CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Centre for Forest Studies and Consulting (ALBAFOREST)
Project Title:	Integrated Drini river Basin Management (IDBM)
Date of Report:	30.04.2015
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CEPF Region: Mediterranean/Southwest Balkans

Strategic Direction: 2

Grant Amount: $US 116,150.00

Project Dates: 1.03.2014-28.02.2015

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

Before starting the project programmed activities implementation were undertaken meetings with heads of regional forests and pastures users associations federations (RFFP) in four focus areas of the project. Presidencies of the respective federations mobilized forest and pasture user associations (FPUAs), and whose governing boards loaded members to cooperate with the implementation of the project implementation team, respectively with the project field coordinator.

In this way we have built working groups who, led by the project's director have been visited enough space throughout the Drini Cascade and around terrains inhabited by local communities within the watershed of the Drini river. After repeated visits focused on rehabilitation of degraded terrains which were under multiyear regime of rinsing the surface of the depth of soil erosion from rainfall and degraded forestlands and ecosystems. Such terrain in the project are considered as' critical ecosystems.

The second phase of cooperation included sensibilization and awareness activities of communities living in villages around the targeted areas for rehabilitation. In this regard, the objectives were achieved with the continued support of the boards of the respective FPUAs. From the selected communities there were built working groups, with their participants in the implementation of rehabilitation activities related to bio-engineering operational measures implemented in the four selected demonstration sites. The field coordinator of the project, has preliminarily developed relevant instructions and training for each group in terms of direct implementation method of biological intervention models to be carried out by the project.

With local communities representatives, FPUAs, as well as those of state institutions were bound sub-agreements that have a term of three year action, a period that was deemed sufficient to observe and take cyclical data in terms of dynamics the performance and sustainability of rehabilitation impacts are expected to be obtained from the implementation of the project.
In these sub-agreements were defined rights and obligations for the implementation of multilateral protection of rehabilitated surfaces and to allow visits by 'AlbaForest' experts appear whenever required by them. Our promise to the communities related to the transformation of the areas focused on fruitful terrain. This was achieved through afforestation with forest species and fruit species of indigenous varieties that are diminishing the territory of the watershed of the Drini river.

The project partners were the Ministry of Environment and four-regional communities representatives of the Drini's basin and respectively the partners are:

1. Ministry of Environment, Rruga e Durrësit, Nr. 27, Tirana, Albania, Tel/fax: +355 4 2224537, Fax: +355 4 2270627, www.moe.gov.al, info@moe.gov.al
2. Dibra Regional Council, Peshkopia, Albania(http://www.kqp.gov.al) and 3-selected local communities/units and land-users NGOs)
2. Kukësi Regional Council, Kukësi, Albania (http://www.kqk.gov.al) and 3-selected local communities/units and land-users NGOs)
3. Shkodra Regional Council, Shkodra, Albania(http://www.kqsh.gov.al) and 3-selected local communities/units and land-users NGOs)
4. Lezha Regional Council, Lezha, Albania (http://www.kql.gov.al) and 3-selected local communities/units and land-users NGOs).

The field community-based partners were as planned four pre-selected micro-catchments as following:

(i) “Gjoricë”, in the Dibra region,
(ii) “Vig-Mnelë”, in the Shkodra region ;
(iii) “Terthore”, in the Kukësi region;
(iv) “Blinisht” in the Lezha region ;

The partners (one partner per each district, one region has 3-districts) were collaborative and been invited to participate the training and informative planned workshops and assist the project implementation through facilitating AlbaForest collaboration and interconnections with local government. These partners have assisted and facilitated the project implementation in selecting and hiring professional workers that AlbaForest has hired for carried out planned professional works and plantations and check-dams installation in the 4-selected micro-catchments of the 4-regional pilot models demonstrations.

Project's beneficiaries:

The direct beneficiaries of the project activities were community resident families around demonstrative surfaces. The benefits can be summarized as follows:

• Stabilization of vulnerable land erosion and mudslides around residential housing space community;
• Protection of agricultural land and roads or pedestrian them by mudslides and massive partial erosions;
• Curbing of negative phenomenon of forest vegetation cover reduction
• Curbing filling water reservoirs of hydroelectric power plants with alluvial flow and siltation of rainfall from the premises of critical ecosystems;
• Strengthening the individual or community initiatives for undertaking concrete steps towards protecting and playgrounds around the country assessing their settlements.

Within Drini's basin, with a thorough stretch of about 10 km^2 are included 4 regions of Albania (Dibra, Kukësi, Shkodra and Lezha), 12 districts (3 per each regions) and 101 communes and municipalities (Dibra: 32, Kukësi: 25, Shkodra: 30, Lezha: 14,) with a total of population of ca 628,703 inhabitants;

The project was be in partnerity with 4-regions and respectively with their 4-Regional Councils representatives, with selected 12-community-based authorities, with interested stakeholders of watershed management and environmental and land user's NGOs are as following:

The Drini basin regions, its size and population is as following:

(i) - Drini river basin: Size: 10,107 km2
(ii)- 4 regions (Dibra, Kukësi, Shkodra and Lezha);
(iii)- 12 districts (3 per each regions);
(iv)- 101 communes (Dibra: 32, Kukësi: 25, Shkodra: 30, Lezha: 14,)
(v)- Population: 628,703 inhabitants, of which 310.000 women ;

The partners have been collaborative and been invited to participate the training and informative planned workshops and assist the project implementation through facilitating AlbaForest collaboration and interconnections with local government. These partners have assisted and facilitated the project implementation in selecting and hiring professional workers for carried out planned professional works and plantations and check-dams installation in the 4-selected micro-catchments pilot models demonstrations.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The project is presented to the CEPF's four overarching and interlinked components:

1. Strengthening protection and management of globally significant biodiversity.
2. Increasing local and national capacity to integrate biodiversity conservation into development and landscape planning.
3. Effective monitoring and knowledge sharing.
4. Ecosystem profile development and program execution.
5. Support community-based capacity building for integrated NR's management.

The proposed project aim was to identify and resolve the natural resources and critical ecosystems problems, forestland and agriculture land, landuse system of Drini basin areas which are of great influence of water regime/balance and of high erosion of the Drini river watershed and develop actions for awareness raising and promotion of a sustainable natural resources and holistic territory management.

The decision to implement protective measures and rehabilitation use the results to address the impact in natural resources rehabilitation and decision-making for critical ecosystems restoration within Drini's basin, due to:

1. Loss of millions of m^3 soil due to the erosion in the "Drini" river basin-catchments;
2. Degradation of natural resources and ecosystems of the Drini basin due to lack of a sustainable natural resources management approach;
3. Social and institutional vacuum and the demand to assist to creating and demonstrating sustainable technical models of bared/eroded land rehabilitation and NR management;
4. Re-activation and training of "Drini" basin Communities people through active participation in creating sustainable NR management models of bared/eroded terrain rehabilitation through reforestation;
5. Curving of negative erosion phenomenon and subsequently the reduction of soil loss and curving downstream sedimentation for preserving water-balance to the Drini basin catchments;
6. Preservation and enhancing of biodiversity of the mountainous ecosystems;

The project has developed and demonstrated mini-projects models due to the sub-sectoral issues evidenced and organize workshops to present them to the communities representatives and their technical administration and know-how of rehabilitation measures through biological operations to build communities technical capacities to rehabilitate the affected agriculture landuse and forestland and prevent flood's damage and minimize their consequences in the future.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

The overall development goal of the project was Drini's basin integrated management through degraded natural resources and critical ecosystems restoration through identifying the existing natural ecosystems and environmental problems and demonstrate rehabilitation measures through combined biological models of micro-catchments in the selected sites of Drini basin, as of agriculture land and forest land, coverage in areas of critical ecosystems and high erosion areas and develop actions for awareness raising and

promotion of a sustainable natural resources, landuse system and holistic territory management.

The specific objective of the project was degraded natural resources and critical ecosystems restoration through demonstration of biological models of integrated DRB management and support building communities and NGOs capacities to ensure resilience of the key ecosystems and local livelihoods to climate change.

This objective was achieved through 3 main components:

(i) Field survey of environmental and natural ecosystems status and mapping and demonstrate combined biological models of mini-projects due to the sub-sectoral issues evidenced and organize workshops (Shkodra).

(ii) Demonstration of environmental rehabilitation interventions in the selected areas by combined biological biologic measures in the selected micro-catchments of Drini basin (4-regions), by planting trees, check-dams installation and fences erection and also grasses/herbaceous seeding in the selected Drini's basin of the 4-regions rehabilitation pilot areas.

(iii) Capacity building of Drini basin's communities and stakeholders, environmental and land users NGOs (3-informative workshops, 3-training courses, 3-field symposia, public-awareness-raising, develop community-based natural resources guideline, etc).

No significant effort has been made to understand the impact of climate vulnerability at the regional level, to mobilize stakeholders and the wider public in assessing the range of rising vulnerabilities and adaptation options. Parallel with strengthening the research on vulnerability and adaptation, the project has also contributed to connect scientific results with policymaking processes, to emerge local community dialogue on expected changes in ecosystems and to enhance their adaptive capacity to climate change.

The project has supported pilot demonstrations in micro-catchment selected of 4-region's areas as for:

i. Stabilization of the forest and pasture's land. This requires the combined biological models as are: planting trees, construction of check-dams, rehabilitation of natural resources and micro-catchments, and planting land stabilizing trees and shrubs to reduce flooding, landslides and erosion negative effects.

ii. Rehabilitation of agricultural land: This requires the protection and improvement of poor soils, degraded and bare land reduction, if appropriate, the use of the land qualitatively weaker replacing yearly cereal production on slopes with perennial crop stabilize slopes, leguminous fodder, medicinal and aromatic plants, fruit trees and shrubs.
iii. Sustainable use of agricultural land for livestock production and reduced the need to cultivate and feed on surfaces exposed to erosion. This requires the establishment of

protection around areas, grafting of wild trees, demonstration of improved agricultural practices.

The Drini's basin integrated management project approach was consisting of developing a Drini's basin survey and demonstrate integrated rehabilitation and protective biological measures of Drini's basin and its critical ecosystem's restoration. It aimed to address and influence the impact in decision-making for defensive works as afforestation, rehabilitation of the basin's critical natural ecosystems, micro-catchments, and build local communities capacities for a sustainable DBM and legal improvement and involvement in other investment plans.

The project planned activities were focused on Drini's basin integrated management with the purpose:

(i) to ensure resilience of the key ecosystems and local livelihoods to climate change
(ii) take local pilot actions of IDBM natural resources integrated management
(iii) to biodiversity conservation activities within protected areas and natural environment.

The project has developed combined biological pilot models of mini-projects due to the sub-sectoral issues evidenced and organize workshops (Shkodra region). The project has supported local capacity building through providing the selected communities representatives and their technical administration with know-how of rehabilitation measures through biological operations to build communities technical capacities to rehabilitate the affected agriculture and forestlands and upgrading communities technical capacities to prevent basin mismanagement and demonstrate its integrated management.

The project combined biological models been demonstrated were consisted of the following:

(i) Planting forest and fruit trees
(ii) Construction of mountainous check-dams
(iii) Erecting fences along with torrent streams
(iv) Seeding grasses of cultivated pastures

The project's focus and its planned activities were as following:

(i) Drini's basin-catchments survey and mapping and design of interventions plans and their costs.

Identification of natural environmental problems, bare lands and forestland situation, demonstrate defensive measures structures and actions in areas of high erosion in the upper and lowland of watershed. (agriculture land, landslides, forests/grasslands, burned areas, green areas etc);

(ii) Demonstration of degraded natural environmental rehabilitation interventions in the

selected areas by combined biological measures in the micro-catchments, by planting trees and check-dams installation and fences erection, planting 60.000 trees (12,500 sapling and 47.500 scions).
The training topics have consisted of: watershed and natural resources rehabilitation biological models, watershed integrated management, soil erosion, soil bio-engineering models applications, critical ecosystems, holistic natural ecosystems management etc.

(iii) Support community-based capacity building through regional training workshop (Shkodra) with the relevant institutions and civil society for the presentation of results and outcomes to address decision-making for implementing measures to protect basin's areas, through forest improvements, drainage systems, protection of rivers from erosion, exploitation inappropriate.
(iv) Public awareness: information, know-how of stakeholders and the local community, through awareness-raising and training activities, the implementation of protective measures and forestland rehabilitation, erosion control, flood protection, creating decentralized best landuse practices and NR management by the Local Government;
(v) Develop communities and civil society's capacities and improving/enable their skills in basin to apply the necessary approaches, tools, mechanisms and know-how in integrated basin management.

(vi) Develop a local-regional strategic action plan with recommendation measures for the prevention, protection and rehabilitation and integrated management of the Drini's basin.
In total there are planned to be planting 60,000 trees (of which 12,500 sapling and 47.500 scions), and the planting trees were native and indigenous species and neither exotic and nor invasive spp. In addition there were planned to be carrying out soil stabilization and anti-erosive biological interventions works and there are installation 400 m^3 check-dams and 200 m^3 double fences and 200 m^2 single fences and also seeding of 4000 m^2 of herbaceous grasses in most bared lands of the selected sites of 4-micro-catchments within regions. These actions have not caused any negative environmental impact of these operations since they will be carrying based on existing natural materials from the sites and not any others.
The pre-selected micro-catchments were located in the following communities and regions:

(i) "Gjoricë", in the Dibra region,
(ii) "Vigë-Mnelë", in the Shkodra region ;
(iii) "Tërthore", in the Kukësi region;
(iv) "Blinisht" in the Lezha region ;

The planting species were selected based on existing micro-catchment management plans and their species list proposed to be planted in the Drini watershed's micro-catchments (Management Plans are designed from the WB-Natural Resources Development Project (http://www.worldbank.org).
The plant species planted are selected from respective natural biotope areas. This process was conducted in accordance with the directive of the project which had as objective the rehabilitation and restoration of native forest cover and critical ecosystems.

Species planted in four demonstration areas are:

1. Turkey oak (Quercus cerris);
2. Hungarian oak (Quercus trojana);
3. Black ash (Fraxinus excelsior);
4. Mountain maple (Acer pseudoplatanus);
5. Chestnut (Castanea sativa);
6. Hazelnut (Corylus avellana);
7. Walnut (Juglans regia);
8. White willow (Salix alba)
9. Wild Poplar (Populus tremula);
10. White Poplar (Populus alba);
11. Common Alder (Alnus glutinosa);
12. Black Pine (Pinus nigra);
13. Wild Apple (Malus sylvestris);
14. Wild Pear (Pyrus communis);
15. Wild Cherries (cerasus avium var. sylvestris);
16. Cornel (Cornus mas);
17. Wild pomegranate (Punica granatum, var. spontaneum).

The "Drini's Delta and respectively watershed in Albanian territory has been subject to illegal forest cuts and high damage protection structures, as factors that have contributed to the establishment of drastic erosion, sediment's transportation and waters disbalance and increased opportunities for the natural ecosystems degradation and land-floods of Lower-Shkodra and Lezha regions. This is due to the lack of an integrated Drini's basin management and affecting considerable damage of natural ecosystems and economic consequences of region's communities and affecting the population livelihoods.

The project has addressed to these demand-driven issues and has supported the affected communities capacity building and focused on critical ecosystems damaged and their rehabilitation throughout Drini's river basin in Northern, Northeastern, and Northwestern part of Albania, involving local and regional communities and environmental and landuser's NGOs and other interested stakeholders to achieve the planned expected results. The progress developed up to this phase has been a successful achievements and useful lessons learned through the planned objectives and results achieved through activities achieved developed, which is a demand-driven approach to replicate to other river watersheds in Albania.

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

1. Restore degraded natural resources and preserve important critical ecosystems.
2. Preservation and enhancing of biodiversity of the mountainous ecosystems and flooding prevention;
3. Support "Drini" basin communities capacity building and creating decentralized best

landuse practices and NR management by the local

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion: There are already created combined biological rehabilitation models within Drini river basin which are a sample and good practice for country's degraded natural resources restoration and preserve important critical ecosystems. In addition the demonstrated models were followed and replicated from local communities for preservation and enhancing of community-based natural resources and river basin sustainable management to preserve the water balance and conserve the nature. The project's support to "Drini" basin communities capacity building has influenced to creating decentralized best landuse practices and NR management by the local government and communities themselves.

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

1. Rehabilitation of selected eroded land and degraded nature though demonstration combined biological models measures in the selected pilot areas of Drini's basin as: reforestation, check-dams installation and fences erection and herbaceous grasses-seeding.
2. Reducing the landslide through reduction of the erosion scale in the rehabilitated area and torrents courses and the visible positive impact in minimizing the downstream sedimentation and water turbulences and landslides stabilization;
3. Reinstalling of forest and grassland vegetation in the rehabilitated area of the critical ecosystem sites and restoration of the natural spontaneous vegetation of the damaged sites in the rehabilitation pilot-areas; (in 4-selected regional sites within Drini's basin);
4. Re-establish soil and water balance and flooding prevention, increase wood production and soil productivity of the Drini watershed and contributing in carbon sequestration in the selected rehabilitation pilot areas of Drini's basin, by planting of 60,000 forest trees within degraded areas/sites.
5. Promote build the antierosive and protective check-dams against sedimentation by curving of soil loss and curving downstream sedimentation to the Drini basin catchments through demonstrate of mini-projects applied in the selected most degraded micro-catchments and ecosystems sites by installing 400 m^3 check-dams, erecting 200 m^3 double fences and 200 ml single fences and seeding of 4000 m^2 herbaceous grass.
6. Support Drini's basin community-based capacity building through know-how provision and organize 3-training workshops to upgrade community capacities for sustainable NRs managements, and develop and deliver a local-regional strategic action plan for "Drini" basin's integrated management.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

The project also extends its effects around areas demonstration spaces. These effects are appeared in:

• Illegal logging curbing in the sliding slopes that are part of the hydrographic network focused;

• Reduce significantly the filling of reservoirs of hydroelectric power plants from flow of downstream sedimentations and siltation material;
• Stabilization of terrains inhabited by communities previously threatened by massive mudslides (Village Pobreg, Kukës).
• Creation of necessary plant vegetation and forestland cover for the ihe infiltration of precipitation into the soil instead of surface runoff.
• The improvement of water quality by clean-up of pollution sources and by augmentation of infiltration into the soil and into the underground.
• Saving soil and slowing the siltation of the reservoirs by control of erosion.
• Containment of landslides, especially those headed directly for the river and the reservoirs.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: 20
Species Conserved: 17
Corridors Created: 0

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

The goal of CEPF to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation, and through AlbaForest's integrated approach in this project, local NGOs, stakeholders, land-users and the community representatives from the four villages are all being trained through workshops, courses and field visits. Through this process, local people was taught the know-how and techniques needed to effectively rehabilitate the basin together. This was quite important for the future of their land, and for demonstrating the benefits of IRBM to the Albanian government.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Any attempt to restore or conserve a large area must involve the local communities of people living there. This is why AlbaForest decided to pilot the micro-project in selected areas that involve four villages - the variation in activities having been adapted to the local context and needs. Information, sensibilisation and awareness among communities (mainly women, young people and children) is the only alternative to preventing further soil erosion and ecosystem degradation in our country.

Project Components

Project Components*: Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned (as planned in the approved proposal):

1. Drini basin survey, mapping and selection of sites for rehabilitation.

Products / Deliverables planned:

1.1. Conduct field survey of natural environmental status of Drini Basin, to include specific sections on forestland, agricultural land, watercourses, grasslands.
1.2. Identify and document areas where rehabilitation demonstration models is taking place.
1.3. Database of natural environment and critical ecosystem's "hot-spots" and maps natural resources and environmental issues is created.
1.4. Four community-based sites selected as demonstration rehabilitation interventions.
1.5. Landowner permission and permits secured for proposed demonstration sites.
1.6. EIA and Environmental Management Plan prepared for all four sites, selected prior to any on-the-ground actions. At the end of the project will agree with respective communities to maintain their own sites rehabilitated, of all carried out biological models to include planted trees, check-dams installed, fences and herbaceous grasses, for the 4-selected micro-catchments.
1.7. Mapping of natural resources and critical ecosystem's status: landslides, soil erosion status, bare lands, deforested areas, burned areas, torrents, protected areas.
1.8. Rehabilitation model's schemes and estimations, of combined biological interventions models (reforestation, check-dams installation, fences erection and herbaceous grass seeding) prepared.
1.9. Identify the "critical sites" in the 4-selected micro-catchments of 4-regions to develop planned combined biological demonstration's models.
1.10. Biological model's schemes and estimations of combined biological demonstrations based on the established data base and "hot-spots" developed.

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

1.1. Survey of natural environmental status of Drini river Basin, conducted.
1.2. Areas where rehabilitation demonstration models identified and documented.
1.3. Database of natural environment and critical ecosystem's "hot-spots" and maps natural resources and environmental issues is created.
1.4. Four community-based sites selected as demonstration rehabilitation interventions.
1.5. Landowner permission and permits for proposed demonstration sites secured.
1.6. EIA and Environmental Management Plan prepared for all four sites, selected prior to any on-the-ground actions. At the end of the project has agreed with respective communities to maintain their own sites rehabilitated, of all carried out biological models to include planted trees, check-dams installed, fences and herbaceous grasses, for the 4-community-based selected micro-catchments.
1.7. Natural resources and critical ecosystem's status: landslides, soil erosion status, bare lands, deforested areas mapped.

1.8. Rehabilitation model's schemes and estimations, of combined biological interventions models (reforestation, check-dams installation, fences erection and herbaceous grass seeding) prepared.
1.9. The "critical sites" in the 4-selected micro-catchments of 4-regions to develop planned combined biological demonstration's models identified.
1.10. Biological model's schemes and estimations of combined biological demonstrations based on the established data base and "hot-spots" developed.

Component 2 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

2. Demonstrate biological rehabilitation models at four pilot sites selected.

Products/deliverables planned:

2.1. Develop EIA/EMP shared with stakeholders for each site.
2.2. Engage communities engaged to assist with interventions.
2.3. Develop M&E system set up at each site.
2.4. Develop awareness program to promote demonstration sites.
2.5. Plant 12.500 saplings in the selected sites of the 4-selected micro-catchments.
2.6. Plant 47,500 scions in the torrential streams-water courses of the 4-selected micro-catchments.
2.7. 400 m^3 check-dams within and alongside the torrential water courses of 4-selected micro-catchments installed.
2.8. Erect 200 m^3 double fences alongside the 4-selected torrents courses of the 4-selected micro-catchments.
2.9. Erect 200 m^2 single fences alongside the torrential streams water coursers of the 4-selected torrents courses.
2.10. 4000 m^2 with herbaceous seeding grasses in the 4-selected "hot-spots" sites of bare lands, 1000 m2 per each region.

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

2.1. EIA/EMP shared with stakeholders for each site developed.
2.2. Communities engaged to assist with interventions engaged.
2.3. M&E system set up at each site developed.
2.4. Awareness program to promote demonstration sites developed.
2.5. 12.500 saplings planted.
2.6. 47,500 scions of the 4-selected micro-catchments planted.
2.7. 400 m^3 check-dams installed.
2.8. 200 m3 double fences erected.
2.9. 200 m^2 single fences alongside the torrential streams water coursers of the 4-selected torrents courses erected.
2.10. 4000 m^2 with herbaceous seeding grasses 1000 m2 per each region planted.

Component 3 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

3. Capacity building of Drini's basin communities and stakeholders.

Products/deliverables:

3.1. Prepare Agenda for developing 3-regional introductory meetings of Dibra, Kukësi and Lezha including selected communities regions and interested stakeholders and NGOs.
3.2. Develop regional introductory meetings with regional authorities and 12-selected communities and NGOs as project's partners.
3.3. Prepare and deliver **t**he Agenda of regional training for 4-region's representatives invitations.
3.4. Prepare the training topics for 3-training regional workshops with community-based representatives was consisting of: watershed and natural resources rehabilitation biological models, watershed integrated management, soil erosion, soil bio-engineering models applications, critical ecosystems and holistic natural ecosystems management etc.
3.5. Develop training workshops for rehabilitation application with local partners, stakeholders and NGOs developed. There have been trained ca 40 people, of regional 12-selected communities, land user's and local environmental NGOs representatives.
3.6. Develop public awareness raising through 3-field regional symposia as site-events in the 4-selected regions.
3.7. Develop community-based natural resources management guideline for each 4-selected Drini's basin communities of the 4-regions providing integrated basin management models.
3.8. Prepare and publish 1-brochure: " Forest & Man", 1-leaflet on IDBM.
3.9. Update Webpage information update and articles on Drini IDBM and soil bioengineering approach.
3.10. Completing the Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT).

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

3.1. Agenda for developing 3-regional introductory meetings prepared.
3.2. Regional introductory meetings developed.
3.3. The agenda of regional prepared and delivered.
3.4. The training topics for 3-training regional workshops developed.
3.5. Training workshops and trained ca 40 people, developed.
3.6. Public awareness raising through 3-field regional symposia performed.
3.7. Community-based natural resources management guideline prepared and delivered.
3.8. 1-brochure: " Forest & Man", 1-leaflet on IDBM published.
3.9. Webpage information and articles on Drini IDBM updated.
3.10. The Civil Society Tracking Tool (CSTT) completed.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?
There were no any components unrealized.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

• Information, sensitization and awareness among communities (mainly the women, the youth and children) appear as the only relevant option for prevention of land desertification of soils and integrated management of the Drini river watershed;

• Interventions with combined bio-engineering measures are only effective if operations for the rehabilitation of degraded soils from erosion and transform their natural resource with economic value to communities, residents of mountainous areas that are within the Drini watershed;

• Awareness of LGUs and the central governmental institutions (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration (MoARDWA), Ministry of Energy) for the development of appropriate legislation in terms of integrated management of the Drini river watershed;

• The main strategy of the Albanian Government for the sustainable management of natural resources in the Drini watershed should be oriented and rely mainly on integrated management of spaces where ecosystem stretching terrain are in critical condition.

However, the first impacts on the environment have emerged with the stabilization of the erosion phenomenon on the grounds of selected rehabilitated sites and areas.

• Information, sensitization and awareness among communities (mainly women, young people and children) is presented as the only alternative to the phenomenon of desertification prevention of terrestrial soil erosion and critical ecosystems further degradation in our country;
• Interference with bio-combined measures of soil engineering are the only operations for the rehabilitation of degraded soils from erosion and transform them into valuable natural resources to communities in mountain areas;
• Contribute to and establish Integrated Drini Basin Management (IDBM) and replicate best practices to reduce the negative impacts of insufficiently planned water infrastructures.
• Supported IDBM policy and legislation development and implementation through capacity building and advocacy at all appropriate levels.
• Reduce the landslide will control the erosion and river basin dams be prevented against

sedimentation.
• Support strategic decision-making at the river basin scale, which guides actions at sub-basin or local levels.
• The need for building synergy of the existing solid knowledge of local communities the river basin and the natural and socio-economic forces that influences it.
• Influence to the main strategy of the Albanian state for the sustainable management of natural resources is redirecting to a sustainable river basin's management.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

National water policies in Albania is mostly exploiting water – with efforts to increase water supply for a growing population and increase the number of hydroelectric dams. Recognizing the need to take the needs of biodiversity and ecosystems into account (which also benefits local people), the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) is funding projects that take an holistic approach to water management. In Albania, CEPF funded the project led by AlbaForest (Centre for Forest Studies and Consulting) to undertake Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) of the Drini River basin.

The proposed project aimed at identifying the natural environment problems and critical ecosystems status and demonstrate rehabilitation and restore the Drini's basin natural resources, the critical ecosystems of influence for the agriculture land and forest coverage in areas of high erosion of the Drini river watershed and develop actions through demonstration of combined biological models of rehabilitation and communities awareness raising and promotion of a sustainable natural resources, landuse system and holistic territory management. The decision to implement protective measures and rehabilitation use the results to address the impact in decision-making for afforestation, rehabilitation of the basin's micro-catchments of defensive works and involvement in other investment plans.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

Within Drini's basin, with a thorough stretch of about 10 km^2 are included 4 regions of Albania (Dibra, Kukësi, Shkodra and Lezha), 12 districts (3 per each regions) and 101 communes and municipalities (Dibra: 32, Kukësi: 25, Shkodra: 30, Lezha: 14,) with a total of population of ca 628,703 inhabitants;

The project was in partnerity with 4-regions and respectively with their 4-Regional Councils representatives, with selected 12-community-based authorities, with interested stakeholders of watershed management and environmental and land user's NGOs are as following:

The Drini basin regions, its size and population is as following:

(i) - Drini river basin: Size: 10,107 km2

(ii)- 4 regions (Dibra, Kukësi, Shkodra and Lezha);
(iii)- 12 districts (3 per each regions);
(iv)- 101 communes (Dibra: 32, Kukësi: 25, Shkodra: 30, Lezha: 14,)
(v)- Population: 628,703 inhabitants, of which 310.000 women ;

The Project has been tackling the big task by starting small size examples, there are piloting four micro-projects aimed at preventing soil erosion in the basin; which will then be used to inform IRBM for the entire catchment. There was shown a direct example on planting 60,000 trees, seeding grasses and herbs, installing the small anti-erosion structure and improving the management of grazing pastures.

Other lessons learned to conservation community:

Among other lessons learned we can add the following:

• The need for the development and implementation of project in other environmental "*hot spots*" and regions of the country relying in the awareness of communities, LGUs and civil society organizations.

• After preparation of the preliminary EIA for the four works, to have a full EIA is required a minimum period of three years, a period specified in sub-agreements concluded between the parties participating in the project.

• Active participation by all relevant interested stakeholders in the Drini basin to be informed for a transparent planning and decision-making.

Any attempt to restore or conserve a large area must involve the local communities of people living there. This is why AlbaForest decided to pilot the micro-project in selected areas that involve four villages - the variation in activities having been adapted to the local context and needs. Information, sensibilisation and awareness among communities (mainly women, young people and children) is the only alternative to preventing further soil erosion and ecosystem degradation in our country.

The goal of CEPF to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation, and through AlbaForest's integrated approach in this project, local NGOs, stakeholders, land-users and the community representatives from the four villages are all been trained through workshops, courses and field visits. Through this process, local people was taught the know-how and techniques needed to effectively rehabilitate the basin together. This was quite important for the future of their land, and for demonstrating the benefits of IRBM to the Albanian Government.

Additional Funding

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 the CEPF investment in this project.

There was no-additional funding to the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

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.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

Albania has drawn considerable area, among which Drini basin is the most considered area, where plant cover occupies less than 30% of the surface. These areas lie mainly in the hilly area and less in mountainous areas.

Integrated Drini Basin Management (IDBM) is a process of managing natural resources and human activities on a watershed basis. This approach allows us to protect important water resources, while at the same time addressing critical issues such as the current and future impacts of rapid growth and climate change.

The project is considered of fully success parameters for the following reasons:

• Implement cross-cutting bio-engineering measures as shown that they are effective interventions to curb soil erosion and eventual stabilization of soils in the degradation of the above nature elements;
• Creates real conviction of Drini watershed communities, local administrations, public institutions, etc., that nothing is impossible if there is persistence, will and the necessary expertise to join the word to work, the dream to reality;
• Develop a sound technical-scientific example for further actions in terms of restoring plant vegetation cover and biodiversity restoration;

• Part of this surface cannot be renewed in the natural order therefore required through afforestation intervention. Be aimed at the use of native species that have higher productivity and decrease strongly influence the erosion.

Most of the groundwater in the Drini basin is taken from springs, 65 of which have a wet season discharge above 100 l/s, mainly in the district of Malësia e Madhe, Tropojë, Kukës, Dibër and Bulqizë. The quality of these springs is generally good, they yield a fairly stable amount of water with low hardness. Drini watershed in the transition period has been the subject of illegal forest cuts and high damage protection structures, as factors that have contributed to the establishment of erosion, sediment transport and increased opportunities for the flood of lands of its basin regions and this has been detrimental to the natural ecosystems of the watershed.

During the period January-February 2010 in urban areas of Lower-Shkodra, have been flooded twice about 12 thousand ha of agricultural land and thousands have stayed home. Water over two months, causing serious damage to housing, land, agricultural crops and environmental long-term consequences. The Municipalities of Ana e Malit, Dajç, Velipojë, Berdicë, Bushat, height of water during flooding reached more than 1 m. However, community area and the municipal authorities are still not aware of the consequences that are caused by flooding. After 1990 the public is reacting to floods and the community response is minimal.

In response to upgrade the public awareness the project has promoted and developed demonstration of combined biological models of critical ecosystem rehabilitation, relevant information, know-how and training of stakeholders and, through awareness-raising and training activities of the local community. The implementation of combined biological models was protective measures of forestland rehabilitation, erosion control, flood protection etc. During the training workshops the project has also demonstrated the mini-project designed for a sustainable basin management approach which can be replicable to other river's micro-catchments and other river's basins.

ALBASFOREST Centre has closely collaborated with local authorities of 4-regions, 12-district's and 4-selected representing regional communities and build partnerity with institutions and landusers NGOs to have received the expected results of the project and make them interested and able to have their own capacities to achieve a better integrated management of Drini basin and its natural resources in Albania.

The project carried out activities through application of combined rehabilitating biological models to include planting trees, check-dams installation, fences erection and herbaceous grasses seeding, in the 4-selected micro-catchments, ALBAFOREST at the end of the project has agreed with respective communities to maintain these carried out activities according to their jurisdiction legal framework for their own sites and natural environment rehabilitated.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Environmental Aspects

For each of the demonstration sites once selected was prepared the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan and submitted to CEPF for approval. There was not envisaged any negative environmental impact from the implemented planned activities of the project and the project has decided mitigation measures and they're met and rigorously implemented.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum				
CEPF Global Targets **(Enter Grant Term)** **Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant. Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.**				
Project Results	**Is this question relevant?**	**If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.**	**Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.**	**Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2013 to May 30, 2014. (Attach annexes if necessary)**
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No			Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	None			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			

4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	yes	20		
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1below.	yes	4		

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics								Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
									Increased Income due to:												
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	sustainable natural resources management	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental	security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting or	More secure access to water resources	or other natural resource due to titling,	reduction of natural disasters (fires, landslides,	More secure sources of energy	public services, such as education, health,	traditional knowledge for environmental	decision-making due to strengthened civil society and	Other
Gjoricë (Dibër)							x		x					x		x			x	x	
Tërthore (Kukës)							x		x					x		x			x	x	
Blinisht (Lezhë)							x		x					x		x			x	x	
Vig-Mnelë (Shkodër)							x		x					x		x			x	x	
Total																					

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit: