

Vlora, 17, November 2017

## Improving coverage and management effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas - Phase II Project Launching Report



### Introduction

The project “*Improving coverage and management effectiveness of marine and coastal protected areas – Phase II*” was approved on June 2017. It is a 4-year project with a budget 1 million Euro financed by the Italian Government through the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). The implementing partner is the National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA) as the representative and line agency of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The project is executed by UNDP. The main project stakeholders are the local government authorities in the coastal areas, mainly Vlora Municipality, the coastal Regional Administration of Protected Areas, especially Vlora one, research institutions such as University of Vlora, NGOs; private sector - notably the fisherman organizations of Vlora, the hotels and tour operators and; local communities living in and around the coastal areas, especially around Karaburuni - Sazani Marine Park.

The project objective is to ensure an effective management of the coastal and marine environment of Albania, develop scientifically based and stakeholder supported network of marine and coastal protected areas, which considers the entire ecosystem including humans and aims to maintain healthy, productive and resilient ecosystems.

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The project management unit includes one project manager, one technical expert, one administrative assistant and a field coordinator which would be based in the vicinity of MPA Karaburun Sazani, at Visitor Center, Radhima.

One month commencement phase was conducted to kick-start the project including reviewing the project strategy, performance measurement, organizing stakeholder meetings and mobilizations, review of the project budget and annual work plan for 2017-2018 and finalization of ToRs for the key personnel.

The objective of the project launching event was to attest ownership for the project, aiming to enable all parties have full understanding about the project and expected results and their contribution to achieve the project objective.

The ceremony was hosted at the General Consulate of Vlora under the cordially auspices of the General Italian Consul, Ms. Luana Micheli and was moderated by the General Director of the National; Agency of Protected Areas, Mr. Zamir Dedej.

The welcome greeting speeches were delivered from Mr. Dritan Leli, Vlora Mayor, Mr. Nino Merola, AICS Director, and Ms. Lymia Eltayeb, UNDP Country Director.

The meeting followed the agenda as Annex 1.

The Director of Vlora Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Ms. Lorela Lazaj, presented the performance and achievements during 2017. Significant improvements have been done on the management of PAs, monitoring, capacity building, etc. Special focus has been given to the awareness, information and communication with the local community, visitors and tourists through establishing 3 Visitor Centers in the Vlora region and making them functional.

The National Project Manager, Ms. Violeta Zuna presented an overview of the achievements of the project phase I, finalized on March 2017, the project phase II results framework, expected outputs and stakeholders' involvement, as well as the project management arrangement. The presentation included also the key activities for the first year.

### ***Proactive stakeholder discussions***

Representation and views from different members and stakeholders:

- Mr. Arben Breshani, Chamber of commerce - sharing the views on the role of SME into regional economic development and sustainable tourism like:
  - The business development approaches must aim sustainable use of regional natural resources, particularly marine ecosystem values
  - Economic development through competition principles, financially and technically feasible and following planning instruments friendly with environment and ecosystems
  - Business sector must also engage and motivate local people and entrepreneurs to invest in nature conservation activities, ecotourism, aiming at the same time increase of employment rates and efficiency, decrease of productions and services costs; e.g. communities living in coastal areas in vicinity of MPA and their livelihoods are connected with the use of natural resources - tour operators, dive boat operator (diving opportunities in Vlora Bay), private marinas (regattas), etc.

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- MPA managers and small business (farmers, fishermen cattle raisers, traders, small business-shops state institutions like harbor authorities, captain navy) should communicate and exchange their views/ ideas.
- Ms. Mirela Koçi, representative of civil society
  - The civil society supports the implementation of project in targeted protected areas, focusing its support on deriving benefits to biodiversity conservation and/or the socio-economic enhancement of local communities.
  - Divers groups will gather professional and amateur divers as well as promote and develop diving education and practice in coastal area of Albania
  - Professional marine biodiversity groups /NGOs will focus on aquatic life and conservation wildlife and biota in water ecosystems, biodiversity conservation programs, nature protection and coastal zone management activities; research and monitoring of aquatic life and ecosystems
  - CEPA (communication, education and public awareness activities envisaged to NGOs focusing mainly locally on public information and education in Vlora Bay, public awareness and education, research and capacity building on issues related to sustainable development and nature conservation.
  - Based on the contributes that UNDP biodiversity projects have introduced in course of time, as well as into an increase of stakeholder attitudes and affiliation to improvement of livelihoods subject to protection and conservation of resources, it would be a good model to refer to and lead for all other projects and initiatives in the area. E.g. one of the projects is of Vlora County, focusing on a project of marine straights pollution.
- Ms. Rezarta Brokaj, Vlora University
  - Provides scientific justification for accepted decisions in all areas including the sustainable use of nature resources and biodiversity conservation
  - Contribute their scientific expertise to discussions on establishment of MPAs in Albania and to training activities of the project.
  - Engage in bilateral project with relevance to MPA management
  - Provide curricula on tourism, navigation and also on marine biology
  - Provide their expertise and experience in the project's training activities.
- Mr. Adnan Aliaj, representative of Touristic and Tour operators:
  - Wise use of touristic resource of Marine Park
- Mr. Reshat Xhelili, Fishery inspectorate
  - Inspectorate supports the enforcement of legislation on sustainable fishing in the coastal and marine environment mainly through control and management of fishing activities
  - It is responsible for surveillance of fisheries activities and conducts inspection of the fishing condition and standards (including aquacultures)

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- It collects data on ecological and financial indicators pertinent to fishery sector and performs assessment of fishery stock and capacities
- He is willing and keen to share and cooperate with the project their work and studies on fish sources, analyses and assessment of fish stocks and planning of fish catch quotas
- Fishery inspectorate will cooperate to strengthen monitoring and surveillance system
- Mr. Nihat Dragoti, Executive Director of INCA
  - Informs on their participation into the implementation of some activities during the phase I and support the continuation of the phase II
  - Encourages the implementation of the management plan and the tourism plan
- Sailing entrepreneurs from Italy

They attest high interest to develop the sustainable tourism like sailing activities. Establishment of a school for sailing would be an interesting initiative. They support the project and are willing to cooperate.
- Mr. Saimir Beqiraj, Professor at Tirana University and Vlora University
  - Reassured for the great feeling and appreciation of the continuation of the good job into the marine sites. He recalled the very important experience and team commitment as part of the scientific experts group for different studies thereof;
  - Activity for small monitoring should be addressed by RAPA and Vlora University, since they have capacities and must get more involved with specific monitoring tasks
  - Inform on an Interreg Project just commenced, which aims development of a strategy on the cross boarder marine areas management.
  - WAIT foundation will publish the scientific data of their study on Adriatic and Ionian seas through articles publication.
- Legambiente

They have cooperated with the project team and RAPA and have experience in the awareness campaign, and willingness to cooperate in open classes initiatives, involving the regional schools
- Mr. Pajtim Shpata, diver

Highlights the particular importance to strengthen the legislation for diving and to complete it with specific rules and regulation.
- Mr. Lefter Kashta, professor at Tirana University
  - Joint marine experts team of Albanian University and cathedra and Conservatoire du Littoral through PIM are carried out important site mission and habitat observations including the mapping of habitats of deep waters.
  - Recommends development of the habitats and species inventory.

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- Mr. Zamir Dedej, NAPA Director
  - Supported the ideas, views and recommendations came from the discussions
  - The Management Committee might have to be reshuffled to be inline and follow the respective amendments in the new PA law. It will obviously be strengthened as a mechanism of cooperation and steering of users groups interests
  - NAPA will continue the support and cooperation with all partners.
- Ms. Lymia Eltayeb, UNDP Country Director
  - The project will keep informed the Management Committee which will be gathered regularly
  - UNDP is highly interested and committed to ensure the balance of economic development with the protection of the environment are maintained and properly attended by the authorities and stakeholders involved;
  - The Inter-ministerial Committee for SDGs will consider environment as an important part in the SDGs achievements.
- Mr. Nino Merola, AICS Director
  - Appreciates with thanks the presence of all participants and their active involvement; emphasizes that the project will serve as a model for other Marine Protected Areas in Albania. It is expected that the private sector be engaged and we have sustainable actions.
  - The presence of the 3 institutions (AISC, UNDP, NAPA) demonstrates support and cooperation.
  - The project vision is institutional strengthening for the economic development. It is not an investment project, but a tool that support the system for cooperation. This will multiply chances and opportunities in the future to cooperate and exchange ideas all together again. The project will create the model that if is successful, should be replicated in other areas.

The event was followed with the side events at the Visitor Center in Radhima organised with the local stakeholders.

- Pupil and teachers of the Primary School of Orikum played local folk dressed with traditional costumes and instruments
- Four student for the High School of Arts in Vlora finalised their painting inspired from the landscape and values of the MPA Karaburun - Sazani
- The main finfish species were presented on the stands and some complimentary finger food offered for the visitors
- The shell fish inventory of Vlora marine sites was displayed and explained for the attendants

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- The woman association of Orikum shared their artefact produced in the scope of support and assistance received from UNDP and other donors in course of last years (knitted bags, soups and creams from oil olives)



## Annex 1

17 November 2017

General Italian Consulate Premises, Vlora

### AGENDA

#### Session I – Meeting of the stakeholders

Facilitated by Mr. Zamir Dedej, Director of National Agency of Protected Areas

Time	Topic	Note
09:30 – 10:00	Registration and welcome coffee <sup>1</sup>	
10:00 – 10:20	Welcome address	Keynote Speakers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High representative of the Minister of Tourism and Environment (tbc)</li> <li>- Mr. Dritan Leli, Mayor of Vlora (tbc)</li> <li>- Mr. Nino Merola, Director of Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development</li> <li>- Ms. Limya Eltayeb, Country Director of UNDP Albania</li> </ul>
10:20 -10:30	Protected Areas in the Vlora region	Ms. Lorela Lazaj - Director of Vlora Regional Administration of Protected Areas
10:30 – 10:45	Short presentation of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase of the project	Ms. Violeta Zuna – Project Manager
10:45 – 11:30	MPA Sazan-Karaburun Management Committee representatives and stakeholders	Presentation and views from different stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commander of the Pashaliman Base, Colonel Ferdinand Kreshpani “Coastal Guard Involvement with enforcement activities”</li> <li>- Small businesses: Mr. Arben Breshani: “Regional economic development and sustainable tourism”</li> <li>- Regional Fishery Inspectorate, Mr. Reshat Xhelili: “Sustainable fishing”</li> <li>- University of Vlora: Mrs. Rezarta Brokaj: “Research with relevance to marine ecosystems of Vlora”</li> <li>- Tour operators/ touristic guides: Mr. Adnan Aliaj: “Wise use of touristic resource of Marine Park”</li> <li>- NGOs: Mrs. Mirela Koci: “Knowledge, awareness and information on Marine Park values and challenges”</li> </ul>
11:30 - 12:15	Questions and discussion	
12:30	Transfer to Visitor Center Radhima site	

#### Session II – Side events in the Visitor Center Radhima

<sup>1</sup> Kindly be informed on security and control procedures while entering in the premises of Italian Consulate. Therefore bring with you the ID card.

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Time	Topic	Note
13:00 – 14:00	Exhibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Fish corner by the local fishermen</li><li>- Students from the High School of Arts in Vlora performing thematic painting</li><li>- Traditional folk by pupils groups from the primary school of Orikum</li><li>- Local handicraft products by Orikum woman association</li><li>- Attending the preparatory works for the Marine Care Facility - receiving, rehabilitating and releasing turtles</li></ul>