

Environment for People in the Dinaric Arc



A Western Balkans Environment & Development Cooperation Programme

The Dinaric Arc in South Eastern Europe is an area with a rich natural and cultural heritage. The region hosts large and almost unspoilt forests and healthy populations of large carnivores (bear, lynx, wolf, golden jackal), and is the most water-rich area in the Mediterranean in terms of freshwater ecosystems. However these qualities are under threat due to the current economic crisis and previous socio-political circumstances. The effects of rural abandonment and degradation of the natural environment are having severe impacts on the livelihoods of many rural communities in the region.

Yet recent events have created an opportunity to safeguard the Dinaric Arc's biological and cultural diversity. At the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 9) the "Big Win" statement was released, moving the governments of South Eastern Europe closer to an emerging vision of a vast cross border network of protected areas stretching across this ecologically important region. This joint commitment will help protect the region's rich biological and cultural diversity, favour the growth of national economies and provide a concrete basis for lasting regional cooperation.

Following up on the commitments made in the "Big Win", as well as on the premise of the Dinaric Arc Initiative, a number of organisations have joined forces to set up the project "Environment for People in the Dinaric Arc" which will run for three years, from 2009 to 2012, and will support cross-border cooperation for the conservation of key natural and cultural sites.

Covering six pilot sites, (NP Plitvicka jezera-NP Una, NP Durmitor-NP Sutjeska, NP Tara-Drina, Neretva delta, Mountain Dinara, and Prokletije / Bjeshkët e Namuna) the project will promote the natural and cultural values of the area, while enhancing local livelihoods through improved regional cooperation and strengthened environmental governance.



Durmitor National Park (Montenegro)
UNESCO World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve, photo: Boris Erg/IUCN



Traditional agriculture in Džajčići village, Bosnia & Herzegovina; photo: © WWF-Canon / E. Parker



A broad range of activities will be undertaken at different levels including:

- Establishing bottom up local private / public partnerships to conserve natural heritage and use;
- Identifying actions in the fields of tourism, forestry, agriculture, and protection of valuable areas;
- Increasing capacities to recognize and value local biodiversity and cultural values;
- Aligning priorities to undertake joint action across borders;
- Assessing the potential for establishing transboundary protected areas;
- Integrating activities into broader European frameworks for nature conservation; and,
- Creating platforms for key decision makers from different countries to interact and coordinate actions.

The Western Balkans Environment & Development Cooperation Project “Environment for People in the Dinaric Arc” (also known as “Sustaining Rural Communities and their Traditional Landscapes through Strengthened Environmental Governance in Transboundary Protected Areas of the Dinaric Arc”) is being implemented by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), WWF Mediterranean Programme and SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) and is funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.



Golden Lily *Lilium bosniacum*,
IUCN photo archives

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About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN works on biodiversity, climate change, energy, human livelihoods and greening the world economy by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,000 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

www.iucn.org



About SNV

SNV is one of the world's most active development organisations, with almost half a century of international experience. Working in 33 countries across four continents, SNV combines the inspiration of the development worker with professional advisory services, strengthening the capacity of local organisations in order to create real impact in rural economic development.

SNV's vision is a society where all people enjoy the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development. SNV offers high quality professional services and knowledge to groups and individuals in order to build strong, stable and successful organisations that create the conditions in which people and communities are able to flourish.

In the Western Balkans, SNV has been active for over 15 years, working in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro. Through a network of 11 local offices, over 100 SNV permanent staff support a wide range of private and public sector organizations at national, regional and local levels, developing the rural economy and assisting the move to EU localisation in agriculture, forestry, tourism, water, and governance. Where possible SNV includes local capacity builders in its approach, and works with many local partners and international partners.

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation is headquartered in The Hague, registered as an independent foundation in The Netherlands, and receives substantial financial assistance from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

www.snvworld.org



About WWF

WWF, the global conservation organization, is one of the world's largest and most respected independent environmental conservation organizations. WWF has a global network active in over 100 countries with some 5 million supporters.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption. WWF is known only by its initials.

www.panda.org/mediterranean/