



Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Coastal Development and Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

10928

Project Type

MSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT/NGI

CBIT No

NGI No

Project Title

Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Coastal Development and Planning for Sustainable Tourism Development

Countries

Albania

Agency(ies)

UNDP

Other Executing Partner(s)

Ministry of Tourism and Environment

Executing Partner Type

Government

GEF Focal Area

Biodiversity

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Productive Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Coastal and Marine Protected Areas, Biomes, Wetlands, Lakes, Sea Grasses, Rivers, Temperate Forests, Mainstreaming, Tourism, Certification - International Standards, Species, Wildlife for Sustainable Development, Threatened Species, Influencing models, Transform policy and regulatory environments, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Demonstrate innovative approach, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Private Sector,

Capital providers, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Large corporations, Indigenous Peoples, Communications, Public Campaigns, Awareness Raising, Education, Behavior change, Civil Society, Academia, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Local Communities, Type of Engagement, Partnership, Consultation, Participation, Information Dissemination, Beneficiaries, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Access to benefits and services, Capacity Development, Participation and leadership, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Gender Mainstreaming, Women groups, Gender-sensitive indicators, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Learning, Theory of change, Indicators to measure change, Adaptive management, Knowledge Generation, Knowledge Exchange, Innovation, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Certification -National Standards

Sector

Rio Markers

Climate Change Mitigation

Climate Change Mitigation 1

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 1

Duration

48 In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

93,755.50

Submission Date

2/23/2022

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	986,900.00	9,300,000.00
Total Project Cost (\$)		986,900.00	9,300,000.00

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

To position the development of the tourism industry in Albania as a positive influence on the status of biodiversity in coastal Key Biodiversity Areas, and as pillar of sustainable livelihoods, through mainstreaming biodiversity in tourism planning and development

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
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Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 1. Enabling framework for mainstreaming biodiversity into coastal tourism development (planning, implementation mechanisms, data)	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 1. Strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity conservation into tourism, as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policies and regulations in place supporting biodiversity friendly coastal tourism development - Spatial plans adopted covering 3 KBAs and surrounding buffer zones recognize critical biodiversity resources - Multi-stakeholder participatory decision-making processes occurring in local development in and around PAs and KBAs - Local government and other stakeholders in 6 municipalities 	<p>Output 1.1. National policies, standards, strategies and regulations to support development of biodiversity-friendly coastal tourism development adopted and implemented</p> <p>Output 1.2. Municipal spatial plans incorporating biodiversity considerations in tourism development for 3 Key Biodiversity Areas</p> <p>Output 1.3. Multi-stakeholder and participatory management and implementation mechanisms established and functioning</p> <p>Output 1.4. Technical capacity development program for monitoring</p>	GET	178,191.00	2,000,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 2: Catalyzing biodiversity-friendly coastal tourism	Investment	<p>Outcome 2. More sustainable, biodiversity-friendly management and operation of tourism across more than 150,000 ha of ecologically important coastal landscapes, as indicated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Biodiversity-friendly tourism development plans covering 83,600 ha (16,600 ha of KBAs not otherwise covered by PAs in 6 sites), ~55,000 ha of buffer areas surrounding KBAs, and ~12,000 ha of adjacent coastal ecosystems under threat from tourism development) (GEF Core sub-indicator 4.1: 83,600 ha) - Improved management 	<p>Output 2.1. Coastal tourism public-private partnerships for joint protection and sustainable use of biodiversity</p> <p>Output 2.2. Biodiversity-friendly tourism infrastructure , and monitoring and enforcement systems</p> <p>Output 2.3. Biodiversity-friendly tourism products and experiences developed with local communities to raise engagement in biodiversity conservation and generate livelihood benefits</p>	GET	618,991.00	5,770,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
Component 3: Knowledge management, awareness, gender mainstreaming and M&E	Technical Assistance	<p>Outcome 3. Upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-friendly tourism across Albania is supported by raised awareness and knowledge management , as indicated by:</p> <p>-Improved attitudes and awareness of tourism industry, communities , and tourists (domestic and international) for the importance of biodiversity to tourism, measured by KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) survey</p> <p>-# best practices and lessons learned developed, disseminated and used, including on gender mainstreaming</p>	<p>Output 3.1 Targeted outreach and education campaign on mainstreaming biodiversity into tourism delivered to tourism industry, local communities, CSOs, and domestic and international tourists</p> <p>Output 3.2 Knowledge exchange system established to share experiences between municipalities for replication and upscaling of best practices across Albania</p> <p>Output 3.3 M&E system incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards developed and implemented for adaptive project management</p>	GET	100,000.00	600,000.00

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
				Sub Total (\$)	897,182.00	8,370,000.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
GET			89,718.00		930,000.00	
Sub Total(\$)			89,718.00		930,000.00	
Total Project Cost(\$)			986,900.00		9,300,000.00	

Please provide justification

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
Recipient Country Government	Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MOTE)	Public Investment	Investment mobilized	2,000,000.00
Recipient Country Government	National Agency for Protected Areas	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Shkoder County	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Fier County	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200,000.00
Recipient Country Government	Multiple municipal governments	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	400,000.00
GEF Agency	UNDP	Grant	Investment mobilized	100,000.00
GEF Agency	UNDP	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	1,000,000.00
Donor Agency	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	Loans	Investment mobilized	4,000,000.00
Donor Agency	European Union	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Total Project Cost(\$)				9,300,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

In case of GEF approval, UNDP will be prepared to invest grant financing to support the project. In case of project approval, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment has agreed to coordinate with the project the development and implementation of sustainable tourism strategies and approaches. This is mainly in relation to Component 2, but the Ministry of Tourism and Environment is a key partner for the entire project, and investment mobilized from the Ministry will contribute to the achievement of outcomes for

Components 1 and 3 as well. The investment expected to be mobilized from county and municipal governments will be in relation to the project's work with these entities to develop and implement spatial planning with biodiversity mainstreamed (under Output 1.2), and biodiversity-friendly partnerships and infrastructure to be completed under Outputs 2.1 and 2.2. It is anticipated that the national and international civil society organizations working in Albania on issues highly relevant to the project, such as biodiversity conservation (particularly conservation of globally significant bird populations), coastal ecosystem and landscape management, sustainable fisheries, sustainable tourism, sustainable livelihoods, and building climate resilience would be engaged by the project as partners, and would contribute to the achievement of the project objective, generating multiple synergies. All co-financing commitments will be discussed at PPG with the entity providing the cofinancing. The amounts will be confirmed. The linkages and relevance to specific project sites/project activities will be agreed as well. Letters of cofinancing will be obtained that will confirm amounts, relevance and coordination with relevant project elements.

D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNDP	GET	Albania	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	986,900	93,755.5	1,080,655.50
Total GEF Resources(\$)					986,900.00	93,755.50	1,080,655.50

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)

PPG Required **true**

PPG Amount (\$)

30,000

PPG Agency Fee (\$)

2,850

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
UNDP	GET	Albania	Biodiversity	BD STAR Allocation	30,000	2,850	32,850.00
Total Project Costs(\$)					30,000.00	2,850.00	32,850.00

Core Indicators

Indicator 1 Terrestrial protected areas created or under improved management for conservation and sustainable use

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
80,686.40	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 1.1 Terrestrial Protected Areas Newly created

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WPA ID	IUCN Category	Total Ha (Expected at PIF)	Total Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
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Indicator 1.2 Terrestrial Protected Areas Under improved Management effectiveness

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)
80,686.40	0.00	0.00	0.00

Name of the Protected Area	WPA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
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Name of the Protected Area	WDA ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Akula National Park Buna River - Velip oja Protected Landscape	125689332698	SelectProtected Landscape/ Seascape	23,027.00						
Akula National Park Butrint National Park	1256890909	SelectNational Park	9,424.40						
Akula National Park Divjak?-Kara vasta National Park	1256894679	SelectNational Park	22,230.00						

Name of the Protected Area	WDP A ID	IUCN Category	Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Total Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Total Ha (Achieved at TE)	METT score (Baseline at CEO Endorsement)	METT score (Achieved at MTR)	METT score (Achieved at TE)
Akula National Park - Vain-Tale Nature Reserve	12568911661	SelectHabitat/Species Management Area	4,393.00						
Akula National Park - Fushë Kuqe Reserve	12568911663	SelectHabitat/Species Management Area	2,200.00						
Akula National Park - Narta Protected Landscape	125689196506	SelectProtected area with sustainable use of natural resources	19,412.00						

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
83600.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
83,600.00			

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted

Indicator 6 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mitigated

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct)	0	0	0	0
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect)	0	0	0	0

Indicator 6.1 Carbon Sequestered or Emissions Avoided in the AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.2 Emissions Avoided Outside AFOLU (Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use) Sector

Total Target Benefit	(At PIF)	(At CEO Endorsement)	(Achieved at MTR)	(Achieved at TE)
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (direct)				
Expected metric tons of CO ₂ e (indirect)				
Anticipated start year of accounting				
Duration of accounting				

Indicator 6.3 Energy Saved (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Total Target Benefit	Energy (MJ) (At PIF)	Energy (MJ) (At CEO Endorsement)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at MTR)	Energy (MJ) (Achieved at TE)
Target Energy Saved (MJ)				

Indicator 6.4 Increase in Installed Renewable Energy Capacity per Technology (Use this sub-indicator in addition to the sub-indicator 6.2 if applicable)

Technology	Capacity (MW) (Expected at PIF)	Capacity (MW) (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at MTR)	Capacity (MW) (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	17,500			
Male	17,500			
Total	35000	0	0	0

Provide additional explanation on targets, other methodologies used, and other focal area specifics (i.e., Aichi targets in BD) including justification where core indicator targets are not provided

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description);

Description of the Target Landscape

The geographic focus of the proposed project is Albania's coastal zone, and specifically the areas around Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) along the coastal landscape. The Albanian coastline has a total length of about 380 km (excluding the internal shore of coastal lagoons), with about 284 km stretching along the Adriatic Sea and the remaining 96 km facing the Ionian Sea. In the coastal area of Albania there are wetlands such as Karavasta, Narta, Patoku, Viluni, Kune-Vaini, Orikumi, and others. Historically Albania has lost 250,000 ha of wetlands; most of this was in the mid-20th century due to agricultural reasons, but current trends prioritize tourism and accompanying infrastructure development. Despite the massive land reclamation for agricultural purposes, about 109 km² of coastal wetlands or lagoons still exists, especially along the Adriatic coast. They are formed of Quaternary deposits, mainly of alluvial origin. The lagoons and their wetlands act as shelter and reproduction sites for a wide range of aquatic organisms of ecological interest, like fish or water birds. Coastal lagoons are important areas for wintering migratory birds, and there are annually around 70 waterfowl and water bird species with a total population of 180,000 individuals in Albania during the winter. Albania is also an important crossroad for the migration of birds, bats, and insects. There are some 91 globally threatened species found in Albania. These include the coastal species of the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), and the sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) for which Albania is a country of particularly critical importance. Aquatic biota contain more than 310 species of fish, six of them endemic, about 520 species of mollusks with 54 endemic, 15 amphibians and 37 reptiles. Along the coast and its wetlands, 46 echinoderms and 115 crustaceans have been determined. Furthermore, about 136 species of macroscopic algae and 440 diatoms, about 70% found on rocky substrates at the Ionian Riviera, have been counted. Marine grasses, *Posidonia oceanica* and *Cymodocea nodosa* inhabit the sandy substrate along the Adriatic coast, forming large submerged pastures. The lagoons are also significant regions of tourism and recreation, and important centers of fishing. Albania's coast is included within the "Mediterranean" biodiversity hotspot.

Albania's coastal zone includes multiple KBAs, which harbor globally significant biodiversity in a wide variety of ecosystem types, including wetlands, shallow bays, beaches, coastal forests, and river deltas. The proposed project aims to encompass the six major coastal KBAs (see the table below) along Albania's coast, covering 33,209 ha, with varying degrees of focus. A map indicating the geographic scope of the project is included as an annex to this PIF.

Proposed Project Sites: Albania Coastal Key Biodiversity Areas

Site	Area (ha)	KBA Criteria	Municipality	Associated PA	PA Area (ha)	IUCN Category
Lake Butrint	1,900	B2	Sarand?	Butrint National Park	9,424	II
Narta Lagoon	4,180	A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i	Vlor?	Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape	19,412	VI
Karavasta Lagoon	22,230	A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2	Divjak?	Divjak?-Karavasta National Park	22,230	II
Patoku Lagoon	1,211	A1, A4i, B1i	Kurbin	Patok-Fushe Kuqe Reserve	2,200	IV
Drini Delta	2,188	A1, A4i, B1i	Lezh?	Kune-Vain-Tale Nature Reserve	4,393	IV
Vilun Marsh	1,500	A1	Shkod?r	Buna River-Velipoja Protected Landscape	23,027	V
Total	33,209				80,686.4	

Karavasta lagoon represents the largest lagoon in Albania and is among the biggest of the Adriatic basin. It is 43 km² in size, has a mean depth of 0.7 m and a maximum depth of 1.3 m. It is formed by the activity of Shkumbini and Semani rivers. Divjaka forest, a typical dune forest of 12 km², spreads in the northwest of the lagoon. It is bordered by brackish or freshwater, and pines (*Pinus halepensis* and *P. pinea*) grow up in old dunes, mixed with shrubs, grasses or reed near lagoon shores. Karavasta lagoon harbors globally threatened water birds, especially the Dalmatian pelican.

The Drini and Mati river deltas are two of the three deltas on the northern Adriatic coast of Albania, covering a coastal area of 140 km². River deltas are a distinct feature of the northern coastal region. The Drini and Mati river deltas harbors significant biodiversity and provide wintering grounds for the endangered pygmy cormorant and over 70 other species of waterfowl and water birds. The Drini delta is an internationally recognized Important Bird Area. The Patok lagoon, within the Mati Delta, serves as an important feeding area for globally endangered loggerhead turtles. The Drini and Mati river deltas represents a complex and compound system of sandy belts, capes, bays, lagoons and island areas. They also harbor significant biodiversity values in the three types of habitats: marine, wetlands and non-

wetland habitats, including forests, shrubs, and open fields where traditional agriculture is practiced. Biodiversity is one of the most important assets of Lezha region, in which Drini and Mati river deltas lies.

Narta lagoon (Vlora) is situated at the southern Adriatic coast; it is 42 km² in size and has a depth of 0.3 to 1.0 m. It is formed under the regime of the Vjosa River. Water salinity varies from 28 x in winter to 75 x during summer. About 1/3 of the surface is exploited as saline since the beginning of the last century. The lagoon is separated from the sea by a narrow littoral belt of alluvium dunes. Other important lagoons at the Adriatic coast are Patoku (5 km², Laci), Orikumi (1.5 km², Vlora), and Viluni (1.6 km², Shkodra).

Butrint lagoon is 16.3 km² in size with a mean depth of 14 m and a maximal depth of 21 m. It is situated in the southern part at the Ionian Sea. Butrint is a permanently stratified lake with an anoxic hypolimnion. In spite of that, the lagoon was used intensively during the last few decades for aquaculture of mussels (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*) with a yearly gross production of 2000 to 4500 t.

Key Threats

Albania's biodiversity is under threat due to unsuitable practices related to massive tourism developments. With the model of development based on quantity instead of quality, the foreseen growth of tourism in the region will continue to be detrimental for the landscape, and cause pressure on endangered species. In addition, the strain or overuse of available water resources, increasing amount of waste and discharge of pollution in the sea and coastal water bodies is a further threat to environmental resources, and especially species that depend on aquatic ecosystems. The fragmentation, reduction and loss of natural habitats have been a result of demographic developments and the urbanization process. Beginning in 1990, the country has been characterized by massive population shifts from the countryside to large and medium-sized urban centers such as Tirana, Durrës, Vlora, Elbasan and Sarandë, and to undeveloped coastal areas. As a result, poor or non-existent water and sewerage systems, the clearance of land for infrastructure and a lack of overall spatial plans have caused pressures on ecosystems and species. Construction for tourism purposes has an adverse impact on the fragile coastal and marine resources in the country. From August 2017 to August 2018, according to the national statistical office, Albania hosted 2.1 million visitors - a 16.8% increase compared to the previous year. Unplanned growth will continue to have an adverse impact on these regions, and destroy the remaining functioning ecosystems and critical habitat areas.

It is recognized that in 2020 the tourism industry has seen a major reversal in terms of growth, due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, which essentially stopped international tourism, and significantly

slowed domestic tourism as well. However, it is foreseen that once the pandemic is brought under control, which is currently expected sometime in 2021, the tourism industry will rebound and see continued growth, perhaps even more rapid than prior to the pandemic.

Habitat destruction such as wetland drainage from urban expansion and tourism development, including illegal construction: Perhaps the most significant threat to Albania's coastal biodiversity is the unplanned and unregulated development of infrastructure, especially tourism infrastructure, which tends to be located in or near the most sensitive ecological areas. Much of Albania's coastal zone remains undeveloped, but threats are increasing, and there is growing pressure for large scale intensive development for tourism along the coastal zone. In recent years in Albania tourism has significantly increased, especially in places like Ksamil and Saranda (which are both located adjacent to the Butrint KBA). Most of these tourists come for the sun and beaches in the summer. These figures are expected to continue to grow in the coming years. The Ministry of Tourism and Environment has indicated that Albania aims to attract 10 million tourists by 2025. The ambitions may have been tempered by the current global pandemic, but if and when the pandemic is brought under control and international travel again resumes, it is likely that tourism in Albania will return to rapid growth. As one example of potential tourism impacts, in December 2019 a proposal to build a large tourism village including 370 villas and 2,350 apartments within the Divjaka-Karavasta National Park was eventually rejected, after significant outcry from civil society organizations and the public. Initial plans for the proposed 3,342 ha development site had included a 15-story five star hotel, bars, a luxury shopping mall, an aquapark and an 18-hole golf course in the middle of the 22,230 ha national park. Another coastal KBA within the scope of the proposed project, Narta Lagoon, has been identified as a possible site for a new airport to support increased access for tourists along the central coast of Albania. Countless smaller examples of poorly planned and inappropriate tourism development, or potential development exist all along Albania's coast.

Disturbance (especially to birds) from unplanned and unregulated tourism: Going hand in hand with habitat loss from unregulated tourism infrastructure development is the increasing number of tourists, and their dispersed impacts on the environment. One of the key biodiversity assets in the coastal ecosystem of Albania are the populations of rare birds, such as the Dalmatian pelican and white-headed duck, among others. A critical threat to these bird populations are human disturbance at critical times or locations, such as nesting areas. Global research on tourism impacts on bird populations have documented a 46-78% decrease in bird populations compared to restricted sites.[1]¹ When birds are disturbed from their nest, or are displaced from important feeding grounds by human activity, they can abandon nests, leading to population declines over time. Immediate responses can range from behavioral changes including nest abandonment or change in food habits, physiological changes such as elevated heart rates due to flight, or even death. Human disturbance (one cause alone or many types acting synergistically) may reduce the overall carrying capacity of a given staging area for waterfowl

and other water birds. Disturbances may affect an individual's energy balance, and in the long-term may affect an individual's productivity or survival. However, long-term effects of human disturbance is difficult and expensive to study. Researchers have described six categories of impacts to wildlife as a result of visitor activities. They are:

- 1) Direct mortality: immediate, on-site death of an animal;
- 2) Indirect mortality: eventual, premature death of an animal caused by an event or agent that predisposed the animal to death;
- 3) Lowered productivity: reduced fecundity rate, nesting success, or reduced survival rate of young before dispersal from nest or birth site;
- 4) Reduced use of refuge: wildlife not using the refuge as frequently or in the manner they normally would in the absence of visitor activity;
- 5) Reduced use of preferred habitat in the critical habitat: wildlife use is relegated to less suitable habitat in other areas due to visitor activity; and
- 6) Aberrant behavior/stress: wildlife demonstrating unusual behavior or signs of stress that are likely to result in reduced reproductive or survival rates.

The unplanned and unregulated presence of tourists in these critical ecosystems is a major source of human disturbance in Albania's coastal areas. When tourism facilities, such as walking paths, picnic areas, etc. are not planned, tourists tend to use coastal ecosystems in a random and dispersed manner, which can infringe on critical habitat zones. This also leads to issues of solid waste management, as there are not centralized collection facilities, such as clearly placed waste receptacles in tourism areas. In addition, there is poor enforcement of regulations that do exist to try to manage tourist's ecological impacts, due lack of trained enforcement personnel, and limited technical capacity.

Waste and pollution leading to water quality degradation: Water pollution comes from diverse sources along the coastal zone, and has many negative impacts on habitats and wildlife. Considering the disproportionately large role tourism plays in the economy in coastal areas, much of this negative impact is linked to tourism, and this is poised to worsen as the tourism industry continues to expand. Albania's coastal ecosystems are inherently "downstream" from the full river watersheds, meaning that the full array of upstream pollution sources affect these sensitive coastal ecosystems. This includes point and non-point source pollution, and sources that originate near to the coastal zone, as well as far upstream. Although many habitats are highly polluted by inorganic and organic wastes, detailed data on water quality is still lacking. In the past, occasional monitoring found high levels of nitrites in the rivers Lana, Ishmi, Gjanica, Osumi, Semani, Shkumbini and Tirana, exceeding the EU guide values for high quality fresh water, and in some cases, they exceed the guide values for surface waters. High levels of ammonium and nitrite indicate deteriorating water quality due to high organic loads. In 2010, the

sewerage coverage of urban areas was 83 per cent and rural areas 11 per cent. In the Buna river delta, for example, there is no wastewater treatment plant, which makes pollution very high in the area (although there is no regular water quality monitoring to track the actual pollution levels). A water treatment plant is a key part of the Shkodra municipality Strategic Plan 2030, but so far construction has not started. The continued unregulated development of tourism infrastructure and facilities in the region will exacerbate this problem. In addition, the discharge of untreated wastewater to the ecosystem is a threat to the further development of the tourism sector, as this can present health risks to tourists, as well as reducing the attractiveness of tourist sites. In Albania, small and medium-sized enterprises normally discharge their wastewater into the urban sewerage system. Besides discharges of treated and untreated wastewater, there are other potential impacts of industries; for example, abandoned industrial sites can still be significant pollution hotspots in Albania. However, there are no official data on amounts of water used by this sector, nor for the quantity / quality of discharged wastewater. Urban solid wastes are dumped in uncontrolled and unlined areas, often located close to rivers, lakes or seashore. The leaching wastewater from disposal sites is a major source of pollution. In rural areas, waste is not collected at all and dispersed dumping is uncontrolled.

Barrier 1: Inadequate and uncoordinated spatial planning, priority setting, and policy mechanisms to support sustainable tourism development

A majority of the threats to biodiversity along Albania's coast derive from the lack of a coordinated planning context and inadequate enabling policy and regulatory framework, especially with respect to a rationalized and sustainable approach to coastal tourism development. There has been some progress in this regard in recent years, at least at the national level. In 2013 the Government initiated the process of drafting three national spatial planning documents: the General National Territorial Plan, the Integrated Cross-sectoral Plan for the Coast and the Integrated Cross-sectoral Plan for the Economic Zone Tirana-Durrës. These documents were approved by the National Territorial Council in June 2016. The General National Territorial Plan makes references to the EU Water Framework Directive, and protection of natural areas is also recognized as an important factor. Reference is also made to Natura 2000 and the European Green Belt. The Integrated Cross-sectoral Plan for the Coast makes a reference to the principles of integrated coastal zone management and to the Barcelona and Ramsar Conventions.

While the Integrated Cross-sectoral Plan for the Coast has been an important step forward, implementation at sub-national levels remains extremely limited. In addition, the policies and regulations required to support strong implementation of this plan are not yet fully in place. Few municipalities have yet developed spatial plans, and implementation of those that have been developed is still in the early stages. The key issue is that critical biodiversity resources have not yet been recognized and incorporated in spatial plans, with appropriate zoning to ensure the protection and maintenance of ecosystems, and ecosystem services. The Integrated Cross-sectoral Plan for the Coast divides the entire Albanian coast into four zones, from north to south: a.) the natural region; b.) the economic region; c.) the agricultural region; and d.) the shores and cultural tourism region. However, there are KBAs in all of these regions, not just in the natural region, and spatial planning and

development in each region should be carried out in a way that recognizes the important biodiversity resources in each of these regions. While tourism is a focus of the fourth region, coastal tourism occurs along the entire Albanian coast, and frequently in areas where critical ecosystems are located. The lack of biodiversity mainstreaming in the spatial planning sector is due to multiple reasons. There is, on one hand, insufficient data and information about biodiversity available to planners. On the other hand, there is insufficient awareness and capacity of planners and decision-makers on how to appropriately integrate biodiversity considerations in spatial planning, through spatial management mechanisms such as zoning for buffer zones around PAs and other biodiversity rich areas. As far as institutional obstacles are concerned, the most crucial is weak coordination and planning among the involved institutions and agencies. There are also few operationalized multi-stakeholder participatory planning and management mechanisms. Such mechanisms are critical for developing and implementing biodiversity-friendly spatial plans, site management plans, and other natural resource management plans linked to biodiversity conservation.

In parallel with spatial planning issues, there are insufficient national tourism policies and regulations to adequately incorporate biodiversity considerations. National policies, such as the national sustainable tourism development policy, do increasingly recognize linkages between environmental conservation and sustainable tourism development. However, the understanding of the role of biodiversity in this nexus is limited, as are corresponding specific regulations (such as 'net zero wetland loss' provisions). The national sustainable tourism development policy recognizes 'coastal and maritime' tourism and 'natural tourism' as two of the three main types of tourism products in Albania, but does not clearly and specifically emphasize the need for tourism development to avoid harming biodiversity and other environmental resources, and does not highlight biodiversity resources as a potential driver of sustainable tourism development. In addition, the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment regulations are weak throughout Albania, but particularly in coastal areas that are under high pressure for development. In relation to the tourism industry, there are currently no criteria or standards for biodiversity-friendly tourism operations or products. International good practices, such as Ramsar guidelines for wetland management, are only partially implemented in a few sites. Other key policy and regulatory challenges ahead for mainstreaming biodiversity in tourism development relate to clear land property and ownership, improved and standardized services, and access to public services and waste management.

Barrier 2: Limited technical experience and understanding of sustainable tourism approaches, infrastructure, and activities, and limited enforcement of existing

The second major barrier to biodiversity friendly tourism development is that in Albania there is a severe lack of experience and technical understanding of how to implement biodiversity friendly tourism, and what that means in practical terms on the ground. Albania is significantly behind its Adriatic and Ionian neighbors (especially Croatia, partly thanks to the previous GEF-funded COAST project) in protecting and maximizing its natural assets and taking advantage of sustainable nature-based tourism. The general concept of 'ecotourism' is still nascent in Albania, and more specific

approaches that directly support the conservation of biodiversity are even more rare. Neither local government officials nor tourism developers have an understanding of how to organize or construct biodiversity friendly tourism infrastructure. In addition there is an increasing need for qualified personnel in the sector, and improved services. Tourism operators do not have practical guidelines or good practice examples of how to carry out biodiversity friendly tourism services; there are currently no widely applied biodiversity friendly tourism criteria, standards, trademarks, or other internationally recognized certifications in use by tourism operators in Albania. There are also few working models of how to establish and operate models of tourism development that leverage both public and private interests and resources to achieve sustainable tourism. Such approaches are particularly critical to support investment in public tourism infrastructure, such as roads, boating facilities, organized parking, and organized waste management. Smaller scale infrastructure to support organized dispersal of tourists is also lacking, such as trails, signage, developed picnic areas, solid waste and wastewater facilities, fences, information boards, birdwatching towers and blinds. Enforcement of current tourism regulations in coastal areas is also significantly lacking, both in terms of tourism activities allowed, as well as in larger scale development aspects; illegal construction is a ubiquitous problem in Albania. Further, in some areas, water pollution, due to industrial pollution, wastewater and solid waste have been inadequately addressed thus far, and have already degraded the environment, including biodiversity, such that tourism potential has been hampered. Considering that Albania's coastal KBAs are inherently 'downstream' from much of the country's population, there is a need to implement cost-effective water pollution and treatment remediation approaches in order to improve the situation for biodiversity, and to enhance tourism potential.

Barrier 3: Poor awareness and understanding of the damage from unsustainable tourism, potential for sustainable tourism, and the need to implement sustainable tourism approaches for long-term sustainability

Going hand in hand with the previous two highlighted barriers is the simple fact that the concept of biodiversity friendly tourism has not permeated the consciousness of most stakeholder groups involved in the development of the tourism sector. Local and national government officials, private sector investors and operators in the tourism industry, and local community members all have limited exposure to and awareness of what biodiversity friendly tourism encompasses, and its potential triple-bottom line benefits. Studies have shown that ecotourists typically stay longer, spend more, and feel a duty to respect the destination, compared to high volume package tourists. However, the most widespread model of tourism development in Albania is focused on unsustainable approaches for short-term gains. Because environmental monitoring data is usually lacking, and not widely disseminated when available, many stakeholders are not fully aware of the negative ecological impacts of poorly planned, poorly organized, and unsustainable tourism development. This lack of awareness and understanding has secondary negative effects, as political will is often stimulated by public attention to a particular issue; so with the public not fully aware of the potential long-term negative effects of unsustainable tourism development, policy makers and decision makers are also not driving forward with an agenda for sustainable tourism development. Albania does have a small cadre of environmentally-focused civil society organizations, but their influence on the broader consciousness is

not yet widespread. The proposed project focuses on Albania's coastal zone, but similar poor awareness and understanding of negative tourism impacts, and the potential benefit from sustainable tourism approaches, is seen throughout Albania's tourism regions. The coastal zone is responsible for a majority of the tourism sector's contribution to Albania's GDP, but other areas, such as the Valbona Valley in the Albanian Alps would also greatly benefit from an increased understanding and awareness of biodiversity friendly sustainable tourism approaches.

2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects,

The Government of Albania has put in place a number of baseline policies and programs that aim to support biodiversity conservation, tourism development, and the synergies between the two, where feasible. The National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020 (NSDI-II) was approved by Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 348, date 11.5.2016. This document presents Albania's vision for its national social, democratic and economic development over the period 2015-2020, and its aspirations for European integration. The NSDI-II explains the main government policies and strategies aiming at transforming Albania into a country worthy of membership in the European Union, achieving standards that serve citizens, increase their welfare and ensure the safeguarding of their rights, and establishing policies that enhance competition and economic prosperity in Albania, as well as competition with countries in the region and beyond.

Regarding the environment, the NSDI-II provides a general overview of the environmental situation in Albania, including the country's coastal zones. Amongst others, sets as strategic objective "Enhance and strengthen the protection of nature" through:

- ? A targeted 17% increase in the surface of Protected Areas of the territory through the enhancement and integrated management of protected areas;
- ? The establishment of the ecological network "Natura 2000"; and
- ? The assurance of conservation status for 5% of threatened species and habitats.

In 2016 Albania approved the Integrated Cross-Sectoral Development Plan for the Coastal Belt to 2030, which is intended to provide the roadmap for sustainable development along Albania's coastal zone. The Vision of the Integrated Cross-Sectoral Plan for the Coastal Belt is: *"The coastline as the land-sea binomial, important national asset and integrated part of the Mediterranean network. Well-managed space, where there are harmonized the needs for economic development and local needs with the necessity of cultural, natural and historic assets protection. Authentic destination, diverse and clean."*

In relation to tourism, as further emphasized in the Integrated Cross-Sectoral Development Plan for the Coastal Belt Plan, *“Among other things, this plan also highlights the development potential that comes from the tourism sector, by taking as reference the best practice implemented in the Mediterranean basin, where the Albanian coast also belongs to?... it is concluded that one of the most important sectors which also has a significant impact in the economy, having a wide margin of further growth in the short-term future, is the sector of tourism.”* The plan elaborates the important interdependence between the tourism sector and nature conservation: *“Also, nature preservation is a necessity to protect inherited asset and to give options in recreational activities to be implemented in natural conditions, that can be also transformed in an income source for the local community. Intensive development shouldn't be and shouldn't result to be the only development model implemented along the coastline. For this reason, this plan proposes to determine certain areas, such as regional national parks and green corridors along the rivers, in order to protect such territories from the intensive development of urban system and their promotion as territories that utilize their “natural” land, in order to develop alternated tourism in regional and the Mediterranean level.”*

In the most recent planning of the MoTE for sustainable tourism development 2018 – 2022, the authorities report over 1.5 billion euro income generated for 2017 from the tourism sector and over 5 million foreign visitors in Albania, which contributed to the country's annual economic growth of 4%. As such, the government considers tourism as strategic sector that could provide long-term sustained economic growth, while enabling efficient environment protection. The government program includes budget allocations to address tourism activities. The vision of the government of Albania is that *“Albania be recognized as an attractive tourist destination, authentic and hospitable in the Mediterranean, based on the sustainable use of the nature, cultural and historical resources, and for the development of the high quality and diverse touristic products, easily accessible from the international markets.”*

This tourism policy document builds on sustainable development principles, considering the tourism as a strategic and priority economic sector, with very significant social and community impacts, while it does not compromise on environment protection and ecosystem conservation criteria, as part of any development and planning in the sector. Therefore the government tries to couple development programs (such as improving quality of life and the urban system, development of agricultural system, environmental protection and development of water and natural systems, sustainable economic development) with sustainable tourism patterns and growth. However, without detailed budgeted plans or financial estimates of intended programs, strategies and plans are limited to indicating actors involved, and dependent on financial sources (foreign organizations, state budget, regional development funds, donation, loans, private investments).

The main government policy goals in the tourism sector are:

- Increasing the contribution of tourism to the country's total income
- Ensuring a balanced development of tourism offer and services
- Increasing the employment level in the tourism sector
- Improving the livelihood and alleviating poverty in tourist areas throughout the country
- Increasing the tourism expenditures (public investments)
- Increasing the revenues from tourist activities and services
- Providing the legal and institutional protection of the travelers and visitors rights

For implementation of these strategic goals, the MoTE has identified five main strategic directions:

- Product development / diversifying touristic offer
- Developing the human resource in the sector / improvement of the quality of services
- Marketing / promotion of Albania as a touristic perennial destination
- Public and private investment
- Policy framework and destinations management

The project will also take into consideration the lessons from other previous projects in Albania. Certain aspects of the experience of the current UNDP/GEF project *Enhancing financial sustainability of the protected area system* will be relevant, and will be further analyzed during the PPG. For example, this current project is developing and exploring models of collaboration with the private sector for tourism-driven economic benefits as well as biodiversity benefits. The baseline scenario for the proposed project will also be enriched from the best practices and lessons from projects implemented by UNDP, the World Bank, GiZ, and others on biodiversity conservation, coastal zone protection, and tourism development.

The following table summarizes existing government and donor funded projects that are relevant to the proposed project. The table identifies the most pertinent programs supporting the government from agencies that include shared responsibility on tourism development and environmental conservation, such as Albanian development funds or other projects funded by the state budget and /or foreign donors

/ international institutions that channel development assistance funds in Albania and play an essential role in achieving the objectives.

In terms of synergies and coordination, there are a number of steps that will be taken to ensure synergies and coordination with other relevant initiatives and development partners. All relevant stakeholders will be consulted on the project design during the PPG phase; this will conclude with a project design validation workshop at the end of the PPG phase. Once the project is approved, relevant stakeholders will then again be invited to participate in the project inception workshop. Relevant stakeholders will also be considered as candidates to serve as members of the Project Steering Committee, with a final determination on the composition of the PSC to be agreed by the Government of Albania and UNDP. Information about the project will be regularly disseminated in this forum. In addition, project updates will be shared with relevant stakeholders by email approximately quarterly.

Baseline Projects and Programs Supporting Biodiversity-friendly Tourism Development in Albania's Coast

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
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Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
Municipal and environmental infrastructure	<p>€105 million euro (Including €40 million euro as EU contribution, while EBRD will make available additional resources up to €60 million euro under sovereign guarantee and €5 million euro for small loans to SMEs via local financial institutions.)</p>	<p><u>Financing:</u> Tourism-enabling and general municipal infrastructure and transport infrastructure.</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> The tourism-enabling infrastructure investments will be carried out in the regions of Berat, Korca, Fier and Shkoder, whereas general municipal and transport infrastructure investments will be made in the entire country including in the Designated Regions.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Enhance the competitiveness of Albania's tourism sector through a comprehensive approach including infrastructure development, cultural and natural heritage sites rehabilitation and support to SMEs.; Improve municipal and environmental infrastructure across the country and regional transport links to provide more reliable access to economic centers across the country, including in the Designated Regions, and improve accessibility to certain touristic sites and touristic villages in these regions.; Transition Impact relates to enhancing competitiveness of inland tourism so that Albania can develop its significant potential also outside the existing coastal destinations. This will be achieved through investment in tourism-related municipal and transport infrastructure and support to SMEs active in the tourism value chain. The project will contribute to the promotion of inclusive procurement practices to provide on-the-job training opportunities for young people during the phase of construction by engaging contractors of infrastructure sub-projects to provide on-site training opportunities for a number of young people.</p>	60 months (12/2018 - 12/2023) with possible extension

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
<p>Advancing Albania's planning for medium and long-term adaptation through the development of a National Adaptation Planning (NAP) process (Readiness and Preparatory Support)</p>	<p>\$2,763,047 USD</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u> Green Climate Fund grant</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> This project is designed to help the Government of Albania increase its capacity to address the country's climate change vulnerabilities. It will support Albania to develop a national plan for CCA through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The strengthening of a national mandate, strategy and steering mechanism that focuses on assessing and addressing capacity gaps (particularly in the priority sectors of tourism, urban development, agriculture, transport, and energy) ? Outcome 1; •The development of a NAP Strategy action plan document and its implementation plan ? Outcome 2; and •The development of financing, monitoring and evaluation strategies to ensure that capacities and funding options are institutionalized for the long-term sustainability of adaptation planning beyond the life of the project ? Outcome 3. <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> The main beneficiaries in this first cycle of NAP development are the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and other beneficiaries include other ministries and local governments receiving capacity development support (within the priority sectors listed above), as well as all other entities associated with CCA in Albania such as academia, NGOs, civil society organizations, and private companies.</p>	<p>2021-2024</p>
<p>Improving coverage and management effectiveness of the MCPA in Albania (MCPA Phase 2)</p>	<p>?1 million euro</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u> Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> To ensure comprehensive and effective management of the coastal and marine environment of Albania by improving the coverage of marine and coastal protected areas throughout Albania that complement the existing system of terrestrial parks, with the main goal to secure the long-term protection of Albania's unique coastal and marine biodiversity for current and future generations.</p>	<p>2017-2021</p>

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
Development of the maritime sector	\$679,026 USD	<p><u>Funding:</u> Norwegian Embassy</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Strengthening the maritime regulatory framework in accordance to the international maritime practice and EU legislative requirements; strengthening institutional capacity to harmonize standards and regulations through training and exchange programmes and increasing governments efforts on promoting the establishment of maritime cluster and coordination.</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy, General Maritime Directorate (GMD), port authorities, Albanian Coast Guard, Ministry of Tourism and Environment, and private sector.</p>	September 2021
Community Works IV Program	?36.7 million euro	<p><u>Funding:</u> Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), Western Balkans Investment Fund (WBIF), Government of Albania and the beneficiary LGUs.</p> <p><u>Geographical coverage:</u> South Coast, Albanian Alps, 5 Counties (Vlora, Gjirokastra, Dibra, Kukes, Shkodra), 6 municipalities (Himara, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Mat, Puka, Tropoja)</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> 120 million inhabitants</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Promote sustainable socio-economic development in high tourist potential areas, through improvement of integrated public infrastructure while respecting environment and preserving cultural and historical heritage.</p>	2015-2020 (extended)
Integrated Urban and Tourism Development Program	?63.8 million euro	<p><u>Funding:</u> World Bank</p> <p><u>Geographical coverage:</u> 3 Counties (Vlora, Berat, Gjirokastra) 4 municipalities (Saranda, Gjirokastra, Berat, Permet) and the tourism corridor of this region</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> 84,000 inhabitants and about 300,000 tourists.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Improving urban infrastructure, promoting tourism and strengthening institutional capacity to support tourism and the development of local economy in selected areas in southern Albania. The project will impact the development of the economy and improve living conditions in the southern region of the country.</p>	2017-2022

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
Reconstruction of Vloa River Road	10.490 billion ALL (approximately 781 million euro)	<p><u>Funding:</u> Kuwaiti Fund 77% of the value, and the Albanian Government 23% of the value + VAT;</p> <p><u>Geographical coverage:</u> Vloa county, River Vloa valley, 3 municipalities (Vlore, Selenica, Himara);</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> 129 million inhabitants</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> The project foresees to build sustainable public infrastructure in the South Coast area, specifically in Vloa River area. This will improve the living conditions of locals and will transform tourism sector one of the main pillars of the local and regional economy.</p>	2017-2022
Empowering the 4 helix of MED maritime clusters through an open source / knowledge sharing and community-based approach in favor of MED blue growth	2.5 million euro	<p><u>Funding:</u> Project lead Partner Municipality of Jesi (Italy); other partners CORILA ? Consortium for Managing Research Activities in the Venice Lagoon; Albanian Development Fund; City of Gradi?ka; PUBLIC INSTITUTION NATIONAL PARK ?SUTJESKA?; Early Childhood Education, Social Policy and Sports Agency of Serres Municipality; Municipality Moscenicka Draga; Vrsar Tourist Board; Tourist Organization of Sremska Mitrovica; Development centre Murska Sobota; Municipality of Tepelene; Marche Region; ALMONIT- MTC.</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> Adriatic-Ionian area</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Promote the sustainable valorization and preservation of natural and cultural heritage as growth assets in the Adriatic-Ionian area.</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Various</p>	2020-2022

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
ALMONIT-Albania, Montenegro, Italy, Multimodal Transport Connectivity	77 million euro	<p><u>Funding:</u> Project Partners are Albanian Development Fund ADF; Regione Puglia ? Dipartimento Mobilit?, Qualit? Urbana, Opere Pubbliche, Ecologia e Paesaggio; Ministarstvo Saobra?aja i Pomorstva Crne Gore; Regione Molise; Municipality of Bar; Municipality of Shkodra</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> The project area is fragmented on two sides of the Adriatic-Ionian Sea between Italy, Albania and Montenegro and on two sides of Shkodra/Skadar Lake and Buna/Bojana River between Albania and Montenegro.</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> The area experiences poor accessibility and is characterized by transport systems with low interoperability, thus negatively affecting intra and interregional connectivity. The aim of the project is to establish a long-term active partnership among the relevant stakeholders, via multimodal inland water and maritime transport connections in order to improve connectivity and to facilitate and promote sustainable cross border cooperation in the project area.</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Local communities and local public authorities of the target area who will benefit from intensified socio-economic interaction, as well as increased skills and management capacities leading in increased ownership over the assets.</p>	2019-2022
Local and Regional Infrastructure Budget	10.3 billion ALL (approximately 780 million euro)	<p><u>Funding:</u> Government of Albania</p> <p><u>Geographical coverage:</u> 12 Counties in Albania</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> 2 million inhabitants</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> The main objective is to promote socio-economic development through regional infrastructure projects focusing on improving tourism, accessibility between communities and access to basic services, encouraging co-operation between local units.</p>	2019-2021

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
Integrated Waste Management and Marine Litter Prevention in the Western Balkans	?3 million euro	<p><u>Funding:</u> GIZ, Ministry of Tourism and Environment</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> Albania's marine and coastal waters, and inland waterways</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> Local and national stakeholders in waste and recycling management in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro have identified the causes and effects of water pollution, and are reducing the amounts of waste that enter the Mediterranean Sea and contributory rivers.</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Various.</p>	2018-2022

3) *the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;*

The long-term solution for biodiversity sensitive tourism development along Albania's coast has multiple key goals. These include sustainable long-term economic growth to reduce poverty, increase employment, and generate income for coastal communities. This must be achieved while securing and enhancing critical biodiversity resources in the coastal zone, which play many important roles in maintaining an intact and functioning coastal ecosystem, and which in turn also supports local livelihoods. Therefore the long-term solution is one where local communities, tourism operators and developers, and government bodies cooperate and collaborate to ensure that coastal tourism infrastructure and activities are designed, developed, and operated in full alignment with biodiversity needs and requirements.

To address the previously described threats and barriers the proposed project will build on the baseline scenario to mainstream biodiversity conservation within tourism development along Albania's coastal zone through outputs that support a rationalized spatial approach to coastal tourism development where biodiversity is mainstreamed in land use, strengthen the development of biodiversity friendly sustainable tourism approaches and tools, and increase awareness and understanding among tourism operators, decision makers, and the general public about the necessity of incorporating biodiversity considerations in all aspects of coastal tourism development to support widespread adoption and scaling-up of good practices.

The project's strategy is to provide stakeholders with an enabling environment and tools to support biodiversity friendly tourism development, while creating incentives for tourism development that contributes to positive biodiversity outcomes, and disincentives for tourism development with negative

biodiversity outcomes. The project aims to prioritize the biodiversity friendly tourism development in those areas of Albania's coastal zone that have been identified as having the greatest biodiversity values, which are the 6 Key Biodiversity Areas that will be targeted by the project, covering 33,209 ha (see previous table in landscape description). A map indicating the geographic scope of the project is included as an annex to this PIF.

The project will aim to incentive biodiversity friendly tourism in these sites, and in surrounding buffer zones and adjacent coastal areas, in areas where tourism development is appropriate and compatible. The project objective will be achieved through project components that: (i) build a stronger enabling environment for sustainable tourism that is aware of, respects and conserves biodiversity as an essential asset for tourism; (2) demonstrates a model for biodiversity sensitive and biodiversity-friendly tourism that integrates improved standards for planning, operating and monitoring tourism within ecological limits, with the promotion and development of community-based tourism experiences and products that are biodiversity-friendly and help generate financing for biodiversity conservation and communities; and (3) establish and strengthen tourism sector and tourist awareness of the significance of biodiversity to tourism, and put in place knowledge management platforms to support replication and upscaling of biodiversity sensitive sustainable tourism throughout Albania.

The project's theory of change diagram is included as Annex D. The theory of change diagram provides more detail linking the project's outputs, outcomes, intermediate state, and expected impacts. The theory of change diagram also specifies the project impact drivers, and the assumptions recognized in the project's strategy.

To summarize the theory-of-change, there are two main expected impacts, the environmental impact on biodiversity, which feeds into the development impact of sustained and sustainable tourism based economic growth in Albania's coastal zones, which supports improved livelihoods. These impacts will be generated over the long-term once tourism sector growth and infrastructure development along Albania's coast is occurring in a rationalized and sustainable manner over time (the "intermediate state"). To achieve this intermediate state, three outcomes must be achieved; First, Albania's policies and regulations related to tourism development must be strengthened and harmonized for mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations. Second, management and operation of tourism along Albania's important coastal landscapes must be made sustainable and biodiversity-friendly. Third, awareness must be raised and knowledge shared regarding good practices, lessons, and the potential socio-economic and environmental benefits of sustainable biodiversity friendly tourism, in order for biodiversity-friendly tourism to be up-scaled and replicated throughout Albania.

The project outputs planned in order to achieve these outputs are described in further detail under each of the project components, below.

The proposed project components are:

Component 1: Enabling framework for mainstreaming biodiversity into coastal tourism development (planning, implementation, mechanisms, data)

The expected outcome for this component is strengthened and harmonized policies and standards to mainstream biodiversity into tourism development. Biodiversity friendly tourism development requires an organized, coordinated and cohesive approach to planning and management of tourism development. Under Output 1.1 the project will contribute to the development of national policies, standards, strategies and regulations to support the development of biodiversity friendly coastal tourism development. During the PPG phase a detailed SWOT analysis of existing tourism-related policies and regulatory measures will be conducted in order to identify the specific elements that need additional strengthening to most significantly improve the consideration of biodiversity measures in tourism development. It is expected, however, that a key element will be a national strategy and platform for biodiversity friendly tourism development. This may include the adoption of national certification standards for biodiversity friendly tourism. Additional elements may include, for example, ensuring national tourism strategies appropriately incorporate biodiversity consideration, regulations for net zero loss of wetlands for coastal development, adoption of Ramsar management guidelines, strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment procedures, adopting standards for biodiversity friendly tourism development and operations, and sub-national regulations to empower regional and municipal governments to regulate tourism development in coastal zones. All above activities will be carried out in a way that is fully aligned with and reflective of UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards (SES). Under Output 1.2 the project aims to address the spatial planning aspect that is critical for supporting biodiversity friendly tourism development in coastal areas. The project will support the production, adoption, and implementation of municipal spatial plans that incorporate biodiversity considerations in 3 KBAs (out of the 6 total within the scope of the project). The project will work with municipal authorities to specify appropriate zoning for tourism development, ensuring that critical habitats will be maintained. To support monitoring and implementation of all aspects of the project, under Output 1.3 the project will establish multi-stakeholder participatory management and implementation mechanisms, and ensure these are operating and sustainable. The exact form and mechanisms to be used will be further defined during the PPG phase, but may include local protected areas management boards, municipal working groups with citizen participation, and local sustainable tourism development committees. From the very beginning the project will work to ensure that these mechanisms are established in a manner that will lead to their long-term sustainability and continued operation after project completion. Under Output 1.4 the project will invest in a technical capacity development program to strengthen ecological monitoring and reporting mechanisms for sustainable tourism development. One critical aspect of a supportive enabling environment is having adequate ecological data and analysis of that data to support biodiversity-friendly tourism development and oversight. The project will work to strengthen the institutional capacity of key government agencies

and partners through a training and capacity development program, improved environmental and tourism sector data management. This may also include, for example, the development of tourism-related mobile applications to support biodiversity friendly tourism development. Such applications could be targeted for tourists (for example, with maps, and highlighting biodiversity friendly tourism activities), or for environmental and tourism management authorities in order to increase efficiency and data sharing. This will also include investments in advanced biodiversity monitoring, water monitoring, and other relevant environmental monitoring technologies, including possible use of various types of remote sensing data, GPS-based technologies, environmental DNA, camera traps, and drones. The project will support mapping of point and non-point source pollution sources that negatively affect biodiversity, as well as negatively affecting tourism potential. The specific capacity needs and project activities to address them will be further elaborated during the PPG phase.

Component 2: Catalyzing biodiversity-friendly coastal tourism

The expected outcome under this component is that more sustainable and biodiversity friendly tourism will be implemented across 100,000 ha of ecologically important landscapes. Under this component the project will help develop site-based tools and mechanisms to support biodiversity friendly tourism development and operation. Under Output 2.1 the project will help establish public-private partnerships for biodiversity friendly coastal tourism, joint protection, and sustainable use of biodiversity. This may include, for example, partnerships on development of biodiversity friendly infrastructure, tourism waste management, and implementation of certification programs and standards. The project design may include a tourism developer consultation service, whereby investors who wish to invest in the development of tourism infrastructure can work with experts to ensure that investments are done in a way that is in-line with national requirements and biodiversity-friendly guidelines. In the National Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy, the promotion of public-private investments is identified as the first policy goal. Such partnerships could also include the establishment of government financial or regulatory incentives (e.g. reduced tax rates for 3 years for tourism revenue gained from hotels constructed in a biodiversity-friendly manner, or expedited development approval processes for tourism development projects that meet biodiversity-friendly standards or which include additional investment for biodiversity-friendly tourism infrastructure). Under Output 2.2 the project will invest in sustainable tourism infrastructure to support biodiversity friendly tourism activities and operations, as well as monitoring and enforcement systems. This will include, for example, establishment of trails, posting of signage, establishment of designated picnic areas, toilets, bird watching blinds, and towers, fences, information boards, etc. (in all 6 KBAs). Such measures are necessary to ensure that tourists use sensitive sites in an appropriate manner that does not have negative impacts on biodiversity. The project will invest in measures to reduce pollution and improve waste water management, including one pilot of a constructed wetland in or immediately upstream from 1 KBA (pending a feasibility assessment during the PPG phase). This will also include measures to improve coastal water quality in key tourism areas. The project will provide training and necessary equipment for environmental inspectors, protected areas authorities, and others involved in monitoring and enforcement. This will include, for example, construction inspectors in order to minimize any expansion of illegal construction, which is extremely difficult to remove once in place. While technology and equipment is

important, it is also critical to ensure that efficient and effective monitoring and enforcement procedures are in place, such as multi-institutional coordination and data sharing, to support law enforcement. The specific measures and capacity approaches will be elaborated during the PPG phase through the completion of a capacity needs assessment related to monitoring and enforcement for sustainable tourism. Protected area management effectiveness co-benefits resulting from mainstreaming activities will be assessed through the METT (to be completed during the PPG). Under Output 2.3 the project will support the promotion of biodiversity-friendly tourism products, services, and experiences in partnership with local communities, to raise engagement in biodiversity conservation, and generate livelihood benefits that incentivize local support for biodiversity friendly tourism development. This may include, for example, promoting biodiversity friendly food products or handicrafts through logo creation and marketing, establishment of local green markets for biodiversity friendly products, an online marketing platform for biodiversity friendly tourism products and services (e.g. 'Green List' of biodiversity friendly hotels, tourism service providers, and products), and mechanisms to support entrepreneurs in establishing biodiversity friendly businesses. During the PPG project development phase, an estimate for income generation for local communities will be completed, as requested in the UNDP PISC review.

Component 3: Knowledge management, awareness, gender mainstreaming and M&E

The outcome for this component is that the upscaling and replication of sustainable, biodiversity-friendly tourism across Albania is supported by raised awareness and knowledge management. The full Knowledge Management plan will be elaborated as an annex to the Prodoc during the PPG. Under Output 3.1 the project will conduct an outreach and education campaign on mainstreaming biodiversity in tourism, which will be targeted for the tourism industry, local communities, civil society organizations, and domestic and international tourists. A variety of methods and outreach tools will be used, depending on each different target audience. However, it is expected that this will include online tools, such as social media. Under Output 3.2 the project will establish a knowledge exchange system for the sharing of experiences between municipalities for replication and upscaling of best practices across Albania. This is likely to include, for example, peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, exchange visits between municipalities, and workshops and seminars to be held in other biodiversity-sensitive tourism areas outside the primary project target areas. Output 3.3 of the project will encompass the project's M&E activities, incorporating gender mainstreaming and safeguards.

4) alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies;

The project aligns to GEF-7 biodiversity programming directions through BD-1-1 to *Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as landscapes and seascapes through biodiversity mainstreaming in priority sectors*. Tourism is an identified priority sector for mainstreaming in the GEF-7 programming directions and a key sector impacting on biodiversity in Albania, with impacts likely to increase as

visitation grows and as tourism is developed across more destinations. In alignment with GEF-7 programming directions the project will support spatially-explicit provincial tourism planning that identifies and recognizes natural tourism assets, promote systemic change across the tourism sector in Albania (e.g. through capacity development, awareness-raising and development of technical tools and operational guidelines) so that development and operations are more sensitive to biodiversity needs, and develop and demonstrate financial incentives for the adoption of biodiversity-positive tourism development and operation. Through its focus on six KBAs along Albania's coastal landscape, the project will also contribute to enhanced PA management and financing through reducing potential threats of tourism to habitats, enhancing revenue from tourism activities that can contribute to PA management (and community management of buffer zones), and strengthening management capacity in the areas of visitor management and community engagement.

5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

The incremental reasoning for this project is outlined in the table below.

Incremental cost reasoning for the proposed project

Baseline practices	Alternative to be put in place	Project impact
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Baseline practices	Alternative to be put in place	Project impact
<p>Increasing understanding of impacts of unsustainable tourism with government introducing site closures and restrictions.</p> <p>Government policy for development of coastal tourism sites offers potential to help direct and manage Albania's growing tourism sector, but risks further impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems if tourism expansion and development is not planned and implemented in a sustainable fashion that respects ecological limits and needs.</p> <p>Government policy for tourism development promotes community-based tourism as a means for better income equality and distribution at local level. Community-based tourism typically does not explicitly consider biodiversity providing a missed opportunity to mainstream biodiversity within a key policy direction for tourism.</p> <p>"Ecotourism" captured in tourism strategy but has not been successfully operationalized due to lack of clear agency responsibilities, and practical and agreed technical guidelines and standards for how to develop and operate tourism in a biodiversity-friendly manner.</p> <p>Sensitive coastal ecosystems are targeted for accelerated tourism development, without zoning, planning, or other strategic and biodiversity friendly development approaches. Tourism plans prepared which recognizes natural assets for tourism but does not specify biodiversity conservation needs. Tourism development leads to ecological damage in the absence of clear technical guidance and inter-agency cooperation on tourism that respects and supports biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Small-scale initiatives for community-based ecotourism underway but limited by a lack of local capacity and understanding of tourist expectations, and absence of agreed standards and criteria for different nature-based tourism activities. Upscaling of successful approaches limited by lack of replication mechanisms and knowledge exchange across jurisdictions and government agencies.</p>	<p>Biodiversity-friendly tourism will be established as a model for tourism in Albania to help stop and avoid unsustainable tourism and facilitate financial benefits from tourism for local communities. A strategy for biodiversity-friendly tourism will be established and multi-sector engagement and capacity development will help mainstream biodiversity-friendly tourism into Albania's national tourism strategies and plans.</p> <p>Technical and operational guidance to operationalize biodiversity-friendly tourism will be developed, including explicit incorporation of biodiversity in existing tourism standards and certifications, and through broadening of financial incentives and solutions that enhance local financing for biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Demonstration of biodiversity-friendly tourism standards, planning, partnerships and product development in Albania's coastal landscape helps establish sustainable tourism as a model for adoption across Albania. Spatially-explicit planning for tourism development in 3 KBAs developed for integration into national coastal spatial planning helps prevent tourism impacts and damage to critical ecological assets.</p> <p>Municipal authorities, local tour operators and communities are willing and capacitated to participate in biodiversity-friendly tourism and provide sustainable, high-quality products to tourists linked to local biodiversity.</p>	<p>Improved tourism management and operation benefitting over 33,209 ha including recognized KBAs on the coast of Albania.</p> <p>Reduction of threats from tourism development to biodiversity through adoption of industry standards and impact monitoring at critical sites, and avoided impacts on significant coastal lagoon habitats.</p> <p>Better planning and operation of tourism and development of biodiversity-friendly tourism in PAs and surrounding KBAs strengthens revenue generation and management, supporting the conservation of globally-threatened species such as Dalmatian pelican, pygmy cormorant, and white-headed duck that support wildlife-watching tourism activities; and benefitting other threatened species including slender billed curlew, greater spotted eagle and European sturgeon.</p>

6) global environmental benefits (GEFTF) and/or adaptation benefits (LDCF/SCCF)

The project demonstrations will support improved tourism management and revenue generation for biodiversity conservation across 100,000 ha. These benefits will be focused in the Albania's biodiversity rich and highly sensitive coastal landscape, targeting six Key Biodiversity Areas covering 33,209 ha and 67,000 ha (~55,000 ha of KBA buffer zones, plus ~12,000 ha of adjacent coastal ecosystems, to be confirmed at PPG) in riverine, estuarine, and other coastal habitats under threat from unsustainable tourism development. The KBAs contain globally-threatened species including Dalmatian pelican, slender billed curlew, greater spotted eagle, and white-headed duck, which offer potential revenue generation for conservation and communities through wildlife watching activities. Some of these species are threatened by poaching and unsustainable use and increased revenue for biodiversity conservation, along with awareness-raising in local communities, could help increase local support for implementation of biodiversity measures, while also generating increased revenue for sustainable livelihoods.

The coast of Albania is a tourism development area and contains diverse natural assets such as sensitive coastline, wetland marshes, beaches and bays that are highly susceptible to poorly-managed or inappropriately-sited tourism. This includes the ecologically significant Karavasta lagoon which contains important bird nesting and fish spawning habitats that are at risk from improperly-placed, unsustainable tourism. The project's efforts to provide guidance, standards, controls and incentives for biodiversity-friendly tourism will help protect these significant habitats and prevent damage from tourism. The elaboration and adoption of biodiversity-friendly tourism standards will bring enhanced environmental responsibility and performance of the tourism sector encompassing issues such as environmentally-sensitive design and development, solid and liquid waste management, and energy and water use efficiency.

In parallel, the project will support awareness raising among tourists, local communities and tourist associations to help build a groundswell of interest for biodiversity-friendly tourism and a shift away from unsustainable tourism development and operations. This is expected to have indirect environmental benefits across Albania's coastal zone, and across other tourism regions of Albania, supported by capacity development with government at all levels and practical biodiversity-friendly tourism standards and guidelines.

7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

Innovation

The project leverages the concept of biodiversity-friendly tourism as a mechanism to incentivize biodiversity conservation. This is not a new strategy, but it has been demonstrated as a viable concept to pull together the different threads of the government policy on tourism ? avoiding unsustainable tourism impacts, generating enhanced tourism revenue, building community-level tourism, promoting nature-based economies and approaches ? in an innovative way that maximizes alignment to government policy directions and will engage a range of partners. The project will seek to build off existing best practices for tourism impact monitoring (e.g. limits of acceptable change, carrying capacity) and adapt these into site-responsive visitor impact management and monitoring approaches that can be practically and consistently implemented by municipalities and land use managers throughout Albania. Opportunities for including guidance to monitor social impacts/benefits and incorporate climate change adaptation and mitigation into tourism planning, development and operation will also be explored ? these are emerging issues where more guidance is needed. The project will also, where practical, leverage technology such as mobile applications to support tourism impact monitoring, marketing and the development of a multi-vendor marketplace to connect tourists and community providers of biodiversity-friendly experiences and products.

Other innovative aspects of the project include the application of new technologies in innovative ways for sustainable tourism development. The project will leverage GIS-based and remote-sensing technologies for municipal spatial planning, with the possibility of developing open-source online georeferenced mapping to support the targeted municipalities to provide accurate, up-to-date sources of spatial data that can be easily referenced. The project will also build on and further develop the experience of Croatia in relation to innovative micro-financing for green tourism entrepreneurs; the project will not specifically create such mechanisms, but will serve as a knowledge marketplace to provide information and analysis to leverage incentives for potential partners and entrepreneurs in the micro-finance market. The project will also support the adoption of the most recent developments in green tourism standards, which will be highly innovative in Albania. In terms of on-the-ground technologies, the project will support key partners in the application of the latest, most innovative, and cost-effective technologies for monitoring ecosystems and species and tracking tourism impacts, including, for example, the potential use of cellular camera traps, satellite tagging of birds and sea turtles, drones, and eDNA for aquatic ecosystems.

Further objectives include attracting foreign investment, and increasing the competitiveness of the Albanian economy through innovative support for small and medium-sized enterprises. The direct contribution of AIDA in the economic development is evidenced through: Facilitation and support of direct investments in Albania, increase the competitiveness and innovation capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises, encouragement and support to exports of goods and services.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project results will be ensured through attention to the four elements of sustainability ? financial, institutional, socio-political, and environmental. Project sustainability will ultimately depend on ensuring the full ownership of the project outputs and activities by the responsible public institutions and private sector partners, and securing their long-term commitment (regulatory, policy, funding and resources) to scale-up and replicate best practices in biodiversity-friendly tourism development. The project has been designed to dovetail with government policy directions for tourism development and bring together the mandates of different government stakeholders in an integrated manner. This alignment will support the sustainability of the project as its mainstreaming focus will help embed the project approaches and biodiversity-friendly tourism within future tourism policy and strategy of the Government of Albania. It will also be operationalized within the coastal KBA landscapes where establishment of a multi-stakeholder platform clearly tied to the implementation of tourism plans and development strategies will provide ownership for biodiversity-friendly tourism across municipal authorities. The provision of operational guidelines, standards and capacity development programs will strengthen awareness and ownership for biodiversity-friendly tourism at national, municipal and village levels. The project aims to establish biodiversity-friendly tourism at the community level as a viable, sustainable livelihood for local communities. Providing this employment and income generation for local communities and connecting them with domestic and foreign tourists ? and tourists with high-quality, standardized visitor experiences ? will support the ongoing development of biodiversity-friendly tourism.

Catalytic Role: Potential for Replication and Scaling-up

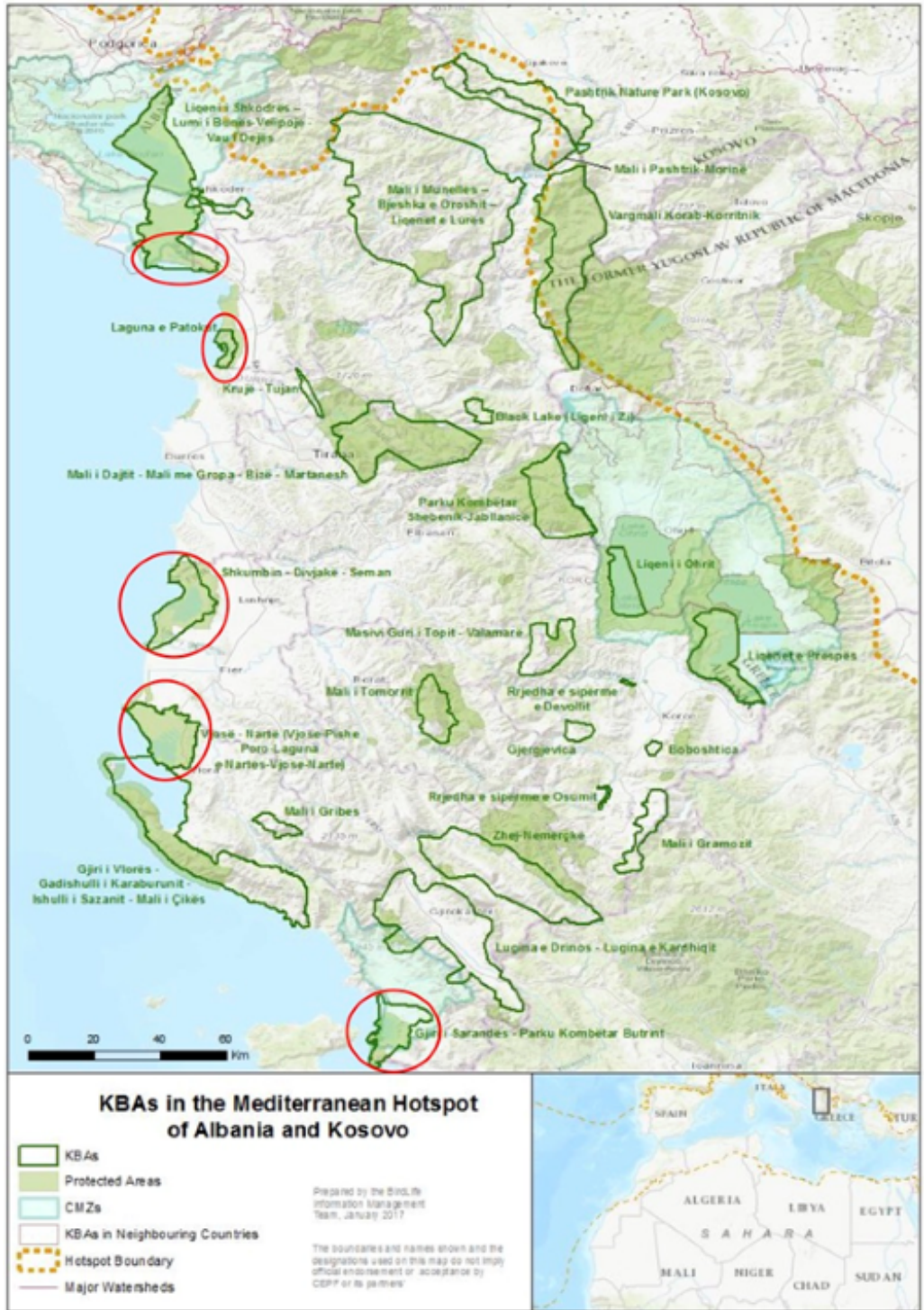
Replication of good practices developed by the project will be achieved through the direct replication of selected project elements and practices and methods, as well as the scaling up of experiences. The following activities have preliminarily been identified as suitable for replication and/or scaling up: (i) sustainable tourism standards and certification approaches; (ii) establishment of public-private partnerships for synergistic biodiversity and economic benefits; (iii) site-based, participatory, management guidance modalities; (iv) ecosystem based management approaches to coastal ecosystems that depend on both upstream and downstream environmental quality; and (v) advanced monitoring and enforcement methodologies using new technologies such as geo-referenced monitoring and camera traps.

[1] Auttpol Nakwa, Narit Sitasuwan, Araya Jatisatein, Pornnip Chantaramongko, Wasun Pupichit and Pornchai Srisak, 2008. The Effects of Tourists on Bird Diversity in Tourist Area Compared to Restricted Area of Seasonal Evergreen Forest at Tung Salang Luang National Park, Phetchabun Province, Thailand . International Journal of Zoological Research, 4: 96-105.

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.

Annex A



4.

Site	Area (ha)	KBA Criteria	Municipality	Associated PA	PA Area (ha)	IUCN Category	Geographic Coordinates
Lake Butrint	1,900	B2	Sarand?	Butrint National Park	9,424	II	39°46'56.8"N 20°01'43.0"E
Narta Lagoon	4,180	A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i	Vlor?	Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape	19,412	VI	40°32'11.6"N 19°25'16.2"E
Karavasta Lagoon	22,230	A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2	Divjak?	Divjak?-Karavasta National Park	22,230	II	40°55'27.2"N 19°29'38.1"E
Patoku Lagoon	1,211	A1, A4i, B1i	Kurbin	Patok-Fushe Kuqe Reserve	2,200	IV	41°37'28.6"N 19°34'48.7"E
Drini Delta	2,188	A1, A4i, B1i	Lezh?	Kune-Vain-Tale Nature Reserve	4,393	IV	41°44'03.5"N 19°35'25.1"E
Vilun Marsh	1,500	A1	Shkod?r	Buna River-Velipoja Protected Landscape	23,027	V	41°52'54.0"N 19°26'23.4"E
Total	33,209				80,686.4		

2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Yes

Civil Society Organizations

Private Sector Entities

If none of the above, please explain why:

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement

The project concept was developed based on consultations with national government stakeholders, and based on national policy documents (e.g. NBSAP) that have been developed through comprehensive participatory processes at multiple levels (national, county, municipal) with a wide range of stakeholders. The project concept was also identified based on consultations with local level stakeholders, such as village and municipal administrations, and PA administrations (i.e. NAPA and RAPAs) at the Divjaka-Karavasta and Llogara-Karaburuni PA complex (in the context of current activities under the PAs finance project). The project concept is based directly on Albania's identified national priorities for biodiversity conservation and tourism, as outlined in the NBSAP, the National Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for 2019-2023, and other strategic policy documents related to biodiversity conservation and tourism. At this stage of project concept development, it has not been necessary to conduct a further round of consultation with stakeholders for project identification.

Sustainable tourism development is a responsibility shared among several actors including the government authorities (central and local), tourism industry, NGOs, education system, media and citizens; also, important role plays the international organization devoted financial or technically into assistance and development of this sector in Albania.

Stakeholder	Role
<i>Government agencies</i>	
Council of Ministers	The Council approves all enabling legislative and regulatory frameworks for the development of tourism, including the functioning of the protected area system.
Ministry of Tourism and Environment	The Ministry is the focal point institution for the implementation of the CBD, and the implementing partner for this project. It is responsible for preparing the enabling legislative and regulatory framework for project activities and ensuring that they are presented to the Council of Ministers for approval. The Ministry is responsible for creating the enabling conditions for implementation of all project activities. The Ministry will develop and present proposals for government funding for support of sustainable tourism development.
<i>National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA)</i>	The NAPA is a key institution for partnering in the development of biodiversity friendly tourism development, services, and activities in and around protected areas, which are part of the area covered by KBAs targeted by the project.

Stakeholder	Role
<i>National Environmental Agency/ Regional Environmental Agencies</i>	The NEA will issue any required environmental permits during the project and will enforce provisions of environmental legislation relating to EIAs, environmental permitting and coordination of monitoring activities.
State Inspectorate of Environment, Forests and Water (under Ministry of Interior)	The SEIFW will support the enforcement of legislation on environmental protection, forest, water and fisheries activities.
National Tourism Agency	This agency is in charge with promotion of Albania as a ?tourist destination? in the Mediterranean basin, Europe and around the world. It applies a range of tools and methods, tourism fairs, on-line promotion, publication of promotional materials, familiarization trips with various international tour operators, promotion of family tourism as a generating source of tourism revenue; therefore, it becomes part of joint projects in cooperation with other developing and aid organisations.
National Coastline Agency	This agency has the mission of protecting the coastal area, monitoring and enforcing the development of the coastal area and the plans approved by the planning authorities. The main objectives fall into protection, sustainable development of the coastal area, implementation of policies and strategies for integrated management of the coastal area, and coordination of related programs in this area.
Albanian Agency of Investments Development	Its main objectives are to attract foreign investment, increase the competitiveness of the Albanian economy through the support for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as through innovation. The direct contribution of AIDA in the economic development is evidenced through: Facilitation and support of direct investments in Albania, increase the competitiveness and innovation capacity of Small and Medium Enterprises, encouragement and support to exports of goods and services.
Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure	The Ministry will support ensuring the compliance of development and construction activities in coastal areas with approved management plans.
<i>National Urban and Construction Inspectorate</i>	The Inspectorate will assist protected areas in the development and management of waste management facilities, water supply and sewerage.
Ministry of Finance and Economy	The Ministry will be responsible for ensuring the ongoing allocation of funds in the state budget for sustainable tourism development in coastal zones.
State Minister for Trade and Entrepreneurship	The Ministry will administer permits for energy supply and mining activities in coastal areas.

Stakeholder	Role
Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure	The Ministry will support and assist the project in improving the quality and range of tourism and recreational products and services in coastal areas.
National Territorial Planning Agency	The Agency will support the coordination of biodiversity-friendly spatial planning efforts with the relevant national and local government planning instruments.
<i>Local Government</i>	
Local Government Units / Municipalities	The Unit will issue the requisite development and construction permits, in accordance with local planning and construction regulations.
<i>Prefectures</i>	Will provide and maintain municipal public services (water supply, sewerage, waste management) in protected areas.
<i>NGOs and Donors/Funders</i>	
Environmental NGOs	Selected NGOs will support the implementation of project activities in targeted KBAs, focusing its support on deriving benefits to biodiversity conservation and/or the socio-economic upliftment of local communities.
Donors and Funders	Donors/funders will be sought to collaborate with key project partners in identifying funding opportunities supporting the development of biodiversity friendly tourism, aligning these funding opportunities with strategic plans for sustainable tourism development and individual municipal spatial plans, and mobilizing funding support to respond to these opportunities.
<i>Private sector / Local enterprises</i>	
Private sector, including local businesses, farmers, fishermen, tour operators, etc.	Local enterprises will participate in discussions and project activities to develop sustainable and biodiversity friendly tourism infrastructure, services, and activities.

Other institutions whose role and activities are relevant for the tourism sector, and which are also potential project collaborators, include the following: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ministry of Health and Social Care, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Bank of Albania, Institute of Statistics, Institute of Culture Monuments, Agency of Archaeology Service, National Agency of Regional Development, Advisory Committee of the Tourism Private Sector. All of these organizations relate to the generation (direct and indirect) of employment from the tourism industry.

All relevant stakeholders will be fully consulted during the PPG phase. The project preparation phase will be a fully participatory process, with frequent stakeholder consultations at various levels. Early in the project development process a comprehensive stakeholder analysis will be conducted to ensure all relevant stakeholders are identified and engaged. The preparation team will regularly meet with the key government partner, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment. Other national government stakeholders will also be regularly consulted, particularly the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. At the sub-national level, the project preparation team will conduct field missions for consultations with local government at the county and municipal level in order to ensure the project is structured in a way that aligns with and supports local development priorities and addresses key barriers at the local level. The project will also consult with local resource users to collect detailed and specific data about local resource use, and critical local development issues. Local consultations will be conducted a minimum of 2-3 times in each targeted KBA. At the start of the project preparation process the project development team will hold a series of introductory workshops to present the general concept to local stakeholders, and receive initial feedback. Additional inputs will be collected in a one-on-one basis throughout the preparation period. The project preparation team will then hold a project validation workshop toward the end of the preparation process to present the final draft project framework to all stakeholders, and receive any further final feedback, which will then be incorporated in the final project design. Civil society organizations will also be frequently consulted during the project preparation process, with consultations at the national and local level.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

The project will be fully in-line with and supportive of both the GEF's and UNDP's gender mainstreaming policies. The thematic and geographic scope of the project provides a range of opportunities for the engagement of women, and possibilities for supporting gender mainstreaming through the direct involvement of women, for example in community-based tourism activities. Community-based tourism provides good opportunities for women to engage in nature conservation and biodiversity conservation through developing tourism enterprises and through roles as hosts, guides, hospitality and/or development of handicrafts and local products for tourists. This will generate socioeconomic benefits for women and also help improve female participation in the labor market. Women are typically under-represented in decision making, particularly at formal or higher-levels, and the project will seek to encourage the participation of women in tourist development platforms and associations at municipal and county levels.

During the PPG phase, a full gender analysis will be completed to identify the different roles of men and women in biodiversity-friendly tourism. At the site level, the project will carefully examine local conditions pertaining to local livelihoods, resource use and land tenure and management systems, and factors affecting the livelihoods of women and men in project KBAs and nearby communities. Consultation sessions will be held to obtain views and inputs of a wide range of local stakeholders, including women, to develop project activities and to inform a robust stakeholder involvement plan with full gender considerations. A corresponding gender mainstreaming plan for the project will be completed and submitted with the project document at time of CEO Endorsement. This will include project approaches and actions to mitigate any negative impacts on rural women and girls (e.g. in terms of benefit sharing, labor division of labor, access to resources, access to technology and skills development.), along with the gender mainstreaming focus which will be integrated across project activities as relevant. This attention on gender mainstreaming is recognized in project Output 3.3. Gender-disaggregated targets and indicators will be included within the project results framework. The project is aiming for at least 50% of direct beneficiaries to be female.

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; No

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

Due to the project's focus on tourism ? a key sector for Albania's economy ? there are good opportunities to engage the private sector in the project. Many of the project outputs will directly target the tourism sector and private tour operators and providers, through activities such as development of incentives to facilitate the adoption of biodiversity-friendly tourism development and operation, and

demonstration of standards and guidelines for tourism operators to better incorporate biodiversity conservation ? along with the provision of awareness-raising and capacity development programs to support their uptake. It is anticipated that there will be strong interest expressed by private sector operators in key coastal zones to cooperate and coordinate with the project, and it is expected that some of these will become formal co-financers and provide a co-financing letter during PPG phase. Eco-friendly hotels and local tour operators could also champion the promotion of biodiversity-friendly tourism products / experiences developed by the project and their inclusion in regional tour itineraries. There are also opportunities to engage private sector nationally to support uptake of tourism sustainability and biodiversity-friendly standards across Albania. This potential engagement will be done during the PPG phase, and national tourism associations will be used as an entry point to private sector engagement. Specific opportunities for private sector engagement will be developed in more detail during the PPG phase and individual co-financing commitments secured.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

Risks	Rating	Preventive Measures
Slow or limited policy mainstreaming and adoption of biodiversity-friendly tourism within tourism development strategy.	Low-moderate	The project is well-aligned to government policy for tourism and different mandates and objectives of Ministries. Project outputs have been developed to provide inputs that can be fed into key national policy documents on tourism development, and integrated into county and municipal planning and partnerships. However, there is a chance that government policies can change during the life of the project which could lessen project sponsorship from government and limit mainstreaming potential. To mitigate this, the project will need to actively engage with key Ministries and municipalities during project development and implementation. Appropriate mechanisms for ensuring coordination and partnership between Ministries will be required.
Limited engagement of local communities and tour operators in capacity development programs for biodiversity-friendly tourism.	Low-moderate	Initial consultations have indicated interest of local stakeholders (for example, in the area surrounding Divjaka-Karavasta National Park), however current ecotourism efforts in the region have found that it can be difficult to secure time of local communities for tourism-related training and capacity development. To prevent against this, the project will actively engage with local communities during project development to seek their inputs and thoughts on project activities and needs. The project will also seek to establish appropriate incentives to secure community engagement and interest, and will work with established community social enterprises to facilitate strong community engagement.

Risks	Rating	Preventive Measures
Economic factors influence tourism market in Albania in a way that prohibits achievement of project objective.	Moderate	Albania's tourism sector is growing, but there is some potential for this to be negatively impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a reduction or slowing of tourism growth in Albania in the short-term, due to both travel restrictions, and general poor global economic conditions. This will not have a major impact on the project objective as there is still strong domestic tourism at project sites that can support biodiversity-friendly tourism development, and the project will set the stage for future tourism growth. There is also the possibility that Albania will actually benefit in the long-term from the global pandemic, as tourists look for relatively less expensive travel destinations that also provide quality ecotourism experiences. The success of the project is not reliant on tourism revenue which will mitigate against this risk, however a sharp downturn in tourism could potentially influence government policies, and the ability or willingness of private sector partners to implement biodiversity friendly approaches developed championed by the project. Project outputs and activities will need to be developed in a way that helps prevent and mitigate this potential risk.
Biodiversity-friendly tourism might not fully incorporate or reflect views of women and girls and ensure equitable opportunities for their involvement and benefit.	Moderate	A full gender analysis and mainstreaming plan will be completed during the PPG phase. Gender-based risks and mainstreaming opportunities will be integrated into project outputs and activities, and included within the project results framework.
Rolling out of new standards on tourism development/operation could change current access to tourism sites and their resources, including by restricting access to current tourism operators, which may include local communities (e.g. local tour operators, local guides).	Moderate	Local communities and tour associations will be included in consultations during project development and their views and inputs secured. The project will demonstrate activities to help encourage voluntary adoption of more sustainable and biodiversity-positive tourism rather than blunt enforcement of rules, which will help facilitate engagement and buy-in for activities. UNDP's SESP pre-screening has been completed at PIF stage in accordance with policy, and this will be further elaborated and finalized during project development to better assess and mitigate potential impacts at a community/local level. The project will develop and implement a comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan to ensure that local stakeholders and communities are consulted and engaged in project activities.

Risks	Rating	Preventive Measures
<p>Biodiversity-friendly tourism development could result in damage to sensitive ecosystems and/or cultural sites through improperly-sited or operated tourism development, or through inappropriate tourist behavior.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>The project is aiming to develop sustainable, biodiversity-sensitive tourism to help prevent against these impacts and provide a viable, more sustainable option to mass tourism at heavily-visited tourist sites in Albania. The project will support the integration of biodiversity conservation into tourism standards and certifications that will help prevent against tourism impacts on biodiversity. This will be complemented by capacity development programs with local tour operators and communities to ensure they have skills to properly deliver biodiversity-friendly tourism, and awareness with tourists will raise awareness of potential impacts of tourism and promote biodiversity-friendly tourism ventures that support local livelihoods and nature conservation.</p>
<p>Climate change could impact natural habitats (including shifts in use of natural resources by local communities, e.g. if agricultural crops fail) and impact on the quality of ecotourism experiences.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>These impacts are more likely to emerge over the longer term, but over the course of project duration there could be localized storm or extreme weather events that impact on natural assets supporting tourism, reduce access to tourist sites reducing tourism numbers and economic benefits for communities. Relevant climate risk screening tools will be applied during the PPG phase (as recommended by STAP), possibly including tools disseminated by the World Bank (https://climatescreeningtools.worldbank.org/). The project will engage local communities and tour operators in the project development and detailed design. Opportunities will be explored during the PPG phase on how climate change adaptation can be integrated into proposed activities related to standards, guidelines and criteria for tourism planning, development, operation and monitoring. Climate change vulnerability and adaptation will also be considered in the development of biodiversity-friendly tourism products.</p>
<p>Area of influence risk: Despite the project's best efforts, it is possible that large-scale tourism development that is not biodiversity-friendly (e.g. airport development in inappropriate areas; large scale mass-market tourism development in ecologically sensitive areas) will occur in the project target areas, which would significantly affect the project's ability to achieve its planned outcomes and objective.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>The project will work closely with all stakeholders, including key government decision-makers, with the aim of being informed as far in advance as possible of potential large-scale developments that are not aligned with the project strategy. If any such developments are initiated, the project team will work with a range of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, to re-direct developments in an appropriate manner. The project design may include a developer consultation service, whereby investors wishing to initiate tourism development can work with experts to ensure that tourism development is planned and carried out in a biodiversity-friendly manner.</p>

Risks	Rating	Preventive Measures
COVID-19 related travel and meeting limitations may affect the proposed project's support for biodiversity conservation and biodiversity friendly tourism activities	Moderate	The COVID-19 situation will be closely followed during the PPG. In case threats persist beyond the PPG phase, the project's interventions requiring public gatherings will sought to be replaced by online alternatives. When online alternatives are not feasible (e.g. for rural stakeholders with limited IT capacity), meeting participants will be properly instructed to keep social distancing and all other national requirements related to COVID-19 protocols. They will be provided PPE materials such as masks and sanitizer. Outdoor meeting venues will be utilized, with necessary arrangements to make participation comfortable. The Prodoc and CEO Endorsement Request will contain updated analysis and activities constructed accordingly.

Note on COVID-19:

Risk analysis: During PIF preparation, preliminary risk analysis of the COVID-19 related containment measures on the project outputs have been considered and appropriate mitigation measures have been mentioned above in the Risks Section. Possible consequences of the reinstatement of COVID-19 situation, will be re-assessed in a more detailed manner at PPG stage. Availability of technical expertise of dedicated staff and co-financing will be re-assessed and appropriate interventions will be designed and included in the project document. UNDP together with the Ministry of Tourism and Environment have adaptive management capacities and possibilities to ensure COVID-19 related mitigation measures and effectiveness of the proposed overall project implementation and stakeholder engagement. The PPG stage will include consultations with a wide range of stakeholders in as much as possible, and the Stakeholders Engagement Plan will entail dedicated measures aimed at enabling the participation of all stakeholders in the project implementation, with appropriate mitigation measures in case of COVID-19 restrictions, including ways to reach out to the most marginalized groups.

Opportunity analysis / relations to 'green recovery': the Albanian Government responded quickly with the objective of containing as much as possible the spread of the pandemic, to avoid the danger of a likely exponential growth of infections, Decrees and rules are continuously updated and uploaded in the link of the Ministry of Health <https://new.shendetesia.gov.al/masat-e-reja-per-te-parandaluar-perhapjen-e-covid-19/>. The COVID-19's UN Albania Socio-economic Recovery and Response Plan includes **short term measures**, to minimize, manage and mitigate the adverse, most pressing, and urgent impacts of COVID-19 on the lives and livelihoods of the people including their access to essential services and fundamental rights as well as **medium to long term measures**, to ensure a structural response - focusing more on sustainable development and 'building back better' than before - to address the negative impacts of COVID-19. The plan has highlighted the amplified vulnerabilities and widening inequalities during the COVID-19, and the existing critical capacity gaps that are hampering adequate responses, focusing largely on health equipment and PPE in the short term. The short- and medium term recovery opportunities that this proposed project will support are aligned with the integrated UN System in Albania's support to COVID-19 response under the 'Early Recovery'

pillar, including: 1) Access to basic services; 2) Restoration of economic activities and livelihoods; 3) Security, rule of law, social cohesion; 4) Supporting migrants and displaced people impacted by the crisis.

The project is fully aligned with the medium post COVID-19 recovery opportunities by supporting communities' recovery, through strengthening of Albania's enabling environment for sustainable tourism development, development and implementation of biodiversity friendly tourism tools and approaches, and knowledge-management, stakeholder coordination and M&E activities. In terms of (i) access to basic services, the project will be working closely the targeted municipalities to support their residents by developing biodiversity-friendly infrastructure and services, including clean water, and waste disposal. The project will support (ii) the restoration of economic activities and livelihoods by facilitating the re-opening of the tourism sector (which has been greatly affected by the pandemic) in a sustainable and healthy manner, with biodiversity-friendly tourism products and services. In this regard, the project will support biodiversity-friendly tourism service providers in their access to information for re-opening under covid-compliant approaches. Ecotourism products and services can often be carried out in covid-compliant ways, as they typically involve outdoor activities with small groups (e.g. birdwatching, hiking, kayaking, etc.). The project will contribute to (iii) security, rule of law, and social cohesion by supporting the organization of tourism in sustainable ways (i.e. tourism development site plans), and the enforcement of related tourism and development regulations, such as the reduction of illegal construction. The project does not have a strong link to (iv) support for migrants and displaced people impacted by the crisis, although the project's link to restoration of economic activities and livelihoods, and contribution to the development of green jobs (as discussed below) will also be supportive of displaced people. In the long term the project will support the green recovery efforts by enabling strengthened resilience of ecosystems and livelihoods, and conserving the natural capital and diverse ecosystems of Albania's coastal zone.

The project's contribution to the development of green jobs should also be highlighted. The project will promote and stimulate green job creation by serving as a knowledge marketplace in relation to biodiversity-friendly tourism good practices, the promotion of biodiversity-friendly standards, and enhanced marketing of biodiversity-friendly tourism products and services.

Disease pandemics have a disproportionate impact on the tourism sector. Considering the new reality of the covid pandemic, and the potential for other pandemics in the future, the project will support Albania's sector in becoming more resilient to pandemics through development of the green tourism sector, including potentially increasing market opportunities for domestic tourism. Further development of green tourism infrastructure will also support resilience to future pandemics through improved sanitation, and improved outdoor recreation infrastructure, as public outdoor spaces have served as a sort of haven during the covid pandemic.

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

The project will be implemented within the context of the United Nations Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021 and the corresponding UNDP Country Programme Document for 2017-2021.

The proposed project will take place under the National Implementation Modality (NIM) of UNDP. The Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MOTE) is the government institution responsible for the implementation of the project in accordance with the UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM), implying full ownership of the project. This is in line with the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) and the UN Partnership Framework for Albania between the UN and the Government of Albania. The MOTÉ, acting as the Implementing Partner for this project, will be responsible for the overall coordination of project implementation, efficient use of project resources and achievement of the planned project objectives. At the same time, the Ministry is the focal agency of Albania for the GEF. The MOTÉ will be responsible for project execution, working closely with other government agencies and ministries, and with county and municipal stakeholders. At this stage the government has indicated that it will not need to request UNDP to provide execution support for the project.

A Project Steering Committee will be established and provide overall guidance and decision-making for the project. This is proposed to be chaired by MOTÉ with the UNDP DRR invited as co-chair, and comprised of relevant national ministries and agencies (including NAPA, RAPAs), and municipal administrations (e.g. Shkodër, Lezhë, Kurbin, Divjakë, Vlorë, and Sarandë). Membership will be finalized during the PPG phase.

UNDP Country Office (CO) in Albania will provide quality assurance, in accordance with the requirements of the GEF and UNDP Policies and Procedures, including completion of project inception report, annual project implementation reviews (PIR) and mandatory independent mid-term review and terminal evaluations. Most of UNDP's work for the project will be based in its Country Office in Tirana under the supervision of the Programme Specialist for Environment and Energy and other senior programme staff, including the UNDP Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative as warranted. UNDP will also engage contractors to carry out Midterm and Final Evaluations of the project. The UNDP Regional Technical Advisor, based in the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, will provide technical support in terms of project cycle management and oversight, to ensure consistency with expectations from UNDP and GEF. UNDP will conduct in-person monitoring visits (with costs

for UNDP staff covered by the GEF Agency fee) to project sites as necessary, as agreed in the project's Inception Report / Annual Work Plan to assess first-hand project progress.

Roles and responsibilities in relation to all aspects of project implementation will be further detailed at PPG stage.

A Project Management Unit (PMU) will be embedded within MOTE. This PMU will be responsible for overseeing project monitoring and evaluation and ensuring a coordinated approach is taken with the delivery of project activities, including integration between activities at national and landscape level, and broader collaboration with associated projects and initiatives.

The MOTE, with the support of UNDP, will coordinate the project with other related biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism projects in Albania, including related GEF investments that this project will complement. Mechanisms to coordinate with relevant ongoing projects will be further defined during the PPG phase as project activities and budget are formulated. Key coordination projects and areas are outlined below:

Title	Budget	Objective / Focus / Coordination	Timeframe
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<p>Environmental Services Project</p>	<p>\$17,998,650 USD</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u> IBRD (GEF and SIDA), Ministry of Tourism and Environment</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> The objective is to support sustainable land management practices and increase communities' monetary and non-monetary benefits, in targeted project areas which are mainly in erosion prone rural upland areas. This objective is to be achieved through the support of alternative livelihoods and provision of environmental services and through sustainable utilization of wood and pasture products in the long term. The project is particularly focused on enhancing the financial, economic, and institutional sustainability of land use and natural resources management, and will help build capacities of Albania farmers, community organizations and government institutions to efficiently use EU funding.</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Farmers, Forest and Pasture Users? Association, action groups and individuals spanning 310 rural communes and 2980 villages in the country benefit either directly or indirectly from the grant funds and other project activities. The project pursue the creation of equal opportunities for women and vulnerable groups to increase participation, firstly in the project activities and secondly in the long-term management of land based activities.</p> <p><u>Coordination:</u> The project will coordinate with the above project on aspects related to the development of sustainable livelihoods in the context of tourism, and the potential for biodiversity friendly livelihoods linked to the tourism sector to benefit local communities. The project will draw lesson from the above project's experience related to linking the maintenance of ecosystem services to sustainable livelihoods.</p>	<p>2015-2019, to be extended to 2021</p>
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<p>Enhancing financial sustainability of the Protected Areas system in Albania</p>	<p>\$1,420,000 USD</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u> GEF, UNDP, Ministry of Tourism and Environment</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> Albania's protected area system as a whole, with pilot field activities in three national parks</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> To reduce the funding gap for protected areas in order to improve their management effectiveness, particularly in respect of reducing the threats to, and improving the conservation status of, their biodiversity values</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> National Agency for Protected Areas, local communities, PA staff</p> <p><u>Coordination:</u> The proposed project will coordinate with the PAs project on leveraging PAs in sustainable tourism in order to achieve synergies related financial benefits for PAs, biodiversity benefits, and benefits to local communities from the development of biodiversity-friendly tourism approaches.</p>	<p>Originally to 2019; currently ongoing</p>
<p>Building the resilience of Kune-Vaini lagoon through ecosystem-based adaption (EbA)</p>	<p>\$2,323,563 million USD</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u> GEF Special Climate Change Fund, Ministry of Tourism and Environment</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> Kune-Vaini lagoon and surrounding area</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> To increase the capacity of government and local communities living nearby the KVLS to adapt to climate change using an integrated suite of adaptation interventions, including EbA</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Local communities</p> <p><u>Coordination:</u> The Kune-Vaini lagoon and surrounding area falls within the geographic scope of the project, as it is within Albania's coastal zone, and part of the Drini delta KBA. The proposed project will coordinate with the Kune-Vaini project on aspects related to developing climate resilient tourism infrastructure that leverages intact ecosystems as part of a broad strategy for ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change.</p>	<p>2016-2019 / extended</p>

<p>Land of Eagles and Castles: Integrated Participatory Management for Albanian Coastal Biodiversity</p>	<p>?166,503 euro (179,641 USD, Rate 1 EUR = 1.07891 USD)</p>	<p><u>Funding:</u> Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund, Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania</p> <p><u>Geographic coverage:</u> Coastal ecosystems</p> <p><u>Objective:</u> The aim of the project is to support civil society for including the stakeholders in the demonstration of an integrated approach for the conservation of the biodiversity in coastal areas. The activities are focused in three directions: 1- Inclusion of local community; 2- Inclusion of private sector; 3- Supporting the society in the collaboration with local and central institutions</p> <p><u>Beneficiaries:</u> Local communities</p> <p><u>Coordination:</u> The proposed project will coordinate with the CEPF project on the involvement of the civil society sector in biodiversity friendly tourism development. Lessons from the CEPF project will be replicated in other KBAs within the scope of the proposed project.</p>	<p>2019-2021</p>
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7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions?

Yes

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

- National Bio Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP)
- CBD National Report
- Cartagena Protocol National Report
- Nagoya Protocol National Report
- UNFCCC National Communications (NC)
- UNFCCC Biennial Update Report (BUR)
- UNFCCC National Determined Contribution
- UNFCCC Technology Needs Assessment
- UNCCD Reporting
- ASGM National Action Plan (ASGM NAP)
- Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA)
- Stockholm National Implementation Plan (NIP)
- Stockholm National Implementation Plan Update
- National Adaptation Programme of Action Update
- Others

The project is highly relevant to and consistent with Albania's national priorities related to biodiversity conservation, as outlined in key national policy documents. The project rationale and approach is fully consistent with broader government planning at the national level, and specifically in relation to Albania's coastal belt.

The Government of Albania has ratified the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) on 1994 and to this end it is committed to the implementation of the requirements of the Convention and decisions of the Conference of Parties (COP) of CBD. The Convention is binding on the member states to make sure that this strategy is consistent with planning and activities of all sectors that might have a (favorable or adverse) impact on biodiversity.

The biodiversity sector is underpinned by the second revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP 2012 - 2020). The NBSAP is the main strategic document guiding the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity requirements in Albania. In addition, Albania is a participant in European and regional initiatives related to the CBD - particularly the PAN-European Strategy on Biological and Landscape Diversity (PESBLD). The primary focus for implementing the CBD and PESBLD are:

- ? Protection and improvement of biological and landscape diversity;
- ? Incorporation of principles and policies required for sustainable biodiversity use and management into national legislation; and
- ? Promotion of sustainable development for present and future generations.

The NBSAP specifically highlights the linkages between sustainable tourism and the conservation of biodiversity: *Recreational values related to biological and landscape diversity represent an asset that may be used for tourism development. This is a task and responsibility for the protection and development of these values and passing them on to current and future generations. If we are not able, and not responsible for protecting biological diversity there is risk for loss of these values that help tourism, as an instrument for fostering development in Albania. Hunting, fishing, and alpinism, and other tourism-related activities require from the country to take the necessary measures for protecting environment and its biodiversity. Recently, the concept of ecotourism has turned into an important domain, which is generating financial benefits, in particular regarding protected areas, but not only, and which generates sustainable use of biodiversity components. This element was identified and developed in cooperation with the responsible Ministry for culture, in the National Tourism Development Strategy.*

As outlined in the NBSAP, the first strategic policy objective of the NBSAP is the integration of biodiversity in cross-sector policies. A specific target for this objective is the formulation and use of guidelines to ensure that biodiversity has been considered in the decision-making process. This is covered through Component 1 of the project. In addition, the NBSAP aims to promote and support the inclusion of actors in decision-making regarding biodiversity, which is also supported through Component 1 of the project, through the establishment of management boards. Another target under this strategic objective is the conservation and strengthening of the social functions of biodiversity; this can be addressed through the recognition of biodiversity as important for socio-economic development, through activities such as ecotourism. Another target relates to the engagement of the private sector in biodiversity conservation, which is critical in the sustainable development of the tourism sector, and which is also supported by the project under multiple aspects of the project, but especially under Component 2.

The National Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy (NSTDS) is a key policy document that highlights the relevance and national ownership of the proposed project. The NSTDS includes the following elements:

Vision: *Albania, a hospitable, attractive and authentic destination, for sustainable development of country's economic, natural and social potentials?*

Mission: Development of destinations, areas, products and diversification of the tourism offer. Increasing the added value of tourism potentials for the economic and social development of the country.

Sub-sectors: *COASTAL: 1. Coastal; 2. Maritime. NATURAL: 3. Mountain Tourism; 4. Ecotourism (Flora/Fauna); 5. Waterfront. THEMATIC: 6. Cultural; 7. Agritourism; 8. MICE; 9. Eno-Gastronomy; 10. Health.*

Strategic goals: 1. Creating new development poles and industries, as well as consolidating the tourism offer. 2. Increasing the added value and impact of the sector on the economy and employment. 3. Development of new products and services in tourism, as well as improvement of their quality. 4. Improving the country's image and promotion of local products.

Policy Goals: 1. Promotion of Public-Private Investments. 2. Improvement of Tourism Services. 3. Development of Tourism Products. 4. Re-orientation of Promotion towards Potentials. 5. Supporting the Management of Destinations.

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The proposed project's scope falls directly within the scope of the NSTDS, as it targets the coastal, maritime, ecotourism, and waterfront sub-sectors. In relation to Strategic Goal 2, the project will contribute to increasing the added value and impact of the tourism sector, as biodiversity-friendly and green tourism products and services are typically higher value and generate greater return on

investment than 'mass market' tourism. The project links to the Strategic Goal 3, as the project will support tourism entrepreneurs in developing new biodiversity friendly tourism products and services (under Component 2). The project aligns with and supports all five of the NSTDS policy goals, including the Policy Goal 4, as the project will contribute to the strengthening of marketing and branding of biodiversity-friendly and green tourism products and services.

The project will support Albania's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi Targets. The primary SDG linkages will be to SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 14 (Life Under Water). There are also contributions from the proposed project towards SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Sustainable tourism has been identified as contributing to all SDGs (e.g. see the Global Sustainable Tourism Council alignment of the GSTC criteria to SDGs), so indirectly the project will have the potential for broad SDG contributions. Key contributions to Aichi targets include: Target 1 (awareness of values of biodiversity awareness), Target 4 (sustainable production and consumption), Target 5 (habitat loss and degradation), Target 11 (protected area expansion and management).

The legal basis for nature protection in Albania is derived from the Constitution of the Republic of Albania (Law 8417 of 1998). In the constitution, Article 59 states that 'The state intends a healthy and ecologically suitable environment for current and future generations, and the rational exploitation of natural resources based on the sustainable development principle'. Article 59 is supported by Article 56 which emphasizes that 'Everyone has a right to be informed on the state of the environment and its protection'.

Law No. 10431 of June 2011 "On Environmental Protection", defines the principles underpinning all environmental protection activities in the country. The Law on Environmental Protection allocates responsibility for environmental policy and management to the Ministry of Environment (MoE). It also outlines the relationship between the MoE, the National Environmental Agency (NEA) and its Regional Environmental Agencies (REAs), and the Environmental Inspectorate. The Law on Inspection in the Republic of Albania (No. 10433, June 2011) determines the structure and organization of the Environmental Inspectorate. Specific national legislation has been developed to regulate aspects of environmental management such as air and water quality management, waste management, environmental impact assessments, chemicals and hazardous waste management, as well as the conservation of biological diversity and the protection of flora and fauna.

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge management is embedded within the project design. Component 3 relates to knowledge and information management and includes a specific output (Output 3.2) to identify and document best practices and lessons learned. The project's approach to knowledge management will focus on knowledge exchange and transfer at multiple levels:

? *Cross-sectorally*: between relevant national Ministries that have a mandate related to ensuring sustainable tourism that provides biodiversity and community benefits, and between government, private sector and communities;

? *Spatially*: between municipalities to ensure exchange of lessons and best practices between sites and support upscaling to other municipalities and counties, and between Albania and other Mediterranean countries (especially Adriatic coastal countries) working on achieving sustainable tourism and enhancing biodiversity conservation through nature-based/biodiversity-friendly tourism;

? *Institutionally*: between governments at different levels, from local administrations to national Ministries.

The project's knowledge management will include the production of online content and a social media presence, documentation and publication of best practices (e.g. case studies), face-to-face transfer and site visits (between individual sites, projects), participation in webinar and remote events (e.g. relevant nature-based tourism virtual webinars), and attendance at relevant regional and international events, particularly those at Mediterranean scale. It will include dissemination of best practices through the Project Steering Committee that will include representation from multiple Ministries, and reporting up of best practices to the national tourism decision-makers as relevant to maximize upscaling potential and mainstreaming across different sectors. During the PPG phase, the ways in which the project can coordinate with and build off the knowledge management of other GEF-funded (and other ODA) projects in the Mediterranean region will be further explored and elaborated. This approach to knowledge management will maximize project impact by supporting dissemination of best practices from the demonstration landscape so that they can be replicated across Albania, and to other countries in the region. Knowledge management activities and mechanisms will be further defined during the PPG phase.

9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF	CEO Endorsement/Approval	MTR	TE
Medium/Moderate			

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title	Submitted
SESP Pre-Screening	

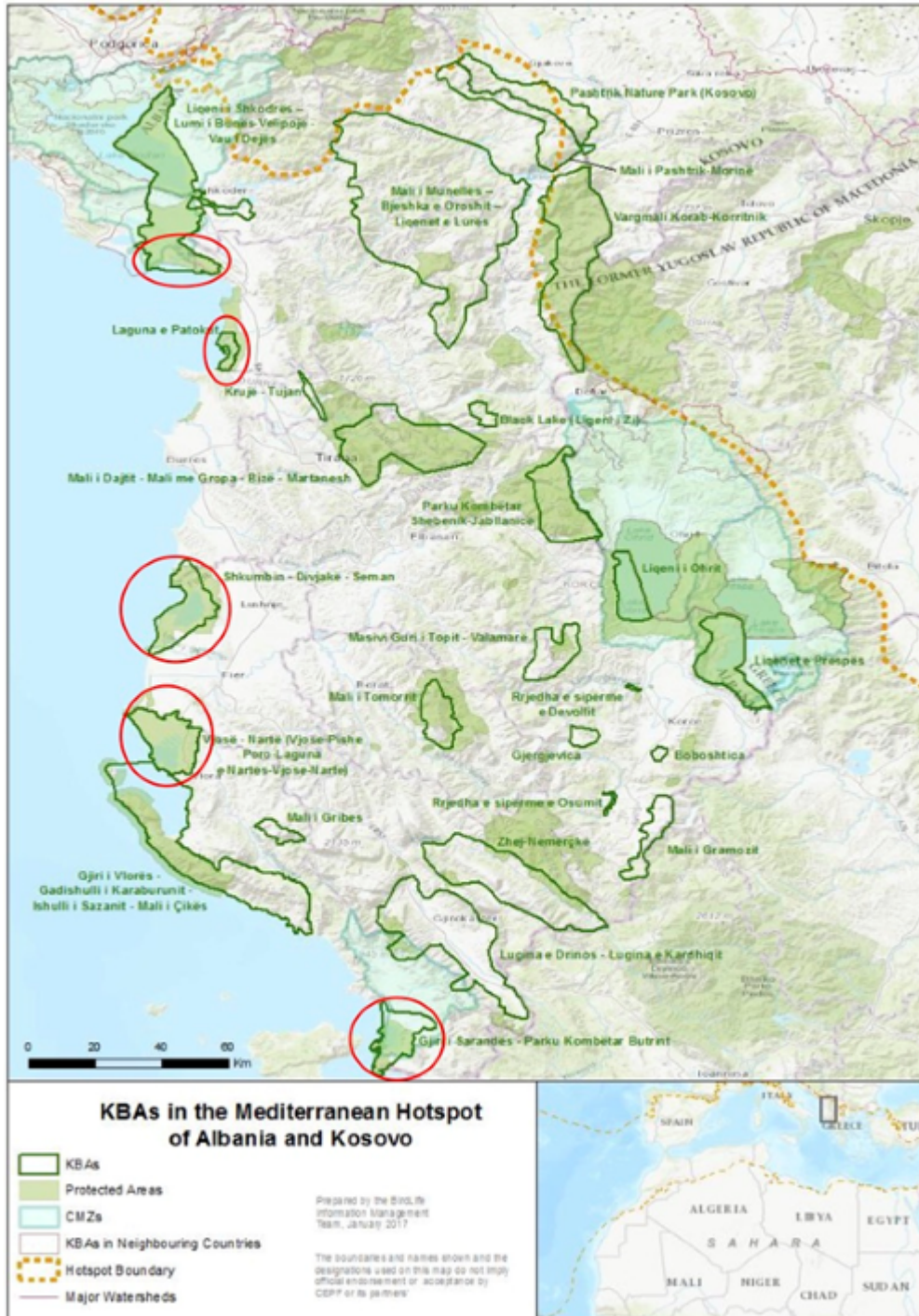
Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And GEF Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name	Position	Ministry	Date
Mr. Sofjan Jaupaj	GEF Operational Focal Point for Albania	MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ENVIRONMENT	3/17/2022

ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place



Site	Area (ha)	KBA Criteria	Municipality	Associated PA	PA Area (ha)	IUCN Category	Geographic Coordinates
Lake Butrint	1,900	B2	Sarand?	Butrint National Park	9,424	II	39°46'56.8"N 20°01'43.0"E
Narta Lagoon	4,180	A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i	Vlor?	Vjosa-Narta Protected Landscape	19,412	VI	40°32'11.6"N 19°25'16.2"E
Karavasta Lagoon	22,230	A1, A4i, A4iii, B1i, B2	Divjak?	Divjak?-Karavasta National Park	22,230	II	40°55'27.2"N 19°29'38.1"E
Patoku Lagoon	1,211	A1, A4i, B1i	Kurbin	Patok-Fushe Kuqe Reserve	2,200	IV	41°37'28.6"N 19°34'48.7"E
Drini Delta	2,188	A1, A4i, B1i	Lezh?	Kune-Vain-Tale Nature Reserve	4,393	IV	41°44'03.5"N 19°35'25.1"E
Vilun Marsh	1,500	A1	Shkod?r	Buna River-Velipoja Protected Landscape	23,027	V	41°52'54.0"N 19°26'23.4"E
Total	33,209				80,686.4		