

“COMBINE2PROTECT”

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



Duration:

24 months

“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 design 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. We will provide all necessary tools, we will use the most advances methods, and we will integrate and analyze many datasets in order to present the structure, functionality and benefits of a common network.

This project will contribute with action plans, will prioritize sites for conservation, will map critical habitats and design green corridors, to develop a tool for improving current conservation.

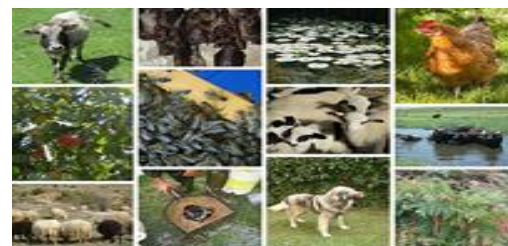
**This project is
co-funded by
the European
Union and
National Funds
of the
participating
countries**



Main objective of the project:



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.



*Optimizing monitoring and protection at key sites

- Develop Regional Biodiversity Strategy-Action Plan, maps of key habitats, species & sensitivity of the South-East 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
- Apply measures to improve conservation status of priority habitats and species at Prespa NP by mitigating the impacts of grazing

* 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

* 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

Lead Partner:

Centre for Development of the South-East Planning Region



Project Partners:

- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki - Special account for research funds - Department of biology
- State Environmental Inspectorate
- Region of Western Macedonia

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