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**PROJECT
“ALBANIAN NATIONAL CAPACITY SELF-
ASSESSMENT FOR GLOBAL
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT”**

**NCSA Albania
Final Report**

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List of Acronyms

AL	Albania
APCD	Action Plan to Combat Desertification
ASCI	Areas of Special Conservation Interest
ASP	Agricultural Services Project
ANFI	Albanian National Forestry Inventory Project
AUT	Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT)
BRI	Biological Research Institute
CAMP	Coastal Area Management Program
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCD	Convention to Combat Desertification
CCF	UNDP Country Cooperation Framework
COP	Conference of the Parties
EA	Ecosystem Approach
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
EEA	European Environmental Agency
FPRI	Forest and Pasture Research Institute
FRI	Fishery Research Institute
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDFP	General Directorate of Forests and Pastures
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GEF/SGP	Global Environmental Facility/Small Grant Program
GIS	Geographic Information System
GoA	Government of Albania
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MKOE	MillieuKontakt Ooast Europa
MNS	Museum of Natural Sciences
MN	Montenegro
FSD	Forestry Services Directorates
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MoAFPC	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Protection of Consumers
MoEFWA	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration
MoTCYS	Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports
MTBP	Medium-Term Budget Program
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NCNB	National Council for Nature and Biodiversity
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NCTA	National Council of Territorial Adjustment
NGOs	Non Governmental Organizations

NSSD	National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development
PEEN	Pan European Ecological Network
REC	Regional Environmental Centre
RDoAF	Regional Directorates of Agriculture and Food
RoA	Republic of Albania
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
SC	Steering Committee
SPAs	Specially Protected Areas
SRF	UNDP Country Strategic Results Framework
SRI	Soil Research Institute
SU	Sustainable Use
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
WB	World Bank
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today's growth in human population and a sharp increase in consumption have turned environmental problems into issues of global significance. People have understood that the future of our planet depends on how countries are able to agree on common rules to ensure that human existence on the Earth lasts as long as possible. In 1983 the UN General Assembly established the independent World Commission on Environment and Development aiming to define global problems and seeking solutions thereto. The 1987 Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* (I, II) defined the principle of sustainable development as development "which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro was a major breakthrough in this respect, formulating the concept of sustainable development.

The principles of maintaining the quality of the environment and using its resources in a balanced manner have been set out in three documents approved by the UN member states, dealing with the different facets of the natural and human environment. These documents are generally known as the Rio conventions:

- The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, whose main objective is conservation of biological diversity at its various levels, both occurring naturally and in domesticated or cultivated form.
- The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, whose principal objective is to control and slow down the increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere and to develop measures to mitigate the effects of possible climate changes.
- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, whose principal objective in the narrower sense is to put a stop to the worsening of the environment in the arid climatic zone and in a broader sense to protect the soil as a valuable global resource.

Albania has become a Party to three above-mentioned Conventions after 1990-s which corresponds to the country's change of regime and participation in international agreements on environmental protection.

Albania ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity on January 1994. Albania became a Party of the UNCCD on 2000 April 27, after its accession on December 1999.

As part of the global economic, cultural and environmental arena, Albania's development will only proceed by adequately taking into account, global processes and trends. The principles of the conventions, as well as of the European Union environmental policy, have been established as priority areas for the next ten years. Acceding to the conventions means that the provisions thereof take precedence over domestic law and activities, and countries are bound by the international commitments undertaken under the conventions. Given the broad scope of application of the individual conventions, the specific nature of local circumstances and the needs and interests of the states, the environmental and

economic policy acts may in practice turn out to be in conflict with the objectives of the conventions.

Albania, with the support of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), has initiated a self-assessment process to lead to a better understanding of capacity development needs in the context of Albania's priorities for addressing global environment challenges, and to gain a better understanding of how the global environmental management system may assist Albania to address these capacity development needs. The National Capacity needs Self Assessment (NCSA), project was implemented by a broad-based working group and operating under the guidance of a Steering Committee (SC), comprising significant stakeholders identified in NCSA process. Steering Committee is composed by representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (Chair of the SC), Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection (Institute of Soil Studies), Ministry of Energy and Transport (National Agency of Energy, Ministry of Local Government, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as ECAT Tirana and REC Albania.

The objective of the National Capacity Self Assessment was to assess capacity needs and priorities with respect to the global environment and within the context of sustainable development so that Albania can meet the requirements of the Global Environmental Conventions in a coordinated and strategic manner. The NCSA took into account the Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Land Degradation and was focus on cross-cutting issues and synergies between the Conventions. The NCSA will result in the preparation of a National Action Plan that will describe in practical terms the activities should be implemented to address the capacity constraints identified in the assessment. In addition to contributing towards global environmental goals, the NCSA will have direct benefits for environmental management and sustainable development in Albania.

The project was introduced to the GoA and to the key stakeholders identified during the inception workshop held in April 2005.

The first phase of the project was devoted to stock taking and collecting of baseline information relating to the individual conventions.

In this phase the methodological guidelines for NCSA process was provided. The assessment process consists in three levels namely systemic, institutional and individual.

In the second phase thematic profiles focused on the assessment of capacity needs for implementation of each individual convention in Albania were developed. Capacity constraints which were common to at least two conventions were addressed in the third phase. Then the significance of the capacity constraints to successful implementation of the conventions was subjected to a comparative assessment and in-depth analyses.

Identified Thematic Priority Issues

The thematic profiles are a thorough review of the progress made with each Rio Convention in Albania in terms of:

- Legal instruments and their effectiveness
- National programs and projects
- Implementation of convention issues in national programs

- Monitoring of adopted programs
- Information management (databases)
- Financing
- Stakeholders involvement
- Public awareness

The outlook for implementation of convention Annex 1 (a-c) contains the thematic profiles for each of the three conventions.

The Thematic Profiles were then used to identify priority issues for implementing the Conventions. The issues have been subdivided into general issues and specific subject areas, and given their priority ranking.

The main priority issues for the successful implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity were identified as follows:

- There is a little capacity do design and manage properly new protected areas without external financial and technical support.
- Weak capacity to elaborate feasible strategies, plans and programs. A coordination and cooperation tradition in the process of planning by various scientific and nongovernmental organizations is weak.
- Lack of integrated databases concerning biodiversity. Information management of various institutions engaged with biodiversity monitoring is weak.
- Weak capacity to implement rehabilitation measures of degraded ecosystems and recovery of threatened species.
- Weak capacity to conduct Biodiversity monitoring.
- Low level of awareness of decision makers concerning the biodiversity conservation issues. The level of awareness among decision makers about the issues of international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora is extremely low in Albania. Customs services of Albania lack knowledge about the guidelines of the Convention and Albania's commitments before CITES.

The main priority issues to the successful implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification were the following:

- Inadequate budget of institutions at central and local government to develop and carry out works and investment on land protection
- Low awareness and knowledge of decision-makers concerning legal framework on land and low technical level of legal experts
- Low awareness of decision-makers on land degradation/desertification issues
- Lack of needed budget and technical capacities to implement national programs and lack of qualified staff both national and local level.
- Low awareness of general population concerning the environmental issues, especially on land desertification/degradation issues.
- Inadequate institutional framework at central and local level to promote the technical/scientific cooperation

Capacity constraints to successful joint implementation of the environmental conventions

In the next stage each of the priority issues were reviewed and their associated capacity constraints were identified. Chapter 3 summarizes the capacity constraints and whether the constraints are at the systemic, institutional or individual level.

The following capacity constraints were identified from the analysis of joint implementation of the conventions:

1. Poorly developed policies, legislations, strategies and programs and poor integration of them into sectoral policies and development plans.
2. Relevant institutions are not able to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs
3. Low level of awareness of decision-makers and public about (global) environmental issues
4. Underdeveloped system of data collection and information management
5. Poor Scientific Cooperation and Declining of Research Capacities
6. Inadequate enabling environment for technology transfer

Opportunities for Synergistic Environmental Management

Given that an important element of the project was to couple global environmental management within the framework of national sustainable development priorities, an

analysis of the problems of implementing the conventions synergistically was undertaken.

Proposals are being made to overcome the constraints by both legislative and executive means. The specialists are recommending a number of actions to increase the synergies from the three environmental conventions that will be part of NCSA Action Plan.

Next Steps/Follow Up

The NCSA Action Plan is being developed and will be submitted to the SC and MoEFWA for approval. Proposals for the implementation follow up and monitoring of NCSA process will be part of the NCSA Action Plan.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. NCSA Objectives

This National Capacity Self-Assessment Document is the result of the project launched by Albania, with support of the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), to improve the management of global environmental issues in Albania on the basis of the Rio environmental conventions (hereinafter referred to as the NCSA). The NCSA project has been an excellent opportunity for Albania to carry out an analysis of its environmental policies and determine its capacity development shortcomings. The next step will be to find solutions to overcome the capacity constraints.

The project is based on the provisions of the three environmental conventions was adopted in Rio de Janeiro in 1991:

- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) (www.biodiv.org) (hereinafter referred to as the Convention on Biological Diversity);
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (www.unfccc.int) (hereinafter referred to as the Convention on Climate Change);
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) (www.unccd.int) (hereinafter referred to as the Convention to Combat Desertification).

The primary goal of the project was to gain a better understanding of the capacity development needs in the context of Albania's priorities for addressing global environment challenges, and to gain better understanding of how the global system may

assist Albania to address these capacity development needs. The goal also entailed a number of specific objectives:

- To identify priority issues for capacity building for issues of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation;
- To explore both the needs for capacity building within the framework of each issue and those arising from the interrelationship of these issues,
- To catalyze targeted and coordinated action and requests for future external funding and assistance;
- To couple specific environmental protection activities with the broader framework of national environmental management and sustainable development.

1.2. Background to Albania

Physical and Socio-Economic Context

Albania is a small country located in South Eastern Europe. It has borders with Serbia and Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece and covers an area of 28,748 km². From the fertile coastal plain on the Adriatic Sea, the land rises into hills and mountains to the North (Albanian Alps) and East (Korabi Mountain). Small rivers traverse the country. Although Albania is rich in water resources, 33% of the catchments areas are situated outside its national borders.

The Government considers the environment to be an integral component of poverty reduction and will work to achieve an integrated rural development that includes the protection and improvement of use of natural resources. Environmental policies during the period 2002 – 2006 are directed at halting the process of environmental degradation; creating conditions for rehabilitation of polluted areas and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.

In 2002 the Government formulated, with financial and technical support from World Bank, and other players of the international community, the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (NSSSED). This Strategy, developed through a broad participatory process that included local government, civil society, private sector and donors, aims to address poverty reduction through a broad set of reforms and activities.

Albania has recently signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union, which sets the conditions for the country's eventual accession to the EU. The policies that need to be adopted and actions to be taken are fully in line with the NSSSED. These two instruments are the main focus of national development and donor support.

Currently the government, with support from UNDP, is engaged in a continued participatory dialog and advocacy to integrate the MDGs into the NSSSED. Initial progress has been made in linking MDG-NSSSED development priorities with the annual

Medium-Term Budget Program (MTBP) under which Albanian public institutions are working. Thanks to UNDP efforts in promoting and advocating for national commitment to Millennium Development Goals, the NSSD is also seen as one of the mechanisms to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Environmental Strategies and Legislation

According to the Constitution, every citizen in Albania is entitled to “an ecologically healthy environment for present and future generations” as well as “access to information on the state of the environment”. The Constitution also requires the “rational exploitation of forests, waters and pastures based on the principle of sustainable development”.

The Law on Environmental Protection (1993, amended in 1998 and 2002) forms the basis for environmental management in Albania. The law addresses the prevention and reduction of pollution, sustainable management of natural resources, monitoring, how to define pollution levels. It provides binding provisions for environmental impact assessment and the implementation of the polluter pays principle.

A series of sectoral laws contain provisions for environmental protection, for example the law on water reserves, law on mining, and laws on regulatory entity of waste waters, hunting, forestry, soil, urban planning etc. These laws are accompanied by a considerable number of normative acts.

Recently, several laws have been approved, such as laws on protected areas (2002), environmental impact assessment (2002), protection of marine environment from pollution, air protection, as well as several decisions on environmental monitoring, procedures related to the designation of protected areas, administration of protected areas, designation of Nature Monuments have been issued. The legislative framework is already quite comprehensive. However, the challenge is not so much in the legislation, which seems to be in place, but in its implementation and enforcement.

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is the basic document presenting the Government’s policy and general programs in the environmental sector. The NEAP was first prepared with assistance from PHARE and the World Bank in 1994. It was revised in 2001 (covering the period 2002 – 2005) through an extensive consultative process involving a large number of stakeholders organized into thematic work groups. The main issues identified through the NEAP are:

- Development of policies and programs;
- Improvement and completing the legal framework;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building;
- Increase of public awareness.

Priority investments are to focus on watershed management, forestry, flood control, solid waste management, water supply, sewage systems and urban management. However, the

revised NEAP does not set out priorities. Moreover, although each proposed activity in the NEAP is calculated; most funds have only been requested and not secured. An inter-ministerial committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, has been set up to enable implementation of the revised NEAP.

Other main environmental policy documents include the National Water Strategy (1996); the National Waste management plan (1996); the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2000); the 'Green Strategy' (1998) developed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumers Protection; the National Strategy for the Development of the Forestry and Pastures in Albania (2005); the National Strategy for Tourism Development (2003), and the National Energy Strategy. A National Environmental Strategy was recently developed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration (MoEFWA), with the help provided by the EU through ELPA Project (2006).

Recently, a new law on biodiversity protection has been approved by Albanian Parliament. This law defines the roles and responsibilities of the various Ministries involved in biodiversity conservation. Albania already has a *red list* of protected species, which protects all endemic and sub-endemic species. This list has to be updated every five years.

Institutional Framework for the Environment

In institutional terms, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (MEFWA) is the highest governmental body responsible for environmental protection. Beginning in early 2006, the *MoEFWA* was additionally tasked with overseeing most issues related to water, pasture, and forest management. The *MoEFWA* is now directly responsible for managing 1,502,161 hectares of land or 52.25% of the country's surface area - including all protected areas, forests, and pastures – and much of the country's surface water.

The *MoEFWA*'s main tasks include: implementing relevant national policies, defining priority environmental and forestry investments, development of national research programs in the environmental field, and, coordinating environmental protection-related activities of the other ministries and local authorities. The *MoEFWA* may propose measures for the protection and preservation of the environment, forestry and water resources and is responsible for the implementation of water policy and forestry policy. The *MoEFWA* is the Focal Point for implementation of the conventions.

The *MoEFWA* is organized into 9 Directorates. The main directorates are: directorate of forestry and Pastures Policy, directorate of natural protection policy, directorate of pollution prevention policy, directorate of fishing policy, directorate of control coordination, Unit of coordination of integrated policy, directorate of environment impact assessment. The directorate of Forestry and Pastures Policy is organized into three sectors: Sector of treatment of forestry resources, sector of forestry and pasture management, sector of communal forestry. The directorate of natural protection policy is

organized into three sectors: Sector of protected areas policy, sector of fauna protection policy, sector of water resources policy.

The *MoEFWA* is supported by 12 Regional Environmental Agencies (REA) located in each Prefecture. These functionaries are responsible for implementing and enforcing legislation; carrying out site inspections; controlling operating facilities and the use of natural resources within their regions; taking part in environmental permitting for new activities; and supporting environmental monitoring and assessments.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Production (MoAFCP) is responsible for agricultural development and the regulation of all agricultural lands (approximately 700,000 hectares). The Ministry focuses upon assisting farmers to increase productivity. The MoAFCP has Land Administration and Protection Units in each District who report directly to the local government. The MoAFCP recently created the General Directorate of Resources and the Office of Services. This directorate is organized into three sectors: sector of agricultural land management, sector of irrigation and drainage, as well as the sector of inventory, transfers and immovable property registration.

In local level, except the Regional Environmental Agencies, in each region and commune, there are created the Land Administration and Protection Offices (LAP) integrated within the local government structure and work with the regional councils. LAP's are responsible for managing both, state and private agricultural, forest, pasture, riparian, urban and unproductive lands. In principle, these responsibilities include: land use planning, changes of cadastral classification, compilation of development plans; organization and implementation; maintenance of archives and registers and provision of these data for physical and juridical persons; and, evaluating agricultural land, forest, pasture (and meadows) in connection with transfer of ownership and taxation.

Scientific institutes associated with the Conventions include the Academy of Sciences (Institute of Biological Research, Institute of Hydrometeorology, etc), the University of Tirana (Faculty of Natural Sciences, Museum of Natural Sciences, Botanical Garden, etc) and research institutions dependent on ministries (Institute of Soil Research, Institute of Fishery Research, Institute of Forest and Pastures Research, etc). The majority of these institutions contribute to monitoring, based on government decisions and through financial support from the government. MoEFWA also sub-contracts these institutes to collect information and perform other Convention-related tasks. MoEFWA recently established the Institute for Environment. The reform that is under way in Albania is expecting to re-shape and re-organize the whole research sector, aiming to bring this sector work more efficiently and responding to the new demands of the free market economy.

INSTAT is the government statistical agency formally responsible for collecting and storing information. When preparing reports to international conventions, the Ministry of Environment requests official data from INSTAT. Although INSTAT collects information from institutes across the country, in some cases the data may be incomplete,

out-of-date or inconsistent. The MoEFWA may have more direct access to more reliable information than INSTAT.

The number of environmental NGOs in Albania is estimated between 80-100. They are all established after democratic changes of the year 1991. At the beginning they were all based in the capital (Tirana). Later on new branches or new NGOs were established at regional and local level, but still half of the environmental NGOs are based in Tirana (39 NGOs). In general, the NGOs are independent, have good expertise (although limited in number); yet they often have insufficient facilities and equipment. Their main areas of activity include environmental education and raising awareness. There is no umbrella organization to represent the interests of NGOs, hence cooperation and communication amongst the NGOs is not well developed, although the Albanian branch of the Regional Environmental Centre (REC) does support coordination.

The GEF small grants program (SGP) has been running since 1998 and supports NGOs to implement projects related to implementing one or more of the Global Environment Conventions. The SGP is considered a success by most stakeholders. Over the years, the SGP has held many consultations across the country, and has developed contacts with a large and representative network of NGOs. NCSA will coordinate its activities with the GEF SPG to build on knowledge and experience accumulated throughout the years of its successful operations in the country. SGP will also serve as an important platform for outreach and consultations with the NGOs and their involvement in the NCSA process.

1.3. Methodology

The Guide for Self-Assessment of Country Capacity Needs for Global Environmental Management, UNITAR 2001, served as the basis for implementing the project. The methodology covered the entire life span of the Rio environmental conventions from the development of the documents to implementation, monitoring and revisions. The methodology was reviewed and agreed by all parties involved in the formulation of the NCSA project report.

The NCSA activities followed a 'project' methodology, setting an overall time-table, describing a management structure and defining principles for the drafting of actions and their prioritization. An important part of the NCSA process was the openness and transparency of the whole process and the involvement of a broad range of different stakeholders in society in order to build consensus and ensure ownership of the NCSA process. A full list of participants and stakeholders in the project is given in Annex 2.

A series of consultations, analysis (SWAT and Root-Cause analysis), workshops and meetings were organized and conducted under the NCSA process. They were all focused on the following key issues:

- How to assist the implementation mechanisms, and how they should be negotiated, in order to effectively address the Rio environmental conventions' priorities in Albania.

- How to build management capacity, and the capacity for more effective implementation of the Rio environmental conventions in Albania.
- What any potential cooperation/negotiations should aim to achieve, and how would these be financed.
- What kinds of strategic alliances are needed to ensure that social, environmental and economic constituencies can start to work together for sustainable development?
- What do stakeholders, including independent civil society groups, recommend, and how effectively will the cooperation be organized between all stakeholders to become part of the process.

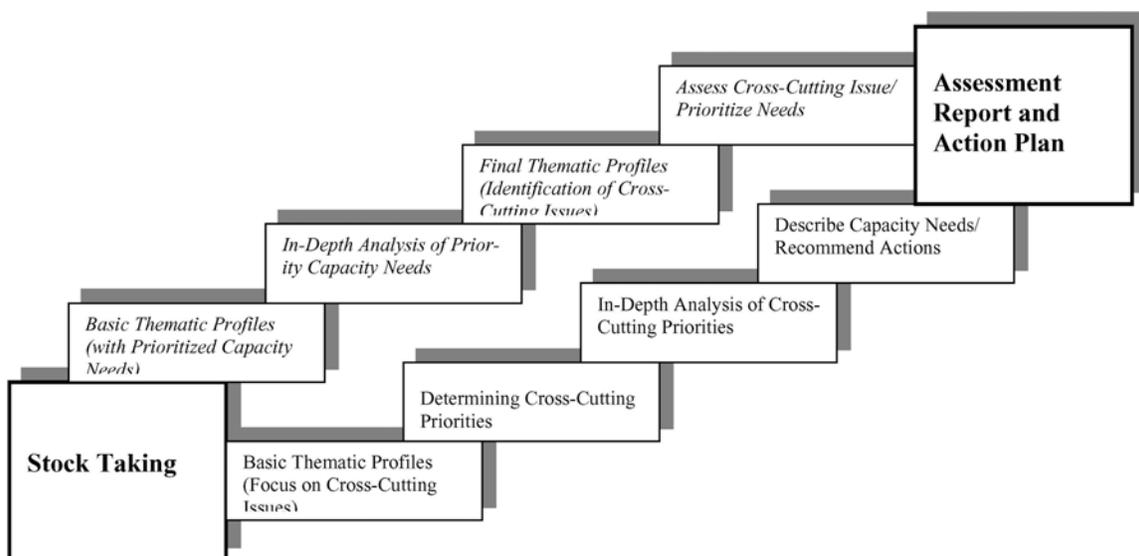


Fig.1 Phases and steps of the NCSA process in Albania

1.4 Project Activities

The NCSA process as shown above (Fig.1) was divided into 5 phases:

- Phase 1. Establishment of a NCSA co-ordination mechanism
- Phase 2. Preparation of Stock Taking reports
- Phase 3. Preparation of Thematic Profiles
- Phase 4. Preparation of Cross-Cutting Capacity Constraints to global environmental management in Albania based on the Rio conventions
- Phase 4. Drafting the National Capacity Self-Assessment Document
- Phase 5. Drafting the NCSA Action Plan

Four out of five phases are already completed, while work is under way to draft the NCSA Strategic Action Plan

1.4.1 Establishment of a NCSA co-ordination mechanism

For the successful implementation of the project a clear management structure was established with well-defined responsibilities, thereby ensuring efficiency of management, involvement of experts and ownership of the project by a broad range of stakeholders, as well as to inform the general public of the project activities through the whole life of the project. The following management structure was established for the project:

NCSA Steering Committee

The MoEFWA created the NCSA Steering Committee to provide general supervision over the project direction and management. The Steering Committee consisted of representatives of all ministries, the Parliament, the Office of the President and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The GEF operational focal point chaired the NCSA SC. (See list of Steering Committee members within Annex 2).

Project Management Team

The Project Management Team managed the day-to-day co-ordination of the NCSA project. The team, reporting to the Steering Committee, was responsible for developing the methodological structure of the project, provision of technical expertise and supervision of the Working Groups. The Project Management Team includes the National project Director, National Project Manager, Project assistant and team leaders of three working groups,. (See list of Project Management Team members within Annex 2).

Working Groups

Three Working Groups (WGs), were established for carrying out the tasks arising from the project, focusing on the thematic areas of each convention.

- Convention on Biological Diversity Working Group – leader: Museum of Natural Sciences, Tirana University;
- Convention on Climate Change Working Group
- Convention to Combat Desertification Working Group – leader: Institute of Soil Studies.

The leaders of WGs were free to invite members into the working groups, and membership varied during the different phases of the project. The participants involved in WGs came from public, academic and NGOs. (See the lists of working group members within Annex 2).

Convention Focal Points

The Convention Focal Points were initially involved in the NCSA process during the preparation phase, providing administrative and informative support for preparing the application. The principles of the project, its main goals and objectives, the methods, participants (PMT, WG leaders, and representatives of SC), etc. were all discussed and set up during the project preparation stage as well as during the first phase of project with the convention focal points. During the project regular consultations between the convention focal points and the PMT occurred, as well as consultations between the convention focal points and the Working Groups. Conventions focal points instructed WG-s in questions of relevant environment politics in Albania. The PMT presented regular reports to convention focal points as well as to the SC.

1.4.2 Preparation of Stock Taking reports

Preparation of stock-taking reports for the implementation of the Rio Conventions was the first task of the working groups established under the NCSA project in Albania. For understanding the baseline situation for each thematic area the working groups began by collecting background information, including: (i) country activities under the three Rio Conventions (i.e. country's reports, clearing-house mechanism, monitoring programs) (ii) national projects and programs, (iii) regional cooperation, initiatives and activities, and (iv) related legislative and policy development.

1.4.3 Preparation of thematic profiles

The preparation of the thematic profiles for Albania began with a review of the status and trends of the legal framework in Albania and then an analysis of it. Legislative instruments of all different levels as well as other national documents were part of this analysis. Various reports and action plans that had been previously prepared within the framework of implementing the conventions were reviewed. Stock-taking reports previously produced by working groups provided a useful baseline information for such an analysis. The working groups also modified their work to take into account the more recent legislation. (See the list of documents that served as a basis for the thematic profiles in Annex 3).

A full list of stakeholders who are connected by their activities associated with implementing the conventions in Albania was prepared. (See the list of stakeholders in Annex 4).

The working groups then prepared the thematic profiles for the conventions on the basis of the background information they had collected. Each working group was independent in its work, but followed an agreed methodology in preparing the thematic profile for their relevant convention.

The thematic profiles are included in this document at Annex 1. A summary of the thematic profiles is presented in Chapter 2.

The thematic profiles present an overview of the implementation of the conventions to date with regard to the following:

- Legislation pertaining to the convention
- Legal instruments and their efficiency
- National programs and projects
- Implementation of convention related issues through national programs
- Monitoring implementation of the adopted programs and action plans
- Databases pertaining to the convention
- Funding for carrying out the commitments undertaken under the convention
- Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the convention
- Public awareness
- Outlook for implementing the convention in Albania

After preparing the thematic profiles the working groups determined the priority issues which, when addressed, would result in a more successful performance of the commitments for each convention in Albania. In order to identify priority issues within each Thematic Profile, the tools used included a prioritization matrix, the “problem tree” and “root cause analysis”. In the process of prioritizing issues the following criteria were taken into account:

- Contributes to the implementation of international commitments
- Creates a basis for subsequent environmental actions
- Has a balancing impact on the environment
- Has a long-term impact on the environment
- Creates preconditions for developments in other sectors (policies)

A summary of the priority issues to implementing the conventions is also included in chapter 2.

Having determined the priority issues, the reasons behind such issues were also analyzed in order to try to establish why these priority issues are hindering the successful implementation of the conventions in Albania. Chapter 3 contains a summary of the capacity constraints standing in the way of implementing the conventions. During the project process different scales (for example 1-5 and 1-3) were used. The scale of 1-5 to prioritize the issues and capacity constraints was selected by common agreement after work meetings and consultations between all the project participants. Agreement on the priority scale was reached by adopting a voting process.

1.4.3 Preparation of Report on Cross-Cutting Capacity constraints to global environmental management

The opportunities for enhancing environmental management in Albania by adopting the concepts and obligations/requirements of the Rio Conventions played an important role in the NCSA process. The section on 'Opportunities for environmental management in Albania based on the Rio conventions' includes details on the synergistic needs and necessary actions. A Summary of cross-cutting capacity constraints to implementation of Rio environmental conventions in Albania are given in chapter 3, while Opportunities for synergistic environmental management in Albania based on the Rio conventions are given in chapter 4.

Based on the proposals received from the working groups, the experts held a series of joint meetings where they jointly developed the following Cross-Cutting Priority Requirements and the related root cause analysis for six main cross-cutting and synergistic issues:

- Development and improvement of policies, legislations, strategies and programs;
- Implementation of policies, legislations, strategies, and programs;
- Awareness raising of decision makers and public of global environmental issues;
- Data collection and information management;
- Increased support to research;
- Technology Transfer.

1.4.4 Drafting the National Capacity Self-Assessment Report and next follow up steps

Draft NCSA report was prepared by Working Groups under supervision of the Project Management Team. Next step is the preparation of the NCSA Action Plan. After reviewing both NCSA Final Report and NCSA Action Plan the Steering Committee has to submit them to the MoEFWA, seeking the Government's approval to put into action all plans to improve capacity for environmental management in Albania.

The NCSA process should not end with the drawing up of the action plan itself. The project must be followed by implementation of the actions detailed in the document and monitoring thereof. These activities are facilitated by the fact that the project mapped in great detail the stakeholders who are able and willing to continue their efforts towards sustainable environmental management.

One important aspect that emerged as a result of the project was an institutional cooperation network between top specialists in universities as well as other institutions. The recommendation is to maintain the existing structure of the NCSA process so as to

periodically repeat the reviews of implementing the Rio environmental conventions. The documents prepared within the framework of the project shall be handed over to the MoEFWA and the final version of the project results shall be made available on the project website in the Internet (<http://www.moe.gov.al>).

2. THEMATIC PROFILES AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The Thematic Profiles provide an understanding of the baseline situation for each of the three Rio Conventions. To prepare the thematic profiles, legislative instruments of different levels as well as other national documents were consulted. Various other reports and action plans that had been previously prepared within the framework of implementing the conventions were also reviewed. The working groups also modified their work to take into account the more recent legislation. The list of documents that served as a basis for the thematic profiles is given in Annex 3. A second list was prepared on stakeholders who are connected by their activities with implementing the conventions in Albania (see Annex 4). The working groups started to prepare the thematic profiles for the conventions on the basis of the background information they had collected during Stock Taking phase. Each working group was independent in its work, but followed an agreed methodology in preparing the thematic profile of the relevant convention. The thematic profiles are included at Annex 1(a-c).

While developing the thematic profiles for the conventions the working groups determined the priority issues of the Albanian environmental policy to date which serve as major constraints to the implementation of these conventions. Integration of the principles of the conventions into the national legislation, development plans and programs plays a key role in implementing the conventions. Ascertaining conflicts between the provisions of national documents and those of the conventions was also an important part in the process.

In order to better establish the nature of the priority issues, and to quantify them so as to be able to compare and prioritize the different issues, the scale of the problem and the level of concern were developed. The scale of the problem is a measurement of the relative importance of the priority issue. The level of concern is a measurement of the level of importance in relation to convention implementation. The rating scales were:

Scale of problem – the extent of the relevant priority issue was measured on the global, national, local scale. A global issue is important for the global environment, i.e. has transboundary environmental impact. National issues are those deriving either from the national policies or having a nation-wide impact on the environment. Local issues relate to Albanian regional problems.

Level of concern – here we assessed the impact of the priority issue on the implementation of the conventions in Albania as being high, medium and low. Priority issues that are directly in conflict with the principles of the conventions, or are related to activities working fully against the provisions of the conventions, are of high concern.

Priority issues that serve as constraints to implementing the provisions of the conventions are of medium concern. However, these may derive from the “lenience” of the conventions towards some social and economic issues. Priority issues that have to be taken into account in nature and environmental protection but have little impact on the implementation of the conventions are of low concern.

To determine the priority ranking, priority was assessed on the scale of 1-5. Priority ranking is derived from a synthesis of the above two scales, where number 5 means the most severe problem and number 1 the least severe problem.

2.1. United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity

Profile Summary

Name of convention: United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)

Adopted: June 12, 1992

Entry into force: December 30, 1992

Ratified by Albania: January 1994

Organization responsible for implementation in Albania: MoEFWA

National focal point: Minister of MoEFWA

Main convention objectives:

The main objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity is conservation of biological diversity at its various levels (genetic, taxonomic and ecological), both occurring naturally and in domesticated or cultivated form, through protection and sustainable use. The convention also pertains to all processes and activities in the society that may, even if indirectly, influence biological diversity.

Thus the convention has an impact on many different facets of the society and this is reflected in the obligations of different agencies. In addition the convention establishes international obligations pertaining to the fair and equitable sharing of costs and benefits between the parties.

Commitments undertaken under the convention:

The obligations arising from this convention include conservation planning, management of the environment and its resources, and the related economic relations. However, the obligations formulated in the convention are aimed at actions on the national level and are worded in such general terms that they are applicable in the case of widely different social, economic and ecological conditions. The convention does not define the objectives of the activities to be undertaken by the states in precise terms. Each member to the convention has to determine itself the national goals of its implementation.

Outlook for implementation of convention:

The Albanian National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, covering the years 1999 –2015, determine the outlook for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity in Albania. The strategy and action plan are to be revised and renewed every five years. The process of evaluation will take into account the biological diversity monitoring data acquired in the meantime, but also the experience and

recommendations of the UNCED follow-up process, any new developments, e.g. the EU environmental policy (Albania has signed recently the SAA with the EU).

There are no major problems in fulfilling the general objectives of the convention in Albania, however, creating and launching the more specific institutional and procedural infrastructures could cause difficulties. Following the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety could probably be fairly complicated.

Albania has successfully launched the national planning process for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity by preparing a national review, strategy and action plan: Albanian National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) – Tirana, 1999 – 109 pp. The NBSAP was prepared under the GEF-Biodiversity Enabling Activity (Phase I).

Many of the activities defined in the action plan are actually being carried out and more emphasis should be put to monitoring and evaluation. GEF-Biodiversity Enabling Activity –Phase II is facilitating and providing financial support for the implementation, monitoring and revision of the NBSAP in Albania.

Priority issues for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity

The main priority issues for the successful implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity were identified as follows:

- There is a little capacity do design and manage properly new protected areas without external financial and technical support.
- Weak capacity to elaborate feasible strategies, plans and programs. Traditions coordination and cooperation by various departments in the process of planning, scientific and nongovernmental organizations is weak.
- Lack of integrated databases concerning biodiversity. Information management of various institutions engaged with biodiversity monitoring is weak.
- Weak capacity to implement rehabilitation measures of degraded ecosystems and recovery of threatened species.
- Weak capacity to conduct Biodiversity monitoring.
- Low level of awareness of decision makers concerning the biodiversity conservation issues. The level of awareness among decision makers about the issues of international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora is extremely low in Albania. Customs services of Albania lack knowledge about the guidelines of the Convention and Albania's commitments before CITES.

2.2. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Profile Summary

Name of Convention: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Entry into force: January 1, 1995

Ratified by Albania: October 1994

Organization responsible for implementation in Albania: MoEFWA

National focal point: Minister of MoEFWA

Main convention objectives:

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change. It recognizes that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Under the UNFCCC, governments gather and share information on greenhouse gas emissions, national policies and best practices; launch national strategies for addressing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to expected impacts, including the provision of financial and technological support to developing countries; cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change

Commitments undertaken under the UNFCCC:

The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate. By becoming a party to the UNFCCC, Albania has accepted a number of commitments which include, *inter alia*, to:

- develop, periodically update, publish and make national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol available to the COP;
- formulate, implement, publish and regularly update national and — where appropriate — regional programmes containing measures to mitigate climate change by addressing anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, and measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change; and
- communicate information related to implementation of the UNFCCC to the COP, in accordance with Article 12.

The Government of Albania has taken considerable steps for the implementation of the UNFCCC such as preparing the First National Communication to the COP, the Technology Needs Assessment, and compiling the climate change NAP. In accordance with Article 4.3 of the UNFCCC, the Government of Albania has requested funding from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to assist the country in preparing its FNC. So far Albania has finalised and submitted its FNC to the CoP 8 on October 2002 and has started the preparation of the SNC after the completion of the self-assessment exercise (stocktaking). The stocktaking process

spurred the generation of essential information for preparing the project proposal for the SNC, which was the main output of this exercise.

According to the FNC Albania is a relatively low net emitter of greenhouse gases, with relatively low carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions per capita, mainly due to the fact that over 90 percent of electricity is generated by hydro-sources. The energy sector contributes more than 60 percent of total emissions. Relatively high CO₂ emissions per GDP are explained mainly due to high energy intensity. Based on the predictions for future emissions, if no GHG abatement measures are taken by 2020 total GHG emissions will be increased from 7,061.45 gig-grams (Gg) in 1994 to 37,653 Gg.

Outlook for implementation of convention:

Although Albania does not have any commitments for GHG emission reduction, the NAP aims at reducing the growth rates of GHG emissions. The abatement scenario of emissions foresees the introduction and implementation of different options mainly focused on energy saving through energy efficiency measures and promotion of renewable energy sources. A tier of GHG mitigation measures for all GHG relevant sectors with a more significant focus on the energy sector has been proposed and evaluated in terms of many criteria. They consist not only of reduction potential, and cost and benefit, but also the contribution to poverty reduction and social welfare. Measures consist of thermal insulation in housing, efficient bulbs, solar thermal, LPG (cooking, heating), small hydro-power, fuel switching in industry, and others.

The future climate scenario for Albania predicts changes such as increased temperatures, decreased precipitation and reduction of water resources and arable land. The most vulnerable area is Albania's coastal zone, while the most vulnerable sectors are water resources, agriculture energy and tourism. Future climate changes are expected to negatively impact the river flow, which in turn will affect the generation capacity of hydro-power plants. This is an issue that needs to be taken into consideration. The National Communication process has not only been considered as a tool for reporting to the UNFCCC but also for mainstreaming to national planning process and programming through the mobilization of new resources. Due to such efforts the National Energy Strategy (NES) has already integrated many findings and outputs from Albania's FNC and TNA.

Priority issues for implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

The priority issues addressed and recommendations done, during the assessment process, identified that overall system for the implementation of the UNFCCC and its Protocol is not sufficient. There is a list of the constraints that hinder the implementation of the UNFCCC and participation into the Kyoto Protocol Flexible Mechanisms:

- Lack of awareness on climate change issues at all levels
- Lack of relevant education at all levels
- Lack of sufficient funds from the state budget
- Insufficient climate change mainstreaming efforts

- Insufficient capacities to deal with climate change issues
- Lack of reliable data to compile studies for climate change
- Lack of inter-ministerial coordination efforts
- Lack of a sustainable mechanism for the reporting to the UNFCCC.
- Lack of an favourable environment to attract investments for climate friendly technology transfer

There is a recommendation which aims at the establishment of a **sustainable and efficient mechanism for the implementation of the Convention in Albania**. In order to achieve this it would be necessary to undertake the following actions:

- Increase public awareness on climate change issues through an effective communication and outreaching strategy.
- Establish a sustainable mechanism for developing frequent GHG inventories and other components of National Communication to the UNFCCC
- Enhance national capacity to collect data and estimate GHG inventories, abatement analysis and vulnerability and adaptation studies for climate change in Albania
- Train the staff in order to ensure the sustainability of the process of National Communication
- Continuously and systematically inform all levels of society on economic, environmental, and social opportunities that cooperation under the Convention
- Create a favorable environmental for absorption of the investments that promote the transfer of climate friendly technologies through incentive systems and market instruments
- Use the national communication preparation process as a tool for integration of climate change concerns into national development plans.
- Address climate change adaptation issue into sectoral development strategies and programs, especially at the community level.
- Enhance the quality of the climate systematic observation and monitoring and ensure its sustainability.
- Build capacities to monitor and observe climate variability and change and address adaptation response measures for vulnerable systems in both national and community levels.
- Enhance skills for participating and developing negotiations on behalf of the country into the international climate change *fora*.

2.3. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Profile Summary

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was adopted in Paris on 1994, June 17, and was entered into force on 1996, December 26. Albania became a Party of the UNCCD on 2000 July 26, after its accession on December 1999. The main objective of the Convention is to *combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought particularly in Africa through effective actions at all levels to achieve sustainable development in affected areas.*

The Convention defines “Desertification” as: *Land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities.* The aims of combating desertification are prevention and/or reduction of land degradation/desertification; rehabilitation of partly degraded land; and reclamation of deserted land. The desertification is not limited to the expansion and advancing of deserts, but also includes worsening environments for plants, animals and people resulting from excessive use of water, grazing and inadequate land use. Thus the convention indirectly covers loss of soil fertility and land degradation. *Land degradation includes the following issues:* soil erosion by wind and/or water, soil destruction, soil denudation, chemical pollution of soil, vegetation degradation of all strata, habitat conversion/loss, loss of soil organic matter, aquifer degradation, riparian degradation, coastal zone degradation related to watershed factors, mountain zone soil stability, fuel wood crisis, uncontrolled bush/forest fires, overgrazing, land-use changes, sedentary and urbanization, drought and desiccation. A 5th new annex, named Regional Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe, added to the UNCCD in the fourth Conference of the Parties (11–12 December 2000).

The main **obligations** stemming from the articles of the convention are as follows:

General Obligations:

- Adopt integrated approach;
- Strengthen sub-regional, regional and international coordination;
- Cooperate with relevant intergovernmental organizations;
- Promote the use of existing bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms;
- Formulate National Action Programs (NAP).

Obligations of affected country parties:

- Give priority to the effects of drought and land degradation, and allocate adequate resources according to circumstances;
- Establish strategies and priorities within the framework of sustainable development;
- Promote awareness and facilitate participation;
- Provide an enabling environment, strengthen legislation and establish long term policies and action programs.

Also, there are some regulations, directives and decisions of the European legislation to support the Convention implementation (for land management and land protection, the management and reduction of water pollution; the management of waste; the protection of forest and agro ecosystems).

The importance of implementing the convention

Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection are the main ministries responsible for the implementation of the Convention in Albania. These ministries, in close cooperation with related institutions are working to integrate convention requirements into environmental legislation and policy, as well as the approximation of national legislation to the EU directives. Several strategies and sectoral action plans have been compiled and approved in Albania since 1992 that address these obligations.

Various forms of land degradation are common nationally with commensurate ecological and social costs. Inappropriate cultivation, grazing, forestry, streambed mining, and development practices are the general causes of land degradation. Land degradation is primarily evinced by water related erosion. These problems clearly result in serious, negative ecological, economic and social impacts. Reduction of soil fertility, desertification and impoverishment of the soil from land degradation has adversely impacted agriculture biodiversity.

Albania is a very mountainous country with many varied landscapes including bare rock. The average altitude is 708 m over sea level; only 16% of its territory is located at elevations of less than 100 m. The relief of the country has a hilly or mountainous character; more than 75 % of the total area is hilly and mountainous. The lowlands, up to 200 m above sea level, include 23.4 % of the total area of the country, 48.1 % (between 200 m and 1000 m above sea level) includes ranges of hills and small mountains and depressions and valleys in the interior of the country. The high altitude area (above 1000 m) includes 28.5 % of the Albanian territory and is made up of mountain peaks and chains and highland plateaus. As result soil erosion is a widespread problem throughout the country. The erosion is caused by the natural factors such as steep slopes, climate (e.g. long dry periods followed by heavy rainfall), land cover patterns (e.g. sparse vegetation). Moreover some intrinsic features of a soil make it more prone to erosion (e.g. thin layer of topsoil, silt texture or low organic matter content).

In addition, human factors as inappropriate land use, abandonment of sloping land, deforestation, and overgrazing and construction activities are combined with the natural factors to increase the soil erosion through the country. Due to migration of population from rural to urban areas as well as immigration, more than 45 % of the agricultural land was not cultivated or abandoned for years. High rainfall and land abandonment has accelerated soil erosion, often at alarming rates. Floods and landslides occur frequently as a result of damages of land protection infrastructure.

On the other hand, privatization of land, land fragmentation and land market are creating the incentives to rapid chaotic urbanization of agricultural land. At present the urbanization can be considered as a major threat to Albania's land resources. As the country builds its infrastructure and develops its industries the most fertile lands are being lost to roads, highways and construction.

A new phenomenon in the last decade is abandonment of land, which has caused exposure to inappropriate land use and degradation. This category includes arable

land created in the 1960's to 80's far from inhabited areas, arable land in steep and very steep terrain, and arable land of low fertility and shallow lands.

Over the last 50 years, the degradation and loss of biodiversity from Albania's forests ecosystems has been substantial, while the major constraints for pasture conservation and sustainable use are the low quality and productivity, and overgrazing. Forest ecosystems comprise an important part of Albania's biodiversity and one of Albania's highest priorities is the restoration of depleted forest and pasture ecosystems... Also the effects of fishing, aquaculture and hunting practices on the country's marine and wetland biodiversity have been substantial over the last decade. More than 60% of the population now lives in the coastal plain, up from 40% in 1990. The result has been accelerated degeneration of coastal ecosystems as a result of habitat conversion and pollution. Reclamation, drainage and irrigation work, river flow and water management (dikes, dams, embankments, artificial water reservoirs, etc.) have drastically reduced the size of the former coastal wetland area of Albania and have changed the water regime in many remaining wetlands. Most of the coastal lagoons are facing the problem of eutrophication and degradation.

Priority issues of implementing Convention to Combat Desertification

The main priority issues confirm the urgent need of implementing Convention in Albania:

- Soil erosion in all the country, including the mountains, valleys, field and coastal areas;
- Inappropriate land use, abandonment of sloping land, deforestation, overgrazing and construction activities increasing land degradation/soil erosion and the loss of agricultural land;
- The soil fertility reduction of areas under cultivation as result of poor land management and socio- economic situation in rural areas;
- Poor cultivation and grazing practices that have resulted in the loss of land integrity, economic opportunity and food security.
- High land fragmentation
- Low level of awareness of decision makers and public to land value as a natural resource and on land degradation issues;
- Lack of land use planning and land use planning structure in national and local level
- Legislation framework is incomplete and not harmonized
- Poor cooperation and coordination between ministries and institutions in central level, as well as local government
- Water management practices have severe impacts upon the stability of Albania's land base. Salinization and water logging caused by inappropriate management of irrigation schemes are widely evident.

It is also expected that **climate change** will cause the increasing of temperatures by 0.8 to 1.0 °C by 2025-ies, between 1.21.8 °C during the 2050-ies, and by 2.1 to 3.6°C in the 2100-ies. This climate change will reduce water resources and humidity and will have an unfavorable impact on agriculture, forests and biodiversity. Such climate

change in Albania will impose the use of additional and significant irrigation activities during the dry months of vegetation and changes in plant species and habitats.

As a result it is an urgent necessity the compilation of long-term strategies, policies and programs for land protection and environment, the improvement of legal framework for land and water, the awareness raising of decision makers and public of land degradation issues, the increasing of funds and investments to implement sustainable development plans and programs. Mainstreaming of all land protection activities into environmental programs as well as the improvement of training and environmental education at different levels will provide a successful implementation and meeting of UNCCD obligations.

3. SUMMARY OF CAPACITY CONSTRAINTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RIO ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS IN ALBANIA

Following the identification of the priority issues for implementing the conventions there are analyzed capacity constraints which are causing such problems. For identifying and grouping the capacity constraints the following categories were used:

Systemic Capacity: refers to organizational concerns in creating “enabling environments”. This includes policies and plans, economic, regulatory and accountability frameworks within which institutions and individuals operate, the relationships that exist, both formally and informally, between institutions and the distribution of institutional responsibilities.

Organizational Capacity: refers to institutional levels, focusing on the overall performance and functional capabilities of an organization, access to finances, information, technology, infrastructure and other resources, availability of skilled human resources, its organizational structure and its ability to adapt to change.

Individual Capacity: refers to specific attributes enabling individuals to perform functions, make decisions and ensure these are implemented in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner.

Capacity constraints at the systemic level:

- Poor coordination and cooperation between various stakeholders at central and local levels.
- Underdeveloped legislative framework, gaps and overlapping of present legislation.
- Weak law implementation.
- Poor enforcement capacities leading to inadequate implementation laws.
- Inadequate cooperation and networking with international community.
- Poorly developed motivation systems and market instruments.
- Low public and decision maker’s awareness.
- Weak integration of relevant environmental issues into the education system.

- Inadequate financing of institutions.
- Lack of up-to-date information about the state of the environment
- Lack of clear and long term policies and strategies on environment issues.
- Lack of qualified and permanent staff in central and local government.
- Lack of indicators to monitor the institutions and experts activities at different levels of government.

Capacity constraints at the institutional level:

- Unclear mandates of institutions, including as well departments, sectors and groups in these institutions.
- Insufficient knowledge about the competencies and duties derived from the law.
- Poor institutional management and performance, unstable institutions and structures.
- Migration of qualified specialists/staff.
- Poor coordination and cooperation of institutions at different level of government.
- Low accountability, transparency of institutions.
- Low ability of institutions to mobilize financial resources.
- Inadequate material-technical base of institutions.
- Poor access to information: limited access to Internet, publications, books and language barrier.
- Poor human resource management practices , including:
 - Inadequate incentives system for workers;
 - Non-existing performance management system of employees;
 - Lack of opportunities for professional growth;
 - Non-transparent hiring procedures.
- Lack of avenues for sharing data, experiences –conferences, seminars (needed for coordination)
- Irregular / insufficient awareness raising programs / projects
- Non existent regular training, re-training programs for state employees

Capacity constraints at the individual level:

- Low networking and cooperation skills of public workers.
- Lack of individuals experienced in conducting evaluations and audits.
- Lack of experts with the knowledge about incentive measures.
- Poorly elaborated job descriptions, if at all.
- Poor managerial skills of public employees.
- Lack of skills of researchers in articulating research results.
- Poor public relations and stakeholder involvement skills of government employees.
- Poor team-work, networking skills of individuals.
- Limited human capacities to establish partnerships and cooperate with other Convention Parties.
- Lack of legal experts with the knowledge about environmental issues and *vice-*

versa.

- Low knowledge and skills of scientists and experts working in environmental field.
- Insufficient support for individual training.
- Lack of interest for the professional qualification because of low salaries.
- Low knowledge about modern technologies and use of computer programs, such as: GIS; remote sensing; modeling; environmental valuation; cost-benefit analysis; assessing social impacts; evaluation of policies, projects and programs.

4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN ALBANIA BASED ON THE RIO CONVENTIONS

Taking into consideration the progress and shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the Rio conventions, and the new problems and opportunities born as a result of their synergy, it is possible to give only a general preliminary estimate of Albania's capacity to fulfill obligations of the Rio conventions.

Since democratic change in 1991 to date, Albania has undoubtedly made great progress in developing its legislation, building up its government institutions and proceeding towards harmonization with the European Union. Albanian legislation is being amended in the process of integration with the European Union, and today Albanian legislation, including legislation on environmental management, is in every respect mostly comparable to the EU legislations. However this period of time has been too short to develop good customs and to understand and implement this legislation. Law enforcement is still weak in Albania.

It is also important to recognize that the human potential of Albania is too small to fulfill all the executive and control functions envisaged by the legislation and resulting from the EU integration process. For these reasons Albania's insufficient administrative capacity can be felt in certain areas, including in implementing Rio conventions. Although Albania has joined the Conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change and Combat Desertification, and tries hard to fulfill generally its obligations resulting from those conventions, there are clear shortcomings in creative implementation of the ideas of the conventions with consideration of local peculiarities and in interlinking the conventions.

Interlinking Conventions – Common Needs

Considering the limited capacity of the Albanian human potential, the main way will be involvement of larger numbers of interested persons, primarily scientists and students but also environmental activists, into the implementation of single conventions. To improve the level of necessary knowledge it is necessary to pay attention to the level of specialists connected with conventions as well as of society as a whole, especially of schoolchildren. Various courses of different level and training programs should be arranged to achieve this.

Capacity needs at system level

- Develop a culture of information sharing and communication.
- Develop a culture of engaging all affected and interested stakeholders into the planning process, especially of local representatives.
- Strengthen capacities of local governmental bodies in formulating local action plans and programs.
- Make the necessary changes in the legislative framework in order for the plans and programs to be better enforceable.
- Mobilize and allocate adequate financial resources for implementation of action plans and programs.
- Develop capacities to carry out audits of institutional accountability with special focus on consistency with commitments under the Rio Conventions.
- Create coordination mechanism for implementing actions across all three areas in order to avoid duplication and ensure the effective use of scarce resources.
- Develop new laws and strengthen the existing ones with regard to the institutional accountability, division of responsibilities among various institutions, as well as concerning coordination mechanisms.
- Strengthen capacities or create new where necessary to prepare technical, financial and economic analyses to be used in the planning process.
- Strengthen the existing mechanisms and elaborate new ones for the cooperation with neighboring countries for solving environmental issues.
- Develop mechanisms for the coordination of planning activities
- Linking social and economic priorities with environmental objectives.
- Develop legislative base for proper functioning of monitoring institutions (including identification of relevant institutions and assigning specific functions), in order to avoid duplication and ensure exchange of information, as well as rules for access to this information.
- Develop coordinated and compatible systems for data gathering, validation, analysis and dissemination.
- Develop mechanisms for data exchange.
- Develop indicators, giving higher priority to those cutting across at least two conventions.
- Identify institutions for gathering information data providers
- Create scientific-technical and management potential at local level.
- Strengthen cooperation with relevant subsidiary bodies of the Conference of Parties.
- Strengthen legislative base for coordination and information sharing of research activities.
- Create effective links between research and development institutions and those tasked with applying policies and practices relevant to three thematic areas.
- Strengthen links and collaboration with international research institutions (e.g. through exchange visitor programs, partner programs with foreign institutions, probations abroad, conduct of joint research projects).

- Improve curricula of higher education institutions (incorporate such disciplines as GIS, remote sensing, modeling, economic valuation, etc.)
- Develop incentives and market mechanisms for the transfer of technologies
- Create conducive legislative framework for technology transfer
- Establish institutional mechanisms, e.g. clearing house, for technology transfer
- Strengthen cooperation with relevant subsidiary bodies of the Conference of Parties
- Strengthen capacity to raise awareness of the public (to encourage the interest of politicians)
- Develop public awareness raising programs and the mechanisms for their involvement in the oversight of implementation process.
- Mobilize human and financial resources for undertaking awareness raising programs.
- Integrate environmental considerations into the school curricula and cooperate with other countries in order to avoid “re-inventing the wheel”.

Capacity needs at institutional level

- Charge certain agencies in respective fields with coordinating functions for the process of preparation of various plans and programs.
- Develop human and mobilize financial resources to carry out necessary technical, financial and economic analyses for preparing policies and action plans.
- Public sector staffing of social science specialists and skilled managers. Currently an unbalance in favor of technical professionals is often apparent.
- Increase significantly the government spending for the elaboration of plans and programs, in order to be able to engage the best experts in the country and to have the possibility of experience and training abroad to get the best examples and practices from the western countries
- Strengthen law enforcement agencies by clarifying their functions and providing necessary equipment.
- Improve mandates of all institutions working in climate change, biodiversity and land degradation areas.
- Provide assistance in: a) developing job requirements and detailed job descriptions for employees, at least for those holding key positions; b) establishing performance evaluation system.
- Improve human and financial resource management practices at institutions.
- Review salary structures and incentive systems within public institutions to encourage employees’ motivation and positive performance.
- Strengthen the active leading role of MoEFWA in the implementation of plans and programs.
- Institutionalize the provision of regular training and re-training programs for state employees.
- Develop the capacity to better manage and deploy existing resources.
- Develop capacity of institutions to negotiate, obtain funds for research.

- Strengthen institutional capacity to access to information.
- Improve material-technical base of institutions in environmental science research field.
- Establish incentives for motivating people to take up research in the field.
- Develop capacity to finance monitoring systems and increase financing through the Government budget
- Develop capacity to provide online access to data
- Strengthen logistic support to monitoring systems; support infrastructure to operate monitoring systems.
- Strengthen capacity of institutions to select and manage technologies
- Strengthen institutional capacity to the access to information on technology
- Strengthen capacity of NGOs to reach more segments of the country' population with awareness raising programs.
- Strengthen capacity of media in addressing environmental issues.

Capacity needs at individual level

- Ensure the existence of political commitment to environmental and sustainable development issues
- Ensure the delivery of critical information to policy makers
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of decision makers about the commitments made by the country as a signatory of the conventions, and the implications on national development policies and programs.
- Enhance capacity of policy makers in strategic planning, setting priorities.
- Raise awareness of politicians (of various sectors) about environmental issues.
- Increase the skills of policy makers and analysts in developing proper institutional structure.
- Increase the skills of policy analysts on economic and environmental valuation techniques, and on conducting comprehensive policy analysis for environmental issues.
- Build capacity of policy analysts in evaluating alternative options and their consequences on sustainable development.
- Increase the skills of managers of institutions to elaborate job descriptions for employees and put in place and use performance evaluation system.
- Increase the skills of managers of public institutions, NGOs in the efficient use of resources.
- Increase the skills of individuals (evaluators) in undertaking institutional audits and evaluation of various programs and plans, paying particular attention to the consistency with commitments under the Rio Conventions.
- Continuous awareness increase on environmental and sustainable development issues among political representatives, decision makers and general public.
- Increase communication and presentation skills of researchers.
- Increase networking and cooperation skills of scientists.
- Increase managerial skills of individuals in charge of research institutions.

- Provide knowledge and know-how to scientists about modern technologies and disciplines (e.g. remote sensing, modeling, economic valuation, etc.)
- Raise awareness of policy and decision makers about the importance of environmental science research.
- Train institutional staff in preparation of inventories and national communications.
- Develop capacity of individuals in (i) the design of inventory and monitoring system, (ii) data processing and information management, (iii) data organization
- Increase the skills of policy legal professionals on environmental and technology transfer issues.
- Provide knowledge and know-how to experts about incentive measures for technology transfer.
- Increase networking and cooperation skills of public employees regarding technology cooperation; link them with individuals, international experts.
- Raise awareness of policy and decision makers, businessmen, local population about the benefits of various technologies and their application. Provide them with knowledge in novel concepts relevant to sustainable development and available technologies.

Individual Conventions-Specific needs

UNCBD

Systemic level

- To update the NBSAP and integrate indicators into the Strategy.
- To ensure coordination among sectors in the preparation and implementation of the conceptual and strategic documents, including use of information, financial and human resources.
- To integrate the protection of BD and SU of its components into the sectoral strategies and decision-making process.
- To expand continuous supports for education and training of experts for developing and implementing the policy and measures.
- To expand continuous support for the ongoing monitoring and assessment of measures applied.
- To produce cost estimations for the implementation of sectoral duties related with BD
- To apply economic incentives to support protection of the biological diversity and sustainable use of its components
- To institutionalize the preparation of reports on the CBD.
- To ensure a systematic support for comprehensive monitoring of BD (financial and human resources).

- To improve coordination and the more effectively use of existing capacities in research, academic institutions, and in universities as well as in the private sector (information and human resources).
- To identify priorities for research in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components, and to ensure financing.
- To support integrated research for the Rio Conventions.
- Continued enlargement of the network of protected areas.
- To designate marine areas and to expand coastal protected areas.
- Continued implementation of EMERALD network.
- To start the implementation of the PEEN in the country.
- To develop the national strategy for invasive alien species.
- To develop the concept for the protection of the original breeds that are threatened with genetic erosion.
- To integrate the protection of genetic resources of forest tree species into the National program of protection of plant genetic resources.
- National strategy for the in-situ protection of genetic diversity in populations of old plant varieties and original breeds of the animals
- To integrate the planning of use of biological resources into physical/territorial planning
- To achieve consensus on the values/prices of the BD components.
- To implement the newly developed strategy of forestry sector
- To support the promotion of BD (its values) in socio-economic programs.
- To elaborate a new law of hunting and wildlife protection in the framework of the Birds and Habitats Directive.
- To elaborate the hunting guidelines in line with the European charter on hunting.
- To amend the law on Fishing
- To develop the Act on sustainable tourism.
- To develop a National program for protection of plants genetic resources for food and agriculture.
- To elaborate Bonn guidelines to the situations in Albania.
- To integrate the issue of Biosafety into the NBSAP.
- To improve human, financial and information resources at the system level in order to implement the Bonn guidelines.
- Continually harmonize national activities with policies and laws of the EU
- Clarify competencies for the biosafety among 3 ministries (MoEFWA, MoH, and MoAFCP).
- To define competencies among institutions in the field of biosafety and to optimize their activities at all levels.
- To improve the process of accreditation of institutions for addressing issues of biosafety.
- To prepare a comprehensive strategy for training and education in the issues of BD and SU of its components at all the levels.

- To create support tools at the systematic level (legal, regulatory and economic) in order to provide continuous training for managerial staff within sectors relevant to the CBD.
- To ensure capacities for a system of continuous education of experts in all
- CBD issues.

Institutional level

- To rehabilitate the activity of the NCB.
- To improve coordination and communication among existing structures for the UNFCCC and UN CCD, as well as for other conventions in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components.
- To set up the clearing- house mechanism on Biodiversity.
- To update regularly the clearing- house mechanism on Biodiversity.
- To establish the National Secretariat for CBD.
- To complete appointments of NFPs for specific CBD areas.
- To enlarge (to modify) the actual scope of research considering the CBD requirements.
- To use official information resources to better promote activities and results of the private sector in the field of the biodiversity research.
- To strengthen human and financial resources at the institutional level for monitoring and research of BD.
- To strengthen current capacities of institutions (financial, material and human resources) so that they enable strengthening of both protection *in – situ* and *ex – situ*.
- To improve effectiveness of institutions in the public sector for application of the protection in-situ and ex –situ.
- To improve the use of support for protection of BD.
- To strengthen communication with concerned stakeholders.
- To ensure systematic support to motivate institutions for the SU of biological resources.
- To exchange information on existing best practices and to use incentives to promote sustainable use of BD
- To improve human, financial and information resources at the institutional level to implement Bonn guidelines both at supervising and application levels.
- To develop a national biosafety clearing-house mechanism.
- To increase educational capacities oriented toward better awareness of state officials in the field of biosafety.
- To develop laboratories for assessment of risks related to GMOs.
- To ensure the opportunity for specialized university education at higher levels in the field of environmental law, economy, policy and communication that would focus on the implementation of measures for the conservation of BD and SU of its components.

Individual level

- To mobilize and use existing human resources in the planning and decision-making processes.
- To support the mutual exchange of information and experience of employees in the field of planning and implementation.
- To motivate employees to obtain higher qualification for planning in the protection of BD and SU of its components.
- To motivate young experts to improved participation in the scientific-research programs in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components.
- To expand training to managerial staff working in science and research.
- To ensure specialists in the field of environmental law, economy, policy and communication oriented to practical problems of the protection of BD and SU of its components.
- To promote training for managers in SU of biological resources.
- To improve human resources via running of training on biosafety
- To introduce specialized courses in universities and other educational institutions with accreditation for biological safety.
- To ensure systematic training-of-trainers.
- To support access of the public to internet technologies.

UNFCCC

Systemic level

Albania has a strong body of laws aimed at environmental protection. According to the Constitution, every citizen in Albania is entitled to “an ecologically healthy environment for present and future generations” as well as “access to information on the state of the environment”. The Constitution also requires the “rational exploitation of forests, waters and pastures based on the principle of sustainable development”. The Law on Environmental Protection (1993, amended in 1998, 2002) forms the basis for environmental management. It addresses the prevention and reduction of pollution, sustainable management of natural resources, monitoring, how to define pollution levels. It provides binding provisions for environmental impact assessment and the implementation of the polluter pays principle.

A series of sectoral laws contain provisions for environmental protection, such as the law on water reserves, law on mining, and laws on regulatory entity of waste waters, hunting, forestry, soil, and urban planning. These are accompanied by a considerable number of normative acts.

In the context of the climate change issue, except of the laws on ratification of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol from the Albania’s parliament there are no laws that address explicitly the issue of climate change. Because the energy sector emits a significant share of GHG emissions, the sector has been the focus of analysis and recommendations for climate change mitigation. In addition, the most relevant laws that relate to climate change are adopted under the energy sector. A legislative framework on energy in Albania comprises a relatively large number of different pieces of legislation at present. A more detailed analysis of the current legislation is given as follows:

- *Law on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources* (No. 9372 of April 27, 2005)

This is the most important law for climate change in general and GHG mitigation in particular. It focuses on promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation, creation of an energy efficiency fund, energy efficiency labelling, and promoting energy audits schemes. The purpose of this law is to create the legal framework required for the promotion and improvement of the efficient use of energy throughout the energy cycle. This law establishes the economical use of energy sources, the establishment of more reliable energy supply conditions, as well as the minimisation of impact on the environment

- *Law on Power Sector* (No. 9072 of May 2003)

This law abolishes the above law. It assures the conditions of electricity supply to consumers, efficient functioning of the electricity market and adjusts the power sector to market economy condition. The overall aim of the Law on Power Sector is to enhance the economic effectiveness and the quality of services for power generation, transmission and distribution and provide a transparent and comprehensive legal framework for the mentioned activities.

- *Law on Electricity* (No. 7962 of July 1995)

This law specifies the conditions for activities in the power sector and the rights and duties of all physical and legal persons involved in one of these activities. It also

regulates the relationship between consumers and suppliers in terms of their basic duties and obligations. The law provides for operational and technical management of the power network as well as for connections to the grid and measurements of electricity.

- *Law on Regulation of Power Sector* (No. 7970 of July 1995)

This law prescribes the establishment of an Energy Regulatory Body (ERE) in the power sector and defines its duties. According to this law, ERE is responsible for tariff regulation and licensing in the power sector.

- *Law on Energy Conservation in Buildings* (No. 8937 of September 2002)

This law declares that the design and construction of buildings should meet the necessary technical parameters for conservation, saving and efficient use of energy. All buildings to be constructed so as to limit thermal losses, and provides thermal insulation of buildings and central or district heating schemes.

- *Governmental Decree for Energy Building Code*

The elaboration of the Energy Building Code began in 1998 based on the NAE in collaboration with the Albania-EU EEC and the other institutions of the sector. The Governmental Decree No. 38 of January 2003 approved it as the Norms, Rules and Conditions for Design and Construction, Production and Conservation of Heat in Buildings.

- *Governmental Decree for Strategy of Energy* (No. 424 of June 2003)

This governmental decree approves the National Strategy of Energy until 2015. According to the decree, the Ministry of Industry and Energy and the NAE are appointed to update this strategy every two years.

- *Law on Electrical Police* (No. 8637 of July 2000)

Based on this law, a specialised executive body for controlling the enforcement of legislation and use of electricity —the Electrical Police — was established. The purpose of such a structure is to monitor and punish abuses in the power sector, particularly with electricity consumption

There are other Laws that are relevant to the process of the GHG abatement technology transfer to the country. They are as follows:

- *Law on Foreign Investment:*

The Law covers any kind of foreign investment in Albania and specifies basic conditions for promotion and protection of foreign investments in Albania. The Law provides for non-discriminatory treatment, full protection and dispute settlement in accordance with international standards. According to Article 2 of the Law on Foreign Investment no foreign investments are made prior to authorization. In addition the foreign investor has the rights to employ foreign citizens and to transfer all assets that are related to foreign investments out of the territory of Albania. A limitation to foreign investors is only imposed with respect to land ownership rights. Generally the Albanian Law on Foreign Investment is a tool that creates highly favorable conditions for the promotion of foreign investment.

- *Law on Concession:*

The Law defines the legal basis for domestic and private sector participation in the provision of public services and infrastructure through concessions and other arrangements (leasing, management contract, service contract, and so forth). Among other sectors of economy, the law covers also the whole energy sector.

- *Law on Free Zones:*

This Law assumes the creation of the free zones in which the investors are exempted from duties and taxes.

Following the first National Environmental Strategy produced in 1993 with the assistance of World Bank and the National Environmental Action Plan finalized in 2002 and produced with the assistance of both PHARE and World Bank, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Management assisted by EU CARDS Program has very recently produced the second National Environmental Strategy (NES) which is still at the draft phase awaiting approval. It is expected to be published by early 2007. The National Environmental Strategy (once approved) will be the basic document presenting the Government's policy and specific programs in the environmental sector. The NES is part of the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development and it is based upon National Plan for the EU Approximation of the Legislation, National Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Partnership Priorities and the existing sectoral strategies such as the ones on Transport, Agriculture, and Energy. The issue of climate change is addressed into that draft strategy through recommendations for the reduction of the growth rates of GHG emissions.

Institutional level

The national focal point for UNFCCC and the responsibility of the CDM Designated National Authority belongs to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration of Albania through its Climate Change Unit.

At the start of the project in 1998, a Climate Change Unit was established in the Ministry of Environment (which has currently merged into the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration). This office serves not only for the UNDP/GEF project implementation but is responsible for the implementation process of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, specifically the operation of the DNA.

The [Climate Change Unit](#) at the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration is staffed with 4 full time employees who, in addition involves 10 nationals hired in ad-hoc basis. The Unit is funded mainly by UNDP-GEF. Other contributions are mobilized every year in the form of co-financing, parallel financing or in kind. The contribution received from the Government from the state budget is getting increased every year. The Unit has three core technical teams, specifically GHG inventory; GHG mitigation and Vulnerability and Adaptation Team. The Team of GHG mitigation has started getting involved in the CDM exercise with the intention to build the appropriate capacities for identification, developing, and hosting CDM projects in Albania. A significant role on this regard has played the Ministry of Environment and Territory of Italy in the frame of the MOU signed under the Kyoto Protocol.

This Climate Change Unit collaborates with an inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional technical team with experts and representatives of other ministries and research institutions

that carry out the duties stemming from the membership of the country of the Framework Convention on Climate Change¹.

A Programme Steering Committee has also been established which oversees all projects and activities within the framework of the UNFCCC. This informal committee includes high-level participants from all major government and non-government stakeholders. A technical level national climate change team with three thematic working groups (on GHG emission inventories, GHG abatement measures and vulnerability and adaptation) has been established.

¹ The Climate Change Unit has three groups of experts (Vulnerability, Abatement, and Inventory).

UNCDD

Systemic level

- To approve the National Action Programs (NAP) and establish priorities for specific action for a comprehensive Land Management Policy and Plan, as well as a Sustainable Land Management Policy,
- To improve the legislative and regulatory framework, as well as the enforcement of existing laws for the successful development of the NAP
- To establish the interagency coordinating body for implementing NAPs,
- To revise, coordinate and consolidate into one comprehensive Land Code all laws on land reform, land tenure and land transactions enacted since 1991,
- To develop a new list of measures for implementation of Albania commitments, in regard to the UNCCD, taking into account the already developed recommendations for the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification,
- To integrate the land protection and land consolidation issues into the sectoral strategies and decision-making process.
- To apply economic incentives to support land protection, land consolidation and land sustainable use,
- To prepare a comprehensive strategy for land protection and to develop an effective and comprehensive agricultural and land use policy to avoid the land degradation;
- To enforce and strengthen the laws on environment protection, as well as with respect to land use planning and national water use,
- To increase the investment in rehabilitation of irrigation systems to extent irrigated areas and drainage systems to avoid water- logging.
- To provision the capital funds from the state budget to allow the implementation of important projects on land degradation issues to improve the situation in Albania, as well as to facilitate the studies of scientific institutions.
- To strengthen and enforce the capacities of water management bodies, including the economic instruments;
- To identify priorities on research in the field of land protection and land degradation issues and to support the scientific institutions with needed funds,
- To clarify and define competencies among institutions in the central and local level related to land management and administration,
- To focus the attention of society on the issues of forest protection, as well as integration of private sector in forest restoration activities;
- To support with needed funds the extension service on land degradation issues, land use and land protection, as well as to ensure the more effectively use of existing capacities in central and local level,
- To improve the training at different levels: the government officials, the specialists of different fields
- To improve the cooperation between structures in regional and communal levels, as well as scientific institutions and universities;
- To clarify the competencies of land administration and management sections in local level related to other structures concerning land
- To strengthen the international cooperation with the Global Mechanism (GM) and GEF, including development and implementation of transboundary joint projects in the framework of the Convention,

- To develop and support the ongoing monitoring and assessment of strategies, programs and projects implementation,
- To promote the technical/scientific cooperation through the improvement of institutional framework at central and local level

Institutional level

- To rehabilitate the activity of National Coordination Body for UNCCD.
- To disseminate the relevant information, such as reports of COP and other activities associated with the UNCCD to the key implementation agencies.
- To assess the factors that cause land degradation, to map the eroded areas and to undertake works and improvement measures on land protection and rehabilitation,
- To improve effectiveness of institutions in the public sector for application of improvement measures in eroded land,
- To strengthen human and financial resources on development of detailed inventory of land resources, to compile relevant maps using modern GIS technology and to make this information available to decision makers and different organizations involved in improving land use.
- To develop the effective monitoring programs on land degradation
- To integrate the activities to control land degradation into existing programs and projects that address biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation,
- To establish or strengthen the dedicated Governmental bodies with clear mandates and policy-making responsibility to deal directly with land issues;
- To clarify the inspection framework between different structures in national, regional and communal level,
- To strengthen the monitoring for land use and to enforce the capacities on land use planning in communal, regional and national level,
- To support the institutions in local and regional level with needed budget and technical capacities to implement national programs,
- To support the qualification of scientific staff in Universities and Scientific Institutions through training programs, experience exchange with other countries,
- To strengthen human and financial resources at the institutional level for monitoring of UNCCD implementation,
- To exchange information on existing best practices and to use incentives to promote sustainable land use,
- To strengthen communication with concerned stakeholders for land issues, land degradation and land protection,
- To develop the extension service on soil fertility protection, use of ecological farming and adaptive agriculture management,
- Implementation of credit and investment projects in agricultural sphere;
- The acquisition of appropriate technology which will allow more effective management and distribution of the country's water resources and adequate financing for existing projects and programs,
- Awareness raising of decision-makers concerning legal framework on land and increasing of technical level of legal experts,

- To improve coordination and communication among existing structures for the UNFCCC and UNCBD, as well as for other conventions in the field of land protection and land use.

Individual level

- Strengthening environmental education at different levels (from children to decision makers) with emphasis on how to avoid land degradation;
- Improvement of the access to the communication means and computer technologies within state governmental structures,
- Development of an effective and comprehensive public education program to inform the personnel in key implementing agencies for the country's obligations in the UNCCD and to understand the role that they are expected to play in the meeting of these obligations.
- Improving the scientific basis for optimal land use and creation of the relevant consulting system and training courses involving the Universities,
- Strengthening of NGOs, especially in rural areas
- Improving training at different levels to allow correct classification of lands that are prone to erosion and other factors of degradation and to conduct monitoring programs for evaluation of current changes;
- To organize and develop different training courses with the staff of local government (especially of urbanity office and land administration and protection sections) for their role in land protection, land use and land use planning,
- To support access of the public to internet technologies.
- To involve the people in the planning process of land use, as well as in decision making process
- Awareness raising of people on erosion risk on land and increasing of technical level of legal experts,
- To motivate young scientific specialists to participate and contribute in scientific-research programs for land protection and land sustainable management,
- To promote the experience and information exchange in the field of land suitable and sustainable management, between different institutions in country and abroad,
- To ensure and develop an effective extension service for awareness raising of people for their role in land degradation, as well as needed measures to prevent land erosion and land degradation,

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1A Thematic Profile on the Convention on Biological Diversity

1. Introduction

Albania is a small country located in South Eastern Europe. It has borders with Serbia and Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece and covers an area of 28,748 km². From the fertile coastal plain on the Adriatic Sea, the land rises into hills and mountains to the North (Albanian Alps) and East (Korabi Mountain). Small rivers traverse the country. Although Albania is rich in water resources, 33% of the catchments areas are situated outside its national borders.

Albania is distinguished for its rich biological and landscape diversity. This diversity is attributable to the country's geographic position as well as geological, hydrological, climatic, soil and relief characteristics. The mountainous terrain combined with steep cliffs creates ideal conditions for maintaining and protecting a large number of ancient species, some of which are endemic or sub endemic. The high diversity of ecosystems and habitats (marine and coastal ecosystems, wetlands, river deltas, sand dunes, lakes, rivers, Mediterranean shrubs, broadleaf, conifers and mixed forests, alpine and sub alpine pastures and meadows, and high mountain ecosystems) offers rich habitats for a variety of plants and animals. There are around 3,200 species of vascular plants and 756 vertebrate species. There are 27 endemic and 160 sub endemic species of vascular plants. Approximately 30% of all European floras occur in Albania. The high Albanian forests maintain communities of large mammals such as wolf, bear, lynx, and wild goat, and also characteristic bird communities.

Coastal lagoons and large lakes inside the country are important areas especially for wintering migratory birds. There are annually met around 70 waterfowl and waterbird species with a total population of 180,000 individuals in Albania during the winter. Albania is also an important crossroad for the migration of birds, bats, and insects.

There are some 91 globally threatened species found in Albania. These include the Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), and the Sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) for which Albania is a country of particularly critical importance.

In spite of the fact that a low number of species has become extinct during the past century in Albania, the rate of loss of country's biodiversity during the last 50-60 years is believed to be increasingly high. Moreover, insufficient knowledge and studies on a wide range of flora and fauna limit an accurate historical evaluation of the biodiversity status of Albania. Two species of plants and four species of mammals have become extinct; and meanwhile 17 bird species no longer nest in the country's territory. During the last 25 years, approximately 122 species of vertebrates (27 mammals, 89 birds, and 6 fish) and four species of plants are expected to have lost more than 50% of their population. The number of rare and endangered species of plants and animals is high and expected to increase if appropriate conservation measures are not taken.

The international community concerned with increasing rate of biodiversity loss started to address the challenge through various processes. One of the most important events was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The Earth Summit resulted in a set of documents, including Agenda 21 and Rio Declaration that laid down principles of and rules for a global environmental management. The UNCED process has also produced important additions to international law including the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Convention to Combat Desertification in

Those Countries Experiencing Serious Droughts and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, often referred to as the Rio Conventions.

The UNCED and the adopted documents are of global importance and have relevance to all sectors. Thus capacity development for global environmental management had become an issue for all of the countries that have made commitments under these three Conventions. The issue is of particular importance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, which on the one hand have insufficient capacities to meet their commitments undertaken under the Conventions while on the other hand the proper implementation of the instrument is vital for their economic and social development.

In May 1999, the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) was launched as a strategic partnership between the UNDP and the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility. In the beginning of the year 2005, a project entitled “*National capacity needs self-assessment related to environmental management of global conventions*” (NSCA Project) was approved for Albania. The objective of the NSCA project is to determine the priority needs for capacity development in Albania in order to expand the country capacity to meet commitments to global environmental management. The project also focused on capacity related issues that are common across the conventions, assessing the capacities needed to address these in a synergistic fashion.

This report is presenting results from a comprehensive assessment of existing capacities in Albania for the implementation of *the Convention on Biological Diversity* and the *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety*. The report includes a description of existing capacities and recommendations for capacity development through various forms of interventions with the ultimate objective of ensuring long term and efficient implementation of the CBD in the context of other Rio Conventions. The Report is a stand-alone assessment document, while at the same it serves as one of the background documents for developing National Self-Assessment Report (NSAR) and a proposal of the Action Plan (AP).

2. Methods

2.1. Concept of capacity building and capacity development

In the global context, “*capacity building*” is being used in many contexts. Most often it refers to developing the ability of individuals and institutions to make and implement decisions and perform functions in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner (1, 2). However, a new term “capacity development” has been proposed since this terminology shifts emphasis from a process that is externally driven to one which is self-motivating and takes place gradually from within. Capacity building/development needs to be addressed at the three levels: individual, institutional and systemic.

Capacity development at *the individual level* refers to the process of changing attitudes and behaviors, imparting knowledge and developing skills while maximizing the benefits of participation, knowledge exchange and ownership. It aims to investigate “individual” responsibilities and interests on plans and decisions including personal incentives and expertise.

Capacity development at the *institutional level* focuses on the overall organizational performance and functioning capabilities of the single institution, as well as its ability to adapt to change. It aims to develop the institution as a total system, including individuals, groups and the organization itself.

Capacity development at the *systemic level* is the most challenging effort, since it aims at reaching favorable political, regulatory and financial framework, in which individuals and organizations operate and interact with the external environment, as well as the formal and informal relationships of institutions. Traditionally, interventions at the systemic level were

simply termed “institution strengthening.”

Capacity development concepts have been described in various documents: for the purpose of this assessment ones produced by UNDP /GEF have been most relevant (1, 2, 3, 5, and 25). Pursuance to them (2) capacity development needs are to be assessed, according to the below 5 generic indicators:

- **Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies, and programs**

This category includes analyzing global conditions that may affect country needs and performance in a given area, developing a vision, long-term strategizing, and setting of objectives. It also includes conceptualizing broader sectoral and cross-sectoral policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, including synergies between global environmental conventions. It further contains prioritization, planning and formulation of programs and projects.

- **Capacity to implement policies, legislations, strategies, and programs**

This category includes process management capacities that are essential in the implementation of any type of policy, legislation, strategy and program. It also includes execution aspects of program and project implementation. It includes mobilizing and managing human, material and financial resources, and selection of technologies and procurement of equipment.

- **Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders**

This category includes issues such as mobilization and motivation of stakeholders, creation of partnerships, awareness-raising and developing an enabling environment for civil society and the private sector, stakeholder identification and involvement, managing of large group process and discussion, including mediation of divergent interests, as well as the establishment of collaborative mechanisms.

- **Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge** This category pertains to the mobilization, access and use of information and knowledge. It includes issues such as effectively gathering, analyzing and synthesizing information, identifying problems and potential solutions, as well as consulting experts and peers. It further covers specific technical skills including the capacity to carry out scientific and technical assessments.

- **Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn** This category pertains to the monitoring of progress, measuring of results, codification of lessons, learning and feedback, and ensuring accountability to ultimate beneficiaries and partners. It also covers aspects such as reporting to donors and global conventions. It naturally links back to policy dialogue, planning and improved management of implementation.

2.2. Review of methods and procedures used in assessment

Stock-taking

Stock-taking and inventory of existing capacities were the first steps in the assessment. It was done through (i) *review of relevant documents* (Convention on Biological Diversity, Protocol on Biosafety, Decisions of the Conference of the Parties and Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, National Environmental Action Plan, and (ii) *interviews*. Interviews were conducted with different stakeholders, including representatives of Ministry of the Environment, Fishery, Forestry and Water Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and Ministry of Education and Science.

E-mail networking with relevant experts and institutions

In order to ensure dissemination of timely information and to provide continuous

communication with stakeholders all working documents were distributed through e-mail. All working documents are also published on the web page of the Ministry of the Environment, Fishery, Forestry and Water Protection. These arrangements allow for all stakeholders to participate in consultations and submit their comments to this report.

Stakeholder analysis

A stakeholder analysis is an analytical tool to determine who should be involved in a project, an activity or a process, and how to involve each stakeholder. Information obtained should be used in the development of capacities for implementing key commitments under the Convention. A review of the key stakeholders to the CBD in Albania is presented in Annex V of the Stocktaking report

Priority-setting

Priority-setting is on the scope of the NSCA Project. Within the framework of the commitments and actions needed to address them, there were identified capacity development interventions that can influence most effectively the overall implementation of the CBD at the national level.

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis specifies and summarizes information on issues that deal with requirements, needs and areas that call for the improvement. It analyses strong and weak aspects. Improvement of weaknesses is the subject of strategic planning. SWOT analysis also allows for the identification of opportunities and threats to implementing of proposed measures.

3. Background situation

Currently there is a broad legal and political frame work that defines or prioritizes activities on conservation of biological diversity (BD) and sustainable use (SU) of its components. The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety are basic international legal instruments setting up the framework.

The text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (hereinafter as CBD) was adopted in Nairobi in 1992. Later, in June 1992, at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development the Convention was opened for signature and came into force at the end of the year 1993.

The objectives of this Convention are:

- conservation of biological diversity (Articles 6-9, 11 and 14);
- sustainable use of its components (Articles 6, 10 and 14); and
- fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including appropriate access to genetic resources (Article 15) taking into account all rights over those resources as well as transfer of relevant technologies (Articles 16 and 19) taking into account all rights to technologies.

The definition of “**biological diversity**“ in this Convention covers all life forms, that is *diversity and variability among living organisms from all sources including their terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; biological diversity thus includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.*

The Convention on Biological Diversity does not cover human genetic resources. The Convention defines biological resources as components of ***biological diversity with actual or potential value for humanity.***

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (hereinafter as the Protocol) addresses specific questions of biosafety in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms

resulting from modern biotechnology.

The activities for the implementation of the Convention and Protocol commitments are detailed in 178 decisions, which have been adopted at the meetings of the *Conference of the Parties* (hereinafter as COP) and in 14 decisions of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol so far. Decisions dealing with the implementation of this Convention based on the ecosystem approach are of key importance.

In addition to international law there are many initiatives and processes that deal with the conservation of BD and the SU of its components. In the pan-European context the most important intergovernmental processes are the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy and the ministerial (the European Ministers of Environment) conferences called “Environment for Europe”. Within this context and in the framework of the pan-European process key target areas were formulated, where immediate interventions are needed to halt a biological diversity loss in Europe by the year 2010. These became part of the Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity adopted at the 5th ministerial conference.

Box 1: *Strategic areas of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy*
Pan-European Strategy addresses 12 areas for the implementation of the conservation of biological and landscape diversity in Europe:

- *Activities necessary for starting the process of strategy implementation.*
- *Establishment of the Pan-European Ecological Network.*
- *Integration of biological and landscape diversity concerns into sectoral policies*
- *Building awareness and support of the public and decision-makers*
- *Landscape conservation*
- *Coastal and marine ecosystems*
- *European river ecosystems*
- *Inland wetlands*
- *Grasslands*
- *Forest ecosystems*
- *Mountain ecosystems*
- *Threatened species conservation*

Box 2: *Measures for biodiversity included in Kyiv Resolution of the ministers of environment*

The Kyiv Resolution on Biodiversity adopted at the 5th ministerial conference within the Environment for Europe process (Kyiv, May, 2003) covers measures in different areas as follows:

- *for the conservation of forest biodiversity to support application of the ecosystem approach, implementation of international initiatives and national implementation based on national forest programs,*
- *for the conservation of agricultural ecosystems to identify all high value areas in the agricultural land, which are important from the nature conservation point of view and take into consideration conservation needs while proposing financial subsidy and incentive schemes,*
- *for strengthening of the ecological networks it is necessary to build up Pan-European Ecological Network and adequately ensure conservation of its core areas ,*
- *for the invasive alien species control to support national implementation of the European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species developed under the Bern Convention,*
- *in financing biodiversity it is necessary substantially to increase public and private financial investments for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its component,*
- *in monitoring to establish European program on biodiversity monitoring with the application of an agreed set of biodiversity indicators,*
- *in public participation and awareness it is necessary to develop and implement national communication action plan in order to support stakeholder participation in nature and landscape conservation policy development.*

The establishment of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) to Europe supports the implementation of the *Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats* known as the Bern Convention 1979 (Council of Europe 1997). In Recommendation No. 16 (1989) "*on Areas of Special Conservation Interest*" (ASCIs), the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention recommended Parties to "*take steps to designate Areas of Special Conservation Interest to ensure that the necessary and appropriate conservation measures are taken for each area situated within their territory or under their responsibility where that area fits one or several of the following conditions:*

- ◆ it contributes substantially to the survival of threatened species, endemic species, or any species listed in Appendices I and II of the convention;
- ◆ it supports significant numbers of species in an area of high species diversity or supports important populations of one or more species;
- ◆ *it contains an important and/or representative sample of endangered habitat types;*
- ◆ *it contains an outstanding example of a particular habitat type or a mosaic of different habitat types;*
- ◆ *it represents an important area for one or more migratory species;*
- ◆ *it otherwise contributes substantially to the achievement of the objectives of the convention."*

The implementation phase of the EMERALD Network started in 1999. The years 1999-2000 should mark the pilot stage of setting up the EMERALD Network, supported by the Council of Europe. In 1999 pilot projects started in the following countries: Bulgaria, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

Albania signed the *Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 1979)* on 31 October 1995 and ratified it on 2 March 1998. In 2001 the Council of Europe invited Albania to start the EMERALD Network pilot project. The project started in April 2002, according to the contract signed in 25 February 2002 between the Ministry of the Environment of Albania and the Council of Europe.

During the first phase six sites were selected as ASCIs to be included in the EMERALD Network. Those sites are: Llogora National Park, Tomorri National Park, Divjaka National Park, Butrinti National Park, Prespa National Park and Allamani area (proposed as a Strict Nature Reserve). The overall objective of the EMERALD Network pilot project was to develop a pilot database, containing the fair proportion of the ASCIs and submit a proposal for the selected sites designation to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention. The pilot projects phase was only a starting point that lays a basis for the development of EMERALD Network at the national level. Recently (autumn 2005), a second phase of EMERALD Network has started to be implemented in Albania aiming to identify up to 80 % of potential ASCI-s. 14 sites are identified and are being analyzed. The second project will be completed by December 2006. The third phase for the identification of the remaining 20 % of ASCI-s, completing so the Emerald network in the country is foreseen for 2007.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was approved by the Albanian Government in January 1994. The Focal Point for the convention is the Minister of Environment, Fishery, Forestry and Water Protection. Since then and on Albania has undertaken a series of actions to meet with its obligations to implement CBD, as follow:

- Preparation of the first National Report to UNCBD Secretariat

- Preparation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP)
- Establishment of the National Council for Nature and Biodiversity
- Monitoring program on Biodiversity
- Establishment of an interim Clearing House Mechanism
- Establishment of the Biodiversity Secretariat
- WB/GEF Phase II Enabling Activity
- Biosafety program

Albania has accessed the Cartagena Protocol officially on February 8th, 2005 by law on accession of Albania to the Protocol of Biosafety, which was approved by the Parliament and became part of its legal system.

In accordance with the precautionary approach contained in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the objective of this Protocol is to contribute to ensuring an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health, and specifically focusing on transboundary movements. Albania is in the first steps of developing the biosafety framework and in the first steps of gathering all the information which is partly an impediment.

The following text describes the existing capacities for the implementation of selected commitments under the CBD organized according to the specific CBD Articles. While assessing capacities it is necessary to take into account that the CBD is a framework convention. Its provisions are expressed mostly as general targets and policies rather than strict and precise obligations. Parties themselves determine the extent of implementation of commitments and their national priorities through the strategic documents such as a national biodiversity strategy and action plan or program in consideration the Convention's objectives. In Albania, as described in the text below, priorities are not clearly defined in spite of the fact that the basic strategic documents have been developed.

3.1. General measures for conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components

Article 6 (a) of the Convention requires each party to develop or adopt national strategies, plans or programs reflecting the measures set out in the Convention. This commitment to national planning is simultaneously a commitment for a repetitive process. Article 10(a) of the Convention requires each party to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into the national decision-making process. Article 6(b) reinforces this by the requirement to integrate the conservation and SU of biological diversity into relevant sectoral plans, programs and policies.

Systemic level

According to the Constitution, every citizen in Albania is entitled to “an ecologically healthy environment for present and future generations” as well as “access to information on the state

of the environment”. The Constitution also requires the “rational exploitation of forests, waters and pastures based on the principle of sustainable development”.

The Law on Environmental Protection (1993, amended in 1998 and 2002) forms the basis for environmental management in Albania. The law addresses the prevention and reduction of pollution, sustainable management of natural resources, monitoring, how to define pollution levels. It provides binding provisions for environmental impact assessment and the implementation of the polluter pays principle.

A series of sectoral laws contain provisions for environmental protection, for example the law on water reserves, law on mining, and laws on regulatory entity of waste waters, hunting, forestry, soil, urban planning etc. These laws are accompanied by a considerable number of normative acts.

Recently, several laws have been approved, such as laws on protected areas (2002), environmental impact assessment (2002), protection of marine environment from pollution, air protection, as well as several decisions on environmental monitoring, procedures related to the designation of protected areas, administration of protected areas, designation of Nature Monuments have been issued. The legislative framework is already quite comprehensive. However, the challenge is not so much in the legislation, which seems to be in place, but in its implementation and enforcement.

The National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) is the basic document presenting the Government’s policy and general programs in the environmental sector. The NEAP was first prepared with assistance from PHARE and the World Bank in 1994. It was revised in 2001 (covering the period 2002 – 2005) through an extensive consultative process involving a large number of stakeholders organized into thematic work groups. The main issues identified through the NEAP are:

- Development of policies and programs;
- Improvement and completing the legal framework;
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building;
- Raising of public awareness.

Priority investments are to focus on watershed management, forestry, flood control, solid waste management, water supply, sewage systems and urban management. However, the revised NEAP does not set out priorities. Moreover, although each proposed activity in the NEAP is calculated; most funds have only been requested and not secured. An inter-ministerial committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, has been set up to enable implementation of the revised NEAP.

Other main environmental policy documents include the National Water Strategy (1996); the National Waste management plan (1996); the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2000); the ‘Green Strategy’ (1998) developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food; the National Strategy for the Development of the Forestry and Pastures in Albania (2005); the National Strategy for Tourism Development (2003), and the National Energy Strategy.

A draft law on biodiversity protection has been prepared, and has been submitted to the Albanian Parliament for approval. This draft law defines the roles and responsibilities of the various Ministries involved in biodiversity conservation. Albania already has a *red list* of protected species, which protects all endemic and sub-endemic species. This list has to be updated every five years.

However, planning in general is weekly coordinated and integrated in existing strategic documents. One of the effects of this “planning inflation” is the difficulty in understanding priorities both for stakeholders and decision makers.

Institutional level

At the national level, a number of high level inter-ministerial structures with a permanent or temporary mandate, decision-making or advising, exist such as: the National Council of Territorial Adjustment (NCTA), National Water Council, Committee of Energy Policies (all the latter are chaired by the Prime Minister); Council of Tourism Policies, National Council for Nature and Biodiversity (NCNB), Steering Committee of National Environmental Health Action Plan, Steering Committee of the National Environmental Action Plan (all the latter are chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister). The MoEFWA is represented at the highest level in all the above-mentioned committees.

National Council for Nature and Biodiversity (NCNB) was created in the year 2000 by a decree of the GoA, and it was chaired by the deputy Prime Minister. This Inter-ministerial Council was to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the BSAP. The Directorate of Nature Protection within the MoEFWA is entitled to play the role of the Biodiversity Secretariat of this Council. The Council held two meetings and approved concerned documents. However, it was overtaken by events – notably the establishment of the Ministry of Environment (today MoEFWA) – and has since not been active.

The MoEFWA is responsible for the co-ordination of implementation of the Convention. The Minister of MoEFWA is the national focal point of the CBD.

Other sectors of the government, scientific and supporting institutions, and NGOs participate in the development and implementation of the NBSAP. The private sector plays an important role in the implementation of the Convention.

Co-ordination of the implementation of the NBSAP is insufficient as a consequence of strongly underestimated capacities (human, information, financial) at the institutional level. Effective transfer of relevant information from the international level to the national level is not achieved. There is almost no transfer of information on the development of the international agenda from the national level to the regional, district or local levels.

The lack of coordination of technical institutions dealing with issues of nature conservation, landscape, soil, water, or the other components of the environment, due to their sectoral organization (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fishery, water management) does not allow effective use of the potential of these organizations.

Individual level

At the individual level, there are not many experts for the development of general measures for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components. Furthermore, their involvement is lacking as a consequence of insufficient co-ordination and mechanisms promoting integration of the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components into strategies, policies and programs of other sectors.

3.2. Identification and monitoring

Article 7 (a, b) requires parties to the CBD to identify components of biological diversity important for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components. It also requires contracting parties to monitor the components of biological diversity. Particular attention is given to the components of biodiversity which require urgent conservation measures and which offer the greatest potential for sustainable use.

Systemic level

Components of biodiversity, which are important for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components, have been identified through the national legal regulations in the field of nature conservation¹¹, hunting and fishery¹². Implementation of different legal regimes has a negative influence on the management of protected animal species and on decision-making processes.

National red lists of protected animal species are developed for all groups of vertebrates and for selected groups of invertebrates. However, data on species are missing, especially for invertebrates.

In the framework of implementation of the CBD, country's biodiversity (flora and fauna) of coastal lagoons is monitored since 2000 under the state monitoring program which recently is expanded to other wetlands.

Towards establishment of environmental monitoring program various biodiversity indicators are identified by the Albanian experts in 2005, along with frequency of measurements and institutions engaged, taking into considerations the EEA indicators. The CARDS 2004 project aims to strengthen environmental monitoring system in Albania which among others improvement of environmental monitoring system using environmental norms and directives of EU as a general reference framework and improvement of data quality through development of an up-to date cost effective and sustainable integrating environmental monitoring system according to the standards of EEA and other relevant European Institutions. Biodiversity monitoring is part of this project and relate to ecological survey of coastal and surface waters and biodiversity in general. The CARDS project will support also **establishment of National Hydrobiology Reference Laboratory.**

Implementation of the long-term monitoring of the status of components of agricultural biodiversity is charged to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Protection of Consumers (hereinafter "MAFPC"), but little progress has been achieved so far.

Institutional level

The MoEFWA is in charge of overall environmental monitoring. Several research institutions, such as the Biological Research Institute (BRI), Museum of Natural Sciences (MNS), Forest and Pasture Research Institute (FPRI), Fishery Research Institute (FRI) and Botanical Garden are engaged in this monitoring program. Data is collected on an annual basis and is complemented with data published by other government bodies, such as Directorate of Forestry and Pastures Policy (DFP) and Directorate of Fishery Policy.

However, except to pilot projects, monitoring of biota has not been implemented due to insufficient financial, material, personal and technical capacities of the research Institutes involved in monitoring and the lack of a comprehensive monitoring methodology.

The lack of financial resources has not allowed broader use of the capacities of other institutions in the monitoring of biota. Monitoring of forests is limited to the assessment of the health status of forests, while monitoring of agricultural biodiversity is almost inexistent.

The Gene Bank for the preservation of plant genetic materials (National Seed Institute-NSI) is established, but there is a need for further support. Very little is done for monitoring and preservation of native breeds of animals and animal genetic materials.

Financing of monitoring activities, which Albania committed to perform in accordance with the Convention, is not sufficiently addressed. Qualified estimates of costs for the implementation of biodiversity monitoring do not exist.

Individual level

There are few experts for biodiversity monitoring in Albania. Further more, their capacity has not been satisfactorily utilized for monitoring due to insufficient material and technical

equipment and the lack of co-ordination. Mobilization of capacities at the individual level (as well as at the institutional level) is generally ad-hoc through projects from foreign aid.

3.3. In-situ conservation of biodiversity

In-situ conservation of biodiversity is a primary approach to the conservation of biological diversity. Article 8 requires parties to adopt legislation necessary for the protection of threatened species and populations as well as measures for the conservation of ecosystems, wild fauna and flora, and genetic diversity. It also covers *in-situ* conservation of animal breeds and plant varieties. Special attention is given to the balance between conservation measures planned within and outside of protected areas. Article 8(f) requires the restoration of degraded ecosystems and the promotion of the recovery of threatened species. At the same time article 8(g) requires parties to undertake steps for controlling of risks for biological diversity and human health associated with the use or release of living modified organisms which are likely to have adverse environmental impacts.

Systemic level

The administration and management of protected areas is based on Law No. 8906 dated 6 June 2002 “On Protected Areas”. The object of this law is the declaration, preservation, administration, management and use of protected areas and their natural and biological resources; the facilitation of conditions for the development of environmental tourism, for the information and education of the general public and for direct or indirect economic profits, by the local population, by the public and private sector.

This law regulates the protection of six categories of protected areas, applied in the territory of the Republic of Albania. The categorization of areas, the status, and level of protection for each area is based on the criteria of the World Centre of Nature Conservation. The law pays special attention to forests, waters and other natural resources within protected areas that shall be excluded from classification as forests for utilization.

Management of forests and forest property, of waters and water property, as well as other properties in state ownership located inside a protected area shall be performed by the administration of the protected area. This administration shall exercise such activities directly or through an authorized subject. Where these properties are in private ownership, they shall be managed and utilized by the owner and legal user provided that this management is in compliance with the area management plan approved by the Ministry of Environment.

For the first time, the “Law on Environmental Protection” presents the concept of the MoEFWA as the highest institution for environmental issues. This law presents a synthesis of the main rights and obligations in the field of environmental protection of all interested parties: the state with its central and local structures, juridical and physical persons, the public and the obligations resulting from international agreements. The integration of environmental protection into local and national sector policies such as transport, energy, agriculture, tourism, industry, services, territory regulation and economic and social development as a whole, is the responsibility of respective local and central structures. According to this law the broad public participates in environmental protection directly or through the environmental NGOs. The NGOs have the right to give opinions and to collaborate with the environmental protection structures.

The law is followed by a series of Government decrees and regulations as following. Decree “On the administration of protected areas”, defines that the State Authority for the administration of protected areas is the Directorate General of Forest and Pasture, which should establish separate administration for protected areas. The decree also defines the main duties and responsibilities of the administration. Following this decree the Directorate of Forests and Pastures Policy issued respective orders for the establishment of the separate administrations for 11 National Parks and 11 Managed Nature Reserves.

Decree “On the procedures for the proposal and declaration of protected areas and buffer zones” defines the procedures for the proposal and declaration of protected areas and buffer zones, as well as criteria and requirements for the selection of these areas.

Decree “On the re-declaration of some protected areas” defines that protected areas declared prior the enforcement of the Law No. 8906, date 06.06.2002 "On Protected Areas", take the status defined by this law as following (Forest National Park became National Park, Game Reserve changed to Managed Nature Reserve).

Decree “On the establishment of the Management Boards for protected areas” defines that Management Boards are established for protected areas of category II, IV and V. The decree also defines the duties and responsibilities of the Management Boards as well as their composition. Management Board members represent the relevant stakeholders and monitor the implementation of the management plan for the protected area and coordinate the activities of different institutions working within the area.

There are also several government decrees on the establishment of new protected areas as “The protected landscape of Vjose-Narte”; “The Managed Nature Reserve of Lake Shkodra” and “The Protected Landscape of Bune-Velipoja” (2005) and enlargement of Dajti National Park (July 2006).

Box.3. Network of protected areas in Albania

Until the 1990s, protected areas in Albania were small in number and size. Recommendations that emerged from the ecological survey and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan led to an important step in protected area planning in Albania. A new system was adopted for classifying existing and proposed protected areas, incorporating six IUCN management categories. The following table summarizes the improved system of protected areas that already cover up to 6.34% of the country total area (the new protected areas established in November 2005 are not included).

Management categories (IUCN, 1994)		Number of protected areas	Area (ha)
Category	Description		
I	Strict nature reserve	4	14.500
II	National parks	13	88.615
III	Nature monument	746	3.490
IV	Managed nature reserve	25	63.663
V	Protected landscape	5	72.638
VI	Protected areas of multiple use	4	18.200
Total		801	261, 106.4

Source, MoEFWA, August 2006

Six protected areas identified as areas of special conservation interest-ASCI are included in the first pilot phase of Emerald Network in Albania. During the second phase of EMERALD Network project in that has started recently other protected areas (ASCI) will be added to the Emerald Network.

Some 19 sites along the coast have been identified since 1996 (under Coastal Area Management Program –CAMP (UNEP/MAP, 1996) and proposed to be given the status of specially protected areas—SPAs. Up to date there are not established marine protected areas. Various documents mention candidate sites such are Sazani, Karaburuni, Porto Palermo, Ksamili and Stillo, but further action steps are not yet undertaken.

Albania is a party to other International treaties, such as the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention); the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention); the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention); the Convention on the Conservation of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO).

CITES is ratified by the Albania parliament with the law No. 9021, date 06.06.2003. The law entered into force on 25.09.2003 and it defines the scope, definitions, conditions for import, export, re-export, transit of exemplars, commercial activities and moving of exemplars, records, certification of the origin and unchangeable identification, and identifies the responsible state administration bodies.

The legal framework for nature conservation does not take into consideration existing capacities and for this reason law enforcement is weak. The legal provisions are not sufficiently implemented in relation to damage to biological diversity and violation of national legislation (including the criminal code).

Box 4: Network for the conservation of genetic diversity of forest wood species

Network for the in situ conservation of genetic diversity of forest wood species consists of seed collection forest tree stands with the area of 5818 ha. Protected tree stands of phenotype in category A cover 5418 ha and partly protected tree stands in category B 410 ha

The conservation of main forest species is as following:

- 134 stands of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) forests with an area of 2313 ha
- 26 stands of black pine forests (*Pinus nigra*) with an area of 572 ha
- 43 stands of silver fir (*Abies alba*) forests with an area of 569 ha
- 57 stands of Bosnian pine (*Pinus leucodermis*) forests with an area of 702 ha
- 61 stands of oak (*Quercus sp.*) forests with an area of 1382 ha
- 20 stands of Balkan pine (*Pinus peuce*) forests with an area of 159 ha
- 5 stands of scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) forests with an area of 58 ha
- 20 stands of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) forests with an area of 63 ha

FPRI has a seed orchards in Ferras, Fieri district, were several hybrids of poplar are reproduced.

In situ conservation of agricultural biodiversity components is provided first of all at the level of registered cultivars and hybrids. Conservation is provided primarily for commercially used cultivars and hybrids. In-situ conservation is not sufficiently ensured of the original (old native) cultivars of cultivated plant species. This poses threats of genetic erosion and increases the vulnerability of the original (old native) genotypes of plant species in Albania. This has to be addressed through a specific legal framework that will be linked with the Rural Development Program, which gives more options for utilization of land races and old cultivars, as well as for funding.

The principle problems in the area of the in situ conservation of genetic resources are: marginal attention paid to the issue, limited financial resources and consequently limited capacities for the qualified implementation of measures.

Institutional level

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (MoEFWA) is the main institution responsible for the protection of environmental values in Albania. According to the legal provisions, MoEFWA identifies protected areas and approves management plans. The law provides the possibility to transfer already existing administration of protected areas to

new or different administration bodies or the MoEFWA itself upon approval of the Council of Ministers (CoM) (Art 23, § 1-4).

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Protection of Consumers (MoAFPC), the former Ministry of Agriculture and Food, has been the major authority for the management of forests, water, pastures, flora and fauna. It enforces its right and responsibilities through the Directorate General of Forests and Pastures (DGFP), Directorate of Fishing (DF), Directorate of Waters and Regional Directorates of Agriculture and Food (RDoAF). The new government structure has set the DGFP and Fishing Directorate and the Water Basin Secretariat within the MoEFWA.

Historically, the mandate for protected area management lies within the General Directorate for Forestry and Pastures (GDFP). The recently approved Law on Forest and Albanian Forest Service (Art. 7 and 14) from 2005 confirms the mandate of GDFP for protected area management.

After the institutional changes from the end of 2005 MoEFWA took on board forestry including PA-s management and therefore is responsible for protected areas administrations as well. With this structure supervision of Protected Areas Administrations is under the

According to current structure of the MoEFWA, Protected Areas Administrations are under this ministry, but are not any more dependent from a single directorate.

Within the MoEFWA, the Protected Areas Administrations depends hierarchically on the Minister, but it receives its funds from the DFS in districts.

Because PAs have no separate budget line, it is treated as any other Forestry Sector in the District office. Due to this legal and institutional set up for protected area management, the allocation of funds is not based on the allocation of a budget but is decided on a case-by-case basis.

Within the DGFP, the Park Administration depends hierarchically on the Department for Protected Area Management, but it receives its funds from the District Forest Service Office. Between the two structures there is no line of command although both are within GDFP.

An important new part of the DGFP Park Management structures is the Management Board, which is currently under development. It provides the setup for a participatory management approach including all relevant technical structures as well as governmental structures at regional and local level. Also other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations and business associations are considered member of the board.

For the *in-situ* biodiversity conservation, responsibilities of individual organizations are not yet clearly defined. In addition, activities are not well coordinated among sectoral institutions, which manage and implement individual (particular) projects aimed at the *in-situ* conservation of biological diversity. The potential of project steering committees is not always used efficiently. It has happened that the achievements within a project life have been vanished after the project has ended up. Often institutions have not been able to adopt the project outputs as their sustainable assets.

Performance of individual institutions is limited by their capacities. Effectiveness of their performance is assessed through checking the success or failure to complete tasks within the approved annual work plan, and possibly through assessing the effectiveness of funds spent. There is no feedback on the effectiveness of institutional performance on the biodiversity status and development.

Political support for the issues of conservation of genetic resources has decreased since the time of accession of the Albania to the CBD and consequently capacities in this field have been weakened.

Individual level

The administration of protected areas lacks in both number and capacities of personnel. All the staff working in protected areas management is with a background of forestry. Limited and inadequate staff engaged in in-situ conservation. Competitive and advantageous salary conditions influence the quality of staff at the expert level. Staffing of posts in the public service is compromised and professional requirements have been reduced. The lack of experts in such field as economic and social aspects of biodiversity and related impacts, and incentives is a specific problem. There is a need for training courses for professionals aimed at the exchange and increasing of knowledge in the biodiversity field. Offers of foreign courses and training are used, but command of the language of the course is the main limitation. In order to address the legal aspects of the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, including issues of the access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits arising from utilization, it is necessary to train a group of experts for the identification and assessment of original (old native) cultivars of plants.

3.4. Control of invasive alien species

Article 8(h) of the CBD deals with the issue of invasive alien species and requires parties as far as possible and as appropriate to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species. Other Articles of the CBD and the decision of the COP²³ relate to the issue of invasive alien species indirectly. Article 8(h) includes also intentional and unintentional introductions.

Systemic level

Draft law on Biodiversity Protection deals with this issue, but this law is not yet approved by the parliament. There are not yet existing legal regulations that may integrate the Guiding Principles for the Prevention, Introduction and Mitigation of Impacts of Alien Species which Threaten Ecosystems, Habitats or Species.

A national strategy for comprehensively addressing the issue of invasive alien species including control of them has not been developed yet (Decision of the COP VI/23). There is a considerable lack of coordination of the issue.

Institutional level

Responsibilities for invasive species of single authorities and sectoral organizations are not clearly defined and divided and communication and exchange of information is lacking.

Individual level

Experts on the issue of invasive alien species control are available. They have opportunities for professional development, while technical equipment varies in institutions. The issue of invasive alien species is underestimated.

3.5. Protection of traditional knowledge on biodiversity and sustainable use of its components

According to the Article 8(j) a party to the COP is required to respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovation and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and SU of its components, promote wider application of traditional knowledge, innovation and practices with the approval and involvement of their holders and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovation and practices.

Systemic level

This issue is not addressed in a complex way due to low level of public information and

underestimation of the importance and opportunities for its utilization in social and economic programs. There is a general attitude towards globalization concepts without respecting the preservation of what might be golden value for any individual country.

Institutional level

Coordination of the activities for the issue of traditional knowledge application belongs to the competence of the MoAFPC. However, the institutional responsibilities for this issue are not defined clearly. Coordination and effective central management of activities are missing.

Individual level

At the individual level, traditional knowledge about biodiversity is present and applied in many activities connected with the use of biodiversity informally in families. Development of professional careers of individuals in the field of the application of traditional knowledge may be achieved through PhD studies at universities and participation in special courses.

3.6. Ex-situ conservation

Article 9(a) requires every party to adopt measures for *ex-situ* conservation of components of biological diversity, preferably in the country of origin of such components. This should be done while respecting the fact that *ex-situ* measures preferably have to complement *in-situ*² measures. Article 9(d) requires the regulation of the collection of specimens of species and genetic resources for *ex-situ* conservation purposes so as to prevent biodiversity loss.

Systemic level

Legal framework dealing with the issues of *ex-situ* conservation is incomplete. Programs dealing with *ex-situ* conservation of biodiversity are missing.

Institutional level

Botanical Garden of Tirana participate in *ex-situ* conservation, e.g. in the implementation of measures provided for by the approved recovery programs for critically endangered and rare plant species. The gene banks for native plant and animal species have not been established yet. The gene banks for the conservation of genetic material of cultivated species and microorganisms already exist nearby the Zootechnical Research Institute and National Seed Institute. However, institutional responsibilities for this issue are not defined clearly. Coordination and effective central management of the activities is missing.

Individual level

Capacities for the *ex-situ* conservation at the individual level are sufficient.

3.7. Sustainable use of components of biological diversity

Article 10 invites the parties to use the ecosystem approach²⁶ for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components.

The ecosystem approach (hereinafter “EA”) is an approach and strategy of integrated land use that enables the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity (all its resources respectively) at a balanced level. Application of the EA in all sectors enables a balance to be reached in three basic objectives of the CBD – conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of biological resources. The EA is based on the use of scientific knowledge and traditional experiences, which focus on the structure, processes, functions, mutual relations between organisms and their environment. Human society can be

² While Article 9(a) is oriented at the components of biodiversity, Article 9(b) is oriented at the *ex-situ* conservation facilities for genetic resources. Article 9(c) completes the article 8(f) (rehabilitation and restoration of degraded ecosystems and promotion of the recovery of threatened species). Final purpose of some measures of the *ex-situ* conservation for wild species (in comparison with the domestic and cultivated species) is their reintroduction into the natural habitats.

an integrated part of majority of natural or semi natural ecosystems. However, the EA requires an adaptive management in relation to the dynamic natural ecosystem. The EA is methodically based on 12 guiding principles approved by the COP.

Parties have to introduce model approaches to EA application in the use of natural resources in a short time and gradually introduce them in all economic sectors. Parties will submit reports on the effect of such an approach and will mutually cooperate. As a model solution of EA, the *Guiding Principles for the Tourist Development* were developed and approved by the Decision of the COP VII/14. In Albania, these guiding principles have not been further developed.

3.7.1. Sustainable use of forest ecosystems

There is a political support for the application of EA in forest ecosystems and the existing international legal framework reinforces it ²⁷.

Systemic level

Law No. 9385 dated 4 May 2005 “On forests and the forest police” is the main law covering the forestry sector. Its objective is the administration, protection, enlarging and treatment of the forests aiming at environmental conservation and the production of wood material and other forest products. The law recognizes three different forms of forest ownership (state, group (commune-village), private).

The supply of local people with wood and fodder is regulated in an instruction of the Council of Ministers: No. 5 dated 10 October 1994 “On procedures for supplying villagers with firewood, fodder and construction material”. This instruction authorizes the head of the village to prepare annually a firewood collection plan based the needs of village community and to present the respective requests to the forest authorities. The DFO has to fulfill the requests according to the annual allowable cut in the respective districts. Before taking the exploitation permit, the head of the village has to collect the fee for the firewood (defined according to the decision of the CM “On the forestry sector fees”) that will go on the DFO account.

The administration and management of medicinal and aromatic herbs is regulated with Law No. 7722 dated 15th of June 1993 “On the protection of natural medicinal, oil-bearing plants”. Most oil-bearing plants are found in wild state in forest and pasture areas. The collection, accumulation, processing and sale of medicinal and aromatic plants are done by private individuals or subjects. The fees for the collection and accumulation of the medical and aromatic plants are defined in decision No. 82 dated 26th of February 1993 “On forestry sector fees” changed with Decision No. 678 dated 14th of November 1996 and Decision No. 530 dated 21st of August 1998.

Law No. 7875 dated 23rd of November 1994 “On the protection of wildlife and hunting” regulates hunting activities in the Republic of Albania. There are also some regulations of the MoAFPC and the DGFP, which regulate the administration, management, development, preservation and protection of wildlife and hunting activities. The state promotes private investments aiming at the administration and preservation of wildlife. Each hunter is obliged to respect and implement the hunting calendar and is also obliged to pay the respective taxes and fees defined in other legal dispositions. There are various cases of prohibitions defined in the hunting activities aiming at the protection of wildlife.

However, in practice the law does not provide all the necessary provisions to ensure a sustainable development of wild fauna species. Therefore a new law on the wild fauna is foreseen to be elaborated in the course of next year to comply with the provisions of Birds and habitats Directives as well.

The strategy for the development of the forestry and pasture sector has got as its own goal “ensuring the management and sustainable development of forestry and pasture resources in

accordance with the aimed/intended governmental policies, aiming at the same time at the conservation and function of the public benefits of forests in accordance with the interests of the different layers of the society and for a steady multifunctional management”.

The strategy determines the main directions of the activities in the next 25 years .It makes up a national program for forests and pastures, a number of actions which will be carried out in the next 10 years, in collaboration with the partners.

Sustainable management of forestry and pasture resources means a good management and utilization of resources in a way which restores and secures biodiversity, production, regenerative capacities, forestry vitality and potential and for now and in the future it meets the ecological economic and social functions in local, national and global level without causing damages on other ecosystem.

In order to meet the above mentioned requirements the strategy defines several strategic objectives and actions to be undertaken. The most important strategic objectives regarding biodiversity preservation are: Improvement of Protected Areas Management, Improvement and strengthening of the protected areas administration, giving priority to the national parks and to the protected landscape areas in order to implement the management plans of protected areas with the involvement of community in it. Nature conservation and eco-tourism have to be guided and promoted inside or close to PA, without clashing the management objectives of PA, in order to secure and distribute the economic, ecologic and social benefits.

The development of the National Strategy of Forestry and Pastures (2005) based on cross-sectoral principles requires for more effective implementation.

Institutional level

The MoAFPC was until recently responsible body for the implementation of decisions and commitments adopted by the COP for the area of “forest biodiversity”. Recently, under the new Government arrangements, this responsibility has shifted to the MoEFWA. Implementation support with the use of existing data, information and knowledge is provided by the FPRI in Tirana, the Faculty of Forestry of the Agriculture University of Tirana. Key institutions for co-operation are agencies within the environment sector, and Districts Forest Services (DFS) in particular.

Mandates and missions of the institutions need to be clearly defined. Information resources require a concept for cross-sectoral linkages, which currently does not exist. Necessary information is partially available therefore completion and updating is required. Access to information should be improved, including structure and system of acquiring new information.

Financial resources are insufficient because there is no direct source for financing of the implementation of tasks related to the conservation and maintenance of biological diversity of forest ecosystems within the state budget of the MoEFWA.

Biodiversity does not have high priority in the Concept of the State Forest Policy. The Concept is mainly focused on the commercial use of forests rather than on the conservation of forest biodiversity.

Processes such as planning, quality management, monitoring and assessment do not work effectively enough because some institution levels are not sufficiently developed or they do not function properly.

Until recently, the state forest administration is composed of the GDFP and 36 DFS offices. Under the new government, GDFP is integrated into the new MoEFWA. The main tasks of GDFP include control of legal and illegal activities within forest areas, as well as planning and implementing of management interventions (forest improvements, afforestations, erosion control measures) in forest areas. Recently, due to a high pressure to forest resources, the focus is set on the control and prevention of illegal activities paying less attention on the management issues.

Insufficient equipment for the execution of supervision in the field (lack of communication tools, old vehicles with high operational costs, lack of computers) is a specific problem and

results in low level of law enforcement. Funding for the forest works has been always insufficient.

The communal forests remain property of the state, but the right of use is given to the villagers with permanent residence in the village for serving their needs with construction timber, fire-wood, fodder, grazing and other uses provided by the forests. The communal forests are managed through management plans which are elaborated taking into consideration (a) the socio-economic state of the commune, (b) the position of forests and pastures, (c) administering traditions, (d) the predisposition of the local population to get organized for a rational use of these resources, (e) the proportion between high forests, coppices and shrubs, the degradation level and their potential for improvement and (f) the needs for fire-wood and grazing.

Forest and Pasture User Associations are in charge of managing communal forest and implementing the management plan. Recently, a National Association of Communal Forests was established with the goal of (i) facilitating cooperation of single associations with other institutional partners and potential donors, (ii) providing extension services as well as training on capacity building for association members and forest users, (iii) promote good examples of sustainable use of forest resources among different user associations.

The non-state forestry sector is represented by private forests that consist of only 4-5% of the total forest area. Traditionally, the most common form of ownership on forest areas was public or group property (village or commune) so there are no big owners of forest areas.

Individual level

Existing human resources are sufficient, but need to obtain higher level education (specialization in biodiversity issues) and should be more efficiently deployed (e.g. the position of BD expert is missing at central and local administration offices).

The fact, that positions are not properly defined, is a continuing problem and stems from the fact that processes within institutions are not well developed and do not function well. There are capacities for appropriate training but they are not used for various reasons, the lack of funds is a commonly interpreted as a main reason. Access to necessary information needs to be improved. Communication skills at the individual level are not a problem and it is possible to consider them sufficiently effective.

3.7.2. Sustainable use of non-forest ecosystems

Decisions of the COPs (III/9, III/11, V/5, VII/3, and IV/6) deal with the conservation of grasslands and wetlands referred to as agro-biodiversity programs. The issue of wetland conservation has not been addressed clearly at the beginning of the CBD processes, probably because of the overlapping of issues with the Ramsar Convention. The Joint CBD-Ramsar Work Plan was adopted at the COP V.

Systemic level

Law No. 7917 dated 13 April 1995 "On pastures and meadows" regulates the administration, restitution to the former owners, criteria for user rights, treatment, increase in the holding capacity and the preservation of the ecologic balance of pastures and meadows. There is a potential threat that, partially, areas under the category of pastures (including here grasslands, abandoned lands and wetlands) will be treated for the compensation of former land owners. This action might be misused if there will not be developed in time additional guidelines on land use. The role of intergovernmental institutions is important to preserve agro-biodiversity values by encouraging and developing integrated sustainable programs in areas where biodiversity is high (mainly wetlands).

A National Wetland Strategy is under preparation in Albania. As a party of the Ramsar Convention, Albania is making its efforts to improve inventory and management capacities

dealing with wetlands. Two Ramsar sites, Butrinti lake and Karavasta Lagoon are considered priority wetland sites and are covered with management projects. There are under development projects related with Lezha wetlands and Shkodra Lake area which foreseen development of management plans for these wetland sites. Understanding values of biological biodiversity and incorporation of biodiversity conservation into other sectors is largely missing.

Institutional level

Organizations/institutions that deal with biodiversity of non-forest natural habitats and species are Universities, Museum of Natural Sciences, Research Institutions (BRI, FPRI and FRI), Botanical Garden, and NGOs. ECAT Tirana has undertaken the first national inventory of wetlands in Albania, and is implementing a project that aims at building capacities for the conservation of wetlands in Albania. A MedWet 3.1 database has been installed at the main Research Institutions and organizations (government and non-government) dealing with wetland inventory and data management.

Individual level

At the individual level very good experts for the conservation and sustainable use of non-forest ecosystems are available. Institution development and capacity development efforts suffer from the fact that salaries in public sector are low and consequently, educated professionals are tempted to go either to the private sector or abroad.

3.8. Incentive Measures

Article 11 of the CBD requires the parties to adopt measures that act as incentives for the conservation of BD and the SU of its components.

Systemic level

The chapter about “Financial Resources and their Use” of the law on forest defines the financial responsibilities for the forest property as follows (Art. 35): “The forest service is responsible for the administration of the property and of the incomes realized by the economic activities in the forest and pasture sector, according to the dispositions of this law and other legal and sub-legal acts in force”. According to the law (Art. 36): “The financial sources of the forestry sector shall be provided by: i) Budget of the Republic of Albania, ii) Internal sources; iii) Different donors and grants.

These sources are further specified as follows: (Art. 37): ”The internal sources of forests and pastures are provided by: i) Sale of timber, fuel wood, hunting, pastures, forest and non-forest products and other related services; ii) Leasing or transfer in use of forest and pasture surfaces; iii) Giving professional licenses; iv) Technical assistance and projects designed by the forest service person; v) Fees, fines and sequestrations; vi) Incomes obtained by renting parts of infrastructure, buildings or other means in the property of the forest service; vii) Incomes generated by taxes and fees obtained through tourist activities, hotels, restaurants, sport activities, etc., in the state forest fund (including protected areas).

Based on the sources of income listed above, the Forest law provides clear structures for the distribution of the funds. It stipulates that “incomes created in forests and pastures, public property shall be divided between the state budget and DGFP according to the legal dispositions in force. They shall be kept in a special bank account.” (Art. 38) They shall be used as follows (Art. 39): a) Salaries and social insurance of the forest staff; b) operational costs; c) Investment in forests, pastures, protected areas and forests with special functions.

Internal sources are used for investments in forests, pastures, protected areas. At national level, 30 % of the income generated remains in the state budget (out of which probably 10 % are provided for the Ministry of Agricultural). The remaining 70% are returned to DGFP for investment.

Laws, regulations, decisions that contain provisions for compensations for the restriction of common cultivation to support nature protection and for financial contribution for the maintenance of favorable conservation status of species and natural habitats do not exist. Compensation for damages caused by protected animal species is not foreseen by the existing legislation. Attempts for establishing financial support and incentives for short periods of time have been made within projects with such budget lines. Unfortunately, incentives to support traditional ways of use and practices that are compatible with conservation and sustainable use of biological resources are still far beyond the reality. In addition, mechanisms such as Agriculture Banks or Nature Fund are not in place yet.

Institutional level

Albania has developed ambitious plans for the conservation and sustainable use of various ecosystems, including water (inland water, coastal and marine ecosystems). Agriculture is also included in plans. But, insufficient allocation of financial resources at the systemic level combined with the lack of experience causes the institutions do not work effectively. Environment protection units should be established in all main sectoral ministries, and expert knowledge, including that of biological diversity, should be strengthened in the Government offices. The international community should provide training, including workshops on relevant topics proposed by the Government.

Individual level

In the area of incentive measures there is a permanent lack of experts. Universities and postgraduate courses do not offer studies in this area.

3.9. Research and Training

Article 12 of the CBD deals with issues of scientific research. The parties commit themselves to promote and encourage research that contributes to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, to encourage relevant methods and maintain education and training programs. At the same time the parties are required to cooperate in the exchange and application of research results in development of methods for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.

Systemic level

A National Strategy for Science and Technology is being implemented under supervision of Ministry of Education and Science.

The concept of research and development within the framework of the MoEFWA up to 2005 includes also research and development in the area of nature conservation among its priorities. The concept, however, has not been applied in practice. Market mechanisms for creating attractiveness from all stakeholders in terms of resources and availability for research both for scientific institutions and NGOs are not yet in place.

Institutional level

Generally, the area of science and research is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). Under the auspices of the MoES, the Committee of Science and Technology has been established.

The MoEFWA and the MoAFPC identify the scientific tasks which need to be addressed in the area of biodiversity within a framework of NBSAP.

A number of Research institutions take part in the research that contributes to the

conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, such as research institutions of Academy of Sciences (i.e. BRI), Universities (i.e. MNS, Botanical Garden, Department of Biology of the Faculty of Natural Sciences), research institutions within the MoAFPC (i.e. FPRI, FRI). Non-governmental organizations (such as Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA), Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals (ASPB), Albanian Association of Biologists (AAB), Albanian Herpetological Society, etc.), are also involved in the research.

The above mentioned institutions also participate in the development of methods for the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources.

Individual level

At the individual level there are not sufficient resources for the implementation of research needs. There is need for more professional training and employment in the area of research. There is lack of experts with managerial skills.

3.10. Public education and awareness

Article 13 of the CBD requires strengthening of public education in order to understand the importance of BD and measures required for conservation. At the same time it requires the parties to cooperate with other states and international organizations in developing educational and public awareness programs, with respect to the conservation of BD and SU of its components. The international legal framework in this area has been considerable strengthened by the Convention of European Economic Commission of the UN on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Systemic level

Environmental Education (EE) strategy and programs are being developed and implemented in Albania within the system of education, as part of intra-curricular or formal EE, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science.

The Albanian Constitution and a number of laws guaranty the right of citizens to the access to information in general.

Albania is a signatory to the Aarhus Convention, which is already ratified by the Albanian Parliament.

Institutional level

Some universities and faculties participate in the implementation of EE actively and are also involved in national and international education projects. The faculties of natural sciences and agricultural faculties are increasing the number of compulsory courses with curricula focused on the conservation and wise use of biodiversity, agrobiodiversity as well as its individual components and other tasks arising from the implementation of the CBD.

However, there is insufficient staffing and technical equipment, and promotional material. Cooperation between nature conservation organizations and schools in the area of EE is not systematic. There are no linkages between school and after school education programs for nature conservation. Within curricula EE is driven by the personal interest and commitment of individual teachers.

Educational trails and educational sites in protected areas (especially National Parks) are not yet developed.

NGOs play very positive role in EE as they are able to prepare and implement grant schemes aimed at EE. There is an EE Strategy prepared by Albanian NGOs, supported by MKOE.

Some information and promotion materials with focus on nature and landscape protection are published so far. Some titles (such as guides for educational trails, various brochures and leaflets about protected areas, plants, animals etc.) are published in the framework of foreign projects or with support from other non-state resources.

Several training projects related with Aarhus Convention have been operating in Albania, aiming at facilitating both the understanding and practical use of useful mechanisms provided

by this Convention.

Individual level

At the individual level there are sufficient capacities for public education and awareness.

3.11. Impact assessment, minimizing adverse impacts, liability and redress

Article 14 of the CBD requires parties to take into account impacts on biodiversity in the process of environmental impact assessment (hereinafter “EIA”), including notification, exchange of information and consultation on activities with potential transboundary impacts on biodiversity. Article 14.1(d) deals with the specific case of emergencies. Article 14.2 deals with the issue of liability and redress.

The requirement for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) is declared in the Preamble of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the Environmental Impact Assessment of Certain Plans and Programs.

The 5th Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Kyiv adopted the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (hereinafter “the Espoo Convention”), which in the Article 2 sets out the requirements to assess impacts on biodiversity as well.

Systemic level

The EIA is covered by the law on Environmental Impact Assessment (year 2002) which includes assessment of impacts of strategic documents on environment (SEA), and the law on Environmental Protection.

In the legal system of Albania, the issue of liability for damage to the environment is not sufficiently applied (in the framework of criminal, administrative and civil liability). For example, there is no specific compulsory insurance for the compensation of damages to the environment in various emergency cases. Legal regulations, which would introduce a more effective system of assessment of natural resources, are also missing.

Institutional level

The MoEFWA is the central body of the state administration for EIA. An investor finances EIA processes; public institutions fund the EIA processes from stage budget resources. For the purpose of information dissemination, the following are used: the Bulletin of MoEFWA information system of EIA and information workshops – public hearings (but they do not specifically focus on the issue of the assessment of biodiversity loss).

The new Act on EIA presumes that the regional environmental agencies (REAs) will implement activities related to EIA. According to the new act, a proponent will continue to be responsible for payments for EIA. A legal or natural person who is responsible for the development of a strategic document covers the costs connected with the assessment of impacts of the strategic documents upon environment.

Individual level

The MoEFWA keeps a list of authorized or licensed persons for the assessment of impacts on the environment. However, registration in the list is not required for the execution of the expert activities in the assessment of impacts on environment. In order to gain technical capability there is training and additional retraining available. There are no specialized courses for the assessment of impacts on biodiversity. Certificates for the assessment of impacts on biodiversity are not issued or required.

3.12. Access to genetic resources

According to the Article 15 of the CBD, the parties are required to create conditions to

facilitate access of other parties to genetic resources for environmentally sound and adequate use of biodiversity. They also have to minimize restrictions that run counter to the objectives of the Convention. Article 15 also deals with the return of benefits arising from the subsequent utilization of genetic resources. These benefits include possible participation in scientific research which is based on the genetic resources provided, fair and equitable sharing of research and development results and commercial and other benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

Systemic and institutional levels

The Bonn Guidelines on access to genetic resources, their ownership and equitable sharing of benefits give some directions in this area. It is necessary to apply them at the national level. There is no policy or legal instrument for controlling access and use of forest species genetic resources. Attempts are being made to prepare a law that defines the rules for access uses and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

No legal instrument currently covers intellectual property rights over the old cultivars and land races. At the institutional level the responsibilities are not clearly defined.

Individual level

There are not sufficient capacities at the individual level and it is necessary to build them through specialized courses and training. The opportunity for involvement in international research is still absent.

3.13. Access to and transfer of technology

According to the Article 16 of the CBD, the parties are required to adopt measures that will facilitate the transfer of technology, first of all to developing countries. Technologies, which are transferred among parties, must not cause significant damage to the environment. Article 16(5) confirms that intellectual property rights may have an influence, positive or negative, on the implementation of the CBD objectives and it requires contracting parties to co-operate in order to ensure that such rights do not run counter to the objectives.

Systemic level

The transfer of technology to developing countries is becoming an issue in the context of the increasing level of official development aid. In Albania, no specific analysis of the influence of intellectual property rights on meeting the commitments has been completed.

3.14. Handling of biotechnology and distribution of benefits

The Protocol (Cartagena Protocol) adopted in 2000 deals with the handling of biotechnologies and distribution of benefit. The Protocol requires parties to ensure an adequate level of protection in the field of the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms which result from modern biotechnology and which may have adverse effects on the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components taking also into account risks to human health and specifically focusing on transboundary movements.

Systemic level

Albania has accessed the Cartagena Protocol officially on February 8, 2005 by law on accession of Albania to the Protocol of Biosafety, which was approved by the parliament and became part of its legal system. Albania is in the first steps of developing the biosafety framework and in the first steps of gathering all the information which is partly an impediment.

A draft law on conservation of biodiversity is prepared in 2002 but not approved which some articles on GMO have related to imports, eradication and containment of GMOs, notification and consultation with other states and programs for GMOs. These articles are based on

Biosafety protocol and expected to be improved by the development of Biosafety Framework and implementation of Action Plan on legislation approximation related to EU directives. It includes preparation and approval of completed legislation during 2006-2015 in line with EU legislation on GMOs. GMOs are a new area for Albania and its experts which makes the preparation and implementation of necessary measures difficult. Foreign technical and financial assistance and experience is very valuable. The law on accession of Albania to the protocol approved by Parliament is the sign of commitment of Albania to implementation of Protocol and was introduced in national legal system. A draft law on biosafety is being designed in the framework of the preparation of the National Biosafety Framework.

The National Biosafety Framework is being developed in the framework of the project “Development of a National Biosafety Framework for Albania”, financed by UNEP/GEF and the Ministry of Environment of Albania. The main objective of this project is the preparation of the Biosafety Framework in accordance with the conditions of the Cartagena Protocol of Biosafety. (For more information see Annex 2, as well as internet page of the project: <http://biosafety.moe.gov.al>).

Institutional level

The current distribution of institutional responsibility in this field is not effective. Institutions dealing with the issues of biosafety at the research and education level are working independently and without well coordination of their activities. There is no independent authorized laboratory for GMO in Albania.

Individual level

In the area of biosafety there are no clearly defined obligations of concerned stakeholders and abilities and knowledge are not sufficient in some cases. Within the state service there is a lack of experienced lawyers because they leave for better paid sectors. Experts in biosafety are obtained from various areas of the economy, research institutions, and universities. They are usually contracted as part time job consultants. The introduction of specialized courses on biosafety into the study programs at Albanian universities would be a significant benefit.

Preparation of experts in specialized courses at universities and other accredited educational institutions is not available.

There is a significantly better situation in the area of information resources due to international cooperation and increasing access to information through the electronic media. There is a serious gap in the system which delays the development of capacities, namely a national clearing-house for biosafety. The operation of a clearing-house would contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the exchange of scientific, technical, environmental and legal information on all aspects of biosafety.

3.15. Financial resources

Article 20 requires each party to provide financial support for national measures necessary for the implementation of the CBD. Each party is obliged to provide financial resources and supports to the extent to which it will be able to provide them. The developed country parties are required to provide „new and additional financial resources³” to enable the developing country parties to meet „the agreed full incremental costs” for the implementation and benefits of the CBD. The GEF is a financial mechanism based on the decision of the COP.

Systemic level

³ “New and additional financial resources” means financial resources over the existing bilateral and multilateral funds. According to the Article 20 (3), the developed country parties can provide financial resources through bilateral, regional and other multilateral channels in addition to the financial resources they shall provide according to the Article 20 (2).

At the systemic level no strategy for technical and financial support for the developing country parties has been developed in relation to the CBD.

Protected areas are under the responsibility of forest service so their budget is included in the overall budget allocated to forest service. This includes staff salaries, operational costs and maintenance works on protected areas. The Albanian Forestry Service, by law, has the right to re-invest incomes generated from selling forest products or services (70% of these incomes are given back to Forest Service for re-investment). Protected areas have also benefited; the majority of PAs maintenance work is realized through these funds.

Entrance Fees to Protected Areas are applied in Albania, although this is not a common practice. Also, law "On protected areas" allows concession of services (restaurants, guided tours) to private companies, but this is not yet a normal practice.

Considering all mentioned above, biodiversity protection and sustainable use of natural resources in Albania is still lacking financial resources. The main contributors to this issue are international donors (World Bank, UNDP, GEF, USAID, SNV, DANIDA, SIDA, CIDA, etc.), whose support is focused on specific areas and specific topics of international interests.

Nowadays, there is no study to explore the possibilities for financial resources to protected areas (as Environmental Funds, Green taxes, Offsets, compensations from infrastructure works or Environmental Impact Assessments). MoEFWA is looking to undertake such a study, but the lack of supporting funds has postponed it.

Generally, Albanian Government supports selected activities for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components through the priority aid areas. However, issues of BD and SU of its components have not been identified as a specific priority area for the country.

Institutional level

The MoEFWA administers the membership of the SR in GEF. The GEF NFP was appointed within the MoEFWA.

Individual level

At the individual level technical capacities are limited. The lack of capacity results from a lack of individuals focusing on issues of developing countries.

3.16. Reporting

Article 26 introduces the obligation of regular reporting on measures which have been taken for the implementation of the CBD. The report must also assess the effectiveness of such measures. However, the CBD does not specify the intervals at which the reports have to be submitted. This interval is determined by the COP and at present it is set at three years.

Systemic level

The first national BD report was developed and published by the MoEFWA with financial assistance from the GEF in 1999. The national report focused on providing information to the COP on the status of biodiversity in Albania and on implementing Article 6 of the CBD. Under Biodiversity Enabling Activity, Phase II the second national report will be developed.

Institutional level

The MoEFWA is responsible for the development of national reports. The reports are compiled by the NFP that is represented by one person at the MoEFWA. Cooperation with other sectors is essential in the development of thematic reports. The development of reports is not systematic, and teams for the development of reports are not institutionalized.

Individual level

Competent experts for developing the reports on the status and conservation of biodiversity and implementation of the CBD in Albania are available, but their capacities are not fully

utilized.

3.17. International cooperation

According to Article 5 of the CBD, international cooperation can be implemented directly or through competent international organizations. Other Articles of the CBD give details for international scientific and technical cooperation.

Emphasis is given to international cooperation in the framework of other international conventions (Rio Conventions). “*Joint Liaison Group*” has an important role in strengthening of cooperation and reaching of synergy⁴ among the Rio conventions. This working group consists of members of relevant bodies and secretariats of the conventions. The objective of the group is to strengthen coordination among the Conventions (first of all in the areas of information exchange and development of joint work plan focused e.g. on relations between climate change and biological diversity and soil degradation) that should contribute to harmonization of approaches and higher effectiveness.

Systemic level

From the point of view of international commitments Albania acceded to 6 international conventions dealing with nature, landscape and biodiversity protection. A few other international conventions also address this issue in part.

Special cross-sectoral panels or working groups are being established for addressing cross-sectoral issues within single international instruments. However, their effectiveness is not very high. A joint working or expert group that would cover issues of all three Rio Conventions (for the biodiversity, climate change and desertification and land degradation) is being established in Albania, as result of NCSA project.

Sufficient attention has not been given currently to cooperation in the implementation of commitments of the Rio Conventions. First of all, detailed analysis of cross-cutting issues and related problem areas of these Conventions has not been developed yet. Therefore there is no objective control whether duplication occurs in the implementation of commitments and tasks arising from particular conventions and whether existing resources (financial, human, information and material) are used effectively for the national benefit and not only from the sectoral point of view.

Institutional level

Albania has representatives in many international organizations dealing with nature protection⁵. In the framework of bilateral cooperation the Commissions on Transboundary Cooperation in Nature Protection with Greece and FYROM are operating. Bilateral transboundary cooperation of PA managers with neighboring protected areas in FYROM, Serbia and Montenegro and Greece is well developed.

The implementation of particular conventions (development and implementation of national programs, strategies and action plans), international programs, active work in committees and expert groups of the conventions, the EC, as well as in international organizations is limited due to the lack of financial resources and personal capacities.

While adopting international commitments financial demand for implementation is underestimated (e.g. implementation of research by the MoES, management of Ramsar sites). The implementation is limited to the sector which is responsible for the implementation of the convention; other sectors are only marginally involved. Practical implementation of commitments arising from international conventions remains, in many cases, at the formal level.

The mechanism for allowing easier technical and scientific cooperation among contracting parties is being developed gradually (*clearing-house* mechanism).

Individual level

Albania regularly participates in the meetings of the COP, advisory bodies and occasionally at

⁴ Synergy in this context means effective cooperation leading to effectiveness of activities in the implementation of particular conventions. One of the priorities is to eliminate possible duplications in implementation and to ensure maximum use of existing resources.

⁵ E. g.: Wetlands International, World Conservation Union (IUCN)

the meetings of ad-hoc expert groups. The representation of Albania at the meetings at the highest level is adequate (usually, the Minister or the State Secretary of the MoEFWA).

At the working level of meetings, Albania usually is represented by 1 or 2 representatives mostly from the MoEFWA. The participation of experts from other institutions is problematic, generally due to the issue of financing of these business trips. The current management does not respond to the need for active and full participation of Albania at the meetings where the negotiations are held simultaneous among several working groups. This situation is negatively reflected in the ability to promote the country's interests at the meetings as well as the information transfer from the meetings to the national level. The work of Albanian delegations at the meetings held within the CBD and meetings within other international processes which are related to biodiversity issues is not coordinated (e.g. processes in forestry, processes aimed at the protection of genetic resources for food and agriculture). The current use of available information on relevant international experience or activities by experts is not satisfactory.

4. Analysis of key capacity assets and needs for implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Biosafety Protocol

In Chapter 3 existing capacities were described at systemic, institutional and individual levels in Albania for implementing the commitments under the CBD and the Protocol. As the next step, a SWOT analysis was carried out which is a useful tool for assessment. Based on the identified strengths and weaknesses of the process, and the opportunities and threats, this method allows for identification of existing deficiencies as well as opportunities for overcoming these deficiencies. The SWOT analysis was carried out for five groups of capacities according to the generic indicators of UNDP/GEF (1).

4.1. SWOT analysis and capacity assessment

4.1.1. Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies, and programs
A key driving force for developing capacities to conceptualize and formulate policies and strategies for the protection of BD and SU of its components is the positive international framework and the priority position of the issue in the major environmental international initiatives. The weak point is, however, insufficient ability to transfer the international framework to the national (and lower) levels. This is accompanied with insufficient coordination of the activities required to meet the obligations of the CBD and the Biosafety Protocol at both the horizontal and vertical levels. The main problem, however, is the overall formal approach to the preparation of strategic instruments for the protection of biological diversity and for the sustainable use of its components. The valuation of BD components, taking into account of non-production functions and integration of this value into national planning provides an important opportunity to improve the situation. This might develop an understanding of the importance of conservation of BD and SU of its components in the context of sustainable development. In addition, it might cause the mobilization of capacities to update and make clearer the existing policies, strategies and programs. It is important to note that via relatively modest changes in capacities (such as cross-sectoral coordination) it is possible to achieve significant improvements in implementing policies and measures.

Table 4.1: SWOT analysis of capacities to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies, and programs

S/Strengths	W/Weaknesses
Positive political and legal framework to formulate national policy, strategies, legislation and programs for the conservation of BD and SU of its components	Insufficient capacities for the transfer of the international policy framework to the national and regional (county) levels as well as to municipalities
Existing NBSAP	Broadly and formally formulated strategic priorities for the conservation of BD and SU of its components are without measurable indicators
Ability to formulate and prepare policies, strategies, legislation and programs	Insufficient capacities to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategies and programs; the absence of indicators of implementation and impact – insufficient feedback
Adequate methodical, scientific and technical support	Insufficient coordination among sectors during the preparation of strategies and the low level of integration of measures for protection of BD and SU of its components into the policies, strategies, legislation and programs of the other sectors
Existence of sectoral policies, strategies and legal instruments	Formal approach to the preparation of policies, strategies, legislation and programs
Existence of individual capacities to operate in the field	Significant differences in qualification and competence of managerial staff working in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components
	Not using the synergistic opportunities within the activities of the UNFCCC-CBD-UNCCD
O/Opportunities	T/Threats
Growing international emphasis on halting the loss of BD and achieving SU of its components	Underestimated importance of BD and SU of its components within the context of sustainable development within the country policies and strategies
Change in the political priorities and strategic goals at the national level	“Inflation” of policies, strategies and programs
Valuation of BD components and integration of its value into national planning processes	Low interest to mobilize capacities to update policies, strategies and programs
Increased involvement of local and regional self-government into strategic decision-making	Insufficient application of knowledge in the formulation of the strategies, policies, programs and legislation
Restructuring in central and local institutions towards better efficiency in policy development (including establishment of inter ministerial structures)	Institutional improvements remain as “paper work”

	Frequent restructuring of the institutions within the public sector without considering respective policies and strategies
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4.1.2. Capacity to implement policies, legislations, strategies, and programs

The institutional framework in Albania to implement strategies, policies, laws and programs is being developed. Planning at the institutional level, however, is not linked to conceptual and strategic planning. In decision-making on the allocation of the resources strategic priorities are not taken into consideration. This results in insufficient capacity of institutions to implement approved strategies and programs. Activities of particular institutions are in many cases modified and accommodated from external (not from the state budget) financing with the resources, moving away the priority needs. On the other hand, the access to external resources (outside the state budget) and the growing capacities of the institutions, including the public sector institutions, to utilize these resources represent a positive stimulation to implement strategies, policies, legislation and programs. The use of expert and technical equipment in the private sector and NGOs also creates opportunities to improve the current situation.

However, lack of legal enforcement is still a problematic issue in Albania

Table 4.2: SWOT analysis of capacities to implement policies, legislation, strategies and programs

S/Strengths	W/Weaknesses
Existing NBSAP	Insufficient linkages of strategic planning to planning at the institutional level, both horizontally (among sectors) and vertically (within sectors)
Existing comprehensive institutional framework for the protection of BD and SU of its components	Absence of implementation tools for some issues under the CBD
Access to the information on implementation of programs and strategies	Lack of legal tools for some issues under the CBD
Availability of high-quality experts for the conservation of BD and SU of its components	Insufficient level of financial, human and information resources in relevant institutions
Existing legal framework for nature and landscape protection	No incentives for the conservation of BD and SU of its components in place
	Absence of definitions of best practices at the national level
	Absence of highly qualified experts in the field of law, economy, policy and communication able to address legal and economic challenges relevant to conservation of BD and SU of its components
	Not using the synergistic opportunities within the activities of the UNFCCC-CBD-UNCCD
O/Opportunities	T/Threats
Opportunities to use and obtain experience in the international projects	Weak political will to improve the existing state of capacities for the protection of BD and SU of its components
Opportunities to use experts and equipment of the private sector and NGOs	Frequent restructuring of the institutions within the public sector without assessing needs and effectiveness
Opportunities for human capacity developments in the framework of international projects	Low salaries at the public institutions do not motivate staff to work professionally

Opportunities to receive information from internet and other external sources	Insufficient awareness/information on the scope of activities and actions required to meet the CBD commitments
	Lack of financial means to implement actions and activities proposed on respective strategies and policies

4.1.3. Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders

The developing legal framework enables a gradual growth of the public participation in the environmental protection, including protection of biological diversity. Despite that, two phenomena “inherited” from the past still remain: on the one hand the low level of public involvement and the participation of various interest groups and on the other hand the formal attitude of and the public sector towards the consultations and searching for consensus based solutions.

Growing international pressure (Aarhus Convention) is seen as an opportunity to improve the situation. The public use of the legal opportunities is also limited by insufficient information on the subject of the consultations. There are gaps in available information and lack of access to the relevant information even within the public institutions. This problem can be solved through introducing new information technologies and by developing integrated information systems. From the long-term prospect, however, the low interest of the public in participating in decision-making can have negative consequences. This low interest is caused by a low level of awareness on how particular decisions influence the quality of life of the individual. The pressure used from some stakeholders towards local government decision (those who do not have long-term land use vision) have caused harms on biodiversity. There are experiences in the past from different sensitive areas, such as Prespa, Shkodra Lake, coastal urban areas (Durrresi, Saranda, etc.) where the pressure used has created big irrevocable impacts. Table 4.3: SWOT analysis of capacities to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders

S/Strengths	W/Weaknesses
Developing legal framework to support participative approaches	Absence of the tradition of public involvement
Active participation of the academic institutions and NGOs in developing and implementation of strategies and concepts	Formal attitude to the implementation of participation approaches by public bodies
Developed NGOs, competent in the fields of the protection of BD and SU of its components	Incomplete scope of information needed for implementation of the commitments of the CBD in the decision-making sphere
Aarhus Convention used as tool and mechanism for enforcement of public participation	Lack of staff experienced in communication in the public sectors
Establishment of information centers within project lifespan	Low expert and managerial competence in existing information centers and PR centers
The demand for development of transparency is increased among stakeholders	The pressure for transparency is not followed by alternative and/or compromise solutions
O/Opportunities	T/Threats
Accession to the Aarhus Convention	Application of opinions and activities based on private or extreme interests
Development of communication and information technologies	Insufficient time framework for negotiations and consensus building
Decentralization of the decision-making process	Lack of willingness or ability to communicate and to make information available

New non-traditional forms of raising environmental awareness	Low interest from the public to participate in the decision-making process due to lack of confidence to political decisions
Opportunity to train specialists in the field of environmental law, economy, policy, communication and media activity	Low priority in funding related to capacity development of biodiversity sector
Reorganization of institutions related with BD	Insufficient communication and coordination among sectoral institutions
Opportunities for developing integrated planning processes	Pressure from the process of land compensation to the former owners against BD

4.1.4. Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge

Research institutions and experts for biological diversity in Albania are available, but their capacities, however, are not used effectively and in a coordinated manner due to the absence of a complex research program for protection of the BD and SU of its components. Ultimately, national research priorities are not clearly defined. Scientific institutes develop projects that are likely to obtain financial support regardless of their relative importance to the conditions in Albania.

There is a lack of projects that would support a synergistic potential of the Rio Conventions. The current trends in research on BD and SU of its components do not guarantee the ability of institutions to continue ongoing initiatives, nor to maintain a sufficient pool of experts with adequate qualifications to fulfill the requirements of CBD and the Biosafety Protocol. Talented scientists and environmental experts leaving education and research institutions also have negative consequences. On the other hand, the positive feature of the situation is the growing capacity of organizations in the private sector and in selected NGOs and the opportunity to solve scientific-research projects with the support of the state budget (through MoEFWA).

Table 4.4: SWOT analysis of capacities to mobilize information and knowledge

S/Strengths	W/Weaknesses
Existing legislation to support research and development	No long tradition of scientific and research institutions
Scientific-research projects in the protection of BD and SU of its components	Absence of a comprehensive research program for the conservation of BD and SU of its components and insufficient coordination and prioritizing of research
Enough qualified experts with opportunities for scientific education	Not using the synergistic opportunities within the activities of the UNFCCC-CBD-UNCCD
Existence of financial mechanisms to obtain support for small scientific projects	Low effectiveness in the use of existing scientific-research activities
	Absence of skilled managerial staff in science and research
	Insufficient financial resources to support participation of experts in education
	Absence of highly qualified experts in the field of environmental law, economy and policy able to solve practical legal and economic problems of the protection of BD

	and SU of its components
O/Opportunities	T/Threats
Increasing experience in accessing funding for the implementation of research projects (not from the state budget)	Gradual shift of young scientists abroad due to lack of motivation tools at the institutional level within the country
Increasing share of private resources in financing research activities	Insufficient monitoring of allocated resources
Implementation of research programs for the conservation of BD and SU of its components in the target countries for the development aid of Albania	Lack of competent teachers for environmental issues in schools as a result of low salaries in education sector
Supporting funds for environmental education and pilot projects	Continuous targeting environmental education for the knowledge on BD instead of explanation of its importance for sustainable development
Opportunity to use EU financial resources for science and research	
Existing formal and informal education in the field of biodiversity protection and SU of its components	

4.1.5. Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn

The extent and the quality of capacities for monitoring, reporting, evaluation and education influence the quality of planning and decision-making processes at all levels including the overall level of the CBD implementation. The existing concept of integrated environmental monitoring and information system as well as experts of high quality, are major capacity strengths.

The weak points are: (i) the absence of a comprehensive system for monitoring of BD status and trends; (ii) the lack of Sectoral Monitoring System as a consequence of insufficient resources (personal, financial and material) at the institutional level, and (iii) lack of monitoring methodology. Despite a remarkable increase in knowledge on the status of the country's biodiversity it has not been possible so far to define the baseline status of biodiversity, since generally accepted indicators are missing. The development of criteria and indicators for the species and habitats status, development of procedures to assess them for the purpose of implementing the Habitats and Birds Directives as well as the need to implement a comprehensive monitoring and reporting is seen as an important opportunity. The threat, however, is the continual marginal position of the biodiversity monitoring with underestimated financial and personal support caused by low political support due to low political support, demanding logistic and methodological challenges. This threat makes vulnerable also the existing activities in monitoring and assessment that has enabled the significantly implementation of the obligation of Albania in the framework of the accession process to the EU.

Table 4.5: SWOT analysis of a capacities to monitoring, evaluate, report and learn

S/Strengths	W/Weaknesses
Existence of the Concept of integrated environmental monitoring	Lack of a complex information system on BD and the lack (data bases and GIS)
Existing information system for environmental monitoring	Lack of a <i>clearing-house</i> mechanism
Information on <i>taxas</i> and habitats exists	Unclear mandate for particular institutions in the field of monitoring of BD
Components of BD important for the protection of BD and SU have been legally identified	Lack of financial, personal and material support for monitoring and assessment
Good level of inventorying of forest habitats	Non-compatibility of the input data provided by the involved institutions as a result of use of different methods for data collection
Development of criteria and indicators for assessing of selected BD components (habitats and species from the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive)	Lack of experts for several components of BD
Drafting of methods to monitor selected BD components	No documented base-line situation
Qualified experts in monitoring, assessment and reporting for most of the components of BD	Use of indicators of the status and trends of BD in planning and decision-making not in place yet.
Monitoring of selected processes that threaten BD	Difficulty in obtaining input data from the private sector
Data outputs from projects related with BD	Absence of an institutionalized reporting mechanism for the purpose of the CBD
	Insufficient opportunities for some issues of education on BD and SU of its components
O/Opportunities	T/Threats
Accession process to the EU membership and related obligations to monitor and report on the status of selected components of BD	Continuing underestimation of the importance of monitoring of BD
Making use of the synergy in global environmental conventions	Breaking the continuation of existing monitoring and assessment processes (forests, selected components of agro biodiversity, coastal and marine biodiversity, selected processes that threaten BD)
Development of informational technologies in the public sector with respect to the involved bodies	Not applying diversified mechanism to finance monitoring, assessment and reporting via several chapters of the state budget
Involvement of non-state sector into the monitoring and assessment of BD	Non-integration of capacities to halt irreversible loss of a significant part of autochthonous genetic sources

4.2. Key assets and needs in priority areas to strengthen and develop capacities

Commitments following from the CBD listed in Chapter 3 are summarized in the following areas and requirements:

4.2.1. Updating of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, integration of the considerations of conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components into the sectoral strategies and plans and the decision-making process.

4.2.2. Research, monitoring, assessment, reporting

4.2.3. *In-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation of biological diversity

4.2.4. Supporting sustainable use of biological diversity

4.2.5. Access to genetic resources and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources

4.2.6. Specific issues of biological safety in the field of safe transfer, handling and utilization of living modified organisms

4.2.7. Support for education and of public awareness on the causes and consequences of biodiversity loss.

Key assets and capacity development needs at all levels have been summarized according to the above listed objectives. They are presented in the tables below.

4.2.1. Updating of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, integration of the considerations of conservation of biological diversity conservation into the sectoral strategies and plans and the decision-making process

Table 4.6: Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Strategy and Action Plan for Protection of Biological Diversity developed and published. • Other sectoral strategies related with BD (forestry, fishery, agriculture, tourism, etc.) are developed. • Approximation of the national legislation to the EU legislation for the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of its components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To update the NBSAP and integrate indicators into the Strategy. • To integrate EP into the preparation of strategic documents and implementation. • To ensure coordination among sectors in the preparation and implementation of the conceptual and strategic documents, including use of information, financial and human resources. • To integrate the protection of BD and SU of its components into the sectoral strategies and decision-making process. • To expand continuous supports for education and training of experts for developing and implementing the policy and measures. • To expand continuous support for the ongoing monitoring and assessment of measures applied. • To produce cost estimations for the implementation of sectoral duties related with BD • To apply economic incentives to support protection of the biological diversity and sustainable use of its components 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of the valuation of the components of BD. • Insufficient coordination among sectors in the preparation of strategies and low level of integration of measures for protection of BD and SU of its components into the strategies, legislation and programs of the other sectors. • Continuing understanding of BD as a technical issue of the “nature protection” problem. • Lack of incentives limits integration of the protection of BD and SU of its components into the sectoral policies, strategies and implementation. • Lack of clear indicators to monitor implementation of relevant sectoral strategies and policies and integration of biodiversity into them. • Planning measures within strategic and political documents is not supported by providing resources for implementation. • Low human capacity within the MoEFWA and the relevant local agencies for planning and calculating in advance other sectoral duties.
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative structures to implement the CBD (NFP, NCNB). • Institutions with methodological, technical and scientific capacities to implement the CBD are available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To rehabilitate the activity of the NCNB. • To improve coordination and communication among existing structures for the UNFCCC and UN CCD, as well as for other conventions in the field of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop functioning of NCNB and National Secretariat for CBD had negative impacts on implementing the CBD commitments. • Low level of the coordination and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political will to improve institutional set up for BD protection and SU of its components is shown recently 	<p>protection of BD and SU of its components.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To set up the <i>clearing-house</i> mechanism. • To establish the National Secretariat for CBD. • To complete appointments of NFPs for specific CBD areas. 	<p>communication among cross-sectoral committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient connection between conceptual and strategic planning and planning at the institutional level has negative impacts on the effectiveness of implementation of strategies and policies. • Lack of financial support to improve institutional capacities.
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources to develop and implement strategic and conceptual documents in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components are available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To mobilize and use existing human resources in the planning and decision-making processes. • To support the mutual exchange of information and experience of employees in the field of planning and implementation. • To motivate employees to obtain higher qualification for planning in the protection of BD and SU of its components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient awareness and knowledge on the international conventions • Insufficient awareness and knowledge on the scope of issues of the CBD. • Insufficient knowledge of the importance of BD in the context of sustainable development. • Insufficient transfer of information development from agenda within the CBD into the national, regional and local levels. • Low level of motivation of employees and experts.

4.2.2. Research, monitoring, assessment and reporting

Table 4.7: Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept of the environmental monitoring, including Information system of Monitoring and Sectoral Monitoring systems. • Important components of BD and SU are legally identified. • Information system (databases) on <i>taxa</i> and habitats. • Monitoring of the health condition of forests. • Inventories of non-forest habitats (marine and coastal, wetlands). • Collection of data for forest management planning. • Criteria and indicators for the assessment of the conservation status of selected BD components. • Drafts of monitoring methods for selected species and habitats. • Mechanisms for financing research and small research projects • Concept of the state scientific and technical policy • Council of Ministers decree on Biodiversity Monitoring • The first national report on BD developed and published (1999). • The second national report on BD under development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To institutionalize the preparation of reports on the CBD. • To ensure a systematic support for comprehensive monitoring of BD (financial and human resources). • To improve coordination and the more effectively use of existing capacities in research, academic institutions, and in universities as well as in the private sector (information and human resources). • To identify priorities for research in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components, and to ensure financing. • To support integrated research for the Rio Conventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-estimation of the importance of the actual information on the status and trends of BD in the planning and decision-making. • Insufficient political and financial support to improve monitoring and reporting processes.
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research institutes active in research and monitoring of the changes of the environment are available. • Responsibilities are clearly stated by law and by the statutes of the institutions. • Accreditations as an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enlarge (to modify) the actual scope of research considering the CBD requirements. • To use official information resources to better promote activities and results of the private sector in the field of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically low level of cooperation among institutions. • State budget constrains cause shifting national priorities from BD to other areas of economy and social policy.

	<p>effective tool for monitoring of quality of institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations within the private sector that are research-oriented. 	<p>biodiversity research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen human and financial resources at the institutional level for monitoring and research of BD. 	
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent and experienced experts. • Potential to develop specialized scientific teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To motivate young experts to improved participation in the scientific-research programs in the field of protection of BD and SU of its components. • To expand training to managerial staff working in science and research. • To ensure specialists in the field of environmental law, economy, policy and communication oriented to practical problems of the protection of BD and SU of its components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging generation problem – young experts do not find it attractive to work in research and science compared to opportunities the private sector. • Lack of skilled middle age managerial staff in science and research. • Lack of specialists on selected taxonomic groups.

4.2.3. *In-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation of biological diversity

Table 4.8: Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on Biodiversity Protection • Law on Protected Areas • Network of protected areas being enlarged • national ECONET being created • Legal protection of species. • Red lists of endangered species. • Initiative of EMERALD network being implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued enlargement of the network of protected areas • Continued implementation of EMERALD network • To develop the national strategy for invasive alien species. • To develop the concept for the protection of the original breeds that are threatened with genetic erosion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To integrate the protection of genetic resources of forest tree species into the National program of protection of plant genetic resources. • National strategy for the <i>in-situ</i> protection of genetic diversity in populations of old plant varieties and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing supportive measures/tools to protect BD are not effectively used. • Weak system of legal enforcement. • Insufficient repressive tools for protection of BD and SU of its components. • Current legal and strategic tools deal only partially with the issue of invasive species. • Lack of understanding of the importance of protection of genetic diversity. • Low level of support to existing <i>ex-situ</i> conservation structures

		original breeds of the animals.	
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional network for the protection of BD <i>in-situ</i> and facilities or protection <i>ex-situ</i>, including facilities for protection of genetic diversity. • Network of gene bases, seed collection stands and seed orchards for protection of genetic diversity of the forest trees <i>in-situ</i> and <i>ex-situ</i>. • The gene bank of NSI meeting international standards to preserve genetic resources at the level of seeds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen current capacities of institutions (financial, material and human resources) so that they enable strengthening of both protection <i>in – situ</i> and <i>ex – situ</i>. • To improve effectiveness of institutions in the public sector for application of the protection <i>in-situ</i> and <i>ex – situ</i>. • To improve the use of support for protection of BD. • To strengthen communication with concerned stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to state budget constraints, priority is given to other than BD issues and this causes postponing the implementation of the CBD. • Communication with involved stakeholders is not sufficient.
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experts for protection of BD <i>in-situ</i> and <i>ex-situ</i> in the public and private sectors. • High level of enthusiasm and personal involvement of individual experts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare training for employees of the public sector in the field of the CBD. • To strengthen tools for the individual motivation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic motivation tools at the individual level are not effective, and opportunities of motivation rewards are limited. • Insufficient awareness on the broader scale of the CBD commitments.

4.2.4. Ensuring sustainable use of biological diversity

Table 4.9: Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NBSAP includes goals and strategic trends for sustainable use of the BD components. • The approximation of the national legislation with the EU is going on. • EIA for BD is legally stated. • Forest law recently amended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To integrate the planning of use of biological resources into physical/territorial planning • To achieve consensus on the values/prices of the BD components. • To implement the newly developed strategy of forestry sector • To support the promotion of BD (its values) in socio-economic programs. • To amend the law of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of political will to integrate a value/price of the BD into the national planning. • Weak system of legal enforcement • Lack of or weak application of integrated approaches to the use of biological resources. • Ineffective application of existing supportive mechanisms. • Insufficient application of

		<p>Hunting and wildlife protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To amend the law on Fishing • To develop the Act on sustainable tourism. • To develop a National program for protection of plants genetic resources for food and agriculture. 	<p>liability for damage to BD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No tradition of the application of indicators in assessments of the effects of utilization of biological resources.
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions exist in the public and private sectors that have the potential of sustainable use of the biological resources under condition of systematic supports. • Human and some information resources are available at the institutional level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure systematic support to motivate institutions for the SU of biological resources. • To improve effectiveness of managing the information resources. • To exchange information on existing best practices and to use incentives to promote sustainable use of BD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are not sufficient financial resources/ systematic support for motivation toward sustainable use. • Insufficient awareness of the concept of the SU of biological resources, missing examples of best practices. • There are no incentives for sustainable use practices
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified experts in the field of SU of biological resources are available. • Raising the level of education is possible in the form of PhD studies and specialized courses to obtain specific technical skills. • Modern information technologies enable access to information on best practices in the conservation of BD and SU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote training for managers in SU of biological resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic motivation tools are not effective at the individual level; opportunities for individual rewards are limited. • The majority of users of biological resources have not understood their values and opportunities of the application within socio-economic programs.

4.2.5. Access to genetic resources and fair sharing of benefits from utilization of genetic resources

Table 4.10: Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bonn guidelines oriented to the access to genetic resources, ownership and fair sharing of benefits arising from their utilization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To elaborate Bonn guidelines to the situations in Albania. To integrate the issue of Biosafety into the NBSAP. To improve human, financial and information resources at the system level in order to implement the Bonn guidelines. Continually harmonize national activities with policies and laws of the EU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak political support accorded to application of Biosafety issue. Low level of law enforcement and weak control on access and use of genetic resources.
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing institutions that have capacities for addressing issues of biosafety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve human, financial and information resources at the institutional level to implement Bonn guidelines both at supervising and application levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not clear mandates of institutions with respect to biosafety and lack of financial support are barriers for more systematic developing of capacities.
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experts in Biosafety are available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve human resources via running of training on biosafety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weak awareness on this particular CBD objective and unclear understanding of this concept is a barrier for more systematic developing of capacities.

4.2.6. Specific issues of biological safety

Table 4.11: Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A national program on Biosafety is being developed Albania has applied to be a party of the Biosafety Protocol. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify competencies for the biosafety among 3 ministries (MoEFWA, MoH, and MoAFCP). To define competencies among institutions in the field of biosafety and to optimize their activities at all levels. To improve the process of accreditation of institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The support to the protection of BD and related areas of the biosafety is often only formally declared, without more consistent implementation. Research and education are not adequately coordinated in practice.

		for addressing issues of biosafety.	
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic institutional framework with respect to biosafety is available. • Examples of quality evaluation and of management exist in some institutions. • Research and education in some universities (Tirana University, Agriculture University of Tirana) • Implementation and control methods in some research institutes within the MoAFCP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a national Biosafety clearing-house mechanism. • To increase educational capacities oriented toward better awareness of state officials in the field of biosafety. • To develop laboratories for assessment of risks related to GMOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of initiative and often insufficient experience with preparation of high quality proposals for new projects in the field of biosafety cause difficulties in participation of institutions into the projects financed from international resources. • Weakly defined competencies.
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned experts (for biosafety) are available and have the potential to improve their level of expertise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce specialized courses in universities and other educational institutions with accreditation for biological safety. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient number of experienced specialists does not allow for the solving of important questions of biosafety to a satisfactory level.

4.2.7. Support for education and raising of public awareness on causes and consequences of biodiversity loss

Table 4.12: **Identified assets, needs and limits of the capacity framework**

Level	Assets	Needs	Limits, barriers
Systemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of environmental education are integrated in conceptual and strategic documents. • Legal support for education of employees in the public sector. • Specialized events are organized for protection of BD and SU of its components that enable the exchange of information and experience. • NGOs having qualified experts participate in environmental education as well as in expert training. • Opportunity to use new information technologies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prepare a comprehensive strategy for training and education in the issues of BD and SU of its components at all the levels. • To create support tools at the systematic level (legal, regulatory and economic) in order to provide continuous training for managerial staff within sectors relevant to the CBD. • To ensure capacities for a system of continuous education of experts in all CBD issues. • To improve opportunities for grant support for the informal environmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources of individual sectors for education of the managerial staff are used according to the most urgent on-going priorities, rather than for systematic education. • Politically declared priorities of raising the qualification level of the society are not supported by measures that would enable improvement of capacities for education in protection of BD and SU of its components.

		education.	
Institutional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutions and organizations exist for formal and informal education in protection of BD and SU of its components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve institutional capacities in the area of financial, material and also human resources. • To ensure the opportunity for specialized university education at higher levels in the field of environmental law, economy, policy and communication that would be focused on the implementation of measures for the conservation of BD and SU of its components. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no committed positions for CBD within the institutions dealing with CBD.
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized experts to provide education are available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure systematic training-of-trainers. • To support access of the public to internet technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in specialized trainers due to low incentives including low compensations. • Lack of trainers with communication skills.

5.Recommendations

In Albania, capacities are available for implementing at certain extent provisions of the CBD and the Protocol on Biosafety. But there are still gaps. Generally, capacities for implementing the CBD have improved in recent years, in particular within the process of implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) recently signed with the European Union, which sets the conditions for the country's eventual accession to the EU. In some areas this has resulted in significant strengthening of capacities for implementing the CBD. It has to be stressed, however, that a major driving force for positive development has not been an ambition to improve implementation of the CBD, but rather an effort for successful and timely completion of the SAA negotiations with the EU.

With regard to system level capacities, it is necessary to revise the NBSAP taking into account the latest developments and the international agenda. The revised Strategy should include measurable implementation and impact indicators. The revised Strategy should be based on the ecosystem approach. It should integrate existing national strategic documents that had been developed in response to international BD related legal instruments. This will contribute to the overall clarification of the national strategic framework in the area of the BD.

Valuation of BD components should become a common practice and should be integrated into national planning and decision-making processes. At the same time this would affirm that the importance of biodiversity is not purely scientific or conservation, but rather it has an influence on overall quality of life.

In order to support integrated approaches to conservation of BD, it is important to improve and complement existing incentive measures and ensure the coordination of sectoral planning.

With regard to institutional level capacities, it is necessary to revitalize the operations of the National Council for Nature and Biodiversity and its Secretariat, considering its completion and restructuring. Simultaneously; the operations of the NCNB should also be restored in order to facilitate the transfer of information from the international to the national level as well as among sectors. The NCNB should meet regularly, while the system is put in place to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. The NCNB should be responsible for the preparation of the national reports to the CBD.

It is also necessary to complete the appointments of the National Focal Points and integrate them ex-officio into the activities of the NCNB. The responsibilities of the National Focal Points should include cooperation with all relevant bodies and agencies active in implementing of those commitments/ themes under the CBD, for which they have been appointed focal points.

The Clearing-house mechanism to promote and facilitate technical and scientific cooperation should be set up and the biosafety clearing-house should also be established. Government and public sector institutions should have timely, free of charge access to information that is needed for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components, particularly if the information is generated through public funds. It is also very important to improve the capacity of the institutions that are entrusted with monitoring of BD to enable them to generate up-to-date information in support of both decision making processes and assessing the impact of implementing strategic instruments and national laws.

At the individual level capacity, a continuous effort should be made to raise public awareness, while promoting and encouraging the understanding of the importance of biodiversity and biological resources, including production and non-production functions. Access to education and training in the measures required for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components should be facilitated of public sector employees. Less developed concepts for the commitments under the CBD such as the conservation of traditional knowledge on the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components, application of intellectual property rights over BD components and the liability for damages to BD should also be included in education and training programs. An increased level of information and education should be provided for decision makers at all levels – from the central to the local level. Formal and informal education on biodiversity should be integrated into the broader framework of sustainable development and all three Rio Conventions.

ANNEX 1B Thematic Profile on the Framework Convention on Climate Change

I. Methodological approach

This report developed for the purpose of the UNDP-GEF NCSA project consist on two moments: (i) assessment of the current capacity for dealing with the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and (ii) the assessment of the capacity needs for the implementation of the UNFCCC and participation to the Kyoto Protocol Flexible mechanisms.

The *assessment of the current capacity* has been done through a stocktaking exercise which consisted in the application of the following tools: (i) in-desk review of relevant documents; (ii) discussions among relevant stakeholders; (iii) interviews with stakeholders; (v) consultative meetings and minis-workshops.

The *assessment of the capacity needs* for the purposes of this report has been done in three levels: (i) individual level, (ii) institutional level and (iii) systemic level. Capacity development at the *individual level* refers to the process of changing attitudes and behaviours, imparting knowledge and developing skills while maximizing the benefits of participation, knowledge exchange and ownership. It aims to investigate “individual” responsibilities and interests in plans and decisions including personal incentives and expertise. Capacity development at the *institutional level* focuses on the overall organizational performance and functioning capabilities of the single institution, as well as its ability to adapt to change. It also covers the specific nature of the institution, its competences and financial transparency Capacity development at the *systemic level* covers the creation of a favourable political, regulatory and financial framework, in which individuals and institutions operate.

According to the UNDP/GEF Manual (1), indicators focus on the following functions:

- general knowledge
- national policy, legal and regulatory framework
- institutional mandates, coordination and interactions,
- cooperation of stakeholders
- management of institutions
- management of information, monitoring and observation
- mobilization of scientific information to support the decision process
- financial resources and technology transfer
- incentive systems and market instruments
- negotiation skills
- capability and motivation of individuals.

The thematic assessment of capacities was on the basis of the Strategic Areas of Support organized as per the following generic indicators:

- **Capacity to conceptualize and formulate policies, legislations, strategies, and programs.** This category includes analyzing global conditions that may affect country needs and performance in a given area, developing a vision, long-term strategizing, and setting of objectives. It also includes conceptualizing broader sectoral and cross-sectoral policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks, including synergies between global environmental conventions. It further contains prioritization, planning and formulation of programs and projects.

- **Capacity to implement policies, legislations, strategies, and programs.** This category includes process management capacities that are essential in the implementation of any type of policy, legislation, strategy and program. It also includes execution aspects of program and project implementation. It includes mobilizing and managing human, material and financial resources, and selection of technologies and procurement of equipment.
- **Capacity to engage and build consensus among all stakeholders** This category includes issues such as mobilization and motivation of stakeholders, creation of partnerships, awareness-raising and developing an enabling environment for civil society and the private sector, stakeholder identification and involvement, managing of large group process and discussion, including mediation of divergent interests, as well as the establishment of collaborative mechanisms.
- **Capacity to mobilize information and knowledge.** This category pertains to the mobilization, access and use of information and knowledge. It includes issues such as effectively gathering, analyzing and synthesizing information, identifying problems and potential solutions, as well as consulting experts and peers. It further covers specific technical skills including the capacity to carry out scientific and technical assessments.
- **Capacity to monitor, evaluate, report and learn** This category pertains to the monitoring of progress, measuring of results, codification of lessons, learning and feedback, and ensuring accountability to ultimate beneficiaries and partners. It also covers aspects such as reporting to donors and global conventions.

II Albania and the UNFCCC

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sets an overall framework for intergovernmental efforts to tackle the challenge posed by climate change. It recognizes that the climate system is a shared resource whose stability can be affected by industrial and other emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Under the UNFCCC, governments gather and share information on greenhouse gas emissions, national policies and best practices; launch national strategies for addressing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to expected impacts, including the provision of financial and technological support to developing countries; cooperate in preparing for adaptation to the impacts of climate change

Albania ratified the UNFCCC in October 1994, and it entered into force on January 1, 1995. As of January 2005⁶ Albania is also a Party to the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC. Albania holds the status of a non-Annex I party to both these legal documents. The national focal point for UNFCCC and CDM Designated National Authority belongs to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration of Albania.

The Government of Albania has taken considerable steps for the implementation of the UNFCCC such as preparing the First National Communication to the COP, the Technology Needs Assessment, and compiling the climate change NAP. In accordance with Article 4.3 of the UNFCCC, the Government of Albania has requested funding from the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to assist the country in preparing its FNC. So far Albania has finalised and submitted its FNC to the CoP 8 on October 2002 and has started the preparation of the SNC after the completion of the self-assessment exercise (stocktaking). The stocktaking process spurred the generation of essential information for preparing the project proposal for the SNC, which was the main output of this exercise.

According to the FNC Albania is a relatively low net emitter of greenhouse gases, with relatively low carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions per capita, mainly due to the fact that over 90 percent of electricity is generated by hydro-sources. The energy sector contributes more than 60 percent of total emissions. Relatively high CO₂ emissions per GDP are explained mainly due to high energy intensity. Based on the predictions for future emissions, if no GHG abatement measures are taken by 2020 total GHG emissions will be increased from 7,061.45 gig-grams (Gg) in 1994 to 37,653 Gg.

Although Albania does not have any commitments for GHG emission reduction, the NAP aims at reducing the growth rates of GHG emissions. The abatement scenario of emissions foresees the introduction and implementation of different options mainly focused on energy saving through energy efficiency measures and promotion of renewable energy sources. A tier of GHG mitigation measures for all GHG relevant sectors with a more significant focus on the energy sector has been proposed and evaluated in terms of many criteria. They consist not only of reduction potential, and cost and benefit, but also the contribution to poverty reduction and social welfare. Measures consist of thermal insulation in housing, efficient bulbs, solar thermal, LPG (cooking, heating), small hydro-power, fuel switching in industry, and others.

⁶ Albania's Parliament adopted Law No 9334 dated Dec. 16, 2004 on "Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol

The future climate scenario for Albania predicts changes such as increased temperatures, decreased precipitation and reduction of water resources and arable land. The most vulnerable area is Albania's coastal zone, while the most vulnerable sectors are water resources, agriculture energy and tourism. Future climate changes are expected to negatively impact the river flow, which in turn will affect the generation capacity of hydro-power plants. This is an issue that needs to be taken into consideration. The National Communication process has not only been considered as a tool for reporting to the UNFCCC but also for mainstreaming to national planning process and programming through the mobilization of new resources. Due to such efforts the National Energy Strategy (NES) has already integrated many findings and outputs from Albania's FNC and TNA.

II.1 Legal framework related to climate change in Albania

Albania has a strong body of laws aimed at environmental protection. According to the Constitution, every citizen in Albania is entitled to "an ecologically healthy environment for present and future generations" as well as "access to information on the state of the environment". The Constitution also requires the "rational exploitation of forests, waters and pastures based on the principle of sustainable development". The Law on Environmental Protection (1993, amended in 1998, 2002) forms the basis for environmental management. It addresses the prevention and reduction of pollution, sustainable management of natural resources, monitoring, how to define pollution levels. It provides binding provisions for environmental impact assessment and the implementation of the polluter pays principle.

A series of sectoral laws contain provisions for environmental protection, such as the law on water reserves, law on mining, and laws on regulatory entity of waste waters, hunting, forestry, soil, and urban planning. These are accompanied by a considerable number of normative acts.

In the context of the climate change issue, except of the laws on ratification of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol from the Albania's parliament there are no laws that address explicitly the issue of climate change. Because the energy sector emits a significant share of GHG emissions, the sector has been the focus of analysis and recommendations for climate change mitigation. In addition, the most relevant laws that relate to climate change are adopted under the energy sector. A legislative framework on energy in Albania comprises a relatively large number of different pieces of legislation at present. A more detailed analysis of the current legislation is given as follows:

- *Law on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Sources* (No. 9372 of April 27, 2005)

This is the most important law for climate change in general and GHG mitigation in particular. It focuses on promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation, creation of an energy efficiency fund, energy efficiency labelling, and promoting energy audits schemes. The purpose of this law is to create the legal framework required for the promotion and improvement of the efficient use of energy throughout the energy cycle. This law establishes the economical use of energy sources, the establishment of more reliable energy supply conditions, as well as the minimisation of impact on the environment

- *Law on Power Sector* (No. 9072 of May 2003)

This law abolishes the above law. It assures the conditions of electricity supply to consumers, efficient functioning of the electricity market and adjusts the power sector to market economy condition. The overall aim of the Law on Power Sector is to enhance the economic effectiveness and the quality of services for power generation, transmission and distribution and provide a transparent and comprehensive legal framework for the mentioned activities.

- *Law on Electricity* (No. 7962 of July 1995)

This law specifies the conditions for activities in the power sector and the rights and duties of all physical and legal persons involved in one of these activities. It also regulates the relationship between consumers and suppliers in terms of their basic duties and obligations. The law provides for operational and technical management of the power network as well as for connections to the grid and measurements of electricity.

- *Law on Regulation of Power Sector* (No. 7970 of July 1995)

This law prescribes the establishment of an Energy Regulatory Body (ERE) in the power sector and defines its duties. According to this law, ERE is responsible for tariff regulation and licensing in the power sector.

- *Law on Energy Conservation in Buildings* (No. 8937 of September 2002)

This law declares that the design and construction of buildings should meet the necessary technical parameters for conservation, saving and efficient use of energy. All buildings to be constructed so as to limit thermal losses, and provides thermal insulation of buildings and central or district heating schemes.

- *Governmental Decree for Energy Building Code*

The elaboration of the Energy Building Code began in 1998 based on the NAE in collaboration with the Albania-EU EEC and the other institutions of the sector. The Governmental Decree No. 38 of January 2003 approved it as the Norms, Rules and Conditions for Design and Construction, Production and Conservation of Heat in Buildings.

- *Governmental Decree for Strategy of Energy* (No. 424 of June 2003)

This governmental decree approves the National Strategy of Energy until 2015. According to the decree, the Ministry of Industry and Energy and the NAE are appointed to update this strategy every two years.

- *Law on Electrical Police* (No. 8637 of July 2000)

Based on this law, a specialised executive body for controlling the enforcement of legislation and use of electricity —the Electrical Police — was established. The purpose of such a structure is to monitor and punish abuses in the power sector, particularly with electricity consumption

There are other Laws that are relevant to the process of the GHG abatement technology transfer to the country. They are as follows:

- *Law on Foreign Investment:*

The Law covers any kind of foreign investment in Albania and specifies basic conditions for promotion and protection of foreign investments in Albania. The Law provides for non-discriminatory treatment, full protection and dispute settlement in accordance with international standards. According to Article 2 of

the Law on Foreign Investment no foreign investments are made prior to authorization. In addition the foreign investor has the rights to employ foreign citizens and to transfer all assets that are related to foreign investments out of the territory of Albania. A limitation to foreign investors is only imposed with respect to land ownership rights. Generally the Albanian Law on Foreign Investment is a tool that creates highly favorable conditions for the promotion of foreign investment.

- *Law on Concession:*

The Law defines the legal basis for domestic and private sector participation in the provision of public services and infrastructure through concessions and other arrangements (leasing, management contract, service contract, and so forth). Among other sectors of economy, the law covers also the whole energy sector.

- *Law on Free Zones:*

This Law assumes the creation of the free zones in which the investors are exempted from duties and taxes.

II.2 Policy framework related to climate change in Albania

Following the first National Environmental Strategy produced in 1993 with the assistance of World Bank and the National Environmental Action Plan finalized in 2002 and produced with the assistance of both PHARE and World Bank, the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Management assisted by EU CARDS Program has very recently produced the second National Environmental Strategy (NES) which is still at the draft phase awaiting approval. It is expected to be published by early 2007. The National Environmental Strategy (once approved) will be the basic document presenting the Government's policy and specific programs in the environmental sector. The NES is part of the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development and it is based upon National Plan for the EU Approximation of the Legislation, National Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Partnership Priorities and the existing sectoral strategies such as the ones on Transport, Agriculture, and Energy. The issue of climate change is addressed into that draft strategy through recommendations for the reduction of the growth rates of GHG emissions.

The analysis of the political framework relevant to the climate change mitigation lays also on energy sector due to its significant role towards emissions and potential for the reduction as well. A National Strategy for Energy has been drafted and approved in June 2003 by the Government of Albania according to Decision of the Council of Ministers, No. 424 dated. 26.06.2003. The National Energy Strategy *aims* at the restructuring the energy sector based on market economy principles and developing a modern energy policy. A detailed plan of action also adopted on 19 September 2003 by the Albanian Government follows this strategy.

The strategy for the development of energy sector is an essential part of the NSSD. The Energy Strategy considers the country obligations in the framework of the Regional Electricity Market in South East European countries, and international environmental conventions that Albania is a Party to, as well as the harmonization and converging of the energy sector development according to EU Directives for the association of Albania in the European family.

The strategy for the development of energy sector is a document that analyses and recommends the future changes, by the year 2015 that must be undertaken in the Republic of Albania, in order to increase the security of the energy supply and the optimization of the energy resources to meet the demand and achieve the sustainable development. It is the first national strategy, which address explicitly the environmental issues like greenhouse gas emissions and urban air emissions. Addressing the recommendations provided for the energy sector under the Albania's FNC is considered as a significant progress in mainstreaming the global environmental concerns into national sectoral planning and policy. This strategy is considered as an expression of the national demands which provides a sustainable development of the whole national economy and achieves in the meantime, the environmental protection during the whole cycle of the energy sources utilization.

The strategy is subject of the regular revision and update. In this context the process of the revision and update of the National Energy Strategy has begun.

III.3 Institutional framework for dealing with climate change in Albania

The national focal point for UNFCCC and the responsibility of the CDM Designated National Authority belongs to the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration of Albania through its Climate Change Unit.

At the start of the project in 1998, a Climate Change Unit was established in the Ministry of Environment (which has currently merged into the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration). This office serves not only for the UNDP/GEF project implementation but is responsible for the implementation process of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, specifically the operation of the DNA.

The [Climate Change Unit](#) at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration is staffed with 4 full time employees who, in addition involves 10 nationals hired in ad-hoc basis. The Unit is funded mainly by UNDP-GEF. Other contributions are mobilized every year in the form of co-financing, parallel financing or in kind. The contribution received from the Government from the state budget is getting increased every year. The Unit has three core technical teams, specifically GHG inventory; GHG mitigation and Vulnerability and Adaptation Team. The Team of GHG mitigation has started getting involved in the CDM exercise with the intention to build the appropriate capacities for identification, developing, and hosting CDM projects in Albania. A significant role on this regard has played the Ministry of Environment and Territory of Italy in the frame of the MOU signed under the Kyoto Protocol.

This Climate Change Unit collaborates with an inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional technical team with experts and representatives of other ministries and research institutions that carry out the duties stemming from the membership of the country of the Framework Convention on Climate Change⁷.

⁷ The Climate Change Unit has three groups of experts (Vulnerability, Abatement, and Inventory).

A Programme Steering Committee has also been established which oversees all projects and activities within the framework of the UNFCCC. This informal committee includes high-level participants from all major government and non-government stakeholders. A technical level national climate change team with three thematic working groups (on GHG emission inventories, GHG abatement measures and vulnerability and adaptation) has been established.

II.4 Major commitments under the UNFCCC

The ultimate objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate. By becoming a party to the UNFCCC, Albania has accepted a number of commitments which include, *inter alia*, to:

- develop, periodically update, publish and make national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol available to the COP;
- formulate, implement, publish and regularly update national and — where appropriate — regional programmes containing measures to mitigate climate change by addressing anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of all greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, and measures to facilitate adequate adaptation to climate change; and
- communicate information related to implementation of the UNFCCC to the COP, in accordance with Article 12.

II.4.1 Reporting to the UNFCCC through National Communications

Having the status of the non-Annex I country, Albania has accepted the commitment to produce national communications to the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC. Albania has lacked the financial resources to fulfil its obligation as a non-Annex 1 country of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol to prepare national communications to the COP. This has prompted the government of Albania to request assistance from UNDP/GEF, which was made available in 1998 through the project Enabling Albania to prepare its FNC to the CoP of the UNFCCC, and in 2004 through the Enabling Albania to prepare its SCN to the CoP of the UNFCCC project.

The preparation of Albania's FNC was the first accomplishment of the Government of Albania towards the COP. It was officially submitted to the UNFCCC secretariat in September 2002 and launched in November 2002 at COP 8 in New Delhi, India.

After the completion of the FNC, Albania secured “add-on” support from UNDP/GEF. Through this project, the climate change team that prepared the FNC prepared the TNA which provides a self-assessment of the national needs for both types of technologies: GHG abatement technologies and adaptation technologies. The above assessment consists of the prioritising of key abatement and adaptation technologies for GHG relevant sectors and coastal zones, under a set of evaluation criteria agreed by experts and stakeholders consulted. After the selection of key

technologies, a package of project proposals addressing each selected technology option has been developed.

II.4.1.1 National inventories of all GHGs

The first GHG emission inventory by sources and sinks for Albania is performed under the Albania's FNC project, Enabling Albania to prepare its FNC to the COP of the UNFCCC, which started in 1998 and was finalised in 2001.

The lead agency⁸ responsible for preparing the GHG inventory preparation is the Climate Change Unit/Programme, which relies on the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment of Albania. The Unit/Programme was established in 1998 when the GEF provided funds for the FNC. As the UNFCCC focal point, this unit is responsible for the implementation of the UNFCCC. To date, the unit/programme has mainly taken a project-based approach.⁹

Albania's first GHG inventory covers all sources and sinks as well as all gases as mandated by the respective Decision of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC. Albania's first GHG inventory considers five main modules — energy, industrial processes, agriculture, waste and LUCF — as guided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), revised in 1996. Solvents are considered as well. The national inventory considers three direct GHGs such as: CO₂, CH₄ and N₂O and three indirect GHGs such as: CO, NO_x, and non-methane volatile organic compounds (NMVOC). Estimates of key sources¹⁰ are provided as well. Also aggregated GHG emissions and removals expressed in CO₂ equivalent are provided. In addition, indicators such as CO₂/GDP and CO₂/capita are estimated mainly for comparability purposes. Estimates for Albania's first national GHG inventory are made for the base year 1994. Time series (1990-1994) are used only for the category of CO₂ emissions from fuel combustion.

The estimates of GHG emissions and sinks are performed according to the 1996 revised IPCC Guidelines. In addition, the IPCC Good Practice Guidance is used for the uncertainty assessment¹¹ and key source estimates. The solvent category follows the Co-ordinated Information on the Environment in the European Community (CORINAIR). The methods elaborated for Albania's GHG inventory were labelled "Tier 1" and "Tier 2." Emissions of carbon dioxide released from energy and transport are estimated through two approaches: the top-down and bottom-up approach.

All activity data concerning each sector are national. The main activity data source/provider is the Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), although it does not provide activity data for GHG inventory purposes according to the IPCC nominations. Other Data providers/sources are the National Agency of Energy, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Energy and Industry, Ministry of Transport, the National Directorate of Forestry, Taxation Department, Costumer Offices and

⁸ The designation "lead agency" implies that the agency has overall responsibility for the inventory and that the agency carried out most, or all, of the following duties: coordination/compilation of the national inventory; archiving of relevant national data; periodic updating of the inventory; documentation of the selection process for national activity data, emission factors and other conversion factors; documentation of methods and assumptions used; validation of conversion units and other data; verification of inventory estimates; compilation of the inventory report; and reporting to international bodies.

⁹ For more information visit the national climate change homepage: <www.ccalb.org>.

¹⁰ A key source category is one that is prioritised within the national inventory system because its estimate has a significant influence on a country's total inventory of direct GHGs, in terms of the absolute emissions level and trend.

¹¹ The Monte Carlo method is used for uncertainty estimates.

different databases, surveys and studies prepared by international organisations (e.g. the World Bank, UNDP, EBRD, and EIB), universities and different NGOs. As regards emission factors, in most cases they represent default factors provided by the IPCC 1996 Revised Guidelines. An exception is made in two cases only: emissions released from fuel consumption in small industrial boilers and emissions from burning of fuel wood in household stoves. Most of the emission factors used in estimates do not reflect the Albanian situation.

The major technical constraints faced by the GHG inventory process is related to the activity data gaps and use of IPCC default emission factors that do not reflect the country situation.

Activity data gaps identified for Albania's first GHG inventory are mainly related to the availability of data (disaggregated activity data or inconsistency with the IPCC format) and their variability after the 1990s. In most cases, activity data reported were in an aggregated form or inconsistent with the IPCC format, which made estimating emissions exceedingly difficult. Most of the activity data are characterised for their variability after the 1990s, when the country entered a period of rapid development. In the course of these years, sectors like transport, agriculture, industry and waste, underwent drastic change. In addition, the problem of data gaps becomes significant in those cases when the missing ones are key sources, such as mobile combustion, enteric fermentation, fuel combustion in industry, fuel wood burned for energy purposes, and solid waste treatment.

The overall uncertainty estimated for Albania's first GHG inventory was 17.03 percent,¹² of which the CO₂ equivalent emissions from fuel wood contribute 79.23 percent. This comes especially from the large degree of uncertainty of activity data for this subcategory (especially from fuel wood self-collected from rural areas).

Attempts to improve the quality of the GHG inventory started on June 2002 through the UNDP-GEF regional project Building Capacities to Improve the Quality of the GHG inventories in East Europe and CIS. The goal of this project is to build on the inventory work undertaken for the first FNC in preparation for SNC, aimed at creating sustainable technical and institutional capacity. The progress made so far under this project consists of strengthening national arrangements for compiling, archiving, updating and managing GHG inventories.

Albania's system of GHG inventory is under the process of documentation. A national inventory report along with the manual of procedures has been drafted. The archiving of data and estimates is under way. A national strategy aimed at improving the quality of GHG inventories has been drafted. The strategy focuses on activity data collection and identification of methods/approaches for reducing the gaps.

A plan that can be put into place for SNC has been developed. It consists of the development of a methodology for filling in gaps, and would be implemented during the SNC's preparation. Survey method stands at the heart of the methodology for filling the activity data gaps for those categories which do not exist.

The second GHG inventory will be done under the project Enabling Albania to prepare its SNC to the COP of the UNFCCC. The project started in March 2005 and is expected to last three years. The GHG inventory will be carried out according of the new UNFCCC guidelines, specifically those adopted by the 8th session of the CoP of the UNFCCC (17/CP8) on National

¹² The combined uncertainty reported under Albania's FNC is found to be higher (19 percent). The above value of 17.03 percent is a corrected one estimated after the peer reviews of the GHG inventory.

Communication from non-Annex I countries. Albania's second national GHG inventory will cover all sources and sinks as well as all gases as mandated by 17/CP.8. Therefore it will consider three direct GHGs: CO_2 , CH_4 and N_2O and other indirect GHGs such as: CO , NO_x , SO_x and $NMVOC$. In addition, estimates of $HFCs$, $PFCs$ and SF_6 will be provided, not reported under the Albania's FNC. Emissions released from *bunker fuels* will be estimated and reported separately as instructed by the guidelines. Estimates of the *key sources*, *sensitivity analysis* and *uncertainty level* will be provided. The second GHG inventory will report on estimates of aggregated GHG emissions and removals expressed in CO_2 equivalent. In addition, indicators such as CO_2/GDP and $CO_2/Capita$ would be estimated mainly for comparability purposes.

Estimates for Albania's second national GHG inventory shall be made for the *base year 2000*. Re-estimates for the year 1994 will be made as well. Given the variability of activity data after '90s the team has agreed to develop *time series for a 10-year time frame (1994-2000)* in order to provide a clear view of the emission trends. This will also create a clear background for the abatement analysis. A special attention will be given to the key source categories and a sensitivity analysis is needed to be done in order to see how / whether the key sources have changed. Therefore priority will be given to the key source categories such as *enteric fermentation* [22%]; *fuel wood burned for energy purposes* [21%]; *fuel combustion in industry* [14%]; *fuel combustion in transport* [11%], waste [4%] which totally make around 72 %.

Improved estimates of GHG emissions are expected mainly due to the majority of outputs of the GEF regional project on GHG inventories. *Soft methodology* for filling the activity data gaps that do not exist already developed under the GEF regional project on GHG inventories will be utilized under SNC phase. This will be critical for the implementation of the GHG inventory improvement strategy, already drafted under the above project. In addition, the Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) plan drafted under the regional project will be implemented as well.

As regards *emission factors*, in most of the cases default factors provided by IPCC 1996 Revised Guidelines will be used. The team will see the possibility to use Emission factors calculated under other studies / projects/ programs like the case of industrial boilers or wood stoves. In addition, Emission Factor Database will be visited to see if appropriate factors relevant to our circumstances are provided. Also regional Emission Factors that are or will be developed under the GEF regional project on GHG inventories will be utilized if appropriate.

All the new input data utilized along with emission estimates will be *archived* using the same format as for the first inventory archive done under the GEF regional project on GHG inventories. Also the *Manual of Procedures* and *National Inventory Report* developed under the above project will be updated in the same line.

II.4.1.2 National policies and measures to abate GHG emissions

The first GHG emission abatement analysis for Albania is performed in the frame of Albania's FNC. This analysis consists of developing two GHG scenarios: a GHG baseline scenario and a GHG abatement scenario. Projections for Albania's GHG abatement are made for 1994-2020. Projections of GHG emissions performed for Albania are sector-specific. They are built up for all GHG source categories: energy and transport; LUCF; agriculture; waste; industrial processes and solvents. The development of both scenarios was made by utilizing a number of assumptions

based on the macro-economic projections of the country as a whole, as well as in the development plans of the economic sectors taken in particular.

Given that the baseline GHG emissions scenario forecasts the most significant share of CO₂ emissions [83 percent] will be released from energy and transport activities, the team decided to analyse the energy and transport sectors in detail, i.e. quantitatively, and not simply qualitatively, as the other sectors.

The abatement GHG emissions scenario combines the emissions in the baseline scenario (reference scenario) with the changes (i.e. reductions) in emissions introduced by various abatement options being evaluated. The selection of measures for the energy and transport sectors was made taking into account the actual situation of the energy sector in Albania, as well as key sources of GHG emissions and reference scenarios of GHG emissions for the energy and transport sectors.

The GHG abatement measures and technology options identified under Albania's FNC have undergone a prioritisation process through Albania's TNA exercise carried out under the Top-Up phase of Climate Change Enabling Activities.

The TNA was a continuation of the work carried out or identified/recommended under Albania's FNC and through other activities to enhance technology transfer. This assessment of technology needs has been made through a sector-by-sector approach, starting with the energy sector which, according to the Albania's FNC makes the most significant contribution to the overall GHG emissions inventory. The assessment also covers other sectors such as LUCF, agriculture, waste management and industrial processes.

Using the compiled information on alternative technologies for the priority sectors and sub-sectors and based on the ranking of the alternative technologies, the top three to four technologies are considered as key ones for most of sectors under assessment. Once the key technologies are selected, the barriers will be assessed, along with the policy needs and actions. A package of project ideas for the key technologies is designed.

The software used for the development of energy and transport baseline emissions scenario was Long-range Energy Alternatives Planning (LEAP) (version 95.0). Concerning the non-energy sectors, the 1996 revised IPCC methodology is used for the development of baseline emission projections, although an exception is made for the solvent use sector. The predictions for NMVOC emissions by the year 2020 are made according to CORINAR methodology. The development of GHG abatement analysis for energy and transport is based on LEAP and GACMO¹³ software. For the other sectors, the analysis is more qualitative (quantitative analysis was not possible).

Base year data (from 1994) for the development of the GHG baseline scenarios are identical to those of the GHG inventory. Data for other years (1994-2000) and predictions on macro-economic indicators were received from INSTAT and other relevant institutions/ministries already mentioned in GHG inventory section.

¹³ GACMO is a GHG costing model developed at the UNEP Center for Energy and Environment.

Having the GHG inventory as the starting point for the GHG abatement analysis and given the data gaps related to this inventory, gaps and uncertainties of the same nature were present to the abatement analysis exercise as well. Therefore attempts to reduce data gaps and the level of uncertainty under the GHG inventory will in turn bring more accurate abatement analysis, i.e. more realistic predictions. The team lacked the necessary data to perform quantitative analysis for some technology options, such as: central heating (CH) schemes; district heating systems (DHS); small scale combined heat and power (CHP) and DHS in new urban areas.

Another gap was related to the programming issue. In other words, in the course of the preparation of the Albania's FNC sector-specific scenarios and related national strategies, and programmes were not available for the sectors that were under the focus of the GHG abatement analysis. This is not the case for the time being. Many new strategies and actions plans have recently been adopted by the Government of Albania that will impact GHG abatement in Albania, and therefore both scenarios (baseline and abatement) need to be updated and improved. Abatement analysis is a component of the national communication that follows the GHG inventory. It could be done right after the completion of the GHG inventory, which serves as the starting point of the analysis. In Albania's case the GHG inventory developed for 1994 served as the starting point for the baseline scenario of GHG emissions. The analysis consists of the development of two scenarios: baseline and abatement. The analysis of scenarios brings the package of measures and technologies to be developed in order to reduce (abate) the GHG emissions.

Albania has addressed the mitigation and adaptation measures through the National Climate Change Strategy, which consists of a set of priorities for action in order to integrate climate change concerns into other economic development plans. This strategy is elaborated in the frame of Albania's First National Communication. The abatement scenario of emissions foresees the introduction and implementation of different options mainly focused on energy saving and energy efficiency measures. A basket of 25 GHG mitigation measures for the energy and transport sector is proposed in the frame of this study, which are then analysed in terms of cost and benefit. Even the rate of penetration is calculated. The above measures consist of the thermal insulation in housing, efficient bulbs, solar thermal, LPG (cooking, heating), small schemes SHP, fuel switching in industry, etc. More information on the GHG inventory can be found in Albania's FNC report. These measures are addressed in the National Climate Change Action Plan, which is a part of the revised National Environmental Action Plan already adopted by the Government of Albania.

In terms of resource mobilisation, the package of project ideas was developed under the TNA exercise. Two projects have been sent to GEF for funding and seem to be successful (one is a project on Market Transformation for Solar Thermal Water Heating in Albania). GEF has recently approved the Project Development Facility, Block B (PDF B) . Another project on building adaptive capacities for representative vulnerable system is under way. The rest of the project idea notes serve as a good background for the potential project to be carried out under the CDM.

The GHG abatement analysis to be carried out under the SNC will be sector – specific, i.e. it will consider the following sectors: *energy, agriculture, waste, LUCF, industrial processes and solvents*. A special attention will be put under the *energy and transport sector* as significant contributors to the GHG emissions, already considered as priority categories under this thematic area.

The Baseline Scenario developed under the Albania's FNC will be *subject of revision, update and adjustments* in accordance with the new development conditions of the country and possibilities for future socio-economic development. The GHG inventory base year 2000 will serve as the starting point of the GHG analysis. The GHG abatement analysis will go up to 2025, i.e., 5 years beyond the analysis carried out under FNC. There is also a need to update and revise all *details and assumptions* made. Assuming to have better and more improved GHG inventory due to data improvement, better inputs from more comprehensive national economic development parameters, more accurate assumptions for economic and demographic parameters, which are based from their side on the macro-economic projections of the country as a whole, as well as in the development plans of the economic sectors, more reliable and improved GHG scenarios for all relevant sectors will be developed.

The list of abatement options proposed for the abatement scenario for each sector will be *reviewed and updated* in the light of new developments and needs. Key sources identified and updated under the GHG inventory exercise will be considered while making the selection of technology options. The impact of specific emission reduction actions / options will be measured (quantitative at the possible extend) against the baseline scenario. The cost and benefit will be analyzed.

Once the options have been identified, barriers assessed there is a need to select them for short and long term interventions. This process involves revisiting of priorities identified earlier in the light of barrier analysis. In the course of the selection process the team agreed to consider two distinct Tiers of options/measures

- *Win-win* options /measures that could be deliver / implement faster, cheaper and easier.
- In a longer term, new options will become available which need significant resources and efforts.

The scenarios for energy, including transport sector will be still based on LEAP 2000 Software (the latest version). As per other sectors the team will explore on the possibility to utilize appropriate models/ software such as STAIR or COPATH for Agriculture if will be made available. IPCC Excel Spreadsheets will be utilized in case that no specific software will be available. Selection of abatement options will be done though a multi criteria analysis. For that purpose criteria will be set and a selection process will be done based in the scores. Type and respective weight for each criterion will be decided through consultations with different stakeholders and scores for each option will be found

II.4.1.3 Assessment of the vulnerability and adaptation measures

The very first assessment of Albania's climate vulnerability and adaptation options has been carried out under UNEP/Mediterranean Action Plan in 1995. The study has been very modest and covered the Albania's coastal area only. This assessment performed under IPCC guidelines of 1994 consisted on study of the expected climate changes and their impact to the relevant sectors. A more completed assessment of vulnerability and adaptation has followed the first one. It was one of the main activities carried out under Albania's FNC project. This study covered *the overall Albanian territory*. It was focused on the assessment of expected climate impacts in *hydrosphere*,

natural and managed ecosystems, energy, tourism, health and sanitation, population. Official districts have been considered as base units, constrained within available data.

The overall work performed under Albania's FNC to assess the vulnerabilities has consisted on: (i) Evaluation of climate variability and trends during baseline period; (ii) Analysis of environmental and socio-economic situation in the absence of climate change; (iii) Development of climate change scenarios for Albania; (iv) Projections of environmental situation affected by climate change. (v) The factors that are directly affected by climate (such as river flows, runoff, energy needs, etc.) (vi) Projections of socio-economic situation affected by climate change.

As a climatologic baseline a 30-years '*normal period*' as defined by WMO has been accepted. The period 1961-1990 is selected as a *baseline* to study the influence of climate on the relevant sectors. Three time horizons were considered: years 2025, 2050 and 2100. Although the year 2100 was fixed as upper horizon, in some cases such as in social-economic assessments, projections were not reliable for more than a few years ahead. For these cases (energy, population, etc.) the team has considered the year 2025 as the upper level. For others (natural ecosystems, forestry, etc.) that have longer response, the vulnerability assessment has been extended up to 2050 and 2100 horizons.

A long list of sector-specific adaptation options is developed by taking into account two main objectives identified, as following: (i) promotion of sustainable development, and (ii) the reduction of vulnerability (IPCC 1994).

In the course of the Top-Up phase the adaptation team has been focused on TNA for coastal adaptation, already assessed as the most vulnerable under the Albania's FNC. The assessment process was sector – specific one and has consisted on the review the evaluation for technology for the following sectors: (i) *water resources*, (ii) *agriculture*, (iii) *forestry*, (iv) *human health*, (v) *tourism and settlements*.

Using likely the same criteria as for abatement technologies 2-3 top adaptation options / technologies have been considered as key ones. Once key technologies were selected, barriers were assessed along with actions needed. Concrete actions were proposed in the form of the project ideas.

The assessment of vulnerabilities and adaptation options is carried out in accordance with the IPCC guidelines (IPCC, 1994). The scenarios of likely climate change for Albania were prepared by using MAGICC/SCENGEN software as recommended by NCSP.

A variety of analytical methods in climate impact assessment (CIA) have been selected. Among others, worth mentioning were: experimentation, impact projections, empirical analogue studies and expert judgment. The LEAP model has been used to evaluate the likely impact of climate change in energy. A simple statistical model has been used in the runoff assessment. For the other sectors, statistical models were developed or empirical analogues have been used (regional analogies of present climate and regional analogies of future climate). The need to use socio-economic scenarios or integrated system models were highly stressed.

All climatologically data have been received from the Hydro-metrological Institute. Data regarding relevant sectors were received from other relevant institutions/ministries like National Agency of Energy, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Energy and Industry, Ministry of Transport, the National Directorate of Forestry, and different data bases, surveys and studies prepared by International organizations, Universities and different NGOs.

In the course of the preparation of the SNC project proposal the expert team agreed to narrow the focus of the assessment to be carried out under the SNC to an area with subset of vulnerabilities, where there is both high vulnerability and a likelihood of significant impacts of climate change

and vulnerability. The focused area along with the sectors under analysis will comprise a compound system that will be under the focus of analysis. Three specific areas have been analyzed under the stocktaking exercise. They are (i) Drini river Cascade; (ii) Shkumbini River Basin (8th corridor); (iii) Durres-Kukes Highway

A set of selection criteria of equal weight was developed and agreed through the broad consultations with stakeholders. The *selected area* is wide spread, from east to west of Albania putting together an interesting topographic diversity such as mountains, gorges, fields, coast, seashore. The Drini River cascade originates from Kukës up to the coast, to its delta (Lezha). Design of an Adaptation Policy Framework (APF) for the selected area will be the main outcome of the vulnerability and adaptation exercise under the SNC. This will facilitate the process of mainstreaming the climate vulnerability and change and adaptation response to the national planning and policy.

The team has agreed the assessment of vulnerability will be sector –specific and will consider the following related sectors, such as: (i) *water resources*; (ii) *agriculture*; (iii) *energy*; (iv) *forestry*; (v) *tourism*; (vi) *population and settlement*. A special attention will be put to water resources and their respective impact to the hydroelectricity produced, as it is known that more than 95% of electrical energy in Albania is produced from hydro sources. Climate change is expected to affect seasonally the amount and flow of rivers, which in turn is expected to affect electricity supply generated annually by hydroelectric and its timing. An assessment will be done on of the impact of climate change to the electrical energy supply for the selected area. The hydropower cascade of Drini River has a total exploitable capacity of 1.7 GW and a generation potential of 6.8 TWh, accounting for the bulk of Albania’s hydroelectric potential.

The assessment will integrate also other sectors like agriculture (irrigation systems and cereals production), forests (erosion) etc, as it is known that adaptation in one sector often has consequences for others therefore, an integrated assessment will be done at the extend possible. The area has potential resources from the economic development point of view (agriculture, livestock, mining, tourism, etc.). The Shengjini beach is well known for its attractive touristy values especially during the summer time. The selected area brings together diverse *demographic processes* and *social phenomena*, such as unemployment, poverty, emigration, social conflicts, etc. In some sub-areas extreme cases of such infant mortality, poverty, rural and exodus are observed. The coastal part of the selected area Lezha field (plain) is known for inundations after heavy rains that are becoming more and more frequent. These evens that are registered as extreme ones have caused serious damages mainly in agriculture, tourism and settlement. Lack of infrastructure in this area has triggered the situation.

The emphasis will be put on the current conditions i.e. current *climate risk and vulnerability* and on this basis the future vulnerability will be predicted. This part of the assessment also includes an assessment of the scope and effectiveness of adaptation measures that may have been implemented. Three baselines will be developed for the selected area: (i) climate baseline; (ii) environmental baseline and (iii) socio-economic baseline.

Current vulnerability and climate impact to sectors will be assessed through the use of some indicators: For the climate system the indicators will be temperature (seasonal), precipitation

(seasonal), wind, cloudiness and sunshine duration. The average change in mean runoff will be selected as the main indicator for water resources. For energy sector the main indicators would be of energy demand and supply. Forests area and eroded land would be the main indicators to assess the forests sector. Plant production, irrigation systems, cattle breeding poultry production and would be as indicators for agriculture/livestock. Coastal tourism under the selected will be assessed in terms of the impact of the sea level rise and the rise of temperatures. Settlements will be assessed in terms of impact of droughts and flooding into inhabitant's wellbeing.

Designing of an Adaptation Strategy Paper based in Adaptation Policy Framework (APF) for the selected area will be the main outcome of the vulnerability and adaptation exercise under the SNC. This will facilitate the process of mainstreaming the climate vulnerability and change and adaptation response to the national planning and policy. The strategy paper will outline adaptation measures and plans of implementation (what); the way of implementation and resources needed (how); time frame (when); responsible parties for its implementation (who). It will serve as the basic document that will create the momentum for a follow-up of this process, i.e. addressing climate variability and change to the national planning and policy.

II.4.1.4 Public awareness and communication on climate change

Public awareness, exchange of information and communication are important components that are crosscutting to the entirety of attempts undertaken by Albania to implement the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol. Efforts to raise awareness on climate change have contributed positively to the climate change mainstreaming process.

Despite the increasing public awareness activity regarding environmental issues in general, the issue of climate change in Albania is still relatively dormant, and even at the level of policy makers one does not find a very good understanding of the climate changes and the related issues.

The preparation of Albania's FNC is the first step in the fulfillment of the country's commitments under the UNFCCC. These comprehensive results of the conducted work under the frame of this document show that awareness raising and intensified education and training on that issue are very important, in order to expect effective implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan and meeting obligations to the convention.

Prior to the start up of the GEF project on National Communication preparation no any public awareness on climate change activities has been carried out in Albania. Although the raising of public awareness is not the immediate objective of the GEF project on National Communication preparation the FNC process has positively contributed to awareness raising among all stakeholders, enhancement of knowledge on climate change related issues, strengthening of the dialogue, information exchange and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders including governmental, non-governmental, and academic and private sectors; and building national capacities.

The project Steering Committee meetings and joint efforts of ensuring the support from the governmental institutions for the project, have served as a way of raising awareness among policy makers who represent different climate change institutions. These policy makers are expected to also provide support for the adoption and implementation of the National Climate Change Action Plan. The workshops organized under the GEF project on National Communication preparation have contributed to the same purpose of awareness rising.

While working with UNDP Albania as the implementing agency for climate change projects funded by GEF, all climate change project activities have been aligned with the UNDP country office policy and mission which consists on reaching the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and responding to other national priorities through the human development approach. Albania is a pioneer country in the preparation of a national MDGs monitoring report in Europe. As a consequence of a participatory process, the GHG reporting is integrated as a part of the MDG reporting system - the main GHG inventory indicators are integrated into the MDGs monitoring indicators, making the MDGs targets and indicators more country specific and measurable. Also the majority of the MDGs are used as tools /criteria for prioritization of technology needs for GHG mitigation. The Government of Albania is now for the first time including the MDGs into national planning monitoring and evaluating system. In this context, the climate change strategy and related indicators are successfully addressed in the newly adopted National Energy Strategy, which is a part of the NSSD (National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development). This progress came also as a consequence of a broad participatory process and stakeholder consultation.

The publication of the main results and findings of the Albania's FNC in the recent State of Environment Report (SoE) as well as inclusion of the Climate Change Action Plan into the revised National Environmental Action Plan are indicators of a higher level of awareness among the environmental policy makers. The establishment of the National Climate Change Web Page has played an effective role in rising awareness about climate change.

To assess the level of public awareness and other relevant components addressed under Article 6 of the UNFCCC, a survey has been carried out under the *Article 6* Project funded by United Nations Environment Program.

The purpose of the survey was to assess: the level of knowledge regarding Climate Change issues, UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol in Albania which will serve as basis for a national strategy formulation comprised of flexible country-driven actions addressing specific needs required for implementation of the Article 6 of UNFCCC in Albania;

The survey was conducted to assess the needs and requirements for implementation of the Article 6 of UNFCCC. The method used in the survey comprises in-depth interviews through personalized questionnaires. A total of six hundred (600) questionnaires were administered and data collected were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

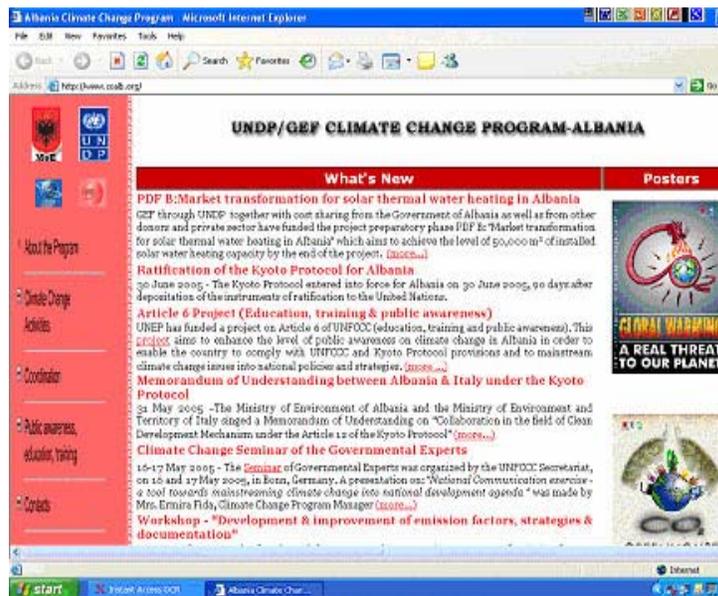
The target group of the questionnaire was different stakeholders coming from public sector, private sector and NGOs. Different categories have been targeted. These categories belong to sectors that are affected or affect the climate change such as energy, transport, industry, agriculture, land use change and forestry and waste.

Based on the survey a general conclusion derives: More than half of the public is not aware on climate change and its threats. A higher share belongs to those who do not know about Albania's position, institutions and accomplishments under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol.

The results of the survey show that despite of the efforts made on awareness and communication, training and education related to climate change, there is a need for additional major interventions. This will start with a communication strategy on climate change issues which after its implementation stage will bring change to our behavior and way of doing things. Climate change is a global problem; however each of us has the power to make a difference. Even small changes in our behavior can help prevent greenhouse emissions without affecting our quality of

life. Because reducing our greenhouse gas emissions will require changes to the way we produce and use energy. And this can save us money.

Public awareness and outreach has been designed as a cross-cutting component during the overall climate change activities carried out by the Climate Change Unit/Programme. A national climate change web page www.ccalb.org designed in 2000 is updated on a monthly basis. In addition, seminars, trainings, posters and newspaper articles have been produced and interviews have been given in the media over the years.



A strategy of partnership with governmental institutions, international organisations, academia and NGOs has been implemented and found to be successful. The role of the Project Steering Committee has been critical to the success of this strategy. Among the partners involved under the process those to whom the collaboration has been strong and successful have been the Ministry of Energy and Industry, National Agency of Energy, Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Polytechnic University of Tirana, Institute of Hydrometeorology, Institute of Biological Research, Institute of Statistics, ECAT-Tirana, and Energy and Environment for Sustainable Development (NGO).

UNEP *has been recently* implementing a project in Albania in support of [UNFCCC Article 6](#), which includes, *inter alia*, assistance to countries to raise public awareness on climate change, to involve local stakeholders in a dialogue on a perspective national climate strategy, to approach various target groups on climate change issues, and to disseminate up-to-date materials on climate change problems. This project aimed to enhance the level of public awareness on climate change in Albania in order to enable the country to comply with UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol provisions and to mainstream climate change issues into national policies and strategies. A country assessment on the level of the awareness on climate change issues *has been* carried out *through a survey which* has served as basis for a communication strategy formulation comprised of flexible country-driven actions addressing specific needs required for implementation of the

Article 6 of UNFCCC in Albania. The survey consisted in-depth interviews through personalized [questionnaires](#). Gathering of primarily data has mainly been done through interviews of representative sample of different stakeholder groups.

A total of six hundred *600 questionnaires* were administered and data collected were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. 500 questionnaires, out of 600 questionnaires were distributed in Tirana city; the capitol of Albania and the rest of 100 were administered in the main prefectures of the country through the network of Regional Environmental Agencies. Different national stakeholder consultative meetings were conducted to seek comments, suggestions, identify needs, barriers and gaps for the purpose of the development and validation of a communication strategy at the end.

Given that no previous assessment on climate change has been previously made it was agreed to start with interviewing climate change related stakeholders and expanding the *target group* towards a wider group that of environmental related stakeholders. The target group of the questionnaire covers different stakeholders coming from categories of public sector, private sector and NGOs. Different sub-categories have been also targeted which belong to sectors that are affected or affect the climate change such as energy, transport, industry, agriculture, land use change and forestry and waste. Environmental protection and others have also been included as sub-categories.

A report on the findings from the survey along with a summary of the findings from the survey has been elaborated from the EESDC and posted in the national climate change web page: <http://www.ccalb.org/>

As indicated under the [conclusions of the survey](#) carried out with the purpose to assess needs and requirements for the implementation of Article 6 of the UNFCCC, there is a clear need for an intensified public awareness in the field. The summary of survey results reveal that almost 46% of the people interviewed, when asked about when and how Albania will be affected by climate change, said that they do not believe that a temperature increase has happened due to climate change impact. On the other hand, the survey shows that 77,1% of the interviewees think that Albanian citizens are able to actively participate in climate change policy-making, which leaves room for interventions that would make the population more active in terms of climate change issues. Another interesting finding of the survey is that 80% of the respondents think that a public awareness campaign will increase public awareness among parliamentarians and the public at large.

Based upon the current situation of the Article 6 related activities which serves as the baseline and, the findings from the national survey carried out, a Communication Strategy has been drafted. This practical communication strategy explicitly focuses on the role that information and communication can play in empowering interested parties to strengthen the level of understanding and awareness on the issues of climate change and the Article 6 through the effective usage of media and public information activities. The strategy highlights the fact that the genuine involvement and participation can only occur if the information needs of all citizens (including those at the margins of societies) are met and the voices of those most affected by development decisions are heard.

This communication strategy *aims* at generating awareness on the climate change issues in Albania with a special emphasis on the Kyoto Protocol benefits and obligations. Its goal is not only to raise visibility in this direction, but also to mobilize new partnerships in order to achieve a higher degree of general awareness and encourage actions to be taken by all stakeholders.

Through an aggressive communications campaign that will accompany the process, the Government of Albania through its Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration aims at attracting the interest and attention of respective interest groups such as: the Albanian Government, private sector, civil society, media and Albanian general public. This strategy aims at gathering public support in order to achieve a successful implementation of the UNFCCC and a fruitful participation of Albania in the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol and other climate change programs. As a deliverable under the Article 6 Project funded by UNEP the strategy is posted under the web page: <http://www.ccalb.org/>

III. Albania's participation to the Kyoto flexible mechanisms

With the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by its Parliament, Albania become eligible for participation under the CDM. This will serve mainly to promote sustainable development through the promotion and diffusion of new and clean technologies, protection of the environment at national and global levels by accepting that the global nature of climate change requires wide cooperation between countries according to their common but differentiated responsibilities and in the line with their socio-economic circumstances.

Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol does not entail any financial implications to Albania due to the status of non-Annex I that the country enjoys , which does not bring any emissions reduction target. However, the ratification enables Albania to attract new investments and projects in the field of energy, transport, environment, forests, etc. through the CDM mechanism by facilitating the implementation of the sectoral action plans that derive from respective strategies. This is the case for the National Energy Strategy, which in addition to the environmental concerns addressed has stressed greatly the need for ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Albania. This ratification is also in line with the policy of the EU that has already ratified this protocol. Moreover, four years ago it started the implementation of an action plan to achieve a 7-percent reduction from 1990 levels by 2012.

After the ratification of the protocol, the next step to make it operational is the establishment of respective institutional structures (DNA) that would propose, follow up and monitor the CDM projects that would be funded under this mechanism. The DNA belongs to the Ministry of Environment through its Climate Change Unit.

The first CDM project would be a project funded by the Bio Carbon Fund of the World Bank Group on Community-based carbon sequestration. It is a large scale project whose methodology has been approved by the CDM Executive Board. An Emission Reduction Purchase Agreement has been negotiated and agreed between MoEFWA and Bio Carbon Fund of the World Bank. The above project has served somehow in paving the way towards building the institutions to deal with Kyoto Mechanisms in Albania. Although the DNA exists as an authority there is a significant need to strengthen it and to set up an active and operational body.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been recently signed with the Ministry of Environment and Territory of Italy on issues related to the Kyoto Protocol. Capacity-building activities will start soon in order to enable the environment to host CDM projects. UNDP and WB have started being more active on such issue by approaching Albania in designing and developing project that address Capacity Building for the Kyoto Flexible Mechanisms.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

The above assessment of the climate change thematic area provides a clear message that the overall system for the implementation of the UNFCCC and its Protocol is not sufficient. There is a list of the constraints that hinder the implementation of the UNFCCC and participation into the Kyoto Protocol Flexible Mechanisms:

- Lack of awareness on climate change issues at all levels
- Lack of relevant education at all levels
- Lack of sufficient funds from the state budget
- Insufficient climate change mainstreaming efforts
- Insufficient capacities to deal with climate change issues
- Lack of reliable data to compile studies for climate change
- Lack of inter-ministerial coordination efforts
- Lack of a sustainable mechanism for the reporting to the UNFCCC.
- Lack of an favourable environment to attract investments for climate friendly technology transfer.

There is a recommendation which aims at the establishment of a **sustainable and efficient mechanism for the implementation of the Convention in Albania**. In order to achieve this it would be necessary to undertake the following actions:

- Increase public awareness on climate change issues through an effective communication and outreaching strategy.
- Establish a sustainable mechanism for developing frequent GHG inventories and other components of National Communication to the UNFCCC
- Enhance national capacity to collect data and estimate GHG inventories, abatement analysis and vulnerability and adaptation studies for climate change in Albania
- Train the staff in order to ensure the sustainability of the process of National Communication
- Continuously and systematically inform all levels of society on economic, environmental, and social opportunities that cooperation under the Convention
- Create a favorable environmental for absorption of the investments that promote the transfer of climate friendly technologies through incentive systems and market instruments
- Use the national communication preparation process as a tool for integration of climate change concerns into national development plans.
- Address climate change adaptation issue into sectoral development strategies and programs, especially at the community level.

- Enhance the quality of the climate systematic observation and monitoring and ensure its sustainability.
- Build capacities to monitor and observe climate variability and change and address adaptation response measures for vulnerable systems in both national and community levels.
- Enhance skills for participating and developing negotiations on behalf of the country into the international climate change fora.

ANNEX 1C Thematic Profile on the Convention to Combat Desertification

1. Legal instruments and their effectiveness

Albania is in the process of establishing its legal framework for the environment and the Government is paying special attention to begin harmonizing its laws with the European Union environmental legislation.

The new Law on Environmental Protection was prepared by the Ministry of Environment and adopted by the Parliament in September 2002. This law is a comprehensive framework law that covers a broad range of issues, including, environmental policies, strategies and programmes; use and protection of soil, water, air, human building environment, waste, including hazardous waste, and environmental charges and taxes; EIA and SEA; permitting; prevention and reduction of environmental pollution, including establishing norms; monitoring and information; control of the state of the environment; duties of State Bodies for the environment; the role of the public; sanctions; and environmental funds.

Last years the Ministry of Environment has approved the new laws and has prepared the draft laws on environmental protection issues not previously covered by legislation. There are to mention here the draft laws on nature protection areas and biodiversity protection, water and soil management, air protection, monitoring systems, environmental impact assessment and environmental information. Nevertheless the existing legal framework needs to be further developed, particularly for waste management, including hazardous waste, chemicals, industrial accidents, permits and environmental auditing.

Land

A legal framework for land management has been established since 1991 (box N.1), started with the law *On the Land* (1991), which divides the land into the agricultural land, land occupied by forests, pastures and meadows and non-agricultural land (land occupied by structures, urban development, etc). The law *On the Transfer of Agricultural Land, Meadows and Pastures* provided that the land could be sold, leased, mortgaged etc. and set out the steps that had to be taken to achieve that.

The law *On the Creation and Function of Structures on Land Management and Protection* (2001) gives the legal basis for creation and function of land administration and protection offices in local level, while the *Law on Organization and Function of Local Government* places LAP's within the local government structure. The government decision on *Functions of the LAP sections* (2002) sets out in detail the responsibilities and functions of the LAP offices.

Based in the above laws there are created the land administration and protection sections (LAPs) in the 12 regions (qark) of the country, as well as in all communes and municipalities. These offices are part of local government and were under the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization until previous year. However, after last government changes (September 2005), it has an unclear situation related to LAPs functioning and activities, because the Interior Ministry has now assumed all functions of the Ministry of Local Government, while these sections technically are under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection. In addition land within the management functions of LAPs is state and private agricultural land; local and private forests and pastures; state forests; riverside land; village urban land and unproductive land. The MAFCP is no long responsible for forest, pasture and water management issues, while

the MEFWA is now responsible for management of public forests, water and pastures. However, the MEFWA does not enjoy any formal administrative ties to LAP's.

Law *On land protection* (2004) ensures the legal basis for creation and function of a new inspectorate on land protection and land rehabilitation. The main task of the Inter-ministerial State Committee on Land Protection that should be created according to this law is the coordination of work and activities between the MAFCP, MEFWA, other institutions and local government. This inspectorate has to create the budget on land protection that is no less than 40 % of fund created by the accumulation of land taxes. But up to now it is created neither Inter-ministerial State Committee, nor Inspectorate on land protection in local level.

Box 1 Albanian Legislation on land management and protection

- Albanian Civil Code
- Law *On the Land* No.7501 (July 1991)
- Law *On Forestry and Forest Police Service* (1992).
- Law 7698/93 *On Restitution and Compensation of Properties to Ex-owners*
- Law 7699/93 *On Compensation in Value for the Former Owners of Agricultural Land*
- Law 7665/93 *On the Development of Priority Areas Concerning Tourism*
- Law 7843/94, *On Registration of Immovable Property*
- Law *On Pasture and Grazing Land* (1995)
- Law *On Transfer of Ownership of Agricultural Land without Compensation* (in 1995)
- Law *On the Transfer of Agricultural Land, Meadows and Pastures*(in 1995)
- Law 8318/98 *On Leasing of State Agricultural Land, Forests, Meadows and Pastures*
- Law 8312/98, *On Non-Divided Agricultural Lands*
- Law *On Organisation and Function of Local Government* (2000)
- Law *On the Creation and Function of Structures on Land Management and Protection* (2001),
- Law *On Environmental Protection* 2002
- Law 8405/02 *On Urban Planning*
- Decision of CM, N. 532/02 *Functions of the LAP section* (October 2002)
- Law *On land protection* (2004);
- Decision of CM, N 59, date 28.1.2005 *On the accomplishment of analyses for agricultural land indexes*
- Decision of CM, N 80, date 28.01.2005 *On the composition, function mode, duties and responsibilities of state structures on agricultural land protection*

The execution of the Albanian legislation on land is being regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection, Ministry of Public Works, Transports and Telecommunication, Environmental Agencies under MEFWA and Local Government (regional and local level). However, there are no cooperation mechanisms between the mentioned structures and monitoring institutions. The insufficient land monitoring and non clear separation of state authorities' responsibilities cause constraints for Convention implementation.

The legal framework on land management and land protection has been created, but there are many laws on land dealing with only one issue. Many of these laws are 'reactive' to address

specific problems. It is necessary that all laws on land reform, land tenure and land transactions enacted since 1991 be revised, coordinated and consolidated into one comprehensive Land Code. The adoption of the new legislation on land management will definitely contribute to the improvement of the land resources management system. In this context, it also needs to be recast the legislation to provide a clearer framework on the relationships between the various levels of administration; central, regional and local.

A review of the different administrative systems and organisations that administer land and natural resources and police the environment needs to be undertaken to ensure that the most effective use is being made of scarce human resources; that co-operation at district and commune level is a reality.

Forestry, Pasture and Meadow

The present degradation of forests in Albania is a consequence of the continuous over-exploitation during 60 years, and illegal cutting after the 1990s. Forest resources have degraded significantly over the last 14 years as a consequence of the country's transition to a market economy. In some areas, the total forest cover has decreased by an average of 15 percent over a period of five years, with varying degrees of reduction in the different forest types. The resource degradation, which includes uncontrolled wood-cutting and overgrazing, is particularly intense in areas near villages and communities, making human pressure on forest resources the major cause of the degradation. In parallel with degradation of forests and pastures, investments in forest management have diminished considerably since the mid 1980s and were eventually discontinued in the 1990s due to dwindling financial resources allocated to the forestry administration, investments.

Since the early years of the transition period the government has approved the new laws on forest and pasture (Box N.2). The number of legal acts have been approved recently on forests as well as the action taken for their implementation, projects etc.

Box N 2 Legislation on forestry

- **Law N. 8934, date 5 September 2002, on Environmental Protection (article 18)**
- Law N. 7623, date 13 October 1992, on Forests and Forestry Police, amended by law N. 7838, dt. 10.06.1994 and law N. 8906, dt. 06.06.2002
- Governmental Decision N. 36, dt. 31.01.1994 "For the granting of a professional permit in the sector of Forests and Pastures", amended by Governmental Decision N. 330, dt. 26.06.1995.
- Governmental Decision N. 648, dt. 13.12.2002 "For the temporary suspending of tree cutting with exception of cutting for heating purposes".
- Governmental Decision N. 247, dt. 23.04.2004 "For the approbation of the National Development Strategy and Institutional Reform in the Sector of Forests and Pastures in the Republic of Albania".
- Governmental Decision N. 290, dt. 30.04.2004 "For the Approbation of the National Fire Fighting Strategy in the Forests and Pastures".

Forests are regulated by Law 7623/92 *On Forestry and Forest Police Service*. State and public forest resources are administered, developed and protected by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration, through the Directorates of Forest Service and the Forest police at the district level. The Law provides a wide range of management tools to protect and preserve forest resources and prevent deforestation. As a general rule, permission or a license is required before anyone can do anything in a forest. The number of legal acts have been approved recently on forests as well as the action taken for their implementation, projects etc.

Forest resources are comprised of State, local and private forests, while the Law *On Pasture and Grazing Land* (1995) gives the legal framework for the pasture and meadows management. It divides pastures and meadows into state pastures and meadows for general use, administered by the municipalities and communes and private pastures and meadows either in personal ownership or in co-ownership.

With respect to forests, the principal issue is law enforcement. As a result of weak and ineffective law enforcement the considerable quantities of wood have been illegally harvested in the forest and pasture sector of Albania. The impact of such illegal activities has caused and continuous to cause serious economic and environmental damages. Better co-ordination should be developed between the authorities regulating forests, the police and the courts to ensure that laws on illegal timber harvesting are properly enforced.

It is necessary to provide a national action plan, criteria and indicators for sustainable management and protection of forest, as well as the capacity building of public forestry sector staff. Also the Forest Extension Service has to be evaluated as an important step in the development of local and private forestry sector. The current policy is to be focused on rehabilitation of degraded forests and afforestation of eroded areas. Cooperation with international organizations is required to achieve this.

Water resources management

The water resources of Albania are abundant, in all regions of the country, with irregular seasonal distribution. Groundwater resources represent about 23 % of the total renewable resources and are the main source for drinking water and for industrial and agricultural purposes. Irrigation is the second surface water use sector, concern the amount of water use. Many farmers due to the small family parcels (1.3 ha as average), are using furrow type and strip-type irrigation method, account for about 90% of total area. This method impose the high soil erosion as well as the high amount of fertilizer used, which is not always controlled and monitored for their environmental effect on the soil and water table.

The water pollution is an important problem, because Albania is one of the few countries where there are no wastewater treatment facilities and existing raw sewerage outfalls are located either directly on the seacoast, on the bank of coastal rivers or on drainage ditches that after a short distance discharge directly into the sea/lakes.

As a matter of fact, measures have been taken in terms of policy and legislation formulation (Box N.3).

Box N. 3 Legislation on Water Management

- Law N. 8934, dt. 05.09.2002, “On environmental protection”
- Law N. 8093, dt. 21.03.1996 “On water sources”, amended by law N. 8375, dt. 15.07.1998; law N. 8605, dt. 20.4.2000 and law N. 8736, dt. 01.02.2001
- Decision of CM N. 775, dt. 28.10.1996 “On the establishment of the National Council of Water (amended by Decision of CM N. 77, dt. 02.03.2000)
- Decision of CM N. 63, dt. 26.01.2001 “On the procedures of researching, investigating as well as of giving the authorizations, permissions and concessions for employment of water reserves
- Decision of CM N. 337, dt. 15.07.1999 “On the establishment of the governmental commission for water problems with neighboring states”.
- Law N.8905, dt. 06.06.2002 “On Protection of Marine Environment from Pollution and Damage”.
- Decision of CM N. 364, dt. 18.07.2002 “For approbation of the plan “Administration of coastal zones”.
- Decision of CM N. 379, dt. 21.07.1993 “National plan for the protection of coastal waters and coastal zones from pollution”.
- Law N. 9103, date 10 July 2003, “On Protection of Trans-boundary Lakes”
- Law N. 8518, dt. 30.07.1999 “On Irrigation and Drainage”
- Law N. 9115, dt. 24.07.2003 “Concerning the environmental treatment of polluted waters”.
- Law N. 8102, dt. 28.03.1996 “On the Regulatory Framework of the Water Supply Sector and of Disposal and Treatment of Waste Water.
- Law N. 8103, dt. 28 March 1996. on the Privatization of the Enterprise of the Water Supply Sector and of Disposal and Treatment of Waste Water
- Decision of CM N. 445, dt. 16.07.1998 On the establishment of the National Regulatory Commission of the Sector of Water Supply and Waste Water Management.

The national Water Law was adopted in 1996 and is fairly advanced. However, it was never properly implemented due to conflicts of interest, responsibilities and overlaps. The law is now perceived to be in conflict with laws regarding protection of agricultural land, minerals and environmental protection. Regulations were never adopted or implemented to define water use rights and use conditions. As a result, water use remains essentially “open access”. For instance, the existing permitting system does not apply to the agricultural sector where irrigators may extract as much water as they desire, free of charge. Prioritization of water use and associated rights, environmental mitigation, and participatory planning and decision-making structures are basically absent from the water sector and water management. The Government of Albania will soon commence a water resources management project with funding from the World Bank. This effort will strengthen only infrastructure improvement of delivery systems and will not likely directly address water resources management legislation.

Environmental Impact Assessment Law (EIA)

The Law on Environmental Impact Assessment, No.8990, was approved on January 23, 2003. It defines the rules, procedures and deadlines for identifying and assessing the direct or indirect impacts of projects or activities on the environment. The Law establishes the steps necessary to

implement EIA procedures: presentation of the application, preliminary review, selection and classification criteria, public hearing and consultation, access to information, duties and rights of other bodies. The Law also provides the list of activities that should be subject to the Profound and Summary EIA process. It is supported by several Decisions of the Council of Ministers and Guidance issued by the MoE. The MoE is the legal competent authority for requesting, reviewing and approving EIA documentation.

It is to be supported by information on the project characteristics, the project location (environmental, human and cultural data) and the potential project impacts, which will be used by the MoE will determine the need for a Profound EIA

Requirements for the implementation of a trans-boundary EIA and other environmental matters are also included, since Albania has ratified several international environmental conventions including: the Espoo Convention on Trans-boundary Impacts; the Barcelona Convention on the protection of marine environment and coastal areas of the Mediterranean, the Aarhus Convention, and the Basel Convention.

The Albanian Law on Environmental Protection requires that any project or activity that will affect, or is likely to affect the environment, has to receive an Environmental Declaration, Environmental Permit, Consent or Authorization by the Ministry of Environment (MoE) before implementation may commence. A Decision by the Council of Ministers has defined the projects included in this process. Without a positive Environmental Declaration the Council for Adjustment of Territories for the locality will not grant a construction permit and construction may not legally commence and without an Environmental Permit an activity with an environmental impact may not commence and continue.

The Environmental Declaration is the official document issued by the Minister of Environment, after the review of the request and relevant documentation for the approval of the environmental elements of a project, plan or program that requires construction works, installations or schemes. If the project implementation is performed in compliance with the Environmental Declaration, the competent authority issues the relevant Environmental Permit, in compliance with the requirements of Law on Environmental Protection. An Environmental Permit is the official document issued by the MoE, after the review and consultation of the request and its relevant documentation, with all the concerned stakeholders. It approves the exercise of any activity having an impact on the environment, including several types of construction.

Each form of approval may include mandatory conditions and procedures to be implemented, so that pollution and damage to the environment do not exceed the allowed norms. The MEFWA has authorized its local offices (Regional Environmental Agencies (REAs)) to issue Environmental Permits for activities with a lesser impact on the environment, entitled Environmental Authorization (greater impact) and Environmental Consent (lesser impact).

The Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) defines the type and scale of the projects or activities that require an EIA before implementation.

It is important to mention that *the current legal framework on natural resources* in many cases does not provide structure and guidance to address institutional and capacity shortfalls. There exist conflicts and gaps in the land legislation and the result is that those who use, manage and/or regulate the land do nothing pro-active, operate outside of the law, and/or rely upon their own best judgment. Also, non-enforcement of laws on land protection and management, forests protection (e.g. illegal logging) result in the loss of habitats for flora and fauna, loss of sinks for

GHGs affecting the climate, and in land degradation (soil erosion, landslides) – in turn influencing social and economic well-being of local people.

Institutional Framework

In the table N.1 are presented the main institutions that operate on natural resources and their state responsible related to the implementation of UNCCD.

Table N. 1 State responsible Ministries and Institutions on natural resources use related to implementation of UN Convention to Combat Desertification

Institution	Responsibilities	Main Activities	Strengths	Weaknesses	Priority issues
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration	<p>It is the highest governmental body responsible for environmental protection, development of environmental strategy.</p> <p>It coordinates the environmental protection-related activities of the other ministries and local authorities.</p> <p>It proposes measures for the protection and preservation of the environment</p> <p>It defines priority environmental investments. development of national research programs in the environmental field.</p> <p>It is responsible for the development of state policy and strategy in the field of environment</p> <p>It is responsible for the Implementation of water policy based in the law on Water Reserves (in this Ministry are involved the Secretariat of water and the executive agencies of 6 watersheds since September 2005)</p>	<p>Development of state policy and strategy in suitable management of natural resources, establishing principles and approaches to strategies;</p> <p>Leads and organizes the monitoring of flora and fauna, species, habitats, migration routes, soil fertility, soil erosion, land degradation;</p> <p>-Initiating development of important legal documents (laws, orders, instructions) for conservation and protection of land and water resources, protected areas;</p> <p>-Ensures development of normative acts on natural resources protection, conservation, replication, sustainable use.</p> <p>-Ensures the integration of environmental considerations into sector policies and programs.</p> <p>-Promoting environmental awareness among enterprise managers and the general population</p> <p>-Ensures organization and implementation of environment monitoring</p> <p>- Ensures the execution of the Water legislation and support the activities of Water Secretariat and executive agencies of watersheds.</p>	<p>Existence of the legislation framework</p> <p>Existence of regional environment agencies in 12 regions, Water associations</p> <p>Existence of professional capacity - scientific research institutes</p> <p>Scientific educational capacity</p> <p>Supervision of agricultural significance lands, forestry and pastures</p> <p>Cooperation with other ministries</p> <p>International cooperation</p> <p>Existence of NEAP</p> <p>Some important project on rise of environment capacities</p>	<p>Impact on natural resources</p> <p>Impact on economic productivity and efficiency</p> <p>Impact on human health and well-being</p> <p>Impact on ecosystems</p> <p>Scale of the problem</p> <p>Urgency of the problem</p> <p>Compensation can be required for harm caused to nature, for excess consumption of natural resources, as well as for emissions into the environment (based on the environmental legislation)</p>	<p>Enforcement of legislation</p> <p>Review NEAP</p> <p>Introduce legislation on nature protection for water and soil protection,</p> <p>Establish a national database of environment indicators,</p> <p>Enhancing effective use of natural resources</p> <p>Restrictions of Natural resources restoration</p> <p>Reducing the environmental impact</p> <p>Inventory of natural resources and assessment and improvement of economic tools</p> <p>International cooperation in the field of natural resources conservation</p> <p>Development and implementation of regulations and measures to control and mitigate the adverse impacts of urban growth and development</p>
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection	<p>Policy making on agricultural sector, food sector and Consumer's Protection</p> <p>The main Policy objectives</p>	<p>-Increasing agricultural production</p> <p>- Extending the program of Irrigation and Drainage</p>	<p>-Existence of agriculture directorates in all regions</p> <p>- Existence of land administration and</p>	<p>Land fragmentation,</p> <p>Low level of investments</p> <p>Low level of automation on land cultivation,</p>	<p>Rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation system,</p> <p>Fertilization,</p> <p>Mechanization of agriculture</p>

	<p>are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reducing rural poverty and raising rural and farm incomes - Increasing exports of niche products and reducing requirements for food imports - Ensuring the sustainable of natural resources 	<p>infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalizing Land reform and registration - Improving natural resources management - Strengthening Agricultural technical services through seed testing, veterinary service, enforcement food safety regulations, investments in development of farm research and extension service - Agri-business, marketing, Processing - Integration of Agriculture into EU structure - Developing land policy, principles of land resources management, state monitoring of the land use (in the scope of responsibilities) 	<p>management sections in regions and communes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of some important research institutes on soil science, food, veterinary, agricultural plant cultivation, fruit trees and olives. - Scientific educational capacity - Food inspections in regional level 	<p>Failure of plants protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient seed production Insufficient credits for farmers, Land abandonment Lack /malfunction of irrigation system Flooding, land slide, soil erosion, salinization, Insufficient land protection measures Deforestation, overgrazing, Land urbanization 	<p>activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land consolidation Increasing of fund on land protection Application of anti-erosion measures, Reforestation of eroded areas Road repair,
<p>Ministry of Public Affairs, Transport and Telecommunications</p>	<p>Policy making on urban land use, urban infrastructure and services, urban and regional planning, providing a legal and regulatory framework for urban and rural development</p> <p>Policy making on transport and communication and establishing norms and limitations for land use safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introducing urban and regional planning frameworks and regulations, -Improving the reliability and efficiency of urban infrastructure and services - Promoting economic development in the poorer rural and urban areas - Encouraging private sector investments in housing - Developing of territorial mapping and settlement ensuring environmental safety during construction and exploitation of buildings. State inspection of urban construction based in Albanian legislation <p>Creation of modern network of roads, port and rail</p> <p>Ensuring adequate regulation of transport operations in the interest of economic</p>	<p>Existence of professional capacity</p> <p>Scientific educational capacity</p> <p>Cooperation to relevant local structures.</p> <p>The policies on transport exist. It is a planning on road network development and improvement. Rehabilitating and upgrading transport infrastructure.</p> <p>Promoting private sector involvement in the development of transport infrastructure, ensures technical level</p>	<p>It is necessary to have permission by local authority before to build. According to urban law, it is prohibited to build in good agricultural land (I-IV classes of bonitet). The local organs of MAFCP, MEFWA and MPATT coordinate before to give the permission. All documents, accompanied by maps, are presented to the Committee of Territory Adjustment in local, regional or national level.</p> <p>Implementation of road-building works should be in compliance with the environmental law to protect the nature and land resources.</p>	<p>The enforcement of legislation</p> <p>Sustainable land use</p> <p>Regional planning</p> <p>Creation of green zones in the settlements</p> <p>Applying environmental restrictions</p>

		efficiency, safety and environment Projects on developing, construction, repair and exploitation of common use transport ways network,			
Public administration Department	To implement the law on Civil Service, approved in 1999, and to move ahead with the reform of government structures and administration The policy objectives are: - To create an efficient, effective and honest public service in central and local level - To improve the quality of public service - To ensure the efficient management of public sector finances	Implementation of the Civil Service Law Improving the machinery of Government and state structures Strengthening the capacities of institutions to design and formulate policies Reform and strengthening of local government Training programs for public administration	Existence of the legislation framework Existence of professional capacity Improvements in the management of public finance The EU has been the main supporter of the reform on Public Administration	The weakness of local government capacities to develop and implement policies on land use and sustainable management of land resources	Strengthening of capacities of the Ministries and local government Developing the capacity of government institutions to design, formulate and implement policies on land use. Reform and strengthening of local government, especially of Land administration offices on regional level
Ministry of Health And Institute of Public Healthcare	It is responsible for: • The formulation and implementation of health policies • Accreditation and quality control • Coordination between stakeholders and health service providers • establishing norms and limitations for safety of land use for sanitary and healthcare purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and approval of sanitary norms • The organization of public information and health education campaigns • Support with funds the Institute of Public Healthcare on the monitoring of air, urban noise, urban and surface water, bathing water • Inspection through the IPH of food industries and markets of food; residential and recreational buildings, public buildings etc. • The methodological management of the sanitary and epidemiological safety of the population <p>The conduct of investigations and surveys to clarify environmental health impacts</p>	Qualified staff in the Ministry, Institute of Public Health, as well as in different inspectorates, centers and laboratories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sufficient information on the pollution of land and ground waters. • No sufficient information on poisoning by pesticides or other chemicals used in agriculture is available. • Increasing air pollution from traffic is related to (a) increased fleet of private and old vehicles, (b) poor public services (c) quality of fuels. Policy response is evident for the protection of air quality in the last years, but the capacities to monitor the air emission are low. Also, in the future the data should be needed to assess health risks. 	
National Water Council	Policy making on water reserves,	The administration and management water resource is very important to extend water	Existence of national water strategy, legal framework and	Rehabilitation of reservoirs, It is necessary to extent the rehabilitation of irrigation and	Rehabilitation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage system, pumping

	<p>where are also including the wetlands and waste water treatments</p>	<p>supply in Albania. In other hand it influences on land degradation/ desertification processes on the country.</p> <p>The NWC manages the water reserves; it proposes draft law and by-laws, prepares the legal, technical and regulatory framework, undertake other actions necessary for the implementation of the water reserves national plan, directs and approves plans of watershed basins, as well as approves the inter-regional and national plans and projects</p> <p>The Technical Secretariat is the executive organ of the NCW, which implements the national policy of water reserves approved by the NCW, applies provisions of Waters legislation, etc.</p> <p>To establish environmentally sound system for waste treatment and discharge</p>	<p>the needed infrastructure,</p> <p>Existence of the executive agencies in 6 main watersheds of the country, water associations in local level,</p> <p>The support by donors in the implementation of the different projects</p> <p>Training programs for technical staff on water resources management</p>	<p>drainage systems, to maintain and renovate the pumping stations,</p> <p>Unknown demand for water supply</p> <p>No sanitary landfills do exist yet in the country for the urban waste and hazardous waste and waste is dumped in the open, following no environmental protection rules.</p> <p>The same stands for the hazardous waste generated from the former industry. It has been left beyond control at the open dumps around the closed factories.</p> <p>The lack of data on urban waste, as well as lack of waste monitoring</p>	<p>stations, deep wells,</p> <p>It should forecast demand for water supplies</p> <p>Introduction of contemporary sewage treatment technologies,</p> <p>Water resources regular monitoring,</p> <p>Elaboration of a rural water supply and sanitation strategy covering future investments requirements,</p> <p>Development and implementation of regulatory framework for water resources planning and management</p> <p>Implementation of lake Ohrid Water Quality Management Plan</p>
<p>Ministry of Economy, Market and Energy</p>	<p>Policy making on energy sector and establishing norms and limitations for land use safety</p>	<p>Development and establishing the norms of land use for energy objects</p> <p>Environmental measurements in the sphere of energy</p>	<p>Professional capacity</p>	<p>Low level of environmental protection in the area of electrical substations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To rehabilitate the existing hydropower plants to ensure efficient economic utilization of domestic hydropower resources • To adopt the legislation and regulatory framework for a privatized energy sector • to evaluate the options for the use of the thermal solar energy,
<p>Immovable Property Registration System</p>	<p>Registration of land property, Regulation of land relations, Inspection of property rights</p>	<p>Mapping of real estate, digital mapping and digital registers</p> <p>State systematic observation</p>	<p>The digital information for the country</p> <p>Data base on real estate</p>	<p>No digital information for all the communes, especially for coastal zone</p>	<p>It is urgent to finish the digitizing of information for coastal zone.</p>

	and restrictions,	of real estate Information on real estate for multipurpose cadastre maintenance Establishing and management of state mapping fund, based on the materials and schemes Trainings for information topographic and cadastre Providing information on real estate for developing project documents on urban construction,	Professional training Real estate monitoring Cadastre assessment of land Qualified specialists with relevant degree	Hardships in information of rural settlements real estate	Using of modern technologies (GIS tools)
Local government	Land use, land management and protection, urban development, transport, agricultural activities, nature protection, environmental and other activities in regional and local level	In Albania, last years, concrete steps have been taken with regard to the decentralization aspects. The water supply and wastewater functions, aspects of education, social assistance, social care, some immovable properties are being transferred under the ownership of the municipalities and communes that provide maximum supervisory and regulatory responsibilities. With regard to delegated functions special attention should be paid on the implementation of Albanian legislation. In order to perform this task local government units should increase their administrative capacities, as well as the opportunities for training and assistance. The filling and clarifying the functions of the regional councils is a priority for Albanian Government.	The legal framework is completing, Enforcement of the rights of local government authorities in the field of socio-economic development, land use environmental protection based in Albania legislation Fiscal decentralization has aimed at: providing the local governments with necessary financial instruments and necessary authority, as well as formulation of economic development strategies	Lack of qualified specialists Lack of clear responsibilities in local and regional level Low level of budget for land protection measures Lack of land use plans and zoning schemes of communes Lack of master plans for urban area Illegal agricultural land urbanization Low level of land protection investments Low level of land taxes collection Deterioration of community roads Lack of sanitary norms on the community territories	It needs to be recast to provide a clearer framework on the relationships between the various levels of administration; central, regional and local. Facilitation of the information sharing between local government and Ministries, agencies and authorities. Financial support and training of technical staff of LAP offices at local and regional level are required. Capacities of efficient use of natural resources, Improvement of transport water infrastructure and waste management in communes Maintenance of drainage and irrigation system in the territory of commune/municipalities

2. National strategies, plans and projects

Several strategies and sectoral action plans have been compiled and approved in Albania since 1992 that address the nature resources management, such as National Action Plan for Environment (1993, 2001), National Action Plan for Environment and Health (1998), Green Strategy for Agriculture (1998), Strategy of Forests and Pastures Development (1998), National Water Strategy (2004), National Plan of Waste Management (1996), National Strategy for Socio-economic Development (2001), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (1999), National Energy Strategy (2004), etc.

Common Country Assessment (2004) identified unsustainable land use practices as a primary national environment and development concern. The report concludes that forestry, agriculture, and water management are the main drivers of land degradation. The immediate causes of environmental degradation in Albania are a combination of accelerated economic activities failing to consider environmental impacts along a lack of integrated planning in environmental management.

National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (2001, approved by GOA 2005) guides all Albanian development. The NSSD details several national objectives for land protection, including (i) promotion of good agricultural practices and the principles of sustainable development; (ii) improving land management and ownership through functional land marketing; (iii) need for landscape level conservation of biological diversity; (iv) increasing investment in rehabilitating and improving irrigation and drainage systems and, (v) enhancing the institutional structures responsible for managing and monitoring the utilization of forest and pastures.

The *National Environmental Action Plan* (approved in 1994, reformulated in early 2002) is the basic document which presents the governmental policy in the area of environmental protection. The ultimate goal of this plan is to meet the constitutional obligation towards the citizens who have the right to a healthy and ecological environment, rational use of natural resources, as well as the prevention and control of cross-border pollution and damage of the global environment. The platform on which the National Action Plan is based, aims to be in coherence with principles of the UNCCD Convention, having as important approach participation, awareness raising partnership, methods of programming, etc. The priority issue of the Action Plan is to develop a comprehensive strategy for complex environmental management.

The National Action Plan has been prepared to serve as a framework for the future activities to keep desertification under control. Considering the fact, that the economy of Albania is in a transition period, it is a priority the developing of National Action Plan to combat desertification/degradation, which will encourage efficient implementation of environmental measures in different areas.

Strategy of Forests and Pastures Development (2004) is a document which determines the long term strategy directions for the development of the forestry and pasture sector. The government priorities are: sustainable management of natural resources, through rebuilding and enhancing local government structures for environmental management, control of illegal harvesting operations, transferring of forest and pasture areas to the communes either in ownership or utility title; completion of legal framework on management, and finding ways for common state-community management of forest and pasture areas, especially for long-term lease of pastures.

The Green Strategy (*Government Strategy for the Development of Agriculture in Albania*) is the official fundamental act of the MAFCP, approved in 1998. It is the Government policy for

agricultural development and in this framework for assessing and fighting erosion and land degradation. The priorities outlined by the GOA include: drafting appropriate legislation, creation of permanent structures for the management of natural resources, stabilization of a separate budget for agriculture, identification and localization of the most affected areas from erosion, preparation of a strategy for prevention of erosion.

However until present, Albania has not implemented many activities in relation to land protection. Since last years the MEFWA and the MAFCP have started to collaborate on activities related to land protection. Last year the GOA initiated the preparation of the National Action Program to Protect Land and Combat Land Degradation (NAP). The NAP evaluates general environmental conditions and sets priorities regarding the country's efforts to meet obligations under UNCCD. The draft NAP identifies the following needs:

- Assess and quantify the state of land degradation and desertification;
- Increase public awareness regarding land protection;
- Adapt and adopt a legal framework compatible with both the NAP and UNCCD, including identification of gaps in existing legislation; and,
- Strengthen the capacity of institutions to address SLM issues and coordination information gathering/management.

The NAP is submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Water Administration for comments. Upon approval by this Ministry, the NAP will be circulated to other line ministries for endorsement and final government approval.

There are many strategies and plans undertaken in different areas related with issues of land protection and control over degradation and desertification, but the steps/actions planned are different from one strategy/plan to the other. Currently country's capacity to prepare comprehensive and feasible plans with the participation of all relevant stakeholders is limited. This in turn results in conflicting sectoral policies, non-fulfillment of planned measures or non-incorporation of most pressing needs into the planning process. In addition it is very important to move from strategies and plans to actual implementation.

Projects Implementation

In Albania there are carried out or are ongoing projects financially supported by the World Bank, UNDP, USAID, EU, IFAD, etc. Some of the most important projects are mentioned below.

Albanian Forestry Project (AFP) implemented during 1996- 2004 and the new project “*Natural Resources Development*” (November 2005-November 2010) are supporting the institutional and policy reforms of Albania's forest and pasture sector, while *the Land Use Policy Project* [first (1996-1998) and second phase(2002-2003)] has been supported by the EU to establish and develop a land use planning capability in Albania. The objective of the LUPP was *to enhance the policy formulation capabilities of Albanian institutions for land use planning*. The methodology to achieve this objective was to establish a GIS laboratory to collect, process and use information essential for land use planning. This GIS is the key tool to assist the involved Albanian institutions to formulate – design – applies – monitor land use plans at a national, regional or local scale.

Rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage systems [second phase(ongoing)], is supporting the rehabilitation of irrigation facilities; the improvement of irrigation and drainage design, environmental management, environmental monitoring, as well as the development of investment

program, project administration and implementation support. The project has four important components:

- **System rehabilitation:** (i) rehabilitation and minor improvement of irrigation facilities, (ii) rehabilitation of flood control and drainage facilities, (iii) rehabilitation of reservoirs and headwork, and (iv) design and supervision;
- **Institutional support:** (i) support for WUAs (water use associations) and FWUAs (Federative of water use associations), (ii) support for water enterprises, and (iii) support for construction industries;
- **Technical studies:** (i) improve irrigation and drainage design, (ii) improve environmental management, and (iii) environmental monitoring;
- **Implementation support:** (i) development of investment program, (ii) project administration and implementation support, and (iii) support to Project Management Unit.

One of the important components of *Agriculture Services Project* (ongoing) is the Land Market Development. The objectives of this component are to improve and update the land registration system by computerizing the land registration process to establish a land market, improve land security and to facilitate a more efficient and sustainable use of agricultural land.

International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) started in 1994. These initial interventions were based on a 'marginal areas development strategy' and focused on the development of the poorest mountain districts in the country. The projects provided support to local government, small-scale rural infrastructure, access to village -based financial services, seed supply and multiplication, veterinary prophylaxis, and small-scale irrigation rehabilitation with associated water user associations development. The focus on marginalized areas was expanded to national coverage of mountain area districts with the ongoing Mountain Areas Development Program (MADP), which aims to raise living standards throughout Albania's mountain areas through interventions implemented and financed through the Mountain Areas Development Agency (MADA) and the Mountain Areas Finance Fund (MAFF). MADP is continuing to finance the provision of rural financial services, small-scale irrigation rehabilitation, support farmers in their agricultural income-generating activities (and developing market linkages for their products) as well as the necessary support services required to develop the Albanian rural economy.

Regional projects

Albania has been participated in a number of regional projects including the Lake Ohrid Management (WB, closed in December 2004), 'Determination of Priority Actions for the further elaboration and Implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the Mediterranean Sea' (UNEP), Conservation of Wetland and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region (UNDP, closed in December 2006) as well.

The Scadar Lake Integrated Ecosystem Management project is ongoing and both Albania and Montenegro are involved in this project. The overall objective is to assist the Governments of Albania and Montenegro in ensuring the sustainable use of the natural resources, enhancing the tourism potential of the lake, and supporting effective joint management of its watershed.

All the projects implemented or ongoing have elements which contribute to legal framework and policies on natural resources management.

3. Implementation of convention issues in national programs

The Republic of Albania acceded to the UNCCD on 27 April 2000. The Focal Point for the CCD is the MEFWA. This Ministry through the Nature Protection Directorate is responsible for coordinating and the implementation of the UNCCD. Another key player is the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection, through its Department for Land Management. This Ministry is responsible for agricultural land and many activities related to rural development.

Through the decision of Council of Ministers N. 463 (1996) "On preparing the action plan for land protection and establishment of the working group for its implementation" it was intended to set up a Working Group for Land Protection, which would function as an inter-ministerial structure at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (actually MAFCP) (with the participation of one representative from the National Environment Agency (NEA) presently Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration, under the direction of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection.

The above mentioned decision of Council of Ministers charged the working group with the task of "coordinating the preparation of the action plan on land protection", "proposing the institutionalization of the implementation of this plan" etc. This group was convened only in two or three meetings at the beginning and later on its activity was stopped.

The National Action Plan has been prepared to serve as a framework for the future activities to keep desertification under control. Considering the fact, that the economy of Albania is in a transition period, the preparation and development of a National Action Plan to combat desertification/degradation was a priority. Last year the GOA initiated the preparation of this plan (NAP), which will encourage efficient implementation of environmental measures in different areas.

The implementation of NAP, other programs and plans asks the needed budget by government and technical capacities for solving land degradation issues. The most of activities are expensive and its realization depends on foreign donations. Lack of financial support of state institutions is a main cause that doesn't allow the institutions to carry out the activities foreseen in the plans and programs.

It is very important the work and activities coordination between institutions in all levels, because the lack of this coordination, as well as of a clearer framework on the relationships between the various levels of administration (central, regional and local) in many cases has led in the failure of projects or activities. The institutional reform has been addressed the administrative needs (creation of new structures) instead of the planning and implementation needs. Also, the connections between programs and plans are limited. So, there are duplications in some areas, while in others nothing is happening.

In the Table N. 2 are presented strategies, plans, activities developed in Albania and the progress on the country meeting of UNCCD obligations, although not developed as a result of the UNCCD.

Table N 2 The progress on the country meeting of UNCCD obligations

Obligations / decisions	Strategies / plans / programs developed in Albania
<p>Article 4 General obligations i. adopt an integrated approach addressing the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of the processes of desertification and drought.</p>	<p>National Environment Action Plan (NEAP) was first prepared in 1994 and it was revised in 2001 (approved in early 2002 and covering the period 2001 – 2005). The main issues identified through the NEAP are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of policies and programs; • Improvement and completing the legal framework; • Institutional strengthening and capacity building; • Raise of public awareness. <p>Priority investments are to focus on watershed management, forestry, flood control, solid waste management, water supply, sewage systems and urban management.</p> <p>The Green Strategy (<i>Government Strategy for the Development of Agriculture in Albania</i>), is approved in December 1998. It addresses the policies of agricultural development on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing rural poverty and raising rural and farm incomes through increased productivity • Ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. <p>The support programs involve the assessment of land degradation process and Sustainable Land Management through: strengthening of legislative framework, finalizing of land reform process, extending the program of rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage infrastructure, improving watershed management, creation of permanent structures on land management, development of policies and strategies on prevention of soil erosion and land protection, etc. The strategy on forest and pasture sectors is incorporated in the Green Strategy as well. The objectives are: to promote appropriate & conservation forestry and pasture resources, to support the establishment of an efficient forestry management service, to facilitate the privatization of forestry and pastures, etc.</p> <p>The main objectives of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, approved in November 1999, as a step towards implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity, are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection and improvement of biological and landscape biodiversity, • Incorporation of the principles and policies required for sustainable biodiversity use and management, • Promoting sustainable development for present and future generations <p>National Water Strategy has as policy objectives to improve coverage, quality and reliability of water supplies, to establish environmentally sound systems for wastewater treatment and discharge, to improve the financial sustainability of water supply and sewerage utilities, to promote an effective integrated water management system, to prevent the huge water losses, to take the</p>

	<p>comprehensive actions to identify and minimize pollution sources, prevent pollution processes.</p> <p>The public investment programs (PIPs), since 1993, have been prepared by the Albanian Government. The PIP sets the policy and strategy for Public Investment and is used to guide the allocation of new public investments resources. Priority actions for 2000-2003 PIP in agriculture sector have been:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Irrigation and drainage infrastructure (Rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation system, the establishment of Water User's Associations) 2. Land reform and registration (Strengthening land and cadastral services to support land market) 3. Natural Resources Management (Restructuring of forestry services, Establishing the regulatory framework and institutional capacities for the management of fisheries resources) 4. Rural development (Establishing a functional infrastructure and improving public services) 5. Agricultural technical services (Establishing technical services in all districts)
<p>ii. give due attention, within the relevant international and regional bodies to the situation of affected developing country Parties with regard to international trade, marketing arrangements and debt, with a view to establishing an enabling international economic environment conducive to the promotion of sustainable development.</p>	<p>Internationally Albania is party to a number of international conventions. It has signed the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1994, Convention on Climate Change in 1994, Convention on the Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat in 1996; Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals in 2000; Convention to Combat Desertification in 2000, ratified the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 2003, the Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in December 2004. It is also a member of a number of UN organizations.</p> <p>An important regional initiative is the establishment of transboundary Park in the Southern Europe, the creation of the Prespa Park. This initiative is the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Lakes and their Surroundings.</p> <p>The NSSD underlines the importance of international assistance in many sectors, the need of operating within regional and international bodies to enhance international trade, marketing arrangements, etc., with a view to establishing an enabling economic environment so as to promote sustainable agricultural development and land management.</p> <p>Acknowledging the significance of the climate change problem and the necessity to take effective steps for its mitigation, the Government of Albania joined the UNFCCC on January 1995. The First National Communication of Albania, as a response to the commitments of Albania to the UNFCCC present situation with regard to climate change. At the same time, it serves as the basis for future action, research, improvement, offering opportunities for policy refinement and development.</p>
<p>iii. integrate strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.</p>	<p>In May 1999, the European Union adopted a new initiative for five countries in the Balkans, including Albania, called the Stabilization and Association process (SAP). This process aims to establish closer ties between these countries and EU through Stabilization and Association agreements. In November 2000, the European Commission initiated the process towards such an agreement with Albania. The objective of the Stabilization and Association Agreement is to aid in creating political and economic stability in these candidate countries.</p> <p>The National Strategy for Social and Economic Development (NSSD) is a strategic document that combines the main</p>

agendas of the Albanian government to: reduce poverty, guarantee sustainable economic growth, achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and integrate the country into EU and NATO. The National Strategy for Social Economic Development for Albania (NSSED) established a multi-year plan to combat poverty and strengthen governance. A permanent organization was established in the Ministry of Finance and a deputy ministers' network was created to ensure coordination.

The **Millennium Development Goals and NSSED** contains strategies for poverty alleviation, through a Survey and Poverty Action Plan with a view that all persons can access the basic social amenities.

While retaining responsibility for the poverty reduction strategy, the primary mandate of the NSSED Department will be to ensure that all national goals, including EU and NATO membership, the MDGs, good governance and decentralisation, are appropriately reflected. Rather than monitoring ministry action plans, the NSSED will identify high-level indicators and use specialised research to determine how well Albania is progressing towards its medium- and long-term goals.

The NSSED and the Food and Agriculture Strategy constitute the strategic framework of agriculture and food sector, aiming at integrated rural development for poverty reduction through ensuring: (i) sustainable increase of the production and yields from agriculture, livestock and agro-processing; (ii) improved use of natural resources; (iii) increased access to and quality of rural services (education, health, social protection), potable water supply and sanitation, as well as rural transport infrastructure; and (iv) diversification of rural economy and increasing the employment and the revenues from non-agriculture activities in rural areas.

The Government of Albania adopted, in April 2005, **the Integrated Planning System (IPS)**. It aims to integrate the various policy frameworks (NSSED, Stabilization and Association Process, MDGs, etc) into a single medium-term development plan in 2007. The IPS establishes a new planning architecture that will harmonize, in a coherent way, all existing policies and strategies and integrate them in a unified medium-term plan for social and economic development in Albania which will be closely linked to the Medium-Term Budget Plan and the annual budget.

The **National Forum for the Development of Mountain Areas was established in 2003** with the support of the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Mountain Areas Development Agency (MADA) and the technical assistance of the Institute of Contemporary Studies and the Centre for Rural Studies. The objective of this Forum is to contribute to the formulation of a new vision for the development of these areas, to carry out various lobbying activities with decision makers, as well as to contribute to the process of defining priorities, to identify, design and implement social and economic development projects. Work is continuing to set up and strengthen forums in 7 pilot districts (Kukes, Diber, Mirdite, Librazhd, Berat, Korça, Permet), to expand this initiative to other mountainous districts and to integrate them in one national Forum until the end of 2005.

The **Albania' First National Communication** to the UNFCCC incorporates strategies for human resource, scientific, technical and institutional capacity building which have positive implications to sustainable land management.

The World Bank has prepared its new **Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Albania** for the period July 2005-June 2009. The preparation of the new strategy is benefiting from wide consultations with the Government, Parliament civil society, private

	<p>sector, donors and other interested stakeholders. The CAS will support the country's development agenda in its National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development (NSSSED). Two pillars will constitute the building blocks of the new strategy: economic growth through support to private sector development and improved service delivery particularly in the social sectors. Special attention will be paid to governance issues, which will be mainstreamed in all programs and projects.</p>
<p>iv. promote cooperation among affected country parties in the fields of environmental protection and the conservation of land and water resources, as they relate to desertification and drought</p>	<p>In the NEAP 2001-2005 the Forestry and Biodiversity sub-themes have the international linkages through the CBD and the UNFCCC in which sustainable land management is a focus.</p> <p>The First National Communication encourages the cooperation of affected country parties, both regionally and internationally. The number of international and regional meetings and workshops, some at ministerial levels, has increased. Exchange of information takes place through networking, training and expert missions and bilateral cooperation.</p> <p>Trans-boundary lakes like Scadar, Ohrid, and Prespa are points of floristic and fauna exchange with other Balkan countries. Regional cooperation for Scadar lake and Prespa lake, exists between Albania and neighbor countries Greece, Montenegro and Macedonia.</p> <p>A joint project of Albania, Greece and Macedonia, Lake Ohrid Conservation Project (LOCP), 1.6 million euro (closed, December 2004) is developed. The project consisted of three main components institutional strengthening, Lake Ohrid monitoring and Watershed management.</p> <p>The new project Scadar Integrated Ecosystem Management is implemented and both Albania and Montenegro are involved in this project. The overall objective of the project is to assist the Governments of Albania and Montenegro in ensuring the sustainable use of the natural resources, enhancing the tourism potential of the lake, and supporting effective joint management of its watershed.</p>
<p>v. strengthen sub-regional, regional and international coordination</p>	<p>Albania is participating in a number of regional projects including the Lake Ohrid Management (WB), 'Determination of Priority Actions for the further elaboration and Implementation of the Strategic Action Program for the Mediterranean Sea' (UNEP), Conservation of Wetland and Coastal Ecosystems in the Mediterranean Region (UNDP) as well (1999-2006).</p> <p>An understanding memorandum exists regionally to collaborate and coordinate activities in the domain of sustainable land management and water conservation around Scadar, Prespa and Ohrid lakes areas. This includes access to climate data, model outputs, etc and the development of sub- regional and regional action plans.</p> <p>One of the guiding principles of the NEAP is that international and regional agreements and treaties pertaining to environmental management will be fulfilled. The objective of the NEAP and NSSSED is the developing partnerships, share resources and strengthen Albania' ability to comply with relevant regional and international protocols, treaties and agreements. One of the NEAP management priority areas is to develop shared regional facilities and exchangeable networks of experts.</p>

<p>vii. determine institutional mechanisms, if appropriate, keeping in mind the need to avoid duplication</p>	<p>The willingness to integrate environmental issues/policies with the sectional ones is expressed clearly in the foundation and the functioning of several decision-making inter-ministerial bodies such as: National Council of Territory Regulation, the local Councils of Territory Regulation, National Water Council, National Committee of Energy, Committee of Tourism Policies, the Inter-ministerial working group for the Implementation of the NEAP, etc. a number of steering committees/boards, with the participation of representatives from other sectors such as: economy, tourism, territory regulation, etc., have been established and are operational for a number of environmental projects.</p> <p>The management of water reserves of the Republic of Albania are executed by the National Council of Water (NCW) and by the technical secretariat at the national level, as well as by the basins authorities at the local level and by other agencies and organisms that the NCW has appointed. The composition of the National Council of Waters is determined by the Council of Ministers, while the NCW determines the composition of the Water Technical Secretariat (WTS) and of the basins councils. It is the central decision organ for the management of water resources. The Prime Minister chairs the National Council of Waters. It is the main body that proposes draft laws and by-laws, prepares the legal, technical and regulatory framework, undertake other actions necessary for the implementation of the water reserves national plan, directs and approves plans of watershed basins, as well as approves the inter-regional and national plans and projects. The Technical Secretariat is the executive organ of the NCW, which implements the national policy of water reserves approved by the NCW, applies provisions of Waters legislation, etc.</p> <p>The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration prepares the new national strategies and implements the approved strategies in the field of water resources, biodiversity for nature protection, forest management and protection, soil conservation and urban waste management.</p>
<p>viii. promote the use of existing bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms and arrangements that mobilize and channel substantial financial resources to affected developing country Parties in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.</p>	<p>The NSSED and its program call for the use of overseas development assistance, the exploitation of bilateral and multilateral agreements, loans and grants in the execution of many of the program activities to complement the insufficient financial and other resources of local parties so as to facilitate sustainable land management and development</p> <p>Albania should exploit all the available bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms and arrangements from the various conventions (UNCCD, UNFCCC) and international organizations (UNDP, World Bank, GEF, FAO, etc) to promote sustainable natural resources development.</p> <p>The First National Communication identifies the GEF, UNDP, UNEP etc to implement sustainable land management and development in the face of climate change. The execution of the NSSED and the achievement of MDGs would be partly dependent on financial resources secured from foreign and local partners/ donors. Furthermore, through its bilateral cooperation assistance has/is been received from countries like, USA, Holland, Greece, Germany, Turkey, Italy, etc.</p>

<p>Article 5 Obligation of affected country Parties</p>	
<p>i. give due priority to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, and allocate adequate resources in accordance with circumstances and capabilities;</p>	<p>Different activities to achieve the goals of Green Strategy on Land protection, land management, forestry and pasture are being undertaken e.g. the rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation system, the increasing agricultural mechanization and inputs through the projects grant contribution of Japanese Government, the management plans for state and local forests, forestation and improvement of forest and pasture, construction and repairing of some dams, the carrying out of national forest inventory through ANFI project, etc.</p> <p>Priority action on Water and Sanitation are being undertaken e.g. a centrally managed programme to undertake emergency repair and rehabilitation of critical water supply and sewerage infrastructure, etc.</p> <p>The Albanian Government is working to meet the requirements of the Convention of Biological Diversity by reviewing the size and status of some of the protected areas and finding mechanisms for a better management in and ex-situ. Only a few management plans have been approved by the government so far and they have not started to be enforced yet. Three Ramsar sites have been proclaimed in Albania.</p> <p>The total surface of the land area protected for biological diversity has significantly increased over the last decade (from about 3.8 percent of the country's surface area in 1998 to 5.9 percent in 2001). The total surface of protected areas in 2003 was approximately 190,000 hectares. The short-term goal is that 14 percent of the country's territory be included in different categories of protected areas, while the long-term goal (year 2020) aims at including 25 percent of the country's territory under this status.</p> <p>In recent years, Albania has experienced a variety of serious environmental problems, including increased flooding on the coastal plain, drained wetlands, excessive sediment transport and deposition, and poor water quality. During 1998-2003, the <u>USDA Forest Service</u> carried out an assessment of the Shkumbini and Vjosa watersheds to identify the causes of these problems, to develop watershed management plans, and identify the mitigation practices that minimize the socio-economic impacts associated with changing land use practices. The USDA Forest Service Inventory and Monitoring Institute provided technical and administrative management for this.</p> <p>Based on the Constitution of the Republic of Albania which proclaims that "The state aims at ... rational use of forests, waters, pastures and other natural resources according to the principles of sustainable development", the MoAF formulated the "Strategy of Agricultural Development" (Green strategy) where is incorporated the strategy of forest and pasture sectors. Some important projects are developed in the forestry and pastures sector. An ecological survey of selected high forests, the assessment of the existing and the environmental assessment were carried out between 1995 and 1996, while Albanian National Forest Inventory Project is carried out in 2002-2004.</p> <p>Albanian Forest Project (1996-2004, project cost 21.6 million US\$), financed by the World Bank, observed the illegal logging</p>

	<p>phenomenon as a first step towards combating illegal logging, verified and clarified the extent of illegal logging. The study aimed to provide reliable data and up to date estimates, so as to give competent bodies an accurate diagnosis of the level of extent of illegal logging, as well as to use of that information to determine effective solutions. The project carried out the <i>assessment of the illegal logging phenomenon assessment of the monitoring system; assessment of the inter-sectoral dimension of the phenomenon</i></p> <p>One of the NEAP management priority areas is to develop sustainable financial mechanisms for land use and coastal zone management. A new project is implemented on Integrated Coastal Management, since 2005.</p> <p>In addition, in the Forestry Sector, Natural Resources Management Project, (November 2005-November 2010), financed by the WB, will support a multi-sectoral approach to resource management, addressing natural resource degradation at the level of micro-catchments (MCs) in three out of the seven watersheds of Albania.</p> <p>The Rehabilitation of irrigation system and drainage is a priority in Agriculture sector. The second phase of the project (financed from WB, project cost 21.2 million Euro) is ongoing.</p>
<p>ii. establish strategies and priorities, within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;</p>	<p>Several strategies and sectoral action plans have been compiled and approved since 1992, such as: National Action Plan for Environment (1994) and (2002); Management Program of Coastal Zone (1996); National Report on Habitat II (1996); National Action Plan for Environment and Health (1998); Green Strategy for Agriculture (1998); Strategy of Forests and Pastures Development (1998); National Water Strategy (1997); National Plan of Waste Management (1996), NSSED, etc.</p> <p>A Strategy of Information and Communication with the Public was drafted and approved in December 2004, which is designed to offer mechanisms providing deeper knowledge on the process of European integration, on commitments and obligations toward such a process, and on the rights and benefits for all Albanian citizens.</p> <p>The National Strategy for Social and Economic Development (NSSED) aims at the improving the living conditions for all Albanians and emphasizes policy interventions to improve education, healthcare and infrastructure and calls for stronger public accountability and increased public participation in decision-making to empower the poor. The government considers the environment to be an integral component of poverty reduction and will work to achieve an integrated rural development that includes the protection and improvement of use of natural resources. Environmental policies are directed at halting the process of environmental degradation; creating conditions for rehabilitation of polluted areas and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.</p> <p>According to the National Strategy for the energy sector the normalization of the supply of the country with electric energy will be fulfilled by the end 2007.</p> <p>In the last years, the institutional reforms with respect to the development and sustainable use of land resources consist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishment and consolidation of the land administration and protection structures in 12 regions of the country, 2. Restructuring of the Agricultural directorates in the districts and regions,

3. Restructuring of Agricultural Research Institutes to encourage capacity building (project funded by World Bank), for restructuring forest structures,
4. Establishment of land protection strategies on regional level

Some initiatives under decentralization program, which has only commenced in the last few years, include: transfer of management and co-management of natural resources and water resources to the local government, continued support to the communes for the improvement of pastures and forest management and preparation of effective management-exploitation plans, transfer of the drainage/irrigation schemes under the management of Associations of water users, which currently are responsible for 180,000 ha.

A long term **Strategy for the Social Insurance System** which has a planning horizon until the year 2020 aims at adding contributors to the system by increasing the employment rate in the private sector and by educating people in rural area as to benefits of the system. It is planned that within 10 years the rural scheme will converge to the nation-wide scheme.

The thematic area National **Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy** lays out the strategies with respect to the development and achievement of sustainable potable water supply and sanitation services according to EU standards in urban and rural areas. Albania has adapted the Millennium Development Goals for a period of 15 years, which fits with the long-term goals of the Government. The Millennium Development Goal for the water and sanitation sector is: *Improving Access to safe and reliable drinking water supply and sanitation.*

The **Forest policy** is the guiding principles for sustainable forest management and the protection of water catchments. The policy adopts a precautionary approach in the implementation of forestry activities. **Government Strategy for Illegal Logging Reduction** was prepared by General Directorate of Forestry and Pastures with the support of FAO technical assistance. It represents a legal instrument for developing and implementing an action plan to reduce illegal exploitation of national forest resources. Implementation of the strategy began with the establishment of a high level Inter-Ministerial Task Force for Forest Resource Protection in November 2000 comprised of representatives of eleven related government institutions.

The thematic area **Forestry and Agriculture** of the Green Strategy emphasizes actions for sustainable land management and sustainable forest and pasture management. MAF, with support from the World Bank, has prepared a Rural Development Strategy, and is facilitating the activities for Development of Rural Areas. The focus of the Ministry is assisting farmers to increase productivity and economic returns from land-use.

A National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was adopted and defines priorities and necessary changes for implementation of the Conventions on Biological Diversity. This strategy would increase the protected areas to approximately 15 percent of Albanian's territory.

<p>iii. address the underlying causes of desertification and pay special attention to the socio- economic factors contributing to desertification processes;</p>	<p>The 2004 status report on progress toward achieving the MDG notes that the Constitution of the Albania ensures and safeguards fundamental human rights to free access to education, health and housing, among others. It notes further that the Albania Government is committed to eliminating poverty. It has an elaborate welfare system, along with special emphasis given to those that are less fortunate so that they do not live in poverty.</p> <p>The strategies of the NSSED endeavor to raise farm production and revenue, improve land tenure and optimize land use, create employment and alleviate poverty through sustainable land management and development.</p> <p>In Albania wood is the predominant fuel for households needs, covering about 68% of rural household energy needs for heating and cooking during the winter and about 53% during the summer. Fuel wood satisfies 79% of the total heating needs of rural households. The Local Forestry and Pasture Management Project, aimed to increase the participation of workers and villagers in local forestry activities and to support the transfer of forests and pasture user rights to communes. The project had increased the interest and awareness of the local governments and villagers to protect forests and pastures, rehabilitated 3,300 ha of thinning forest, built some 5,000 m3 of erosion control works, and increased forest area by 250 ha.</p> <p>Public investment in reforestation and rehabilitation has increased significantly recently. Total investments in 2000 were about 2.6 times more than in 1999. As result, reforested and rehabilitated surfaces increased over the same period by about 3 and 3.3 times respectively.</p> <p>A National Waste Strategy was adopted in 1996. The Strategy sets out short and long-term objectives for solid waste management. The short-term strategy is to develop a landfill system for municipal waste throughout the country over the next 5-10 years. Over the long-term, more sophisticated methods of waste management are to be developed. Waste separation, recycling, waste reduction and composing policies are also to be developed over the long-term.</p>
<p>iv. promote awareness and facilitate the participation of local populations, particularly women and youth, with the support of non-governmental organizations, in efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought</p>	<p>One of the priorities of Ministry of Environment is to increase public awareness on the importance of environmental protection and their inclusion in the decision-making process. The comprehensive sensibility campaign through electronic and written media has continued during last years. In close collaboration with Council of Ministers' representatives, many meetings were organised with the participation of the public on licensing procedures for activities that have a great impact on environment</p> <p>The environment has become a subject of popular public concern and the media has taken it on board. There have been tangible results in the amount of information and educational materials produced from manuals and books to TV documentaries.</p> <p>The Forestry sector every year organizes the month of forestry (December) where the local NGOs and civil society joins with the Forestry sector to increase the forest areas and to reforest the degraded areas.</p> <p>An Environment day (5 June) and World Earth day (22 April) are celebrated every year, as are other events and exhibitions as a contact for the public. The different activities of NGOs are organized in different districts and villages to increase public awareness on environmental protection.</p>

	<p>In the NEAP, education, awareness and advocacy is a cross cutting theme that receives attention in nearly all of the thematic areas. The First National Communication stipulates that parties need to develop and implement educational and public awareness programs on climate change and its effects. The participation of NGOs and the local public in sustainable land management activities is abundant in the various thematic areas of the NEAP, NSSED.</p>
<p>v. provide an enabling environment by strengthening, as appropriate, relevant existing legislation and, where laws do not exist, enacting new ones and establish long-term policies and action programs.</p>	<p>Among the many environmental problems facing Albanian authorities and decision makers, strengthening of institutions and law enforcement has been a priority of government.</p> <p>The NEAP is considered the main official document identifying government policies for environmental issues. It identifies the need to address first the economic, legal and institutional framework governing environmental management in Albania. It defines tasks for Ministries and other institutions whose activity has an impact on the environment. These include a range of organizational, administrative, legal and technical measures, such as: the establishment of a legal framework, introduction of economic incentives, prevention of erosion and soil rehabilitation, reforestation, reductions in industrial and urban pollution, good management of natural resources, investments for environment, and the development of information and public awareness strategies.</p> <p>Albania has adopted the Law on Protected Areas in 2002 and the draft law on biodiversity is with the Parliament for approval. Other laws that regulate biodiversity protection are the law on forestry, the law on pastures and grazing, the law on fisheries, the law on hunting and wildlife protection and the law on plant protection.</p> <p>Additionally, the thematic area of Forestry, Biodiversity and Agriculture of the NEAP, NSSED and MDGs calls for the revision of legislation, improved institutions, etc. that may have a bearing on sustainable land management and sustainable water supply.</p> <p>Following the frame law on “Environmental protection” and the Law on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), all the major plans and programs of the other sectors have to go through a SEA procedure, while the development projects through an EIA process.</p> <p>The Environment Protection law is a comprehensive and strong piece of legislation promoting sustainable development practices.</p> <p>The Forestry Sector legislation further provides the framework for the sustainable management of forest resources in addressing issues like water catchments protection, reforestation programs, protection against fire, demand and supply of forest products, soil conservation, and the conservation of forest biodiversity. Further development of the existing Geographical Information Systems (2003) is needed for informed decision making and for wider application and use.</p> <p>Allowable norms for the discharges of effluent water, the national and the rural strategies for water and sewerage, decisions on the protected areas, decisions for the management plans for the protected areas, etc. already approved by the government; a</p>

	<p>number of projects with international support in the areas of forestry, biodiversity, water infrastructure, air and water monitoring, etc. (past, on-going and future), as well as the National Environmental Strategy (focusing exactly sectoral environmental integration) expected to be drafted until the end of 2005, are examples of response measures meant to alleviate the environmental pressure from economic activities in Albania.</p> <p>The preparation process of the First National Communication has also contributed to the enhancement of general awareness and knowledge on climate change related issues in Albania, strengthening of the dialogue, information exchange and cooperation among all relevant stakeholders including governmental, non governmental, academic and private sectors, and building national capacities.</p> <p>A review of the existing legal instruments, policies and non-regulatory mechanisms reveal that the enabling environment, with respect to appropriate policies, laws and programs do exist but they must now be used in the development of the National Action Program under the UNCCD.</p>
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4. Monitoring of programs and plans

There are no regular and continuous monitoring and evaluation to precisely identify the effectiveness of the development plans and programs. The current legal framework does not provide needed structure and guidance to address institutional responsibilities for monitoring. Actually a variety ministries and agencies are responsible for the compilation, development and revising of plans and programs in national and regional levels, but a continuous monitoring and revising of their implementation doesn't exist. The weak legal framework results in institutional mandates related to monitoring and reporting that are not well coordinated. There is no clear framework describing the relationships between the various levels of administration (central; regional and local) relevant to monitoring/reporting, creating confusion between the different offices in communal and regional levels related to their duties and competencies. In Albania is the need to strengthen institutional capacity on monitoring/reporting and revising of development plans, programs, including the need to clarify roles and responsibilities regarding data collection/information.

5. Databases

Precise characterization of the environmental issues and challenges facing Albania is hampered by inadequate data and databases. Formal linkages between many institutions capable of collecting data and those charged with decision-making do not exist, as well as the mechanisms for sharing information within the Government are weak. Data collection, data processing and data exchange between state and private organizations is a serious problem due to absence of low implementation and a clearer legal framework on the relationships between the various levels of land administration and protection institutions: central, regional and local. This is one of the reasons of the poor coordination and cooperation mechanisms between the ministries, national and local governments, private sector and civil society on the issue of land degradation. In addition there exists a low cooperation and networking skills of employees of different organizations to share data and information for the projects under the national action programs. Unstable institutional structures, change of the structures and low level financing of state institutions are other causes of absence of national databases for natural resources.

Land data sources are dispersed in many agencies and much data are old and archived and of questionable use. Very little data are in digital format and most of them are generated from the donor-funded projects. The best quality data and research are in the various scientific institutes.

The Immoveable Property Registration System provides the most important national database relating to the land use. The cadastral information is available in the Central office and in the regional offices in digital format, for urban and rural areas. The information for rural areas provides the boundary points of agricultural parcels, the numeric codes of agricultural parcels, name of owners, as well as the size of property.

The sections of Land Administration and Protection in regions and communes provide the information for agricultural land, forestry and pastures in parcel level (maps and data register). In the most cases the information is not in digital format. The database for crops production is available in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in national level, while in the Council of Region in the regional level. National database for soil *pedologic* information (maps and data of soil types), soil suitability classification according to *bonitet* (in 10 classes), as well as data for soil structure, physical qualities, micro and macro elements contents, current soil state and fertility are available in Soil Research Institute.

The various databases for roads, railways, mineral resources, nature conservation, forestry and pastures are maintained by different ministries and general directorates under Ministries, based on different software solutions. The Geological Survey of Albania provides the information in digital format for mineral deposits about types and location. MEFWA maintains the database of rivers and lakes and data on the extent of forest areas (natural and plantations), at both national and regional levels, while the MAFCP has the maps of irrigation and drainage systems in all the country. The Military Geographical Institute has available the topographic maps in digital format for all the country. The Institute of Hydrology maintains the climate data, while the Geographical Study Institute the geographic data in national level, both in digital format.

Last years the Ministry of Environment is implementing a project [Environmental Legislation and Planning in Albania (ELPA)] which has as objective the creation of databases for natural resources based on environmental monitoring using GIS software. The environmental monitoring in Albania is coordinated by the MEFWA. The Decision of Council of Ministers (2002) outlines the list of environmental state indicators to be measured, as well as the institutes responsible to perform the duties set in the National Environmental Monitoring Program. The most regular and productive exercise in terms of data generating (at least in the period 2000-2005) is the one carried out by the research/monitoring institutes. Water quality monitoring, including coastal water, urban and surface water, underground water is monitored by the Albanian Geological Survey (AGS), Institute of Public Health and the Institute of Hydrometeorology. Soil Research Institute does the monitoring of indicators for agricultural land (soil fertility, soil erosion, soil pollution) and irrigation water; while the Institute of Forestry and Pastures Research does the monitoring of indicators on forests and forest ecosystems. Institute of Biological Research does the monitoring of fauna of the wetland; ecosystem and habitat diversity in the protected areas and waters; threatened species of fauna; anthropogenic impacts to the fauna.

6. Financing

Land Degradation issues are known by decision makers, but investment and the ratio of the budget state related with land protection are still very low because the land degradation, as well as land protection issues are not considered as priorities. The evident indexes of this are low level implementation of existed strategies and plans, the lack of long term strategies and policies for soil conservation, land use planning, land consolidation, as well as the lack of funds in national government and local government. In addition land degradation aspects are ignored in socio-economical development strategies in regional level.

The main investments on land protection are from foreign donors. So, in 2004, the financing from state budget has been 7.4 million USD and from foreign investment 22.6 million USD. The main investment are mainly on the rehabilitation of irrigation and drainage system and forestry, respectively 45.9 % and 12.1 % of total foreign investments in the period 2000-2004. According to the law *on land protection*, approved in April 2004, the local government should invest on land protection and rehabilitation of eroded land no less than 40 % of the annual accumulation of land taxes. It has not data for these investments up to now.

There are not foreseen the increase of investments on land protection and rehabilitation of eroded land by the Albanian Government in the medium term plan of country development. The increase of investments should be realized by the local government through the budget created from the accumulation of land taxes.

Land degradation is a continuous threat to Albania's land resources and should be considered as a priority, but the investments on land protection are still insufficient. It is the necessity the increase of the investment of Albanian Government, as well as of the foreign donors on land protection.

7. Stakeholders

The Ministry of Environment through the Nature Protection Directorate is responsible for coordinating and the implementation of the UNCCD. MEFWA is the highest governmental body responsible for environmental protection, development of environmental of state policy and strategy and national research programs in the environmental field. This Ministry is supported by 12 Regional Environmental Agencies (REA) located in each prefecture, which are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation; carrying out site inspections; controlling operating facilities and the use of natural resources within their regions; taking part in environmental permitting for new activities; and supporting environmental monitoring and assessments.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer's Protection is a crucial stakeholder, through the sector for Land Management and directorate of the extension service and statistics. This Ministry is supported by the Land Administration and Protection Units and Agricultural Directorates in 12 Regions. The focus of the Ministry is assisting farmers to increase productivity and economic returns from land-use through the directorate of the extension service and statistics. The extension services constitute the principal vehicle to promote the adoption of soil conservation practices in the farming and forestry sectors. The extension officers provide local farmers with advice regarding land use, cropping and cultivation, fertilization and pesticides use, and related matters.

The other important stakeholders are the scientific institutes and universities.

The MAFCP cooperates with institutes specialized in soil sciences that have developed a substantial body of knowledge on issues of soil protection and soil conservation in farming, livestock and forestry (Soil Research Institute, Institute of Forests and Pastures). However, the vehicle for the application of this knowledge on the field, which is the extension services, is weak. The extension services do not have capacity to provide sufficient advice to farmers, forest owners and cattle ranchers on known and feasible soil conservation practices, and certainly not on sustainable land management. The extension service is unable to provide this service because it does not have enough qualified staff and financial support. In this context the capacities of extension services and Environmental Agencies should be strengthened and their cooperation in the field should be established and maintained.

The main centers for the education of specialists in agriculture science are the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT) and the University of Korca (UK).

The AUT is one the main center of high education and research in the field of agriculture. Within the AUT is the section of "Soil Science", with a qualified staff for teaching and research. The main objective of this Section is education of young scientists in the subjects of soil science; emphasize the soil as natural resource, soil physics and chemistry, land use and management, as well as land protection and soil remediation. The education in the field of extension is another purpose of the AUT. The Faculty of Forestry within AUT provides subjects on "Erosion Issues" and other aspects of environmental degradation as well. However, the curricula of higher educational establishments need to be accomplished with desertification issues related subjects, as well as relevant literature needs to be developed and provided.

University of Korca is another center of education and research studies in the field of Soil Science.

The clauses of Annex V of the Convention to Combat Desertification, dealing with fertility of soil, soil degradation, agro-technology, research, action plans and increasing awareness, are important for Albania. Implementation of the provisions of the convention through the collection, analysis and exchange of information, research and technology transfer would contribute to closer contacts between the agricultural producers, research institutions and local governments. The NGO play an important role in this process. There are several NGOs in the country that have gradually built competence and experience in various environmental fields. The NGO-networks in Albania are important stakeholders to involve farmers in the consultation process for the implementation UNNCD. Last years the sharing information with the public is increased. The representatives of the government, non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions have presented and have discussed in mass-media the different issues related to the land use, land protection, soil erosion, land urbanization, etc. The data are available for the broad public.

The International day to Combat Desertification – June 17, The Environment day in June 5, the World Earth day- 22 April are always celebrated by participation of mass-media, NGO and different institutions (governmental and non governmental). Although the activities on public awareness raising on combating desertification of broad public are limited. It is needed to build up a platform for ensuring public participations in combating desertification.

The Convention to Combat Desertification has many goals as the protection of soil and water, socio-economic objectives, education, research, financial aid, etc. Although the Land degradation in Albania is widespread, the general objectives of the Convention to Combat Desertification with respect to soils are mostly of medium or low priority. The stakeholders on all levels, although familiar with the negative impacts of land degradation, are poorly equipped to respond. Democracy, decentralization and open markets demand radically different responses and incentives relevant to the earlier, centralized administration. Therefore it is very important that the government agencies and other stakeholders would be ready to contribute too much more by way of investment towards implementing the provisions of the convention.

8. Public awareness

One of the priorities of Ministry of Environment is to increase public awareness on the importance of environmental protection, land degradation issues and their inclusion in the decision-making process. Public awareness is developed through mass media, training programs, continuous education, and short courses. Development of flyers, small booklets, and other written materials has been one of the good methods for increasing awareness.

In the NEAP, national strategies, programs and projects, the education, awareness and advocacy is a cross cutting theme that receives attention in nearly all of the thematic areas. The First National Communication stipulates that parties need to develop and implement educational and public awareness programs on climate change and its effects. The participation of NGOs and the local public in sustainable land management activities is abundant in the various thematic areas of the NEAP, NSSD.

The comprehensive sensibility campaign through electronic and written media has continued during last years. In close collaboration with Council of Ministers' representatives, many meetings have been organized with the participation of the public on licensing procedures for activities that have a great impact on environment. The environment has become a subject of

popular public concern and the media has taken it on board. There have been tangible results in the amount of information and educational materials produced from manuals and books to TV documentaries. The sharing information with the public is increased. The representatives of the government, non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions have presented and have discussed in mass-media the different issues related to the land use, land protection, soil erosion, land urbanization, etc.

The International day to Combat Desertification – June 17, The Environment day in June 5, the World Earth day- 22 April are always celebrated by participation of mass-media, NGO and different institutions (governmental and non governmental). In April 22, 2003 from the MoEFWA, Soil Research Institute (SRI), and Land Association organized an exposition where different scientific institutions, Agricultural University, NGO-s presented their studies results and activities on land; one year later the MoEFWA, SSI. Land Association and Institute of Forestry and Pasture presented the draft of National Action Plan. The Forestry sector every year organizes the month of forestry (December) where the local NGOs and civil society joins with the Forestry sector to increase the forest areas and to reforest the degraded areas. The different activities of NGOs are organized in districts and villages to increase public awareness on environmental protection.

The main center for the education of specialists in agriculture science is the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT). The AUT is one the main center of high education and research in the field of agriculture. Within the AUT is the section of “Soil Science”, with a qualified staff for teaching and research. The main objective of this Section is education of young scientists in the subjects of soil science; emphasize the soil as natural resource, soil physics and chemistry, land use and management, as well as land protection and soil remediation. The education in the field of extension is another purpose of the AUT. The Faculty of Forestry within AUT provides subjects on “Erosion Issues” and other aspects of environmental degradation as well.

However, the curricula of higher educational establishments need to be accomplished with desertification issues related subjects, as well as relevant literature needs to be developed and provided. The strengthening environmental education in Universities and middle schools, especially on land degradation issues, as well as increasing of knowledge on UNCCD is a necessity.

Law awareness on Convention issues at all levels and the low level of environmental education at different levels, from children to decision makers, especially on land degradation issues and how to avoid land degradation continues to be present in our country. It is needed to build up a platform for ensuring public participations in combating desertification. In order to achieve this goal most of the NGOs interested in environment, especially NGOs dealing with women, with rural population, and with poverty eradication should be animated at the local and national levels. People should know that desertification and land degradation are almost irreversible processes. It is a necessity the development of an effective and comprehensive public education programs, including the whole community and especially the staff in the key implementing agencies in the relation to the country’s obligations under the UNCCD and their role to achieve these obligations, as well as the strengthening of the environmental NGO capacities, especially those in rural areas. Also, it should take place the training of trainers, the organization of different training courses and improvement of knowledge through trainings at all levels (government institutions, as well as individual level) related to land degradation issues, suitable land management and land protection is a necessity.

9. Findings

In this chapter are presented the capacities and Constraints/needs that summarize the major findings of the thematic assessment on Land Degradation by identifying the major issues and capacity constraints. Analysis of situation in Albania is based in the definition of land degradation proposed in the UNDP/GEF database on land degradation related projects (2000), as below:

Land degradation includes the following issues: soil erosion by wind and/or water, soil destruction, soil denudation, chemical pollution of soil, vegetation degradation of all strata, habitat conversion/loss, loss of soil organic matter, aquifer degradation, riparian degradation, coastal zone degradation related to watershed factors, mountain zone soil stability, fuel wood crisis, uncontrolled bush/forest fires, overgrazing, land-use changes, sedentary and urbanization, drought and desiccation.

The Capacity Constraints Analyze identifies the priority areas of action and the capacity constraints at the individual, institutional and systemic levels. The main land degradation issues in Albania are:

- Inappropriate land use,
- Water erosion, pollution of soils and water logging due to malfunction and mismanagement of irrigation/drainage systems,
- Lack of land use planning and land use planning structure in national level
- Some confusion on legislation and practice with respect to data exchange on land matters within government.
- Lack of a clearer framework on the relationships between the various levels of administration; central, regional and local.
- Inactive role of NGOs and academic institutions in ecological education and public awareness programs,
- Overall lack of funding,
- Lack of specialists trained to implement the CCD

At the individual level the need for training is the major issue.

The GEF OP15 not only provides an opportunity for addressing some of the financial, technological and technical constraints which affects the country's ability to meet its obligations under the UNCCD but, because it is a specific framework for intervention on Sustainable Land Management, it also allows a more comprehensive approach to the country's efforts to address the problem of land degradation in general. Issues such as the urbanization of best agricultural lands, and the unregulated use of agricultural lands for housing, especially in coastal zone and the enforcement and/or introduction of relevant land use policies can be more effectively addressed with this approach. Ineffective land use promotes land degradation and is an important constraint in achieving sustainable development.

Public education and awareness of both the UNCCD, the factors that contribute to land degradation are low. This presents a major constraint that can be also effectively addressed through the development and implementation of the National Action Program of the UNCCD.

The legislative and regulatory framework for effective implementation of the NAP and the country meeting its other obligations as party of the UNCCD exists although there is need for

enforcement and strengthening, by increasing the size of penalties or other measures. There is also need for some new especially concerning effective land use.

In addition there are some strategies and plans undertaken in different areas related with issues of land protection and control over degradation and desertification, but the steps/actions planned are different from one strategy/plan to the other. Also it should move from strategies and plans to actual implementation. A legal framework on land has been created, but it needs to be recast to provide a clearer framework on the relationships between the various levels of administration; central, regional and local.

The analyse of Capacities and constrains of the Convention implementation system

Existing Capacities at Systemic Level

- Existence of national strategies for Water, Forestry, Agriculture and Energy, as well as regional development strategies for some regions;
- Existence of legislative framework (laws, sub-laws, regulations);
- Institutional strengthening of the environment structures has been a priority last years (The creation of MoEFWA in 2001 and Environment Institute with Decision of Council of Ministers N.659, dt.18.12.2002)
- Understanding the importance of environmental issues;
- Existence of International cooperation with European Environmental Agency, as well as the other international organizations
- Membership to the international conventions and international treaties;
- The implementation and financing of the Environmental monitoring program for land (soil erosion, soil fertility, soil pollution) water, air, forestry, biodiversity;
- Implementation of international projects aimed at the strengthening of institutions, staff training and science development;
- Public awareness raising campaign on environmental issues, especially on nature protection and conservation, on the sustainable management of natural resources;
- Political stability to enable capacity building for environmental protection;
- Establishing of the coordination mechanisms between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (Directorate of Land Management) in the framework of UNCCD.
- State funding prospective for biodiversity protection activities during 2005-2006.

Capacity Constrains/Needs at Systemic Level

- Lack of long term strategy and policy for soil conservation and land use planning;
- It is not present a national land-use planning structure in Albania. The institutional reform has addressed the administrative needs (creation of land administration and protection structure) instead of the planning needs;
- Lack of a clearer framework on the relationships between the various levels of administration: central, regional and local;
- Poor coordination and cooperation mechanisms between the ministries, national and local governments, private sector and civil society on the issues of land degradation;
- Gaps in the existing legislation on land. Many laws and overlapping of issues;
- Lack of funds in national government and local government;
- Existence of many strategies and plans, but low level of its implementation;

- Overlapping on legislation and practice with respect to data exchange on land matters within government;
- Lack of the financial support to meet country's obligations to the convention;
- Lack of trained staff at different levels (especially in local and regional levels);
- Land degradation aspects are ignored in socio-economical development strategies in regional level;
- Poor knowledge/expertise which comes from capacity constraints to identify, develop and promote project proposals on land conservation aspects;
- Poor enforcement capacity leading to inadequate implementation of laws;
- Decision makers are not aware on degradation/desertification Convention issues;
- Studies on land degradation, as well as land protection issues are not considered as priorities of the sector;
- Land Degradation issues are known by decision makers, but investment and the ratio of the budget state related with land protection are still very low;
- There is a need for coordinated monitoring of land degradation issues across various Government departments;
- Increase of land fragmentation as result of those parts of the Civil Code that deal with farm family co-ownership of land and inheritance. There is an immediate need for those parts of the civil code to be revised in order to reduce land fragmentation.
- Lack of indicators for assessing the current status and tendencies of land degradation.

Existing Capacities at Institutional Level

- Environmental agencies in regional level and sections of land administration and protection in prefectures and local level;
- Scientific institutions and centres under MAFCP and the Institute of Environment under MEFWA with the qualified staff;
- Agro-environment and Ecology Department in Agricultural University of Tirana;
- Department of Natural resources in MEFWA and Department of land Management in MAFCP;
- National Water Council and National Water Secretariat, as well as Water Executive Agencies of 6 watersheds;
- Highly qualified specialists in the institutions;
- Great number of environmental NGOs (about 83);
- MEFWA as a focal point for UNCCD;
- Environmental monitoring services is in place;
- Many documented studies with regard to land degradation in the country;
- Training courses on land use planning; water administration, etc. have been available.

Capacity Constrains/Needs at Institutional Level

- The institutional responsibilities for control of land degradation are not clearly defined;
- Unstable institutional structures, change of the structures, separations and allocations;
- Non clear mandates and policy making responsibilities to deal directly with land use management, planning and monitoring. Frequent occurrence of duplications or breaks;
- Weak coordination between central and local structures;
- Lack of fund to support scientific studies with regard to land degradation issues;
- Lack of modern equipments, technologies and communication means in related structures;
- Migration of specialists/staff from scientific institutions and ministries abroad;

- Insufficient number of high qualified specialists, especially with regards to land use planning;
- Lack of information flow data sharing and distribution;
- Lack of efficient consulting service on protecting soil fertility, use of ecological farming and sustainable land management,
- Weak coordination and cooperation between governmental and non governmental organizations, between state environmental structures and NGOs;
- Insufficient projects for public awareness increase, insufficient participation of mass media;
- Insufficient fund for land degradation monitoring and land resources inventory at different levels;
- Lack of reliable data on the surface of eroded soils;
- Lack of institutional structures in different sectors (agriculture, urban planning, etc) for planning and coordination of environmental activities;
- Lack of public sector involving mechanisms in decision making processes with regard to land protection issues;
- Lack of information, limited use of traditional knowledge and methods.

Existing Capacities at Individual level

- Public awareness with regard to environment protection during last 10 years increased;
- Increase of information access for individuals, internet development;
- Wide opportunities of involvement in different international projects;
- Wide opportunities for individual qualifications.

Capacity Constrains/Needs at Individual level

- Low level of environmental education at different levels, from children to decision makers, especially on land degradation issues and how to avoid land degradation;
- Low interest of farmers to cultivate agricultural land, because of low soil productivity and low profit
- Low participation in international conferences because of high membership fees and lack of funding;
- Low salaries cause: lack of interest for professional improvements; lack of responsibility towards work which is mostly shown up between the young generation;
- Low awareness on Convention issues at all levels;
- Need to improve knowledge through trainings at all levels: government institutions, as well as individual level;
- Strengthening environmental education in the Agricultural University, especially on land degradation issues, land use planning as well as increase of knowledge on UNCCD.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the situation which is stated in this report we recommended:

Urgent need for the preparation of the National Action Programs (NAP) and establishes priorities for specific action that can act as a catalyst for the development of a comprehensive Land Management Policy and Plan for Albania.

Policy makers should address Sustainable Land Management policies which streamline land degradation issues in a coherent manure. The NAP should be in accordance with UNCCD requirements to which Albania is a Party.

The other issues identified require the following action:

I. Institutional Level

1. Permanent and active operation of the NCB through the NAP;
2. Development of a list of measures for UNCCD implementation in Albania;
3. Timely dissemination of relevant information, such as COP reports, activities to the key implementing agencies.
4. Comprehensive assessment of the land degradation factors which will facilitate NAP implementation and will ensure sustainable development of rural areas in Albania;
5. Development of the detailed inventory of land resources, to compile relevant maps using modern GIS technology and to make this information available to decision makers and different stockholders involved in the process through the strengthening sub-regional cooperation and coordination.
6. Development of efficient monitoring programs on land degradation
7. The effective management and distribution of the country's water resources and adequate financing for existing projects and programs.
8. Increase of investment in rehabilitation of irrigation systems to extent irrigated areas and drainage systems to avoid flooding.
9. Provision of capital funds from the state budget for the implementation of important projects on land degradation.
10. Improvement of training at different levels on land-use and environmental issues;
11. Integration of the activities to control land degradation into existing programs and projects that address biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation.
12. Clarification of inspection framework between different structures in national, regional and local level
13. Strengthening of monitoring system for land use and strengthening capacities on land use planning at regional and national level ;
14. Improvement of the cooperation between structures in regional and local levels for projects in the framework of UNCCD;
15. Support of land consolidation through the adequate policy and strategy
16. Strengthening international cooperation with donors (GEF, WB, IFAD, etc) including development and implementation of transboundary joint projects in the framework of the Convention,
17. Provision of clear mandates and responsibilities at all levels with regard to land use, management, planning and protection;
18. Strengthening of the water management boards capacities, especially at local level; including to enforce economic instruments;
19. Developing extension service on soil fertility protection, the use of ecological farming and sustainable agriculture.
20. Increasing the society on the issues of forest protection and integration of private sector in forest restoration activities;
21. Development and implementation of pipeline projects on water use and wastewater management, as well as the preparation of project proposals at local level;
22. Application of state incentive to the farmers in order to increase agriculture production and employment opportunities in rural areas.

Public Education

1. The development of an effective and comprehensive public education programs, including the whole community and especially the staff in the key implementing agencies in the relation to the country's obligations under the UNCCD and their role to achieve these obligations.
2. Improving the scientific basis for the optimal land use and creation of the relevant consulting system as well as the training courses involving the Universities,
3. Strengthening of the environmental NGO capacities, especially those in rural areas.

Legal, Regulatory & Policies Framework

1. The determination and clarification of legal responsibilities on different levels during the preparation of the NAP for their successful implementation.
2. The enforcement of existing laws and the development of appropriate legislation to prevent the conversion of agricultural lands into other land destinations.
3. Taking into consideration the overlapping, contrary or duplications coming out from different laws on land, there is need for all those laws to incorporate into a Land Code.
4. The development of effective and comprehensive agricultural and land use policies to avoid the land degradation;
5. Enforcement and strengthening of laws on environment protection;
6. Enforcement of the legislation with respect to land use planning and national water use.

II. Individual Level

1. Mainstreaming of all land protection activities into rural and socio-economic development programs and activities.
2. Improving training at different levels to allow correct land classification which are prone to erosion and other factors of degradation as well as to conduct monitoring programs for evaluation of current changes;
3. Strengthening environmental education at different levels (from children to decision makers) with emphasis on how to avoid land degradation;
4. Improvement of the access to the communication means and computer technologies within state governmental structures.

ANNEX 2

Participants in the project

Steering Committee

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Water Administration (Chair)

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection (Directorate of Forests and Pastures)

Ministry of Energy and Transport (National Agency of Energy)

Ministry of Local Government

Institute of Soil Studies

REC Albania

ECAT Tirana

Project Management Team

Klodian Marika National Project Manager

Sajmir Hoxha National Project Director (MoEFWA)

Fabian Selmanaj Admin/finance Assistant

Technical Secretariat

Pellumb Abeshi GEF Focal Point

Zamir Dedej CBD Focal Point

Ermira Fida UNFCCC Focal Point

Sajmir Hoxha UNCCD Focal Point

Working Groups:

Working Group for UNCBD

Ferdinand Bego team leader

Andrian Vaso

Elvana Ramaj

Genti Kromidha

Working Group for UNCCD

Perparim Laze team leader

Valentina Suljoti

Vangjo Kovaci

Ferdi Brahusi

Thimaq Lako

Working Group for UNFCCC

Energy and Environment for Sustainable Development Centre

Besim Islami team leader

ANNEX 3

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- Decisions of the 4th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity www.biodiv.org
- Decisions of the 5th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity www.biodiv.org

Decisions of the 6th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity www.biodiv.org

- Decisions of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity www.biodiv.org
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ANNEX 4 Stakeholders

Beso your comments!!!!

A- Governmental Organizations (Ministries)

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Administration (MoEFWA)

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumers Protection (MoAFCP)

Ministry of Interior and Local Government (MoILG)

Ministry of Health (MoH)

Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)

B- Research Institutes

Main Research Institutions related to Biodiversity

1. INSTITUTE OF BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Fax: + 355 4

Page interneti: www.fshn.edu.al

Address:

Rr. "Sami Frashëri", Nr. 5, Tiranë

Tel./Fax: + 355 4 222638

Email: ikbiol@albmail.com

Dean: Prof. Dr. Llukan Puka

Organization in departments level is as follows:

- Department of Biology
- Department of Mathematics
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Industrial Chemistry
- Department of Physics
- Department of Informatics
- Botanical Garden
- Museum of Natural Sciences

Director: Prof. Dr. Efigjeni Kongjika

At the department level, it has the following organization:

- Department of Flora and Ecology
- Department of Physiology and Microbiology
- Department of Genetics and Biochemistry – Biophysics

Departments related to biodiversity and biotechnology:

- Department of Biology
- Botanical Garden
- Museum of Natural Sciences
- Department of Industrial Chemistry
- Department of Chemistry

2. TIRANA UNIVERSITY

Address:

"Sheshi Nënë Tereza", Tiranë

Tel: +355 4 228402

Fax: +355 4 223981

Rektor: Prof. Dr. Shezai Rrokaj

Department of Biology

Prof. Dr. Murat Xhulaj – Head

FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

Address:

Bulevardi "ZOG I" Nr. 8, Tiranë

Tel: +355 4 227669

Department of Industrial Chemistry

Prof. Dr. Elmaz Shehu – Head

Institute of Corn and Rice
Shkoder
Tel/fax: +355 2242507
e-mail: ileka@albn.net

Department of Chemistry

Prof. Dr. Pandeli Troja - Head

Director: Dr. Kostandin HAJKOLA

BOTANICAL GARDEN

Tel: +355 4 225454

Fax: +355 4 250166

Head: Prof. Dr. Liri Dinga

6. Institute of Horticulture

Address:

”Uje i Ftohte”, Vlore.

Tel & Fax: 063 23225

E-mail: IPMCRSP@icc.al.eu.org

Director: Bardhosh FERRAJ

MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES

Address:

Museum of Natural Sciences

Rr. Duresit, Tirana

Tel: +355 4 229028

Head: Prof. Dr. Idriz Haxhiu

7. INSTITUTE OF FIELD CULTIVARS

Address:

Institute of Field Plants,

Fushe Kruje

Director: Prof. As. Fadil DACI

**3. THE AGRICULTURAL
UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA**

Address:

Universiteti Bujqesor

Kamez, Tirane.

Rector: Prof. Velesin PEÇULI

Faculties:

- The Faculty of Agriculture;
- The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine;
- The Faculty of Forest Sciences
- The interfaculty Department

8. FODDER RESEARCH STATION

Address:

Fodder Experimental Station,
Fushe- Kruje

Director: Dr. Asllan CELAMI

Cel. +355 (0) 682458269

**4. INSTITUTE OF VEGETABLES AND
POTATOES**

Address:

Rruga "Skënder Kosturi", Tiranë

Tel/ Fax : +355 4 22842

Email: instpp@albmail.com

Director: Prof. Dr. Xhevat Shima

9. Tobacco Station, Cerrik (Sdc)

Address:

Experimental station of tobacco,
Cerrik
Elbasan
Tel: 05812291

Director: Kadri KYÇYKU

Cel:+ 355 (0) 682423261

5. INSTITUTE OF CORN AND RICE

Address:

**10. INSTITUTE OF PLANT
PROTECTION**

Address:

Instituti i Mbrojtjes se Bimeve
Shkozet, Dures.

Tel&Fax: ++355 52 64527
E-mail: imbalbania@yahoo.com.

Director: Dr. Skender VARAKU

**11. NATIONAL ENTITY OF SEEDS
AND SAPPLINGS**

Address:

Enti Shteteror i Farave dhe Fidaneve
Rr. "Siri Kodra", Tirane.
Tel: 00355 42 30324

Director: Petrit TOPI

**12. INSTITUTE OF FISHERY
RESEARCH**

Durres.
Tel. +355 05222552

Director: Dr. Kastriot Osmani

**13. INSTITUTE OF FOREST AND
PASTURE RESERACH**

Tirane.

Director: Prof. Syrja Hasko

14. INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS

Address:

Rruga "Lek Dukagjini" Nr. 5,
Tiranë
Tel : +355 4 233357
Fax: +355 4 228300
Faqe interneti: www.instat.gov.al

General Director: Dr. Milva Ekonomi

C- Non-Governmental Organizations

List of Environmental NGOs having biodiversity as a priority

1. Albanian Association of Biologists - Tirana, Albania
2. Albanian Society for the Protection of Birds and Mammals - Tirana, Albania
3. Albanian Association of Plant Physiology – Tirana, Albania
4. Albanian Association of Young and Students of Geoscience and Environment - Tirana, Albania
5. Albanian Environmental Center – Tirana, Albania
6. Albanian Environment Center for Studies and Development - Tirana, Albania
7. Albanian Society of Migratory Birds – Tirana, Albania
8. Albagene – Tirana, Albania
9. Albaflor – Tirana, Albania
10. Albaforest - Tirana, Albania
11. Association for the Preservation of Cultural and Natural Heritage – Saranda, Albania
12. Association of Users of Communal Forests and Pastures Shishtavec-Kukes, Kukes, Albania
13. Association of Environmental and Agricultural journalists - Tirana, Albania
14. Albanian Lawyers For Environmental Protection - Tirana, Albania
15. Albanian Environmental Student's Club - Tirana, Albania
16. Aquarius – Tirana, Albania
17. Association for Protection and Development of the Environment, Mat - Burrel, Albania
18. Association for Protection of Aquatic Wildlife in Albania - Tirana, Albania

19. Association Kadmi & Harmonia - Pogradec, Albania
20. Association Tourism and Environment, Pogradec - Pogradec, Albania
21. BLEKALB – Tirana, Albania
22. Blue Expedition- Vlora, Albania
23. Divjaka-Ecotourism Association - Lushnje, Albania
24. ECAT-Tirana, - Tirana, Albania
25. Eco Integration Retina, Lezhe - Lezhe, Albania
26. Eco-Action, Mirdita - Reshen, Albania
27. Eco-Counseling Center - Tirana, Albania
28. EKO-Goup - Tirana, Albania
29. Ecological Club - Librazhd, Albania
30. Ecological Club, Dibra Region - Peshkopi, Albania
31. Ecological Club, Elbasan - Elbasan, Albania
32. Ecological Club, Lezhe - Lezhe, Albania
33. Ecological Club, Lushnja - Lushnje, Albania
34. Ecological Club, Maliq - Korce, Albania
35. EDEN Center, - Tirana, Albania
36. Egnatia - Librazhd, Albania
37. Environmental Association Gjinar - Elbasan, Albania
38. Environmental Association Gramsh - Gramsh, Albania
39. Environmental Association Lilium Albanicum - Librazhd, Albania
40. Environmental Association Morava - Korce, Albania
41. Environmental association “Tomor and its managers” – Berat, Albania
42. Environmental Club, Kurbin – Tirana, Albania
43. Environmental Club Perla - Tirana, Albania
44. Environmental Education Eco Group – Tirana, Albania
45. Environmental Protection and Development – Tirana, Albania
46. Farmers’ Association, Shkrel – Shkoder, Albania
47. Forests and Pastures Users Association of Melan, Diber – Peshkopi, Albania
48. Forest Progress - Kukes, Albania
49. Friends of Prespa – Korce, Albania
50. Herpetofauna of Albania, Tirana, Albania
51. Hunters Association, Diber - Peshkopi, Albania
52. Hunters Association – Tirana, Albania
53. Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania – Tirana, Albania
54. Institute for Natural Studies and Environmental Education in Albania - Tirana, Albania
55. Korca Women’s Group – Korca, Albania
56. Eco-counseling Center, Vlore - Vlora, Albania
57. Mass-media and Environment - Tirana, Albania
58. Nature Protectors Association of Albania - Tirana, Albania
59. People’s Forest Foundation – Shkoder, Albania
60. Preservation of Forests and Green Environment - Shkoder, Albania
61. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania - Tirana, Albania
62. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environmental Association, Shkoder - Shkoder, Albania

63. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environmental Association, Berat - Berat, Albania
64. Protection and Preservation of Natural Environmental Association, Vlore - Vlore, Albania
65. Regional Environmental Center, Tirana – Tirana, Albania
66. Society for the Protection of the Environment and Promotion of Tourism – Gjirokaster, Albania
67. Southern Natural Environment of Albania - Gjirokaster, Albania
68. Stimulating Program for Social Alternatives – Tirana, Albania
69. Sustainable Economic Development Agency - Tirana, Albania
70. The Environmental Association Kristal - Lac, Albania
71. The Environmental Club of Pogradec - Pogradec, Albania
72. The Environmental Club, Kurbin - Milot, Albania
73. The Young Ecologist - Tirana, Albania
74. Transborder Wildlife - Korce, Albania
75. Willow Management Association - Koplik, Albania
76. Youth Environmental Club of P.N.L - Tirana, Albania
77. Youth Environmental Club Pearl, Korca - Korce, Albania