

# Social Safeguard in Compliance with CEPF Safeguard Policies

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CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN  
PATOK LAGOON, ISHMI AND MATI RIVER OUTLET  
THROUGH INTEGRATED RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT

***Project Title: Conservation of Biodiversity in Patoku lagoon, Ishmi and Mati  
River outlet through Integrated River Basin Management***

**CEPF Grant: #63851**

**January 2014 - June 2015**



CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN  
PATCK LAGOON, ISHMI AND MATI RIVER OUTLET  
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Urban Research Institute (URI)

CEPF Grant: #63851

# Semi-Annual Social Monitoring Safeguard Report

(Period: January-June 2014)

July 2014



## Acronyms

ASPBM	Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals
CI	Conservation International
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ESMF	Environmental and Social management Framework
EMT	Environmental Management Plan
IRBM	Integrated River Basin Management
IWMP	Conservation of Biodiversity in Patoku lagoon, Ishmi and Mati River outlet through Integrated River Basin Management
MoE	Ministry of Environment
PCP	Public Communication Policy
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PMT	Project Management Team
URI	Urban Research Institute
UNEP	United Nation Environmental Program

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## Executive Summary

1. Urban Research Institute (URI) in association with Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds & Mammals is under implementation of project “Conservation of Biodiversity in Patoku lagoon, Ishmi and Mati River outlet through Integrated River Basin Management “. The project aims the protection and the enhancement of biodiversity in the patoku lagoon which are greatly influenced by the development and intervention made in the watershed of Ishmi and Mati rivers. Addressing most of the threats to biodiversity of patoku lagoon can only be ensured through the preparation and implementation of the Integrated Ishmi and Mati River Watershed Management Planning a participatory approach by a broad consultation, engagement and commitment of all public institutions (central and local government authorities), stakeholders, main land users and businesses occurring in the watershed. The proposed project activities will also aim at involving business sector in the watershed management, building up public-private partnerships and finding out mechanisms of Payment for Environmental Services (PES) at watershed level that will enable sustainable use of nature resources, preserve and enhance biodiversity.

2. This Grant Agreement („Grant“ or „Agreement“) is made between Conservation International Foundation („CI“), a nonprofit public benefit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, USA, and Urban Research Institute in cooperation with Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals, („Grantee“), Nonprofit Organization. Funding in support of this Agreement is made available from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (“CEPF”), a joint initiative of Conservation International (“CI”), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (“IBRD”), the Global Environment Facility through the IBRD as implementing agency (“GEF”), the Government of Japan through IBRD as trustee of grant funds provided by the Ministry of Finance (“Japan”), the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (“MacArthur Foundation”), l’Agence Française de Développement (“AFD”), and the European Union (“EU”) -- hereafter together referred to as "the Funding Sources".

3. The current report is the 1<sup>st</sup>. Semi-Annual Social Safeguard Monitoring Report prepared to comply with the CEPF Safeguard Policies. This report covered the resettlement and social safeguard monitoring results to comply with CEPF policy.

4. URI has started the implementation of project and the safeguard compliance is an important and highly valued aspect. The beginning of the project started with review of project background documents and other preparatory activities followed by preparation of safeguard documents.

## Social Safeguard in Compliance with CEPF

5. The objective of this Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) is to ensure that adverse environmental and social impacts are avoided or appropriately mitigated and compensated for. The ESMF is based on the World Bank’s environmental and social safeguard policies as well as CI policies. A key principle is to prevent and mitigate any harm to the environment and to people by incorporating environmental and social concerns as an intrinsic part of project cycle management. Environmental and social issues will be tracked during all stages of the sub-project cycle to ensure that supported activities comply with the policies and guidelines laid out in the ESMF.

6. Many of the world's remaining areas of high biodiversity overlap with lands owned, occupied and utilized by indigenous peoples. Many CEPF-funded sub-project activities are thus likely to overlap with the areas inhabited by indigenous communities. OP 4.10 aims to ensure that affected indigenous peoples receive culturally appropriate benefits and that adverse impacts are avoided or adequately addressed through a participatory and consultative approach. Specific measures to achieve these objectives are described in the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework, including provisions for social analysis, consultations and the preparation of an Indigenous Peoples Plan.

## Project Background and Description

7. The Patoku Lagoon is one of the Biodiversity Hotspots of Albania and is known for its regional (Mediterranean) and European Importance: it is one of the Specially Protected Areas of Albania identified by UNEP and RAC/SPA since 1996; it is an Important Bird Area (IBA) and it is one of the EMERALD sites of Albania. It is one of the most important wetland sites in Albania for waders (Order Charadriiformes), and one of the two sites where Slender Billed Curlew (*Numenius tenuirostris*) has been recorded so far in Albania. Patoku lagoon and the estuarine waters between Mati river (in the north) and Ishmi river (in the south) have become an hotspot area for Sea Turtles in the Mediterranean basin, being used as an important feeding place for the sea turtles, especially for Loggerhead Sea Turtle *Caretta caretta*.

8. Reduction of sediment discharge of Mati and Ishmi rivers due to hydropower dams (Ulza and Shkopeti) and water supply dam (Bovilla water reservoir), as well as from the exploitation of sands and gravel from the main two rivers and their tributaries has greatly influenced the coastal geomorphology and ecosystem stability of Patoku lagoon system. In addition, hunting activity, in the way it has been conducted in the last more than 20 years, unregulated and out of control, has greatly impacted the wintering and breeding communities of water birds in the Patoku lagoon and its adjacent wetland areas. Although having the legal status of a Managed Nature Reserve, Patoku lagoon and Fushe-Kuqe area, is not an area under any appropriate management regime. Illegal logging, illegal constructions, poaching, and unregulated tourism and recreational activities are other threats to the Biodiversity of Patoku lagoon. The proposed project activities will also aim at involving business sector in the watershed management, building up public-private partnerships and finding out mechanisms of PES at watershed level that will enable sustainable use of nature resources, preserve and enhance biodiversity.

9. The current situation shows a serious lack of concerted actions against the above identified threats and serious lack of integrated management of natural resources. Therefore it is evident the need for integrated and sustainable measures aiming to reduce and control the overall impact of human activities and boost the biodiversity of the area. The project will fulfill this goal by achieving three objectives which would also compose the four project components:

- Assessment of the current biodiversity status and preparation of Integrated Watershed Management Plan of Ishmi and Mati River focused on the Patoku Lagoon protection enhancement. Prepare an assessment of physical, biological, environmental and social characteristics of the area.

- Implementation of best management practices to enhance biodiversity and to reduce its threats through development of rehabilitating initiatives
- Raise awareness among stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of the conservation efforts.
- Monitoring compliance with CEPF Safeguard Policies

10. The project relates with CEPF Strategic Direction 2, Establish the sustainable management of watercatchment and the wise use of water resources with a focus on the priority corridor of Southwest Balkans. More specifically it is linked with Investment Priority 2.1 Contribute to and establishes Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) initiatives for pilot basins and replicate best practices to reduce the negative impacts of insufficiently planned water infrastructures. The urgent need for implementing the rehabilitation initiatives with the scope of sustainable management of the waters of the lagoon with an irreplaceable biodiversity and with high socio-economic profits, makes up for a two-sided priority, in empowering the public-private partnership. In addition the project is closely related to the strategic investment of CEPF also because it aims to empower the role of civil society in replicating initiatives with direct impact in promoting best practices on wise use of waters and other ecologic resources offered by river basins.

## Purpose of report

11. URI Public Communications Policy refers the Safeguard Policy Statement with respect to information disclosure related to project safeguard documentation states that URI shall post on project website the safeguard documents submitted. These safeguard documents include the social safeguard and environmental monitoring reports. To comply with the PCP of URI, the PMT shall fill one semiannual monitoring report periodically over the total implementation period of the project, covering Environment, and social safeguard issues.

12. The current report is the 1<sup>st</sup>, Semi-Annual Social Safeguard Monitoring Report prepared to comply with the CEPF Safeguard Policies. This report covered the resettlement and social safeguard monitoring results to comply with CEPF Safeguard Policy. This report is build



**Figure 1:** Project area (Patoku Lagoon)

## Project Implementation Status

13. The project is in the phase of closing the first semi-annual stage. Up to now many different activities had been made. There are working 13 experts engaged in assessment of the baselines situation in the project area. Senior experts are collecting existing data on geomorphology, hydrology, soils, fauna, flora, fishery of the project. All existing data are collected and are under analyzing for the purpose of the project. Site surveys are ongoing to verify the data and collect the missing one. On the other hand URI is conducting a social assessment of the project area. Existing data are collected and communes are contacted for collecting existing data. URI is also assessing the urban waste management situation in the project area. Meanwhile ASPBM is working to assess the industrial impacts in the project area. So far existing data are collected and are under review and analyses.

14. Several meetings were held (20 meetings) in the communes which affect the Mati and Ishmi River Basins and was filled a questionnaires about the socio-economic status of their communes, and their strategy on urban waste management. Meanwhile a meeting was held with the Ministry of Environment managing the protected area. Specific reports on these meetings are prepared about the topics above. An official letter of support for the project is issued from the Ministry.

15. On the other hand the webpage is set and published, and several news are posted at webpage regarding the activities that PA has done. Information for the use of webpage is shared with relevant stakeholders during the meetings; and the Grievance Mechanism is made available on compliance with CEPF Grievance Mechanism Policy where indigenous people or other local stakeholder may raise grievance at all-time about the implementation of the project. The webpage link is [www.biodiversitetitpatokut.com](http://www.biodiversitetitpatokut.com)



Figure 2: During the meeting in Fushe-Kuqe Commune

16. Materials are produced such as leaflets, posters, logo, and other informative materials to promote the Nature Management Reserve Patoku – Fushe-Kuqe – Ishmi Lagoon, including Patoku Lagoon. These materials are shared among the stakeholders and in area in order to raise the awareness among the stakeholders. .

## Public Consultation and Participation

17. About 20 meetings was held with the local authorities that affect the Mati and Ishmi River Basins and the main issues discussed was the strategy of this communes have on preservation of biodiversity.

18. The PMT will conduct a meaningful consultation with local stakeholder and the civil society for every project activity. Meaningful consultation is a process that: (i) begins early in the project preparation stage and is carried out on an ongoing basis throughout the project cycle; (ii) provides timely disclosure of relevant and adequate information that is understandable and readily accessible to affected people. The PIU has paid particular attention to the need of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, such as the hunters, fishermen's. The proposed projects activities are likely to have adverse short-term impacts upon a few community members whose current livelihood will be affected by the imposed regulations and rules related to illegal hunting, fishing and gravel extraction from riverbeds. This is addressed through Process Framework document.

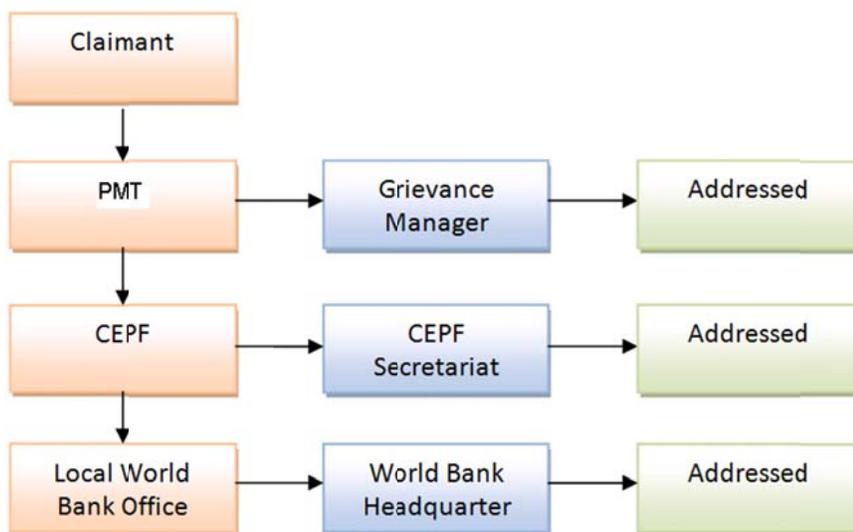
19. During this time there have been several meetings with the communities of fisherman's and the business in the lagoon, and the main focus of the meetings was to share information and cooperation among the stakeholders and the PMT. During these meetings the project was explained and it was made known the benefits and the objectives that this project will bring to this communities.

### Grievance Mechanism

20. A Grievance Mechanism has been framed following the CEPF Safeguard Policies in the project webpage with the objective of mainly to receive and facilitate resolution of Affected Persons, complains and grievances to ensure project safeguard performance. The grievance is active at: <http://biodiversitetitpatokut.com/grievance-2/>. From the grievance form an email will go to the Director of the Project and the claimant will get an answer within a working week from the date of the claim. The grievances with Social aspects will be directed and addressed from URI and the grievances with Environmental aspect will be addressed from ASPBM. Also the grievance address is set on the leaflets that have been distributed in Patoku Lagoon.

21. The mechanism developed shall be in a manner that it shall not impede access to higher level of appeal. According to CEPF Safeguard Policies if the complainant isn't happy with the resolution that PMT has set, the affected person or the representative of an affected group can complain directly to the CEPF Secretariat. Also it has been clear in the grievance form that the claimant in cases of a not satisfying answer they can claim directly in the email address at: [cepfexecutive@conservation.org](mailto:cepfexecutive@conservation.org)

**Figure 3: Grievance redresses mechanism and procedure**



## Health and safety

22. The platform construction workers were skilled fisherman with experience in working in water systems. They were advised to ensure health during the placement of the platform. No health related issue was registered during the platform construction activities. The fisherman office of Mr. Gjovalin Cali was equipped with first aid kit to be used if necessary and the vehicle of the ASPBM had a first aid kit box as well. The availability of the first aid kit was checked and confirmed before the starting of the construction operations. No injury has occurred during the construction of the platform.

## Permission of the landowner

23. The Patoku lagoon is owned from the Government and managed from various parties. The construction of platform is agreed with the Ministry of Environment. The Ministry has issued a support official paper as well (a copy is attached to this report). Meanwhile the Lagoon basin used for the construction of the platform is managed under specific fishing license from Mr. Gjovalin Çali Family. During the activities of the project several meetings with the members of Çali Family were conducted. They have supported the project and have been contracted for the construction of the platform.

## Institutional Arrangement

24. A meeting was held in the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and a support official letter was issued regarding the project for. A copy of the letter is attached to this report. In this meeting we met the General Secretary Mr. Alqi Billako, Mrs. Adriana Sokoli, Director of Projects and Mrs. Odeta Cato, Director of Biodiversity. Also we have met the Chairman of the Commune of Fushe-Kuqe and he was



**Figure 4:** During the meeting with the Deputy Chairman of Ishmi Commune

25. The project doesn't cause restriction in its own, the project is based in standards foreseen from the law for the protection of biodiversity and the environment in general, the project cause no property conflicts, but it aims to regulate the impact activities which affect the environment and the Natural Protected Area in accordance with the law. The project aims to establish environmentally friendly products such as Eco-tourism and to and to promote "best practice" through Clean-Up and trainings. Disclosure and access in the information

26. The placement of the nesting platform has not affected any local community. In preliminary meetings with fisherman community adequate information for the project EIA and

EMP was shared. Specific informative and consultative campaign was held in 20 communes of the project area from Urban Research Institute as referred at the Social Safeguard Report. Information for the project was actively published at the project webpage: [www.biodiversitetitpatok.com](http://www.biodiversitetitpatok.com); at [www.uri.org.al](http://www.uri.org.al) and at [www.aspbm.org](http://www.aspbm.org)

## Letter of support from the Ministry of Environment



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

No. 7806 Prot.

Tirana, on 14.7.2014

**To: Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund  
Conservation International  
2011 Crystal Drive  
Suite 500  
Arlington, VA 22202, USA**

The Urban Research Institute and Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds & Mammals is implementing the project “**Conservation of biodiversity in Patoku Lagoon and Ishmi & Mati river outlets, through integrated river basin management**”, financed from Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

The project is aiming to draft a plan that includes the framework of measures at basins’ level in order to offset the negative impacts and factors affecting the biodiversity in Patoku Lagoon. During the preparation of the plan several best practice actions will be undertaken in the project area such as, clean- up of waste, training of local stakeholders and promoting eco-tourism in the Patoku Lagoon.

The project, is in line with the national policies and strategies for protection of the biodiversity, and thus is supported from the Ministry of Environment to better achieve its goals. Because of the sensitivity of the project area, the Directorate of Biodiversity and Protected Areas requires close collaboration with project implementation partners and information exchange.

The Ministry of the Environment should receive inception report as well as the final report including all deliverables and reserves the right of the ownership to these materials.



Alqi BLLAKO

GENERAL SECRETARY

## References

1. Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund/Environmental and Social Management Framework

Link: [http://www.cepf.net/grants/Pages/safeguard\\_policies.aspx](http://www.cepf.net/grants/Pages/safeguard_policies.aspx)

2. Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan

Date: January 12, 2014/CEPF Grant: #63851/ Grantee: The Urban Research Institute

*Project Title: Conservation of Biodiversity in Patoku lagoon, Ishmi and Mati River outlet through Integrated River Basin Management*

Project Location: Patok, Albania

Link: [http://www.cepf.net/grants/project\\_database/Pages/default.aspx#](http://www.cepf.net/grants/project_database/Pages/default.aspx#)

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	Urban Research Institute <a href="http://www.uri.org.al">www.uri.org.al</a>