Conclusions from Workshop 1

The open and guided discussions carried out within this workshop demonstrate that cross-border cooperation can bring huge benefits for participating organisations, because as an assemblage they have more experience that can be shared among their members, a larger network of local partners, and greater strength to make an impact and have their voices heard.

The issues identified require consolidated and coordinated actions on both sides of the border in order to be resolved, while future projects can focus on mitigating the consequences of these problems, and can address their immediate and root causes. Addressing these causes means at the same time addressing the main barriers to project implementation encountered during the experience of the NGOs and ensuring long-lasting impacts.

Potential projects that this network can address in future in the cross-border context include the following:

1. Project activities addressing the consequences of identified cross border problems:
 - » Identification and removal of illegal waste dumps
 - » Remediation of landscapes (from illegal waste disposal, illegal logging, fires, landslides)
 - » Target species habitat management (population surveys with adequate conservation measures)
 - » Raising capacities in the protected areas: human (through increase in staff numbers and their targeted education) and technical (through purchase and use of specific surveillance equipment)
 - » Establishing cooperation bodies between protected area managers and local communities
2. Project activities addressing the causes of identified cross-border problems:
 - » Drafting and lobbying for endorsing more suitable policies, legislation and plans
 - » Raising the capacities and awareness of decision makers and the public
 - » Strengthening the law enforcement chain
 - » Designing and conducting specific, targeted educational programmes
 - » Assessing and promoting social and ecological values of nature and natural resources (not just economic)
 - » Introducing the concepts of green economy and sustainability in the policy decision and business sectors

2.2 Second Workshop: Prizren, July 2022

On July 12th, 2022, the second workshop was organized within the project framework in Prizren, Kosovo. Participants in this workshop were all project partners, along with Mr Bajram Kafexholli, Director of Sharri National Park, representatives from the WBF – Mr Fjordi Bisha and Mr Uros Citakovic – and representatives from NGOs operating in Kosovo, chiefly in Prizren.

The NGOs participating at the discussion table contributed to the identification of problems, causes and innovative solutions to live in a clean and healthy environment. Among the participating organizations were Nevo Concepti, Sharri Wildlife, Dokufest, ISDY, ECOTHINK, Let's Do It Peja, SHB Sharri, and *Ec Ma Ndryshe*.

During the first part of the workshop, the host organization EYCD presented the vision and mission of the organization and its activities in the area of protection of nature. The presentation of the project was again made by Ms Gejla Shehaj, FLAG Project Manager and was followed by a round of introduction of all attendees.

Mr Kafexholli moderated a discussion focused on the pronounced lack of cooperation between institutions, both at the local and national level, about working together, sharing data and environmental information that each institution has separately concerning protected areas, making available the monitoring equipment of each institution for the needs of the others, and conducting joint inspections and monitoring. It was noted that the activity of the institutions sometimes approaches outright competition, unfortunately leading to continuous disfunction and stagnation. Citizens lack of awareness of the responsibilities of the Directorate of National Parks and of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning and the problems created with illegal logging in the national parks is of great concern and special attention was requested for the human capacities necessary for the protection of protected areas.

A session was dedicated on how to overcome challenges in the field of environmental protection, the benefits of CB cooperation, and education and public awareness for the protection of nature. It was followed by an open discussion about the uncertainties, questions, suggestions of the participants that led to an analysis of weaknesses, challenges and consequences conducted in the second session.

The second part of the workshop was participative, aimed at identifying along with the NGOs, concrete ideas for future work, considering the challenges of work in the CB environment and the benefits of cooperation. Concrete inputs and ideas for future projects were obtained that the NGO partnership network can implement. Sharing their experiences of working in the CB area, the participants discussed the four main pillars of the analysis, as summarized in the table below.

Root cause →	Immediate cause →	Challenge →	Consequence
Not prioritizing environmental issues Irresponsibility Lack of human resources Attitude Difficult socio-economic conditions Supervision	Lack of bins in public spaces Lack of adequate infrastructure Poor cleaning of locations Poor administrative, human and technical capacities of relevant institutions Waste burning Lack of composting	Waste	Pollution Consequences on the health of humans and cattle Effects on biodiversity: population decline, disturbance
Non-compliance with the law and non-acceptance of responsibility by citizens Lack of data Poorly planned strategies	Illegal cutting of trees Lack of legal power of the protected areas management Intentional arson Conflicts with various area users Lack of communication and cooperation with the local communities Lack of infrastructure for surveillance Lack of appropriate control mechanisms	Deforestation	Destruction of habitats and biodiversity decline Destruction of the ecological integrity of ecosystems Loss of values Weakened tourism experience and income generation
	Lack of educational opportunities (outside the formal system) Mentality (habits) Lack of technical capacities	Unsustainable forestry	Destruction of habitats and biodiversity decline Public expenditures for revitalisation of devastated areas
	Inappropriate policies Ineffective law enforcement and punitive actions Bribery and corruption Lack of cooperation of institutions	Poor law enforcement	Bribery and corruption Passive behaviour on environmental actions

From the list of identified issues, the participants discussed those that are cross-border in nature (and can, thus, be solved through CB cooperation), and those that are shared issues (same issues on both sides of the border that can be tackled at the national level, with the assistance of CB partnerships). The issues of waste, illegal activities in protected areas, unsustainable forestry practices and lack of public awareness and knowledge were identified as such problems, and are a good basis for future collaborative projects.

Conclusions from Workshop 2

The discussion carried out in the final session demonstrated the power of cross-border cooperation for participating organisations. The most important conclusion was that helping to identify the problems they may encounter during and after implementation of a certain project provides the basis for a sustainable and successful project.

It was concluded that future projects can be developed in the area for addressing the following topics and issues:

- » Strengthening law enforcement
- » Cooperation between institutions and local communities
- » Increasing capacities to collect more funds from different donors
- » More and reliable data
- » Increasing community participation through promotion and awareness raising in social networks and the media
- » Innovative solutions based on good practices

2.3 Third Workshop: Shkodër, September 2022

On Thursday September 8th, 2022, the third workshop within the scope of the WBF project was held in Shkodër, Albania. The purpose of the workshop was to gather representatives of relevant local NGOs to further establish the network already developed in the first two workshops to collaborate on tackling the major sustainability issues in the CB area among the three countries of Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo. The workshop was held on the premises of Hotel Rozafa, and was hosted by the Municipality of Shkodër. It brought together a volunteer and ten representatives of the three project partners and six local NGOs, as well as a deputy mayor, two municipal directors, a municipal nature protection specialist and head of the cultural institutions in the municipality.

In the first session, Ms Gejla Shehaj introduced the project and its objectives, and Dr Wilson introduced the experience of FLAG in the area of nature protection, including waste management. Valtida Shukriu presented the work undertaken in Kosovo by EYCD, while Ana Pajovic presented the work done by AMPA in Montenegro.

The participants were invited by Dr Wilson to describe their main areas of experience and expertise, particularly with regard to nature protection, the issues they had met in implementing their projects, the donors that had supported them, where the projects had been implemented, and the outputs and outcomes of the projects.

Naturally, most of the NGOs had implemented projects in the Lake Shkodër–River Buna system and in Thethi National Park (NP). However, some had also worked in Kosovo (e.g. Rugova Valley), in Montenegro (CB projects), and further afield in Albania, in Valbona Valley, in Divjaka and Korça. Most of the projects dealt with nature protection, including many with youth and schools and schoolchildren, and some focusing on mental health, particularly following the experience with Covid.

As in the previous two workshops, the main focus was placed upon identifying the main challenges facing nature protection in the local area, and the immediate priorities of how to address those challenges. Through the guided discussion, the participants analysed the consequences of the challenges, and also their immediate causes. FLAG also presented a logical flow on how the challenges can be met. The results are summarised in the table below.

Root cause →	Immediate cause →	Challenge →	Consequence
<p>Lack of accountability or acceptance of responsibility</p> <p>Lack of penalization of law-breakers</p> <p>Lack of awareness of decision makers</p> <p>Lack of political will and personal will (volunteerism)</p> <p>Closely linked society, with many people influencing those in positions of power</p> <p>Inadequate financing</p> <p>Hiring of staff by political connection or bias and not by level of expertise</p> <p>Unattractive salaries for specialist staff</p> <p>Poor administrative and human capacities of institutions</p> <p>Lack of data and up-to-date information and knowledge</p> <p>Lack of data sharing</p> <p>Incomplete alignment of environmental laws of Albania and Montenegro</p> <p>Political priorities not aligned with the environmental needs (endorsement of inappropriate policies and decisions)</p> <p>Inertia</p> <p>Poor education system</p>	<p>Lack of monitoring of the many plans developed to deal with pollution of Lake Shkodër</p> <p>Inefficient enforcement of laws</p> <p>Lack of adequate infrastructure to prevent untreated sewage entering Lake Shkodër and River Buna</p> <p>Poor surveillance</p> <p>Lack of action by NP management</p> <p>Lack of implementation of the legislation (IUCN lists Thethi as a Category II NP, Albania categorizes it as a NP, yet it is being developed as tourist destination in an uncontrolled manner)</p> <p>Conflicts among the different users</p> <p>Lack of communication and cooperation with the local communities</p> <p>Lack of understanding of objectives of an NP</p> <p>No benefit to local communities of living in NP, beyond tourism and as a resource to be exploited</p> <p>Lack of monitoring of the many plans developed to deal with wastewater in Lake Shkodër, its tributaries and outflow</p> <p>Insufficient reach of Municipal Waste Management (WM) service</p> <p>Rural areas have difficult access for cleaning and WM services</p> <p>Conflicts among the different users</p>	<p>Pollution of Lake Shkodër from wastewater from urban areas</p> <p>Pollution of Lake Shkodër from wastewater from rural areas: restaurants, farms, holiday villages, businesses, dairies and nurseries</p> <p>Pollution of Thethi National Park (and downstream via rivers Shala, Drin and Buna)</p> <p>Dirty riversides and lakeside of River Buna and Lake Shkodër</p>	<p>Dangerous levels of pollution</p> <p>Long-term health problems</p> <p>Long-term damage to wildlife</p> <p>Intensification of environmental degradation, in some areas stagnation</p> <p>Destruction of habitats and biodiversity decline</p> <p>Destruction of integrity of ecosystems</p> <p>Increase in occurrence of hazardous fires, landslides, floods</p> <p>Drying up of streams</p> <p>Destruction of landscapes and loss of aesthetic values</p> <p>Reduction in numbers of visitors and quality of experience</p> <p>Loss of revenues</p> <p>Reduced funds for revitalisation of devastated areas</p> <p>Indifference towards environment</p> <p>Poor impact and outcomes from the funds invested</p> <p>Purchased equipment not used as intended</p> <p>Marginalisation of environmental issues in work</p> <p>Loss of values</p>
<p>Poor socio-economic situation (note: Albania, Montenegro, Kosovo are now upper-middle-income economies)</p> <p>Low level of public awareness of dangers of pollution, of biodiversity loss, of man-made fires and measures to prevent them</p>	<p>Habitat fragmentation</p> <p>Monitoring limited to bird counts</p> <p>Over-exploitation of natural resources</p> <p>Illegal fishing</p> <p>Illegal logging</p> <p>Deforestation</p> <p>Urbanisation</p> <p>Man-made (particularly in conjunction with low humidity levels and high temperatures):</p> <p><i>stubble burning by farmers</i></p> <p><i>other acts of arson</i></p> <p><i>fires for cooking</i></p> <p><i>carelessly discarded cigarettes</i></p> <p>Natural:</p> <p><i>lightning</i></p>	<p>Biodiversity loss</p> <p>Forest fires</p>	

Conclusions from Workshop 3

The conclusions from the third workshop align with those from the first two. The challenges identified are very similar, as are the immediate and root causes. It is through an analysis similar to that of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that identification of the causes of the challenges can be dealt with. From that analysis, measures can be developed that will address the immediate causes listed above and lead to resolution of some of the challenges in the not-so-distant future.

The discussion supported further the idea of CB cooperation among participating organisations as a means of resolving many of the challenges. One hotly discussed issue was appropriate alignment of the legislation in the neighbouring countries.

3. Database of NGOs

Small organisations often have strong motivation and great expectations but, given their limited resources and capacities and sometimes lack of knowledge of the wider context, are often unable to deliver sustainable results. Joining forces and cooperating with one-another will enable these organizations to enhance their understanding, add alternative perspectives for tackling a particular problem, increase their means for acting, extend their intervention over a wider territory and intensify their efforts. The lessons learned from the impacts of the extreme weather in Europe in 2021 highlight the great importance of volunteer organisations in aiding the affected communities. Through this effort we hope to promote volunteerism and improve closer connections with the local communities to assist in the event of civil emergencies.

3.1 List of NGOs identified during project implementation

Green Centre Albania



Green Centre Albania is a non-profit organization whose activity is centred on environmental protection and water management according to European criteria and standards. The centre was established in 2013.

Shkodër, Albania, greencentrealbania@gmail.com, +3556921 55511, Anila Neziri

Qendra Rinore ARKA



ARKA was created by two non-profit organizations: Acli Ipsia in Albania (a branch of the IPSIA organization in Italy) and the Consulting and Development Partners organization in Albania. ARKA generates much of its support from local young people and develops programmes for those who want to develop their

skills in various fields. The range of activities on offer is diverse. ARKA aims to create space for any group that has something to offer. It was established in 2015.

Rruga Palok Kurti No. 1, Shkodër 4001, Albania, +355692064706, Arta Nikolli

Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife (APAWA, Wild Europe)



APAWA aims to raise public awareness for protection and preservation of aquatic wildlife, sustainable development in coastal and wetland areas, influence for solution to the problems linked to aquatic communities, and monitoring of eventual amelioration of aquatic and coastal ecosystems. The Association was established in 1999.

Rruga Kostaq Cipo, p 6/4, ap. 32 1001 Tirana, Albania

Representative in Shkodra, Denik Ulqini, denikulqini@gmail.com, +355682182297



The Door

The mission of the Door is to assist groups and individuals in need in Shkoder Region, supporting them with social services, materials and other activities in their integration into the social and economic life of their community. The Door was established in 2007.

Rruga Bujar Bishanaku, No. 799, Shkoder, Albania

thedor@infothedor.com, +355 68 202 6559, Kastriot Faci



SHOQATA INTEGRIMI

TROPOJE

Shoqata Integrimi Tropojë

Integration Association is a non-governmental organisation that operates in Tropoja. It contributes to improving the living conditions of people in need and development of their communities through social and economic empowerment programmes. Shoqata Integrimi was established in 2004.

Bajram Curri, Albania, integrimida@yahoo.com, +355 69 207 2920,

Xhevdet Hoxha



Shoqata ALPIN

ALPIN Association is a hearth for the voluntary union of ordinary and free citizens who deeply care about protecting the environment. Its activity was started in 2002 by a group of biologists, agronomists, forest engineers, geologists and teachers of biochemistry

of Tropoja, who, concerned about the state of the environment, decided to work together to help prevent the disruption of natural balances and improve the alpine environmental situation. ALPIN now has many members to successfully meet the demands and needs for environmental protection according to contemporary standards through the path of cooperation and partnership with the community and all actors with a positive impact on the environment.

Sheshi Azem Hajdari, Bajram Curri, Albania alpin_m@yahoo.com, +355 682404490, Astrit Metaliaj

COSPE



COSPE (Co-operation for the Development of Emerging Countries) is a non-profit association (Onlus) operating in the field of international co-operation and solidarity, recognised as an NGO by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union. COSPE has been present in Albania since 1999, and works in the areas of Shkodra and Dajç, Lezha. It is active in the field of international collaboration for development in 40 countries throughout the world. It enables and works for equal and sustainable development, intercultural dialogue and human rights, the right to food and water, women's rights, environment and natural resources protection.

Shkodër, Albania, cospecu@yahoo.com, albania@cospe.org, +355 672032214, Rozeta Gradeci

Creative City – Shkodër



The activities of Creative City – Shkodër for achieving its mission include promoting tourism, sports activities, public art, management of public activities, newsletters, cultural information, public awareness campaigns, exhibitions. The NGO was established in 2010.

Rruga Besnik Sykja, Shkodër, Albania, cc@infoshkodra.com, +355 673081001, Armano Lohja

EKO Mendje



EKO Mendje is focused on environmental and social issues. In English the name is Eco Mind: to think ecologically in the relations between nature and people.

Shkodër, Albania, mirsadbasha@hotmail.com, +355 692545500, Mirsad Basha

GO2



GO2 contributes to the built and natural environments through models of land use, urban planning, sustainable transport and sustainable tourism. GO2 was established in 2013.

Bulevardi Skënderbeu 4001, Shkodër, Albania
eshkreli@gmail.com, +69 672 8877, Entela Shkreli

Resurset Natyrore në Zhvillim (RID)



RID is an NGO oriented towards the development of youth and society. It was established in 2016.

L. Qemal Stafa, Rruga Musa Juka, No. 16, Shkodër, Albania
resourcesindevelopment@gmail.com, +355 6760035803, Mirsada Rakaj

Well Point



Well Point - Care for All is a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose mission is to preserve public and environmental health. Well Point was established in 2015.

Shkodër, Albania, wellpointalbania@gmail.com, +355674060132, Aurora Zylaj

Qendra e Informacionit Aarhus – Shkodër



The Aarhus Centres in Albania have been focusing on promoting dialogue among different stakeholders regarding environmental issues and on strengthening the implementation of the Aarhus Convention through partnerships. Recently, they have also been

engaged in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The centre in Shkoder was established in 2007.

Shkoder, Albania, aicshkodra@gmail.com, +355 673217522, Alminda Mema

Birdlife Montenegro, CZIP



CZIP's mission is to protect birds and other animal and plant species, their habitats and undertake biodiversity monitoring in Montenegro, citizen education, popularisation of scientific research, and cooperation with other organizations dealing with the protection of nature. CZIP was established in 2000.

Velje brdo 35, Podgorica, Montenegro
kсенija.medenica@czip.me, Ksenija Medenica

Green Home



Green Home's mission is to protect nature and improve the environment, which will strengthen a sustainable future and lead to social and economic improvement of social communities in Montenegro. In achieving this, it has dedicated itself to working with various stakeholders in order to strengthen cooperation and joint work towards achieving a sustainable future and wide recognition of Montenegro as an ecological state. The NGO was established in 2000.

Dalmatinska 78, Podgorica, Montenegro, sanja.orlandic@greenhome.co.me, Sanja Orlandic

Dr Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association, MSJA



Dr Martin Schneider-Jacoby Association aims to protect the environment with a focus on the protected area of Ulcinj Saline and special areas in Ulcinj Municipality, education and raising awareness of the protection and conservation of the protected area Ulcinj Saline. The association was established in 2016.

Pavla Knezevica 7, Ulcinj, Montenegro, zenepa.lika@gmail.com, msja.zenepa@gmail.com, Zenepa Lika

Dinarides Parks



The Dinarides Parks mission is to improve the protection, development and management of the protected natural resources in the territory of the Dinarides. Established In 2014.

Djoka Miraševića 90, Podgorica, Montenegro
jelena.marojevic@parkdinarides.org, Jelena Marojević Galić

Ozon



Ozon was established in 2006. Its mission is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and environment, as well as protection of the public interest through active participation in the decision-making process, public advocacy and education of various target groups.

Serdara Jola Piletića bb, Nikšić, Montenegro
aleksandar.perovic@ozon.org.me, Aleksandar Perović

Natura



Natura was established in 2002 to promote sustainable development, improve the quality of natural resources, and the protection of rivers, forests and ecosystems.

Dunje Djokic bb, Kolasin, Montenegro
natura@t-com-me, nvonatura@gmail.com, Mikan Medenica

Nature Park Komovi



Komovi Nature Park was established in 2018 with the mission of the protection of the biodiversity and sustainable management of the natural resources of Komovi.

Branka Deletica bb, Andrijevica, Montenegro
parkprirodekomovi@gmail.com, Ivana Jukic

Razvoj Vranj



Razvoj Vranj aims at improvement of the economic conditions of citizens, development of road and water infrastructure, and raising of citizens awareness of environmental protection. The NGO was established in 2019.

Vranj bb Tuzi, Montenegro, info@razvojvranj.me, Alen Lekić

Ulcinj biznis asocijacija



Ulcinj biznis asocijacija works toward improving the quality of life of all citizens in Montenegro through economic prosperity, cooperation with both the public and private sector, international organizations and individual experts, in order to contribute to the development and prosperity of the Montenegrin economy. It was established in 2002.

Bulevardi Skenderbeu, Ulcinj, Montenegro, elvirzecevic@t-com.me, Elvir Zecevic

Green life



The NGO Green Life was established in 2018 with the mission of improvement of the state of the environment, preservation of natural resources and implementation of the concept of sustainable development in Montenegro with special reference to sustainable tourism and sustainable spatial planning.

Dalmatinska 78, Podgorica, Montenegro, dina.sabanovic@gmail.com, Dina Šabanovic

Environment & Youth Capacity Development (EYCD)



The NGO EYCD was established in 2017 to contribute towards capacity building of youth through non-formal education and training for easier access to the labour market, as well as environmental protection through environmental education and contribution in the field of waste management.

William Walker, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova, info.eycd@gmail.com mirsadpz@gmail.com, Mirsad Aliti

THY



THY aims to channel the energies of young people, especially college students, encouraging tolerance and understanding among youth and promoting cooperation, exchange and integration with European young people, through involvement in the decision-making processes. THY was established in 2011.

Beteja e Koshares, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova, haxhifazliuvisar@gmail.com, Visar Haxhifazliu

Sharri Wildlife



Sharri Wildlife was established in 2022 and aims to protect and promote the wildlife of the Sharri Mountain Region, particularly its wild fauna.

Farkëtarët, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova, sharriwild@gmail.com, Flaka Bamja

Sharri Mountaineers Association



The mission of the association Sharri is the organizing of climbing activities and nature protection. It was established in 1951.

Mimar Sinan, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova,
sadik.shporta@gmail.com shbsharripz@yahoo.com, Sadik Shporta

DokuFest



The mission of the DokuFest Organization is environmental protection, education through cinematography, human rights, and the International Documentary and Short Film Festival. DokuFest was established in 2002.

Marin Barleti, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova, linda@dokufest.com, Linda Llulla Gashi

Nevo Koncepti



The mission of Nevo Koncepti is to work to improve the situation of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in the field of education and other areas that affect their overall wellbeing. The NGO was established in 2014.

Adnan Krasniqi, no. 149,II/18, Prizren 20000 Republic of Kosova o.osmani@nevokoncepti.org, oosmani2002@yahoo.com, Osman Osmani

ECOTHINK



The main focus of the organization is the raising of citizens awareness of environmental protection and the importance of the recycling process. ECOTHINK was established in 2014.

Ajdin Rrahmanaj, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova, ecotthink.ks@gmail.com, Linda Namlixhiu

Let's Do it Peja



The organization Let's Do it Peja was established in 2012 to advocate, educate and cooperate for environmental protection and preservation in Kosovo.

Mbreti Pirro, Peja 30000, Republic of Kosova, uxharavina@gmail.com, Urim Xharavina

Ec Ma Ndryshe



The mission of Ec Ma Ndryshe is to establish active and responsible citizenship and utilize culture as a means of development. The NGO was established in 2006 and since then has encouraged democratic governance and sustainable economy at the local and regional level through community mobilization, overseeing of public decision making and partnership in

implementation of development programmes and policies.

Fehmi Lladrovci 94, Prizren 20000, Republic of Kosova, valon.xhabali@ecmandryshe.org, Valon Xhabali

SHE-ERA



SHE-ERA is a non-profit organization targeting economic development. It was founded after the wars of the Balkans, in September 1999, with the particular aim of the economic empowerment of women.

Remzi Pula, Gjakova 50000, Republic of Kosova, wsheera@gmail.com, Mimoza Kusari

Creating a Cross-Border Network for Socio-Economic Sustainability through Protection of Nature



