



# Walk on the Wild Side

Building up capacity and strengthening cooperation for  
the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along  
the South Eastern European Green Belt

**Final report**

**December 2010**



Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservati  
and Nuclear Safety

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### General project information

Title of project	“Walk on the Wild Side”. Building up capacity and strengthening cooperation for the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along the South Eastern European Green Belt														
Country /Region	Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo (UNSCR1244)														
Beneficiaries of project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local NGOs;</li><li>• Local scientific institutions;</li><li>• Administration of protected areas;</li><li>• Authorities responsible for management of biodiversity;</li><li>• Local Border Police;</li><li>• Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) at UNEP Vienna;</li><li>• Ministries of Environment and relevant governmental agencies;</li><li>• Ministries responsible for Border Police;</li><li>• European Green Belt Coordination Office.</li></ul>														
Project partner(s)	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Ecologist's Movement of Macedonia (DEM Macedonia), Regional Environmental Centre Albania (REC Albania), Regional Environmental Centre Kosovo (REC Kosovo)														
Duration of project	14.5 months (19.10.2009 – 31.12.2010)														
Total project costs	<div>Financial support</div> <div>Advisory Assistance Programme for Environmental Protection in the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia:</div> <table><tr><td></td><td>72,000</td><td>EUR</td></tr><tr><td>Applicant’s resources:</td><td>9,000</td><td>EUR</td></tr><tr><td>If applicable Third-party funds</td><td>-----</td><td>EUR</td></tr><tr><td>Budget:</td><td>81,000</td><td>EUR</td></tr></table>				72,000	EUR	Applicant’s resources:	9,000	EUR	If applicable Third-party funds	-----	EUR	Budget:	81,000	EUR
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### Information about the donor

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**Summary:**

The south-western part of the Balkan Peninsula is a biodiversity hotspot. High mountain areas abound in plant species diversity, and the region is one of the last remaining retreats of large European carnivores, such as bear, wolf and lynx. The border areas have been strictly guarded for decades, creating, in some sections one of the most divisive barriers in history. These areas now represent some of the last intact natural sites.

The Sharr Mountain (Albanian: Malet e Sharrit, Macedonian: Шар Планина, Serbian: Šar planina) spans from southern Kosovo and north-western Macedonia to north-eastern Albania. The mountain system is about 80 kilometres long and 10 to 30 kilometres wide. It includes several high peaks with the highest, Titov Vrv, reaching an altitude of 2,747 m. Sharr Mountain extends to Korab Mountain (2,764 m) in the south-west, before continuing along the Albanian/Macedonian border as the Dešat/Deshat mountain range.

The European Green Belt (EuGB) is an initiative of particular relevance to this region, spanning 13,000 km of the land behind the former Iron Curtain, from the Barents Sea in the north to the Adriatic and Black Seas in the south. With the vision of becoming the backbone of an ecological network, the EuGB is a symbol of transboundary cooperation in nature conservation and sustainable development. At the local scale, Sharr Mountain is a true example of what the EuGB intends to achieve. The ecological backbone already exists in the Sharr Mountain, owing to the tight border controls in the recent past and the inaccessible mountainous terrain. The key objectives for the coming years are to strengthen the protection of the existing ecological conditions and values, particularly for the large European carnivores of the region, and to ensure integrated and cooperative management and development plans are applied across the now open boundaries.

*“Walk on the Wild Side. Building up capacity and strengthening cooperation for the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along the South Eastern European Green Belt”* was a project implemented by IUCN, in cooperation with the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), and in close partnership with the Ecologists’ Movement of Macedonia (DEM), REC Albania and REC Kosovo. The project’s activities were implemented across the trilateral border zone of Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia, an area characterized by outstanding biodiversity and landscape values in the region of Sharr/Šar and Korab Mountains. Key stakeholders involved in the project included officials from the three governments, and representatives of NGOs, scientific institutions, protected area administrations and the border police. The project aimed at strengthening transboundary cooperation in nature conservation with several immediate objectives:

- 1) increasing the capacities of stakeholders involved in activities related to biodiversity management along the border zone of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia;
- 2) strengthening cross-sectoral and international cooperation in biodiversity conservation;
- 3) raising awareness of key stakeholders and civil society of the value of conservation of natural heritage.

In the context of this project a training workshop and a study tour have been organised for relevant actors of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia and the brochure “Crossing Borders for Nature. European examples of transboundary conservation” was elaborated.

## Albanian summary:

Pjesa jug-perwëndimore e Gadishullit të Ballkanit është një pikë e rëndësishme për sa i përket biodiversitetit. Zonat e larta malore ofrojnë biodiversitet të bollshëm bimor dhe rajoni mbetet vendstrehimi i fundit i mishngrënësve të mëdhenj, si p.sh. ariu, ujku dhe rrqebulli. Për dekada me radhë, zonat kufitare janë ruajtur rreptsisht, duke krijuar një pjesë të caktuar disa prej barrierave ndarëse më të pakapërcyeshme në histori. Sot, kjo zona përfaqësojnë disa prej sajteve natyrore më të përkurës.

Malet e Sharrit (Maqedonisht: Шар Планина, Serbisht: Šar planina) shtrihen nga pjesa jugore e Kosovës dhe ajo veri-perwëndimore e Maqedonisë, deri në veri-lindje të Shqipërisë. Vargu malor është rreth 80 kilometra i gjatë dhe 10 deri 30 kilometra i gjërë. Ai përfshin disa maja të larta, përfshi edhe majën më të lartë, që është Titov Vrv, e cila arrin një lartësi prej 2,747 m. Në pjesën jug-perwëndimore, Malet e Sharrit takohen me Malin e Korabit (2,764 m) para se të vijojnë përgjatë kufirit Shqiptaro-Maqedonas, me vargmalin e Deshatit/Dešat.

Brezi i Gjellbër Evropian (EuGB) është një nismë që ka rëndësi të vecantë për rajonin, i cili shtrihet pas Perdes së Hekurt, përgjatë 13,000 km-ve të tokës, duke filluar që nga Deti Barent në veri, e deri në Detet Adriatik dhe atë të Zi, në jug. Me vizionin për t'u shndërruar në shtyllën kryesore të një rrjeti ekologjik, Brezi i Gjellbër përfaqëson simbolin e bashkëpunimit ndërkufitar për ruajtjen e natyrës dhe zhvillimin e qëndrueshëm. Malet e Sharrit në nivel lokal, janë një shembull i vërtetë i asaj që Brezi i Gjellbër synon të arrijë. Mund të thuhet se shtylla ekologjike në Malet e Sharrit ekziston, për shkak të kontroleve të rrepta kufitare që kryeshin në të kaluarën dhe të terrenit malor, thuhet të pakalueshëm. Objektivat kryesore për vitet e ardhshme janë fuqizimi dhe mbrojtja e kushteve dhe vlerave ekzistuese ekologjike, vecanërisht për mishngrënësit Evropianë të rajonit dhe pjesëmarrja në një proces bashkëpunues dhe të integruar më të mirë, si dhe zbatimi i planeve të zhvillimit për të kufijve të bashkëpunimit.

“Eci në Zonën e Egër. Ngritja e kapaciteteve dhe forcimi i bashkëpunimit për promovimin e ruajtjes ndërkufitare të natyrës përgjatë Brezit të Gjellbër të Evropës Jug-Lindore” është një projekt që zbatohet nga IUCN, në bashkëpunim me Agjencinë Federale Gjermane për Ruajtjen e Natyrës (BfN) dhe në bashkëpunim të ngushtë me Lwvizjen e Ekologjisë në Maqedoni (DEM), zyrtarë lokalë të REC-ut në Shqipëri dhe në Kosovë. Aktivitetet e projektit zbatohen në zonën tre-palësore të kufirit mes Shqipërisë, Kosovës dhe Maqedonisë, e cila ka një rëndësi të vecantë për nga vlerat e biodiversitetit dhe të peisazheve në rajonin e Maleve të Sharrit/Šar dhe Malit të Korabit. Lista e aktorëve kryesorë të projektit përfshin qeveritë e tre vendeve, përfaqësues të OJQ-ve, insitucionet shkencore, administratorët e zonave të mbrojtura dhe policinë e kufirit. Projekti synon forcimin e bashkëpunimit ndërkufitar të ruajtjes së natyrës, sipas disa objektivave afat-shpejtë:

- 1) Rritje kapacitetesh për aktorët e përfshirë në veprimtari që lidhen me menaxhimin e biodiversitetit në zonën kufitare mes Shqipërisë, Kosovës dhe Maqedonisë;
- 2) Forcimin e bashkëpunimit ndërkufitar dhe ndërkombëtar për ruajtjen e biodiversitetit;
- 3) Rritjen e shkallës së ndërgjegjshimit të aktorëve kryesorë dhe shoqërisë civile mbi vlerat që paraqet për trashëgiminë natyrore, ruajtja e natyrës.

### **Macedonian summary:**

Југозападниот дел од Балканскиот полуостров претставува рај за биолошката разновидност. Високите планински предели изобилуваат со најразновидни видови растенија, а освен тоа овој регион е и едно од последните преостанати засолништа за големите европски месојадци како што се мечката, волкот и рисот. Овие погранични предели биле строго чувани со децении, како резултат на што во одредени делови била создадена една од најразделувачките бариери во историјата. Овие области сега се меѓу неколкуте последни локации со недопрена природа.

Шар Планина се протега од јужниот дел на Косово и северозападниот дел на Македонија до североисточна Албанија. Овој планински масив е долг околу 80 километри и широк од 10 до 30 километри. Тој има неколку високи врвови, а највисок е Титов Врв со 2.747 m височина. Шар Планина се протега сè до планината Кораб (2.764 m) на југозапад, пред да продолжи долж албанско-македонската граница како планински венец Дешат.

Европскиот зелен појас е иницијатива од особена важност за овој регион. Појасот се простира во должина од 13,000 km зад поранешната Железна завеса, од Баренцовото Море на север до Јадранското и Црното Море на југ. Со визија да постане 'рбет на една еколошка мрежа, Европскиот зелен појас претставува симбол на прекуграничната соработка во областа на заштита на природата и одржлив развој. На локално ниво, Шар Планина е вистински пример за она што Европскиот зелен појас има намера да го постигне. Еколошкиот 'рбет веќе постои на Шар Планина благодарение на ригорозните гранични контроли во блиското минато и на непристапниот планински терен. Клучните цели за годините што доаѓаат се да се зајакне заштитата на постојните еколошки состојби и вредности, особено за големите европски месојадци во регионот, и да се обезбеди дека плановите за интегрирано и кооперативно управување и развојните планови ќе се спроведуваат во пракса преку сега веќе отворени граници.

*„Пешачи низ дивината. Зајакнување на капацитетите и соработката заради унапредување на прекуграничната заштита на природата долж југоисточниот зелен појас“* е проект реализиран од страна на IUCN, во соработка со сојузната Агенција за заштита на природата на Германија (BfN) и во партнерство со Движењето на еколоистите на Македонија (ДЕМ), канцеларијата на Регионалниот центар за животна средина (REC) во Албанија и канцеларијата на REC во Косово. Активностите на проектот се спроведуваат во трилатералната погранична зона меѓу Косово, Албанија и Македонија - област што се одликува со извонредна биолошка разновидност и пределски вредности во регионот на планините Шар Планина и Кораб. Клучни засегнати страни во проектот се функционери од трите влади, претставници на невладини организации и научни установи, управите на заштитените подрачја и Граничната полиција. Проектот има за цел да ја зајакне прекуграничната соработка во делот на заштитата на природата преку остварување на неколку итни цели:

- 1) Зголемување на капацитетите на засегнатите страни кои учествуваат во активностите поврзани со управувањето со биолошката разновидност во пограничната зона меѓу Албанија, Косово и Македонија;
- 2) Зајакнување на меѓусекторската и меѓународната соработка во областа на заштита на биолошката разновидност;
- 3) Подигнување на свеста на клучните засегнати страни и на граѓанското општество за вредноста на заштитата на природното наследство.

## **1. Background and objectives**

*“Walk on the Wild Side. Building up capacity and strengthening cooperation for the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along the South Eastern European Green Belt”* was a project implemented by IUCN, in cooperation with the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), and in close partnership with the Ecologists’ Movement of Macedonia (DEM), REC Albania and REC Kosovo. The project’s activities were implemented across the trilateral border zone of Kosovo, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (in the following: Macedonia), an area characterized by outstanding biodiversity and landscape values in the region of Sharr/Šar and Korab Mountains. Key stakeholders involved in the project included officials from the three governments, and representatives of NGOs, scientific institutions and protected area administrations. The project was aimed at strengthening transboundary cooperation in nature conservation with several immediate objectives:

- 4) increasing the capacities of stakeholders involved in activities related to biodiversity management along the border zone of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia;
- 5) strengthening cross-sectoral and international cooperation in biodiversity conservation;
- 6) raising awareness of key stakeholders and civil society of the value of conservation of natural heritage.

The project objectives were achieved through implementation of the following activities: kick-off meeting; international training workshop; study tour to EU countries (transboundary protected areas in Germany and Czech Republic); publication on best practices in transboundary cooperation in nature conservation; recommendations for future collaborations and activities presented as a project proposal concept.

## **2. Project components**

Project components have been:

### **Component I: Project management**

#### **I.1. Project start and kick-off meeting**

Objective of this meeting was the final negotiation of the project structure and the project implementation. The partners presented their inputs (trainings, study tour, experts’ input) and agreed on a binding time plan for implementation. In addition, at the project start the details regarding meeting venues, transport, accommodation and meal have been clarified. Contractual arrangements were negotiated during the meeting.

## **I.2. Organization of a training workshop**

Objective of this component was to organize a training workshop in the target area. Project management related to the organization of the workshop included the following activities:

- selection of site;
- selection of the venue and contractual arrangements with expert team;
- elaboration of the programme;
- selection of the participants;
- logistics and accommodation.

## **I.3. Organization of a study tour**

The study tour structure is described below under “Component III: Study tour and training workshop”.

## **I.4. Compilation of a brochure**

Project management related to the organization of this component included the following activities:

- selection of the case study sites;
- preparation of case studies' template;
- select and contract experts (case studies authors);
- collect case studies;
- compile the text;
- peer review;
- proof reading and translation to national languages (Albanian and Macedonian);
- edit and design;
- printing;
- promotion;
- distribution (preparation of distribution list and postage);
- evaluation.

## **I.5. Derivation of recommendations for future collaborations and activities**

Project management related to this component included the following activities:

- collect lessons learned;
- develop set of recommendations;
- consult with partners;
- prepare final recommendations (in the form of project proposal if relevant).

## **I.6. Reporting and closing the project**

Project management related activities covered the following:

- handover of all deliverables;
- submit all deliverables to the donor for sign-off;
- complete final project report;
- complete all financial processes and reports;
- termination of all contracts;
- announce the completion of project (internal, external and public relations contacts);
- complete project file and store appropriately.



## **Component II: Training workshop**

This component was based on the following assumptions (as indicated in the project proposal document):

One training workshop to be organized in the target area. The site and the venue to be selected upon communication and agreement with partners. The foreseen duration of the training workshop was 3 days.

Up to 26 persons to participate in the workshop, including 20 participants (from Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo), up to 3 project partners and up to 3 experts (including local and international).

The detailed programme of the workshop elaborated during inception phase of the project in cooperation with partners and experts covered the following thematic areas:

- wildlife monitoring and management;
- introduction to EU nature conservation policies;
- examples of successful cooperation between conservation sector and border police sector;
- best practices in transboundary nature conservation cooperation;
- benefits of transboundary cooperation in nature conservation;
- potentials of institutionalising transboundary cooperation in the project region.

## **Component III: Study tour**

This component was based on the following assumptions (as indicated in the project proposal document):

A five-day study tour to a selected EU country to be organized for maximum 15 participants (5 from each country). The chosen site preferably to have the characteristics similar to those of the project area, i.e. mountain transboundary area with high biodiversity values. The intensive training to focus on the following aspects preliminary identified as training needs in the previous project<sup>1</sup>:

- best practices in transboundary management of natural resources;
- biomonitoring with a special focus on monitoring of large carnivores;
- introduction to EU requirements on biodiversity protection and management.

The detailed programme of the study tour to be elaborated in the inception phase in cooperation with local partners and experts.

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<sup>1</sup> *“Civil-military cooperation for the promotion of transboundary nature conservation along the “European Green Belt” (South Eastern Europe). A contribution to civil conflict prevention, conflict management and peace consolidation in the example of South Eastern Europe”*. Implemented by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), with financial support from the German Inter-ministerial Body for Civil Conflict Prevention. Project activities were carried out jointly with the local organisations REC Albania, Eco-99 Prizren and Ecologists Movement Macedonia, and supported by ENVSEC – the Environment and Security Initiative.

#### **Component IV: Brochure on best practices in transboundary nature conservation**

This component was based on the following assumptions (as indicated in project proposal document):

A brochure containing case studies on best practices in transboundary nature conservation to be elaborated and published within the project.

#### **Component V: Recommendations for future collaborations and activities**

A set of recommendations for future collaborations and activities was to be elaborated in cooperation with partners and with input gained from project participants.

### **3. Project activities**

The following activities were carried out during the project period:

- a. 16 November 2009, Tirana, Albania: Tomasz Pezold met with Mihallaq Qirjo, Country Director for REC Albania and Eduart Cani – Project Coordinator, REC Albania. Project's planning; objectives and set up were discussed.
- b. 17 November 2009, Tirana, Albania: Tomasz Pezold met with Ferdinand Bego, Albanian Green Belt focal point and representative of Museum of Natural Sciences, Tirana University. The following issues were presented and discussed: project's objective, planning, activities and content of the study tours and workshop, potentials for cooperation during project's implementation.
- c. 19 November 2009: leaflets about the project in English and German were prepared and sent to UBA and BfN. The leaflets are attached as Annex I and II to this report.
- d. 22 November 2009, Galicica National Park, Macedonia: Tomasz Pezold and Lee Dudley (Green Belt Coordinator) met with representatives of Galicica National Park – Oliver Avramoski and Andon Bojadzi and Til Dieterich, GFA Consulting Group Team Leader of a project on the elaboration of a Park Management Plan funded by the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). The following issues were presented and discussed: project's objective, planning, activities and content of the study tours and workshop, potentials for cooperation during project's implementation.
- e. 23 November 2009, Skopje, Macedonia: Project start and kick-off meeting. The following issues were discussed during the meeting: final project structure and its implementation, partners input to the workshops and

- study tour, project plan for implementation, meeting venues, transport, accommodation, contractual arrangements with the project partners, content of the planned workshop and study tour. The agenda of the meeting is attached as Annex III and minutes from the meeting as Annex IV to this report. The revised project plan is attached as Annex V to this report.
- f. The draft content of the **training workshop** is attached as Annex VI to this report. The draft content was further discussed with Green Belt focal points, project partners and the Macedonian Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning. It has been agreed to organize the workshop in Macedonia in Mavrovo National Park in the week 22-26 of February 2010.
  - g. 24 November 2009, Skopje, Macedonia: Tomasz Pezold and Lee Dudley met with Ms Lidija Zafirovska – State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Macedonia; Sasko Jordanov – Green Belt Focal Point for Macedonia and Vasil Anastasovski – Manager of the sector of nature conservation, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Macedonia. The following issues were discussed: project structure, planning and activities, Ministry's support for project implementation. It has to be noted that gratitude has been expressed for the successful implementation of the previous "Border Police" project and support for the current project was expressed. It has been agreed during the meetings that the draft programme of the workshop will be sent for consultations to the Ministry.
  - h. Another project leaflet has been prepared as IUCN's own contribution. The leaflet, printed in 500 copies was distributed to project partners and local stakeholders and is attached as Annex XI to this report.
  - i. The meeting venue has been chosen in cooperation with the local Macedonian partner taking into account the following main criteria: easy access for participants from all the countries concerned (Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo); cost effectiveness and budget limitations, availability of conference facilities.
  - j. The agenda of the event has been elaborated by the project manager in collaboration with IUCN staff and local project partners as well as in consultations with experts / speakers. The agenda was also approved by the BfN contact person. The final version of the agenda is attached to this report as Annex VII.
  - k. Participants of the workshop have been selected and invited to the meeting in cooperation with local partner organizations. The list of invited persons is attached as Annex VIII, while a scan of the signed list of participants is attached as Annex IX to this report. There were 50 + people participating in the meeting (participation of 43 persons is confirmed by signatures at the participants list attached).
  - l. The meeting has been carried out according to the agenda. The presentations given are attached as Annex X to this report. The meeting served as a platform to exchange experiences between stakeholders from the three countries concerned. Presentations were given on the state of nature conservation in the region and on new initiatives and challenges.

Work groups followed on issues related to management planning; TRAFFIC<sup>2</sup>; monitoring of animals in the project region and potentials for cooperation with the border police in nature conservation.

It needs to be pointed out that the event fully met the expectations of the project team. The meeting brought together all relevant stakeholders from the project area. It abounded with professional presentations, interesting discussions and effective work groups. The work groups' results are attached as Annex XVI to this report. A photo documentation of the event is attached as Annex XV to this report.

- m. The register of all travels related to the event has started in order to collect data needed at the later stages to offset carbon of project related travels, as foreseen in the project proposal. The latest version of the travel register is attached as Annex XII to this report.
- n. The evaluation of the meeting has been carried out at the end of the meeting. The form attached as Annex XIII has been distributed to the participants and used for this purpose. The evaluation report is attached as Annex XIV to this report.
- o. The **study tour** has been organized to Czech Republic and Germany as anticipated in the project proposal document. The date of the tour has been postponed to the second week of September after negotiations with hosting partners. The tour has been organized in cooperation with Šumava National Park, National Park Bavarian Forest and National Park Berchtesgaden. The final programme of the tour is attached as Annex XVII to this report. 14 actors from the target countries took part in the study tour: four from Albania, six from Kosovo and four from Macedonia. The list of participants is attached as Annex XVIII, while the list of contributors to the tour is attached as Annex XIX to this report.
- p. On the last day of the tour an evaluation was conducted. The participants filled in evaluation forms and a discussion facilitated by the tour coordinators followed. The evaluation report is attached as Annex XX to this report.
- q. Photo documentation from the tour is attached as Annex XXI to this report.
- r. As requested by the tour participants, certificates of participation have been issued by the tour organizers. An example of such certificate is attached as Annex XXII to this report.
- s. The elaboration of the **brochure** on best practices in transboundary nature conservation has been started. The highly experienced co-editor, Maja Vasilijevic, Chair of the Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), (in addition to the project coordinator) has been contracted in order to secure the highest quality output possible. In addition it has been agreed that the publication will be elaborated in cooperation with WCPA and published under its auspices (including the usage of its logo). The editors elaborated a case study template (attached as Annex XXIII to this report). The

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.traffic.org/>

publication is attached in English, Albanian and Macedonian as Annex XXIV to XXVI to this report.

- t. Component V of the project - **Recommendations** for future collaborations and activities - as anticipated in the project proposal document lead to the elaboration of a follow up project proposal concept. The elaboration of this document was based on the following inputs gathered during the project's implementation:
- Feedback from workshop and study tour evaluations;
  - Discussions with tour participants and local authorities;
  - IUCN SEE experience in the countries in questions;
  - IUCN SEE brainstorming sessions and problem analysis;
  - IUCN on-going or planned projects;
  - Donors' requirements.

The project proposal concept is not attached to this report as it is considered an internal document.

#### **4. Delays occurred in the project course**

Several delays have occurred during the project implementation. The study tour has been postponed to September (originally planned for June) after negotiations with the study tour hosts (the summer time season was not considered an appropriate time for authorities responsible for protected areas because of other tasks). Other delays were mainly related to the process of the elaboration of the publication. In consultation with UBA the project duration has been prolonged till 31 December 2010. Necessary measures have been taken by the project team and its financial department in order to close all the financial transactions related to the project by 31 December 2010.

#### **5. Activities to establish the project's activities at local, regional and/or national level** (e.g. cooperation between the project partners and other parties involved in the project, use of existing cooperation structures)

As noted under Chapter 3 several meetings with relevant stakeholders were organized in the inception phase of the project in order to get a common understanding and support for the project. That includes in particular meetings with Green Belt Focal Points of Macedonia and Albania; Dr Ilir Morina – Director of Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency and the State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Macedonia.

The project coordinator was in constant contact with the project partners while organizing the training workshop.

The project has established / re-established or maintained working relations between the stakeholders involved (both on sectoral and international level). The project triggered contacts and working relations between stakeholders not cooperating with each other before. It is anticipated that such cooperation will continue after project completion, therefore securing its longer term sustainability.

## **6. Communications**

Several communication activities (apart of those already mentioned above) have been undertaken in order to increase the visibility of the project. This includes *inter alia*:

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn\\_see\\_bulletin\\_23c.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_see_bulletin_23c.pdf)

<http://www.tbpa.net/tbpanewsletter/TBeNEWS-no2-2010.pdf>

<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/places/belgrade/projects/?5494/Walk-on-the-Wild-side>

<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/places/belgrade/news/?6096/Protection-areas-across-borders--learning-by-visiting>

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn\\_see\\_e\\_bulletin\\_issue\\_24.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_see_e_bulletin_issue_24.pdf) .

## **7. Results and lessons learned**

This paragraph refers to the project purpose (immediate objectives) as indicated in the project proposal with its matrix following the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). It analyses achieved results versus set objectives and draws lessons learned from project implementation.

- a) Increase capacities of stakeholders involved in activities related to nature conservation along the border zone of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia.

This was a key component of the project. The limited number of selected participants gained practical knowledge on modern ways of protected areas management, especially in a transboundary context. This was achieved through a study tour organized to Germany and Czech Republic. In opinion of all involved (including participants and project coordinator) the proposed method (study tour) proved to be very effective and should continue in the future for a broader range of stakeholders.

In addition the publication has been produced, which presents a range of examples of best practices in transboundary nature conservation. The target group can draw further lessons and ideas from it. As the current project was limited in time and scale (number of stakeholders and participants involved), it is

recommended to continue with similar activities in the future in order to deepen the knowledge gained, to introduce additional aspects not tackled yet and to reach a broader spectrum of relevant actors.

b) Strengthen sectoral and international cooperation.

This objective has been achieved through the study tour and the training workshop. The tour served as an excellent opportunity for participants from the three countries concerned to establish and strengthen working relations. The training workshop allowed the participation of a larger group of participants representing different sectors. It brought together all relevant nature conservation actors from the project region and served as an excellent (and first of this type in the region) platform for exchange of ideas and experiences between participants from Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. Several new international contacts have been established which potentially will result in common future actions.

This type of action is recommended to continue in the future in a form of more regular meetings with the goal to exchange ideas and experiences.

It is also recommended that Montenegrin participants are involved in the future as Montenegro shares the mountain ecosystem with the countries already involved in the current project.

c) Increase awareness of key stakeholders and civil society.

This was a cross-cutting component achieved through the organization of the study tour, the training workshop and the publication. However the outreach towards civil society was very limited as the project focused mostly on working with representatives of specialised organisations and institutions. It is suggested that this component is strengthened in future actions to encourage the engagement of more non-specialist stakeholders.

d) Mitigate project's carbon footprint.

This objective has been achieved through purchasing carbon offset certificates and by allocating funds to projects related to carbon emissions mitigation. It was an innovative aspect from the perspective of the region. It is recommended to continue with such a practice in future projects and to promote it wider. It would be also recommended to absorb the funds allocated for carbon offsetting in the projects implemented in the region. However such options are so far very limited.

## **8. Conclusions**

The project built upon experiences and findings from the previous project implemented in the same area with a similar set of stakeholders. It aimed on further building capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions involved in nature conservation activities of the border region characterized with outstanding biodiversity values and yet facing numerous challenges related to

social (such as high poverty), economical (underdevelopment, understaffing and under equipped) and managerial issues (lack of efficient structures, skills and capacities). Additionally the project focused on improving transboundary cooperation as a precondition for effective protection of shared ecosystems and natural resources.

A training workshop on the natural values of the border region was held and a study tour to Czech and German protected areas was organized in order to make participants acquainted with modern ways of protected areas management. A publication on best practices in transboundary cooperation in nature conservation has been produced and translated to local languages (Albanian and Macedonian).

The project has received high attention at all levels and in all target countries and its outputs have been highly evaluated by involved parties. The project has maintained the already established network of partners (both on sectoral and international level) and it is anticipated that its long term sustainability will be maintained and result in further strengthening of protected areas systems and capacities in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia. Therefore the objectives set in the project proposal have been met, with the exception of the unexpected low engagement of non-specialist stakeholders.

The project's progress and the project management were monitored by the project manager through a monitoring and evaluation system following the Logical Framework Approach. Special attention was given to the potential risks indicated in the project proposal. It was proved during the project implementation that the measures undertaken to minimize potential risks were effective. Those measures were mainly related to effective communication with main groups of stakeholders as well as communication and cooperation with local partners.

## **9. Recommendations for future collaborations and activities**

Recommendations for future collaborations and activities were presented in the form of a project proposal concept.

The reported project has attracted all key stakeholders from the region and was very well received. The concept has been prepared based on the feedback from the participants of project activities and key institutions. It is anticipated that a follow up project should built on activities conducted so far and make use of its results as well as of the broad network of relevant partners. Such a project should extend the scope of activities and deepen the knowledge and experiences of the participants in the fields already touched upon in previous projects. It is suggested to extend the project area to the border region of Montenegro and to increase efforts to engage more non-specialist stakeholders.

The project should involve and bring benefits to the following stakeholders (from Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro):

- Local NGOs;
- Local scientific institutions;
- Administration of protected areas;
- Authorities responsible for management of biodiversity;



- Ministries of Environment and relevant governmental agencies;
- European Green Belt Coordination Office.
- Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) at UNEP Vienna.

The immediate objectives of this project proposal could be:

1. to increase capacities of stakeholders involved in activities related to nature conservation along the border zone of Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro;
2. to strengthen sectoral and international cooperation;
3. to increase awareness of key stakeholders and civil society.

## **10. Appendices**

Annex I – Project leaflet – English version  
 Annex II – Project leaflet – German version  
 Annex III – Agenda of the project’s kick-off meeting  
 Annex IV – Minutes from project’s kick-off meeting  
 Annex V – Revised project plan  
 Annex VI – Draft content of the training workshop  
 Annex VII – Final training workshop agenda  
 Annex VIII – List of invited persons  
 Annex IX – Scan of training workshop participants list  
 Annex X – Training workshop presentations  
 Annex XI – IUCN project leaflet  
 Annex XII – Travel register - carbon offset  
 Annex XIII – Evaluation template  
 Annex XIV – Training workshop evaluation report  
 Annex XV – Training workshop photo documentation  
 Annex XVI – Working groups’ minutes  
 Annex XVII – Study tour programme  
 Annex XVIII – Study tour participants list  
 Annex XIX – Study tour contributors list  
 Annex XX – Study tour evaluation  
 Annex XXI – Study tour photo documentation  
 Annex XXII – Study tour participation certificate  
 Annex XXIII – Case study template  
 Annex XXIV – Brochure in English  
 Annex XXV – Brochure in Albanian  
 Annex XXVI – Brochure in Macedonian