



Lake Shkoder-Skadar

INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT

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Few words on the LSIEM project

Lake Shkodra/Skadar Integrated Ecosystem Management Project — LSIEMP - is one of the projects in the World Bank Portfolio, financed through a Global Environment Facility (GEF) Specific Investment Grant and government budget contributions, which aims to support the country's strategy in this area. The overall project development objective is to maintain and enhance the long-term economic value and environmental services of Lake Skadar-Shkodra/Skadar and its natural resources.

The project will achieve this objective by: (a) strengthening institutional mechanisms for transboundary coordination and cooperation; (b) improving information and understanding of the lake's eco-

system and potential impacts of development; and (c) providing demonstrations and incentives for pollution reduction and strengthened regulatory capacity.

The project has three components: 1) Capacity Building for improved understanding and joint management of the Lake which aims to establish and functioning the Skadar-Shkodra Lake Commission, its Secretariat and the Bilateral Working Groups; 2) Promoting sustainable use of the lake which will promote adoption of sustainable approaches to economic development of the lake (and its natural resources) by focusing on tourism and fisheries; and

3) Catalyze water pollution investments which will support selected investments to stimulate pollution reduction activities.

One of the main output of the project is to establish effective systems for sustainable management of natural resources, including fisheries. Fish are the lake's most significant natural resource in terms of contribution to local economies and employment. There is some evidence that some of the lake's most valuable fish species are threatened and are declining by over-exploitation and habitat degradation, especially due to increasing numbers of active fishermen.



Skadar/Shkodra Lake Commission

Skadar Lake Commission (SLC) is a joint structure established with the joint agreements between Ministry of Spatial Planning and Environment of Montenegro and Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (MoEFWA) of Albania for the protection and sustainable development of the Skadar-Shkoder Lake. The Joint secretariat is based in Shkodra and plays a coordination role between the Commission, four working groups, governments, donors and lake community. The Commission members are appointed by both ministers and

the chairman of the secretariat is rotated between both countries.

For 2011 the SLC is chaired by Albania. The Commission has played an important role not only in preparing bilateral agreements, signing documents but also during the emergency situation like the flooding events of December '10 and January '11 coordinating and managing steps to be taken for the future. The project is financially supporting the work of the SLC, WGs and the secretary, but from 2012 the Albanian MoEFWA will fully

support those structures. The current SLC members are:

- Mr. Sajmir Hoxha**, Chairman, Ministry of Environment Forest and Water Administration;
- Mr. Ridvan Trashani**, Shkodra Municipality;
- Mr. Fatbardh Sokoli**, representative of CSO.
- Mr. Sinisa Stankovic**, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism
- Mr. Zoran Mrdak**, National Park of Shkodra Lake
- Mr. Marko Junkovic**, representative of CSO
- Mr. Ilir Kraja** secretary.

Success stories

- Sustainable Fishery Management
- Joint Public Awareness Campaign

Joint Working Groups



In the frame of the project in 2009 were established and started functioning four Joint Working Groups. These joint structures function based on a joint agreement between both countries and their sustainability will be depended on the activism of the local stakeholders and structures after the project will finish.

The role of joint Working Groups is joint actions and technical input to documentation related to overall environmental, natural resources and transboundary ecosystems protection by both countries during and beyond project period.

The working groups include ten experts from NGO community, academia, local administration and relevant stakeholders from both countries. They are administratively supported by the SLC Secretary and meet 2-3 times annually in Shkodra or Podgorica to discuss several technical aspects of the project activities and propose new ideas or issues to be included in the agenda of local stakeholders in both countries.

Their contribution and expertise has been crucial not only in drafting terms of references for different

technical assignments of the project but also for reviewing and completing those studies.

Among studies we can mention: Legal Framework Review; Eutrophication level of the lake waters Survey; Monitoring Program, Protected Area Management Plan, Predictive Hydrological Model; Illegal fishery Survey; Social Economic Assessment; etc.

One of the outputs of the Working group work has been identification and supply by the LSIEM project of the university and rangers with equipment necessary for the transboundary protection and monitoring of the lake waters.

The discussions within groups meeting are valuable and constructive also for the mutual cooperation.

The working groups are:

- i) Monitoring and Research,*
- ii) Communication and Public Outreach and Tourism Promotion,*
- iii) Legal and Planning,*
- iv) Water Management*

Administration of Protected Areas

Protected Area Administration (PAA) - is initiated by the LSIEM project. Its structure is prepared with the support and assistance by World Bank and agreed by MoEFWA. Protected Area Administration is part of the Directory for Forest Protection and there are 26 persons covering protection of the lake and forest area. The LSIEM project has been an added value to the protected areas-said Mr. Ridvan Hebjaj, director of PAA. Cooperation of PAA with FMO in Albania strengthened the monitoring and protect-

tion of the Lake. Necessary equipments and technical support have been provided to raise the enforcement performance of the administration and the rangers unit capacity.

Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife Albania is working together with the administration for preparing a Management Plan for ten (10) years and a five (5) year action plan. At the same time the administration is updating the study for forestation of areas near the lake, which will help in coexistence of aquatic species and terrestrial animal.

Sustainable Fishery Management

Promoting sustainable use of the Lake, especially fishery and tourism, is one of the main components of the project. One of the partners is Fishery Management Organization (FMO). FMO of Shkodra was established on March 23rd 2003 covering all the fishing activity in Zogaj, Shirokë, Rrethina, Vrakë, Valcë, Koplík, Stërbeq, Jubicë, Kamicë dhe Shegan. The FMO plays an active role in the lake management, also due to the fact that the fishing licenses are issued only to the FMO members. The FMO cooperates with the Directory of Forest Protection and the MoEFA, and its main structures are Administrative Council and the General Assembly.

The FMO duties are:

- ◊ Promoting the use of methods that ensure continuous development of fishery in compliance with fishery legislation, using the proper technology for the capture and growth of fishery,
- ◊ Promoting the quality and biological diversity of the ichthyic fauna and avoiding over-exploitation,
- ◊ Ensure the member participation in the co-management of fishery resources and protect their interest.

FMO has 5 employers and the Administrative Council composed of 11 members, while the executive has

8 employers.

Some of the results achieved by the organization are:

- Increased number of licenses for fishing (210);
- There is 30% decrease on illegal fishing in 2011 compare to 2007;
- Contracted for protection of fish spawning areas during the banning season and removal of static fishing means.
- Developed a business plan, etc.

In 2011 the National Federation of Fishery Management Organization is established and chaired by the chairman of the Shkodra FMO, Mr. Gezim Lezaj. FMO of Shkodra is the first entity licensed for fishing marketing and auction.



Joint Public Awareness Campaign



In the frame of the Integrated Management of Shkodra Lake Project, Transboundary Forum of Shkodra Lake with financial support of World Bank, through respective Ministries of Albania and Montenegro implemented the campaign: "Protection and Preservation of natural and cultural values of Shkodra Lake.

The campaign aim was to increase awareness of the community on both sides of the project and was based in three pillars: establishment of the project team for its implementation; defining and meetings with target group and

development of the information –communication strategy with community. The awareness strategy for the protection of natural and cultural values of Shkodra Lake approached many interested actors in the region including institutions for the management of natural resources like Regional Forest Directory, Regional Environment Agency, National Park of Shkodra Lake, Research institutions as Universities of Shkodra and Tirana (through experts contribution) and educational institutions ("28 Nëntori", "Ismail Qemali", "Shkolla Pyjore", "Ndre Mjeda" Middle school of Tuzi, Ulqini and Kraja). Implementation of the campaign has been successful through the cooperation of the Forum with Regional Education Directorate, joint agreements with National Park of Shkodra Lake and the strategic plan of the activities.

Special approach of the campaign was the engagement of the youth in activities like eco-camping with participants from Albania and Montenegro, joint cleaning activities on both sides of the lake shore especially after flooding of January 2011.

One of the outputs of the campaign was an environmental educational kit specific for Shkodra Lake ecosystem. For the first time this environmental kit is prepared in 3 languages (Albanian, English and Montenegrin) and for the group age 10-18 years old. The kit will be used by teachers on the extra curricula hours for the school environment.

As a follow up of the campaign and in order to seek sustainability of the activities in the region are established groups of young ecologists aiming strengthening a network "On the protection of joint resources". At the same time the Transboundary Forum of Shkodra Lake will continue to work in the region through engagement of the interested groups.

News

Skadar/Shkodra Lake Commission Meeting

Fourth meeting of Skadar/Shkodra Lake Commission was held in Shkodra on 7th October 2011. The goal of the meeting was to present progress of the project objectives and give recommendations for its improvement and future activities. The meeting discussed and approved several documents produced as Predictive Hydrological Model, Legal Framework Review and Joint Monitoring program. Part of the agenda was the organisation of the **Donor Meeting**. This event is planned to be organized in November 2011. Meeting aims to present project results as well as to stimulate the exchange of information and coordination of activities among donors and present areas of intervention.

Local Public Awareness to protect Water Quality



Creative City in cooperation with Albanian Association for Sustainable Development and Shkodra Municipality are organizing cleaning activities along Shkodra Lake shore every Saturday and Sunday during October and November. These activities are part of the local public awareness campaign to protect water quality of the lake. The aim of this Campaign is

to inform and aware the lake community on the risks pollution sources existing in the lake. It will also inform on the importance and benefits from reduction of water pollutant, which will result in the improvement of water quality and the economic growth of the community.

Field Trip in Lake Skadar-Shkodra.

In the frame of International Waters Conference 6 held in Dubrovnik, LSIEMP hold a presentation and had a special place for promotional materials in the Innovation Marketplace. LSIEMP also hosted IWC6 participants in Lake Skadar in a wonderful field trip during which they were informed by Montenegrin and Albanian PIUs on the various aspects of joint cooperation including joint structures

Studies and Reports

Several joint documents have been prepared in the framework of Skadar/Shkodra Lake Project from domestic and international consultant. Documents are presented and distributed to the respective institutions and can be find at project website (<http://lss.iwlearn.org/>):

- ◇ Social Economic Study of the Lake area in Albania and Montenegro
- ◇ Predictive Hydrological Model
- ◇ Monitoring Development Program
- ◇ Legal Framework Review
- ◇ Preparation of a joint inventory for tourist facilities in Lake area in Albania and Montenegro

Other documents are in process of preparation and consultations.

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This publication is prepared by **Milieukontakt Albania** in the frame of monitoring and evaluation consultancy of LSIEMP activities.

Milieukontakt Albania is active since 2000. The long-term goal is "to develop a strong and democratically organized environmental NGO movement. This means a movement that has a high visibility in society, is able to raise public awareness and is capable of playing an important role in policy- and decision-making processes, on a local, national and international level"

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