

Vjosa Wild River National park

2023

ToR Stakeholder consultation

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1 BACKGROUND

In March 2023, the Vjosa Wild River National Park (VWRNP) was officially established, making it the largest national park in Albania. The VWRNP covers the entire Vjosa River in Albania, from the Greek border to the mouth of the Adriatic Sea, as well as the three main tributaries: Drinos, including Kardhiq, Bënçë and Shushicë. This corresponds to a stretch of about 400 km.

In the coming years, all free-flowing rivers and streams, as well as the most valuable areas with the highest biological and geomorphological values around the rivers, should be added to capture the important ecosystems that feed and influence the health and biodiversity of the river or that are influenced by the river, such as key areas of the delta. These include, but are not limited to, all free-flowing tributaries and adjacent areas of highest biological and geomorphological value, including the Vjosa Delta area, that will be included in the expanded area of the National Park.

In addition, a procedure has been initiated for the establishment of a transboundary protected area between Greece and Albania, which will ensure adequate protection of the entire Aaos-Vjosa river basin.

The full operation of the VWRNP is expected to start in early 2024. However, the preliminary operation of the VWRNP is planned to start as early as 2023 (transition period). The initial capacity building plan assumes that the limited number of staff currently employed in four RAPA units (Vlore, Gjirokastra, Divjaka and Korca) will be temporarily relocated to the area of the newly created VWRNP before a dedicated management authority and staff are appointed in 2024. Start of the management of the Vjosa area as the National Park according to the IUCN standards requires extensive public consultation. It is expected that some changes in legislation will be necessary to adapt to these new and innovative management options.

When designating protected areas in Albania, the boundaries of the protected area and dialogue with stakeholders are two important and essential components. This process must be supported by active participation, and support, of the different target groups, including national and international public.

Phase I, which led to the establishment of the VWRNP, was supported by the stakeholder engagement process, the main objective of which was to inform local communities and stakeholders about the establishment of the national park. In the next phase, the stakeholder engagement process was intended to move from 'receiving information' to developing an active participatory process and engaging stakeholders

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The basic stakeholder analysis has already been done as part of the previous work on the Vjosa River and is available to the consultant. He/she needs to review the document and modify it if necessary.

Consultants are required to develop a process of free, prior, and informed consent consisting of three phases: gathering information, collaborating on planning and implementation, and ensuring accountability of the process.

The information-gathering phase should focus on understanding the current legal and local context, including the legal rights of local communities and other stakeholders.

As part of the collaboration to design the VWRNP and implementation activities, consultants should develop a culturally sensitive approach that reflects local needs and tradititr-5 (e).4m595.69 (rt)-2.5 (.6(e)5Toc)4. (c)24. (c)2

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NGOs, and other stakeholders to learn their position on the establishment of the protected area,

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The expected date for organising the study tour (and starting the work) is the second week of June 2023, and the work should be completed no later than 31 October 2023. The expected working days for this consultancy are about 85-92.

5 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE OF THE CONSULTANTS

The consultant or team of experts who are employed or associated with the company, should have the minimum of the following qualifications and skills:

- A degree from a recognized university in public administration, social services, humanistics or relevant fields;
- At least 5 years of experience of working with stakeholders and preparing analysis of their participation in specific processes;
- Experience of dealing with public and local administration;
- Knowledge of analytical capacity for communication strategies;
- High communication and moderation skills;
- Albanian national with good English skills.