



## **Sectoral Integration of Biodiversity in Albania**

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## **Introduction**

Albania reported<sup>1</sup> that the elaboration and approval of the Cross-cutting Environmental Strategy as an integral part of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007-2013 has followed the approach of inter-sectoral integration for the environment generally. In this framework biodiversity integration in other sectoral policies is considered as crucial in order to achieve the final goal to reach the 'favorable conservation status' for species and habitats.

Biological resources represent an important economic potential. Their exploitation significantly contributes to the socio-economic development. Biological resources are renewable, but only to a certain extent. If their exploitation in agriculture, forestry, or industry is excessive, the survival of certain species and/or ecosystems could be put into danger. The principles of sustainable use of biological resources must be implemented first of all within sectors that significantly contribute to socio-economic development, such as agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing, energetic, industry, etc.

## **Integration of biodiversity conservation into relevant sectors**

The legislation on nature protection, horizontal environmental legislation, the legislation of forests, fisheries, water, land, territorial planning, tourism, etc. include various management and control measures on land planning and use, and law enforcement within and outside the system of protected areas.

The law "*On protected areas*", for each category of protected area, defines the degree of protection and prohibited activities, those requiring approval of the competent authorities and relevant environmental permits. In the same time private land owners, whose properties are included in the protected area, as well as users of these properties, participate in the planning, conservation and use of natural resources of the area. They are obliged to cooperate with the administration of the protected area and strictly implement certain rules, management plans and programs designed for a sustainable development of the area.

Economic and social activities, and implementation of projects in protected areas, are not allowed without possession of an environmental permit; and without relevant study and full report on environmental impact assessment, based on the law "*On Environmental Protection* ", as amended and according to rules, procedures, deadlines, rights and duties stipulated in the law "*On environmental impact assessment*".

All public, private and tourism constructions in the territory of protected areas, are made in accordance with the management plan, after having received the environmental permits, based on studies and

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<sup>1</sup> Albania (2010). Fourth National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, Period covered by the report: August 2007-December 2010, Ministry Environment, Forests and Water Administration, Biodiversity Directorate, December 2010, 51 pp.

general adjustment (physical) plans, approved by the Council of Territory Adjustment of the Republic of Albania, applying the law *"For urban planning"*, as amended and the Law *"On territorial planning."*

Protected areas can be proclaimed in publicly owned territories, municipal and communal territories and in special cases private properties. Private territories and facilities included in protected areas remain the property of a private owner. They are administered and used by him or by legitimate users, only based on requirements of the area management plan, approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration. In case of owner's disagreement, they have the right to seek compensation in cash or in kind or they can sell the surface to state, according to legislation in force. Compensation for caused damages in cases of actions to protect such areas are not foreseen in the legal provisions.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration, other state and local government units or in partnership with third parties, are obliged to prepare management plans for each protected area as well as plans for the preservation of habitats and species. Management plans of protected areas are included in policies, programs and government activities related to them, and in decision-making processes at national, regional or local level.

Contracts to monitor the state and the management of protected areas, of flora and fauna, habitats, forest and soil ecosystems, including species or habitats that are object of EU directives' addendums and nature protection conventions, are signed by state institutions, public or private in accordance with rules and procedures of competition and tendering. Currently, monitoring is organized and run by the Agency of Environment and Forestry, involving public and academic institutions and the network of Regional Environmental Agencies at regional level.

On this purpose, the cross sectorial Environmental Strategy has an action plan according to various fields. In particular the Law *"On biodiversity protection"* and the law *"On wild fauna protection"*, include provisions for protection of species. These, together with the Law *"On protected areas"* comprise provisions from the two main directives, concerning the protection of habitats within and outside protected areas.

Legal requirements for management measures include management plans of protected areas, establishment of their management committees, action plans for habitats and species within and outside protected areas.

Based on projects supported by foreign donors: European Commission, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its implementing agencies, World Bank and UNDP, as well as funding based on bilateral collaborations with other countries: U.S.A and European countries, there are 3 management plans for protected areas elaborated, 2 plans are in the approval process, while it is expected to have 3 new plans within 2013.

The control of land use planning is provided through Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment of strategies, plans, projects and state and private activities, and

according to special provisions of sectoral and environmental legislation. The Network of Environmental Regional Agencies has an important role in assessment at local level, besides the one carried out at central level based on Commission of Environmental Permits and through the new procedures of one stop shop aiming to facilitate business registration.

Law enforcement measures regarding the nature protection are expressed in the environmental and sectoral laws on use of natural resources. Their implementation is ensured by Environmental Inspectorate, Forestry Police, the Inspectorate of Fisheries and inspectors under line Ministries.

### **Sectors in protection of environment and biodiversity**

Besides the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration other competent ministries related to the environment include:

- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection – Directorate for Plant Protection (control of production, traffic, import, export, storage, and application of plant protection and nutrition agents), Veterinary Services in customs etc.;
- Ministry of Economy, Trade and Energy (industry, energy efficiency, licenses for exploitation of mineral resources except ground waters, renewable energy sources;
- Ministry of Health (implementation of sanitary regulations related to environmental protection);
- Ministry of Public Works and Transport (road, air, railway, and water traffic);
- Ministry of Tourism (tourist development areas)