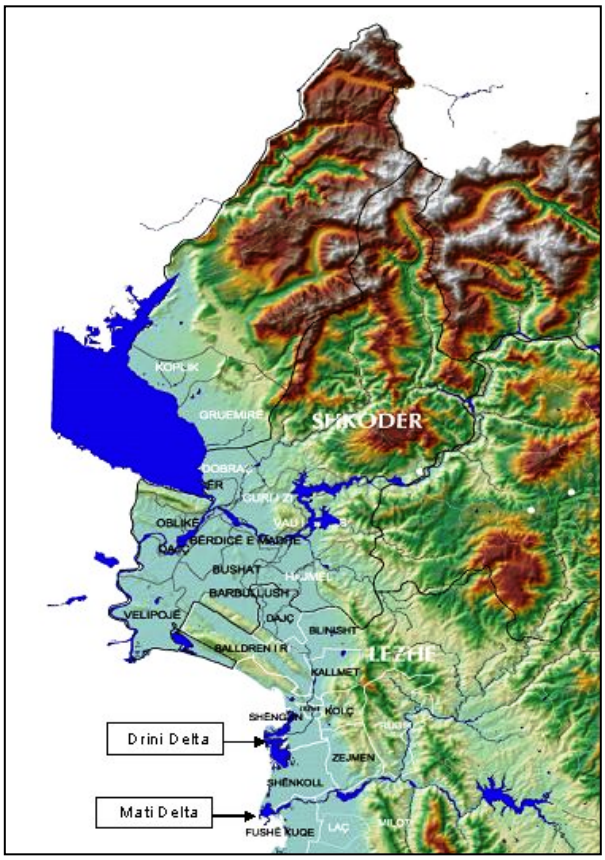
ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

United Nations Development Programme



ALBANIA CASE STUDY JULY 2010

IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ADAPTATION RESPONSE MEASURES IN THE DRINI-MATI RIVER DELTAS

Country	Albania [http://www.adaptationlearning.net/country-profiles/al]
Region	Southern Europe
Key Result Area	Biodiversity Coastal Zones River Deltas Capacity Building
Project ID	3629
Project Activity Dates	Start: 2008 End: 2012

ABSTRACT

The Drini and Mati River Deltas in Albania are experiencing stressful impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems as a result of climate change. There is currently a lack of institutional and individual capacities to undertake a rigorous assessment or to address the potential climate change impacts on biodiversity. The aim of this project is to address key risks and vulnerabilities in the coastal areas of Drini Mati River Deltas of the Northern Adriatic by developing the capacity to adapt to climate change. The key lessons learned thus far with regard to the adaptation project have been: engaging in broad stakeholder consultation during project design; building regional collaboration and support from project inception; ensuring coordination among multiple stakeholders during implementation stage; focusing on strenghtening local institutional and human capacity; remaining focused, pragmatic and strategic about scope, objectives and outcomes.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES

Background

The Drini and Mati River Deltas (DMRD) are two of the three deltas on the northern Adriatic coast of Albania. DRMD represents a complex and compound system of sandy belts, capes, bays, lagoons and island areas. They also harbour significant biodiversity values in three types of habitats: marine, wetlands and non-wetland habitats, including forests, shrubs, and open fields where traditional agriculture is practiced. Biodiversity is one of the most important assets of Lezha region, in which DMRD lies. The Drini Delta is an internationally recognized Important Bird Area, providing wintering grounds for the endangered pygmy cormorant and over 70 other species of waterfowl and water birds. The Patok lagoon, within the Mati Delta, serves as an important feeding area for globally endangered loggerhead turtles.

Climate change has the potential to undermine biodiversity conservation efforts in the DRMD's protected areas, unless the system accommodates uncertainty and management strategies are put in place to respond to climate-related stress. According to Albania's first comprehensive vulnerability and adaptation assessment, conducted as part of the preparation of the First National Communication (FNC), the DMRD is critically vulnerable to climate change and requires adaptation measures to be put in place. Scenarios for Albania predict an annual increase in temperature of up to 3.6ºC, a decrease in precipitation of 12.5%, and consequent reductions of water resources and arable land (due to soil erosion and alteration) by the year 2100. In the coastal zones, an increase in sea surface temperature as well as sea level rise (SLR) of up to 61 centimetres is expected to place additional stress on marine and littoral biodiversity as well as livelihoods of local communities. SLR, more frequent and intense floods, frequent inundation, and submersion of low lying coastal areas could affect life cycles of various species and result in habitat loss and fragmentation. Rising temperatures will also affect the composition and distribution of DRMD's marine and terrestrial species.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Solution: Adaptation Approach, Components and Description

The vulnerability of the DMRD, combined with the potential impacts of climate change on its biodiversity, produce an urgent need for all stakeholders to take climate change into account within sustainable development plans. By developing adaptive capacity and piloting adaptation approaches in the DMRD, the project will be first step to extending this experience to other vulnerable areas and sectors of the country.

The project's overall goal is to assist Albania in establishing a mechanism to enhance, develop and implement strategies to moderate, cope with, and take advantage of the consequences of climate change. The project's specific objective is to build adaptive capacity in the DMRD to ensure resilience of key ecosystems and local livelihoods to climate change. This will be done by first identifying and then integrating climate change response measures into conservation and development programming in the DMRD. The project will build on the government's recent efforts to increase the area under protection by expanding the geographic extent

of the current protected area network. This timely expansion seizes the opportunity to address climate risks under the reinvigorated regime of ecosystem protection. The project will implement coastal dune habitat restoration measure and modify protected area planning and coverage to help increase landscape connectivity and ecosystem resilience. It will also take a landscape-wide approach to adaptation that will go beyond the protected area network boundaries. By including climate threats, the scope and depth of the targeted conservation and sustainable development programmes will be modified to enhance the adaptive capacity of the ecosystems.

The main barrier to the integration of adaptation into regional conservation and sustainable development programming is the absence of institutional and individual capacities to undertake a rigorous assessment of potential climate change impacts on biodiversity. The following key barriers have also been identified and will be addressed by the project: no observation and forecasting capacity in the coastal region; lack of awareness to mobilize programmatic choices due to unavailable information; adaptation needs are not considered in coastal area planning, and overall, poor integrated coastal area management practices; programmes and projects directed towards protection of the DMRD ecosystem do not accommodate climate change concern; limited understanding of coastal habitat changes that will be generated by climate change and of adaptation processes.

SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

Key Successes	Participatory process carefully established. Engagement at the institutional and community levels was essential to reinvigorate commitments and overall interest in the project.
What Factors Supported Success	Representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, World Bank, Regional Environmental Centre, regional authorities and the Council of Lezha Qark as well as Environmental Association operating in the project area have been involved with the project.
Relevant Information	Workshops focused on risk assessment and on capacity building held with participation of different stakeholders from local and central government.

Key Successes	Project deliverables designed to be strategic about scope, objectives and outcomes.
What Factors Supported Success	Project proposal at inception stage was cognizant of logistical and practical parameters. Given its small size and limited resources, it was noted that this project should find strategic short-cuts for achieving the designated set of objectives and outcomes.
Relevant Information	At the inception stage it was recommended that the project only cover coastal ecosystems and not consider marine ecosystems in any studies or activities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Results and Learning

Key lessons learned:

1. Engage in broad stakeholder consultation during project design: The first key lesson learned is the importance of conducting a detailed stakeholder analysis during project design. The project counterparts include representatives of Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration, Ministry of Agriculture, World Bank, Regional Environmental Centre, regional authorities and the Council of Lezha Qark as well as Environmental Association operating in the project area.

2. Build regional collaboration and support from project inception: The regional authorities have demonstrated strong support to the project, voicing it explicitly at the inception workshop. Local authorities fully realize the need to assess climate change impacts and implement adaptation measures, especially since these issues have not yet been addressed in the development plans of the Zone or the Protected Area of the DMRD.

3. Ensure coordination among multiple stakeholders during implementation stage: Careful coordination among multiple stakeholders including government and civil society during the implementation stage have proven to be vital to ensure inclusion

and engagement across stakeholder groups including community groups and various government bodies.

4. Focus on strengthening local institutional and human capacity: The beginning of the project proved to be challenging, due mainly to country's limited expertise in climate change adaptation. Unexpected delays were encountered in the recruitment of the project staff due to the very limited in-country experience for the requisite specialized domain.

5. Remain focused, pragmatic and strategic about scope, objectives and outcomes (particularly during inception stage): Projects need to remain focused and be cognizant of their logistical and practical parameters. Given its small size and limited resources, it was noted that this project should find strategic short-cuts for achieving the designated set of objectives and outcomes. At the inception stage it was recommended that the project only cover coastal ecosystems and not consider marine ecosystems in any studies or activities.

Sustainability

The Global Environment Facility resources will be utilized to ensure the sustainability of the current response mechanisms (policies, programmes, financial schemes, etc.) with a focus on maintaining the functional integrity of the ecosystem and protecting the biodiversity in the area. This will specifically be done by identifying the measures that need to be taken to avoid fragmentation and help enhance the adaptive capacity of the ecosystem. For example, the adaptive capacity of the ecosystem will be enhanced by establishing buffer zones or migration corridors.

Replicability

The specific objective of the project is to build adaptive capacity in the DMRD to ensure resilience of the key ecosystems and local livelihoods to climate change. Building adaptive capacity is the first step to enable replication to occur.

Funding

GEF (SPA): US$975,000
UNDP: US$60,000
Government of Albania: US$140,000
Government of Albania (parallel): US$740,000
Regional Environmental Centre (parallel): US$44,500
TOTAL: US$1,959,500

Time Frame

2008-2012
Profile Updated: July 2010

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http://www.ccalb.org and http://www.undp.org.al

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