



## PROJECT INFORMATION

### Cross-border management of protected areas in the Western Balkans



Mountain range in the transboundary area Prokletije-Albanian Alps

Source: Igor Stojović

#### Background

As part of the accession process to the EU, the project contributes to strengthening the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems in the six Western Balkan countries. It focuses particularly on implementing the Bern Convention and Emerald network. It also contributes to setting the conditions towards the goals set out in the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans and paving the way for the establishment of Natura 2000 protected areas, complying with the requirements of EU environmental legislation. A primary focus is on two transboundary pilot regions: Jablanica-Shebenik (North Macedonia and Albania) and Prokletije-Albanian Alps (Albania and Montenegro). Both regions harbour rich biodiversity and form part of the Balkan Green Belt.

#### Project details

The project aims to strengthen the capacity of local and national authorities of the six Western Balkan countries in protected area management, and to fulfil the Bern Convention requirements and establish recognized protected areas within the existing Emerald and future Natura 2000 networks after an EU accession. In the two pilot regions, stakeholders will learn how to monitor key species and habitats in accordance with Natura 2000 standards. Policy recommendations will increase effectiveness of protected area management with a focus on Natura 2000 by scaling up learnings to the national level and outlining approaches for harmonizing transboundary management. The project aims to raise awareness of the value of biodiversity among decision-makers, businesses, and civil society, and to stimulate exchange and strengthen cooperation between national stakeholder groups on biodiversity conservation and transboundary protected area management in the pilot regions. During the Balkan Green Belt Regional Conference, relevant stakeholders of the Balkan Green Belt and the six Western Balkan will share their experiences to leverage project results.

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**Project countries:** Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia

**Duration:** 11/2025 – 10/2027

**Beneficiaries:** Ministries for the Environment and their subordinate authorities and municipal representatives in the targeted countries, protected area managers and local action groups

**Implementing organisation:** EuroNatur Stiftung Europäisches Naturerbe

**Project number:** 3725510102

#### Thematic management:

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#### Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP)

for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union – a programme of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

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