

Layman's Report



COMMON PLANS FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE TARGETS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BILATERAL NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS

This project is co-funded by the European Union and National Funds of the participating countries.



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All Project Partners (PPs) complement each other regarding knowledge & experience. All PPs participate in all activities and have the capacity for successful implementation of the project – Combine2Protect.

Lead Partners

Centre for development of the South-East planning region

Part of the activities of the CDSEPR are preparing a draft program for the development of the region, the draft action plan for the implementation of this programme, preparing proposals for development of the region, coordination of activities for implementation of the programme, providing professional and technical assistance in the preparation of development programmes of the local government units, encourages inter-municipal cooperation, implementation of projects financed by EU funds and other national and international financial resources, etc.

Project Manager – Zhuljeta Gjurmova; Financial Manager – Mima Stanoevska; Project Assistant – Marija Bandulova

Project Partners

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki-Special Account for Research Funds- School of Biology, Department of Ecology

In Combine2Protect project, a cross-thematic team is involved that focuses on biodiversity conservation and ecological modeling. The team members, hosted in the Department of Ecology, School of Biology of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, are active and engaged in research and project development on key environmental topics. The team has a strong focus on interdisciplinary research involving ecologists and social scientists, towards translating research outputs into policy recommendations. Basic research areas of the team include: a) design of protected areas and evaluation of the efficiency of the protected areas networks, b) global change biology, c) landscape ecology, d) systematic conservation planning.

Project Manager– Antonios Mazaris; Project Assistant – Anastasia Tsavdaridou

State Environmental Inspectorate

Is in charge for conducting inspections and adopting enforcement measures for the purpose of protection of air quality, inland waters and water basins, soil, degradation and pollution of protected flora and fauna, protection of biodiversity, protection of geodiversity and natural resources. It is also responsible for areas protected by law (national parks, monuments of nature, forest park, ornithological reserves etc.), the protection of the ozone layer, protection from harmful noise in the environment and the protection of ionizing radiation and promoting Environmental Policies.

Project Coordinator – Darko Blinkov; Project Assistant – Fejzula Spahija

Region of Western Republic Macedonia

Main responsibility is to design, plan and implement policies at regional level in the framework of their powers, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and social cohesion of the country, taking into account national and European policies. The General Directorates are: Development Planning, Environment and Infrastructure, Rural Economy and Veterinary, Development, Transport and Communications, Public Health and Social Welfare.

Project Manager – Vasilis Ampas

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this document is to explain in layman's terms the Combine2Protect project.

“Nature knows no borders” On the basis of this globally accepted saying, updated strategies on nature conservation focus on the design and implementation of common environmental policies, the expansion of current network of Protected Areas (PAs) and the development of coherent, functional and interconnected, international networks of PAs. COMBINE2PROTECT is designed to address these modern conservation challenges. This project aims to provide a solid basis for common and effective conservation initiatives through the establishment of a common network of PAs between the two countries. This project will provide all necessary tools, will allow the use of the most advanced methods, as well as the integration and analyses of many datasets in order to present the structure, functionality and benefits of a common network.

Reports and action plans will be prepared, sites for conservation will be prioritized, critical habitats will be mapped and green corridors will be designed to develop a tool for improving current conservation. Major environmental changes (climate & land use changes) pose a threat to biodiversity and ecosystems services, but their impacts are expected to be even higher in the near future. COMBINE2PROTECT will account for these future threats. Various models will be developed to map future distribution of habitats and species under climate change and we will project land uses changes and their impacts upon current network of PAs .

These tools will help to identify new sites of conservation interest and thus to design a dynamic, interconnected network of PAs that will allow species to shift their distributional ranges and move from original sites to other PAs. Still, we acknowledge that any such initiative could be successful only if it could be communicated to the public, supported by local communities and translated into policy. Therefore, it will apply a set of direct conservation measures to areas of biodiversity interest (Prespa National Park & Stumitsa River basin) in order to protect critical species and habitats, and at the same time to develop various strategic and management plans for other sites.

The objectives and expected outputs will be communicated to various users through a multidimensional communication campaign. With this project, we will develop tools to strength local economy and promote public awareness.

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All project beneficiaries will be involved in all activities in order to maximize interaction and knowledge exchange. All beneficiaries have the capacity to influence policy at various scales, and this remains a basic target that will ensure the success of the project. COMBINE2PROTECT represents an ambitious project. It is based on current needs raised by recent EU and National strategies and attempts to capitalize existing knowledge and transfer expertise.

COMBINE2PROTECT is our vision on the efficient and long term conservation of biodiversity and the associated ecosystems services.



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INTRODUCTION

COMBINE2PROTECT is an ambitious project that covers a variety of activities at local and regional level. All described activities complement one another so that to increase the efficiency of conservation initiatives in the region. PPs from both countries will be allocated with various tasks. For the Greek side, there is an increased, documented demand on approved infrastructure to be taken while there are many more PAs that should be studied in order to account for their spatial, ecological and socioeconomic features for consideration for the inclusion in the common network of PAs. For Republic North Macedonia side, there are clear needs on Strategic Action plans as a critical step for improving conservation, while the monitoring and sensitivity assessment of PAs is also highly demanding.

Infrastructure and Strategic Action plans are needed to improve conservation of species and habitats, strength efficiency of PAs capacity, but also support a sustainable future.

Meetings, seminars, workshops are needed to improve knowledge and support local participation in conservation. Once the project aims to develop and provide the framework for the first common network of PAs in which various aspects of conservation biology will be taken into consideration (e.g. climate change, fragmentation, connectivity) the involvement of scientists is critical for the new methods and tools that will support these objectives.

Our project focus on future, and thus we acknowledge that the sustainability of our efforts, tools, methods recommendations depends on the sustainability of the common network of PAs, on the offered capacity and on the support of all relevant activities. Thus, we are planning to provide solid support by generating a series of promotion activities, action plans and management targets that will be set by experts others than the PPs.

All activities operate in a complementary way. Activities related to monitoring of species and habitats, collection of drivers and pressures need to offer a temporal window sufficient enough to capture seasonal changes or any dynamic event that could result to misleading records. The development of various new methods and tools is also demanding and at the final step these tools will be parameterized by the data from the region. Proposed infrastructure activities are mature but will require time to be implemented on the field. In COMBINE2PROTECT we strongly believe that Strategic action plans and activities related to dissemination and communication will have the highest added value as they will be expanded for the duration needed for the fulfillment of other project activities. In this way there will be a dynamic interaction, with one action feeding the other, and thus directing next steps and improving final outputs and policy recommendations.

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JOINT MANAGEMENT

The Combine2Protect is a cross border project. All PPs complement each other regarding knowledge & experience. All Project partners (PPs) participate in all activities and have the capacity to successfully implement the project.

All PPs have already completed all necessary preparatory activities to ensure that Combine2Protect will be safely and successfully implemented. These activities include the collection of technical studies based on which the infrastructure activities will take place, Action Plans, Technical specifications etc.

The teams engaged in the Project work on infrastructure activities related to the reduction of grazing pressure that are planned to be undertaken at Prespa NP. Combine2Protect is designed to allow beneficiaries to interact and complement each other in order to ensure the improvement of conservation methods and policy instruments, and to facilitate the development and adoption of new – innovative tools.

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The general objective of Combine2Protect Project is to provide the most appropriate instruments to foster our capacity for biodiversity conservation and to disseminate them to a wide range of users in order to ensure a sustainable, efficient management & operation of PAs, to increase the number of species and the area of habitats and ecosystems protected and to improve conservation tools.

Aims:

1: Optimizing monitoring and protection at key sites

- Develop Regional Biodiversity Strategy-Action Plan, maps of key habitats, species & map of sensitivity of the South-East planning region
- Determine ecological properties (species-habitats), borders and hydrology of Monospitovo wetland-preparation of a Management Plan
- Develop, test and implement Earth Observation techniques & innovative methods for monitoring conservation status & threats
- Develop strategic plan and provide infrastructure to reduce irrigation water needs at Prespa NP

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- Apply measures to improve conservation status of priority habitats and species at Prespa NP by mitigating the impacts of grazing

2: Development of a common PA network

- Design a common network to increase current & future connectivity and ecological functionality, with emphasis on priority species & habitats

- Identify new sites within the two countries to be included in the conservation network

- Assess and model socio-economic driving forces (eg EU policies, economic trends) and environmental pressures (eg habitat loss) affecting biodiversity under current & projected future conditions

- Map key habitats, species, pressures and ecosystem services

3: Ecological Network Capacity Building

- Develop a dynamic-open Ecological Network data exchange system

- Provide various educational and promotion activities (Branding Scheme, mobile app, documentary etc)

- Monitor awareness building

- Support knowledge transfer

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WORK PACKAGES OF THE PROJECT

COMBINE2PROTECT runs a methodological approach that ensures the link between individual & joint cross-border actions. LP is responsible for coordination & synthesis of all WPs, Deliverables and communication with JS. Project is divided into four phases:

1. Preparatory phase (month 1-4) to set-up the project communication structure & to prepare a kick-off meeting
2. Implementation phase (month 3-24) that includes several overlapping activities: research, application, testing, tool development, communication, dissemination
3. Reporting phase: Preparation of regular progress reports, Final Report, Expenditure verification reports. Each activity ensures strong participation of all PPs
4. A clean-up phase (months 20-24) for cleanup, final delivery of the results, securing their availability beyond the end of the project

A continuous science-policy dialogue, dissemination and coordination will run across all phases.

The overall strategy is divided into five work packages:

WP1 - Management & coordination to ensure a smooth progress of all activities (coordination meetings, verification of expenditure etc); Set up tools for communication between PPs

WP2 - Communicate objectives, outputs, results (website, promotional material, events etc); Translate results of all WPs3-5 into policy recommendations-establishment of a continuous science-policy interface

WP3 - Assess the impacts of habitat loss and climate change upon current PAs; innovative methods, approaches and policy instruments, to develop a common network of PAs; Ensure regional connectivity; Design-communicate the common conservation network

WP4 - Direct conservation actions to important PAs to mitigate the ecosystem degradation; Develop & apply novel techniques for monitoring biodiversity and pressures (grazing/water quality); Assess sensitivity of Pas

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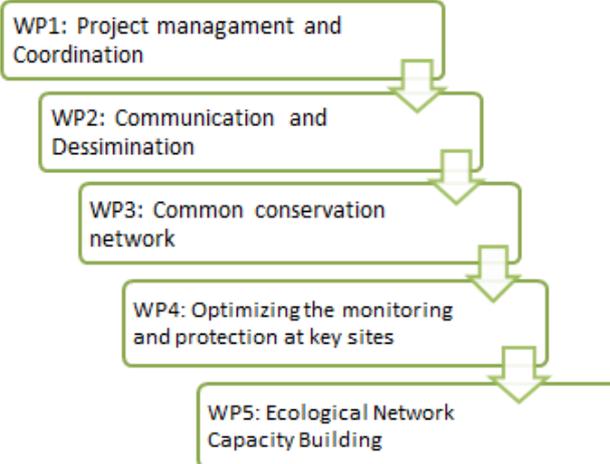
WP5 - Build sustainability for measures developed in all WPs; Open platform for continuous data exchange; Support PA connectivity; Develop a brand name, mobile app & dynamic website to provide information for the common PAs network (maps, land uses, habitats/species, hotels, eco-tours, local products, disable persons facilities etc), report on greening energy in critical areas for biodiversity

Overall Objective

To provide the most appropriate instruments to foster our capacity for biodiversity conservation and to disseminate them to a wide range of users to ensure a sustainable, efficient management & operation of PAs, increase number of species, area of habitats and ecosystems protected and improve conservation tools.



Work Packages



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WORK PACKAGE 1: Project Management and Coordination

Management & coordination to ensure a smooth progress of all activities (coordination meetings, verification of expenditure etc); Set up tools for communication between PPs.

Project Coordination Meetings

Six Project Coordination Meetings will be organized throughout the duration of the Project (24 months). Three meetings will be held in Republic North Macedonia and three meetings in Greece.

Project Management

During the implementation of the project tender procedures will be conducted. The project teams together with the hired external expert are directly responsible for preparation, implementation of the procedures and signing contracts with the selected Contractors.

Intranet – Project Communication platform

Preparation of documents (Administrative & WP documents, Presentations & meetings' documents, coordination decisions, information material) by the project team of LP1 before uploading them to the on-line Network Storage System.

Verification of expenditures

First Level Control (FLC) in order to ensure proper control and approval of the expenditures during the entire period of the implementation of the project.

WORK PACKAGE 2: Communication and Dissemination

Communicate objectives, outputs, results (website, promotional material, events etc); Translate results of all WPs3-5 into policy recommendations-establishment of a continuous science-policy interface.

Multilingual project communication plan

Design of the Multilingual project communication plan, which is the basis for information and publicity activities and communication. The plan serves as roadmap that specifies and records all publicity, communication, dissemination activities; it maps the priorities target groups, indicates objectives and lays down specific deadlines. The common communication plan is drafted and agreed on at the beginning of the project.

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Trilingual project's web platform

Preparation of trilingual project's web platform. All Project Partners (PPs) will provide contribution to the Website based on their activities and the results and outputs from their deliverables. All PPs will contribute with information, text editing and translation, as the Website will be in three languages (GR, MK and EN).

Public awareness campaign (Brochure and Booklet)

The brochure and booklet will be used as project materials, for promotion of the project;; they will be uploaded to all the project partners' web sites and will be sent to all relevant stakeholders, national and international collaborators.

Combine2Protect has developed an integrated publicity and communication strategy with actions that promote the objectives of the project and disseminate its results. A wide variety of audiences and users is targeted, both at domestic level and abroad: decision makers, administrators and managers in applied conservation, public authorities, stakeholders from the primary and the secondary sector, scientists, commercial and tourist chambers and businesses, general public etc.

International conferences for conservation and biodiversity

There will be International Conferences for Conservation and Biodiversity. For the conference all the relevant stakeholders will be invited, from national institutions, other regions and representatives from PPs.

WORK PACKAGE 3: Common conservation network

Assessment of the impacts of habitat loss and climate change upon current PAs; Application of innovative methods, approaches and policy instruments, to develop a common network of PAs; Ensuring regional connectivity; Design and communication of the common conservation network.

Regional Biodiversity strategy with Action Plan

Regional Biodiversity Strategy with Action Plan is the main activity of the project. External expert team will be hired that will create and develop the Strategy. This strategy will cover entire South-East planning region. With this will be improved protection for species and habitats. It will also develop background information required by the EU for the development of Natura 2000 sites. It will be used by local authorities for the implementation of infrastructure measures.

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Map of the key habitats and species

For mapping of important species and habitats, the implementation of an extensive and intensive field surveys of the entire area of the South-East planning Region is necessary, as well as the involvement of many experts on biodiversity, especially experts on habitat (forest habitats, wetland habitats, grasslands, etc.) and species (mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, plants, fungi, algae, and of invertebrates - daily butterflies, snails, dragonflies, beetles and other xylophages insects, aquatic macro invertebrates etc.).

Map of sensitivity of the South East planning region

A map of ecological sensitivity will be prepared. The same expert team that is involved in preparation of the Regional Biodiversity Strategy and mapping of the key habitats and species will develop the map of sensitivity as well.

The most sensitive areas on the map of ecological sensitivity are those that have the highest value in terms of biological diversity and at the same time are most at risk because of the unfavorable abiotic factors. At the same time, most sensitive areas are mostly core areas of significant animal species and plants. Therefore, the priority is the preservation of their integrity and connectivity i.e. they are priorities for protection. The least sensitive areas are those in which the values of biological diversity are low and at the same time are at risk of various abiotic and anthropogenic factors. Between these two categories there are areas in which biological values are high, but not endangered and areas where the biological values are relatively low and at the same time are under significant risk of the abiotic factors.

Assessment report on regional connectivity

Assessment of the regional ecological connectivity will be conducted in order to gain additional knowledge regarding the efficiency of the common network of PAs. Information on various parameters related to dispersal potential of the priority species found in the region will be collected and multiple analyses will be conducted, as well as landscape connectivity models will be developed to expand our understanding and thus our capacity to determine critical distances for regional connectivity and to classify species according to their potential vulnerability to fragmentation in real landscapes. Critical areas that are of a high importance for regional connectivity will be identified and a spatially explicit proposal will be generated on the development of green corridors, while issues related to future road networks and their impact upon connectivity patterns will be raised.

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Report on impact of climate change and other pressures upon habitats, species and ecosystem services of PAs

The impact of climate change and other pressures will be assessed, as future changes are going to drive species out of the boundaries of current PAs. Consequently, it is important to know where to look for and how to accurately protect them. Various datasets at different spatial scales (e.g. climatic and ecological data) will be collected, collated and analyzed and species distribution/ecological niche models and climate change models will be conducted. Climatic stability will be assessed for the PAs of the common conservation network and suggestions on the sites which are expected to maintain similar climatic properties in the future and thus should be of high conservation interest will be made.

Guideline on the preparation of Action Plans on Sustainable forestry and mitigation of human related pressures in protected areas.

A complete guideline on Action Plans on Sustainable forestry and mitigation of human related pressures in PAs will be developed, indicating how impact assessments - forest management plans should be drawn in all PAs. The guideline will provide all principles and priorities for reporting and evaluating the impact of various pressures (grazing, forest roads etc.) upon protected areas of high biodiversity value and thus will be built based on the principles of EU strategies and policies. The basic information will be collected from all transnational PAs in the region.

Book for species/habitats and ecosystem services at the PAs common network

An external expert will be hired to provide expert information for the Book for species/habitats and ecosystem services at the PAs of the common conservation network.

A book will be prepared on the biodiversity & ecosystems services within the common conservation network. It will provide scientific facts and information on conservation issues, management proposals socioeconomic attributes. The service needs to be supported by scientific editorial board to ensure a high quality output.

The book is a way to improve knowledge of the policy matters and strategy on environmental management and will provide a decision making support to politicians, academic, as well as to important consultancy and administrative staff. The book will have three topics:

- A. Natural and biodiversity value
- B. Sustainability of human activities in important natural areas
- C. Common cross-border conservation

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Workshops on PAs and regional connectivity

Workshops aim to enhance the knowledge regarding the efficient management of protected areas and regional connectivity and provide information to a range of target groups, such as personnel of public authorities (e.g. Municipalities, Environmental agencies, PAs Management Bodies), members of NGO's, professionals of the primary, the secondary and the tertiary economic sector, scientists, students, as well as the general public. The duration of each workshop is one day. The participants will observe scientific presentations/lectures, while they will have the opportunity to discuss all issues that interest them in open discussion section. The trainers will be scientists with high relative experience.

WORK PACKAGE 4: Optimizing the monitoring and protection at key sites

Direct conservation actions to important PAs to mitigate the ecosystem degradation; Develop & apply novel techniques for monitoring biodiversity and pressures (grazing/water quality); Assess sensitivity of PAs.

Meeting for expertise exchange on biodiversity monitoring methods

Twenty persons will be invited to this event. The participants will be experts from the two countries and they will exchange their experience in the biodiversity monitoring methods. The results from this meeting will be used in implementation of the other activities of this project.

Meeting for expertise exchange on implementation of EU environmental directives with respect to the Natura 2000 network

This meeting aims to enhance the organizational capacity of agencies and entities involved in the biodiversity monitoring and the implementation of EU environmental directives with respect to the Natura 2000 network. The duration of each meeting will be one day and it will be divided in two parts. The first part will be lectures, while the second part will be round table in order to enhance the exchange of opinions, ideas and experiences. The trainers will consist of scientists and members of public agencies and organizations with high experience on those issues.

The participants will be employees of Centre for development of the South-East planning region, Municipalities from the region, part of the experts that are involved in the preparation of the Strategy for Biodiversity and Study for precise determination of habitat types, hydrology, degradation of freshwater habitats of Monospitovo wetland with Preparation of Management Plan for Monospitovo wetland and scientists from Greece that are involved in the biodiversity monitoring and the implementation of EU environmental directives, environmental protection and resources management.

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Sub regional Training seminars at IPA eligible regions

Sub-regional Training Seminars for Personnel and scientist on Environmental Law Enforcement and adjustment to EU directives host by PP3. On the training will participated relevant experts, reporters and other guests.

Assessment of water balance at sensitive freshwater ecosystems

The main objective of this activity is the simulation with a mathematical model of the unsteady water flow in the channels of the irrigation system in the transnational PA of Prespa Lakes and the optimization of the effectiveness of water. Once standardized, a protocol will be generated to promote efficient cost and effective monitoring of all freshwater systems found in the common network of PAs.

Monitoring of water quality and environmental health in cross-border PAs with freshwater ecosystems using innovative technologies & methodologies

A methodological framework will be developed in order to achieve monitoring of water quality in freshwater ecosystems of interest with the use of innovative technologies. Water quality will be monitored using high resolution images acquired from different sensors placed on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and also from satellite images.

Assessment of water quality of freshwater ecosystems of interest will also be provided based on the use of bio-indicators and indices developed on the basis of microorganism. Sampling and digital microscope analyses for species and taxa description will be included.

Detecting changes in protected landscape by using drones

Innovative methodology in surface and land use mapping, surveying and monitoring will be developed. New type of data will be collected and used, while existing problems will be assessed under an innovative approach. Background information that is required by the EU for the development of Natura2000 sites will be acquired. These innovative methodologies will contribute to the coordination of practices and policies that affect the spatial organization of people and activities in the landscape. At the same time will provide the means for the design and application of measures to mitigate climate change and enhance of conservation.

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WORK PACKAGE 5: Ecological Network Capacity Building

Build sustainability for measures developed in all WPs; Open platform for continuous data exchange; Support PA connectivity; Develop a brand name, mobile app & dynamic website to provide information for the common PAs network (maps, land uses, habitats/species, hotels, eco-tours, local products, disabled persons facilities etc), report on greening energy in critical areas for biodiversity.

Mobile App for Combine2Protect

Preparation of a mobile application for the project “Common plans for biodiversity conservation and sustainable targets for the development of a bilateral network of protected areas” for the cross-border region.

It aims to advertise local products and services, to share and communicate ecological, social, economic and cultural attributes of the region, to offer a new market potential for the region. It will increase accessibility and visitation rates, will be used by local authorities for dissemination, will improve financial status of local communities, promote a sustainable tourism model, promote the biodiversity and different habitats in the region and provide continued public education.

Branding Scheme for products and services and a Destination of Excellence Award

A Brand Scheme and a Destination of Excellence Award will be developed for the common network. It will be awarded to municipalities, agencies, farmers, accommodation facilities and commercial businesses of the tourism sector that operate within the network and meet specific standards. The overall objective is therefore to create a sustainable Branding Scheme and Award that will be recognizable, widely acceptable so that any user would link the Branding Name to the region. Criteria, protocols, processes and standards for products, services and destinations will be developed, while at the same time we will provide the means for the sustainability of the Branding Scheme and Award.

Sustainability of common network of PAs and support of local communities

A study will be generated to enhance development of the local communities of the common network of PAs ensuring sustainability. The needs and special characteristics of the local economy will be considered, as well as the critical issues for the sustainable development of the area.

Alternative funding schemes (e.g. EU) will be assessed and alternative projects and programs that could cover the objectives of the network and thus further support its

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development will be recognized. Regional innovation potential and challenges will be defined and analyzed in depth to be linked with specific funding mechanisms.

Documentary Film on Project's Objectives and outputs

A high quality, professional documentary will be developed to present the project's objectives, addressed challenges, developed methods, technological achievements and scientific outputs. It will also provide promotion and support to the common network of PAs, highlighting the proposed conservation practices and actions for sustainable development of the region.

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RESULTS

The project's sustainability derives from the main objectives implied in its design: support biodiversity conservation as the most critical component of life and sustainability in the planet, build a cooperation partnership, improve capacity on sustainable public knowledge and environmentally cautious culture, improve capacity for biodiversity conservation by exchange of knowledge and tools, drive for higher quality of life among the residents of the border area.

The generated public knowledge and environmentally cautious culture focused on biodiversity and ecosystems will, as is proven by experience, lead to other initiatives of the local governments and civil society aimed to the search and disclosure of potential economic benefits from the available natural resources. As regards the drive for higher quality of life, its self-sustaining character it has been proved and thus supported by several National and EU strategies/policies.

Institutional sustainability is ensured through the allocation of management responsibilities to the public institutions and the University.

LP1 is responsible for the management of the certification award for services and products after the end of the project. A specific socioeconomic management plan will be drawn to ensure sustainability and efficient development of the tool including financial sustainability.

All project's objectives are promoted through the activities of the communication strategy that aims not only to disseminate the results and outputs of the project, but also to inform and raise the awareness of the general public, to improve capacity for biodiversity conservation by exchange of knowledge and tools, to introduce alternative ways of development through environmental conservation and generally to create an environmentally cautious culture.

The dissemination activities and materials are designed to address various target groups (both with expertise and with no specific skills or competences) and to cover a variety of relative issues (e.g. issues regarding biodiversity but also issues regarding the primary economic sector). This multifaceted approach will promote the objectives of the project during its lifetime.

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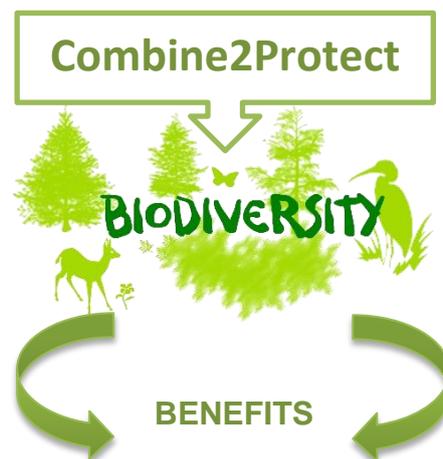


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CONCLUSIONS

Combine2Protect represents an ambitious project. It is based on current needs raised by recent EU and National strategies and attempts to capitalize existing knowledge and transfer expertise. Combine2Protect is our vision on the efficient, sound and long term conservation of biodiversity and the associated ecosystems services.



- ✓ Provide the framework for the development, promotion and sustainable long-term management of a common cross-boundary network of PAs
- ✓ Develop new methods for analyzing biodiversity processes & data
- ✓ Develop advanced models and tools to study ecological coherence & connectivity
- ✓ Develop new technologies for monitoring of species and habitat
- ✓ Apply for the first time the most promising approaches for reducing biodiversity pressures
- ✓ Use this knowledge and innovative results to improve effectiveness of policy instruments for conservation and sustainability, especially under the prism of climate change
- ✓ Integrate results/approaches from recent IPA-, EU- and National-projects to provide the most sophisticated tools for enriching the efficiency of the cross-border PA network
- ✓ Develop and apply methods and policy instruments in cross-border wide and regional case studies so that to account for the ecological and societal variability and different histories of conservation policies
- ✓ Provide a strategic plan for assessing and ensuring the coherence and ecological sufficiency of networks of PAs that account for different conservation responsibilities from the EU to the regional, national and transnational level
- ✓ Produce a comprehensive framework that will improve our capacity of conservation, will identify habitat patches that may be critical to regional connectivity, will also focus on in conservation of biodiversity resources shared by the two Countries

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Zhulieta Gjirkova

Project Manager

zulieta.gjirkova@rdc.mk



**ARISTOTLE
UNIVERSITY
OF THESSALONIKI**

Antonios Mazaris

Project Manager

amazaris@bio.auth.gr



**STATE ENVIRONMENTAL
INSPECTORATE OF
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

Darko Blinkov

Project Coordinator

d.blinkov@sei.gov.mk



Vasilis Ampas

Project Manager

ambasv@gmail.com

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