

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

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

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| Organization Legal Name | <i>IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources</i> |
| Project Title | Supporting the Long-Term Sustainable Management of Transboundary Lake Skadar |
| CEPF GEM No. | 63088 |
| Date of Report | 01.03.2017; revised on 19.04.2017 |

CEPF Hotspot: Mediterranean

Strategic Direction: Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas

Grant Amount: 290723.08

Project Dates: 2013/8/1; 2016/12/31

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

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECARO) was the main applicant and lead partner in the project. Its responsibilities included overall project coordination, securing balanced implementation of activities across the border to ensure transboundary effect of the proposed action; contractual arrangements with project partners; project reporting and communication with the donor; communication and coordination with experts as well as the Ministry of Environment in Albania (MoE), and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism in Montenegro (MoSDT). IUCN ECARO had a leading role in the coordination and implementation of Component 1 (*Support to the development and implementation of PA management plans for Lake Skadar in its transboundary context*); Component 2 (*Capacity building of protected area and natural resources managers as well as representatives of civil society organizations for biodiversity management*); Component 3 (*Strengthening law enforcement and enabling civil society to participate in the biodiversity conservation of Lake Skadar*); and Component 4 (*Communications and awareness raising on the conservation values of Lake Skadar*).

Green Home (GH) was the national partner in Montenegro responsible for the implementation of the project Component 5: *Coordinate contribution to the achievement of Short-term Impacts (Components 1-4) of the project, with a special emphasis on Montenegrin side of Lake Skadar*. GH's responsibilities included facilitation of project activities at the local level in Montenegro; coordination and communication with local stakeholders; organization of local events and meetings, transportation and logistics; leading role at the site level over the implementation of

Component 3 (*Strengthening law enforcement and enabling civil society to participate in the biodiversity conservation of Lake Skadar*) and expert input.

The Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) was the national partner from Albania responsible for implementation of the project Component 6: (*Coordinate contribution to the achievement of Short-term Impacts (Components 1-4) of the project, with a special emphasis on Albanian side of Lake Skadar*). INCA's responsibilities included facilitation of project activities at the local level in Albania; coordination and communication with local stakeholders; organization of local events and meetings, transportation and logistics; and expert input.

Conservation Impacts

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

The project was instrumental in improving the conservation and protection status of Lake Skadar as one of 44 priority key biodiversity areas in the Mediterranean by: (1) enhancing knowledge and skills for preparing and implementing management plans (MPs) for protected areas (PAs) at site, national and transboundary levels; (2) strengthening law enforcement in PAs through capacity building and improving the cooperation among PA managers with authorities in other sectors, including local governments and the judiciary; (3) enabling civil society to participate in and contribute to transboundary biodiversity conservation at Lake Skadar; (4) and by raising awareness among the public and natural resource users about the need to conserve and manage biodiversity sustainably.

3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project

The overall results of the project include:

- *Effectiveness of PA management enhanced* through: (1) development of a new MP for Lake Skadar National Park (LSNP), following internationally recognized standards (e.g., IUCN's management planning guidelines); (2) delivery of targeted training to PA managers and practitioners in Montenegro and Albania; (3) development of Training materials for Writing MPs for PAs (in Montenegrin); (4) provision of equipment; (5) development of a new Management Zoning for Lake Skadar Managed Nature Reserve (LSMNR), following a participatory approach and taking into consideration IUCN's Guidelines for Applying PA Management Categories; (6) a series of transboundary meetings facilitating the exchange of information and coordination of activities among PA staff across the international border; and (7) forging a strategic partnership between national authorities on PA management in Albania and Montenegro;
- *Law enforcement in the PAs strengthened* as a result of: (1) capacity building through workshops, training events, development of practical guidelines/manuals and study tours targeting police forces, judges, inspectors, customs services, PA managers and rangers, as well as civil society organizations; (2) improved exchange of information and experience among PA managers across the border;
- *Civil society's participation in and contribution to decision-making for biodiversity conservation at Lake Skadar strengthened* by: (1) facilitating communication and cooperation among local communities, user groups and civil society organizations with the PA managers; (2) organizing and supporting active participation in land use and PA management planning processes;

- *Awareness among key stakeholder groups on biodiversity values of Lake Skadar and their sustainable use heightened, due to: (1) environmental education and awareness building activities for local schoolchildren; (2) involvement of local natural resource users in PA management processes; (3) publication of educational materials; (4) forging cooperation of PA managers and resource users with local and national media and journalists.*

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

List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

- Increased capacity of the Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro (PENPM) for PA management planning through mentorship and training;
- Improved management and use of fisheries resources on the Albanian side of the lake by means of agreeing on the zoning system and joint patrolling of SLMNR between the Regional Administration for Protected Areas (RAPA) and the Fishery Management Organization (FMO);
- Capacity of authorities for law enforcement improved at the national level;
- Increased acceptance and awareness of the importance of stakeholder consultation in planning processes.

4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion

The training and advice provided in the preparation of the new MP for the LSNP helped strengthen the knowledge and skills among technical staff at PENPM and LSNP. It also helped improve institutional processes for PA management planning and develop a more dynamic relationship with stakeholders. The project facilitated dialogue and cooperation between natural resource users and competent authorities to improve the conservation efforts while securing the livelihoods of local communities depending on natural resources.

The progress in strengthening the management effectiveness of the PAs at Lake Skadar was assessed using the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) developed by the World Bank and WWF, as a rapid qualitative assessment tool based on a scorecard questionnaire. On the Albanian side of Lake Skadar, the initial assessment was conducted in December 2013 and subsequently repeated in 2015 and in 2016 in cooperation with other projects in Albania. In 2016 the National Agency for Protected Areas of Albania (NAPA) has developed a database and software that allows PA managers to assess the management effectiveness of the protected areas they manage by using an online METT tool. The assessment using this tool will be repeated annually.

The project was instrumental in establishing a participatory process for revising the existing management zoning for LSMNR. Particular attention was given to the involvement of the key stakeholders, such as local fishermen, local governments and scientists. The consultation process was completed by designing a new zoning scheme agreed by all key stakeholders. The enforcement of the rules under the new zoning is strengthened by joint patrols by PA staff and local fishermen.

Management planning processes both in Albania and Montenegro have championed the importance of stakeholder consultation in managing natural resources in all stages, from planning through implementation to monitoring. The experience and momentum build during the process for revising the management zoning for the LSMNR in Albania is being used by the RAPA Shkodra to establish a participatory process for revising the Action Plan under the existing MP (2012-2021).

The capacity of law enforcement authorities in Montenegro was enhanced by establishing and facilitating dialogue and cooperation among representatives of inspectorates, judges, customs services, PENPM, Governmental Prosecution Office, Ministry of Interior, lawyers, and border police, as well as representatives of municipalities of Podgorica, Bar, and Cetinje and local NGOs. The outcomes included the identification of key challenges and recommendations concerning the persecution of environmental criminal and misdemeanor acts at LSNP, as well as laws to be amended to allow for more effective law enforcement. The "Manual concerning the legal aspects of protection of Lake Skadar National Park", published by the project provides a detailed practical guidance for authorities and citizens on law enforcement in LSNP.

The active participation of users, local communities and civil society organization in land use and PA management planning processes in Montenegro, as well as in the development of the new Management Zoning for LSMNR is a good indicator of the heightened interest of civil society in decision-making for PAs. Green Home in Montenegro played an exemplary role in facilitating participation of stakeholders in mandatory consultation processes, such as the development of the Management Plan and Spatial Plan for LSNP. This experience can be used by other non-governmental organizations in the lake region and beyond to strengthen the rule of law as a foundation for sustainable use of biodiversity.

The high number and level of enthusiasm of schoolchildren participating in the awareness raising activities under the project ensures the growth of an enduring local initiative for a new generation to experience, connect with, be inspired by, value, and conserve Lake Skadar's biodiversity. Thanks to extensive media coverage and social media presence, the project increased the awareness among the general public locally and nationally on the challenges and the solutions needed for nature conservation and sustainable development in the Lake Skadar region.

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

List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

- Replication potential of the NP management planning process. The model of management planning used for the LSNP MP has been partly used for the development of the other four MPs for National Parks in Montenegro. Despite certain deficiencies, the MP is considered as an exemplary planning process in comparison to the other National Parks in Montenegro;
- Improved transboundary cooperation between the lake authorities. Cooperation Agreement and joint patrols established between RAPA and FMO proved to be effective mechanisms for co-management and safeguarding of natural resources and should be replicated in other PAs in Albania where fishery plays an important role. MoU between PEMNPM and NAPA has been initiated and signed;
- Improved zoning of the lake in Albania for conservation and management. The agreed zoning of SLMNR between key stakeholders (RAPA and FMO) to be submitted as a joint proposal to responsible authorities for approval lays the ground for better protection and a more sustainable use of natural resources on the lake;
- Selection of Skadar Lake as a pilot site in the EU IPA project "Strengthening national capacity in nature protection-preparation for Natura 2000 network" in Albania. Activities initiated in the CEPF-funded project, e.g. the zonation scheme, the cooperation agreement between RAPA and FMO, etc., will have their continuation through the IPA

project and other interventions by project partners. The IPA project also assumes infrastructure development and capacitation of PA staff.

5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion

The approach and methodology applied to develop the new MP for LSNP was made available to the remaining four national parks in Montenegro. The training material used in the process was published in a form of a booklet (Training Materials for the development of Management Plans for National Parks) to be available to PAs managers and nature conservation practitioners, including those at the PENPM, but also to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), thus helping to replicate the impact of project's activities in the long-term.

The project enabled the PENPM and NAPA sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that forges a strategic partnership between the national authorities on PAs in the two countries, and a plan for implementation of joint actions in 2017.

The positive experience at Lake Shkodra was the key argument for extending the co-management arrangement for fisheries between MoE and the FMO. The proposal to exempt the FMO from the formal procedure for issuing fishing permits, submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water to the Council of Ministers, was rejected in June 2016. The successful cooperation between resource users and PA authorities in managing and safeguarding natural resources at LSMNR could be replicated in other PAs in Albania, such as Lake Ohrid or Divjaka-Karavasta National Park.

The new Management Zoning for LSMNR was presented to Albanian authorities at a conference held on the 4th of November 2016 in Shkodra. The event was organized by INCA in cooperation with RAPA Shkodra, and with support from IUCN and GH. More than 50 people participated at the conference, including representatives from the NAPA, RAPA, MoE, National Agency for Territorial Planning, local governments of Shkodra and Koplik, wide range of stakeholders, including NGOs, and many local and national media from Albania and a journalist from Montenegro. The consultation process and methodology were explained by the involved scientists from the Shkodra University, whereas experts from RAPA Shkodra presented the details of the new zoning.

LSMNR was selected as one of the 5 primary pilot PAs under the EU IPA project "Strengthening national capacity in nature protection-preparation for Natura 2000 network" (NaturAL project) which has a strong component on implementation of current MPs for PAs in Albania. The progress made by revising the management zoning of LSMNR helped build stronger synergy with the project. The NaturAL project includes activities to extend the cooperation between the PA managers and fishermen to awareness building activities (e.g. by sharing facilities to be operated as a visitor center/ranger station). It also contributed to the enforcement of the new management zoning by providing essential equipment for patrolling and monitoring (boats, GPS devices, spotting scopes, binoculars, vehicles, etc. to the RAPA Shkodra). Furthermore, the experience and momentum build during the process for revising the management zoning for the LSMNR was used by the RAPA in Shkodra to establish a participatory process for revising the Action Plan under the existing MP.

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

The longer-than-expected time needed to conclude the contractual arrangements between IUCN and the national project partners resulted with delayed implementation of some activities, including the preparation of a communication strategy.

The inception mission in May 2014 revealed several significant developments likely to hamper the implementation of the project, in Albania in particular. The staff involved in the management of LSMNR over the past decade was slashed from 23 to only 3 (who were also responsible for all PAs in Shkodra region). The existing MP was evaluated as unrealistic and overambitious with no resources secured for its implementation. Although the staff costs were covered by the budget of the MoE, little or no funds were available for running operations or investments, ultimately affecting the morale of the remaining staff.

The new role of the FMO in law enforcement was a major positive development since the inception of the project. The association has already achieved significant results in tackling illegal practices such as dynamite and electric fishing. In consequence, the project stepped up its efforts to forge partnership and cooperation between RAPA Shkodra and FMO to that end. One of the main vehicles to achieve this goal was to establish a participatory process for developing a new, improved Management Zoning for LSMNR. This process also helped increase awareness among local fishermen on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The decision to refocus project's efforts in Albania from management planning towards the development of new Management Zoning foreclosed opportunities for effective transboundary cooperation with the Montenegrin side. Given the circumstances it was estimated that it should focus primarily on facilitating exchange of information and experience on a limited set of issues at joint meetings.

The subsequent stages in the project implementation experienced inadequate consultation among the partners and the donor, and additional delays in project implementation due to changes of project coordinators at INCA and GH. In response to these challenges, a series of amendments were made in February 2015, affecting activities and deliverables. Additional changes were introduced in April 2016 in concert with appointing new project coordinators at IUCN and GH. Since then the new team held regular Skype meetings and the implementation proceeded with a stronger and steady pace.

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

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 1.1. Management planning cycle in full motion with joint management practices in place.
Changes - Amendment 1: Management plan for Skadar Lake National Park developed according to international standards and operational; Zonation Plan for Skadar Lake Protected Landscape developed and operational;

- 1.2. Report on management effectiveness assessment of the protected areas of Lake Skadar in Albania and Montenegro including definition of key biodiversity indicators for Lake Skadar;
- 1.3. Report on comparative analysis of existing sectoral plans including recommendations on harmonizing and aligning planning processes. Changes - Amendment 1: Comparative analysis of existing sectoral plans including recommendations on harmonizing and aligning planning processes incorporated into management plan for National Park Skadar Lake;
- 1.4. Initial 2-day seminar on management planning on transboundary protected areas;
- 1.5. Protected area transboundary working groups needs identified according to the management needs;
- 1.6. Two transboundary meetings of protected areas authorities; at least six meeting of management planning WG in MNE and at least 6 meetings of zonation WG in Albania organized. Amendment January 2015. Changes - Amendment 1: at least six meeting of management planning WG in MNE and at least 6 meetings of zonation WG in Albania organized;
- 1.7. Compliance with Social Safeguard Policies monitored and reported to CEPF;
- 1.8. New Deliverable - Amendment 1: Consultation plan for the Skadar Lake NP Management Plan and Skadar Lake PL Zonation Plan developed and relevant authorities supported in conducting consultations with relevant stakeholders; Zonation Plan produced and made available to stakeholders.

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

A road map for development of a MP for LSNP was developed and an expert team to conduct the management planning process was set up as a first step in the process (composed of 5 staff members of PENPM and LSNP). The team was supported by an international PAs management planning expert, and experts from IUCN and GH. The drafting of the plan commenced with collating baseline information on biodiversity and socio-economic aspects of Lake Skadar.

The implementation of the previous MPs for LSNP was evaluated and a set of recommendations were elaborated based on a comparative analysis of the alignment between the PA MPs and other sectoral plans. In 2016 GH, with support from IUCN focused on the Porto Skadar Lake Project with a proposal to revoke the construction permit given to the investor before the Spatial Plan for LSNP was approved. The reasons against the building of the mass tourism resort were explained in the comments sent to the institutions and companies that have developed the proposal. The concerns about the project were also sent to the European Commission, the Ramsar Secretariat and international environmental NGOs. In September IUCN and GH discussed this issue with the Director of PENPM. After inquiring into the matter the Director had concluded that there was no legal basis for revoking the permit granted to the developer. However, although the construction permit is valid by March 2017, no construction activities have taken place by the time of completion of this report.

The involvement of stakeholders in the planning process was based on a prior analysis conducted by staff at PEMNE and project partners, and a road map. Two public consultation meetings were held in the preparation of the final draft of the MP. Key biodiversity indicators for Lake Skadar identified in the process were also incorporated in the document. The first complete draft of the

MP for LSNP for the period 2016-2020 was completed in September 2015, and the final version was submitted for approval to Government in May 2016. The plan was officially endorsed by the Government of Montenegro on the 10th of November 2016.

The key stakeholders played an important role in the development of the new Management Zoning for LSMNR that commenced in 2014 with a preparation of a road map. The process facilitated a strong involvement and commitment of interested scientists, FMO and the local governments of Shkodra and Koplik. It was successfully completed with a new Management Zoning scheme agreed by all key stakeholders. The enforcement of the rules under the new zoning has been strengthened by establishing and conducting joint patrols by PA staff and FMO members. The new Management Zoning for LSMNR was presented to Albanian authorities at a conference in November 2016 in Shkodra, organized by INCA in cooperation with RAPA Shkodra, and with support from IUCN and GH (see also Section 5).

In November 2013 the technical PAs staff from Albania and Montenegro completed the first management effectiveness assessment using the METT. In Montenegro the assessors from IUCN and PEMNE applied 29 out of 30 questions and the final score amounted to 46 points, accounting for 49.5 % of the maximum points for the questions addressed (93 points; including 6 additional points under 3 questions). Following the completion of the project, the assessment was repeated in February 2017. The total score was 53 points, accounting for 57% of the maximum points. The improved scores were reported on the following questions: Protected area boundary demarcation; Regular work plan; Staff numbers; Management of budget; Equipment; Maintenance of equipment; and cooperation with state and commercial neighbors. In Albania the assessors from IUCN and RAPA Shkodra applied 28 out of 30 questions and the final score amounted to 23 points, accounting for 25.5% of the maximum points under the relevant questions (90 points; including 6 additional points under 3 questions). As mentioned above, on the Albanian side of Lake Skadar, the assessment was repeated in 2015 and in 2016 in cooperation with other projects and by using an updated version of METT. In 2016 a project managed by UNDP, in cooperation with IUCN and the NaturAL project developed a database and software that requires PA managers to assess the management effectiveness of the areas they manage every year by using an online METT form. Following the assessment conducted by the RAPA staff in 2016, the total number of points scored was 74, accounting for 73% of the maximum amount (102). The reported progress was strongest with respect to the following questions: Law enforcement; Protected areas objectives; Protected area design; Management Plan; Research; Resource management; Maintenance of equipment; Education and awareness; State and commercial neighbors; Local communities; Economic benefit, Monitoring and evaluation; and Condition of values. The significant progress reported can be accounted for by the synergies established by this project and other projects, in particular the NaturAL project, but also by the establishment of the NAPA and RAPA in 2015. Subjective reasons should also be taken into account having in mind that the assessment in 2013 was conducted following the changes in the RAPA Shkodra by which most of the skilled and experienced staff was dismissed and at a time of low motivation and enthusiasm among the remaining staff.

Discussions on common transboundary issues were initiated during the study trip in May 2015 and were followed by a meeting organized in September the same year, held in the premises of LSNP in Vranjina. The themes discussed at the meeting included: (1) harmonization of management planning; (2) harmonization of zonation planning and zoning; (3) cooperation in protection, control and enforcement; (4) cooperation in scientific research and monitoring; (5) cooperation in specific habitat and species protection; (6) cooperation in management of

tolerated use of natural resources; (7) cooperation in fishery management; and (8) cooperation in restoration and improvement of habitats and populations. The meeting resulted with a list of issues requiring transboundary cooperation and also actions towards establishing effective transboundary cooperation on the operational level. Conclusions of that meeting were used to define the MoU between NAPA and PEMNE.

The second transboundary meeting was held in June, 2016 in the premises of RAPA Shkodra. In attendance were the directors of NAPA, PENPM, and LSNP, Albanian NGOs and local stakeholders in the region, as well as experts from RAPA Shkodra, Green Home, INCA and IUCN. The first part of the meeting was devoted to the revised 5-year Action Plan under the current MP for LSMNR whereas the second to exchange of information on new significant developments on both sides of the border, such as the new draft MP for LSNP and the new zoning for the LSMNR. The meeting was concluded with a set of priorities for follow up actions.

The third transboundary meeting was organized in December 2016 at which the Albanian delegation included representatives of Shkodra Municipality, director of NAPA, director and experts from RAPA Shkodra, representatives of FMO, and several journalists from local and national media. Montenegrin participants included representatives from the PENPM, MoSDT, LSNP, environmental inspections, local communities from Virpazar, and representatives of municipalities of Podgorica and Bar. At the meeting the directors of NAPA and PENPM signed a MoU that included a draft action plan for 2017. Among the issues discussed at the meeting was how the public officials, PA managers and the civil society can cooperate and coordinate their activities following the closure of the project.

Component 2 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 2.1. Capacity building needs assessment report. Change - Amendment 1: Work Group members in Montenegro and Albania provided with on-the-job capacity building course during management plan and zonation development workshops;
- 2.2. Capacity building program. Change - Amendment 1: Training material provided to WG members;
- 2.3. Capacity building support manuals. Change - Amendment 1: Management planning manual developed and published in the Montenegrin language.
- 2.4. Facilitated workshop for judges, inspection and customs services for up to 20 participants;
- 2.5. Law enforcement training for professionals
- 2.6. Learning exchange visit for PA authorities, resource managers and CSO representatives;
- 2.7. New Deliverable - Amendment 1: One day exchange meeting of rangers of SLPL and SLNP organized;
- 2.8. New Deliverable - Amendment 1: Meeting of Directors of Protected Areas Agencies from Albania (NAPA) and Montenegro (NPs of MNE) aimed to initiate discussion on how to improve transboundary cooperation with a special emphasis on Skadar Lake;

- 2.9. New Deliverable - Amendment 1: Two days training for rangers responsible for Skadar Lake National Park in Montenegro and Skadar Lake Protected Landscape in Albania (legislation and law enforcement, prevention and documentation of law violations [protocols, law suits database, etc.], work with poachers, fire prevention, environmental interpretation in the work of rangers, surveillance and monitoring, safety standards) organized and conducted.

9. Describe the results from Component 2 and each product/deliverable

The management planning working groups in Montenegro and Albania delivered on-the-job capacity training through a series of workshops organized for the development of the MP for LSNP and the new zoning for the SLMNR, organized in Podgorica and Shkodra in September, November and December 2014, as well as in April, May and June 2015.

The Training Materials for the development of Management Plans for National Parks in Montenegro was published in Montenegrin in a paper and electronic format with the latter being available from PENPM and at:

<https://www.iucn.org/regions/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/projects/supporting-long-term-sustainable-management>

The distribution of the training materials is ongoing through an e-mailing list of IUCN and GH, as well delivery of 50 hard copies to PENPM and GH to be distributed to PA managers, practitioners and major stakeholders in the private and public sector.

In October 2016, GH organized a workshop with representatives of law enforcement authorities (also see Section 4). The participants identified loopholes in the existing legal environment and developed a list of laws to be amended in order to achieve more effective law enforcement.

IUCN provided advice to GH in organizing a training event for professionals on law enforcement. In July 2016, in Vranjina a round table for LSNP rangers was opened with a presentation of the draft "Manual concerning the legal aspects of protection of Lake Skadar National Park." The discussion that followed focused on how park rangers and local residents should effectively report illegal activities.

An exchange visits was organized in May 2015 to the Neusiedler See - Seewinkel National Park (Austria), Fertő - Hanság National Park (Hungary), and Donau - Auen National Park (Austrian Federal States of Lower Austria and Vienna). In attendance were representatives from PEMNE, LSNP, RAPA Shkodra, and FMO of Shkodra, GH and INCA. Their counterparts from the hosting PAs shared their rich experience and practice in PA management, in particular in transboundary context. The guests learned about the specific organization, legislative background, financing, and governance of national parks, as well about the ecosystem, habitat and species conservation management and habitat restoration, control and law enforcement management; education, recreation, visitor information and management; local regional development and cooperation, with special emphasis on tourism; public relations, awareness raising and information. The study tour has been communicated through IUCN website as well as websites and Facebook pages of national project partners.

The signing of the MoU between PENPE and NAPA in December 2016 marked a significant progress in the cooperation between the national authorities on protected areas in Albania and Montenegro. The MoU also provide a formal framework for long-term transboundary

cooperation between PA managers around Lake Skadar and other PAs between Albania and Montenegro.

During the revision of the project work plan in April 2016, the project partners agreed to cancel the activities related to deliverables 2.7 and 2.9. However, these changes were not entered in the Grant Writer by mistake.

Component 3 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 3.1. On-line database of lawsuits in place and voluntary legal advice established in Montenegro and Albania. Change - Amendment 1: database of lawsuits in place and voluntary legal advice established in Montenegro;
- 3.2. Manual for law enforcement authorities;
- 3.3. Two roundtables focusing on law enforcement, each in one country organized;
- 3.4. New Deliverable - Amendment 1: Sets of uniforms and basic equipment provided to all rangers of Skadar Lake National Park in Montenegro and Skadar Lake Protected Landscape in Albania.

10. Describe the results from Component 3 and each product/deliverable

The slow progress in building the database, mainly due to the difficulty in gaining access to information from relevant officials, resulted in canceling of the activities related to Deliverable 3.1, in consultation with the project partners and donor (more details are given in Section 12).

IUCN supported GH in preparing the manual on law enforcement. The "Manual concerning the legal aspects of protection of Lake Skadar National Park", includes examples of good practice, rules, regulations and steps to process environmental criminal charges successfully (more details are given in Section 12).

A roundtable on law enforcement in Montenegro took place in 2016 in Vranjina as described above. A similar roundtable was initially envisaged to take place in Albania, building on the experience from Montenegro. The original idea for this activity was to share and possibly replicate the experience from the Montenegrin side concerning law enforcement, in particular the creation of an online database of lawsuits and voluntary legal advice with law enforcement authorities in the Albanian part of the region. The progress on the Montenegrin side was slower than expected and some of the tasks proved to be more challenging than expected (e.g. establishing online database of lawsuits). This activity was therefore excluded from the New Action Plan of April 2016.

The project also supported the rangers at LSNP in enforcing the law by providing of winter clothes, boots, hats, and gloves, delivered by Green Home in February 2016.

Component 4 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 4.1. Project communication strategy. Change - Amendment 1: Project communication strategy updated;
- 4.2. Outreach material emphasizing the values, conservation priorities and sustainable management principles of Lake Skadar to local communities and resource users. Change - Amendment 1: Outreach material emphasizing the values, conservation

priorities and sustainable management of Lake Skadar distributed among local communities and natural resources users. Communication material targeting specific stakeholder groups produced in the Albanian and Montenegrin languages and distributed;

- 4.3. Communication campaign strategy. Change - Amendment 1: Communication campaign designed and implemented: (1) Field visits for 40 teachers and students from Albania and Montenegro each organized; (2) One-day field visit to protected areas for 20 journalists from Montenegro and Albania organized;
- 4.4. Communication campaign report;
- 4.5. New Deliverable - Amendment 1: Closing event presenting the project results and lessons learned.

11. Describe the results from Component 4 and each product/deliverable

A Communications expert team set up at the beginning of the project developed a project communication strategy to secure consistent project communications. In 2016 it was agreed that there is a need to improve on project communications and IUCN was tasked to discuss with partners a plan to improve communication activities without formally updating the strategy. The partners agreed on a set of specific communication activities to be implemented by the end of the project. For similar reasons Delivery 4.4 (Communication campaign report) was canceled, although these changes were not entered in the Grant Writer by mistake.

The project partners, in cooperation with NaturAL project, contributed to the production of a brochure summarizing the natural values of Lake Skadar with a focus on the MP for LSMNR and the new Management Zoning. The brochure “Caring for our Lake our Future, the Management Plan for Lake Shkodra Managed Nature Reserve: A Summary,” was published in English, Albanian and Montenegrin both in a paper and an electronic format, available at the following links:

- English version:
https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/shkodra_managing_plan_en_final.pdf
- Albanian version:
https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/shkodra_managing_plan_albanian_final_email_final.pdf
- Montenegrin version:
https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/shkodra_managing_plan_mne.pdf

Around 50 copies were distributed during the project closing event in Podgorica, December 2016. The further distribution of the brochure in Albania was achieved in coordination with the NaturAL project. In addition, in cooperation with NaturAL, a 5-minute video on the transboundary Lake Skadar was produced. It is available in English, Albanian and Montenegrin at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgUZbQfJKLc>. The video was disseminated via websites (IUCN, NaturAL, partners), social media (NaturAL, NAPA, RAPA Shkodra, PENPM) and by email. It was also screened during the conference on Sustainable tourism development in Albania held in Shkodra in September 2016. It will be also used for promotional activities around the lake, mostly by RAPA Shkodra and PENPM. It should be mentioned that NaturAL produced additional short video in fisheries at Lake Shkodra available in Albania and English.

Furthermore, INCA in cooperation with the Shkodra RAPA staff selected 5 flagship species of medicinal plants, animals, fish, birds and reptiles and produced species identity cards containing information for children. In addition a model of an interpretation sheet was published.

In contribution to Deliverable 4.3 INCA and GH have organized field visits for teachers and students in Albania and Montenegro, respectively (more information is provided in Sections 12 and 13 below). Moreover, in June 2016 GH, in cooperation with INCA, organized a half-day study visit on the Montenegrin part of Lake Skadar for 8 journalists from Montenegro and Albania. During the visit representatives from GH, RAPA Shkodra and local communities gave presentations about the natural values and threats they face, as well as the challenges to sustainable use of natural resources by the local communities. Later on, in November 2016, INCA, in cooperation with RAPA Shkoder, FMO, GH and IUCN organized a boat trip on the Albania side of Lake Skadar for Albanian and Montenegrin national and local media. During the trip experts from RAPA Shkodra, INCA, GH and IUCN made statements and gave interviews to the media. This event was also used to promote traditional local produces to the journalists.

The third transboundary meeting was organized in December 2016 mentioned in Section 8 which also served as a project closing event. As mentioned earlier, at the meeting the directors of NAPA and PENPM signed the MoU. At the occasion the Director of NAPA, Mr. Zamir Dedej observed that there have been previous efforts to enhance the collaboration between two countries in the environmental field, but the MoU is different in that it includes an action plan for specific activities to be implemented with stakeholders on nature conservation in Shkodra/Skadar Lake and Buna/Bojana River, as well as in the mountain areas along the state border. Ms. Azra Vukovic, Director of PENPM, added that by signing the MoU the parties have agreed to share information regularly and act in concert to improve the management of the PA, in particular in tackling illegal activities.

Component 5 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 5.1. Secure and provide expert input to the assessment of the management effectiveness of the protected areas of Lake Skadar;
- 5.2. Secure and provide expert input to comparative analysis of existing sectoral plans in relation to the PA MPs;
- 5.3. Organize logistics of all relevant meetings in Montenegro (Amendment January 2015).
- 5.4. Secure and provide expert input to the revision and update of existing PA MPs and support the development of the 2016-2020 MP for Lake Skadar National Park;
- 5.5. Facilitation of workshop for judges, inspection and customs services for up to 20 participants;
- 5.6. Develop a database of lawsuits pertaining to the illegal use of natural resources of Lake Skadar and set up of a voluntary legal advice service on the legal aspects of the use of natural resources. The database will be available to the public (placed on website). A hot line will be established in order to provide legal advice on resource management;
- 5.7. Organization of 1 roundtable for 10 participants from MNE for law enforcement authorities;

- 5.8. Preparation and dissemination of the manual for law enforcement authorities that will contain examples of good practice, rules, regulations and necessary requirements to be executed in order to avoid rejection of the criminal charges related to the violations of laws;
- 5.9. Input to outreach material preparation and translations provided; materials disseminated in Montenegro;
- 5.10. Contribution to the communication strategy and campaign;
- 5.11. Provide IUCN with quarterly performance and financial reports;

12. Describe the results from Component 5 and each product/deliverable

In December 2013 GH contributed to the METT assessment for LSNP, in cooperation with the experts of IUCN and PEMNE. Following the completion of the project, the assessment was repeated in February 2017 (the results are summarized in point 8 above).

GH also contributed in the revision of the previous MPs for LSNP, and the comparative analysis of existing sectoral plans that was used for the new MP. GH played an active role in the consultation on the new Spatial Plan for LSNP, in particular in opposing the Porto Skadar Lake project.

In October 2016, GH organized a workshop with law enforcement authorities, as explained in more detail in Section 4.

With respect to Delivery 5.6 GH initially developed a database to collect data on illegal and criminal environmental offences for LSNP. The requests for information of relevant cases were only partly answered by the authorities. GH also made efforts to identify legal obstacles in processing complaints in Pod Hum near the reserve "Panceva Oka," in collaboration with prosecution officials and the police (such as illegal excavation of gravel from the Moraca and Cijevna River tributaries to the Lake Skadar). The progress was however slow and inadequate which resulted in abandoning further efforts.

In July 2016 GH organized a round table for law enforcement authorities in Montenegro. At the meeting the participants discussed the draft version of the "Manual concerning the legal aspects of protection of Lake Skadar National Park" and how it can be improved to help rangers, civil society organizations and local communities in the prevention of illegal activities and enforce the rule of law on the territory of LSNP. Following the workshop held in October 2016 (see Section 9) the Manual was published and promoted at the project closing event in Podgorica. It was published both in Albanian and Montenegrin, on paper (50 copies) and electronically:

http://www.greenhome.co.me/fajlovi/greenhome/attach_fajlovi/lat/glavne-stranice/2016/12/pdf/Prirucnik_Pravni_aspekti_zastite_NP_Skadarsko_jezero.pdf.

In cooperation with the NGO "Noe Conservation" the Manual was disseminated to the local communities around Lake Skadar on the Montenegrin side (e.g. Podhum, Virpazar and others), whereas INCA helped with the dissemination on the Albanian side of the lake. GH home also delivered copies of the Manual to the staff of LSNP, PENPM, the MoSDT, local governments and other stakeholders.

In addition to the Manual as important outreach material, GH organized several consultation meetings concerning the obstacles in the implementation of the relevant laws, regulations and rules in LSNP with the legal department at the PENPM, with a professor at University of Donja

Gorica, and an expert from the NGO “Noe Conservation” experienced in working with the local communities in the region.

In November 2016 GH organized a field visit for 50 students of two primary schools in Podgorica, attended by their teachers. They first visited the Visitor Centre of LSNP in Vranjina where park staff and GH experts presented the main values of Lake Skadar with a focus on biodiversity. A boat trip was organized afterwards, making stops along the shore to present to the students the natural and historical heritage of the lake region, and also test some traditional food products, locally produced cheeses, honey, fritters and pomegranate juice. During the trip the students had the opportunity to watch pelicans and other water birds.

GH provided an extensive and timely logistical support for the meetings and events organized under the project in Montenegro, but also for the transboundary meetings and events, in cooperation with INCA. GH regularly submitted to IUCN periodic performance and financial reports, including a summary of technical documents, events' reports and meetings' minutes. The narrative reports for the last two quarters were merged as most of the activities in the reporting period were implemented in the last quarter.

Component 6 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 6.1. Expert input to the assessment of the management effectiveness of the protected areas of Lake Skadar provided;
- 6.2. Logistics of all relevant meetings in Albania organized (Amendment January 2015)
- 6.3. Expert input to the revision and update of existing PA Management Plans and support the development of the 2016-2020 Management Plan for Lake Skadar National Park provided. Change - Amendment 1: Expert input to the zonation planning process provided;
- 6.4. Organization of 1 roundtable for 10 participants from Albania for law enforcement authorities;
- 6.5. Contribution to communication strategy development and identification of local stakeholders from Albania provided;
- 6.6. Local input to outreach material preparation and translations provided; materials disseminated in Albania;
- 6.7. Contribution to the communications strategy and campaign;
- 6.8. Performance and financial reports provided to IUCN every quarter.

13. Describe the results from Component 6 and each product/deliverable

In December 2013 INCA contributed to the initial METT assessment for LSMNR in cooperation with IUCN and the staff responsible for the management of LSMNR. As mentioned above, the assessment was repeated in 2015 and 2016 in cooperation with other projects active in Albania.

The activities concerning Deliverable 6.4 were not implemented, as explained in Section 10.

INCA also contributed in the preparation and production of the brochure on MP for LSMNR, entitled and the video “Greetings from Lake Skadar.”

Following the conference on the new Management Zoning for LSMNR in November 2016 in Shkodra, a boat trip on Lake Skadar was organized for Albanian and Montenegrin national and local media (also see section 10 and 12).

In May 2016 INCA involved more than 40 students and teachers from elementary schools in Sterbec, Koplik, and Shkodra who participated in a program that was composed of two modules: open classroom activities and a field trip along the shore of the lake. In collaboration with the Shkodra RAPA staff, INCA during that month also organized students from 5 schools around Lake Shkodra to take part in the celebration of the World Biodiversity Day at Shiroka by presenting their art works.

INCA provided extensive and timely logistical support to all meetings and events organized under the project in Albania, but also to the transboundary meetings and events, in cooperation with GH and IUCN. It regularly submitted to IUCN periodic performance and financial reports, including a summary of technical documents, events' reports and meetings' minutes. The narrative reports for the last two quarters were merged into one due to the fact that most of the activities in the reporting period were implemented in the last quarter.

Component 7 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

- 7.1. Project management team (PMT) and final project structure established;
- 7.2. Local project implementation organizations contracted;
- 7.3. Work plans, time tables and ToRs assessed and adjusted;
- 7.4. Good and effective communication and cooperation between project partners and key stakeholders maintained;
- 7.5. Handover completed for all deliverables and signed off by the donor as accepted
- 7.6. All financial processes and reports completed;
- 7.7. All contracts terminated;
- 7.8. Completion of project, internal, external and public relations contacts announced

14. Describe the results from Component 7 and each product/deliverable

Before any action was implemented on the ground all project partners appointed a contact person/officer who together comprised the PMT. The PMT agreed to meet regularly on a quarterly basis (12 meetings in total), to be organized in premises of national project partners, and back to back with planned on site project activities, whenever possible; meeting minutes were prepared and disseminated among the project partners. After the kickoff meeting held in September 2013 in Podgorica, the PMT maintained face-to-face or Skype meetings, although irregularly. The recurring changes of the contact persons in the project partners hampered the implementation of this plan and also the effective communication among the project partners. This was addressed in April 2016 by appointing new project officers at IUCN and GH; no major setback and delays in the project implementation occurred afterwards.

The PMT agreed to regularly develop annual work plans and monitor the implementation of project activities regularly. Two major revisions of the work plans took place in January 2015 and April 2016 in response to the challenges and changes encountered during the implementation of

the project; the budgets were adjusted accordingly. All the changes in the scope of the project, and its activities and deliverables were done in consultation with the donor.

The project partners regularly shared meeting minutes, list of participants, clarification of pending questions, etc. which ensured effective communication and cooperation of the project partners with the key stakeholders.

The Civil Society Tracking Tool was used independently by IUCN, GH and INCA at the beginning and after the completion of the project to track the progress in their organizational capacity. Over the course of the project IUCN has increased the total score for 0.5 points, (from 81.5 to 82.0; out of 100), whereas the increase in GH and INCA amounted to 6.5 points and 7 points, respectively (from 69.5 to 76.0; and from 62.0 to 69.0; out of 100) over the same period.

IUCN regularly updated its accounting system by collecting all the invoices and copies of receipts related to the project, including those from GH and INCA; all the financial reports were consolidated. The contracts signed under the project were successfully finalized, the products delivered and contracted payments executed. All project materials, project reports and financial documents are stored in the IUCN archive in electronic and hard copy format; many of the project materials are also available online.

The final event under the project was organized on the 5th of December 2016 in Podgorica. IUCN published information on the meeting at the following link:

<https://www.iucn.org/news/eastern-europe-and-central-asia/201612/boost-cross-border-conservation-between-albania-and-montenegro>

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

- 2.7. During the revision of the work plan in April 2016, upon consultation with the donor, the project partners agreed to cancel the activities related to this deliverable. However, the changes were not entered in the Grant Writer. This deliverable would have contributed to a stronger transboundary cooperation in PA management, complementing the progress made in communication and cooperation between the PA management staff and the national authorities. On the other hand, it was realized that such an action must be preceded by better understanding of the legal environment before effective cooperation between the rangers across the border takes place. Given the importance of these aspects for a stronger transboundary management of Lake Skadar, the NAPA and PENPM have agreed to address them as a matter of priority, by including them in the action plan attached to the MoU;
- 2.9 With the revisions of the Action Plan of April 2016, the activities on this deliverable were suspended. The reasons for cancelling the actions related to this delivery are similar as those related to the delivery 2.7 (see above). The changes were not entered in the Grant Writer by mistake. On the other hand, the topics selected for discussion at the intended training were mostly covered in the "Manual concerning the legal aspects of protection of Lake Skadar National Park." The Manual was also published in Albanian which partly contributed to Deliverable 2.9, as originally defined.
- 4.1 This initial description of this delivery was amended in January 2015 by agreeing that the project communication strategy needs to be updated. The setbacks in the following period led to further delays in the implementation of the strategy which reiterated the need of

immediate action. Following the discussions led by IUCN in April 2016, the project partners agreed to focus on the following activities to improve the communication under the project: (1) Prepare an article on the New Management Zoning for LSMNR to be published in the CEPF's newsletter; (2) Organize a transboundary field trip for journalists; (3) Conduct communications campaign on the Albanian side celebrating the International Day for Biological Diversity with the aim to raise awareness amongst the schoolchildren on the importance of Lake Skadar; (4) Produce a short promotional video clip on Lake Skadar as a transboundary eco-tourism destination; and (5) Improve the internal communication between partners by conducting regular Skype meetings. These actions have effectively mitigated the setbacks in the implementation of the communications strategy in the previous period;

- 4.4. This delivery was not accomplished due to the setbacks in the implementation of Delivery 4.1. Following the discussion in April 2016, the project partners have agreed to focus the time and effort on the remaining priority communications actions instead. Given the circumstances described above, the cancellation of Delivery 4.4 did not affect the overall impact of the project;
- 6.4. This deliverable was related to organization of 1 roundtable for 10 participants from Albania for law enforcement authorities with the idea to share the experience on the Montenegrin side concerning law enforcement, in particular online database of lawsuits and voluntary legal advice with law enforcement authorities in the Albanian part of the region. The progress on the Montenegrin side was slower than expected and some of the tasks proved to be more challenging than expected (e.g. establishing online database of lawsuits). During the revision of the Action Plan in April 2016 the project partners have agreed to cancel this activity in Albania, although the change was not entered in the Grant Writer by mistake.

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

- *Training Materials for the Development of Management Plans for National Parks in Montenegro.* The booklet, published in Montenegrin, complements the IUCN's Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories with the necessary adjustments related to the legal framework for PA management in Montenegro. It includes a number of forms that can be used in the preparation of MPs in Montenegro;
- *The Manual Concerning the Legal Aspects of Protection of Lake Skadar National Park.* It was published in Albanian and Montenegrin languages and contains 6 chapters: (1) legal aspects on environmental protection; (2) a chapter on illegal and criminal offences with respect to the environment, (3) a chapter on the civil rights related to the environment; (4) Management Zoning of LSNP; (5) rules and regulations applying to LSNP; and (6) forms concerning the legal procedures for environmental cases;
- *Caring for our Lake, our Future, the Management Plan for Lake Shkodra Managed Nature Reserve: A Summary.* The brochure was published in English, Albanian and Montenegrin both in a paper and an electronic format, in cooperation with the NaturAL project. It presents the natural and cultural values of the transboundary Lake Skadar region in a plain language and is intended for the following audience:
 - o NGOs, CSOs and local informal groups active in the region or nationally, in particular environmental organizations and clubs, but also organizations active in cultural heritage protection or community development;

- School teachers at the primary and secondary schools in the region, in particular those teaching biology, geography, chemistry, and natural resource management (forestry, agronomy) to children from 12 and above or those who are responsible for nature/environment sections for facultative education;
 - Interested students from all over Albania and Montenegro (from high schools and universities) specifically interested in the environment, nature, nature conservation, outdoor activities;
 - Local users (villages in and around the park) which have at least high school degrees, and may practice agriculture and fishing or are interested in tourism;
 - Other professionals in nature conservation, environment, forestry and other related sectors who are expected to have interest in the ecosystem of Lake Skadar.
- *“Greetings from Lake Skadar.”* The 5-minute video, produced in cooperation with the NaturAL, is available in English with subtitles in Albanian and Montenegrin.

Benefits to Communities

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

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

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

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

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| |
|--|

Lessons Learned

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

The consultation process on the draft MP for LSNP was seen by the responsible staff at the park and the PENPM as a burden rather than as an advantage in managing the PA. The lack of previous experience in stakeholder participation in the management of LSNP contributed to this attitude. To mitigate the situation, the project partners conducted informal discussions with the NGOs Noe Conservation and CZIP, as well as with the Natural History Museum in Podgorica. In addition, GH established an informal group to oversee the Porto Skadar Lake project, and how it is treated in the new Spatial Plan for LSNP. The group has created a Facebook page to increase transparency and outreach in the consultation process on the Spatial Plan. It has also sent a letter to the authorities expressing their opinion on the draft spatial plan and letters of concern have been sent to international stakeholders, including the Ramsar Secretariat and UNESCO.

On the other hand, the consultation process for the new Management Zoning for LSMNR can serve as a model in the region and beyond. With support from INCA and IUCN the Shkodra RAPA secured strong and active participation for key stakeholders, local fishermen, local governments and scientists in particular. Specific attention was given to the identification of the zone of strict protection in a way that would provide for the protection of critical habitats for lake's biodiversity while respecting the needs of vulnerable social groups, local fishermen in particular. The zoning was also designed taking into account the provisions set out in the local development plans for the region. The consultation process also helped increase the capacity and awareness among the stakeholders concerning the management zoning concept and its role in managing the IUCN Category IV Protected Areas.

Organizational capacity building activities in Albania were significantly hampered by the changes in the RAPA Shkodra by which most of the skilled and experienced staff was dismissed in the initial phase of the project. At the same time basic technical, material and financial means for the day-to-day operations were missing or poorly provided. The motivation and enthusiasm among the remaining staff was low and decreasing. While the situation on the Montenegrin side was comparatively better, the established institutional culture was resisting changes and there was lack of trust in cooperation with key stakeholders. In both cases the progress depended on individuals or champions who were ready to invest their time and effort to learn new skill and improve their knowledge without real prospects for being rewarded or acknowledged in return. The prior experience and relationship of the national project partners with those champions was of critical importance in the process.

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

The project struck balance between the roles played by the national partners (INCA and GH) and the lead partner (IUCN) in terms of technical capacity, but also access to key stakeholders at national and local level. While the national partners were capable of reaching to and building effective communication and cooperation with the key stakeholders locally, the transboundary cooperation and coordination of activities was often weak and requiring facilitation and support from IUCN. IUCN was also helpful in upholding the long-term results of the project into perspective. The role it played in the preparation and signing of the MoU is illustrative of IUCN's contribution on such issues.

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

The frequent changes of the contact persons who constituted the PMT added to the challenges created by the turnover of the key technical staff and managers at LSMNR, LSNP and PENPM. In addition to the loss of institutional memory related to project implementation created in the organizations where the changes occurred, the changes interrupted the dynamics of the implementation leading to inadequate performance and recurrent delays.

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

The involvement of the key stakeholders in management planning, such as local fishermen in Albania in the development of the new Management Zoning, was instrumental in several ways: (1) in building trust among PA managers and users; (2); by improving knowledge and understanding of the benefits from conservation and sustainable use of natural resources; and (3) by combining technical and human resources to follow up on the jointly agreed policies.

Sustainability / Replication

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

The project helped the application of internationally recognized standards in PA management, both in terms of substance and process, through the development of a new MP for LSNP and the new Management Zoning for LSMNR. It has also identified a set of gaps and obstacles for effective enforcement of laws, regulations and rules in PAs, and provided technical support in addressing those deficiencies. It also contributed to an improved understanding and awareness among key stakeholders on biodiversity values of Lake Skadar and their sustainable use, in particular among fishermen, schoolchildren and journalists. The prospects for maintaining and building upon the projects results are strengthened by the strategic partnership established between the national authorities on PAs in Albania and Montenegro and an action plan for the mid-term.

There is a growing understanding among the key stakeholders around the lake that sustained and integrated cross border cooperation is crucial for the conservation of the natural and cultural values of Lake Skadar. The key NGOs having interest in the region are ready to continue their work to improve the relations between PA managers and resource users to ensure that the unique ecosystem of Lake Skadar continues to sustain local livelihoods and is conserved for the generations to come.

Law enforcement and the control of illegal activities continue to be challenging tasks, more so in transboundary context. The progress on this front depends not only on higher capacity of responsible institutions, but also on the active role of the local community and stakeholders. The positive change in willingness and expectations among the local communities and stakeholders to participate in the decision making processes related to the use of natural resources they are depending on is therefore encouraging.

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

The established cooperation and synergy with the NaturAL project greatly improved the prospects for sustainability and replicability of the project results in Albania. The project uses 5 pilot sites in Albania, among which Lake Skadar is included, to support the implementation of current MPs for protected areas in the country, including through provision of equipment and infrastructure and by building regional, local and national capacities in raising public awareness on PAs and their role in conservation of biodiversity.

Safeguards

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

The project directly addressed a number of threats to biodiversity values of the hotspot, such as illegal building construction along the shoreline, illegal hunting and fishing in both countries. The activities under Component 3, aiming at strengthening law enforcement and enabling civil society to participate in the conservation of the lake's ecosystem, concerned many local communities around the lake, user groups and individuals. The improved capacity of law enforcement authorities affected those involved in illegal activities, whereas the improved management of lake's natural resources involved access restrictions that potentially could have caused economic or livelihood losses for local fishermen. In consequence the project adopted a Process Framework with the aim of protecting the needs of local stakeholders, vulnerable groups in particular. It enabled the project partners to pay attention to the root causes of vulnerability of such groups, how to identify, avoid and mitigate adverse social and environmental impacts of project activities, but also to seize opportunities to enhance their social and economic conditions by supporting soft-tourism activities and promotion of local products and services linked to sustainable use of natural resources.

Following the Process Framework, the project partners, in cooperation with protected areas managers have created preconditions for meaningful, effective and informed participation of local stakeholders in decision making, in particular in the development of the new management plan for LSNP in Montenegro and the new management zoning for LSMNR in Albania. For example, during the development of the new management zoning for the LSMNR, scientists, local fishermen and local government representatives were actively involved in designing the new management zoning, in particular in deciding on the location and extent of the zone of strict protection. In the process they sought solutions that would provide for the protection of critical habitats in and around the lake while respecting the needs of vulnerable social groups, such as local traditional fishermen. As a result, the local fishermen in Albania, organized in the FMO, have come to understand that the enforcement of the new management zoning will secure the long-term use of the resources they depend on for their well-being. The process helped establish and strengthen a constructive relationship between the protected area managers and local fishermen, and enabled other stakeholders to take ownership of the project.

In addition, the project partners ensured that grievances raised by affected communities, stakeholder groups or individuals are brought to the attention and properly addressed by protected area managers and other relevant authorities. In Montenegro, GH played an important role by providing voluntary legal advice service, and also by establishing an informal group to oversee the Porto Skadar Lake project and facilitate the participation in the consultation process for the new Spatial Plan for LSNP.

These efforts were paralleled by communication and public raising awareness activities, focusing on the values of the lake ecosystem and the long-term benefits of sustainable management of its natural resources. In combination, these actions were instrumental in reducing vulnerability and building resilience among local communities and user groups, and also in promoting equity.

Additional Funding

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

| Donor | Type of Funding* | Amount | Notes |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|---|
| European Union | A | € 2,500 | In cooperation with the NaturAL project. |
| European Union | C | € 400,000 | An estimate of planned direct investments through the NaturAL project, including boats, vehicles, office and monitoring equipment and training; activities are underway for establishing a visitor center and a ranger station. |
| | | | |
| | | | |

** Categorize the type of funding as:*

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

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

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

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| CSO | civil society organization |
| FMO | Fishery Management Organization, Albania |
| GH | Green Home, Montenegro |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| INCA | The Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania |
| IPA | Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance of the European Union |
| IUCN ECARO | IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia |
| LSNP | Lake Skadar National Park, Montenegro |
| LSMNR | Lake Skadar Managed Nature Reserve, Albania |
| METT | Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool |
| MNE | Montenegro |
| MoE | Ministry of Environment in Albania |
| MoSDT | Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism in Montenegro |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MPs | Management Plans |
| NAPA | National Agency for Protected Areas of Albania |
| NaturAL project | Project „Strengthening national capacity in nature protection-preparation for Natura 2000 network“ |
| NGO | non-governmental organization |
| PAs | Protected Areas |
| PENPM | Public Enterprise National Parks of Montenegro |
| PMT | Project management team |
| RAPA | Regional Administration for Protected Areas, Albania |
| UNDP | The United Nations Development Program |
| UNESCO | The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| WG | Working Group |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |