

## CEPF Final Project Completion Report

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

<b>Organization Legal Name</b>	Environmental Citizens Association "Front 21/42"
<b>Project Title</b>	Save Ohrid Lake and Galičica National Park
<b>CEPF GEM No.</b>	66116
<b>Date of Report</b>	30.06.2017

**CEPF Hotspot:** Mediterranean Basin - Lake Ohrid and Galičica National Park

**Strategic Direction:** No. 3: Improve the conservation and protection status (of 44 priority key biodiversity areas)

**Grant Amount:** \$31,731.00

**Project Dates:** 01.06.2016 – 28.02.2017

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

*Na*

**Conservation Impacts**

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

Our project is located in the Southwest Balkans, one of the six priority biodiversity conservation corridors in the CEPF investment strategy for the Mediterranean Basin. More specifically, it addresses the threat of habitat destruction in one of the 44 key priority biodiversity areas, thus it is integrated in the third strategic direction: 3. Improve the conservation and protection status (of 44 priority key biodiversity areas). "Save Ohrid Lake and Galičica National Park" project relates to two investment priorities for the 3rd strategic direction:

3.1. Establish new protected areas and promote improved management of existing protected areas by developing and implementing sustainable management plans:

Our project contributed to the suspension of the planned change of the Management Plan for the National Park Galičica, which proposed degradation of the protection zones of the park, for the sake of construction of a ski centre, express way and tourism development zone. This goal was reached by establishing and developing regular communication with UNESCO, World Heritage Committee and IUCN; national and international legal actions; and national and international campaign activities.

Also, our project created a base for improvement and implementation of the (7 years dormant) Law on Management of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage in Ohrid region. This goal was reached by establishing cooperation with the Members of the Macedonian Parliament and

initiating an informal group of MPs “Friends of Ohrid”, who agreed to require a public oversight for the Ohrid Law at the Assembly. The communication with UNESCO also contributed to this result.

Last, but not least within the project we initiated both national and international protection of Studenčište Marsh (important part of the whole ecosystem). More specifically we advocated for protection of the marsh as a category 3 protected area by the national law (Monument of Nature) and contributed to the preconditions for nomination of the Lake Ohrid and Studenčište Marsh for Ramsar Site.

3.3. Raise awareness of the importance of priority key biodiversity areas, including those that have irreplaceable plant and marine biodiversity.

This investment priority was a very important focus of our project, implemented through national and international awareness raising campaign about the unique values of Ohrid region (Lake Ohrid and Galičica National Park) with many components and activities. Within the project 33 young people from around the country learnt about the values of Ohrid and Galičica from national biodiversity expert and then spread this knowledge through direct communication with the citizens, in over 50 street actions in their cities. We also had many presentations and campaign activities, as part of various events, including film festivals, expert gatherings, etc. Local, national and international media were very important part of the campaign component of the project and greatly contributed to the raising of the awareness about the exceptional natural values of Ohrid region.

### **3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project**

Our project contributed to the formal and clear position of UNESCO (expressed in the latest, 2017 State of Conservation Report) that the planned infrastructure projects will have irreversible negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Values of the world heritage; and the recommendation to focus on eco-projects instead. The impact of such report is that it practically disables further development of destructive projects and paves the way to the sustainable development of the region, consequently to better preservation and conservation of the species and habitats.

Our communication with UNESCO and IUCN representatives, which included providing regular, timely and correct information, sending expert and exhaustive analysis, meeting with the monitoring mission, etc. – helped UNESCO to have the complete picture of the real situation (including plans which our country did not report entirely, or at all, despite the obligations deriving from the UN Convention), as well as their much closer monitoring and formal requests for specific measures Macedonian Government now has to implement (unless it wants to lose the only UNESCO site in the country).

Thanks to all of the above, but also thanks to the fact that we used and publicly communicated UNESCO positions in all needed situations, as well as our regular monitoring of all processes and relevant institutions (and timely acting), continually using legal tools, expert comments, national campaign, etc. - none of the planned projects moved/developed from the stage they were at the beginning of the project.

Our communication with the MPs, established right after they were elected, created a solid base for legal changes which will bring a much better protection and management of the Ohrid region – this is an impact that will only grow and bring multiplied benefits for nature protection, in the years to come.

Another important result, which we plan to build upon, is the discovery of the legal gap which creates conditions for Macedonia's non-compliance with the Aarhus Convention (a system error). With current legislation Macedonian Government has a way to impose actions with great impact on the environment, without any information to the public, nor its inclusion in the decision-making. Once corrected – this result will have a significant impact on the environmental democracy in Macedonia and all future relevant policies and decisions.

Last, but not least, thanks to the campaigning activities the project had a great impact on the improvement of the Macedonian citizens' knowledge of and appreciation for the great natural treasure of Ohrid region.

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

*List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal*

1. The Law on Management of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage in Ohrid region is implemented with NGOs participation in all phases of the Management Plan: preparation, monitoring and evaluation;
2. Enable better environment for conservation of all species and habitats in Ohrid World Natural and Heritage site and Galičica National Park by implementation of the Law on Management of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage in Ohrid region.

#### **4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion**

We conducted legal analysis and identified key issues which, in our view, disable the implementation of the law. Based on the analysis, we prepared proposals for amendments to the related law, which we think are needed for full and proper transposition of the UNESCO Convention, as well as for the actual implementation and enforcement of the law. These findings and recommendations were communicated with the UNESCO WH Center/IUCN/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property and reflected in the mission report. Most important of all – the analysis was communicated with the national authorities which have the power to make the changes, and they expressed open support for the proposed changes.

Very important step towards proper implementation of the Law on Management of Ohrid region was the communication we established with the Macedonian Assembly. We gained open support for the initiative for a public oversight for the law from 22 MPs. In order to actualize the promises for a support, we created a core group of 5 MPs titled “Friends of UNESCO” who publicly pledged that will initiate a public oversight for the law and moratorium for the infrastructure projects.

*Additional explanation: The public oversight is a process which provides opportunity for the Parliament to impose on all relevant institutions proper implementation of the law and long-term protection of the region. All issues that we identified within the legal analysis will be raised during the public oversight at the Parliament (and hopefully result with official demands for their resolution).*

Another progress towards long term legal protection (of Ohrid region, and also of all protected areas in Macedonia) was the process of amending the Law on Nature Protection. We participated in the public hearing and submitted comments regarding the management plans for protected

areas, compensation measures, appropriate assessment, as well as coastal strip zones. Adoption procedure of the draft law was on hold due to the long political crises in the country, but we hope to see our comments integrated in the final version of the law.

A legal action which we think will also contribute to the long term legal protection is the Complaint (Concerning Lake Ohrid and Galičica National park in R. Macedonia), which we submitted to the Directorate of Democratic Governance, Culture and Diversity in the Council of Europe for the Bern Convention on Biological Diversity. The complaint included a detailed overview of all species found in Galičica National Park and Lake Ohrid (266 in total), included in the Appendices of the Bern Convention. If no additional information is requested the case will be taken to the Bureau in September 2017 and depending on the state reply, the case might be on the agenda of the next Standing Committee Meeting in November 2017 for voting. Opening a case file should enable better environment for close monitoring by the international community and better conservation of species and habitats in Ohrid World Natural and Heritage site and Galičica National Park.

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

*List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal*

1. No actual construction works are undertaken in Ohrid region in priority habitats and no key species are affected.
2. The local citizens are active participants in the decision making processes for Ohrid region (number of submitted comments to the plans is increased by 50% compared to the current situation which is under 100 comments).
3. Changes in the Law on Touristic Development Zones are adopted in accordance with the Law on nature protection (and other) laws, strategies, plans, etc.
4. Initiative for listing Lake Ohrid (including Studencišhte Wetland) for Ramsar site is submitted.

### **5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion**

5.1. The main short term goal - to suspend the planned infrastructure projects - was fully achieved. The 2016 UNESCO World Heritage Committee's Decision (40 COM 7B.68 Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Ohrid region (C/N 99ter) was crucial for this impact. This document imposed several obligations on the country (including the request for the monitoring mission) "before any further work is undertaken". We contacted IUCN for an interpretation of "any further work" and they confirmed that it refers to all types of work, including any administrative procedures. We noted this in a letter which we sent together with the Macedonian translation of the Decision to the Municipality of Ohrid, when they tried to continue with the administrative process for one of the plans. We sent the same letter to all other stakeholders (2 other affected municipalities, Ministry of Culture, National Park Galičica, etc.).

A step towards solidifying the situation (no actual construction works are undertaken in Ohrid region in priority habitats and no key species are affected) was our request for a formal suspension of all destructive projects, supported by over 7.000 citizens around the country. Our cooperation with the MPs gives a realistic hope and expectation that this decision will be adopted by the Macedonian Assembly.

Another action which can bring complete erasing of the plans for construction within the NP Galičica is the Initiative for assessing the constitutionality and legality of the Government Decision

(to oblige the National Park to amend the Management Plan for NP Galicia in order to accommodate the proposed projects), which we submitted to the Constitutional Court of Macedonia. If our initiative is accepted by the Court, the Government Decision as well as the Park's decision to start the process of changing the existing Management Plan – will both be annulled and Galičica National Park will no longer be under threat from the plans for a ski center, express way, etc.

5.2. Since all plans for all projects were put on hold (thanks to the UNESCO report) – there wasn't an opportunity for the local citizens to participate in the decision making processes. However, we did get a significant public support against the planned projects from citizens around the whole country, thanks to our national campaign "It's significant!" – Save Ohrid the only UNESCO site in Macedonia.

5.3. The legal analysis of the Law on Touristic Development Zones showed that there is no legal ground to challenge the law and demand changes, instead we submitted previously elaborated Initiative for assessing the constitutionality and legality of the Government Decision (to oblige the National Park to amend the Management Plan for NP Galicia in order to accommodate the proposed projects).

5.4. Within the project we established communication with the Ramsar focal point from the Ministry of Environment. As part of the 3rd International Climate Change Conference in Skopje we organized panel discussion "Need for nature conservation - Wetlands: The Hidden Resource for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation – Lake Ohrid and Studenčište Marsh". The following conclusion was adopted: Macedonian Government should commence the proceedings for declaration of Lake Ohrid with "Studenčište" Marsh for Ramsar site. Additionally, Resolution for protection of the Lake Ohrid and Studenčište Marsh was adopted. We included the conclusion and the resolution in the official letter we sent to the new Minister for Environment, with which we ask the Ministry to initiate the nomination of the Lake Ohrid (including the Marsh) for Ramsar site.

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

The project fully achieved the main short term impact - none of the planned projects moved/developed from the stage they were at the beginning of the project. The fact that we used and publicly communicated UNESCO positions in all needed situations, as well as our regular monitoring of all processes and relevant institutions (and timely acting), continually using legal tools, expert comments, national campaign, etc., greatly contributed to the realization of this impact.

The project created solid and sustainable basis for the achievement of the desired goals in the long term impact - "Enable better environment for conservation of all species and habitats in Ohrid World Natural and Heritage site and Galičica National Park" and "The Law on Management of the World Natural and Cultural Heritage in Ohrid region is implemented with NGOs participation in all phases of the Management Plan: preparation, monitoring and evaluation":

- We initiated creation of an informal group of MPs “Friends of UNESCO” who volunteered to initiate and lead all needed legal changes; we also ensured support for these changes from at least 22 MPs, the Assembly Speaker and the Minister of Environment;
- We developed close communication with representatives from the National UNESCO Commission, who expressed their interest and need for cooperation with our legal team regarding the transposition (of the UN convention), implementation and enforcement of the legislation concerning the Ohrid region.
- We initiated future protection of the Lake Ohrid and Studenčište Marsh under the Ramsar Convention and ensured support from the Ministry of Environment, which is the authority that nominates sites for Ramsar designation;
- In our project we put a special focus on the Macedonian citizens’ knowledge of and appreciation for the great natural treasures of Ohrid region – we believe this is also connected to the long term protection of the site.

We identified 4 challenges for achieving our goals for a long term impact: (1) lack of funds (very low amount from government budget is allocated for nature protection); (2) insufficient institutional capacities for utilization of available funds, e.g. UNESCO (since 1979, when Ohrid was added to the WH list, Macedonia had only 1 project of a small scale - 20 000 USD); (3) lack of understanding of the sustainable development principles and meaning, among part of the local population and current local administration; (4) collision of existing plans and strategies that regulate management or activities within the Ohrid region (Spatial Plan of the Republic of Macedonia 2004 – 2020; Spatial Plan of the Ohrid – Prespa Region 2005 – 2020, General Spatial Plan for Municipality of Ohrid 2014 – 2024, etc.) as well as the need for harmonization of the upcoming Management plan for the region with the other plans.

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

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**Project Components and Products/Deliverables**

**Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)**

*List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer*

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

Component 1: Public participation and legal action		
Deliverable		
#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Official documentation from justice department regarding the decision for a change of the existing Management Plan	On February 27th 2017 we submitted an Initiative for assessing the constitutionality and legality of the Government Decision (to oblige the National Park to amend the Management Plan for NP Galicia in order to accommodate the proposed projects), as well as the Park’s decision to start the process of changing the existing Management Plan. We expect a reply from the Constitutional Court sometime autumn 2017. If the initiative is accepted both decisions to change the existing Management Plan will be annulled.

2	Written comments to the draft document within the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for the expressway	All processes for the infrastructure plans are on hold due to the UNESCO Decision. Furthermore, If the Constitutional Court annuls the Government and the National Park decisions for a change of the existing Management Plan for NP Galičica the Expressway project should be canceled.
3	Comments to domestic Strategic SEAssessment for the expressway	All processes for the infrastructure plans are on hold due to the UNESCO Decision. Furthermore, If the Constitutional Court annuls the Government and the National Park decisions for a change of the existing Management Plan for NP Galičica, the Expressway project should be canceled.
4	Comments to domestic Environmental Impact Assessment for the ski center	The ski center project is on hold due to the UNESCO Decision and will be one of the canceled projects if the Constitutional Court annuls the Government and the National Park decisions for a change of the existing Management Plan for NP Galičica
5	Comments to the Study for the snow impact on Ohrid water and species, for the ski center	The ski center project is on hold due to the UNESCO Decision and will be one of the canceled projects if the Constitutional Court annuls the Government and the National Park decisions for a change of the existing Management Plan for NP Galičica
6	Send requests for information to Municipality of Ohrid and Ministry of Environment. Have meetings with relevant sector at the Ministry of Environment.	Request for information regarding the procedure for proclamation of the Studenčište Wetland were sent and meetings with representatives from the Nature department and Spatial planning department from the Ministry of Environment were held. We received official response that the procedure regarding the Study for Wetland Valorization is put on hold after Government Decision obliging Municipality of Ohrid to submit revised version of the valorization study from 2012 that will include at least 4-5 ha protection of the wetland. We were informed that the Nature Department issued negative opinion on the proposed Amendments of the Urban plan for Ohrid. In the response it is noted that the Ministry of Environment first obliges the Municipality of Ohrid to proceed and finalize the process for the Studenčište Wetland prior to any Amendments of the Urban Plan. After the communication with the Ministry of Environment requests for information were sent to the Municipality of Ohrid regarding the Urban Plan concerning the wetland. We want to investigate the legality of the procedure for Amending the Urban plan.
7	Initiate nomination of Lake Ohrid (including Studenčište Wetland) as a Ramsar site	We had meeting with the Ramsar focal point from the Ministry of Environment, Mr. Aleksandar Nastov. He informed us that Lake Ohrid together with the Studenčište Wetland meets the criteria for Ramsar site. He stressed that in order to have designation, first the Government needs to prepare re-valorization study of the Lake Ohrid and lake shore (including Studenčishta Wetland) as well as a Management Plan – both procedures require big financial support and such studies are not governmental priorities. On February 4th, 2017, as part of the 3rd International Climate Change Conference in Skopje, we organized the panel discussion “Need for nature conservation - Wetlands: The Hidden Resource for Climate Mitigation and Adaptation – Lake Ohrid and Studenčishta Wetland”. Our lawyer and Mr. Nastov were among the panelists. The following conclusions were adopted: Macedonian Government should commence the proceedings for declaration of Lake Ohrid and the “Studenčista” Wetland for Ramsar sites; Resolution for protection of the Lake Ohrid and Stundenchishta Wetland is initiated. We utilized the conclusion and the resolution and sent official initiative for nomination of the Lake Ohrid (including the Wetland) for Ramsar site to the new Minister for Environment.
8	Official documentation from justice department regarding the decision for the Urban Plan for Lagadin Beach	All procedures for all projects are on hold due to UNESCO Decision (Paragraph 5). As previously noted, the communication and legal consultations with the local population continued regarding the new proposed project in Lagadin - a private hotel within the village. After consultations with our lawyer, the local community started a legal action against this project. As a result the State Inspectorate for Civil Engineering issued decision for suspension and requested from the Municipality of Ohrid to annul the construction permit.

9	Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee regarding public participation in various plans and projects	We discovered legal gap which creates conditions for Macedonia's non-compliance with the Aarhus Convention (a system error). With current legislation Macedonian Government has a way to impose actions with great impact on the environment, without any information to the public, nor its inclusion in the decision-making. Once corrected – this result will have a significant impact on the environmental democracy in Macedonia and all future relevant policies and decisions. We plan to submit the communication prior to the next meeting of the Committee.
10	Fact Sheet, cover letter and Initiative for monitoring mission to UNESCO WH Committee	Monitoring mission took place in April 2017 and we had a meeting with mission on April 12th. For the meeting we prepared an overview of the planned projects as well as legal analysis of the Law on Managing the world natural and cultural heritage of the Ohrid region.
11	Communication with the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention on Biological Diversity	We submitted a complaint to the Bern Convention on November 19th 2016. The case was prepared in cooperation with two leading domestic experts in biodiversity – Metodija Velevski and Slavco Hristov and is based on the threat from the planned project to the 266 species found in Ohrid region and listed in the Bern Convention Appendices (208 on Appendix II and 58 on Appendix III). From this list 124 species are also part of the International Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species and Wild Animals (Bonn Convention) - 3 species are on the Appendix I and 121 on the on Appendix II. As many as 49 of them are included in the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), ratified by Macedonia in 1999. We also sent an information to the supporters of the international petition and this too had a great effect – in less than a week we had around 2000 new signatures. If no additional information is requested the case will be taken to the Bureau in September 2017 and depending on the state reply, the case might be on the agenda of the next Standing Committee Meeting in November 2017 for voting.
12	Initiative for assessing the constitutionality and legality of the Government Decision obliging the National Park to amend the Management Plan for NP Galicia in order to accommodate the proposed projects.	The initiative for constitutionality of the Government decision and the decision of the NP Galičica, to change the existing Management Plan was submitted in February 2017. If our initiative is accepted by the Court the Government Decision (to oblige the National Park to amend the Management Plan for NP Galicia in order to accommodate the proposed projects), as well as the Park's decision to start the process of changing the existing Management Plan – will both be annulled and Galičica National Park will no longer be under threat from the plans for a ski center, express way, etc.
13	NGO written contribution to the draft Progress Report for Macedonia	Our team had a meeting with the EU Delegation in Macedonia prior to the 2016 EC Progress Report on Macedonia, during which we distributed the Fact Sheet on projects planned in the Ohrid region, as well as other material. The outcome is that the 2016 Report notes that "... implementation (of the EU Directives) is very limited, particularly on air quality and nature protection..." and states that in the coming year, the country should pay particular attention to "... improving the environmental impact assessment process to ensure effective protection of national protected areas, areas of high natural value and potential Natura 2000 sites..." For the next progress report, we participated on consultation meeting with Ms. Maddalena Ivanitsa, representative of DG Environment, and Mr. Nicola Bertolini, Head of Cooperation of the EU delegation in Macedonia. This meeting was scheduled prior to the meetings of the EU delegation with the Government representatives regarding the progress made since November 2016. We shared the new material package (booklet in English, the UNESCO Decision, extras from experts' reports, etc.) and discussed the issue. Ms. Ivanitsa expressed great concern and noted that infrastructure development in Ohrid will be priority issue for discussion with the Macedonian Government. Also, the issue was discussed on the meeting with the High Representative of EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Ms. Federica Mogherini and presented in the CSOs one pager on environment.
14	Communication with the European Parliament	In December 2016 we established contact with Mr. Ivo Vajgl (EU MP, member of the Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs) through our partner EURONATUR. In the following period we plan to follow through. Our communication with the EU MP Ivo Vajgl continued.

		We sent him updated fact sheet and UNESCO decision. Following his advice we also contacted Mr. Tamasz Meszerics, Shadow Rapporteur from the Greens group and shared the materials via e-mail with him as well. We will continue this communication.
1 5	Press releases for participation in the decision making processes	<p>Press conferences were organized for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WH Committee Decision regarding Ohrid at the start of the campaign;</li> <li>- Submission of the complaint to the Bern Convention</li> </ul> <p>For both events we sent press releases (which were published in many printed and electronic media, elaborated in the “media outreach” below).</p> <p>As previously mentioned our lawyer had a joint TV interview with the Lagadin community representative. She also had over 30 public statements for various national, local and international media (please see the media outreach).</p> <p>In relation to our communication with the media we think it is appropriate to report our communication with the investigative journalism organization SCOOP. We signed a Memorandum for cooperation with SCOOP and agreed to cooperate on a video story for the infrastructure plans in Ohrid region. The investigative video was published prior to the Reactive monitoring mission in Ohrid.</p> <p>Link to the story: <a href="http://en.scoop.mk/the-lake-of-ohrid-under-threat-of-urbanisation/">http://en.scoop.mk/the-lake-of-ohrid-under-threat-of-urbanisation/</a></p>

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

Component 2: National awareness raising campaign		
#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	“Ohrid Cube” - a unique portable installation which will serve as the campaign “house”	The Ohrid Cube idea turned out to be quite complicated for construction (especially as an easy to assemble and moveable installation), very expensive to build and to transport around the country and very demanding logistically – to find people who will assemble it in each city, place to store it during the night, etc. Therefore we decided to portray Ohrid as a natural gem with one extra large banner (200x200) and two large banners (130x200). Three high quality original photographs from a well known professional domestic photographer (Ema Kushevska) were purchased for this purpose. The “story” we created has 3 elements and slogans: “The oldest and deepest lake in Europe” – a photo of the lake; “Galičica – According to the Scientists Botanical Garden in Nature” – photo of the National Park; “The Lake With the Greatest Biodiversity in the World, Measured by Surface Area” – underwater photo of the lake biodiversity. The whole “construction” is completed with a stand with the campaign slogan in Macedonian, Albanian and English. This solution allowed flexibility of the use during the awareness raising campaign - we were able to combine the banners accordingly for different spaces and/or to cover 2 or 3 events at the same time.
2	Photos from the campaign tour around 10 cities in Macedonia	Campaign actions and events were organized in 13 cities around the country. They include: Over 50 street actions - direct communication with citizens in order to inform them about the planned projects and their impact on Macedonia’s greatest natural treasure and most important touristic site; Organization of over 10 special “Save Lake Ohrid” signing cards events; Actions for signing Save Lake Ohrid cards within popular cultural events (such as concerts, film festivals, vegan festival, etc.). These activities were implemented by 30 the young activists we trained in July and in cooperation with 13 local NGOs from various cities. We also had many expert presentations on Ohrid values and threats, such as: (1) IPA II mechanism conference, Skopje (Environment working group session) - our lawyer had presentation on the UNESCO decision and its meaning. Over 20 environmental NGO representatives attended the session; (2) National consultative workshop to update the ecosystem profile for the Mediterranean basin, Skopje (organized by MES and CEPF) - our lawyer participated in the preparation of the outcomes regarding the threats of the ecosystems and the possible CSO actions addressing the threats; (3) The gemstones of Macedonia – Scientific conference for Ohrid, Skopje (organized by Eko-svest) - representatives from both teams (Front 21/42 and Eko-svest) participated and contributed to the debate. Over 30 national and international experts participated on the event; (4) Congress of Ecologies of Macedonia with international participation”, Ohrid (organized by MES) - members of both teams attended the congress. During the panel “Water” on 22nd discussion regarding the Ohrid lake emerged and our lawyer took part in the debate. The

		<p>debate ended with a conclusion that a special international conference shall be organized just for Ohrid region; (5) National Strategy for Nature Protection 2017 – 2027, public debate, Skopje - our lawyer participated in the discussion regarding the threats of Lake Ohrid and Galičica National park. Over 40 representatives from different groups (Government, CSOs, academia, experts, etc.) participated; (6) “Eho film festival” - Debate “Save Lake Ohrid”. Presentation was given by our lawyer and Metodija Veleviski from MES. Over 50 people attended the presentation; (7) Addressing the Sustainable Development Goals into the National Strategic Documents of the Republic of Macedonia workshop, Skopje - our lawyer discussed Lake Ohrid and Galičica National park issue with infrastructure projects during the session for Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss; (8) “Ohrid lake – pearl or bijouterie”, Skopje (KontraKadar Debate Cinema)</p> <p>Movie projection followed by presentation of our lawyer and Stojan Lesoski from Eko-vest. Over 20 people participated in the discussion after the presentation; (9) Protecting lakes regional conference, Dojran (organized by REC and CEPF) - Our campaign leader was panellist on Session No. 3: “Non-for-profits, Volunteers and Teachers as Key Players for Lakes’ Life” discussing our campaign and activates regarding Lake Ohrid and Galičica National park. Link: <a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3aB-yZpybPSUE03STBPRGJOZEU">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3aB-yZpybPSUE03STBPRGJOZEU</a></p>
3	Records of the media outreach	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3aB-yZpybPSbFF2NUptZjJVSvk">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3aB-yZpybPSbFF2NUptZjJVSvk</a>
4	Photos and list of participants in the training in Ohrid	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3aB-yZpybPSYUw1ODE1RlpZOGM">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3aB-yZpybPSYUw1ODE1RlpZOGM</a>
5	Campaign branded vests – 100	We had t-shirts with campaign slogan instead, Macedonian and Albanian versions.
6	Organize event for the newly elected MPs to present the campaign, the cards from the citizens and our initiative for official suspension of the projects and public oversight regarding the Law on Management with the World Natural and Cultural Heritage Site - Ohrid region. Create a core group of MPs who will "push" the issues in the Parliament, once it becomes functional	<p>The event for the newly elected MPs took place on January 31st, 2017, in Hotel Stonebridge in Skopje. In partnership with the National Democratic Institute (NDI) we organized a working lunch titled “The MPs for our only UNESCO site. After the team’s presentations we had an open debate and several MPs, including 3 from Ohrid region, took part in the debate. Following the official part of the event we had informal conversations, mostly focused on the practical questions the MPS had regarding the procedures for formal decision to suspend the projects and the public oversight for the related law. The most important outcome of the event (which was the first gathering of the newly elected MPs since the elections in December 2016) is the open and full support all 22 participating MPs gave to our initiatives and their public pledges to vote for these initiatives right after the Assembly becomes functional.</p> <p>All participants received branded folder with the campaign logo and the following materials and documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open letter by Front 21/42 executive director;</li> <li>- The UNESCO Decision (40 COM 7B.68) translated in Macedonian and Albanian;</li> <li>- Our proposal for the Initiative for oversight hearing in the Parliament;</li> <li>- Our proposal for the decision to suspend all infrastructure projects in the Ohrid region;</li> <li>- Specifically designed cards, by a local artist from Ohrid – the cards are on hand-made paper with integrated seeds and can be planted. We used these cards to congratulate the new MPs on their mandate, ask them to preserve the greatest national natural treasure and to pass some of the comments from the on-line petition;</li> <li>- Campaign booklet in which we presented the values of Ohrid region, the projects which threaten these values and selection of comments from the petition.</li> </ul> <p>All materials were in Macedonian and Albanian.</p> <p>As a follow up to this event we sent e-mails to all participants and expressed our proposal to form a core group “Friends of Ohrid”, which will make sure that both initiatives become</p>

		<p>reality as soon as the Assembly becomes functional. This group was created in February 2017 and has 5 MPs from 3 political parties, 2 are from Ohrid. We had one meeting with the core group, during which the MPs appointed the group's coordinator and we agreed the first concrete steps towards the realization of the goals. We also discussed the UNESCO reactive monitoring mission, which the group wants to meet as well. We offered our help with information and materials prior to their meeting with the mission.</p> <p>In the original plan we wanted to make this event public and invite all media, but considering the political crisis after the elections and in consultations with NDI, we organized the lunch as a closed event only for MPs (in order not to waste time and wait for the resolution of the crisis). We agreed with the MPs to have a public event and present to the Macedonian citizens their pledges to protect the only UNESCO site in the country, this would take place soon after the political crisis ends and we have functional institutions.</p>
7	Campaign web site	<p>We created Facebook page of the campaign where we regularly published all information regarding the campaign. Link to FB: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Save-Ohrid-the-only-Unesco-site-in-Macedonia-163172760784358/?ref=bookmarks">https://www.facebook.com/Save-Ohrid-the-only-Unesco-site-in-Macedonia-163172760784358/?ref=bookmarks</a></p> <p>The page has over 1500 likes and followers.</p> <p>The material for the web site was previously completed and sent for translation, we also had several meetings with web designers/programmers, but we didn't manage to finalize the activity by the end of February. However, we ensured another grant for this activity and we plan to finish the web site in the following period.</p>

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

Component 3: International outreach		
#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Support letters from at least 7 significant international NGOs	By the end of the project (February 28th) we got official support from 4 international NGOs and provided material to partner organization Eko-svest and OhridSOS (local initiative) for their post of Ohrid region issues on the earth justice atlas. <i>More information in point 11 of this report.</i>
2	At least 5 support letters from the international expert community	By the end of the project we gained support from 3 international experts gave statements on Ohrid. <i>More information in point 11 of this report.</i>
3	At least 3 articles in the international media	<p>By the end of the project 8 articles were published in international media (also presented in the google drive, in the "Media" folder, the "Media print screens" sub-folder).</p> <p>1. Al Jazeera Balkans made a video reportage about "Ohrid" that was showed on the TV channel as well as put on their youtube channel. The reportage was done in coordination with our campaign team. You can see the article and the video reportage on the following links:  <a href="http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/unesco-zabrinut-za-buducnost-ohrida-i-ohridskog-jezera">http://balkans.aljazeera.net/video/unesco-zabrinut-za-buducnost-ohrida-i-ohridskog-jezera</a>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e226JnHZCmA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e226JnHZCmA</a></p> <p>2. Thanks to our activist Tara, the campaign and the petition for preserving the Ohrid region were presented at the IYNF (International Young Naturefriends) conference in The Czech Republic on 18.11.2016! It was also present in their international newsletter which you can see here:  <a href="http://us4.campaign-archive1.com/?u=53924e330ae2each350138af2&amp;id=21ef075bb8&amp;e=cb565c15c8">http://us4.campaign-archive1.com/?u=53924e330ae2each350138af2&amp;id=21ef075bb8&amp;e=cb565c15c8</a></p> <p>3. Eminent journalist Rachel O'Brien from the AFP News Agency wrote an article and a video reportage about "Ohrid" that was shared on several relevant international media:</p>

		<p>Yahoo: <a href="https://www.yahoo.com/news/macedonians-send-sos-europes-oldest-lake-040024387.html">https://www.yahoo.com/news/macedonians-send-sos-europes-oldest-lake-040024387.html</a></p> <p>France24: <a href="http://www.france24.com/en/20170129-macedonians-send-out-sos-europes-oldest-lake">http://www.france24.com/en/20170129-macedonians-send-out-sos-europes-oldest-lake</a></p> <p>AFP News Agency: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DtWLDgzqw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DtWLDgzqw</a></p> <p>Audio Mass Media Reviews: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BAgz26Svdk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BAgz26Svdk</a></p> <p>4. French eminent science web portal: <a href="https://www.sciencesetavenir.fr/nature-environnement/macedoine-menaces-sur-ohrid-le-plus-vieux-lac-d-europe_110196">https://www.sciencesetavenir.fr/nature-environnement/macedoine-menaces-sur-ohrid-le-plus-vieux-lac-d-europe_110196</a></p>
4	Motion submitted to IUCN World Conservation Congress 2017	Motion was drafted for the Congress but since we didn't not have previous experience in the IUCN procedures we did not meet the deadline for submitting proposal for motion. <i>More information in point 11 of this report.</i>

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

- *Communication to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee*

After a comprehensive analysis of many documents, laws and rulebooks, we discovered legal gap which creates conditions for Macedonia's non-compliance with the Aarhus Convention (a system error). With current legislation Macedonian Government has a way to impose actions with great impact on the environment, without any information to the public, nor its inclusion in the decision-making. Due to the much longer than anticipated analysis of all documents we did not finalized and send the communication within this project. This did not affect the overall impact of the project. Considering the fact that the Macedonia has new government and the Aarhus Convention implies use of all domestic remedies prior to submission of the communication, our next step is to communicate the finding with the government.

- *Support letters from at least 7 significant international NGOs*

By the end of the project (February 28th) we got official support from 4 international NGOs and provided material to partner organization Eko-svest and OhridSOS (local initiative) for their post of Ohrid region issues on the earth justice atlas. We will continue our international outreach if any of the projects continues in any form. In our view the incomplete execution of this deliverable did not affect the overall impact of the project.

- *At least 5 support letters from the international expert community*

By the end of the project we gained support from 3 international experts, who gave statements on Ohrid. We will continue the communication with the international expert community in accordance with the projects development. Our plan is to shift the focus from prevention of destructive projects to a promotion of environmentally sustainable ones and seek international experts' support in this manner.

- *Motion submitted to IUCN World Conservation Congress 2017*

The motion was drafted for the Congress, but since we didn't not have previous experience in the IUCN procedures, we did not meet the deadline for submission of the proposal. However, our cooperation with IUCN had an unexpected positive turn, which will allow us not only to know the network's procedures much better, but also to get support in the available forms and work closely

with the global experts within the organization itself. In late August 2016 we were very surprised to receive a message from the IUCN that due to our professional engagement and communication on Lake Ohrid and Galičica National Park we are invited to apply for a IUCN membership and to participate in the IUCN World Conservation Congress. The congress took part from September 1st-8th 2016, in Honolulu, Hawaii. During the event IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe & Central Asia organized panel discussion: “The World Heritage Upstream Processes and Beyond: Promoting Creative Approaches to Strengthen the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention”. Our lawyer took part in the panel where she discussed the planned infrastructure projects in Ohrid region. During the Congress she was also invited to become a member of the World Commission on Environmental Law. The procedure for IUCN membership is in a final stage, and after it is finalized we plan to utilize the membership for support regarding our efforts to ensure sustainable development in Ohrid region.

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

As an environmental law NGO, the main tools we used (and which contributed to the results) were **legal tools**, more specifically: **legal analysis** (e.g. the analysis of the existing Law on Managing the WH site of Ohrid region, which resulted with identified gaps and main obstacles for real life implementation of this law; analysis of the public participation in the decision-making processes for all projects, which resulted with identification of the gap in the Rulebook for the work of the Government; etc.); use of **national and international law** (e.g. the initiative for assessing the constitutionality of the Government decision to “order” change of the Management Plan for NP Galičica; the Bern Convention complaint).

We produced several **products**: specifically designed **campaign cards** with demands for moratorium for all projects and implementation of Law on Managing the WH site of Ohrid region, which were signed by the citizens around the country within the national campaign; large **campaign banners** with photographs from a local photographer; specifically designed **cards for the newly elected MPs**, with which we congratulated them on the election and asked them to save the greatest national natural treasure – also designed and produced by a local artist; **booklet** about the values and threats in Ohrid region; **Facebook page** for the campaign; **campaign stand and campaign t-shirts** with the **campaign logo**, also by a designer from Ohrid; **factsheet** and many open **letters and initiatives**.

From the **methodologies** we used, the most significant ones were: **NGO networking and sharing knowledge**, especially with our colleagues from the Macedonian Ecological Society, who are biodiversity experts; **training of trainers** – a method we used for the national campaign which started with training of 33 activists from around the country, who then spread the story about Ohrid in their cities; **advocacy towards** the decision makers, especially MPs; last but not least – our main methodology and approach, which was crucial for all results, was the **combination of legal and awareness raising actions**.

**Benefits to Communities**

**13. 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									

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

## Lessons Learned

### **14. Describe any lessons learned related to organizational development and capacity building.**

The scope of the legal work for this project made us realize that we need several law volunteers, as well as graduated lawyers. Another need which emerged from this project is the need for an engagement of least one expert in sustainable economy, or a training programme for economy students whom we will engage after the training.

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

The key aspect of the project design, that contributed to our success, was the linking of the work of lawyers, biodiversity experts and young activist. This was a continuation of the experience gained with our previous work to preserve Mavrovo National Park, except this time we added activists from around the country as well.

The approach to train young people who will then share the information with the citizens in their cities is another aspect of the project design that was also very helpful.

Another important aspect of the project design, which proved to be beneficial, was the communication with the UNESCO WH Center and IUCN.

The crucial element for our success with the MPs was the close cooperation with NDI, which we envisaged in the project as a risk mitigation measure, but proof to be much more beneficial for the final outcome.

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

We learned several lessons during the project implementation and, consequently made adjustments which proved to contribute towards the final results. The most important ones are:

- After few not very successful street actions for gathering the citizens' signatures on the campaign cards, we learnt that organizing presentations and cards signing within various cultural events (e.g. film or music festivals) makes it much easier to reach the right target group;
- During the very first press conference, with which we started the campaign, we realized that even the journalists who followed the development of the various projects in Ohrid region were not aware of the whole picture. After this realization, we used the map of the site with all planned projects in almost all campaign materials and presentations/events;
- The local population's lack of understanding of the concept of sustainable development was another lesson we faced and which we plan to use in the design of our next project in Ohrid region.

### **17. Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community**

The most important lesson we learned in this period derived from our analysis of the existing Law on Management of the UNESCO Site of Ohrid region and the main reasons for the lack of its implementation

in real life. We realized that crucial preconditions for long-term protection of the site (e.g. the natural and cultural heritage inventory) are missing due to a lack of funds. Despite the full understanding of this problem by some personnel in the related institutions, there is very little chance for government budget to be allocated for such activities. We will certainly raise these issues during the public oversight at the Parliament and discuss them with the UNESCO monitoring mission. We also plan to raise the issues with all appropriate donors and our colleagues from the expert NGO community, in order to explore all possibilities for the realization of the crucial projects for long term protection of our greatest natural treasure and one of the most important lentic ecosystems on the European continent.

Within the project we learned from one of the national experts that due to the lack of relevant regulation for boats, introduction of invasive species occurs and this is a great risk for conservation of the unique ecosystem of Lake Ohrid. He gave an example of fishermen who use the same boats in Lake Ohrid, after they used them in Lake Dojran, without any control and/or obligation to clean them. Since this is not an area of our knowledge, we will explore the issue further and propose legal solutions to the problems we will identify with the biodiversity experts.

### **Sustainability / Replication**

#### **18. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated**

We see this project as a foundation, which is necessary for long term protection and conservation in the region. In this manner the greatest sustainability of the project, as well as the basis for multiplication of its results, is the ensured political and institutional support for the legal changes necessary for appropriate management of the site. We already have the first confirmations – both the MPs (including the president of the relevant commission) and the representatives of the National UNESCO Commission asked for our help and suggestions regarding the improvement of the related law and its implementation. We also have positive response from the Ministry of Environment, regarding the initiative for Ramsar nomination, which is another important sustainability aspect of this project.

We plan to continue with (replicate) the practice of working together with various biodiversity experts from other organizations and we also expect that the public awareness raising approach in this project will be applicable for future nature conservation activities in Macedonia. Given the transboundary context of Ohrid - Prespa region, some of the activities from this project can be replicated in Albania and Greece, if needed.

#### **19. Summarize any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability**

Two activities occurred which we could not plan:

- The change of the Law on Nature Protection – In December 2016 the Ministry of Environment published the draft amends to the Law on Nature Protection for commenting. We recognized this as an opportunity for a long term protection of Ohrid region, but also of all protected areas in Macedonia. We participated in the public hearing and submitted comments regarding the management plans for protected areas, compensation measures, appropriate assessment, as well as shore strip zones. The new law should be published by the new government and we hope to see these comments integrated in the final document;
- The creation of the informal group of MPs “Friends of UNESCO” is another activity we could not plan, as it was a result of several adjustments we had to make because of the long political crises

in the country. However, it turned out that these adjustments and the decisions we made, brought a much greater result than the initial plan – the close and constructive cooperation we established and developed with the informal group of MPs is not only the key element for realization of the desired long term impact of this project, but a foundation for many other changes and improvements in the environmental and nature protection in Macedonia.

## **Safeguards**

### **20. 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**

When we started the project we didn't know that there is a Draft Management Plan for Ohrid region – despite the legal obligation to publish the draft document and, more importantly, to start with the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and public consultations for this plan, Macedonian authorities never published any information about the plan. The 2016 UNESCO report mentioned the draft plan and this was the first time we learned about it. Within the project we sent several letters to the 3 institutions responsible for the Management Plan (pointing the legal breach and demanding SEA), and had meetings on this subject with all three institutions (the National UNESCO Commission, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Culture). During the meetings we realized that none of the relevant institutions considered themselves to be responsible for conducting SEA. After analyzing the Law on Managing the UNESCO site of Ohrid region, we identified the gap which caused this misunderstanding. However, considering the importance of SEA process, we communicated this issue and our concern with the UNESCO monitoring mission and submitted a complaint against the Ministry of Culture, as the institution which is responsible for the enforcement of the Law on Managing the UNESCO site of Ohrid region. At the time of writing this report we don't have an answer regarding the complaint, but the 2017 UNESCO report and the draft decision (to be adopted in July 2017) clearly demand a strategic environmental assessment for the Management plan for Ohrid region, with proper public participation.

## **Additional Funding**

### **21. 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**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
National Endowment for Democracy	A	40.000\$	
National Democratic Institute	A	4.500\$	

*\* 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**

**22. 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](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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