

CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS FOR SOUND MANAGEMENT OF THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE BUNA RIVER - VELIPOJA PROTECTED LANDSCAPE

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Table of Content

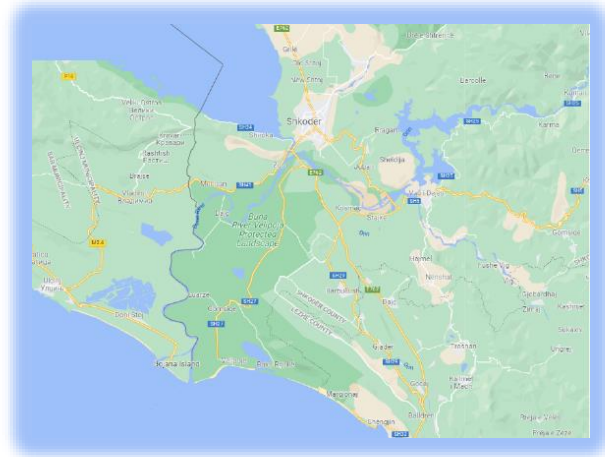
Introduction & Background	4
Methodology.....	4
Key Finding.....	7
Stakeholders Identified	8
The BRVPL as part of RAPA management work	8
RAPA as a regulator for proper management of BRVPL	9
The Management Committee.(MC)	12
Civil Society.....	12
Local communities.....	12
Recommendations.....	14
Annexes	17

Abbreviations

BRVPL	Buna River Velipoja Protected Landscape
CAN	Capacity Needs Assessment
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers
EU	European Union
GI	Geographic Indication
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
MC	Management Committee
NAPA	National Agency of Protected Areas
PA	Protected Areas
PAP/RAC	Priority Action Program/Regional Activity Center
RAPA	Regional Administration of Protected Areas

I. Introduction & Background

The Buna River Velipoje Protected Landscape (BRVPL) is an area in north-western part of Albania, encompassing the mouth of Drini River, the lagoon of Viluni, Buna River with its river mouth, and the gulf of Drini running across Velipojë alongside the Adriatic Sea. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has noted PLBV as Category V and by designation under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance. The landscape is an important Bird and Plant Area, as it is home of threatened endemic bird and plant species. It is an important migration corridor of species between the Adriatic Sea and the inland area during migration season. The area is characterised by a rich diversity composed of relatively flat and shallow landscape, forests on alluvial soil, dry grasslands, shrub lands, marsh, freshwater wetlands and beaches.



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BRVPL area is host to about 30,000 residents dealing with various activities as agriculture, livestock, fishing, tourism, and services mainly oriented to primary activities. Most of the residents are locals, though due to internal migration the newcomers are well integrated as well. Several factors that are related to social, economic, environmental aspects and cultural norms have impacted the relation of humans with nature to mention agriculture land size and fragmentation, agriculture and fishing practices, sustainable use of nature resources, understanding the importance of preservation for current and future generations, etc. Residents' activities in some cases have caused land and water pollution, inappropriate waste management, illegal hunting and fishing, fires, occupation of territories with illegal buildings, etc. Despite that, there is an ever increasing awareness among people and institutions to protect and preserve the wealth of this landscape.

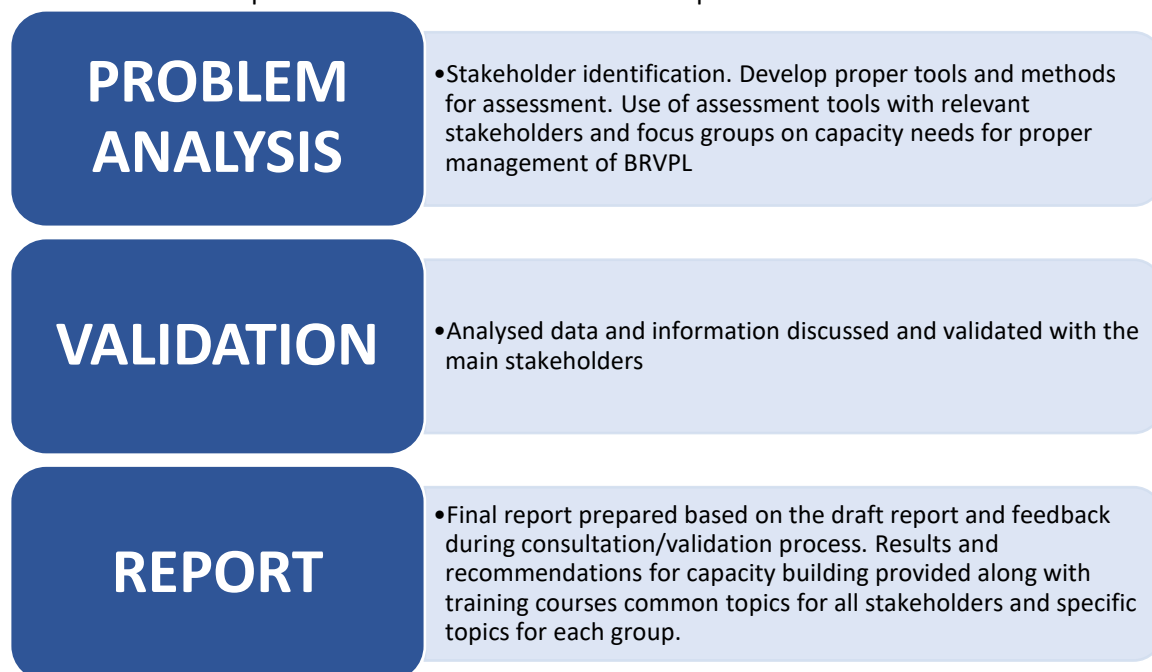
The area is under the administration of the Regional Administration of Protected Areas (RAPA) Shkoder, which manages it based on the "Internal Regulation on Organization and Function of the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) and the Regional Administration of Protected Areas (RAPA)", as well as based on the Law 81/2017. Other stakeholders related to landscape management include Shkoder Municipality; Coastal Agency; environmental, farmers and tourism associations; local civil society organizations; the Fisheries Management Organization; educational bodies and schools.

Pursuant to Article 41 of Law No. 81/2017 "On the Protected Areas", based on the Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) No 593/ 2018, are established Management Committees (MC) of PAs. The MC is a supervisory structure carrying out non-management activities, for each PA organized at regional level, with defined composition, functions, duties and responsibilities.

This consultancy on Capacity Needs Assessment (CNA) for BRVPL aims at identifying needs that will lead to improving capacities of local site managers, the members of the MC, and residents at wide to guarantee a better role in the sound management of the landscape and proper implementation of the management plan. The focus will be on identifying needs and gaps and proposing activities in order to improve knowledge, and capacities of stakeholders involved in the form of training courses and assistance.

II. Methodology

The methodology used for this consultancy was focused on problem identification and analysis, the validation process based on which the draft report will be finalized considering the comments of main actors. The steps followed and actors consulted are presented in the scheme below.



A close cooperation was established with PAP/RAC (Priority Actions Programme /Regional Activity Centre) and INCA (Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania). A desk study has considered relevant documents as a reference, while a list of the reviewed ones is presented at Annex 1.

Step 1. Identification of stakeholders. Three main groups of stakeholders were considered to conduct CNA – the local site managers; the members of MC; and the other relevant stakeholders (including NGOs, local community representatives, local businesses, ecotourism businesses, sustainable farming initiators, etc.).

Step 2. Working with the Focus Group. Two main focus groups were planned to be consulted (local site managers and the members of MC) to find out and discuss their capacity needs in performing their respective tasks related to sound management of BRVPL and the implementation of management plan. For this purpose three basic documents were used as reference materials for discussion: (i) the area Management Plan; (ii) duties and responsibilities of PA local managers/staff, and (iii) duties and responsibilities of the MC. Unfortunately, as indicated in the session on MC below, consultation with MC was impossible due to no/weak response by MC members. A deeper search of the consultant shows that MC is not properly functioning.

The gap between **“what currently exists”** and **“what is needed”**, was used as core element comprising the needed change. Through a participatory, transparent and systematic process it was aimed to assess the needs and define resources for meeting such needs. Within the focus group facilitated by the consultant, participants have defined **the gaps, causes of these gaps, and how to overcome them**. The following Table 1 is used to discuss and analyze the problems faced by PA

managers/staff where two documents have been core for discussions, more specifically: (i) Area Management Plan; (ii) Duties and responsibilities of local PA managers.

Table 1: Exercise 1 – Problem Analysis. Focus group PA managers/staff

Material	Problems	Causes of problems. Individual	Causes of problems. Institutional	Effect	Action/Intervention needed
1. Management Plan. 2. Duties and Responsibilities of local PA managers	What	Why	Why	What	How

Following the first exercise, the focus group has reached a consensus within the group on the most critical actions. They have ranked the most critical actions (according to importance) that will serve to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. Identified actions from exercise 1 were listed and prioritized based on their importance, while further discussion was used to decide on action's chances of occurrence and frequency. The following Table 2 was used for the purpose of this second exercise.

Table 2: Exercise 2 – ranking the most critical issues. Focus group PA managers/staff

Actions	Importance	Chances of Occurrence	Frequency

Step 3. Further Needs Assessment. In order to get deeper insides on capacity development needs, questionnaires were prepared and used specifically for PA administration and PA Management Committee. (See Annex 2 on Questionnaire – Protected Area Administration; and Annex 3 on Questionnaire – Protected Areas Management Committee

Step 4. other Stakeholders. Other stakeholders were identified and included in the assessment. These were stakeholders that either are affected or have an impact on BRVPL such as local entrepreneurs, fisherman, tourist operators, farmers, NGOs, etc. For the identified NGOs the Questionnaire used is presented at Annex 4, while the one used for local stakeholders active in the area is presented at Annex 5.

Step 5. Resources Required. Based on the above exercises and questionnaire responses, the required resources were generated, including: Training topics and type of consultant/trainer or resource person needed. (ii) Detailed Terms of References (for the required consultant/trainer or resource person needed) prepared in compliance to the required support; (iii) prepared a list of support materials and facilities needed and their respective budget using Table 3 below.

Table 3: Generate the Table of Resources Required

Objective	Capacity strengthening intervention		Resources required	Responsibility	Period
	Training	Coaching /Mentoring			

Step 6. Validation process. Based on the results of the listed exercises and questionnaire analysis, a draft report on needs assessment has been prepared. This draft report was further discussed with and validated by the main stakeholders RAPA, and local NGOs.

This final report reflects the discussions on the draft report and include all relevant recommendations on capacity building addressing common topics and specific ones, resources required (human, financial, physical), and relevant time frame.

III. Key Findings

Analyses and findings from the process.

1. Stakeholders identified and their position in terms of management of the Landscape.

In the context of the BRVPL, the concept of the stakeholder is related to individuals, groups, institutions or organizations who have a direct, significant, and specific interest in management and development of the PA. The identified crucial stakeholders for the purpose of the needs assessment are presented at the Table 4 below

Table 4: Stakeholders and their position in terms of BRVPL

STAKEHOLDERS	POSITION IN TERMS OF BRVPL
National Government	Development of legislation (law, regulations, decision), policy and strategy at national level. Through its instruments provide subsidy and other financial and technical support on local developments
Protected Area Management Committee	The Management Committee has the duty to get involved in the drafting of the management plan in line with local and sectorial development plans, respecting the requirements for area protection; supervision of the implementation of the management plan and programs; promoting the ecological development of the surrounding environment; analyzing the performance of duties and functions of the PA administration in regard to implementation of the management plan; analyzing the report on the income and financial expenses for the implementation of the plan; recommending the definition of the investments direction; approving PA annual status report; proposing to the Minister of environment and NAPA, changes in the management plan, extension of borders, and additional measures to improve its quality; promoting development and implementation of projects aiming to improve the qualities of the area, etc.
National and Regional Agency of Protected Areas	NAPA's mission is to manage the network of PAs; develop and implement the management plans for PAs; propose changes for the improvements in the legal and sub-legal framework for the management of PAs; propose site expansion, and operating PAs according to relevant rules and regulations.
Local Government	Shkoder and Lezha Municipality. Establish administrative structures to carry their functions and exercise competences in the areas under their jurisdiction according to laws in power. They are responsible for collection, removal and treatment of wastes and sewages; undertake measures to guarantee quality and protection of air, soil, and water from pollution; guarantee protection from acoustic pollution; develop educational and promotion activities related to environment protection.

Regional Authorities	Shkoder Regional Agency of Agriculture Extension (AREB) including Shkoder, Lezhe, and Kukës. The role of Agency is to provide information and advice on farmer's technologic advancement aiming increase of competitiveness in agriculture; provide information and assistance on financial support schemes in agriculture and rural development; motivate farmers cooperation; organize and develop professional training courses for farmers; provide information on standards related to environment, quality, marketing organic agriculture, and products with geographic indication; provide information for a wide public via mass media; collect statistical data; conduct assessment on damages caused due to natural disasters in agriculture, etc.
Education System	Shkodra University, primary and secondary schools in the PLBV area. The university in addition to education carries research and study work in the territory of PLVB. The primary and secondary school students are users of the PLBV as visitors but as well for educational purposes.
Community	Sustainable use of resources, responsible to use pro conservation practices on land use and other resources. Enhance value of the area and make it attractive for tourism. Ensure revitalization of tradition in production and/or processing of products. Contribute in the increase/enhancement of wildlife.
Livestock Farmers	Livestock farmers and veterinary service to prevent and control animal diseases. Livestock farmers have to better manage wastes and manure aiming the protection of surface and ground waters from potential pollutants. Planned and controlled grazing practices to avoid overgrazing and allow equilibrium in natural resources use. Increase farm efficiency (higher production per animal unit) aiming to reduce the number of animals managed, meanwhile increase production.
Crop producers	Farmers dealing with production of crops in open field and greenhouses. Follow minimum requirement standards in all farming aspects, particularly use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides in this context taking care for surface and underground water pollution. Diversification of production and increase of product standards and quality in respond to tourism development.
Tourism related agencies, businesses	Undertake all measure for conservation and wise & sustainable use of the PA. Protect resources and undertake measure to keep clean air, soil and water. Control acoustic pollution by following and respecting all official norms and standards.
Civil Society Organizations	Dealing mainly with Lobbying and awareness campaigns
Media	Duty to highlight conservation issues. Aware public on protection and conservation issues and point out cases of violation.

2. The BRVPL as part of RAPA management work

PLBV is a complex and diversified landscape part of PA managed by Shkodra RAPA that in total manages an area of about 50,000 hectares including **Nature Monument and Ramsar Site "Shkodra Lake"**, the **National Park "Theth"**, and the **"Protected Landscape Buna River – Velipoje" (PLBV)**. The protected landscape is comprised of Buna river and its surrounding wetlands, Buna delta, Swamp of Domni and Viluni Lagoon. It has a total area of 23,027 hectares of 7,799 ha of shrubs, lagoon area 346 ha, coastal sand dunes 496 ha, saline soils 252 ha, and other areas such as agriculture land and

settlements 14,134 ha¹. The most common forest species are poplar, willow, ash-tree, oak, black locus, hornbeam, cornel, etc. Buna river is host of more than 30 types of sweet water fish such as carp, Albanian roach, chub, perch, etc., and a pathway for many species and subspecies from Shkodra Lake into the Sea such as beech, cuckoo, eel, bass, summer and autumn mullet, etc. Buna itself and its surrounding waters are very rich with water birds (about 50 types); the area is one of the main migratory routes for birds in Europe while many of them build their nests in this area. Little grebe, Pygmy Cormorant, Eurasian wigeons, pochards are some of the popular birds, with little gull, and Sandwich terns the number of which is very considerable. The landscape, flora and fauna diversity, provides for various activities as Eco touristic, recreational, educational, agricultural and other type of land use that should be in line with nature preservation and respect for social norms and traditional values of locals. Being a National Park, importance of PLBV is further increased, and is ever more becoming an attractive site for visitors and businesses. Consequently, the activities along Buna sides require in harmony cohabit between nature and people respecting and preserving the environment and the wealth of this area.

3. RAPA as a regulator for proper management of BRVPL

The National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) is established based on the DCM No. 102/2015 with the mandate to manage, protect, develop, extend and well-functioning of the PAs and other nature networks such as Natura 2000 based on their respective management plans in the territory of Albania. The agency monitors and prepares the inventory of flora and fauna in these areas, and generates incomes based on the services to others, incomes to be used for investment purposes in PAs. The Agency counts about 274² staff members of which 20 are part of the central office and 254 are part of the Regional Administrations of Protected Area (RAPAs), where RAPA of Shkoder counts 29³ staff members. RAPA Shkoder is organized into two main sectors: the **Management Sector** composed of 8 specialists covering management issues and processing all relevant data at County (“Qark”) level; and the **Monitoring Sector** composed of 21 staff members, of which 16 are Rangers covering the direct administration and control of activities carried out in the PA, as well collecting field data at County level.

Duties and responsibilities of NAPA and RAPAs staff are defined into the document “*Internal Regulation on Organization and Functioning of the National Agency of Protected Areas and the Regional Administrations of Protected Areas*”. The document is based on a wide legal base including the Law no. 9000/2012 on “Organization and function of public administration”; Law nr. 9367/2005 on “Prevention of conflict of interests”; Law 9049/2003 on “Declaration and control of assets on financial obligations of public servants”; Law 9131/2003; on “Ethical rules of public administration”; Law 119/2014 on the “Right for Information”; Law 153/2013 on “Civil servant”; DVM 102/2015 on “Establishment, organization and function of NAPA and RAPAs”; order of Prime Minister 39/2015 on “Approval of the structure of NAPA and RAPAs”; Law 8906/2002 on “Protected Areas”, Law 9587/2006 on “Biodiversity protection”; Law 9385/2005 on “Forestry”; and all related sub legal acts. In a way this document serves as the Bible for the day to day staff operations at central and regional level. Key duties and responsibilities of RAPAs and their relevant sectors (management and monitoring) are presented at Annex 6. Going through the document it is noticed that: (i) the document is a general instructive document prepared in Year 2016 prior enforcement of the new Law on “Protected Areas” 81/2017 and prior the new law on forest 57/2020; (ii) there are cases of overlapping duties and responsibilities between sub sectors (monitoring and management), while

¹ Shkodra Municipality - Territorial Development Plan 2015 – 2030.

https://www.bashkiashkoder.gov.al/web/plani_zhvillimit_territorit_1539.pdf

² <http://akzm.gov.al/about>

³ RAPA Shkoder

institutional overlapping (especially those related to exercising inspection duties) are present and critical; (iii) the document is a general regulation that does not reflect specifics of each PA considering their geographical position, diversity, openness to visitors, local's activities and businesses, etc.

Considering the results of the questionnaire (a summary of which is presented at Annex 7) filled out by RAPA staff it is clear that all respondents have admitted that their "job description fully relates to the actual job they carry out"; they all "fully understand their job descriptions"; 80% of respondents admit they "have the required knowledge and skills to perform their duties"; they consider as achievements and are proud of "Increase of community and business awareness on the use of natural resources; Increase of environmental protection and preservation due to which there is an increase in number of bird species and individuals in the wetlands, better fire control, decrease of illegal activities; increase of inter institutional cooperation on flood management; improving results on management and nature monitoring".

The most enjoyable duties as expressed by the respondents are those related to "field monitoring; provision of information to tourists in the Visitors Center; the combination of office, field work and upgrading their capacities through training courses, workshops, conferences, etc.". In terms of easiness and difficulties to perform their duties, the respondents have mentioned the most as supportive factors "good cooperation with colleagues; good working conditions, experience exchange among colleagues; following the document on internal regulation on organization and function and the working plan", while difficulties faced include "lack of proper infrastructure and working tools; difficult terrain and transportation; lack of proper coordination with other institutions".

The most mentioned motivation factors include "protection of common environment for current and future generations; pleasure of going outdoors; good relations and cooperation with colleagues; a better rewarding salary considering difficulties faced; professional and scientific, emotional and spiritual wellbeing".

About dislikes the most common answers include "cases of dealing with offenders that does not always go well; lack of clear and/or overlapping competencies; working conditions and rewards for the work done; long distance to the area covered". When listing the hindering factors to perform their job, the respondents have mostly mentioned "overlapping of competences; working equipment/tools; long distance from the area covered; lack of proper waterproof clothing, decent uniforms, means of transport; professional skills of some of the staff members".

The future wish list of respondents include mostly "deeper knowledge on the nature of our country and its values; protection and preservation of environment; PA to become self-sufficient, away from politics impact, administered by professional administration; have various tasks during career". As regarding the past experiences with training courses and the need for them, the most important comments were "there are good experiences with training course so far, but they should be more of a practical nature; training courses are seen as a necessity; need practical sessions with tools and instruments to be used in our day to day work".

Proposals to improve their knowledge for better performing their duties include "adapt knowledge and get new and updated knowledge in compliance to environmental changes especially climate changes; expand knowledge on human's reaction to an ever changing nature and environment; training courses on sustainable use of PAs; improve job descriptions and how to adjust towards new duties and responsibilities".

Most of the above mentioned statements were core as well during the focus group discussions, however the exercise on Problem Analysis brought the following results that are related to capacity building to perform their job and/or associated with the proper use of needed tools/equipment.

During discussions the staff has mostly indicated that:

- There is continues need to **change the mentality** from simply “*managing a forest*” into “*Integrated Management of PAs*”. First and foremost, this need is identified due to the fact that Shkodra RAPA currently manages an area of 52,000 hectares, while the future plans are to extend the area into 100,000 hectares including Albanian Alps, thus communication with various actors will become even more central; the diversity of PA will be increased, and more actors for cooperation will be present.

- Even in the current conditions, there is no dedicated **cadaster specialist** to deal with proper Land Surveying, with the definition and proper clarifications on sites, drawing of boundary and technical plans referring to real estate, allocation of independent allotments from common ownership, preparing survey reports, etc. This need will be more present with the area expansion.

- **Overleaping of institutions.** As it is mentioned, especially in the context of inspections there is an overlapping of responsibilities that needs to be clarified through coordination of several institutions. According to article 66 of the Law No 81/2017 on Protected Areas, the inspection is carried out by Inspectorate of Forest Police and Administration of the PAs. As indicated, **the inspection templates** are not complete. In these templates are reflected only damages according to the number of units (depending on the type of damage), such as, kg, m³, etc., while their value is included. It is a clear conflict of interest considering the role of FMO that issues licenses, monitors waters and exercise fishing.

- The **uniforms of staff** especially rangers are inappropriate, not dignified, without proper symbols and not consulted with users.

- **Lack of checkpoints** for visitor’s entrance. **The lack of checkpoints** loses the seriousness of PA

Value, as activities carried in the BRVPL and other PAs under the jurisdiction of Shkodra RAPA include visits by tourists, ecotourism, camping, canoeing, animal grazing, scientific research, studies, educational practices, etc. In almost none of the cases there are signs about such activities and associated fees on the use of territory. For instance, in the case of research and studies carried by universities and NGOs, RAPA staff is not involved at the desired level, they are simply informed on the activity, but rarely if never are part of such research or studies and have any feedback from them. These research and studies are considered valuable cases that could serve to upgrade the staff know how and information about PA managed by them.

- There are no **camera traps** as tools to monitor the distribution and abundance of wildlife species, to capture images of human activities, especially in the cases of nature violation and crime within the area.

- The staff, especially rangers are not properly trained on recognizing **animal tracks**.

- Lack of **innovative and efficient technologies** and know how on their use. During focus group

discussion it was brought the issue of such technologies missing in monitoring environmental problems that threaten biodiversity in protected areas (such as might be **drones**). They are needed for the purpose of overall observation of areas especially monitoring wildlife, ecosystems, ecotourism and human’s activity, law enforcement, disasters, etc.

- Though there is an ever increasing awareness on **fire control** due to cooperation between

RAPA staff especially rangers, civil emergencies and locals, the climate changes have put some hot spots into higher risks of fire and other threats like diseases. In this case the staff has recognized the need for further capacity building.

- Enhance **staff skills for monitoring**. The staff feels undertrained regarding practical work on monitoring in the field. They expressed the need for practical training on monitoring. Particularly rangers have no capacity to distinguish the animal's behaviors. In many cases they are incapable to properly fill out the observation/ monitoring reports.
 - Lack of **digital maps** with full information. Velipoja Visitor Center as part of the BRVPL does not have a digital map with all information available. So far there are maps printed in paper with attractive points and signs of trails, but there are no user friendly digital maps with sufficient information that could include as well the richness of flora and fauna.
 - Buna River and its surrounding areas (villages of Zues, Bërdicë, Darragjat, Oblikë, Obot, Shirq, Dajç, Goricë, Luarzë and Pulaj) has a considerable border with Montenegro (about 41 km long, after 20 kilometers in Albania, Buna forms the border between Albania and Montenegro). On both sides of the border it is a lot going in terms of biodiversity, tourism development, land use, etc. . Considering these facts, between Albanian and Montenegrin staff is missing **exchange data and information**, exchange **cooperation programs** and **joint projects**.

When ranking issues according to their priorities/importance, the listing of all identified issues related to capacity building, resulted into the following order:

1. Increase capacity of rangers
2. Establish a cadastral office and train users of cadastral programs
3. Proper tools for efficient monitoring
4. Continuous training courses and combination of theory with practice
5. Communication and behaviors associated with decent uniforms
6. Exchange and cooperation with Montenegrin colleagues

4. The Management Committee.(MC)

The management committees of the PAs are established based on the DCM No 593, Date 09.10.2018 on "The Composition, Functions, Duties and Responsibilities of the Management Committees of Environmental Protected Areas". According to this decision the MC is composed by representatives from the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MTE); NAPA representative; county representative; representative from the municipality; representatives from local institutions related to PAs and its management plan i.e. agriculture sector, tourism, water, education and research; infrastructure and energy; culture inheritance; representatives of civil society; representatives from forest and pasture owners. The DCM properly defines MC duties and responsibilities for a sustainable management of the territory under the jurisdiction of NAPA and their respective RAPAs.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts to contact with the members of MC, the consultant did not have any successful result.

First, it was reported that the MC has not organized any meeting during the last 2-3 years. Out of 11 e-mails sent to MC to fill out the survey only one of them did answer, two addresses were not active, and one respondent from the FMO refused to fill out the questionnaire. Further search on two failure delivery addresses showed that the representatives are no longer part of institutions (road and electricity enterprises).

In these conditions it is clear that the MC is not functional and its **composition and function** is an issue to be seriously considered.

5. Civil Society

Based on the questionnaire and discussions with the local NGOs, the following was noted.

NGOs in general feel being somehow knowledgeable on BRVPL. However, when asked about specific fields they feel less specialized/weak, the answers included: “**lobbying** and **impact on policies** and decisions made; **public awareness** and activities related to **environmental education**; and **project preparation and implementation** in accordance to project cycle”. In terms of the need to increase their capacities the most mentioned were: “**lobbying** towards policies and decisions; increase capacities on **awareness campaigns** and **public education**; **project cycle** and project implementation”. As the most common mentioned pressures on BRVPL were listed: “**political, and law enforcement; economic pressures; erosion, floods, deforestation, environmental pollution**”. As resources with the most negative trends are mentioned: “**human’s activity** and impact especially initiation of **fires**, interventions in damaging systems that accelerate **floods, industrial operations**”. About the role of civil society to diminish the listed pressures, they have mentioned: “**education of fisherman** for proper fishing, education and **awareness of communities**; and **cooperation** with different relevant institutions”. The responses on positive trends include: “**awareness** work with fisherman, various actions on landscape protection has brought to **higher diversity** especially birds and animals”. Their role to sustainable use of natural resources is seen related to: “the increase of their **capacities in a continues way**, this especially to respond to changes especially the **climate changes**”. In fight against erosion combined with education of citizens and especially children they see: “actions for **tree planting** as important ones”, all such actions combined with “use of all forms of **media**”.

Besides these issues posed in the questionnaires, some of the NGOs have listed some other needs that are related to **project writing** especially when preparing project proposals for **cross-border** cooperation. As well they need capacities in terms of **media use** especially self-managed forms of media such as social media (how to make postings more attractive in terms of content and form).

In their opinion, the establishment of Local Action Groups (LAGs) is an important step especially this in the framework of the coming IPARD funds where support to LAGs establishment and function is proposed to be part of schemes. In this framework, LAGs will have an important role in managing larger territories with the purpose of territorial development. As it is so far the established **LAGs are very weak** and have no proper capacity to fulfill their role and the most important is that there is no dedicated law on LAGs. The law is currently under preparation.

6. Local communities

BRVPL area is host to about 30,000 residents that deal mainly with agriculture and livestock activities fishery, tourism and services. In handling these activities in some cases they are causing damages to environment and the landscape, some of which are known by them, while other damages are caused due to the lack of information and awareness. These are especially cases related to cause and effect phenomena i.e. use of **improper means for fishing** that cause damages of fish species and diminish their number; **burning pastures** that cause damages of top soil microorganisms so important for vegetation; **use of chemicals** in an uncontrolled way for cultivation in agriculture that contaminates surface and ground waters, etc.

Differed stakeholders that have answered the questionnaire though represent various sectors of activities have common answers for critical issues. As such they admit that “they know that BRVPL is

a valuable site and they have the right to carry their activity in the area”, but when it comes to responsibilities especially in **respecting the management plan requirements** they have “no or little knowledge/information”.

Regarding the impact on the measures for proper management of BRVPL they mentioned the “ban on hunting; and construction (illegal) that at least have increased the number of birds especially those migratory, increased the presence of animals and allow construction under some certain control”. They “are not **represented in the decisions** taken on the management of the BRVPL and have **no information on the management committee**”.

In term of support needs, the most listed ones are “**know how on controlling floods and fire**; know how on **preventing and controlling animal and plant diseases**; **quality of inputs** used in agriculture and livestock activity; having **alternative cost efficient patterns** for type of agriculture and livestock activity; better liaison of **agriculture production with tourism**”.

The needed training are those related to knowing the **value of the area**, knowing **rare species** of animals, birds and plants; use of **practical means for control** of floods and fire; better knowledge on **plant and animal protection** products that are user friendly; knowing the **wait period** after their use; knowing the **standard requirements** for fertilizer, chemicals, semen for artificial insemination; knowing how to produce **typical products** of the area in a certified way as **traditional products** or **products of Geographical Indication**”.

Erosion control is listed as a critical issue especially related to upstream deforestation, while environmentally **friendly land use practices** are indicated as very important to know. Farmers have expressed their need as well to **apply to IPARD schemes** posing first their need to properly know the measures and know how their business could be eligible for which measure.

Under the law on PAs, Article 2 “**public information and education** on status and usefulness of PAs”, it is the obligation of NAPA and RAPAs to inform public as a whole on developments, plans and activities in the PAs, while according to Article 38 their duty is to ensure “revitalizing **environmental education** and **raising awareness** of local communities about PAs”. The contacted stakeholders have raised the issue of **information** and especially of **consultation** as very important process.

This need is stressed as well by NGOs and education system, teachers and students, especially to know the wealth of BRVPL in practical way.

IV. Recommendations

Considering findings and proposals by the stakeholders involved, following are recommendations referring to capacity building.

Recommendations on RAPA capacity building

- Internal regulation on organization and function should become a flexible and dynamic document to reflect any legal changes in relation to staff duties and responsibilities at central and regional level.
- Review the document to firstly resolve the overlapping issues among sub-sector within RAPAs and lobby to resolve the institutional overlapping issues.
- The Internal regulation for the organization and function of NAPA and RAPAs, should be adjusted by each PARA according to its specifics.
- There is a need to change mentality - education of staff from managing forests into integrated management of PA.

- The Management Plan needs to be revised. The current one is valid till 2026, however the planned changes for Velipoja removing 5,000 ha from protected landscape, will require this revision.
- RAPA should prepare annual plan of operations and submit it every year to MC.
- Training courses need to be organized periodically to upgrade staff capacities. They should be organized as a well mix of theory and practice, and among other subjects, the climate change impact on biodiversity, human reaction to ever changing nature, and communication should be central topics.
- There is need for a qualified Cadaster Specialist (specialist's qualification and available computer program to respond to cadastral needs).
- Camera Traps, Drones and training on their use, is recommended as well as knowhow on data collection, data management and analysis, and results dissemination to interested parties.
- Enhance RAPA staff skills on practical monitoring techniques especially focused to rangers. To properly fulfill their duty rangers should have a certain level of education, proper training in line with their duty requirements and appropriate physical characteristics. Practical training courses with rangers on animal behavior is considered important. Due to the fact that BRVPL is more and more visited by foreign tourists the rangers should have proper communication techniques and know basics of English, particularly in case of Velipoja where there is a Visitor's Center. An important element for the staff especially for rangers is supplying them with decent uniforms and symbols that will increase their reputation and job performance.
- Training on animal tracks. Prepare the animal track identification guidebook, including the walking patterns, how to identify track characteristics for different species in different environments like sand, mud, soft soil, snow, etc. The guidebook should be illustrated with pictures and training is recommended to be of a "show and tell" type combining classroom and field practices.
- Prepare and use digital maps of BRVPL with all relevant information on attractive tourist points, trail signs, flora and fauna, etc. Prepare map user's guide and train rangers on their use and how to communicate such information to interested visitors. In this context rangers should be trained on special and rare plants, endangered species, and migratory animals, the time of their migration, the route, etc.
- RAPA should require closer cooperation from research institutions, its staff get involved in any research or study carried in their territory and use the results for better management of the area.
- Twinning relations to be established with Montenegrin authorities of PAs, to exchange data, information and experiences on management and monitoring of PAs and cooperate in joint cross border project's preparation and implementation.
- Facebook page of RAPA Shkoder is active. Though currently it has 7,100 followers it could expand this number inviting tourist agencies, citizens, researchers, university academia and students. Not only activities could be shared, but as well this media could be used as a forum to share ideas, posing questions and generating discussions, sharing research/study results, sharing monitoring results, etc. This might need further increase of staff capacities and activating sessions such as "Services" and "More-Questions".

Recommendations on MC capacity building

- First and foremost it is recommended to closely follow the functionality of the MC and aware on such issue the high level authorities

- In case there is a need for re-composition of the MC, relevant institutions should propose their candidates. It is the institution that is part of the MC and not the individual, so in case of change in the representation, the institution should immediately provide another suitable candidate. The representatives from institutions should be technical people/specialists and not political appointees this to guarantee sustainability of members in the MC and to get technical contribution from them. The composition should follow the regulation.
- MC could establish small working groups in accordance to different issues faced.
- The MC should have not only the role of noticing things/issues, but as well have the decision making power as in the case of Tourism sector or water sector.
- Training on capacity building for MC members is a must starting with duties and responsibilities, and how to monitor physical and financial progress of RAPA regarding management plan implementation.

Recommendations on CSO capacity building

- Training NGOs on how to lobby and impact policy and decision makers on PAs, biodiversity issues, climate change and impact of other environmental changes on socio economic life of people and natural wealth of the country.
- Training through practical modules on project preparation and implementation especially project focused on cross border cooperation (IPA)
- Increase NGOs capacity on media use especially self-managed forms of media such as social media, how to make postings more attractive
- Increase capacities of NGOs on public awareness and education including school students. The topics to be focused should be related to economics of various pressures erosion, floods, deforestation, environment pollution, etc., and impact of climate change in natural resources and nature beauty.
- With the approval of the Law on LAGs there is a need to support the establishment of a functional LAG and increase its capacity to properly deal with the territorial development. In this regard the experience from LAGs function in the EU countries organizing study visits is highly recommended.

Recommendations on community stakeholder's capacity building

- A network of contacts with representatives from various local stakeholders is important to be established (farmers, businesses, etc.)
- Training courses on the importance and values of BRVPL and human behavior towards these values and proper management of resources based on the management plan.
- Training and capacity building of inhabitants (interest groups) on damages caused by human activity (depletion of resources, harming nature through improper methods for fishing, use of chemicals in an uncontrolled way, burning pastures etc. Training and capacity building through practical demonstrations on floods and fire prevention methods and control; know how on preventing and controlling animal and plant diseases; knowledge on quality of inputs used; advice on alternative cost efficient patterns for type of agriculture and livestock activity; share environmentally friendly land use practices; introduction of concept from farm to tourists (traceability) and better liaison of agriculture production with tourism development (traditional products and GI products).
- Increase awareness of area inhabitants on their right for information and consultation.
- Aware and train farmers and agri-tourism businesses to apply for IPARD schemes.

- There is a need to train local people especially those close to fire high risk zones on how to use communication channels with civil emergency and RAPA, and how to use tools as first responders in case of fires.
- In case of ecotourism agencies there is a need to develop expedition planning seminar and prepare handbook on expedition planning, measures for safety and first aid.

V. Resources Required

Objective	Capacity strengthening intervention		Resources required	Responsibility	Period
	Training	Coaching /Mentoring			
Improve functionality of RAPA		Review the Regulation on Organization and Function		NAPA, RAPA INCA	I QTR 2022
		Review Mng. Plan and Prepare Annual Plan of Operations		RAPA INCA	I-II QTR 2022
Increase capacity of RAPA	Improve Communication for RAPA central staff and Rangers			INCA	II QTR 2022
	Principles and Techniques of Cadastral Mapping	Coaching practical actions with digital maps	Equipment, program on digital mapping	Cadastral specialist	III QTR 2022
	“Show and Tell” training on use of special monitoring equipment	Field Monitoring	Camera traps, Drones	INCA	II QTR 2022
	Theoretical and Practical training on Animal Tracks	Field tracking	Guidebook. field practice	INCA	III QTR 2022
	Enhance staff capacity on successful use of social media		RAPA FB page	INCA	I QTR 2022
Increase Capacity of RAPA and Local NGOs	Project writing particularly cross – border	Coaching on Project preparation		INCA	II QTR 2022
Increase Capacity of RAPA and MC	Training on Monitoring	Support organization of MC meetings	Annual Plan of Actions	RAPA INCA	III QTR 2022
Increase capacity of RAPA and Community	Values of PAs and human behavior			INCA	I QTR 2022
Increase capacity of local communities	Proper use of inputs – care for residues	Plant, soil and animal laboratory analysis on residues		INCA Input suppliers	IV QTR 2022
	Measures for protection and diminishing effect of floods, fires, erosion, etc	Warning signs, Simple protection tools		INCA	IV QTR 2022
	Agritourism development	Visit in a well-developed agri-tourism area		INCA	IV QTR 2022
Increase NGOs capacity	Training on Public Awareness			INCA	III QTR 2022

VI. Annexes

ANNEX 1 Reviewed documents

1. PROGES CONSULTING and Sapienza University of Rome. “Management Plan for Buna River Protected Landscape 2016-2025”.
2. Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 147, Date 13.3.2018 on “Establishment, organization and function of the Regional Agency of Agriculture Extension Service”.
3. Inter Institutional Group on fight against Environmental Crime “Guideline on Competences of Local Authorities on Prevention of Environmental Crime”.
4. Decision of the Council of Ministers No 593, Date 09.10.2018 on “The Composition, Functions, Duties and Responsibilities of the Management Committees of Environmental Protected Areas.”
5. Law No. 81/2017 on “Protected Areas”
6. Shkoder territorial development Plan 2015 – 2030.
https://www.bashkiashkoder.gov.al/web/plani_zhvillimit_territorit_1539.pdf
7. Decision of the Council of Ministers 102, dare 4.2. 2015 on the “Establishment of the National Agency of Protected Areas”.
8. Internal Regulation on Organization and Functioning of the National Agency of Protected Areas and the Regional Administrations of Protected Areas.

Annex 2: Questionnaire – Protected Area Administration

In the frame of the second phase of MAVA project focused on management of coastal wetlands, among others it is aimed to improve the capacities of the Administration of Protected Areas. Your knowledge and skills will play an important role in the sustainable management of Protected Areas and implementation of PA management plans. In this context important actions are related to activities that lead to improvement of your knowledge and capacities as local managers of PAs. In relation to fulfilling your duties and responsibilities as local managers of PAs, and assess the needs for further improvements of your capacities, you are invited to fill out the following questionnaire:

1. Is your Job Description related to your actual job

- YES NO

If your answer is NO, how do you know what tasks you have to perform daily?

2. Do you fully understand your job description

- YES NO

If your answer is NO, what difficulties you have to understand it

3. Do you have the required knowledge and skills to perform the required duties/tasks?

- YES NO

If your answer is NO, what knowledge and skills are you missing/you need to improve?

4. What have you achieved and are proud of? Please, list

5. What you enjoy doing the most?. Please, list

6. What makes your responsibilities easier? What makes them harder? Please, list

7. What are your Interests and motivation concerning the job? Please, list

8. What are your dislikes about the job? Please, list

9. What are the hindering factor(s) for you to perform your job?

10. What are your future perspectives/ wishes? Please, list

11. Do you have any past training experiences? Please, list likes and dislikes about that training.

12. Please, provide any further comment in relation to your duties and responsibilities and the need to improve your knowledge and skills in this regard

Annex 3: Questionnaire – Management Committee

In the frame of the second phase of MAVA project focused on management of coastal wetlands, among others it is aimed to improve the capacities of the members of Management Committee. This due to the fact that their knowledge and skills will play an important role in the sustainable management of Protected Areas and implementation of their management plans. In this context important actions are related to activities that lead to improvement of knowledge and capacities of the members of Protected Areas Management Committee. In relation to fulfilling your duties and responsibilities as members of the Management Committee, and assess the needs for further improvements of your capacities, you are invited to fill out the following questionnaire:

1. As a member of the Management Committee

- Are you familiar with your duties and responsibilities?
 YES NO

- Are you familiar with the Area Management Plan and actions undertaken for its implementation?
 YES NO

Please, elaborate

2. Do you have the required knowledge and skills to perform all the required duties and responsibilities?

- YES NO

If your answer is NO, what knowledge and skills are you missing/you need to improve?

3. Have you ever analyzed the performance of duties and functions of the Buna River Velipoje Protected Landscape (BRVPL) Administration on the implementation of the management plan?

- YES NO

If your answer is YES, what elements of performance have you analyzed and how? Please, describe

4. Have you ever analyzed the incomes and expenditures due to plan implementation?

YES NO

If your answer is YES, please elaborate how

5. Have you been involved in the approval of the report on the annual status of protected area?

YES NO

If your answer is YES, please describe below what indicators have been considered for approval

6. Has the Management Committee ever proposed any change in the current Management Plan?

YES NO

If your answer is YES, could you be more specific on the changes proposed:

7. Do you think you have the right knowledge and skills to review management plans and propose changes in line with local and sectorial development plans while ensuring area protection?

YES NO

If your answer is NO, what skills do you need to improve in order to review the management plan? Please describe.

8. What makes your performance of duties and responsibilities easier? Please, list

9. What makes your performance of duties and responsibilities more difficult? Please, list

10. What are the main hindering factor for you to perform your duties and responsibilities?

11. Do you have any past training experiences? Please, list likes and dislikes about these past experiences.

12. Please, provide any further comment in relation to your duties and responsibilities and the need to improve your knowledge and skills in this regard

Annex 4 Questionnaire - NGOs

In the frame of the second phase of MAVA project focused on management of coastal wetlands, among others it is aimed to improve the capacities of the local stakeholders. This due to the fact that their knowledge and skills will play an important role in the sustainable management of Protected Areas and implemenmtation of sustainable business practices. In this context important actions are related to activities that lead to improvement of knowledge and capacities of NGOs. In relation to fulfilling your role as active civil society actors and assess the needs for further improvements of your capacities, you are invited to fill out the following questionnaire:

1. Do you have sufficient knowledge on Buna River Velipoja Protected Landscape?. Please, answer.
 YES NO

2. Where do you think your organization is less specialised/ feels weak at?. You could select one or more of the below fields:
 - Influencers in policy, decision- making processes?
 - Increasing public awareness?
 - Undertaking protective measures?
 - Use of media (all types of written, visual, social)?
 - Environmental education activities?
 - Support for the development of eco-friendly initiatives?
 - Engagement/mobilisation of local communities?

Other?, Please specify below:

3. In reference to the selected fields, please describe what are your needs to increase the capacities of your NGO.

4. What are the main pressures the BRVPL is facing (political, social, economic, physical)?. Please describe

5. What are the resources with the most negative trends, please list?

6. How can you as NGO impact to diminish the above mentioned pressures and trends? And what capacities do you need to improve for undertaking such actions?

7. What are the resources with the most positive trends, please list?

8. How can you as NGO impact to sustainable use of such resources? And what capacities do you need to improve undertaking these propose actions?

Annex 5: Questionnaire addressed to Stakeholders

In the frame of the second phase of MAVA project focused on management of coastal wetlands, among others it is aimed to improve the capacities of the local stakeholders. This due to the fact that their knowledge and skills will play an important role in the sustainable management of Protected Areas and implementation of sustainable business practices. In this context important actions are related to activities that lead to improvement of knowledge and capacities of stakeholders. In relation to fulfilling your role as active stakeholder and assess the needs for further improvements of your capacities, you are invited to fill out the following questionnaire:

1. Are you familiar with the Buna River Velipoja Protected Landscape?

YES NO

2. Do you live in the territory of the PA or in it surrounding?, Please, describe.

3. What is your position in regard to the PA?

- Are you a user of PA resources?

YES NO

In case your answer is YES, please describe the purpose of the use below:

4. What is the impact of the measures for proper management of BRVPL in your activity?

5. Do you feel having power and/or influence in the decisions on the management of BRVPL? Please, explain

6. What is the support you need in order to have a balanced and sustainable use of resources in BRVPL?

7. What training/coaching do you need for proper management/activities in the area?

Annex 6 NAPA and RAPA duties and responsibilities based on the Internal Rules for Organization and Function (summary)

In a brief RAPAs responsibilities include:

1. RAPA is responsible for the protection and administration of PA and nature monuments in the territory under their jurisdiction; implements the government policies, strategies and programs in the field of PA; supervises the activities carried in the PA in line with law and bylaw requirements; assesses the PAs; follows the implementation of the Management Plan ; monitors the state of biodiversity, habitats; updates the register of PA; proposes and implements measures for regeneration of the damaged and degraded areas; identifies and protects wilderness (flora and fauna) and migration routes; follows annual monitoring plans together with specialized institutions; cooperates with central and local authorities on protection of interests of local population; defines areas for placement of signs and boards; contributes in the collection of tariffs on use of bio-natural resources; keep frequent contacts with users of all kind and controls their activity; supports with the necessary infrastructure for use of PA; uses efficiently the funds for maintenance of PA; documents activities, investments , research carried in the territory of PA; organizes the surveillance and signaling system; cooperates with research institutions, environmental NGOs and community for the protection of PAa and its biodiversity; in cooperation with local actors organizes awareness campaigns and publishes the values of PAs; maintains and is responsible for the activities in the Visitor's Centers and organizes informational and educational activities as well as Eco touristic visits.
2. Controls all the activities of businesses carried out in the territory of PA in line with legal acts and undertakes the right measures for suspension or limitation of all activities that violate PAs management scope and objectives.
3. Undertake measures to suspend illegal activities and ensures compliance of ecological, biological, geomorphological, hydrological and esthetic characteristics that have contributed to denomination of the status of PA.
4. Plans and implements all interventions for prevention and control of pests and diseases in an environmental friendly way
5. In carrying out their activity RAPA should coordinate and cooperate with various institutions such as Sate Inspectorate of Environment and Forest, Fishing Inspectorate; Sate Police; tax and custom offices; private owners and users; local government units; businesses; Regional Environmental Agency; environmental NGOs; tourist agencies; research institutions, etc.

THE MANAGEMENT SECTOR covers all the problems that are related to management, communication and education within the territory of jurisdiction. This sector is composed of the **Head of the Sector** that ensures the coordination with other structures of RAPA; prepares implementation plans and financial needs; prepares action plans for area development; organizes and leads the activity for the management and sustainable use of forest, pastures, waters, etc.; monitors special indicators of staff work and activities in the field; every year plans forest economies that will be under inventory or managed; verifies, approves and submits for approval plans for technical – silvicultural interventions in the forest and pasture funds; prepares operational plans for all activities in the forest fund under its administrative jurisdiction; follows implementation of activities foreseen in the management plan; closely checks implementation of all measures for protection and rehabilitation of forest ecosystems; actively participates into training and capacity building activities.

The specialist for administration and implementation of the management plan is responsible for proper and transparent administration and implementation of the management plan, updating the register and files of PA. Participates in the preparation, implementation and control of the management plan activities; contributes in the preparation of the management and action plan for habitats and flora and fauna of PA; follows the implementation of the International conventions where Albania adheres; prepares summary information on the status and implementation of the management and action plan; defines and implements the measures for rehabilitation of ecological integrity, restoration of habitats or degraded ecosystems; implementation of initiatives and specific plans for effective inclusion of communities; follows implementation of various projects; cooperates the work on management and protection of natural resources; follows the implementation of plans on sustainable activities in forestry, agriculture, fishery, hunting, medicinal and aromatic plants, land management, traditional experiences and erosion control; is responsible to keep records and fill cadastral data, files, maps and GIS information.

The specialist for ecosystem, habitats, flora and fauna. Is responsible for right and transparent administration of works regarding the status of research on ecosystems, habitats flora and fauna of PA. Is responsible for preparation, implementation and control of research and monitoring activities; coordination of monitoring programs and coordination of monitoring programs for plants and animals at risk or extinction; for protection and rehabilitation of important habitats and ecosystems; keeps close contacts with research institutions for integration of research into activities in PA; proposes areas of special importance in accordance to international directives and conventions; contributes in the preservation of nature and culture diversity; contributes on encouraging land management and sustainable development models; supports improvement of knowledge on intercommunion between humans and nature; identifies measures for proper administration of habitats; contributes into preparation of the list of flora and fauna at risk and Red Book; keeps the system of monitoring on activities carried in and around PA.

Public relations, communication and education specialist. Is responsible for proper and transparent administration of operations related to communication with public, education and promotion of nature values. Holds responsible for preparation and implementation of information, education and awareness programs. Ensures preparation of special programs on knowledge improvement, intersectorial communication on biodiversity and protection of landscape, ecosystems, etc. Ensures communication with public and civil society and their participation in activities and management of PA, communication with media to increase public awareness. Identifies main themes for programs of public education, communication and awareness based on Aarhus convention on citizen's rights to be informed, to participate and address environmental issue to the court. Develops and strengthens partnership with media, NGOs, public, institutions for promotion and education at regional level. It is responsible for function and maintenance of visitor's Centers and cooperates with tourist agencies; cooperates with specialized institution on culture, historic, archeological and spiritual inheritance; cooperates with various actors for organization of environmental days, fairs, etc., ; cooperates with schools and universities for organization of educational programs; supports preparation and distribution of publicity materials using written, visive and social media.

THE MONITROING SECTOR. Covers all problems related to control and prohibition of illegal activities in the PA. The **Head of the Sector** is responsible for proper and transparent management of operations in line with administration policies, law implementation and sustainable protection and development of PA. Coordinates the operations and controls rangers activity; prepares the operational plans for prevention and control of damages, miss use and degradation of nature; prepares the programs for prevention and control of fires, diseases, pests and other damages

including human's activities; prevents and takes measures for illegal logging, illegal collection of NTFP and any other activity that is against the legal preventions; communicates with tour guides on respecting rules by visitors; prohibits all constructions that are not in line with the PA management plan; coordinates and verifies that private entities natural or juridical respect conditions, norms and rules for all operations carried in the PAs.

The Specialists of Monitoring Sector controls the operation of rangers; follows implementation of operational plans on prevention and control of damages; follows programs for prevention and control against fire, diseases and other damages including those caused by human activity; controls visitors in terms of following and respecting PA rules, provided first aid in cases there is a need; prohibits all actions and operations that are not in line with the management plan; controls and verifies that all private and public entities do respect conditions, norms and rules for all their operations in the PAs.

Rangers. Their service is very important for the protection of the PA for supervision of the territory and prohibiting its degradation; follow implementation of laws and by laws related to protection and administration of the natural resources; during the service they have uniform with respective logo; controls implementation of the management plan within the territory and takes measures in case of violations; controls implementation of conventions. Directives, agreements, projects and programs. Is responsible and controls the implementation of all measures for protection and rehabilitation of all important types of habitats plant protection, fauna; keep under control the PA in case of damages like fire, pests and diseases, erosion, flooding; keep under control different economic activities such as agriculture, livestock, fishing, hunting, recreational activities, industrial activities (gravel extraction, stone quarry); control measures and prevent dumping of wastes ; prevent , discover and fight damages, misuse , of land, water activities such as illegal fishing and hunting, forest damages; sequestration of tools and transport means used for illegal hunting, fishing or any other illegal activity; in regard to special technical duties cooperates with inspectors of fishing sector, water basin council, etc.; fills out report for all problems identified and measures taken; hold responsible for maintenance of all tools and equipment used during their operations; they should have high communication skills, show ethics; no arrogance, neglecting and discretion is allowed.

Annex 7: Summary of Questionnaires filled by RAPA

1. Is your Job Description related to your actual job? – 9 responders all YES

2. Do you fully understand your job description? - 9 responders all YES

3. Do you have the required knowledge and skills to perform the required duties/tasks?
- 9 responders all YES, 2 are open for further upgrade knowledge

4. What have you achieved and are proud of? Please, list

- Decrease of illegal activities in the PA.
- Increase of community and business awareness on the use of natural resources
- Increase in number of bird species and individuals in the wetlands
- Fire management is improved
- Increase of inter institutional cooperation on flood situation management
- Increase environment protection and preservation
- Still new member of the staff, I am proud for the work performed by all
- The day to day work and results achieved on protection of habitats and fight against violators of nature makes me proud.
- The positive change in the management of the PA. Well and sustainable management biodiversity and habitats. The improved concept on assessing and recognition of PA. Significant improvement in the management capacities
- Good knowledge on and familiarization with the territory (habitats within the PA)
- Monitoring of nature monument, flora, fauna, biodiversity and the pleasure that nature provides to me

5. What you enjoy doing the most?. Please, list

- Field monitoring
- Providing information to tourists in the Visitors Center
- Diversity of activities we are involved in (a combination of office work with field work) i.e. training courses, workshops, conference, working in the office, working in the field, seminars.
- Monitoring and protection of nature wealth including flora and fauna, this makes my job more attractive and not monotony
- Variability of duties and contact with nature and its elements
- Monitoring of special species in the field
- Monitoring of processes in nature and field inspections

6. What makes your responsibilities easier? What makes them harder? Please, list

- Good Cooperation with colleagues
- Good working conditions, however lack of infrastructure makes it harder.
- Easier is made by experience, logistic means, cooperation in a team, etc. harder is made by difficult terrain, lack of proper infrastructure
- Following rules and regulation, following the working plan makes my job easier. More difficult is made due to lack of infrastructure., working tools and transportation.
- Easier is made due to professional capabilities, discipline and dedication. Harder is made due to lack of coordination with other institutions
- Easier due to work experience

7. What are your Interests and motivation concerning the job? Please, list

- Protection of common environment for current and future generations
- Salary and the pleasure of doing my job
- My motivation is good relations and cooperation with my colleagues
- passion and love for nature makes my job even more attractive, while financial incentives are not motivational enough as salaries are very low considering difficulties we face
- My interests are professional and scientific, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, economic interest
- Object of my work and love for nature
- I am more and more motivated by the field work

8. What are your dislikes about the job? Please, list

- Penalization of persons who commit violations
- Cases when dealing with offenders that does not always go well
- There is nothing I do not like about my job
- There is nothing specific that I dislike
- Lack or overlapping of competencies and cooperation with other responsible institutions
- Working conditions (pressure during performance of the task, in many cases you are not appreciated for the performed work)
- Maybe long distance from the area I cover
- Problems that in many are generated due to overlapping between institutions. Problems created by law or even competencies

9. What are the hindering factor(s) for you to perform your job?

- Overlapping of competences
- Institutions overlapping
- Working equipment/tools, lack and/or overlapping of competences
- Long distance form the area covered
- Lack of working equipment/tools, such waterproof clothing, work uniforms, means of transport, lack of binoculars, lack of drones, etc.
- Not all the staff I work with has the right professional skills, lack of responsibility at work.
- Age.

10. What are your future perspectives/ wishes? Please, list

- Deeper knowledge of the nature of our country and its values
- accomplishing my tasks aiming to protect and preserve environment
- Promotion
- To perform better as a team
- PA to become self-sufficient, away from politics impact, as well as to be administered by a professional administration.
- To have various tasks in my career
- To have various tasks in mv career

11. Do you have any past training experiences? Please, list likes and dislikes about that training.

- I suggest that the trainings be more of a practical nature
- I generally have good experiences with training courses. However, in addition to theoretical training would prefer practical ones.
- Yes have good experiences with training
- Yes I have good experiences with training courses on different issues related to the management of PA
- Yes I have good experiences with training courses
- Training courses are indispensable tool, but should be more practical and as simple as possible to understand. In general training courses lack the practical exercises.
- Yes have participated and see training courses as a necessity
- Training courses are important and should be always developed for the best of our work, especially when have practical instruments

12. Please, provide any further comment in relation to your duties and responsibilities and the need to improve your knowledge and skills in this regard

- Since the environment is constantly changing we also need to continuously adapt our knowledge and get new and updated knowledge in compliance with these changes. i.e. climate changes
- The environment and human needs are constantly changing, so more training courses are needed to expand our knowledge.
- Need for training courses on how to sustainably use and protects PA
- To improve job descriptions (duties and responsibilities)