



## Protected Areas for a Living Planet – Dinaric Arc Ecoregion

The countries of the Dinaric Arc region have shown significant progress in recent years in their efforts to establish effective protected areas networks at regional and transboundary level. The success of the WWF project Protected Areas for a Living Planet in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion, which began in January 2007, is due to the collaboration and cooperation between governments, donor agencies, the Dinaric Arc Initiative (UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, FAO, IUCN, WWF, Euronatur, ECNC, REC, SNV), NGOs, scientists and civil society. Here we review the progress of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion, covering 6 countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

### CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas

The PoWPA supports the establishment and maintenance of comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically representative national and regional systems of protected areas (by 2010 for terrestrial and by 2012 for marine areas). It is the key framework to achieving the objectives of the CBD and Millennium Development Goals by placing protected areas at the heart of governments' efforts to conserve biodiversity and achieve sustainable development. Adopted at CBD COP 7, it provides governments with clear guidelines on specific protected area commitments.

### What makes the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion unique

The Dinaric Arc region of southeastern Europe, covering an area of around 100,000km<sup>2</sup>, is one of most significant regions in Europe in terms of its conservation value. It is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots with high floral species diversity and a high rate of endemism, with 10-20% of plants being endemic. Its Dinaric Alpine mountain chain stretches along the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea and hosts relatively large and intact forests. The Dinaric karst system is the largest in Europe and includes extensive cave systems, subterranean networks of lakes and rivers with a diversity of invertebrates, fish, amphibians and reptiles. The region hosts populations of large carnivores (lynx, wolf, bear, golden jackal, prey species). It is the Mediterranean's richest area in terms of freshwater ecosystems. All this, together with its rich cultural heritage, makes the Dinaric Arc an exceptional region.

### WWF in the Dinaric Arc

WWF began working in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion in the late 1990s, advocating for the establishment of protected area networks and ecological corridors as well as supporting the development of specific skills among conservation practitioners. The Protected Areas for a Living Planet in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion project is part of WWF's contribution to helping governments implement CBD PoWPA. It raised high-level political support for PoWPA through the signing of the Big Win Joint Statement at CBD COP 9 in 2008 when representatives of six governments committed to cooperate on improvement of their protected area systems. The Big Win generated political synergies and projects that are greatly magnifying the impact of the Protected Areas for a Living Planet in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion project. The project is working to help the governments to implement these commitments.



Extent of the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion as proposed for the WWF Protected Areas for a Living Planet project.

# Progress of Programme of Work on Protected Areas in the Dinaric Arc Ecoregion

## Planning, selecting, establishing, strengthening and managing protected area systems and sites

- Creation of two new protected areas by the government of Albania, the Sazan Karaburun Marine National Park (124km<sup>2</sup>) and the transboundary National Park Shebenik-Jablanica (339km<sup>2</sup>) and enlargement of Bredhi Hotoves National Park to 343 km<sup>2</sup>, Kune Vain Habitat Management Area to 44km<sup>2</sup> and Divjaka National Park to 222km<sup>2</sup>
- Establishment of one new national park, Una National Park, by the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and declaration of Konjuh Nature Monument and Vjetrenica Nature Park, which together contribute 128km<sup>2</sup> to the country's protected area surface
- Croatia has established fourteen new protected areas (1,487km<sup>2</sup>) under preventive protection
- Montenegro has proclaimed a new transboundary protected area, Prokletje National Park (160km<sup>2</sup>)
- Slovenia has proclaimed the Ljubljansko Barje Regional Park (135km<sup>2</sup>)
- The first ecoregional gap analysis has been completed, with the final report and publication produced and shared among governments, donor agencies, DAI partners and others with an interest in the region and its sustainable development.

## Governance, participation, equity and benefit sharing

- An initiative is under way to develop business plans and establish private-public partnerships for one protected area in each country
- A pilot business plan has been developed in Slovenia for the Secovlje Soline Nature Park
- Training on protected areas economics and business plan development was provided to park managers and representatives of institutions responsible for protected areas
- An ecoregion-wide capacity building plan is under development
- A project has been launched on establishing Natura 2000 in Serbia and Montenegro
- A project has been launched on sustaining rural communities and their traditional landscapes through strengthened environmental governance in transboundary protected areas.

## Enabling activities

- Signature of a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministries for the Environment
- Signature of a Big Win Joint Statement and development of national commitments on mutual cooperation, exchange of experience and coordinated actions to deliver on the CBD PoWPA, in May 2008, by Ministers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia
- Joint statement on sustainable financing for protected areas taken at SBSTTA meeting in Nairobi, 2010, by Dinaric Arc countries
- Increase of 14% in national budget for protected areas since 2007
- Significant donor funding secured for PoWPA implementation (over CHF 1 million in 2008, including funding from GEF and the governments of Finland, Italy and Norway).

## Standards, assessment and monitoring

- In all Dinaric Arc countries Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Areas Management (RAPPAM) has been completed
- In Slovenia results from RAPPAM have been incorporated into management planning guidelines
- Management effectiveness for 66 protected areas within 6 countries have been completed.

## Future challenges

- Raise financial support needed to develop protected area business plans and establish public-private partnerships in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia
- Gain the engagement and collaboration of all relevant sectors dealing with biodiversity and natural resources management.

## Future priorities

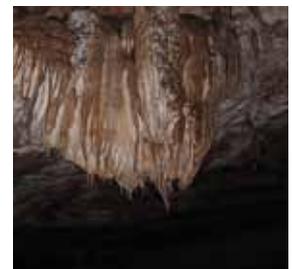
- Ensure long-term financial sustainability of protected areas which benefit local communities
- Ensure cooperation between protected area authorities and other sectors on biodiversity management towards rural sustainable development
- Use the ecoregional gap analysis to expand protected area systems.



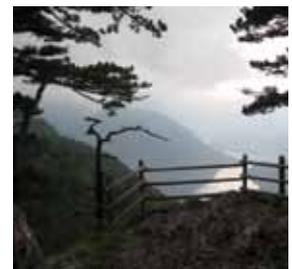
© ROBERT PASICKO / WWF



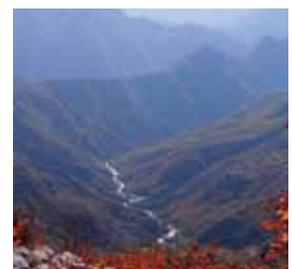
© IVANA KORN / WWF



© PAUL VEENLIET / WWF



© TARA NATIONAL PARK / WWF



© GENTI KROMIDHA / WWF

### For further information:

Dr Deni Porej  
Director of Conservation  
WWF Mediterranean  
dporej@wwfmedpo.org  
+39 346 4970 619



#### Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

[www.panda.org](http://www.panda.org)