



Prespa Lakes Park

GOOD COMMUNITY PRACTICES



REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Albania



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Good Community Practices

P r e s p a L a k e s P a r k

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Prepared by the UNDP GEF project office “***Integrated management of the Prespa Lakes Basin ecosystem in Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece***”

The team in charge for the preparation of this booklet was lead by REC Albania, Mr. Mihallaq LI. Qirjo and Mr. Eduart Cani.
Collaborators: Ms. Violeta Zuna, Mr. Eno Dodbibba, Mr. Ardit Konomi, Ms. Kostanca Ktona

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The project office invites all the people interested to present their comments and opinions on this first edition aiming its enrichment and further improvement. Those with the best opinions and suggestions will be included in the “Authors’ List” in the second edition of this booklet.

Address:

Dr. Violeta Zuna, National Project Manager,
e-mail: violeta.zuna@undp.org, tel/fax.: 00 355 4 2 257 627

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PREAMBLE

In February 2000 the three border countries issued a joint declaration on the special values of the Prespa Lakes Basin and declared the lakes and their catchment areas as “*Prespa Park the first protected cross-border area in Southern Europe.*” The joint understanding of the importance and efforts for collaboration at national level implies a key change in the approach for the protection of the lake basin. The three party Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC) was established in 2001 with the support of the Ramsar Convention and its MedWet Initiative. MedWet/Ramsar participates in this committee as a former official member without voting rights. Prespa is the first “protected” cross-border area in the politically sensible region of the Balkans. It includes two Ramsar areas as well as other national protected areas in the three countries. Pursuant the Declaration of Establishment of February 2nd 2000, the final purpose of the Prespa Park is: the improvement of living standards of the Prespa inhabitants through the preservation of its natural and cultural values and the sustainable use of its resources as well as through peace keeping and collaboration between the three countries.



The “Integrated management of the Prespa Lakes Basin ecosystem in Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece” project, financed by the GEF, UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration, aims at orienting the objectives and priorities of ecosystem management towards the policies and practices of the production sectors. The project was created for strengthening the capacities for the regeneration of the ecosystem and the preservation of biodiversity firstly at national level in the Prespa area in Albania, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and in Greece. This collaboration aims at keeping and strengthening the up to now cross-border management of resources through the empowering of existing cross-border institutions (e.g. the Prespa Park Coordination Committee) and piloting/reinforcing cross-border activities.

This regional project was also created for preserving the global biodiversity in the Prespa Lakes Basin in Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece as well as for collaborating with the governments of the three countries for the reduction of lakes pollution and the introduction of environmental management practices in the Prespa Basin through the integration of ecological, economical and social objectives. The achievements in the three countries will reflect issues that deal with environment protection and the projects will include the ecosystem management in the policies and practices of the respective sectors at national level. The eco friendly approach in the local environmental planning, space planning, water management and use, agriculture, forests management and fishery, management and preservation of protected areas will be piloted for the first time in the Prespa catchment area divided among Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece. The project provides a synergy between all the interested partners at national and international level, in the implementation of actions and strengthening knowledge and skills, in the promotion of participation and attitudes of people. The project work, activities and coordination consist in ensuring achievements for putting the legal and regulatory capacities on the right track, introducing good management practices, preserving the biological values and increasing cross-border collaboration in the Prespa Basin.



These joint projects are identified as priority actions by many environmental policy documents of the Albanian Government such as the National Strategy for Environment, the Action Plan and the Strategy for Biodiversity (1999) as well as a series of national sectoral strategies. Compared to other areas in the country, the Albanian Prespa is very isolated and suffers many economical and development problems. The country's economical and social liberalization has caused huge and uncontrolled changes to the conditions and management practices of the catchment including changes to the demographic structure thus increasing human pressure on the lake catchment resources. Approximately one in five families in Albania has emigrated abroad. Irregular seasonal migration to Macedonia and Greece is the first on the emigration list in this region and it is a main source of income for many families. The current programme is considered as a very important tool for Albania aiming at ensuring sustainable use and development of the Prespa catchment resources, the protection of biodiversity and the creation of the legal and institutional basis for the management of cross-border habitats and waters.

The Prespa Lakes Basin has a surface area of 16,000 square kilometres and it extends over the mountainous region of the Balkans in South-western Europe. The lakes mark the border between Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece since after the end of the Balkans War. After World War II, the lakes were divided by the “iron curtain” and communication between the populations living near the border was very limited. When Macedonia was declared independent and after Albania’s and Macedonia’s efforts to enter a market economy, the region lost its military sense and now people can cross the border freely from all directions. The Prespa Lakes Basin is currently populated by 25,000 inhabitants. The Albanian Prespa falls within the Seman river Basin. It includes an area of 242.2 km² (excluding the water area). The houses are 3-5 km away from each other. From the administrative point of view the Commune of Ligenas includes 9 villages, the Commune of Progër 2 villages and one village is administratively connected to the Municipality of Bilisht which is part of this catchment area. The communities work in agriculture, fishery and family tourism, but traditionally the main engagement of the residents of the area has been agriculture and farming. The lack of irrigation systems, the distance from the market and the improper infrastructure are the main obstacles for the economical activities in the area. The Prespa Basin has important tourist values if we take into consideration the hilly and mountainous landscape surrounded by the cold water of the lakes and the picturesque island of Maligrad. Of interest for foreign and domestic visitors are the ancient churches such as the cave of Treni with prehistoric drawings and parts of the Egnatia Road.



Facts from the Prespa Park

Population growth in the Albanian side of the Prespa Park is considered stable or increasing and it has a relatively high density of 20 people per km². The unemployment rate is 23% and income is nearly 700 dollars. 70% of the work force works in agriculture.

- Wild fruit and medical herbs are very important for increasing the income of the population living in the Park;
- Rare species: the Albanian side of the Prespa Park counts nearly 1.000 species of flora or 30% of the entire Albanian flora.
- There are 50 species of fauna and 19 species of vegetation in the Park, which can be found only in the Prespa catchment area, 1600 butterfly species and a significant variety of reptiles and amphibians;

- The Prespa Park is globally recognized as a nutrition, nesting and breeding place for at least 91 species of migratory birds including the rare and endangered Dalmatian Pelican;
- At least 19 fauna species of the Park are considered endangered;
- Tourism is still undeveloped in this area; however with the development and existence of the possibility of living in harmony with nature there is an increase of the tendency towards ecological tourism throughout the region and also at national level.

Pursuant the law into force some of the responsibilities of the managing authorities remain unclear. Coordination is also missing on issues related to water quality and cross-border coordination. Therefore the Law on water is expected to be approved by the Albanian Parliament, follower of Albania's engagement for accession, aiming the full transposition and implementation of the Water Framework Directive. This law will address properly the issues of water management thus ensuring an efficient activity of the respective authorities.

This booklet aims to present successful practices of the life of communities in the Water Basins (traditional and new practices) and it is a cornerstone for further expansion and enrichment especially with new elements. This will provide this booklet the opportunity not only to present aspects of life but also to further involve the actors and users of the basin in the introduction of good and contemporary management methods. This document was drafted for supporting the local communities, the local government and other stakeholders interested in presenting the need for a sustainable and successful management of the Prespa basin. More concretely, this booklet tries to show and preserve the good traditional values of the Prespa Park community on the Albanian side, which are considered to be in harmony with nature making this an area to be visited and protected.

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UNDP Project for Prespa Park

NATURAL RESOURCES and HUMAN ACTIVITY

Good traditional practices for the use of natural resources such as forestry, fire wood, fishing, cultivation of biodiversity values etc., as a source for living

Field of activity	Use of communal forests
Name of activity	Fire wood production
Community implementing the activity	Villagers of Gollomboç
Activity tradition	Tradition of the 30-40s of the XX century
Duration within one year	April to November

Activity description

The tradition of fire wood production for covering villagers' families' needs was made known by the elderly (80-85 years old) of the village of Gollomboç. Wood was produced in the village's forest, each year in specific parcels. The parcels were used in turn never using the same each year. It was produced by exploiting regularly, dried trees (forest trees), askew or damaged wood, trees fallen due to rotten trunks, and the rest by cutting isolated trees which are at a distance from each other. In accordance to the forest treatment technique they are called garden cuts. The forest was large and healthy. Parcels with oak suitable to be used for fire wood, such as the Turkish oak, Italian oak, Macedonian oak and the common oak, were selected for the production of fire wood. In case a parcel contained many trunks without springs, they were also used as fire wood by rooting them out from the earth (digging with a pickaxe, crowbar etc.). Wood was produced by the villagers only for family needs and not for being sold out of the village.

Environmental compatibility

- Fire wood is produced by doing at the same time a very useful cultural service necessary to the forest. Sanitary cuts are performed.
- Fire wood is produced by cutting the minimum number of rising trees.
- The intervention in the forest is in compliance with the principles of the sustainable management of a National Natural Park, the status Prespa has today.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

By means of the transfer process the commune of Ligenas has currently taken nearly 4000 ha of forests and pastures under its ownership and the current situation in this part of the forest fund is that there are more damaged and rotten oak trunks. Here the above mentioned method is the best and guarantees the fast and safe improvement of the situation in nearly 80% of the communal forests and pastures.



Shags from Albanian Prespa
Foto: M. S. Qirjo

Field of activity	Forests, pastures, farming
Name of activity	Cutting of oak leaves
Community implementing the activity	Villagers of Gollomboc
Activity tradition	Tradition existing before the liberation
Duration within one year	August - September

Activity description

Following the testimonies of the elderly the oak leaves were cut for ensuring the nutritional basis for the cattle during the winter period. The cutting technique was:

They used to cut leaves in oak parcels not suitable for fire wood. According to the villagers the groves at lower heights, meaning the ones closer to the village, belonged to this group. Therefore these were the places where the leafage was cut. They used to cut leaves in nearly 25% of the trees. They cut mostly young trees. Leafage was produces by cutting $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ of the amount of leaves. This process served also to raise the tree crowns.

- Leafage was cut during August – September. They returned to the same tree for leafage cutting, 4 years later by removing mainly the new branches at the lower part of the trunk. When they cut trees (forest trees) for the production of fire wood, their leafage was used for the above mentioned purpose.

- The place for leafage cutting for each family was assigned by the heads of the village and was followed by every family.



Oak forest in Albanian Prespa
Picture: Mihallaq S. Qirjo

Environmental compatibility

The forest biomass is used well to a good extent. Leafage cutting to the degree explained above does not effect the forest growth (i.e. the production of wooden material). All the environmental, recreational, protective and other functions of the forest ecosystem are preserved intact.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

Today this practice can be used successfully not only in the village of Gollomboç but also in the other villages of the commune, in the communal forest area.

Field of activity	Pastures, farming
Name of activity	Cattle grazing and processing of farming products.
Community implementing the activity	Goricë e Vogël, Goricë e Madhe, Gollomboç.
Activity tradition	Tradition of the before liberation period
Duration within one year	Summer, end of May- end of September

Activity description

Five or six families joined their cattle thus forming a herd of 800 heads.

- The farm was established in the high pastures of Mali i Thatë and the herd was placed there
- They grazed every day and were moved so that the same place was not over grazed
- The grazing territory was assigned by the heads of the village by setting borders for the other herds.

There were two practices for milk processing:

1. The dairy was established on the mountain at the pasture and milk was processed on the spot.
2. A dairy was established at the village and a graph was created for every family processing their own milk in this dairy.

Environmental compatibility

1. They are effectively using a natural wealth which is currently unexploited.
2. The alpine pastures have high nutritional values.
3. There is a reduction of forest grazing.
4. Production of farming products at the pastures reduces transport expenses. Shepherds make more efficient use of the time thus resulting in a more efficient productivity.
5. Environment in the residence area (village) is protected.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

Currently, the natural pastures of Mali i Thatë are not exploited at all.

Therefore the forest is over grazed.

The good will of the villagers of the area may bring this phenomenon to an end.

Construction or reconstruction of water absorbing facilities in the pastures of Mali i Thatë would provide favourable opportunities for massive, regular use of these summer pastures.

Field of activity	Communal forests
Name of activity	Improvement activities
Community impl. the activity	Ligenas, Goricë e Madhe and Goricë e Vogël, Kallamas
Activity tradition:	Creation of a new tradition
Duration within one year	May - June

Activity description

1. Cleaning - liberation

It is a cultural service conducted in oak stumpy grounds of nearly 400 ha communal forests. The working technique consists in: Removal (cutting) of damaged and small branches (saplings) as well as those with horizontal development; The intensity of cuts varies from 20% to 35%, depending on: the density of the crown, the number of branches coming from one trunk, the extent of damage caused by abusive human interventions for cutting leafage, the average accumulation age; The cuts are performed during the vegetation period (May – September) in order not to activate the buds, i.e. the new branching; The material cut is left on the ground, distributed on the surface area; The density of the crown of the group should be over 0, 8 and not under 0, 6.

2. Re-stumping

It is a modified cut. It means that this cut is applied as an exploitative cut in the forest treatment technique, when the oak stumping ground has reached the age of exploitation. In this case it is applied as a flat cut of the entire surface. Currently, in presence of degraded or much damaged oak stumping grounds, especially during the last 20 years, this cut is applied as a cultural cut, not as an exploitative one.

Environmental compatibility

1. The two aforementioned works make possible the creation of a healthy oak forest and eliminate its degradation.
2. The new forest performs better its environmental, protective and recreational functions.
3. The biomass cut and distributed all over the area affects positively the creation/enrichment of the humus layer, previously very poor or totally lacking, thus being a new incentive for a high biodiversity.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

Apart from the parcels under protection and those where improvement works have been performed plus a part that is being successfully rehabilitated through protection, we can successfully intervene with these works in nearly 1000-1500 ha of oak stumpy ground from the communal forests fund.

Field of activity	Communal forests
Name of activity	Protection of oak stumpy grounds
Community implementing the activity	Villages of the Liqenas commune
Activity tradition:	2002 and ongoing
Duration within one year	May - June

Activity description

1. Strict protection of oak stumpy grounds

This status belongs to some forest parcels (Bigell – villages of Gollomboç and Diellas). Because of the special biodiversity values (mainly riches consisting in forest trees and bushes, such as oak, ash-tree, linden, poplar, hornbeam, juniper where we can mention the juniper etc), the strategy of the Prespa Park and the Plan for the management of communal forests and pastures determines that no intervention is going to be made there.

2. Four year protection of the parcels intended for re-stumping

3. One to two year protection of parcels intended for cleaning - liberation

4. Protection of trees of certain parcels with possibility for regeneration of damaged oak forests, from grazing

For all the above mentioned categories protection is provided through:

- The construction of protective fences with materials provided mainly by improvement works, cleaning – liberation and re-stumping
- The assignment of guards during the first stage of the works
- Placing tables, signs etc. as signalling tools for banning entry in the protected parcel
- Intensive communication with the community and especially with the shepherds regarding the parcels under protection.

Environmental compatibility

1. This approach is compatible with nature therefore it is left to develop the succession of the forest ecosystem.
2. Protection is provided for the entire vegetation in general and for the rare endangered species in particular, thus guaranteeing a high biodiversity.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

Progress towards improvement of parcels without any intervention with improvement works may be a model to be followed in the future in parcels that are currently unprotected.

Field of activity	Biodiversity
Name of activity	Evidencing trees and bushes of the Park
Community implementing the activity	The forest staff of the Park
Activity tradition	A research study of the 2004-2007 period
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

The staff of the park exhibit all the trees and bushes growing in the territory of the Prespa Park in the premises of their offices in Goricë e Vogël.

- All the staff are engaged in accordance to the areas they cover. They collect leaves, wood, fruit from the plants.
- They consult the dendroflora literature for the accurate definition of all the species and they label them according to their Latin name.
- They are exhibited in the offices.
- Species like the juniper, the Australian hackberry etc. are mentioned among the endangered species.
- A further duty is the conduction of a wide study of the current situation of rare and endangered species as well as the planning of measures for their successful breeding, taking into account the human factor together with the stational and genetic factors.

Environmental compatibility

1. Real information on the state of biodiversity with regards to trees and bushes is provided, these being the main elements of the forest ecosystem conditioning to a large extent the development of the rest of the flora and micro flora, fauna and micro fauna.
2. The drafting of the park strategy is assisted by determining the succession stage and the expected climax formation.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

The research study on rare and endangered species and managerial work needs to be further developed.

Field of activity	Mountainous regulations
Name of activity	Maintenance of the bed of the Zaroshka creek
Community imple. the activity	The village of Zaroshka
Activity tradition	New practice
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

The regulation of the Zaroshka creek bed represents a group of biological and hydro technical works such as: Construction of 5 barrages with a total volume of 100 m³, with materials of the area (dry stone wall); Construction of nearly 20 m³ protective walls for protection against erosion (dry stone wall with a wiring mash); Construction of 100 m double anti erosion fences in bare, inclined surfaces of the creek (the fence is placed in the areas more exposed to superficial erosion following the lines with the same height; Planting forest trees and bushes such as poplar, willow, oaks (Turkish oak, Italian oak), sea-berry, gooseberry. The planting was realised with saplings for the oaks, slips for the poplar, willow and sea-berry, with seeds for the gooseberry. The poplar slips were planted also one year after the construction of barrages using the deposits of alluviums in the upper part of the barrages.

5. Nearly 20 m³ mini barrages were constructed in places where there were flows or streams flowing to the creek.

Environmental compatibility

1. Works were conducted with simple tools in order not to harm the natural environment.
2. All the plants that were cultivated belonged to the species that are naturally present in the area.
3. The slope compensation in the calculations for the dimensions of the barrages was 2/1000 so that the sand or clay grains do not flow into the lake.
4. The erosion of the creek banks in some of its segments led to the reduction of agricultural land. This phenomenon was brought to an end.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

The model for the regulation of the Zaroshka creek can be applied partly to some areas around the creek of Goricë e Madhe.

Field of activity	Fishing
Name of activity	Fishing gudgeon in the village of Kallamas
Community imple. the activity	Amateur fishermen of the village of Kallamas.
Activity tradition	Early tradition enriched in the framework of the Park
Duration within one year	During the open season

Activity description

Gudgeon fishing is conducted during a certain period. Fishing during the breeding period is forbidden.

There are agreements and understanding among fishermen regarding the amount of gudgeon to be caught. The fishing rules set between the three countries owners of the waters of the Prespa lake are followed.

Environmental compatibility

1. Gudgeon breeding rules are followed.
2. Natural balances are preserved and gudgeon is not cultivated artificially.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

This activity should not expand more than the current extent.



Fishing place in Macro Prespa in FYR of Macedonia
Picture: Eduart Cani

TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS and GASTRONOMY

This chapter shows some good, traditional practices for production and cookery. These traditions have been followed for a long period of time and are considered as a friendly relation with nature for tourists and locals. This chapter outlines the tradition of wine production, baking bread in a baking-pan, fish cooking...

Field of activity	Tourism
Name of activity	The special culinary and the traditional wine of the area
Community imp. the activity	Zaroshka and to some extent Liqenas and Goricë e Vogël
Activity tradition	It is an ongoing tradition
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

The village of Zaroshka has some restaurants whose main dish is the carp casserole. The casserole is prepared with fish fillet dipped in spicy juice with finely chopped vegetables etc. Due to this dish, daily tourism is widely developed all year round. The visitors say: “We are going to Zaroshkë to have a fish casserole.”

The restaurants offer a variety of drinks, among which you can find their traditional red and a bit sour wine with a special flavour. This product is also consumed by the visitors with great pleasure.

The method of serving is special too. The casserole is served as a whole and is placed in the middle of the table. Each one takes portions from the casserole together with the tasty juice using the big flat spoon.

Usually the eating is concluded by cleaning with a piece of bread the juice left in the dish. It is really an unforgettable entertainment and pleasure!

Environmental compatibility

1. Short-term tourism is developed thus giving the visitors the opportunity to admire and love the beautiful nature of the Prespa Park.
2. The food offered is very healthy.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

This tradition can expand to the villages of Liqenas and Goricë e Vogël.

Field of activity

Name of activity

Community implementing the activity

Activity tradition

Duration within one year

Natural production of food products

Bee breeding

From some amateurs in the villages

Early tradition continuing to this day

During the vegetation period

Activity description

The practice is conducted based on the general experience of bee honey production.

Until some years ago, bee breeding amateurs used to transfer the hives following the blooming season. During the April – June period they were kept near the field, while during the July – September period they were transferred to the height of alpine pastures.

It is worth mentioning the fact that the hives are not placed far from the agricultural lands, because the agricultural cultures, especially the ones with sufficient bloom, such as the fruit plants, are not treated chemically.



Hive bees in Albanian Prespa
Picture: Mihallaq S. Qirjo

Environmental compatibility

1. It is one of the most environmentally compatible natural products since it does not interfere extensively with any biotic or abiotic elements.
2. The impact of bees feeding on nectar on the realization of long distance fecundation is widely known. This fecundation in other circumstances would be nearly impossible. This factor limits widely the genetic digression of rare and endangered species of trees and bushes.
3. The nutritional and curing values of honey are widely known.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

In case migration is also applied, the possibilities for the expansion of this activity are multiple compared to the current development.

Field of activity	Viticulture
Name of activity	Cultivation of “Othello” grapes
Community implementing the activity	Mainly in the village of Kallamas
Activity tradition	Since 50 – 60 years, continuing to this day
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

It is a type of grape cultivated together with other varieties, mainly in fields near the lake of Prespa e Madhe, northeast of it, i.e. directly exposed for a long period of time to the sun rays (facing south) and also to the rays reflected (by the water mirror of the lake).

Characteristic of this type is the long period of vegetation and one its main advantages is the high productivity reaching 250 – 300 kv of grapes per ha (the fruit is completely ripe at the middle of October).

The farmers treat this type only with agricultural services such as shearing, hoeing etc. No chemicals are used on it neither for supplementary nutrition nor for prophylaxis or disease fighting.

Environmental compatibility

1. This type has been adapted very well to the natural conditions of the area, thus being environmentally compatible.
2. Its treatment is environmentally acceptable. It does not harm the environment and it respects the development of natural agriculture which is a priority for the development of this branch of economy in the territory of the Natural Park of Prespa.
3. The product, i.e. grapes, is a natural product

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

Hours of long sun exposure by the lake make possible the cultivation of a considerable surface of land favoured also by high productivity.

Field of activity	Agriculture, permaculture
Name of activity	Cultivation of beans and other vegetable as well
Community imp. the activity	The village of Goricë e Vogël, Kallams, Gollomboç
Activity tradition	Relatively recent tradition
Duration within one year	Seasonal

Activity description

Beans are cultivated in land created by alluviums of the lake, in land surfaces discovered after the fall of the lake water level.

Under these conditions, the phreatic waters are very close to the surfaces, the roots of the plants have easy and continuous access to water so there is no need for artificial irrigation.

The plants are treated neither with artificial fertilization nor with other chemicals for prophylaxis or disease fighting.

The above mentioned conditions make possible the production of beans that boil easily and have a special taste.

This cultivation method is valid for other vegetables too.

Environmental compatibility

1. It is a natural product.
2. It makes use of a renewable fund of land be this temporarily (depending on the continuous changes of the lake water level). So we have a useful use of the main natural element, the land.
3. The product is very likeable to the consumer and it is prepared for low energy consumption (it boils fast).

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

The entire lake shore line can be used excluding the rocky and craggy part.

Field of activity	Agro-food industry
Name of activity	Production of bread under family conditions
Community impl. the activity	All the population of the area of Ligenas
Activity tradition	Early tradition
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

Each family produce their own bread.

Bread is baked using the fire from burning kindling resulting from leafage production.

Environmental compatibility

1. It makes use of an energy source that otherwise would have been unexploited at all.
 2. The extent of biomass use is increased and the tree cuts in the forest are reduced.
- Of course it is not a case of effectiveness of the use of energy and efficiency of work.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

As long as the concentrated industrial production of bread is not part of this community, this form can continue.

Field of activity

Name of activity

Community implementing the activity

Activity tradition

Duration within one year

Tourism

Traditional baking with wood fire oven

The village of Progër

It is an ongoing tradition

All year round



Baking brick oven in Progër
Picture: Kostas Ktona

Activity description

Activity description Each house of the village of Progër has a wood fire oven in their courtyard, mainly for baking pies, meat and desserts such as baklava etc. Previously the main function of the oven was baking bread, since each family used to prepare their own bread for consumption.

It is called a wood fire oven because it operates through burning wood and what is special about it, is the fact that boxwood is used since it produces more heat for heating the oven.

The reason why the villagers continue using these ovens is

the unique taste of the dishes baked in them. The meat and different casseroles have a better taste if they are baked in the oven.

Since hospitality is a characteristic of the area, the villagers want to please not only themselves but also many friends and visitors with the dishes they cook.

Environmental compatibility

This practice carries special tourist values and serves as a positive element for the attraction of tourists, which is indispensable for the development of the area of Prespa. This practice is nature friendly since it uses traditional methods for forest management.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

This practice may be encouraged for the entire area of Prespa since it makes possible the attraction of tourists who visit the rural areas and like old traditions.

COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES and SERVICES

Old and new traditions that present and aim the introduction of good practices in the maintenance of common areas. Some traditions such as cobbled streets and stone working, cleaning streets etc., are rare cultural values and at the same time nature friendly.

Field of activity	The urban (rural) environment,
Name of activity	Solid waste administration
Community implementing the activity	Goricë e Madhe
Activity tradition:	Efforts to a new tradition
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

Observations were made during a certain period of time about the average daily amount of family waste per household, group of households and the entire village.

The number of bins for the weekly collection of the village's family waste was calculated.

The places for putting the bins were assigned so that the distance from each house would be reasonable, 10 m to 30 m.

There are 12 motor vehicles such as tricycles and small Zetor machines in the village Goricë e Madhe. Therefore a graph was drafted so that each vehicle would cover one month. The owners of the vehicle would collect once a week the rubbish in all the collection points of the village. A non productive land outside the territory of the village was assigned for depositing rubbish. This place was fenced and regulated (levelling, enclosure through a channel). The community decided that every family would pay a tariff of nearly 100 ALL.

Environmental compatibility

1. This service was established with acceptable parameters in a village where there was no cleaning service at all.
2. Family waste was no longer thrown in the creek thus providing the real conditions for the latter to be cleaned and maintained.
3. A new model and culture is being cultivated for the other villages of the commune.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

With a little will, the support of the commune and some modest assistance from the donors this practice can be transmitted to all the villages of the commune and it may restart operating in the village of Goricë e Madhe where unfortunately from some times it has not been functioning.

Field of activity	The urban (rural) environment, sewage and waste water drains
Name of activity	Sewage and waste water drains in the village of Liqenas
Community imp. the activity	The community of Liqenas
Activity tradition	Ongoing.
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

1. The field was selected.
2. The technical project was prepared.
3. Collaboration with the community was provided so that each family would realise their connection to the drains network.
4. A system for water cleaning through filters, decanting etc. was established.
5. Each direct flow to the lake was diverted and set into the system.

There was an initial resistance. Being conservative, the residents wanted to continue with the old manner of water discharge. But later they were convinced and were connected to the drains network by doing the disciplining of water discharge themselves inside the house to the network.

Environmental compatibility

1. Hygiene in the village and inside the household is widely improved thus reducing the risk for infections and spread of epidemic contagious diseases.
2. The lake is protected from organic pollution which brings about the increase of the content of phosphorus in the water. This results in the increase of the number of green algae which on the other hand reduce considerably the level of oxygen in the water thus hindering the existence of all beings in the lake.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

The villages of Gollomboç, Goricë e Vogël and Kallamas currently discharge the sewage and waste water directly in the sea. This practice can and should be applied firstly in these villages but it is also valid for the other villages.

Field of activity	Ecotourism
Name of activity	Family tourism
Community impl. the activity	12 - 15 houses in Gollomboç, Goricë e Vogël
Activity tradition	Project funded by the GTZ, to support a new tradition
Duration within one year	Summer time

Activity description

Houses that fulfilled some conditions regarding the living area, premises inside the house, position, readiness of the family members for developing family tourism etc. were selected.

They were equipped with materials, equipment, for the construction of contemporary standards bathrooms.

Some of the houses selected were also equipped with other domestic appliances and furniture.

Housewives were taught about the conditions necessary for the vacationers, about the communication with them, the presentation of the values of the area etc. Initial publicity was made on this initiative and these welcoming locations.



Touristic house in Albanian Prespa
Picture: Mihalldaq S. Qirjo

Environmental compatibility

1. The development of family tourism respects the status of Natural Park to the fullest by non overloading the territory with huge constructions with respect to the hotel industry.
2. The houses selected represent a new model for all the other houses by making possible the creation of a social, hygienic, cultured and healthy environment in the villages of the commune.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

The activity may expand to all the villages of the commune since they all have distinct natural values in the locations where they have been built.

Field of activity	Decorative greenness
Name of activity	Decorative greenness of the house gardens.
Community implementing the activity	A special house in Goricë e Vogël.
Activity tradition	Not an early tradition.
Duration within one year	All year round.

Activity description

1. Village house constructed close to the road leading to the border point, 20-25 m from it.
In front it has the garden, which is organised in the path (paved with stone and pavement tiles) as well as the garden that extends in both sides of the passage.
2. Greenness. The surrounding wall at both sides, at longitudinal direction is accompanied with a vine row that from the decorative point of view substitutes the decorative lianas.
3. Multicoloured roses are cultivated around the passage at both sides.
4. At both sides in the entrance and in front of the house, seasonal annual or biennial flowers such as petunia, zinnia, autumn flower (chrysanthemum), etc. are cultivated.
5. Several vegetables used for family needs as well as narrow flowerbed with woody or shrubby plants are cultivated in the space between.
6. Several fruit-trees such as apple, plum, etc are distributed in the area too.
In its complexity, a diversified, aesthetic, attractive decorative view is offered to the eye.
7. A green wall with small-leaved privet is constructed at both sides of the gate of the house.

Environmental compatibility

1. In its complex, the house presents a nice environment where one can live in good conditions and in a healthy manner. It invites you to go and visit it, or just admire it when you are outside.
2. The smell of organic manure felt often in village houses has been replaced by the nice scent of roses and other flowers.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

All the houses that have a garden should apply this practice.

Field of activity	Use of energy.
Name of activity	Energy production for heating for the family needs.
Community imp. the activity	Several houses in Ligenas, Diellas, Goricë e Vogël, etc.
Activity tradition	New Practice.
Duration within one year	Spring-Summer.

Activity description

Solar panel installation for heating (solar energy accumulation and its transformation into thermal energy). Water deposits installation for the water feeding of the elements and the premises water supply.

Installation of the water piping that supplies the heating elements in the interiors (of houses or Institutions) as well as the network of warm water supply. The development of such a practice requires a relatively high initial investment. The long time use of these elements makes them profitable.

Environmental compatibility

1. Solar energy is an energy generated from the cleanest source.
2. Electricity consumption is reduced as one of the most anti-economic alternative forms with the lowest efficiency (when electricity is used for heating, it is good to know that 2-2.5 kw/h initial energy are spent per 1 kw/h electricity generated), or fire-wood consumption is reduced, (actually it is advisable not to cut a lot of wood in the forest until oak wood is completely rehabilitated).

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

This form can be used by families that have financial means, and the development of a similar project from different donors is also welcomed.

Field of activity

Name of activity

Community implementing the activity

Activity tradition

Duration within one year

Tourism

The model of cobbled streets

The village of Progër

It is an ongoing tradition

All year round

Activity description

One of the characteristics of Progër is the cobbled streets. The use of cobble-stone was an early solution and the only one for maintaining the streets of the village clean and without mud. The inhabitants of the village gathered the stones from Mali i Thatë, worked them so that they would have the appropriate shape for cobble-stone paving. The village is characterised by narrow and ramified lanes.

The commune is improving the cobbles-stone not only to preserve tradition but also because it is considered a friendlier manner than asphalt paving.



Cobbled street in Progër
Picture: Kostanca Ktona

Environmental compatibility

It constitutes one of the friendliest practices with nature, by fulfilling at the same time the needs of the inhabitants for transport. It is a friendlier alternative than concrete or asphalt and does not contribute to climate warming. From the tourist point of view, this practice is really attracting.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

The commune itself has plans for paving the internal streets of villages with stones, in order to preserve the tourist values of the village as well as the early tradition. At least the village of Progër can pave the streets using this system.

Field of activity	Tourism
Name of activity	Cleaning village streets
Community implementing the activity	The village of Progër
Activity tradition	It is an ongoing tradition
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

Sweeping the courtyard is a yearlong tradition in the village of Progër which still continues. Every morning the women of the village sweep the courtyard and the streets in front of their houses.

Moreover, the women of the village gather once a week for cleaning the village centre and those parts of the lanes that are not inhabited.

Impressive is the fact that cleanness dominates in all village lanes, thus reflecting the early culture of Progër.

Environmental compatibility

Apart from having a clean environment, it is a very positive practice of community work and community awareness rising. This tradition is an example of the community values. Intertwined with a waste managing system from the commune, it constitutes a basis for sustainable waste management and community culture.

Opportunity for the expansion and extension of the activity

This communal practice can be applied not only by all villages of this commune, but also by all the villages of the area of Prespa.

Field of activity	Tourism
Name of activity	Stonework
Community implementing the activity	The village of Progër
Activity tradition	It is an ongoing tradition
Duration within one year	All year round

Activity description

The village of Progër has an early tradition in the stone work. Very noticeable are the ornaments in the buildings, in the door and window cases, in the wall corners, in the groundsels (these are stone seats in front of house doors where women often gather during their free time for a chat with each other), in the village drinking-fountains etc. The talented stone-gravers have produced a lot of ornaments out of stone such as tables, birds, flower-vases, fountain-basins, etc.

This tradition was born and still continues to exist under the influence of the presence of Mali i Thatë which is too close to the village.

This is where the stones are taken from as raw material for the creation of ornaments.



Designed stone in Progër
Picture: Kostanca Ktona

Environmental compatibility

This practice, if carefully used and only for decoration needs, is completely nature friendly and it is considered as a tourist attraction.

Mundesia e shtrirjes, zgjerimit, të aktivitetit

All the villages of Prespa can use this type of practice as a tourist attraction and community elements.

GOOD REGIONAL PRACTICES

Old and new traditions that present and aim the introduction of good practices in the maintenance of common areas. Some traditions such as cobbled streets and stone working, cleaning streets etc., are rare cultural values and at the same time nature friendly.

Field of activity	Use of natural resources
Name of activity	Bird watching
Comm. imp. the activity	Hutovo-Capljina Natural Park in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Activity tradition	Recent interpretation
Duration	Seasonal

Activity description

The “Hutovo Blato” Natural Park in Bosnia Herzegovina was created in 1995.

Previously, the main activity in the Park area was hunting. It used to generate considerable income.

The income generated provided employment for a considerable number of park employees. Since 2000 hunting was banned so the park is totally supported by funds from the Cantonal Ministry of Environment and international donors. This area is considered as a well known residence for migratory birds, surrounded by intact nature and a shelter for more than 240 species of birds. In 2001 the “Hutovo Blato” Natural Park was declared a Ramsar area as a stopping place for these birds following the Convention.

Bird watching with regards to the route they follow is another step as far as the vision of the Natural Park for transforming it into a self-administered park through the implementation of eco friendly activities is concerned. The bird watching activity is very attractive during the winter period since the “Hutovo Blato” Natural Park is famous for migratory birds who continue their flight mostly towards the southern region.



Birds covey in Hutovo Blato Park
Picture: REC Bosnia and Herzegovina

Environmental compatibility

A small number of tourists are interested in bird watching. They do not disturb the birds and they do not have a negative impact on nature. Bird watching is also of interest for the characteristics of the place, the cultural and natural heritage, the gastronomy of the place etc. From this point of view bird watching may generate considerable income since the “Hutovo Blato” Natural Park has very good resources in this aspect with no effect on the environment or with very limited effects.

Opportunities for conducting the activity in the Prespa Park

This activity is totally possible for being exercised in the Prespa Park. It is an educational, tourist and recreational activity. A complete and useful multipurpose itinerary may be created in the Prespa Park.

ACTIVITIES

Field of activity

Name of activity

Community implementing the activity

Activity tradition

Duration

Agriculture and food

Sustainable agriculture in the Neretva river delta

Farmers of the Neretva River Delta

New practice

Seasonal

Activity description

There is a need for informing the farmers of the Neretva river delta on the principles of sustainable development in agriculture. The application of agricultural environmentally friendly methods would improve significantly the quality of agricultural products, the quality of land and the health of the population. A new sustainable practice has already been used in the cross-border area of the Neretva delta as a grafting technique for vegetables and the development of organic olive cultures. The REC has developed two programmes in the Neretva delta: the production of grafted vegetables for greenhouses and the production through the hydroponics method (growing plants with minerals without using grit).



Neretva River
Picture: REC Bosnia and Hercegovina

Greenhouse production in the Neretva delta region is highly important and a developing branch of agriculture. Consequently there is an increase in greenhouse production, the soil diseases have increased a lot thus hindering the sustainable growth of plants. Under these conditions, chemical treatment is not considered as a solution. Experience from other countries of the Mediterranean region (Italy, Spain) has confirmed that planting grafted saplings is the only acceptable solution. This method is considered sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Environmental compatibility

Organic agriculture applies methods that require non intensive use of the land. In the context of reorienting oils and fats policies, this can support the encouragement of a balance between the possibility for the supply and demand for olive oil thus protecting better the environmental values and encouraging the olive growth all over the country.

Opportunities for conducting the activity in the Prespa Park

It is completely possible and widely suggested for the area of the Prespa Lakes. Friendly agricultural practices are widely advised for the area of the Prespa Lakes where intensive agriculture has increased greatly the chance of chemical pollution of the lake.

Field of activity	Ecological and educational tourism
Name of activity	Natural educational paths
Community implementing the activity	Hutovo-Capljina Natural Park, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Activity tradition	New practice
Duration	Seasonal

Activity description

The main idea of the “Educational Path” is to attract schools so that they can conduct the lessons in the open. This was made possible by the bilateral efforts of different actors. The REC brought the international experience in this field and helped in project planning and financing thanks to the Swiss Agency for Development and Collaboration. The “Mocvara” NGO from Capljina has good reference and experience in education and this is the reason why they were in charge of the education programme. The Ministry of Civil Engineering, Space Planning and Cantonal Environment supported this idea. The entire project was implemented by the Natural Park. The educational path is 110 metres long. It contains basic information on the park and its biodiversity. This information is presented in the 7 information tables along the path. The new elements are interactive and suitable for schools in the open.

Environmental compatibility

Hutovo Blato was declared a natural park since 1995. It has an area of 7.441 ha and 6 lakes. It has been a RAMSAR area since 2001. It is located only 8 km away from Capljina and it is one of the richest water reservations in Europe with regards to birds and a winter resting place for more than 200 birds. Hunting prohibition (which used to be the main source of income) has forced the authorities of the Natural Park to find alternative sources of income since finances from the Ministry of Civil Engineering, Space Planning and Cantonal Environment is not sufficient for its operation at full capacity.



Information and educational materials in Hutovo Blato Park
Picture: REC Bosnia and Herzegovina

Opportunities for conducting the activity in the Prespa Park

The educational path was introduced successfully in this seminar organized by the REC with teachers from the region aiming the attraction of schools from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina so the awareness raising campaign started as soon as the path was over.

This is a step forward for making the Natural Park a self sufficient place and at the same time for the promotion of nature protection in children.

The authorities of the Natural Park aim to use this experience for turning into an Educational Centre.

ACTIVITIES

Field of activity	Tourism
Name of activity	Hutovo Blato Natural Park day
Community imp. the activity	Hutovo-Capljina Natural Park, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Activity tradition	Traditional
Duration	May

Activity description

The second Saturday of May is known as the “Hutovo Blato” Natural Park Day. Traditionally the day starts with the Neretva Delta Forum (NDF), which is an informal cross-border group composed of the main actors involved in the important processes regarding the developments in the Neretva River delta which is a cross-border area divided by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Hutovo Blato is the heart of the area. NDF operates as an external counselling body for local authorities and it has an important role in the coordination of different activities taking into account the current developments within and outside the area. Differently from the other meetings of the forum (which are always thematic) during the year, these will be dedicated to a summary of the successes and failures of the project from the last celebration of this Day and at the same time they will provide an overview of all the other activities in the Neretva delta. These Forum meetings are open activities starting with the ceremony and followed by cultural programs, recreational activities, curiosities, lunch in the open and presentation of the latest achievements. More than one hundred main actors and special guests of the Neretva Delta celebrate the day of “Hutovo Blato” Natural Park each day.

Environmental compatibility

This is a promotional activity which aims at awareness raising of the key actors on the protection of nature or in this case on the protection of the Hutovo Blato Natural Park. By showing an overview of the activities and the lessons learnt from the previous year, the project highlights the current needs for the protection of nature and sends this message to the decision making authority.

Opportunities for conducting the activity in the Prespa Park

Being a simple and successful activity it can be repeated and adapted in other similar areas.

Field of activity	Wastewater treatment
Name of activity	Construction of the wastewater treatment system in Nakolec
Community imp. the activity	Nakolec village in FYR of Macedonia
Activity tradition	New practice
Duration	December 2008 - May 2009

Activity description

Inappropriate wastewater management has been identified as one of the major anthropogenic source of stress for the sensitive ecosystem of the Prespa Lakes basin. In the Macedonian part of Prespa household wastewater treatment is one of the priorities for the region since approximately 40% of the households are not connected to the existing central wastewater treatment plant located in the village of Ezerani. As a consequence, wastewaters are causing significant detrimental effects to the status of the natural ecosystems, primarily water and soil.



The wastewater treatment system in Nakolec
Picture: Project office

The construction of the wastewater treatment system is result of a fruitful cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Municipality of Resen the local community of Nakolec and the UNDP/GEF project. While the GEF funds were utilized for construction of the plant, the construction of the wastewater collection system is responsibility of the Ministry and the local community. While the Ministry have secured the required construction material, the local community will cover the costs for the excavation works solely through local financial contribution.

The construction of the pilot wastewater treatment plant was officially launched on 16 December 2008 and lasted the end of May 2009. The official commencement of the operation of the system is expected in the second half of 2009, when the construction of the wastewater collection system should also be finalized.

Environmental compatibility

The experience and lessons learnt during the process are particularly valuable for the authorities and other rural communities, but also for others outside the Prespa basin, on the importance of establishing collaborative partnerships for the efficient protection of the environment. The wastewater treatment system itself has a strong potential of replication in other communities with similar social and economic characteristics.

Opportunities for conducting the activity in the Prespa Park

Such wastewater treatment systems in Prespa will inevitably reduce the anthropogenic impact on aquatic and other natural ecosystems and will contribute to the overall improvement of the trans-boundary waters in the basin.



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