



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Greece

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Final Report of the Mid-term Evaluation Mission

June 2009

Dr. Phillip Edwards (Team Leader)
Mrs. Slavjanka Pejcinovska-Andonova
Dr. Andrian Vaso



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Following completion of the Draft Report on 12th May 2009, review comments were received in consolidated form from the PMUs, the UNDP COs, and the Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava on 24th June 2009. These comments have either been included into the revised text where these related to factual inaccuracies in the draft, or have been reproduced in full and unedited as footnotes to the appropriate text to ensure a fair hearing to all parties. The MTET has made responses to some of the comments. We thank each of the reviewers sincerely for their efforts and insights which have undoubtedly improved this final report.

The views expressed in this report are intended to offer some assistance and direction to the Prespa Basin Regional Project as it enters its latter stages. We have tried to balance our thoughts and offer fair perspectives of what was observed and learned from people more knowledgeable about the Project than we will ever be. Our sincere apologies in advance if anyone should take anything written to be anything other than constructive criticism.

PE would like to express his sincere gratitude to Slavjanka and Andrian for their perceptive thoughts and insights, and without whose linguistic skills none of this would have been possible. They both worked long and hard beyond their ToRs at the everyday logistics to ensure that my welfare was taken care of, and their kindnesses have been much appreciated.

And finally, one of the delights of this sort of work remains coming to new and extremely welcoming countries and going home again having made new friends, seen new things, and witnessed with great admiration the dedication and enthusiasm that so many people bring to their conserving the important places of the world. We, as a team, would like to wish them thanks and every success.

Phillip Edwards
Steart, Somerset
England.

Slavjanka Pejcinovska-Andonova
Skopje
Macedonia

Adrian Vaso
Tirane
Albania

26th June 2009

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

Currency of Albania is the lek. At the time of the MTET, US\$ 1 = 100 lek.

Currency of FYR Macedonia is the denar. At the time of the MTET, US\$ 1 = 46 denari.

AL	Albania
CEPA	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
EoP	End of Project
EoY	End of Year
EU	European Union
FYR	Former Yugoslavian Republic
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GR	Greece
ha	Hectare(s)
IEM	Integrated ecosystem management
LEAP	Local Environment Action Plan
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MCWG	Monitoring and Conservation Working Group
MK	FYR Macedonia
MoAFWE	Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy (FYR Macedonia)
MoEFWA	Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Albania)
MoEPP	Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia)
MTE	Mid-term Evaluation
MTET	Mid-term Evaluation Team
NCRC	National Capital Resource Centre
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NPM	National Project Manager
OFM	Organisation of Fishery Management
PDF-B	Project Development Facility – Block B
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PMU	Project Management Unit
PNP	Prespa National Park
PNP-MC	Prespa National Park Management Committee
POC	Project Oversight Committee
PPCC	Prespa Park Coordination Committee
RFP	Request for payment
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SNR	Strict Nature Reserve
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SPP	Society for the Protection of Prespa
TBC	Transboundary Component
TBU	Transboundary Unit
TDA	Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP-AL	UNDP Albania Country Office
UNDP COs	UNDP Country Offices

UNDP-MK

US\$

WFD

WMWG

UNDP FYR Macedonia Country Office

United States Dollar

Water Framework Directive (EU)

Water Management Working Group

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY POINTS

- Project overall evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.
- Implementation on the ground is mixed and the implementation approach is evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**. [Albanian component is **Satisfactory**; Macedonian component is **Marginally Satisfactory**; Transboundary component is **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.]
- Project stakeholder participation is excellent and has been evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.
- Project monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.
- The sustainability of the Project is mixed (institutionally and socially good, financially poor) and has been evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**.

Key successes – development and publication of the Local Environmental Action Plans in Ligenas and Proger communes in Albania, and initial implementation underway; spatial plans for Ohrid and Prespa Region in FYR Macedonia in the final stages of Parliamentary approval; development of fisheries association for Micro Prespa; “organic generation” of Union of Agricultural Producers in Resen Municipality – formed during the PDF-B, used during another GEF project, and built into a prize-winning NGO during the current implementation complete with a fully functioning analytical laboratory; construction underway of a wastewater plant using organic filtration both to reduce nutrient input to Macro Prespa but also to act as a demonstration for the Municipality of Resen who have expressed interest in replicating it in other villages in the watershed; trilateral technical working groups on monitoring and conservation, fisheries, and water management, working towards negotiated agreements for action; and provoking discussion over the future and function of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee.

Key problem areas – the Project had to cancel the winning tender for the Species and Habitats Plan because it was ineligible – but the knock on delays threaten the viability of many of the Transboundary component’s deliverables; the delay in the start of the KfW project in Albania is threatening the integrity of the Albanian component; the river restoration along the Golema Reka within Resen has provided an engineering solution to the problem of high nutrient input to Macro Prespa, but has missed the opportunity to demonstrate best practice with regard to biodiversity. In addition, there are two external factors that are affecting Project delivery adversely, namely that i) the Greek Government has not delivered on its commitment to fund those parallel activities to the Project that it signed up to; and ii) the political climate in the region is not conducive to the signing of a trilateral agreement covering the working and financing of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee and all that entails, and another solution is urged.

The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) of the Project was conducted over a period of 30 days between 25th March and 12th May 2009 by a team of one international and two national consultant. The MTE was carried out on schedule according to the Project programme. The Evaluation Team’s ToR is given in Annex I, its itinerary in Annex II and the list of people interviewed in Annex III. A list of indicators, their mid-term status and expected end of Project achievement level, together with performance rating is given in Annex IV. After receipt of comments on 24th June 2009, which have been added as footnotes to the main text, the report was finalised on 26th June 2009.

RESULTS

Output 1.1: Integrated Land Use Spatial Plan for MK Prespa and LEAP for AL Prespa – Highly Satisfactory. Local Environmental Action Plans approved by Commune Councils in AL; new Spatial

Plan for Prespa before Parliament awaiting approval; agreement to combine Water-use and Land-use plans into a single Watershed Management Plan in MK.

Output 1.2: Ecosystem health priorities mainstreamed into productive sector law and regulatory instruments – Satisfactory. Reports incorporating ecosystem parameters into existing sectoral legal frameworks produced for water, agriculture, forest, and fishery law in AL. Sustainable forest guidance produced; watershed management plan under preparation; training in Good Agricultural Practice underway in MK. Transboundary Fisheries Group formed.

Output 1.3: Ecosystem oriented water management piloted at the local scale – Marginally Satisfactory (MK). No actions yet awaiting Watershed Management Plan.

Output 1.4: Capacity for water and watershed management built at municipal and commune level in MK and AL respectively – Marginally Satisfactory. Delayed by KfW project but significant lobbying done in AL. Establishment of Watershed Management Council to be finalised in May 2009 in MK.

Output 1.5: Flexible pollution reduction techniques and the use of incentives strengthens enforcement of and compliance with environmental laws protecting ecosystem health – Satisfactory (MK). Training in application and inspection procedures for IPPC B type permits undertaken for Resen and neighbouring Municipalities and industrial stakeholders.

Output 2.1: Reduced environmental impacts of agriculture in AL and MK Prespa – Highly Satisfactory (MK); Satisfactory (AL). principles of Integrated Pest and Crop Management applied, automated agro-meteorological stations and analytical laboratory equipment purchased to help decrease applications of agrochemicals. Management of pesticide packaging waste addressed.

Output 2.2: Forest managed for native species composition and forest stand heterogeneity in MK and AL – Marginally Satisfactory. Small-scale projects undertaken; advisor about to start work in AL. Sustainable Forest Guidance produced in MK.

Output 2.3: Restoration/reforestation of degraded forest in AL Prespa NP – No action.

Output 2.4: Pilot small-scale wastewater treatment facilities measurably reduce eutrophying inputs to Lakes Prespa – Highly Satisfactory (MK); Marginally Satisfactory (AL). Reviews of locations for facilities in AL. Construction of demonstration wastewater plant using natural filtration techniques almost complete in village of Nakolec, MK.

Output 2.5: Strengthened civil society partners for ecosystem-oriented fishery management in AL and MK Prespa – Marginally Satisfactory. Organisation of Fishery Management for Macro Prespa supported with equipment and training; new Association of Fishermen being formed for Micro Prespa; exchange visits undertaken in AL. Professional Fishery Association for Prespa founded in MK

Output 2.6: A marketplace to foster the knowledge, goods and services of a conservation economy – Marginally Satisfactory. Awaiting work on a Natural Resource Capital Centre in AL where an economic valuation of ecosystem services and small-scale awareness raising activities have been undertaken. Activities well advanced for development of a NCRC, and similar economic valuation just beginning in MK.

Output 3.1: Transboundary monitoring programme – Marginally Satisfactory. Transboundary Monitoring Conservation Working Group established and working towards getting pilot transboundary monitoring activities established using agreed methods for 2-3 parameters for each of five themes. Various trainings occurring in AL and equipment bought in MK.

Output 3.2: Landscape scale conservation planning – Unsatisfactory (TB). Habitat and Species Conservation Action Plan tender cancelled because tender may have been compromised, but questions remain over why such a pivotal piece of work has been left so late in the Project. Threatens viability of achieving many indicators.

Output 3.3: Restoration of the Golema Reka – Marginally Satisfactory (MK). Restoration of 500m of Golema Reka achieved, complete with interceptor collection system to take factory pollutants and

sewage to sewage works, but scheme largely an engineering solution and opportunity missed to demonstrate global best practice for including biodiversity factors into the scheme.

Output 3.4: PNP and GNP management capacity is strengthened and the parks fully operational – Not evaluated because KfW project delayed in AL and now a parallel activity by KfW in MK.

Output 3.5: Ezerani Wildlife Reserve is re-authorized and fully operational – Marginally Satisfactory (MK). Project has supported Government work required by new law to re-valorise natural values of Reserve and to determine boundaries and categorisation for re-designation.

Output 3.6: Prespa Protected Area – GR fully operationalised – Not evaluated, Greece only.

Output 4.1: PPCC becomes a formal, international trilateral institution under international law– Marginally Satisfactory (TB). International consultant undertook review of the legal and operational role of the PPCC and produced a report showing stages necessary to achieve Trilateral Agreement to legalise PPCC. AL and MK Governments have endorsed this but reality is that such an Agreement is unlikely because of adverse political climate between GR and MK. Executive Secretary not hired by Project despite its pivotal role.

Output 4.2: Prespa Water Working Group established by the PPCC – Marginally Satisfactory. Groundwork laid to establish Water Management Working Group, expected in June 2009.

Output 4.3: Transboundary communication – Satisfactory. Communication, Education and Public Awareness Strategy has been prepared. Websites for PPCC/Prespa Park and Project operative. Small grants programme run successfully for six projects in AL. Numerous small-scale tools produced and activities completed.

Output 4.4: Pilot species and habitat conservation initiatives – Marginally Satisfactory (AL); Marginally Unsatisfactory (TB). All activities delayed because of delay to Habitats and Species Conservation Action Plan. Small scale activities in AL.

Output 4.5: Tri-national ecotourism and visitation strategy and management plan designed and approved by stakeholders – Marginally Satisfactory (TB). Cooperated with the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) to develop an Ecotourism Strategy for the Korça region. International consultant has prepared ToRs for Tri-lateral Tourism Strategy and Action Plan due to be undertaken during 2009. Key issues for tourism development, initiatives and projects in the three countries were identified.

Output 4.6: Supplementary diagnostic analysis fills gaps in existing analysis and supports preparation of SAP – Marginally Satisfactory (TB). Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis underway and Strategic Action Plan due late 2009.

Output 4.7: Strategic Action Program for Prespa Lakes Basin developed and negotiated and committed to by highest levels of Government in AL, GR and MK – Marginally Satisfactory (TB). Awaiting SAP.

KEY ISSUES

This Project has struggled from the outset with an overly ambitious and overly complex design that arose out of a dysfunctional PDF-B process, described by one of the participants as the “worst he had ever seen”. The original idea of an overarching transboundary set of activities with nationally-focussed ones nested within it was always undermined by the fact that the implementation arrangements provided for two strong national Project Management Units with a much weaker Transboundary Unit which was given a coordination role but no overall project management role – the national components being required to coordinate their activities with those of the TBU but not actually report directly to it. The laxity in this system was further exacerbated by the fact that each component started at different times, with the Transboundary one commencing last. Finally, the MTET feels that the oversight arrangements for the Project are flawed. Given that one of the main aims of the Project is to strengthen and mature the PPCC, it appears counterintuitive that if the PPCC requires its capacity to be strengthened that it should be considered to have enough capacity to

oversee a US\$15 million project, and a conflict of interest for a beneficiary of the Project to oversee the very project from which it is benefiting. Given that several Ministries from all three countries' Governments are actually involved in the activities of the Project, and that moves to legalise the PPCC through some means will at some stage need to involve the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, these oversight arrangements need reviewing to become more relevant and effective in meeting the Project's needs.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, implementation of the Project so far has been variable. Notwithstanding the considerable difficulties posed by it being implemented across three very different countries, including one being a GEF donor rather than a recipient and straddling a Schengen Agreement border; and an enabling environment that has become very much harder to work in than at the time of Project design through deteriorating political relations, exacerbated by ethnic tensions, high expectations, and low technical capacity prevalent across much of the area, progress towards its overall target has been good in places and trust and respect amongst some stakeholders is evident. In **Albania**, a settled Project team appears to have been efficient and effective, with a particularly well-organised and highly motivated project team overseen by a respected National Project Manager (NPM) with strong leadership skills. In **FYR Macedonia**, a poor NPM followed by a difficult recruitment process to replace him, led initially to very slow delivery. However, the new NPM, an engineer by training, has driven implementation forwards forcefully and, since August 2008, a stable and efficient team have made significant and high quality progress, particularly on those activities involving engineering solutions. The **Transboundary component** suffered delays in recruiting personnel at the start and has faced considerable external challenges to its progress since – challenges that seem set to remain.

The MTET believes that the Project can be proud that some of the achievements made by its national components, e.g. the Local Environmental Action Plans, the demonstration wastewater treatment plant in Nakolec, the work with farmers to reduce the application of agrochemicals, which are increasing the integrated ecosystem approach to the management of the Prespa Basin. However, its greater goals of developing effective, streamlined, cooperative mechanisms for transboundary management of the Basin remain slow, mired in the challenges listed above, and lacking in innovative approaches from its staff or stakeholders as to ways to overcome these challenges. The key issues that now confront the Project are: i) how to progress now that the International Transboundary Advisor has left the Project; ii) how to get the Greek Government to honour its financing commitments to the Project that have all made the implementation of the transboundary activities much harder and much slower than anticipated; iii) how to move forward with the maturation process of the PPCC and its Secretariat, and iv) the need for UNDP (particularly the Macedonian Country Office) to lessen the bureaucratic burden on the Project and to work more flexibly thereby facilitating Project activities.

Recommendations and Lessons Learned are listed on pages 62-63.

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

1. The Monitoring and Evaluation Policy at the project level in UNDP/GEF has two overarching objectives, namely to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities; and to promote learning, feedback and knowledge sharing on results and lessons learned among the GEF and its partners, as basis for decision-making on policies, strategies, programme management, and projects and to improve knowledge and performance. With this in mind, this Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) was initiated by UNDP Macedonia as the GEF Implementation Agency for the *Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Greece* (Prespa Basin Regional Project) to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of Project activities in relation to the stated objective so far, and to produce possible recommendations on how to improve the management of the project until its completion at the end of December 2011.

2. The MTE was conducted over a period of 30 days between 25th March and 12th May 2009 by a team of one international and two national consultants. It was carried out on schedule according to the Project programme. The approach was determined by the terms of reference ([Annex I](#)) which were closely followed, via the itinerary detailed in [Annex II](#). Throughout the evaluation, particular attention was paid to explaining carefully the importance of listening to stakeholders' views and in reassuring staff and stakeholders that the purpose of the evaluation was not to judge performance in order to apportion credit or blame but to determine ways to maintain or improve means of implementation to ensure the Project's successful conclusion and to learn lessons for the wider GEF context. Wherever possible, information collected was cross-checked between various sources to ascertain its veracity, but in some cases time limited this. A list of people interviewed is given in [Annex III](#). The report was finalised on 26th June 2009 after receipt of comments on 24th June.

3. Full details of the objectives of the MTE can be found in the ToR (Annex I), but the evaluation has concentrated on assessing the concept and design of the Project, its implementation in terms of quality and timeliness of inputs, and efficiency and effectiveness of activities carried out, and the objectives and outcomes achieved as well as the likely sustainability of its results. UNDP also requested the MTET to examine the functioning of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC) with a view as to how the Project might best facilitate its maturation, and to look at the PPCC Secretariat in relation to the current circumstances of the Project's Transboundary Component to suggest any synergies. As part of this, the Team Leader of the MTE visited Greece to ascertain the views of its national stakeholders and to gain a fuller understanding of the issues pertaining to transboundary cooperation. However, since Greece is not a beneficiary country of the GEF and the activities undertaken there in relation to transboundary cooperation with the Project do not fall under GEF's jurisdiction, these activities have not been included within the MTE. Discussion of some issues pertaining to Greece are, however, included in Section 5: Key Issues.

4. Wherever possible the MTET has tried to evaluate issues according to the criteria listed in the *UNDP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy*, namely:

- Relevance – the extent to which the activity is suited to local and national development priorities and organisational policies, including changes over time.
- Effectiveness – the extent to which an objective has been achieved or how likely it is to be achieved.
- Efficiency – the extent to which results have been delivered with the least costly resources possible.
- Results – the positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effects produced by a development intervention. In GEF terms, results include direct project outputs,

short-to medium term outcomes, and longer-term impact including global environmental benefits, replication effects and other, local effects.

- **Sustainability** – the likely ability of an intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially and socially sustainable.
5. The MTET has evaluated the Project’s performance against the revised logframe (see paragraph 26) according to the current six-point evaluation criteria provided to it by the GEF. This is reproduced in Table 1 for clarity.

TABLE 1: CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE THE RUK PROJECT BY THE TERMINAL EVALUATION TEAM

Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Project is expected to achieve or exceed all its major global environmental objectives, and yield substantial global environmental benefits, without major shortcomings. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
Satisfactory (S)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major global environmental objectives, and yield satisfactory global environmental benefits, with only minor shortcomings.
Marginally Satisfactory (MS)	Project is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with either significant shortcomings or modest overall relevance. Project is expected not to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives or yield some of the expected global environment benefits.
Marginally Unsatisfactory (MU)	Project is expected to achieve some of its major global environmental objectives with major shortcomings or is expected to achieve only some of its major global environmental objectives.
Unsatisfactory (U)	Project is expected not to achieve most of its major global environment objectives or to yield any satisfactory global environmental benefits.
Highly Unsatisfactory (U)	The project has failed to achieve, and is not expected to achieve, any of its major global environment objectives with no worthwhile benefits.

6. The results of the evaluation were conveyed informally to each of the National Project Managers and some members of their teams prior to the Mid-term Evaluation Team’s (MTET) departure. A formal de-briefing meeting was held with the GEF Regional Technical Advisor and the management team of UNDP-MK on 28th April prior to the drafting of this report. A list of attendees at that meeting is given in [Annex V](#).

PROJECT CONCEPT AND DESIGN

7. The Project concept arose from increased efforts to strengthen transboundary cooperation in the Prespa Lakes basin that had been catalysed by the Prime Ministers Declaration of February 2000 in the village of Aghios Germanos, Greece. This had declared “*Prespa Lakes and their surround catchment as “Prespa Park’ ... the first trans-boundary protected area in South Eastern Europe...*” and promised “*enhanced cooperation among competent authorities in our countries with regard to environmental matters*” including the exploration of “*appropriate management methods for the sustainable use of the Prespa Lakes water, and to spare no efforts so that the “Prespa Park” becomes a model of its kind ...*”. From this Declaration, the three Ministers of the Environment established the Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC) as a non-legal entity who, despite funding problems, collaboratively produced a “*Strategic Action Plan for the Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park*” in 2002 as a first step in the development of a common vision for the conservation and sustainable development of the Prespa Lakes basin. As one of the means in seeking funding to implement activities under this plan, the original application to GEF was made and the Project entered the GEF work plan on 5th March 2002.

8. The PDF-B appears to have had a long and difficult gestation, and although being supported actively by a number of local stakeholders, particularly the Society for the Protection of Prespa¹, the final documentation was clearly rushed. The PDF-B process was, according to one seasoned participant, the worst he had ever seen, and given GEF's policy of a "three-year shelf life" for project development, an international consultant was eventually drafted in for two to three months near the end of the period to draft the Project Document which was submitted just ahead of the deadline². The STAP Review was undertaken in June 2005.

9. The Project design on which UNDP-GEF and the Governments of Albania and the FYR Macedonia signed off is moderately simple in concept but is extremely ambitious and complicated in the detail. It contains some innovative approaches to analysis, for example:

*"21. When analyzing stresses on ecosystem health and main sources of stress, the team considered a stress to be the impairment or degradation of the size, condition, and/or landscape context of a conservation target, and results in reduced viability of the conservation target. We considered a source of stress to be an extraneous factor, either human (policies, land uses, pollution) or biological (non-native species)"*³.

22. The following simple example illustrates the thinking behind the stress/source of stress approach. If we call a proposed road a threat to an estuarine system, we are then immediately inclined to stop construction of the road: threat: road = solution: stop road.

23. However if we separate the threat into stress and source, the potential stress to the estuarine system is not the road. The stress is, for example, the loss of tidal flow. This mode of thinking then catalyses consideration of solutions that will maintain tidal flow, which may or may not involve stopping the road."

and identifies the synergies with, and opportunities provided by, the processes in Albania and FYR Macedonia in relation to the adoption of the EU *aquis communautaire*, as well as being complementary to other recently complete or current projects, and links well with co-financing institutions. The local office in Resen, FYR Macedonia, has proved a strength (cf. Albania where there is still no presence in the Prespa area (but see paragraph 135)) since it has enabled the Project to relate activities directly to local people and the administration and to facilitate discussion and cooperation thereby avoiding conflict.

10. However, the overall design of the Project is flawed. The main thrust of the Project is to strengthen and facilitate a transboundary approach to the management of the Prespa Lakes by building cooperation and yet what is designed are two strong national components but that effectively do nothing to build that transboundary cooperation, and a much weaker transboundary component. This is further reflected in its staffing and oversight (for the latter, see paragraphs 19 and 115 *et seq.*). The Document identifies two full project teams (one in each of the two beneficiary countries) to deal with activities in Outcomes 1 and 2, but then allocates only two staff (the ITA and assistant) to the Transboundary Unit tasked with the majority of activities under Outcomes 3 and 4 in an infinitely more complex environment. The MTET feels this is very strange, and it is clear that such staffing arrangements have in practice been detrimental. Also inherent in this design is another weakness that

¹ SPP was formed on 18th December 1990 by seven Greek NGOs (World Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of Prespa, Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature, Hellenic Society for the Protection of the Environment and the Cultural Heritage, Hellenic Ornithological Society, Goulondris Museum of Natural History, Arctouros) the Danish Ornithological Society, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (UK), and Station Biologique de la Tour du Valat (France).

² Consolidated comment: An international consultant was engaged for total number of 584 days in the period 18 June 2004 – 23 November 2006 to develop the GEF Brief and Project Document. In addition, another international consultant was engaged for 24 days to prepare comparative analyses on management of trans-boundaries water bodies to serve as a basis for management of Prespa. However, due to late comments from the key stakeholders and different interests involved, the final document had to be completed in rush.

³ The Nature Conservancy. 2000. The Five-S Framework for Site Conservation: A practitioner's handbook for site conservation planning and measuring conservation success. Volume I. Second Edition.

has undermined the cohesiveness of the Project's implementation. The design of three project components is only ever going to work if there are clear and strong lines of reporting, and given the ITA's central role as a coordinator and the importance attached to the transboundary aspects of this project over the national components alone, this role should have been made pivotal. However, instead of making this role one of leadership through the requirement that the ITA acts as the overall Project Manager with both national components reporting to him/her; the Project Document instead requires this role to be one of "*overall monitoring and coordination among the PMU and the Greek [Project Enabling Committee]*".

11. Although comprehensive, it is overly so, overall being poorly designed and too complex, attempting to cover almost all threats and issues pertaining to the Prespa Basin in a single project – in short, a Christmas tree approach – spatial planning, water issues, agro-chemicals, wastewater problems, fisheries management, forestry management, protected area planning and capacity building, monitoring systems, habitat restoration, targeted species conservation interventions, as well as transboundary institutional strengthening; all in a politically, ethnically, and institutionally complex environment (cf. the STAP reviewer's comment at 1 h) that the proposals are "*summarized and elucidated in a clear logical framework matrix*". While the very nature of an integrated ecosystem management approach is the integration of a number of key issues, the MTET feels that the comprehensiveness of the approach attempted here in such a complex cross-border environment is several degrees too ambitious and probably reflects the international consultant trying to assuage the pressure from all stakeholders to include their priorities for the project, rather than to deal hard-headedly with a focused design aimed at resolving the primary issues – perhaps just the maturation of the PPCC, joint monitoring, watershed management planning, and fisheries management. Furthermore, the design pays little respect to some basic realities – trying to increase transboundary cooperation between two poor countries with economies in transition with weak legal frameworks and one that is a fully-fledged member of the European Union and not eligible for GEF funding. It also pays lip service to the fact that there was a dispute between two of these countries, but does not analyse how to progress in case this dispute escalates – as it has done.

12. There are often no clear links between the projected achievements and the means to realise them. Many of the activities designed have proved hugely complex in themselves to implement, e.g. the wastewater plant at Nakolec, the National Capital Resource Centre in Resen, integrated pollution control in Macedonian Prespa, numerous spatial and thematic plans, and clearly there was not enough analysis into what each output would require⁴. The poor design, however, cannot be laid solely at the door of the international consultant responsible for producing the Project Document; far from it since he had a short time to complete a difficult job, and was undoubtedly swayed by some influential stakeholders whose expectations, like many worldwide when GEF projects are designed, would have been unrealistic. Nonetheless, the speed with which the Project Document was compiled is apparent through its numerous contradictions and inconsistencies, perhaps reflecting differing intentions (even at that late stage) as much as genuine mistakes. The legacy of this complexity and these contradictions has remained and the implementation has struggled accordingly. Of these, perhaps the most important and the one leading to most disillusionment (especially with the SPP) concerns the position of the proposed Executive Secretary (for the PPCC) and the International Transboundary Advisor (ITA). Clearly, at some point, these roles were seen as being separate (see also paragraph 125), since under Outcome 4.1.3 the Document states:

⁴ For example, new wastewater systems or river restoration schemes require feasibility studies, development of complex TORs with subsequent technical evaluation procedures to select companies, consultations on the design, additional technical designs again with more tenders and evaluations for selection of those companies, Ministerial reviews of the decisions and designs???, application for a range of permits some of which require an environmental impact assessment, new planning documentation complete with public hearings, construction permits, contractor selection again with attendant development of TORs and evaluation procedures, the hiring of an independent supervisory engineer and in some cases an additional independent engineer allocated to the Project, permits for electricity supply, operational problems need to be overcome such as high groundwater, links made to other construction projects such as wastewater collection systems, reviews of drawings, documents and the preparation of bills of quantities, and then a full commissioning sequence.

“The existing Secretariat of the PPCC ... will be strengthened by recruiting a full-time Executive Secretary. GEF resources will fund this incremental strengthening with the objective that the member countries of the PPCC take over funding by the end of year 4.

The ES would prepare decision papers for PPCC members that explain issues for discussion in clear language. The ES would be responsible for working with the Trans-boundary Advisor to organise training for PPCC members in planning and operating and contributing effectively to meetings ...” [MTET emphasis].

However, elsewhere the Document is ambiguous or contradicts this approach, for example paragraph 208 states:

“The trans-boundary advisor’s job will be to work him or herself out of a job; he/she will work full-time for the first three years of the project, upon which time the three Governments will finance a full-time executive secretary position for the PPCC, as specified under Output 4.1”.

and this is repeated under “Part III: Terms of References for key project staff and main sub-contracts, Section 8 – Transboundary Unit”, where another inconsistency is found – two years rather than the three years envisaged above; thus:

“The trans-boundary advisor’s job will be to work him or herself out of a job; he/she will work full-time for the first two years of the project, upon which time the three Governments will finance a full-time executive secretary position for the PPCC, as specified under Output 4.1.”

while in paragraph 209 it states much more emphatically that:

“The Trans-boundary Unit will be responsible for: ... d) serving as the executive secretary for the PPCC and working closely with the PPCC staff based in Greece.” [MTET emphasis].

and this is repeated verbatim under the ToRs in Part III, “Section 9 – International Transboundary Advisor”.

13. Other weaknesses are apparent. Much of the justification for the global importance of the area is tied up in the terrestrial biodiversity with paragraph 20 making much of the diversity of flora found in three of the National Parks; the diversity of butterflies and noctuid moths, the high number of mammal and bird species present, and “*at least 19 animal species (mostly terrestrial) have been recorded which have a formal IUCN threat status*”. Only under endemic species is a serious case made for the waterbodies, but justifying this through the inclusion of 25 species of diatoms suggests a recognised weakness in the scientific justification of the lakes themselves beyond their importance to Dalmatian Pelican, Pygmy Cormorant and nine un-named species of endemic fish. While the MTET is not arguing *per se* against the biological importance of the Prespa Lakes themselves, it does feel that given the prevalence of the terrestrial justification behind the Project, perhaps a greater proportion of its activities could have reflected this terrestrial dimension. Interestingly, a number of stakeholders shared this view during the interview process. On the same note, paragraph 25 of the Project Document states:

“As a natural system, the Prespa Lakes are subject to natural disturbances. For project planning purposes, the project team focused upon those stresses attributable directly or in-directly to human causes that result in the destruction, degradation or impairment of the main two global benefits of concern.” [MTET emphasis]

without ever describing or defining what those “*main two global benefits of concern*” are.

14. Finally, despite its inherent flaws and poor design, the aims of the Project remain largely still relevant to the region, even though the political climate in which it is to be undertaken has deteriorated since its submission to GEF, with the consequent difficulties this entails for its implementation. The following are the key objectives formulated for the Project:

Goal

The conservation of globally significant biological diversity and trans-boundary water resources of the Prespa lakes Basin.

Objective

To catalyse the adoption by AL, MK and GR of integrated ecosystem management (IEM) practices in key sectors in the Prespa Lakes Basin, to conserve globally significant biodiversity and conserve trans-boundary waters.

Outcome 1

Stakeholders establish land and water use management basis for maintaining and restoring ecosystem health in the Prespa Lakes Basin.

Outcome 2

Stakeholders modify productive sector resource management practices to reduce pesticide inputs, increase habitat heterogeneity, and improve the status of target species and communities in the Prespa Basin.

Outcome 3

Stakeholders conserve priority biological diversity across the Prespa Basin and make key protected areas (PNP, GNP, ENR and PPA-GR) fully operational.

Outcome 4

Stakeholders build upon ongoing trans-boundary cooperation in the Prespa Basin by strengthening the trans-boundary coordination mechanism and piloting trans-boundary conservation and water management.

Outcome 5

Lessons learnt and adaptive management of project.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

15. The PDF B Project Document for the Prespa Basin Regional Project was signed on 5th March 2002 and the PDF-B was completed and submitted for STAP review in June 2005, finally receiving GEF CEO endorsement on 30th January 2006 as a Full-sized Project under Operational Programme #12 – Integrated Ecosystem Management and as part of Strategic Priority Biodiversity #2 “Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Productive Sectors” and International Waters #2 “Expand global coverage of foundational capacity building addressing the two key programme gaps and support for targeted learning” of the GEF Business Plan. UNDP-GEF signed the Project Document with the Government of FYR Macedonia on 17th April 2006 and with the Government of Albania on 25th September 2006, thereby commencing the Project. First disbursements were made to the Macedonian component in June 2006 and to the Albanian and Transboundary components in November 2006. Project inception workshops were organised for the three components separately and some months apart and Project implementation at the national level in both Albania and FYR Macedonia were initiated much before the inception of the transboundary component, thus activities at the national levels were already underway by the time the transboundary inception workshop was organised. The final Inception Report being completed in November 2007 – a year after Project commencement. Thus, from the outset, the Project was implemented as three separate projects that had their own inception and preparation phases. The delay in the inception of the transboundary component was primarily due to difficulties in recruiting and appointing a suitable candidate to function as the International Transboundary Advisor and Project Manager of the Transboundary Component – this taking three rounds of international advertisement.

16. The differing starting dates of the various components has created confusion in actual starting dates of the project as a whole. For GEF purposes, the official starting date of the project is 25th September 2006 and the end of the year referred to in the logframe indicators would be 24th September. However, the

UNDP programming cycle which uses 31st December as the year end has been used throughout in order to be consistent and compatible with UNDP project and financial management procedures, and the official end of the Project as reported in the Project Implementation Report is 31st December 2011. Although up until now, the reporting of project progress towards achievement of targets within the project logframe has continued to use 24th September as a year end, the MTET suggests (rather than recommends) that the 31st December be regarded as the year end for all purposes from now on.

17. Implementation of the Project so far has been variable. Notwithstanding the considerable difficulties posed by an extremely complex and ambitious project being implemented across three very different countries, including one being a GEF donor rather than a recipient and straddling a Schengen Agreement border; and an enabling environment that has become very much harder to work in than at the time of Project design through deteriorating political relations, exacerbated by ethnic tensions, high expectations, and low technical capacity prevalent across much of the area, progress towards its overall target has been good in places and trust and respect amongst some stakeholders is evident. In **Albania**, a settled Project team appears to have been efficient and effective, with a particularly well-organised and highly motivated project team overseen by a respected National Project Manager (NPM) with strong leadership skills. As a result, the implementation approach in Albania is evaluated as Satisfactory. In **FYR Macedonia**, a poor NPM followed by a difficult recruitment process to replace him led to very slow delivery. However, the new NPM, an environmental engineer by training⁵, has driven implementation forwards forcefully and, since August 2008, a stable and efficient team have made significant progress. As a result, the implementation approach is evaluated as Marginally Satisfactory. The **Transboundary component** suffered delays in recruiting personnel at the start and has faced considerable external challenges to its progress since – challenges that seem set to remain. As a result, the Transboundary implementation approach is evaluated as Marginally Unsatisfactory. Overall, the implementation approach is evaluated as Marginally Satisfactory.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

18. The project is implemented under the Multiple Execution (MEX) modality, with the transboundary component, implemented under the direct execution modality (DEX) acting as the parent in a linked parent-child relationship with the two national components, these being implemented under the national execution modality (NEX) and entered as separate but linked projects. These components have been executed in accordance with the standard rules and procedures of the UNDP NEX modality but with direct payments (thereby UNDP is acting as a business agent to provide those services). The Ministries of Foreign Affairs are the focal point for coordinating UNDP's technical cooperation in Albania and FYR Macedonia. The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Water Management** (MoEFWA) in Albania and the **Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning** (MoEPP) in FYR Macedonia serve as the Designated Institutions (DI) responsible for coordinating implementation of the Project's national components. These Ministries have authorised UNDP to enter into contractual arrangements with physical and legal persons on their behalf, and to make direct payments against all categories of the project budget, and to manage project funds, including budget planning, monitoring, revisions, disbursements, record keeping, reporting and auditing that all observe UNDP rules.

19. Project oversight is undertaken at the strategic level by a **Project Oversight Committee (POC)**. This comprises the Prespa Park Coordination Committee, a trilateral body established by the Governments of the three littoral states⁶, plus UNDP. A Tripartite Review was referred to in the project design but since it is no longer compulsory for UNDP projects, this has been dispensed with. The two national components each have a **Project Board** comprising the National Project Director

⁵ Consolidated comment: The PMU is in addition staffed with two Project Specialists (one with degree in biology, and one with the same university education like as the NPM, but with specialisation in limnology and aquatic ecosystems in general). Their qualifications further strengthen the overall team's ability to respond appropriately respond to the requirements of such a complex GEF project

⁶ The PPCC comprises one member from Government ministries, one member from local government (the mayor), and one NGO representative, all from each of the three countries, plus a non-executive member from MedWet – ten members.

(from the designated Ministry – the Project Executive), the Deputy Resident Representative of each UNDP CO (the Senior Supplier), and the Mayor of Liqenas commune (Albania) or Resen municipality (FYR Macedonia) (the senior beneficiary). These appear to have replaced the Project Enabling Committees foreseen in the Project Document. Paragraph 210 of the Project Document says the POC will meet on “a semi-annual basis” while under the ToR in Part III of the same document it says the POC will “meet annually”. In the event the POC has met only three times, the meetings being held in June 2007⁷, 7th March 2008 and 22nd November 2008, which appears to the MTET to be a little infrequent. The POC is chaired by a representative of the UNDP-MK office. Project team members attend as observers. Some POC members interviewed by the MTET indicated that using the PPCC for oversight of the Project was ineffective and that it played only a nominal role (see paragraph 115). The ITA indicated that sometimes there were issues that he needed the POC’s advice or a decision on, but that he rarely received such.

20. Financing contributions are from GEF (US\$ 4,135,000), UNDP (TRAC) (US\$ 150,000), the Government of Albania (US\$ 120,000), the Government of the FYR Macedonia (US\$289,000), the Municipality of Resen (FYR Macedonia) (US\$ 780,000), the German Development Bank KfW (US\$ 5,000,000), the Swiss Development Agency (US\$ 2,500,000), NATO (US\$ 250,000), an in-kind co-financing (unspecified) (US\$ 1, 230,000) – total US\$ 14.890 million.

21. The Project works closely with, and through, a large number of key local stakeholders, notably the Municipality of Resen (MK), Korça Regional Council and the communes of Liqenas and Proger (AL); the Ministries of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia) (Departments for Nature Protection, Waters, Division of Instrument for Pre-accession) and of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (FYR Macedonia) (Department for Water Management) and the Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid (FYR Macedonia); the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Albania) (Forestry Sector, Water Resources Sector, and Directorate of Fisheries’ Policies); and the Ministry of Environment (Greece) (Department of Management of Natural Environment); a number of international organisations including KfW, Swiss Development Agency, MedWet, and a wide range of local NGOs. It has highlighted local participation as a priority, worked hard to raise awareness and win over an initially sceptical public, and has already provided all levels of stakeholder with a number of benefits with the emphasis on their sustainability. In FYR Macedonia, there is respect for and goodwill towards the Project but this is not so evident in Albania where low level ethnic tensions are being used by local politicians for local political purposes, nor in Greece where there is considerable disillusionment over the Project in no small part stemming from different levels of expectations and poor understanding of GEF funding principles. As a result, the MTET evaluates stakeholder participation as Marginally Satisfactory.

NATIONAL LEVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Project Direction

22. Overall direction of the project has been the responsibility of the **National Project Director** (NPD), a part-time position provided as in-kind contributions by the Albanian and FYR Macedonian Governments, and held since the project’s inception in Albania by Mr. Pellumb Abeshi, General Secretary for Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration and GEF Focal Point for Albania; and in FYR Macedonia initially by Mr. Dejan Panovski and since January 2009 by Ms. Lidiya Zafirovska, State Secretary for Environment, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MoEPP). These persons are responsible for overseeing the execution of the Project on behalf of each Government and for achieving the Project’s objectives and are accountable to UNDP for the use of Project resources. In FYR Macedonia, the NPD has been assisted by a **National Project Coordinator** (NPC), a position held throughout by Ms. Darinka Jantinska, Head of Division of Instrument for Pre-accession, MoEPP.

⁷ At that meeting referred to as a Project Steering Committee.

Project Management

23. Day-to-day implementation is the responsibility of three **Project Management Units** (PMU) – one for each of the two national components and another for the transboundary component. In Albania, the main Project office is based in Tirana, and comprises a full-time **National Project Manager** (NPM) and two staff – a Project Technical Expert, and a Financial and Administration Officer – plus a driver. The position of NPM has been held by Ms. Violeta Zuna throughout the project's lifetime (1st January 2007 to present). Another office is located in the nearest regional centre to Albanian Prespa, Korça, and is staffed by a Local Project Coordinator and a driver. This entire team have been together for some considerable time, previously managing the Albanian component of the six-country regional GEF Project *Conservation of Wetlands and Coastal Ecosystem in the Mediterranean Region*⁸. In FYR Macedonia, the PMU is located in the town of Resen within Macedonian Prespa, in offices provided by and adjacent to the Municipality Administration. The PMU also comprises a full time **NPM** and two staff – a Project Specialist and a Project Assistant. The position of NPM has been held by two persons, thus:

- Mr. Ljupco Stojanovski – May 2006 to October 2007.
- Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski – May 2008 to present.

In addition, another Project Specialist is based in an office in Skopje. As will be seen from the above, the project management of this component has not been contiguous, and indeed during the gap the Project Specialist in Resen also left the Project, meaning that for the period August to November 2007 the Project Assistant was the only person staffing the component. The Transboundary Unit has also been located in the same offices in Resen throughout its lifetime. The TBU comprised an **International Technical Advisor** (ITA) – Mr. Alvin Lopez from Malaysia – from 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2009 and a Project Assistant. In Greek Prespa, there is no PMU *per se*, but the Greek Ministry of Environment has designated the Prespa National Forest Management Body to serve as the Project Enabling Committee to coordinate Project-related activities in Greek Prespa.

24. Implementation of the Albanian component has largely been smooth and efficient throughout. However, in the initial stages of the Macedonian component there were significant problems with slow delivery which led to the NPM resigning just prior to not having his contract renewed. The vacancy for NPM of the Macedonian component had to be re-advertised three times before it was filled by the current incumbent (a lack of suitably qualified personnel who were also prepared to work outside of Skopje being seen as the main reason) and with the Project Specialist rejoining the team in Resen in August 2008, the component team is now settled, effective, and producing excellent results. Unfortunately, the Transboundary component has also not been free of difficulties and a long-running and increasingly bitter conflict between the ITA and the UNDP-MK office has plagued the majority of its implementation period and has been ultimately responsible for the ITA turning down a short-term extension to his contract. This conflict is discussed briefly in paragraph 132 *et seq.*, but it is the view of the MTET that it has not been at the root to any of the problems faced by the Transboundary component, although it is fair to say that without it, greater progress would undoubtedly have been possible.

25. The Project's management and implementation has been focussed closely on the logframe throughout, although with most progress being made on Outcomes 1 and 2. As indicated above, Project inception workshops were organised for the two national components separately and some months apart. At these workshops, minor amendments were made to the project documents and logframes. With national level implementation already underway the Transboundary component attempted to ensure coordination of its activities with those at the national level through another revision of the Project logframe. In the final Inception Report dated November 2007, the need for revision of the overall project logframe was

“highlighted as a priority at the 9th Regular PPCC meeting in November 2006. The main issues with the current logframe were:

⁸ January 2000 – December 2006.

- *There was no reference to the Greek component (not a direct beneficiary of GEF) despite significant reference to the role of Greece in the project in the main text of the project document.*
- *There were certain technical inaccuracies that needed to be clarified and various other gaps.*

Upon inception of the transboundary component, Greek stakeholders provided input to the original project logframe to include the Greek components of the project. Additional input was also provided by the Greek stakeholders to strengthen technical aspects of the current logframe. This revised logframe was then distributed to project managers and key stakeholders for comments and input. The final revision/input was made at the Inception workshop for the trans-boundary component of the project held on 16th June 2007. ...

Although the revised version of the logframe includes the Greek component, it was noted that UNDP, as the implementing agency for this GEF project will make all effort to ensure effective coordination with the Greek component to enable accomplishment of identified targets. This will include an effort to ensure coordinated reporting and monitoring of milestones and targets. UNDP, however, will not be accountable for the delivery/non-delivery of the targets relevant to the Greek component of the project as it does not come under direct management of UNDP and is not financed by GEF.” [MTET’s emphasis].

26. The revised logframe was approved formally by the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor in Bratislava on 12th November 2007. This current logframe with five Outcomes, 29 Outputs, and 89 indicators has been used throughout as the basis for the evaluation (see [Annex IV](#)). In the view of the MTET, this extended revision process, led by three separate teams, missed a major opportunity to simplify an overly complex design and to streamline the indicators to a series of essentials rather than the highly dependent step-wise sequence that remains. By any measure, 89 indicators for a project is far too many.

Project Progress and Financial Assessment

27. Total disbursement of funds to the Project up until 31st March 2009 (the last full month prior to the start of the MTE) amounted to US\$ 3,408,315 (see Table 2). If Project spending can be taken as a crude measure of the progress of implementation, then the Project is currently progressing fairly well since this represents 43.2% of the total disbursement projected by the Project Document for the entire five year lifespan. This includes the fact that much of the Project was delayed at start-up because of slow recruitment and that the Macedonian component had very slow delivery during the first year. Nonetheless, the breakdown of the same figure provides broadly similar progress across the three components with the Albanian component disbursing 43.8% of total budget, the Macedonian component disbursing 43.6%, and the Transboundary component lagging slightly behind on 38.1%. Delivery of co-funding is also largely on track, with donors’ contributions again being largely the same, with only the proportion from Local Government being notably low on just 16.7%. *mote, these figures do not include the funds committed by the Greek Government, funds which they have by and large failed to provide – see paragraph 128 et seq..*

TABLE 2: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY OUTPUT BY SOURCE TO 31ST MARCH 2009† (US\$) AGAINST FULL PROJECT BUDGET AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT (FIGURES ROUNDED)

	GEF			Government			Local Government			UNDP/SDC			Total		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Inception	35,000	34,815	99.5	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	35,000	34,815	99.5
Outcome 1	565,000	163,770	29.0	120,000	67,039	55.9	0	0	0.0	10,000	1,043	10.4	695,000	231,852	33.4
Outcome 2	665,000	477,174	71.8	110,000	106,666	97.0	680,000	100,000	14.7	120,000	15,095	12.6	1,575,000	698,935	44.4
Outcome 3	706,000	131,916	18.7	146,000	0	0.0	100,000	30,000	30.0	2,440,000	1,292,092	53.0	3,392,000	1,454,008	42.9
Outcome 4	1,149,000	485,815	42.3	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	20,000	2,608	13.0	1,169,000	488,423	41.8
Outcome 5	1,015,000	500,282	49.3	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	1,015,000	500,282	49.3
Total	4,135,000	1,793,772	43.4	376,000	173,705	46.2	780,000	130,000	16.7	2,590,000	1,310,838	50.6	7,881,000	3,408,315	43.2

† Figures from Albania to 31st December 2008

SOURCE: PMUs from Atlas. Note, it is outside the scope of the MTET to independently verify the financial figures contained in any of the tables and figures presented here through an audit.

28. Expenditure has not been even across the various outcomes. Table 3 gives the figures for each outcome against the mid-way budget taken from the Project Document. Clearly most progress has been made on Outcome 2 which largely comprises national activities which are largely independent of transboundary concerns and therefore by common consent the easiest to implement. Progress on Outcome 1 in Macedonia at just 21.2% is largely a result of the delay in the Government implementing the new Law on Water, while the slow delivery of Outcome 4 in Albania at just 20.2% is a result of the delay in the commencement of the KfW project there, activities which the GEF Project is dependent upon. Outcome 3 has suffered generally from too little attention and this must be rectified across all three components in the second half of the Project.

29. The biggest anomaly between components comes with Outcome 5 – the project management Outcome. Here, the Albanian component has spent 141.5% of its budget while the Macedonian component has disbursed just 6.3%! This is explained by the fact that two very different policies have been operating regarding the allocation of project management costs – those in Albania all being allocated within Outcome 5 along with expenditure related to office premises rent, telephone, utilities and vehicles usage apparently in accordance with audit advice, since the accounts specified in the Project Document do not match those of the UNDP system. The salaries of the Project Coordinator and Finance Administrative Assistant are recorded under Outcome 5 while other technical staff salaries are charged under other Project Outcomes⁹. However, in the Macedonian component, the original NPM charged all administrative and project management to the various technical outcomes – only recently it appears has this changed. The MTET suggests that accounting procedures be unified across the components.

TABLE 3: TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF GEF FUNDS BY OUTPUT TO 31ST DECEMBER 2008 (US\$) AGAINST BUDGET FOR SAME PERIOD AS PER PROJECT DOCUMENT (FIGURES ROUNDED)

	Budget to 31/12/2008	Disbursement to 31/12/2008	% of mid-term budget (total)	% of mid-term budget (Albania)	% of mid-term budget (Macedonia)	% of mid-term budget (Transboundary)
Inception	35,000	34,815	99.5	-	99.5	-
Outcome 1	483,000	162,217	33.6	57.6	21.2	-
Outcome 2	542,750	477,174	87.9	61.2	109.0	-
Outcome 3	688,000	124,780	18.1	32.2	19.5	15.0%
Outcome 4	827,000	428,384	51.8	20.2	44.8	65.1%
Outcome 5	726,600	438,541	60.4	141.5	6.3	51.3%
Total	3,302,350	1,665,911	50.4	63.4	43.0	45.8%

SOURCE: PMUs from Atlas.

⁹ Consolidated comment: No recommendation is provided by the evaluator on this finding. MTE response: The finding did not seem to warrant a recommendation but was recorded as an inconsistency. Advice should probably be taken from the UNDP-GEF RTA in Bratislava over the need for consistency.

30. Tables 4a-c give the figures for the disbursement of GEF funds by Outcome against budget in half-yearly periods to date. Since half-yearly budgets are not available from the Project Document or Atlas, the years' budgets have been simply divided in two. Figures 1a-c illustrate these figures as a percentage of budget disbursed in each period by Outcome, and Figures 2a-c shows the same but cumulatively. These Figures illustrate a number of points:

- i) The Albanian component has a fairly sound delivery for all components with a slow start then gently gathering pace. Interestingly it also shows Outcome 3 coming to an abrupt halt in the second half of 2008; and the high project management costs discussed above;
- ii) The Macedonian component has pretty slow delivery until the recruitment of the present NPM and in 2008 delivery starts to take off. Outcome 2 is clearly the most worked on, and the graph is heavily skewed by very large payments associated with the Nakolec water treatment facility in late 2008 as well as work on other activities such as the study on pesticide packaging and training in good agricultural practice. Outcome 1 is effectively stalled because of the Government's delay in adopting the new Law on Water;
- iii) The Transboundary component also displays a slow start but then delivery picking up. There is little delivery on Outcome 3, largely the monitoring working group, and payments out of synch against those envisaged in the budget are probably responsible for the curious drop in delivery of Outcome 4 in the first half of 2008 followed by an apparent surge in the second half of the year.

TABLE 4a: ALBANIAN COMPONENT – TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY OUTPUT HALF-YEARLY TO 31ST DECEMBER 2008 (US\$) AGAINST BUDGET

	Jul-Dec 2006			Jan-June 2007			Jul-Dec 2007			Jan-June 2008			Jul-Dec 2008		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Outcome1	22,500	0	0.0	20,000	13,544	67.7	85,000	32,585	38.3	17,000	15,780	92.8	20,000	32,917	164.6
Outcome2	36,500	0	0.0	34,000	33,669	99.0	90,500	32,696	36.1	48,000	32,307	67.3	30,000	47,557	158.5
Outcome3	0	0	0.0	25,000	0	0.0	30,000	10,884	36.3	10,000	10,041	100.4	0	0	0.0
Outcome4	70,000	474	0.7	20,000	0	0.0	30,000	12,591	42.0	25,000	7,562	30.2	25,000	13,643	54.6
Outcome5	54,200	614	1.1	22,000	39,810	181.0	20,200	55,527	274.9	20,000	55,310	276.6	22,200	44,813	201.9
Total	183,200	1,088	0.6	121,000	87,023	71.9	255,700	144,283	56.4	120,000	121,000	100.8	97,200	138,930	142.9

TABLE 4b: MACEDONIAN COMPONENT – TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY OUTPUT HALF-YEARLY TO 31ST DECEMBER 2008 (US\$) AGAINST BUDGET

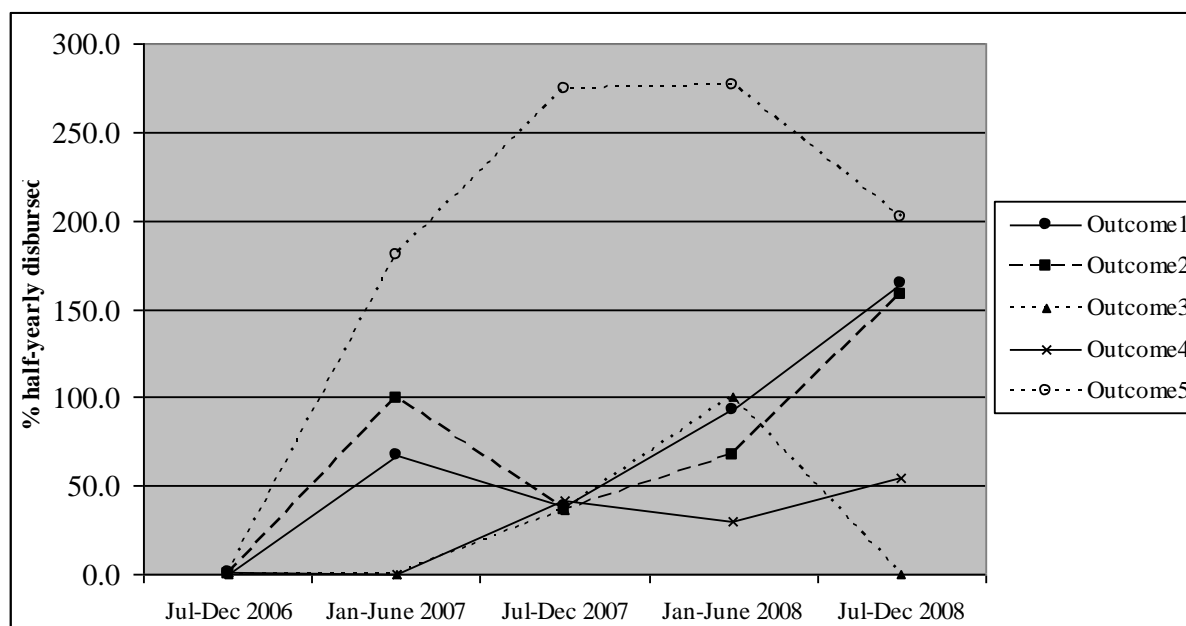
	Jul-Dec 2006			Jan-June 2007			Jul-Dec 2007			Jan-June 2008			Jul-Dec 2008		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Outcome1	31,250	0	0.0	110,000	0	0.0	110,000	0	0.0	36,000	246	0.7	18,000	63,915	355.1
Outcome2	98,250	21,152	21.5	41,250	12,172	29.5	41,250	59,110	143.3	24,750	45,742	184.8	12,375	235,488	1902.9
Outcome3	0	0	0.0	105,000	2,021	1.9	105,000	852	0.8	8,500	2,196	25.8	4,250	40,296	948.1
Outcome4	52,500	4,892	9.3	20,000	27,442	137.2	20,000	13,047	65.2	20,000	14,970	74.8	10,000	13,492	134.9
Outcome5	29,500	404	1.4	24,500	1,354	5.5	24,500	2,886	11.8	24,500	3,559	14.5	12,250	152	1.2
Total	458,000	54,817	12.0	300,750	42,988	14.3	300,750	75,895	25.2	113,750	66,713	58.6	113,750	364,719	320.6

TABLE 4c: TRANSBOUNDARY COMPONENT – TOTAL DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS BY OUTPUT HALF-YEARLY TO 31ST DECEMBER 2008 (US\$) AGAINST BUDGET

	Jul-Dec 2006			Jan-June 2007			Jul-Dec 2007			Jan-June 2008			Jul-Dec 2008		
	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%
Outcome3	180,000	30,054	16.7	55,000	8,832	16.1	55,000	8,740	15.9	50,000	5,665	11.3	50,000	5,200	10.4
Outcome4	113,000	0	0.0	91,250	26,233	28.7	91,250	67,380	73.8	98,250	18,261	18.6	98,250	208,400	212.1
Outcome5	173,000	46	0.0	86,500	25,613	29.6	86,500	57,905	66.9	55,000	75,364	137.0	55,000	75,186	136.7
Total	466,000	30,100	6.5	232,750	60,677	26.1	232,750	134,025	57.6	203,250	99,289	48.9	203,250	288,785	142.1

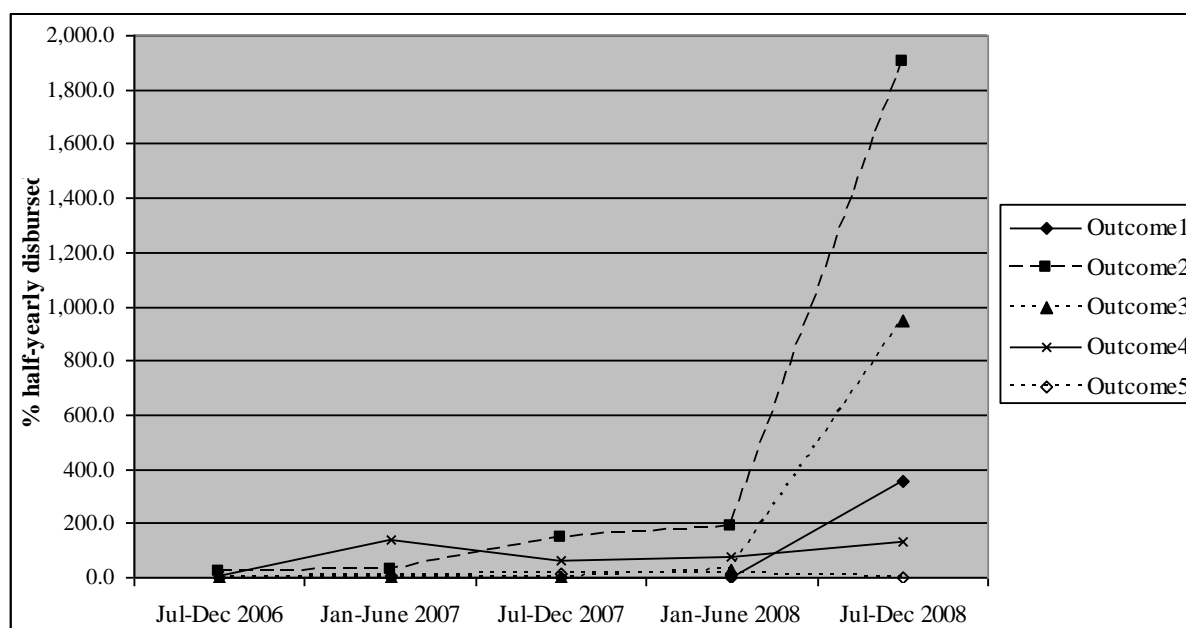
SOURCE: PMUs from Atlas. Note: it is outside the scope of the MTE to independently verify the financial figures contained in any of the tables and figures presented here through an audit.

FIGURE 1a: ALBANIAN COMPONENT: PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AGAINST BUDGET BY PROJECT OUTPUT TO DECEMBER 2008



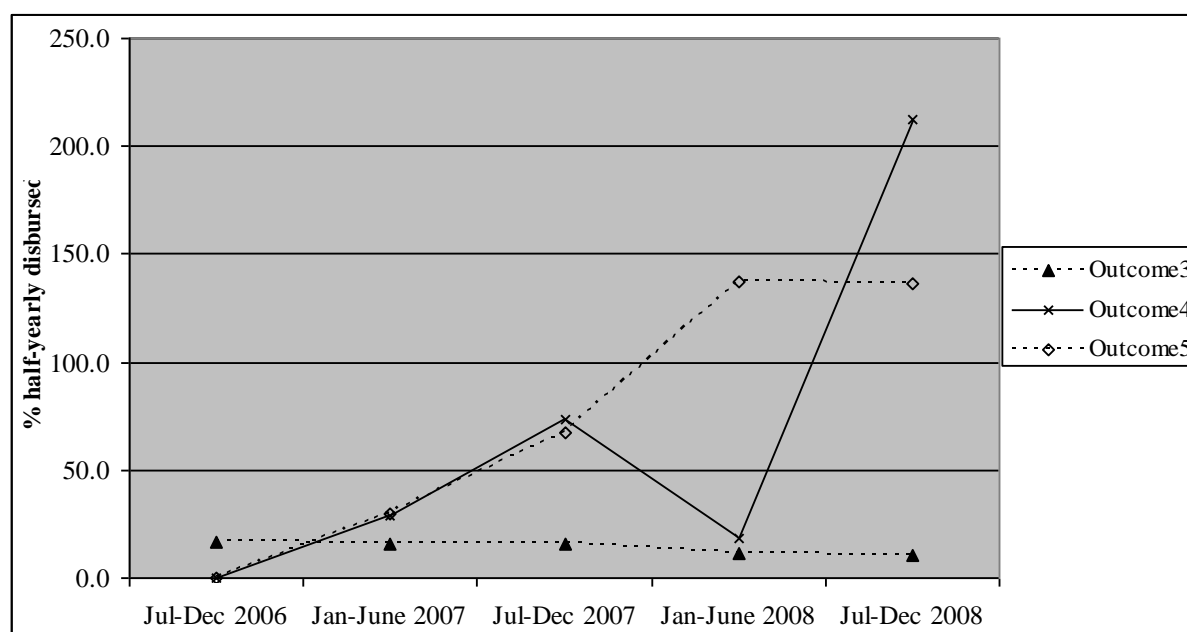
SOURCE: PMU.

FIGURE 1b: MACEDONIAN COMPONENT: PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AGAINST BUDGET BY PROJECT OUTPUT TO DECEMBER 2008



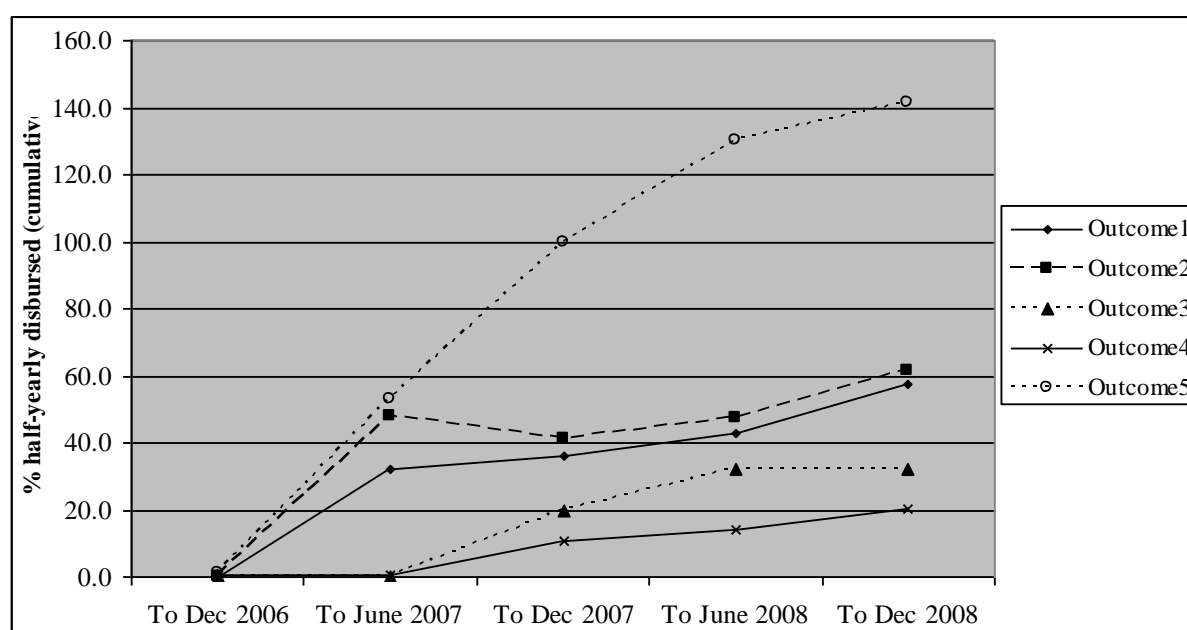
SOURCE: PMU.

FIGURE 1c: TRANSBOUNDARY COMPONENT: PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AGAINST BUDGET BY PROJECT OUTPUT TO DECEMBER 2008



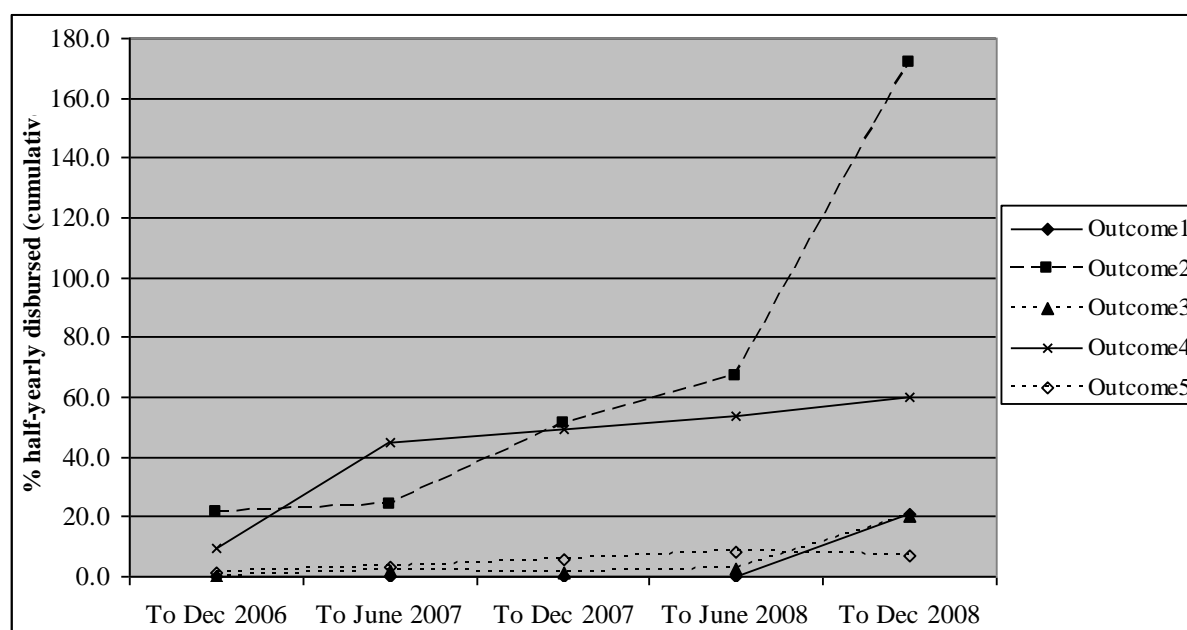
SOURCE: PMU.

FIGURE 2a: ALBANIAN COMPONENT: CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AGAINST BUDGET BY PROJECT OUTPUT TO DECEMBER 2008



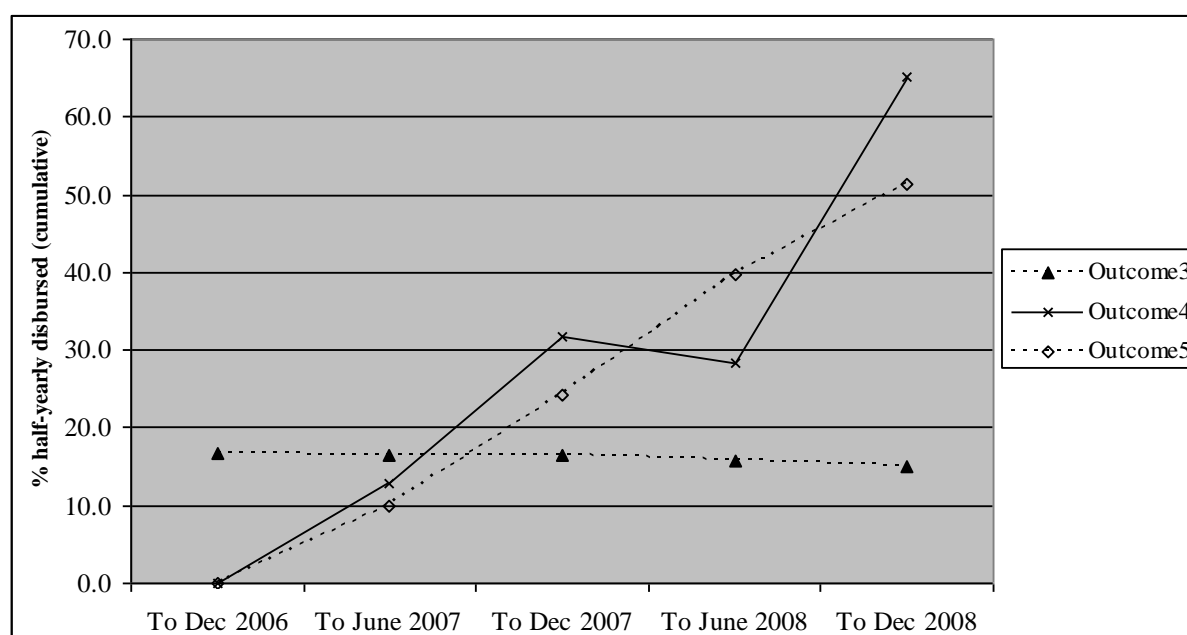
SOURCE: PMU.

FIGURE 2b: MACEDONIAN COMPONENT: CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AGAINST BUDGET BY PROJECT OUTPUT TO DECEMBER 2008



SOURCE: PMU.

FIGURE 2c: TRANSBOUNDARY COMPONENT: CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS AGAINST BUDGET BY PROJECT OUTPUT TO DECEMBER 2008



SOURCE: PMU.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Internal Project M&E

31. Project monitoring and evaluation has been evaluated as **Marginally Satisfactory**. Monitoring and evaluation of Project activities have been undertaken in varying detail at three levels:

- i. Progress monitoring
- ii. Internal activity monitoring

iii. Impact monitoring

32. Progress monitoring is good and has been made through quarterly and annual reports to the UNDP-CO. Monthly reporting is undertaken by the Albanian PMU but only to the MoEFWA. No other monthly reporting occurs, but the PMUs are in weekly communication with their respective COs regarding project, work plan, and its implementation. The PMU ensures that the UNDP-CO receives quarterly progress reports providing updates on the status of planned activities, the status of the overall project schedule, the products completed, problems incurred, and an outline of the activities planned for the following quarter. Neither of these report formats contain quantitative estimates of project progress, just qualitative assessments of progress made. The UNDP-COs generate their own quarterly financial reports from Atlas. These expenditure records, together with Atlas disbursement records of direct payments, serve as a basis for expenditure monitoring and budget revisions, the latter usually taking place twice yearly following the disbursement progress and changes in the operational work plan. UNDP MK also requires quarterly delivery projections along with the undated workplans and procurement tables which serve as an additional monitoring tool, especially for quantitative estimates of the project progress.

33. From the quarterly reports, UNDP-MK as the lead office prepares Quarterly Operational Reports (150-word fixed-format) which are forwarded to UNDP/GEF Regional Coordination Unit in Bratislava, which in turn sends it to the HQ and to GEF. The major findings and observations of all these reports are given in an annual report covering the period July to June, the Project Implementation Report (PIR), which is submitted to UNDP-CO, UNDP Regional Coordination Unit, and UNDP HQ for review and official comments, followed by final submission to GEF. To date only one has been sent since there is no requirement to send one if a project is under eight months old when the first report is due. Thus, the first PIR covered the period from Project start-up to June 2008. The Project also sends annual reports covering a calendar year to the national executing ministries and UNDP-COs through the Project Director. It provides annual reports, as well as implementation status reports on specific activities, to the local government authorities upon request. Project risk assessment is updated twice a year together by the project team and the UNDP-COs at the time of the APR and PIR. In the period up to the Mid-term Evaluation, UNDP-AL has also monitored the Project through five field visits, the last one in February 2009; and UNDP-MK officers through 13 field visits, the last one in February 2009. However, the project team members meet the staff of the UNDP-COs once or more a week to discuss project progress and specific outcomes.

34. The annual work plans for the Project national components are worked out by the PMUs and sent to UNDP for comment, then they are revised and presented to the Project Boards for consultation and comment, before again being revised if necessary and sent back to the Project Boards for approval. The plan is presented at the Project Board meeting when members can propose additional activities as a formal addition to the work plan and formal endorsement is then made. In the case of the TBC, this process is essentially the same, involving the POC. However, since the TBC is DEX, while UNDP consults and seeks endorsement from the POC regarding the annual work plan, it does not require its formal approval.

35. Internal activity monitoring has been undertaken by the NPMs at a number of levels to assess implementation and accomplishments. Annual delivery plans for each outcome/output are proposed at the start of each year, with the terms for each activity closely defined. From these, more detailed quarterly projections are prepared and in turn broken down into monthly work plans. At the end of each quarter, the actual expenditure is compared with the projection and differences are discussed with UNDP to examine the implications. Each NPM conducts weekly team meetings (in person or with the help of Skype for out-stationed staff) and is in daily contact to keep work on track. In FYR Macedonia, staff are required to produce back-to-office reports of meetings. Completion of activities are reported at the time of completion by staff. External consultants and contractors are all tied to performance based contracts with payments dependent upon satisfactory deliverables or milestones. Those consultants contracted on a monthly basis (e.g. on site one week every month) are required to send a report of the emission, its findings, the minutes of any meetings, and a plan for the next

month's activities prior to payment being approved. In Albania, consultants are required to give notice of missions to the area so the PMU can keep track of who is on site. The Transboundary component holds quarterly staff coordination meetings – the last one being on 26th March 2009 just prior to the ITA's departure from the Project. Annual financial audits are carried out by an independent authorised auditing company selected by tender as part of UNDP's Financial Unit's formal monitoring programme. The Project was selected for this and the year ending 31st December 2007 was so audited in 2008. Only minor discrepancies were found¹⁰.

36. Impact monitoring appears a little weak. Baseline measurements have not been carried out as envisaged in the Project Document. In Albania, much has been made of a formal METT assessment but this does not appear to have covered most of the Project indicators' baseline measurements. Most of the monitoring of the effectiveness of training has been carried out qualitatively through expert assessment instead of by the use of quantitative before-and-after questionnaires. In FYR Macedonia, some of the training has been formalised so that certificates are issued when a certain level of competence has been reached. The Transboundary component has not undertaken any activities yet that lend themselves to monitoring of impacts.

The MTET recommends that the national components of the project invest more effort on formalised monitoring of on-ground impacts including revisiting activities after a suitable period (3-6 months) to ascertain the sustainability of gains made.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP/PMU	UNDP-COs provide technical assistance to PMUs in developing suitable impact monitoring programmes for their activities.	Immediately	Increased capacity to monitor impacts
PMU	Develop and implement impact monitoring for appropriate activities	Remainder of the Project	Quantitative impact monitoring

PROJECT RESULTS

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE INDICATORS

37. Indicators relating to the Project's Development Objective are rather weak and in two cases ambiguous. Nonetheless, three of them which are largely within the Project's control show significant progress and with continued effort should be achievable by the end of the Project. The fourth (first below) is largely down to external bodies – the national and local governments – and shows no progress at present. Increased efforts should be made by the Project to explain the importance of the integrated ecosystem management approach and to lobby for its requisite funding.

- Financial resources for IEM approach made available
 - No change compared to baseline

Although the indicator is ambiguous, it is assumed that the US\$2 million to be made available for integrated ecosystem management by the end of the Project is additional to Project financing and co-financing. There is no indication that any progress has been achieved on this indicator.

- Human resources for IEM approach
 - considerable training of people in various sectors (agriculture, fisheries, protected area planning) has been undertaken.

¹⁰ Consolidated comment: The threshold for regular audit of GEF project is US\$ 300,000 disbursement in the period of 1 January – 31 December in a given year. Audits are mandatory only for the NEX projects. This threshold was not achieved in 2007 and in 2008 and therefore the Prespa project was not audited. However, within the internal CO audit, Prespa project was one of the projects that were audited.

Again the indicator is ambiguous. Training has been largely on a single sector basis rather than being in an integrated ecosystem management approach – although the collective end product may be considered integrated.

- Management tools for IEM approach
 - A number of key plans produced or underway. Much information communicated to stakeholders. Incentives for farmers to use less agrochemicals being developed and demonstrated
- Demonstration of IEM approach
 - A number of demonstration activities underway – agriculture, wastewater management, integrated monitoring, fisheries and planning.

SUMMARY EVALUATION

38. Overall, the Project entitled *Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, FYR of Macedonia and Greece* is expected to achieve most of its major relevant objectives but with significant shortcomings and hence the MTET evaluates it as **Marginally Satisfactory**. In making this evaluation, it is important to understand that much of the actual implementation by the Project's staff has been of a very high order, but that the external enabling environment is much changed since that present at the time of the Project's design – political relations between two of the participant countries have deteriorated significantly, much of the enthusiasm for transboundary cooperation engendered by the Prime Ministers' Agreement of 2000 has ebbed away; and Greek Government's failure to honour its financing commitments to the Project have all made implementation of the transboundary activities much harder and much slower than anticipated. Poor Project design, a needlessly complex logframe and set of indicators, and poor oversight arrangements have combined with the low capacities of some stakeholders and unrealistic expectations of others to provide a challenging framework within which to work. In addition, the Project has been hampered by a UNDP office whose rigidity in applying its own operational policies has often been at the expense of a commonsense approach to project implementation.

39. It is, therefore, very important that the MTE has realistic expectations for what it is possible that a project such as this can achieve in the time that it has been working, and throughout this evaluation the MTET has forced itself to go back to basics and assess progress with this background very firmly in mind. The MTET believes that the Project can be proud that some of the achievements made by its national components, e.g. the Local Environmental Action Plans, the demonstration wastewater treatment plant in Nakolec, the work with farmers to reduce the application of agrochemicals, are increasing the integrated ecosystem approach to the management of the Prespa Basin. However, its greater goals of developing effective, streamlined, cooperative mechanisms for transboundary management of the Basin remain slow, mired in the challenges listed above, and lacking innovative approaches from its staff or stakeholders as to ways to overcome these challenges. As a result, the above overall evaluation stands.

40. Key Project achievements include:

- development and publication of the Local Environmental Action Plans in Liqenas and Proger communes in Albania, and initial implementation underway;
- spatial plans for Ohrid and Prespa in FYR Macedonia in the final stages of Parliamentary approval;
- development of fisheries association for Micro Prespa;

- “organic generation” of Union of Agricultural Producers in Resen Municipality – formed during the PDF-B, used during another GEF project¹¹, and built into a prize-winning¹² NGO during the current implementation complete with a fully functioning analytical laboratory;
- construction underway of a wastewater plant using organic filtration both to reduce nutrient input to Macro Prespa but also to act as a demonstration for the Municipality of Resen who have expressed interest in replicating it in other villages in the watershed;
- trilateral technical working groups on monitoring and conservation, fisheries, and water management, working towards negotiated agreements for action; and
- provoking discussion over the future and function of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee.

41. The main problem areas identified by the MTET are that:

- the Project had to cancel the winning tender for the Species and Habitats Plan because it was ineligible – but the knock on delays threaten the viability of many of the Transboundary component’s deliverables;
- the delay in the start of the KfW project in Albania is threatening the integrity of the Albanian component;
- the river restoration along the Golema Reka within Resen has provided an engineering solution to the problem of high nutrient input to Macro Prespa, but has missed the opportunity to demonstrate best practice with regard to biodiversity;

There are two other external factors that are affecting Project delivery adversely, namely that:

- the Greek Government has not delivered on its commitment to fund those parallel activities to the Project that it signed up to; and
- the political climate in the region is not conducive to the signing of a trilateral agreement covering the working and financing of the Prespa Park Coordination Committee and all that entails, and another solution is urged.





42. Chief among the issues that confront the Project currently are how to progress in the absence of an International Transboundary Advisor (see paragraph 125 *et seq.*), how to get the Greek Government to honour its financing commitments to the Project that have all made the implementation of the transboundary activities much harder and much slower than anticipated (see paragraph 128 *et seq.*), how to move forward with the maturation process of the PPCC anticipated (see paragraph 102 *et seq.*) and its Secretariat anticipated (see paragraph 106 *et seq.*), and the need for UNDP (particularly the Macedonian Country Office) to lessen the bureaucratic burden on the Project and to work more flexibly thereby facilitating Project activities (see paragraph 136).
























43. A summary evaluation by Project Output is given in Table 4 and a more detailed summary of the level of achievements made against the indicators of success contained in the logframe is given in Annex IV. Results are discussed below by Project Outcome and key sectoral or cross-cutting issues are then discussed in the ensuing section.

¹¹ Reducing Environmental Impacts of Agriculture in the Prespa Region (Feb 2005-May 2006).

¹² First prize in a municipal award programme organised by the EU Delegation in Macedonia, getting the highest score from 120 entries for its innovative approach, and building local capacities and sustainability.

TABLE 4: EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT PROJECT SITUATION AS PER THE REVISED LOGFRAME

Key:	 = Albanian component	 = Macedonian component
	 = Transboundary component	 = 2 or more components

Component		Evaluation*					
		HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
Output 1.1	<u>Integrated Land Use Spatial Plan for MK Prespa and LEAP for AL Prespa</u>						
Output 1.2	<u>Ecosystem health priorities mainstreamed into productive sector law and regulatory instruments</u>						
Output 1.3	<u>Ecosystem oriented water management piloted at the local scale</u>						
Output 1.4	<u>Capacity for water and watershed management built at municipal and commune level in MK and AL respectively</u>						
Output 1.5	<u>Flexible pollution reduction techniques and the use of incentives strengthens enforcement of and compliance with environmental laws protecting ecosystem health</u>						
Output 2.1	<u>Reduced environmental impacts of agriculture in AL and MK Prespa</u>						
Output 2.2	<u>Forest managed for native species composition and forest stand heterogeneity in MK and AL</u>						
Output 2.3	<u>Restoration/reforestation of degraded forest in AL Prespa NP</u>						
Output 2.4	<u>Pilot small-scale wastewater treatment facilities measurably reduce eutrophying inputs to Lakes Prespa</u>						
Output 2.5	<u>Strengthened civil society partners for ecosystem-oriented fishery management in AL and MK Prespa</u>						
Output 2.6	<u>A marketplace to foster the knowledge, goods and services of a conservation economy</u>						
Output 3.1	<u>Transboundary monitoring programme</u>						
Output 3.2	<u>Landscape scale conservation planning</u>						
Output 3.3	<u>Restoration of the Golema Reka</u>						
Output 3.4	<u>PNP and GNP management capacity is strengthened and the parks fully operational</u>						
Output 3.5	<u>Ezerani Wildlife Reserve is re-authorized and fully operational</u>						
Output 3.6	<u>Prespa Protected Area - GR fully operationalised</u>						
Output 4.1	<u>PPCC becomes a formal, international trilateral institution under international law †</u>						
Output 4.2	<u>Prespa Water Working Group established by the PPCC</u>						
Output 4.3	<u>Transboundary communication</u>						
Output 4.4	<u>Pilot species and habitat conservation initiatives</u>						
Output 4.5	<u>Tri-national ecotourism and visitation strategy and management plan designed and approved by stakeholders</u>						
Output 4.6	<u>Supplementary diagnostic analysis fills gaps in existing analysis and supports preparation of SAP</u>						
Output 4.7	<u>Strategic Action Program for Prespa Lakes Basin developed and negotiated and committed to by highest levels of Government in AL, GR and MK</u>						

* Note: HS = Highly satisfactory; S = Satisfactory; MS = Marginally satisfactory; MU= Marginally unsatisfactory; U = Unsatisfactory; HU = Highly unsatisfactory.

† Evaluation reflects Project's performance – not that of external situation.

PROJECT OUTPUTS

Outcome 1: Stakeholders establish land and water use management basis for maintaining and restoring ecosystem health in the Prespa Lakes Basin.

Output 1.1: Integrated Land Use Spatial Plan for MK Prespa and LEAP for AL Prespa

44. **Albania:** The Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) approved by the Commune Councils for Ligenas and Proger communes in December 2007 are the main outcome of this activity. These documents were the result of a process that lasted from April 2007–Jan 2008 and which took account of the existing national level framework documents, the communes' needs, and site challenges in terms of integrating productive sectors into the ecosystem management approach. The Working Group members for both communes were appointed by the commune heads in mid-July 2007 and, with the support of two regional experts serving as team leaders, worked locally to analyse the situation and set the priority management actions. Five training workshops for a total of 95 participants were held addressing local capacity building and stakeholder participation in the LEAP process, as well as on nature conservation and management. In addition, various awareness materials were produced to highlight the importance of the activity and deliver information and knowledge pertinent to this exercise – outdoor banners; posters; a local newspaper “My Prespa”; a children’s educational booklet on values of the nature; plus pens, hats, t-shirts, all with the Prespa Park logo.

45. Through a contract let to the Regional Environment Centre, the Project is now working with the communes to implement the key findings and recommendations of the LEAPs, focusing on development of the best watershed management practices and undertaking education and public awareness activities. This includes the implementation of pilot projects and environmental recovery activities. During this follow-up phase attention is being given to enhancing the knowledge and know-how in watershed management practice, landscape planning, biodiversity conservation and monitoring aspects and particularly to the transboundary synergies towards a borderless basin. A training workshop on Logframe and Project Proposal development was organised on 14th January 2009 for about 23 participants. In addition, a draft “how to/best practice” manual with its focus on watershed management experiences was finalised in March 2009 and is being edited prior to publication.

46. **FYR Macedonia:** The Project established a new methodology and criteria for the participatory preparation of spatial planning documents incorporating ecosystem conservation objectives based upon a revision of the already-prepared broader Spatial Plan for the Prespa-Ohrid region. These plans are currently before Parliament and approval was expected in December 2008 but national elections have meant delays and this approval is now expected imminently. Three working papers were produced by the international expert and two in-country missions were conducted in the period October 2008-January 2009. The participatory process involved all relevant stakeholders in the country through two workshops (15th October 2008 and 15th January 2009 with more than 20 participants at each) in order to discuss the assessment of the national current spatial planning process, international best practice models in spatial planning, as well as the new proposed criteria and methodology, and a "How to..." Handbook on spatial planning.

47. The demonstration model of a spatial land use plan for Macedonian Prespa should be implemented according to the Project’s design, however the new national Law on Waters was adopted in July 2008 and amended in January 2009 setting out the requirements for Water-use Management Plans based on the concept of river basin management. Because of the high degree of overlap, the Project successfully proposed the idea for combining the Water-use Management Plan (one of the objectives within the Project) and the Land-use (Spatial) Management Plan for the MK Prespa region into a single Watershed Management Plan. Such an approach is cost-effective saving duplication of costs, time and human resources working in parallel on both management plans for the same scope. This newly developed Watershed Management Plan should serve as a model for further such plans to

be developed for other river basins in FYR Macedonia. The MoEPP and MoAFWE staff have expressed their preference for this approach thereby increasing the likelihood of its replication. Currently the Project is awaiting official approval from the MoEPP to progress this idea¹³.

48. The MTET considers drafting a single integrated Watershed Management Plan based on the newly-developed methodology as a really efficient way of using existing data, information, and human resources to achieve sustainable land and water use in the Prespa region. However, the MTET recommends that the Project should also incorporate Strategic Environmental Assessment into the process of developing the Watershed Management Plan since such a strategic planning document will have an impact to the environment. This will mean incorporating other environmental objectives with the water- and land-use objectives at the earliest stage of drafting the planning document. The SEA Report should be prepared according to the national legislation using the appropriate tools and techniques and public participation process¹⁴.

The MTET recommends that with the Project incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment within the process of developing the Watershed Management Plan as a demonstration of best practice.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/ UNDP-MK	Develop and agree a work plan and budget for preparation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report and public hearing events	As soon as possible	Work plan and budget for SEA
PMU	Implement work plan	Within the appropriate timescale for the Watershed Management Plan as approved officially by the MoEPP	SEA as per work plan

Output 1.2: Ecosystem health priorities mainstreamed into productive sector law and regulatory instruments

49. **Albania:** Based on several gap analyses, the Project has produced four sectoral reports that incorporate ecosystem parameters into existing sectoral legal frameworks and provide the respective recommendations for mainstreaming ecosystem health priorities into water, agriculture, forest, and fishery law. The process is finalising procedures to establish an Association of Fisherman at Micro Prespa as well as a plan for improving fishing activities including training and assistance for this association. A national agricultural expert is contracted to provide assistance and an advisory service with the Project area.

50. The sectoral report findings are being fed into the LEAP follow-up activities involving user groups and local planning authorities. These have encompassed two to three round tables each month with local authorities in Liqenas and Proger communes for possible synergies. The Project is drafting ToRs for expertise to assist in drafting regulations and guidelines on watershed management (also linked closely with implementation of the LEAPs) and the newly-developed national legal framework on water. In addition, efforts are being made to strengthen enforcement mechanisms locally and for this there are currently daily meetings with the Regional Environment Agency in Korça along with monthly discussions with the basin authorities and forest inspections bodies.

51. **FYR Macedonia:** A complex set of activities have been completed with the aim of mainstreaming ecosystem health priorities into the Forestry, Water Management, Fishery and Agriculture sectors as well as in strengthening the sectoral policy and regulatory instruments in these productive sectors. A forestry consultant prepared the Sustainable Forest Guidance and supported drafting the Forest Management Action Plan for one pilot Forest Management Unit "Leva Reka-Bigla" in the Prespa region operated by the national Forest enterprise JP Makedonski Sumi-Prespa Drvo. The Sustainable Forest Guidance was shared with partners in Albania and Greece. Extensive meetings

¹³ Consolidated comment: The TOR for selection of a company to prepare Prespa Watershed Management Plan was announced at the beginning of June. The deadline is 6 July 2009.

¹⁴ Consolidated comment: The TOR incorporates SEA.

were held with the planners from the Prespa region and representatives from the MoEFWE (learning by doing sessions) during the drafting process in order to introduce the new ecosystem approach into forest management. The new Law on Forestry is under parliamentary discussion including the proposed ecosystem-oriented forestry approach.

52. Water ecosystem issues will be incorporated within the Watershed Management Plan (see paragraph 47) and training will be held during the drafting process, mainly focused on the new watershed management approach, public participation during the public hearings, and capacity building on Strategic Environmental Assessment. After several individual meetings with governmental representatives, on 18th of March 2009 a workshop was organised with 12 participants from the MoAFWE, MoEPP and other stakeholders to discuss the ToRs for the development of the Watershed Management Plan. The tender announcement was made in June 2009. An initial needs assessment of local fisherman (about 78 individuals) was carried out and intensive work undertaken to establish the first Macedonian Professional Fishery Association "Prespanski Krap" in the region. This Fishery Association has been identified as a key stakeholder at the national and transboundary levels particularly in connection with the nomination of the new concessionaire for the Prespa Lake fishery. A capacity building and training programme will be launched on a national level to strengthen the capacity of the newly established Fishery Association's members in parallel with preparation of the national Action Plan for Fisheries.

53. Well-organised and effective training on Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) was undertaken for a group of 25 apple farmers over the period July-December 2008. The main topics covered were integrated pest and crop management issues. The GAP standard was applied to apple production delivered through desk training and field visits. As a result, the farmers have successfully applied the GAP standards to their every day work. A second group of 25 farmers will start the same training course in September 2009. These training courses are only part of wider Project activities aimed at modifying agricultural management practices in the Prespa region (see also Output 2).

54. **Transboundary:** An international consultant and project staff have been carrying out a participative process to improve transboundary cooperation in fisheries management issues. A Workshop held on 27th November 2008 in Korça with 25 participants representing a variety of stakeholders – governmental institutions, Albanian and Macedonian Fishery Associations plus representatives from the Society for the Protection of Prespa – priority issues were identified as: ecology of the fishery, institutional set-up for transboundary context and livelihoods, fisheries' monitoring, and other issues as a part of the Draft Fishery Programme. On 4-5th May 2009, a second workshop was organised to present the Final Fishery Programme addressing the national measures to be included in by each country to achieve a formal Agreement for fisheries at the transboundary level. The main goal is to improve transboundary management of the fishery through the preparation of a Transboundary Management Fishery Plan based on a consensus between three littoral countries. The Project will provide the data and measures to be included into the recently adopted Fishery Management Plan by the Albanian MoAFWE.

Output 1.3: Ecosystem oriented water management piloted at the local scale

55. **FYR Macedonia:** No actions yet. The new proposed Watershed Management Plan (see paragraph 47) will be piloted at the local scale in Macedonian Prespa once it has been completed and approved. Not applicable to Albania.

Output 1.4: Capacity for water and watershed management built at municipal and commune level in MK and AL respectively

56. **Albania:** The Project has faced significant difficulties in progressing this activity, due to delays from the MoEFWA in setting up the PNP-MC, and the delay in the commencement of the KfW project. However, the Project has lobbied hard at the central, regional, and local levels for the need for a Prespa National Park Management Committee (PNP-MC) as a crucial institution to improve the overall management of the Park and the watershed. At least three dedicated training workshops have

taken place with staff from the PNP (overall 37 persons from PNP and Forestry Directorate) – two in Korça and one overseas (two representatives from the PNP).

57. **FYR Macedonia:** The Watershed Council for Macedonian Prespa is expected to be established in May 2009 on receipt of the official nomination of the representatives by the MoEPP. The draft structure and composition were prepared in parallel with the ToRs for the development of the Watershed Management Plan. The operational mandate of the Watershed Council will be set according to the requirements of the new Law on Waters. During the remainder of the Project, a training and capacity building programme will be delivered to the members of the Council and other key stakeholders. The MTET recommends that this programme includes the concept of the river basin management; combined approach for point and diffuse sources of water pollution; measures required by EU Directives covering bathing waters, drinking waters, urban waste waters, IPPC, nitrates and sewage sludge. It will be very important to present the public participation tools that should be applied to inform the public and to ensure their participation in the development of the Watershed Management Plan.

The MTET recommends upgrading the training and capacity building programme for the Watershed Council members and stakeholders			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP	Develop an upgraded Trainings and Capacity Building Programme	End of Q3 2009.	Work plan and budget for Trainings and Capacity Building Programme
PMU	Implement the Capacity building Programme	Over remainder of Project	As per Programme

Output 1.5: Flexible pollution reduction techniques and the use of incentives strengthens enforcement of and compliance with environmental laws protecting ecosystem health

58. **Albania:** Baseline assessments show that pollution from the Albanian Prespa region is insignificant. There are no industrial facilities, and even the amount of agrochemicals applied by farmers in Albanian Prespa amounts to only around 720kg/annum. Therefore, activities anticipated by the Logframe under this Output are effectively irrelevant, and hence have not been undertaken.

59. **FYR Macedonia:** The Government recently announced a nationwide ban on the use of detergents containing phosphates, hence the activities under the Logframe became irrelevant. The Project supported the Municipality of Resen in complying with the new legal requirements on issuing the first Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC) B type permit for factories in the region. The IPPC B type permit will ensure prevention, monitoring and control of all type of water, air and soil pollution as well as improving energy efficiency and waste minimisation. A national consultancy company was engaged to work together with the Municipality's authorised person to review the pilot IPPC B applications submitted by the Bricks production company, a new installation in the region, and to draft the first IPPC B permit. Two trainings were held (September and November 2008) for 21 representatives of the Municipality of Resen, state environmental inspectors, representatives from other six companies-installations which need to apply for IPPC B type permit, local NGOs, and representatives from neighbouring municipalities – Mogila, Ohrid, Prilep, Krushevo, Demir Hisar, and Bitola. This training was deemed very useful for other installations in the region which prepared their IPPC B type applications using the knowledge gained during these sessions. The Administrative Handbook on Issuing IPPC B Type Permits was prepared and 200-300 copies were being printed in April 2009. The Project intends to continue to support the municipal staff in Resen (one officer issuing IPPC B type permits and one an environmental inspector) with the process of reviewing new submitted IPPC B type permit applications, and negotiating operational plans with companies regarding their IPPC measures.

60. The MTET finds that the Project has carried out very good work in strengthening the previously weak administrative capacities on pollution reduction. Although in Macedonian Prespa there is no intensive industrial production, the six installations in Resen are the main sources of environmental

pollution in the region degrading the water quality in Golema Reka and Prespa Lake. The Municipality staff found the training and direct consultancy support particularly helpful, and expressed a need for similar capacity building programmes within the Project to cover the new legal obligations of the Municipality to work on procedures for approval of Environmental Impact Assessments that need to be prepared by small development projects.

The MTET recommends that a capacity building programme covering the procedure for the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessments be established for appropriate environmental staff in the Municipality of Resen and other key stakeholders.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP	Develop an appropriate programme for the procedure for Environmental Impact Assessments.	End of Q3 2009	Work plan and budget for training and support programme
PMU	Implement the programme	2010	As per programme

Outcome 2: Stakeholders modify productive sector resource management practice to reduce pesticide inputs, increase habitat heterogeneity, and improve the status of target species and communities within the Prespa Basin

Output 2.1: Reduced environmental impacts of agriculture in AL and MK Prespa

61. **Albania:** The Project has undertaken activities to reduce the environmental impact from different productive sectors. Although agriculture is not extensive in terms of the area or number of families practising it in Albanian Prespa, nor does it use intensive methods, it is the region's intention to increase this, particularly in the production of wine and fruit. Therefore, the Project has assisted in purchasing three agro-meteorological stations to provide meteorological data for Proger commune, and two others for parts of Ligenas commune. The former is operative while the Project is conducting a situation analysis in order to place the other two in the most effective locations. A national agriculture expert has been contracted to provide an advisory role for local farmers and to develop a training module for them regarding data interpretation. He has prepared a short-term action plan to improve agricultural practices from an integrated watershed management perspective, building on two training workshops led by international experts (26 participants in February 2008 and March 2009), and an exchange visit for a group of seven farmers carried out with Macedonian counterparts. Four working groups of farmers have been established in the two targeted communes and two trainings are envisaged for each of them each month throughout 2009. It is estimated that these modified resource management practices have led to eight family farms performing better agriculture practices and reducing pesticide inputs. Although the baseline assessment estimated that local farmers in the two communes used only about 720 kilograms of agrochemicals, and although the Mayor of Ligenas believes the Project's focus on agriculture in the commune is misplaced¹⁵, the principles will be applied and the agro-meteorological stations used as development of the sector in the area occurs.

62. **FYR Macedonia:** A training programme on the implementation of the principles for Integrated Pest Management and Integrated Crop Management according to Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) was conducted for a group of 25 apple farmers in Macedonian Prespa. Upon completion of one year of training, the farmers succeeded in learning to control the quantity and type of pesticide used and decreased the number of applications by about three per year¹⁶. Experts from the Faculty of Agriculture, University Saints Cyril and Methodius, Skopje, supported the farmers during the apple growing season in order to apply effective integrated crop management. Two workshops were organised (end 2007 and March 2008) focussing on soil analysis and leaf analysis performed at the agrochemical laboratory in Resen in order to determine proper soil and irrigation management and

¹⁵ The Mayor of Ligenas believes that the focus should be on attracting tourism to the area, but this belies the Project's main concerns with integrated ecological management.

¹⁶ The number of applications depends upon the microclimates found across the region. On average, about 10-15 applications are made per season; this has generally been reduced by three, though in some places by more.

pesticide and fertilizers use. The Manual for GAP was prepared in September 2008 titled "*The Application of the GAP Standard within Apple Growing and Production*" as useful tool with practical "tips and hints" for farmers. One automated agro-meteorological station was provided to the Union of Agriculture Producers which completed a system of five such stations across the region. These monitoring stations provide data on 35 parameters which are transmitted to a central facility in Vienna where they are made available on-line to users with a password. Local experts analyse the information daily and determine the optimal time for applications of pesticides, relaying the information by various means to members and via the agrochemical pharmacies in the region. Such applied GAP standards show a reduction in farmers' costs for water, pesticides, and fertilizers and this is being promoted as an incentive for its wider-scale adoption. Transboundary cooperation on the dissemination of agro-management practices was established through an informal network of farmers' associations and experts from the governmental agriculture institutions from all three countries.

63. The Project also supported the preparation of the study "*Establishment of Sustainable and Efficient Packaging Management in the Prespa Region*" in 2008 dealing with the problem of pesticide packaging waste from bags left in the field after application, or from their illegal disposal near rivers and roads. The Study proposed two options for final disposal of this waste – the collection of pesticide packaging waste and its final disposal in a special incinerator to be constructed at an existing landfill (3km from Resen city); or the collection of the pesticide packaging waste (20-30 times per year) and its transport to an official hazardous waste facility to be determined by the Government of FYR Macedonia. The study contains the complete technical design for the construction of the central station at the landfill site and could be used as a basis for construction. As a follow-up, co-financed actions are expected by the SDC for the construction of the facility. A Commission comprising representatives of the Municipality of Resen, the Public Communal utility company, NGOs, MoEPP and the Project unit was established in order to determine the micro locations for the five collection stations. Three workshops were organised (22nd August 2008, 30-31st November 2008, 11th December 2008) with 20-30 participants at each event coming from pesticides dealers, agricultural NGOs, farmers, representatives of the Public Communal utility company, and municipal inspectors. Several public awareness raising events on this topic were organised by an NGO financed by the GEF Small Grants Programme. Finally, an agreement was made between all stakeholders to add fertilizer packaging waste to the scope of the activities dealing with pesticide packaging waste due to the same hazardous characteristics.

64. The Project started to develop the ToRs for a study on composting apple waste in the Prespa region, but the Municipality of Resen decided this work could possibly be funded by mobilizing resources of the EU grant schemes through the Italian Government¹⁷.

Output 2.2: Forest managed for native species composition and forest stand heterogeneity in MK and AL

65. **Albania:** It is estimated from Agriculture Directorate reports that 30% of the Prespa Park Forest area is currently Community Forest providing the actual needs for fodder and fuel wood for 12 villages. At present, no area of forest is under biodiversity-oriented management. The Project's national agricultural advisor is just commencing activities that contribute to biodiversity-oriented forest management by defining forest management activities and introducing new silvicultural techniques. This work has been preceded by three a small-scale projects commissioned through the Project's own small grants programme to local NGOs – the Ecological Club (USD\$ 9,500) to assist in preparing the main regulatory framework for management in Prespa National Park; the Association of Forest and Pastures (US\$ 4,954) to provide forestry-related services (mainly thinning) in Parcel N°. 80; and Transboundary Nature (US\$ 5,000) to provide information and an identification herbarium on tree and shrub species of Prespa National Park.

¹⁷ **Consolidated comment:** Latest update – the newly elected municipal administration informed the project that such study will not be funded by the Italian government, and that the Municipality will have to look for resources for initiating the implementation of a management system for this type of organic waste. This may be a reason for the GEF project to reassess the possibility of re-integrating this activity in the project workplan, but after careful evaluation of the financial and time constraints, and other feasibility related factors.

66. **FYR Macedonia:** The Project prepared Sustainable Forest Guidance on the integration of biodiversity-oriented forestry and provided technical support to incorporate this approach into the Forest Management Action Plan for one pilot Forest Management Unit "Leva Reka-Bigla" in the Prespa region (see paragraph 51). The Sustainable Forest Guidance was shared with Albanian and Greek partners. This Guidance on the modern approach to forest management could be used to prepare other forest management plans countrywide.

Output 2.3: Restoration/reforestation of degraded forest in AL Prespa NP

67. No activities yet undertaken since Project is awaiting commencement of the KfW project.

Output 2.4: Pilot small-scale wastewater treatment facilities measurably reduce eutrophying inputs to Lakes Prespa

68. **Albania:** The Project has cooperated with the ArtGold initiative and government agencies working to establish low-cost wastewater treatment facilities in the target area by reviewing locations and estimating financial sources and target groups. The Project and a national wastewater management expert have also planned to organise a fact-finding mission for a study tour to a neighbouring country.

69. Other related activities include the supervision of a waste management project implemented in Proger and Ligenas communes which has resulted in about a 30% reduction (weight) in solid waste due to an improved solid waste management system, and recycling and composting practices in the communes. For this, the Project mobilised funds from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) programme on waste management and prepared the communes' regional waste management plan. As part of this joint cooperation between the two communes, the Mayor of Ligenas is supposed to facilitate transport of waste from Proger but unfortunately, and despite promises, this has not yet happened. The Project has also commissioned an economic analysis of the values of the most important ecosystem services in Prespa. This revealed the most relevant services that sustain the integrated ecosystem management approach, and particular attention was paid to continuous structural improvement to solid waste and wastewater management.

70. **FYR Macedonia:** The Feasibility Study for an alternative wastewater treatment plant for one demonstration site – the village Nakolec – was prepared in during July-October 2007. A study tour to Novi Sad, Serbia, was organised in November 2007 for nine representatives from the Municipality of Resen, MoEPP and Nakolec village with the aim of visiting a wastewater treatment plant with similar characteristics and technology as the one proposed for Nakolec to better understand the issues related to the construction of wetlands and maintenance the treatment plant. The main design for the plant and revisions to it, a natural filtration plant, were conducted over two months in the summer of 2008, the Environmental Impact Assessment was prepared and submitted to the MoEPP, and approval was issued late in 2008. Works construction started in December 2008 and at the time of the MTET was in its final phase¹⁸. Commissioning was expected upon completion of the wastewater collection system for the village, construction of which had been delayed by un-seasonal high groundwater. Co-financing for this collection system was obtained by the Project when the villagers of Nakolec agreed to pay for its construction themselves. This was subsequently rendered unnecessary when the MoEPP agreed to pay the cost. The MTET found that the villagers were very aware of the necessity for constructing the wastewater treatment plant to improve the quality of the water draining into Macro Prespa. One of the strengths of this activity has been that the Project did not select the cheapest design but the one with the lowest running costs and easiest operational procedures. In this way, the sustainability of the plant, its operation and running costs, are guaranteed by the villagers themselves.

¹⁸ Consolidated comment: Works have been completed in May, since the MTET mission.

Output 2.5: Strengthened civil society partners for ecosystem-oriented fishery management in AL and MK Prespa

71. **Albania:** The Organisation of Fishery Management (OFM) for Macro Prespa has been assisted by the Project in implementing the fishery management activities, firstly with a needs assessment and then with training and capacity building in managing the fishery in accordance with integrated ecosystem management principles. Fishing tools (nets, life jackets, anti-corrosive paint) and logistic support was provided to them, training workshops were conducted for a total of about 29 fishermen, and a study tour in to the Vlora region on the Albanian Adriatic coast was made to exchange information with fishermen there. The MTET is unconvinced of the relevance of this and agrees with local fishermen that a reciprocal exchange visit with fishermen in the other two littoral countries of Prespa would be more informative. Although there was an exchange study tour (September 2007).of key Prespa stakeholders (farmers and fishermen) with Macedonian and Greek ones, not many fishermen were involved. The MTET believes that a much bigger exchange visit for fishermen should be organised with Macedonian and Greek¹⁹ counterparts and understands that such a concept is in the work programme for 2009. The Project is also supporting the establishment of the Association of Fishermen of Micro Prespa (an OFM is not possible under the law because there are too few members) and giving logistical support. The Project has also assisted with transboundary fishery activities including a situational analysis of fish and fisheries, and a technical workshop on Fish and Fisheries in Korça (February 2009).

72. In Albania there remains no limit on fish catches with the actual annual catch being 200-250 tonnes of fish in total for both Prespa lakes. The project will have to work with the Government to change the legislation and/or regulations in order to impose a legal limit. It is unclear if the Project's indicators (# 33 and 35) would require this or not and this point should be clarified by the PMU and UNDP-GEF. (See also paragraph 141 and recommendation.)

73. **FYR Macedonia:** The Project very successfully facilitated the foundation of the first Professional Fishery Association in the region (see paragraph 52) in 2008 and strengthened its capacities in order to become a relevant partner for the development of a sustainable fishery in the future. Its representatives participating in the first transboundary Fisheries Workshop discussing sector issues.

Output 2.6: A marketplace to foster the knowledge, goods and services of a conservation economy"

74. **Albania:** An international expert in social economic profiling and assessment has been contracted and will commence work soon. His work will feed into the establishment of the National Capital Resource Centre (NCRC) in Liqenas; the ToR for an international expertise to facilitate this have been drafted and tendering procedures are due to start soon. To supplement this, the Project has prepared and distributed widely a brochure on ecological and natural values of the Prespa area. It is being taught to all pupils in the communes of Liqenas and Proger. Additionally, several publications are available throughout the communes (a brochure "*Ekologjisti i Vogel*" (Young Ecologist), a colouring book for pupils) along with coverage in the local Prespa newspapers and television, and public awareness activities and products (t-shirts, posters and leaflets, newspaper, 2009calendar). These have helped to increase awareness among local people regarding the Prespa ecosystem – the 14th issue of IUCN SEE's e-bulletin published information on the progress of the Project and events related to nature conservation. Capacities are supported and materials provided to the two information centres in Zgradec and Gorica; an educational programme has been developed and carried out on Prespa ecosystem by means of a "Green Pack" and awareness further increased by development and implementation of the LEAPs (see paragraph 44).

75. The project has commissioned an economic analysis of the values of the most prominent ecosystem services in Prespa. It has been translated into Albanian, and the local agriculture advisory

¹⁹ The MTET understands that getting visas to enter Greece for the September 2007 visit was extremely difficult and if the process proves as difficult again, the exchange visit may have to be limited to FYR Macedonia – although Greek fishermen could be invited to attend the visit in both Albania and FYR Macedonia.

expert is following up with recommendations for streamlining it into an action plan. The Prespa Agribusiness Fair was organised in Korça in September 2008 and followed with an exchange visit to Resen to join Macedonian counterparts in their apple festival.

76. **FYR Macedonia:** Currently, the Project is working on determining the concept, role and services to be provided to stakeholders by the NCRC that will be established in Resen. An international consultant was contracted in summer 2008 to prepare a report on the ecosystem conservation economy. This report "*Conceptualization of a Natural Capital Resource Centre in the Prespa Lake region*" was prepared using international best practises in applied economics in nature conservation. The Ministry of Culture is expected to provide facilities for the NCRC by providing premises in the Saraj Building in Resen and negotiations between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Culture are underway. Services proposed to be offered by the NCRC include an information centre for the Prespa region, a library, internet services, host offices for representatives from the governmental institutions relevant for Prespa ecosystem, development of research projects and facilitation the dialog with academia and NGOs, organisation and facilitation of ecological debates. The Project is working on the architectural design and renovation of the allotted office, purchase of furniture, and the intention is to engage two employees to work in the Centre (to be paid by the Project for the first year). Meantime, negotiations continue with the Municipality of Resen and MoEPP to share the future running and staff costs. Commitment is still awaited from both institutions.

77. The Project plans to work on the economic analysis of the value of protected areas and all ecosystem services in the region during 2009-2010, in parallel with other related projects in the country. The MTET believes that this will demonstrate an innovative way of exploiting the economic opportunities to increase the value of this region and this example could serve as a demonstration for other protected areas in the country.

Outcome 3: Stakeholders conserve priority biological diversity across the Prespa Basin and make key protected areas in Prespa Basin (PNP, GNP, and EWR) fully operational

Output 3.1: Transboundary monitoring programme

78. **Transboundary:** The Monitoring Conservation Working Group (MCWG) was established in 2007 with the aim of creating a transboundary monitoring system. The MCWG comprises four representatives from each of the three countries: i) a representative from a relevant ministry, ii) from a protected area institution, iii) a representative from a national NGO, and iv) a representative from academia. Meetings are held twice a year. Operational rules have been endorsed and five thematic areas have been established: i) birds and other biodiversity, ii) fish and fisheries, iii) forest and other terrestrial habitats, iv) water quality and quantity, and v) socio-economy and land use. With financial support from WWF-Greece, SPP contracted Tour du Valat Station Biologique to prepare a Study on Transboundary Monitoring System. This involved, without prior advice and/or consultation with Project offices, engaging national consultant to support the international consultancy with data and information collection. A draft report by Tour du Valat containing information on each country's institutions responsible currently for monitoring, main stakeholders, geographical area, criteria for choosing the indicators, and the aim of the monitoring, was submitted to the MCWG members for comments. Indicators for each thematic area have been defined and it has been agreed that implementation of pilot monitoring of 2-3 priority parameters per thematic area will be undertaken in each country for a period of six months. The governments of all three countries should follow with financial support of the monitoring system. The MoEFWA (Albania) has emphasised that the transboundary monitoring system must follow a sustainable approach, i.e. a locally-based, low-cost system. The MTET would also like to highlight concerns of some stakeholders that the accreditation of the laboratories is also an issue needs to be addressed during the MCWG meetings and how the Project or other complementary activities could assist the laboratories with the accreditation process according to ISO 17 025. This accreditation process will be an essential step when monitoring starts

and results need to be recognised by all three littoral states. The MTET suggests that the accreditation process could start with methods for the 2-3 priority parameters on each thematic area.

79. **Albania:** The PMU is working to commission a local NGO in undertaking various training activities in close coordination with, and complementing the efforts of, the MoEFWA. The NGO will facilitate the monitoring programme and assist in organising the Working Group meetings according to the transboundary plans. The PMU has also assisted in preparing and organising regional monitoring workshops.

80. **FYR Macedonia:** Monitoring equipment (gas chromatograph) for the laboratory at the Public Health Institute in Bitola was purchased by the Project to analyse pesticides in surface waters and in samples of sediments and fish tissue. This equipment will be incorporated into the transboundary monitoring system. The MTE also notes continued requests for yet more monitoring stations and analytical laboratories by scientists associated with the Project. The MTET suggests that such requests are unrealistic and should not be met without those responsible securing funds for their sustainable operation. The MTET points to lessons learnt from the World Bank-GEF Project on Ohrid Lake (1999-2004) where monitoring equipment purchased is now lying idle because of the lack of finance to provide for its operational running costs.

Output 3.2: Landscape scale conservation planning

81. **Transboundary:** the initial tender for undertaking the Habitat and Species Conservation Action Plan, the prime report that will underpin many other activities under Outcomes 3 and 4, was advertised in 2008. Only one organisation responded and the evaluation committee selected it to undertake the work. However, prior to signing the contract, further due diligence uncovered the fact that a member of the organisation had been in a position to be able to comment on, and therefore influence, the ToR²⁰. Although it was never proved that any advantage had accrued to the company, the situation was deemed unfair place, UNDP cancelled the tender, quite rightly in the view of the MTET, on the basis that the process may have been compromised. The new ToR was to be let in May 2009²¹. Although no fault of the Project, this incident has seriously compromised the ability of the Project to deliver all activities related to habitats and species conservation management planning under Outcomes 3 and 4, and the MTET's criticism, perhaps easy with hindsight but still pertinent given the situation, is why has such a pivotal piece of work been left so late, some two years after Project start-up?²²

Output 3.3: Restoration of the Golema Reka

82. **FYR Macedonia:** A feasibility study for restoration of the Golema Reka, the main watercourse flowing into the Macro Prespa, divided the river length into three – an upper course that required little if any restoration activities; a middle course that was predominantly urban and heavily polluted; and a lower course running mainly through intensive agricultural landscapes. The latter were deemed not to provide enough space to undertake restoration work, and the urban section was selected as providing

²⁰ **Consolidated comment:** The TOR had been shared with the PPCC and Secretariat for comments, and one member of the company selected to undertake this assignment is a member of the Secretariat which was considered as a conflict of interest as he had a chance to see and comment the TORs in advance which puts other potential respondents in an unfavourable position and makes the process unfair.

²¹ **Consolidated comment:** The TORs were announced, offers received, and the evaluation of offers has been finalised. The signing of the contract is expected in two weeks period due to internal review processes (CAP, RACP).

²² **Consolidated comment:** The work plan for the component was prepared by the ITA and endorsed by the POC. Initially the TOR was planned to be announced in the first half of 2008 but the ITA submitted the TOR at the beginning of October and they were immediately announced on 8th October 2008 with an extended deadline for submission of offers until 3rd November 2009. Two offers were received within the deadline. The evaluation of offers took place on 4th November 2008. The final decision to cancel the tender was made in January 2009 upon finalisation of consultation with relevant departments within UNDP. **MTE response:** The point remains that this piece of work is pivotal to the successful outcome of the Project. The MTET is not criticising the reasons or procedures for the cancellation of the tender, but is definitely questioning why the TOR initially planned for the first half of 2008 was delayed (surely the need to use the 2008 breeding season for survey was paramount?); and even more, why the tender was not actually planned for the second half of 2007 to allow for any possible delays?

the most cost-effective means of actually reducing nutrient inflows into Macro Prespa. Cost-estimates suggested that only around 500m of river could be so restored. Although this is substantially less than the planned intervention on 10 km of the river, the MTET believes that the selection process is fully justified even though certain stakeholders, in particular SPP, disagree. Using SDC co-financing, the river course was cleaned of litter and other rubbish, interceptor wastewater collection pipes were constructed to carry pollution from the adjacent factories to a sewage works, and the river bed was re-profiled. Only with the latter does the MTET take issue since opportunities have been missed in demonstrating global best practice for including biodiversity factors into the scheme (see paragraph 142 et seq.). A second phase of restoration is planned to cover the 500m of river immediately upstream of the current scheme.

Output 3.4: PNP and GNP management capacity is strengthened and the parks fully operational

83. **Albania:** No activities have yet commenced under this Output, pending start-up of the KfW project in Albania, now due in September 2009.

84. **FYR Macedonia:** Originally planned to be a co-funded project with KfW, differing project cycles and approval procedures have meant that the KfW project in Galicica National Park is now running independently as a complementary project with parallel rather than co-financing. This three-year project started in February 2008 with the main aim of promote the integrated sustainable management for the National Park including a Management Plan and increased capacities of the administration.

Output 3.5: Ezerani Wildlife Reserve is re-authorized and fully operational

85. **FYR Macedonia:** Since April 2008 the Project has supported national consultants in developing the Feasibility Study for natural values of the Ezerani Nature Reserve, the main aims of which are to assess the environmental and socio-economic aspects of the Reserve; analyse current practices in the region based on Management Effectiveness Tracking Tools; undertake intensive biodiversity surveys; and analyse its natural and economic values. The Study will enable the revalorisation of the Reserve, its categorisation, and the determination of its boundaries as required under the new Law on Nature. A series of workshops will be organised involving people from Ezerani and neighbouring villages to discuss the proposed boundaries of the Reserve, prior to its re-proclamation by the MoEPP (see also paragraph 144). In parallel, the Project will help to develop the Management Plan for the Reserve as well as support the process of establishing the management authority.

Output 3.6: Prespa Protected Area - GR fully operationalised

86. Not assessed by the MTET.

Outcome 4: Stakeholders build upon ongoing transboundary cooperation in the Prespa Basin by strengthening the transboundary coordination mechanism and piloting transboundary conservation and water management

Output 4.1: PPCC becomes a formal, international trilateral institution under international law

87. **Transboundary:** An international consultant was engaged to undertake an expert review and assessment of the legal and operational role of the PPCC related to the Prespa Park objectives. The Draft Report “*Prespa Park Coordination Committee in transboundary ecosystem management*” providing recommendations and a plan for the institutional maturation of the transboundary cooperation was presented to the 11th Meeting of the PPCC (22-23rd November 2008) where it received an unfavourable reception, mainly on the basis that it did not respect certain political challenges currently prevalent and that no alternatives were presented. Nonetheless, since then, the Governments of both Albania and FYR Macedonia have endorsed it as the way forwards. Greece remains non-committal. The Report was finalised in December 2008 (see also paragraph 102). No sub-groups of PPCC members have been established yet.

88. A decision by UNDP was made not to hire an Executive Secretary despite the pivotal role such a post would play in the maturation of the PPCC (see paragraph 125).

89. A protocol on collaboration was signed in 2007 by the Mayors of Ligenas (AL), Prespa (GR) and Resen (MK) pledging common efforts for conservation of the nature and ecosystems in the Prespa region, although this appears to have occurred independently from any Project input.

Output 4.2: Prespa Water Working Group established by the PPCC

90. **Transboundary:** The Project drafted the ToRs for the establishment of the Water Management Working Group and in November 2008 they were discussed at the 11th PPCC Meeting (November 2008) where the main issues were the size and composition of the Group, its responsibilities, and funding sources. The ToRs have been further elaborated to include an international consultant who has already reported and will lead and monitor the work of the Group. The WMWG is expected to be established in June 2009 during the trilateral meeting, and will address the principles of integrated river basin management as per the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), coordinate the process of developing water management plans including links and exchange with MK counterparts; and coordinate and link WMWG with activities implementing the spatial plans and LEAPs. In **Albania**, the report of the international water management expert has been endorsed and the PMU is assisting the MoEFWA in reviewing new transboundary institutional arrangements with a focus on water management policies and a new draft Law on Water. In **FYR Macedonia**, The project is providing support to the national authorities (MoEPP, Ministry of Agriculture, and others) similar to the support the Albanian PMU is providing to its relevant stakeholders. The institutional arrangements for trans-boundary water management have been discussed with the relevant actors at individual meetings, and at joint workshops organized by the national PMU.

Output 4.3: Transboundary communication

91. **Transboundary:** A high quality Communication, Education and Public Awareness Strategy has been prepared. The consultative phase took place in 2007 and ToRs were prepared at the start of 2008. In June 2008 the Inception Workshop was held with members of Project staff, PPCC members and the Greek focal point to discuss the scope and objectives of the CEPA Strategy. The draft Strategy was presented for comments in August 2008, completed in October 2008, and the final version was endorsed officially by the PPCC at the 11th Meeting along with the proposed detailed activities and budget needed for its implementation. Implementation will occur as part of the PPCC's maturation process (see also paragraphs 111 *et seq.*). The first activities began with the organisation of the celebration event for World Wetlands Day (2nd of February 2009) with a children's painting competition in each country organised by local NGOs. Currently, the Prespa Park photo competition has been opened. Again, while the CEPA Strategy is clearly a very good piece of work, the MTET is curious as to why it has taken two years to prepare and endorse such a crucial piece of work²³. Although it will serve the PPCC well, long after the Project is over, an earlier development would have allowed advantage to be taken of Project finances for a longer period to aid better its fuller implementation.

92. An interactive dynamic website was launched in 2008 to act as the official PPCC/Prespa Park website (www.prespapark.org). Later, the Project's own website was launched (<http://prespa.iwlearn.org>) in four languages (Albanian, Greek, Macedonian, and English). The *Prespa Park Facts and Figures Info-kit* was prepared in October-December 2008 focused on various thematic areas covered by the Project activities: biodiversity, water, fish and fisheries, forests, agriculture, land, tourism. The information pack contains brochures, posters, leaflets and interactive CDs. Previously, they have been published and disseminated only in Greece, but will now be disseminated in Albanian and Macedonian Prespa.

²³ **Consolidated comment:** The tender for CEPA was announced on 27th February 2009 with a deadline of 24th March. The contract was signed in May 2009. No major delays occurred in this activity. **MTE response:** The issue is not that there have been no delays in the process, but rather the scheduling of the activity is far too late in the overall Project work programme.

93. **Albania:** The Project has contributed to strengthen the collaboration among PPCC members: it has developed and maintained the websites for the two targeted communes (Liqenas and Proger); organised weekly meetings with local NGOs to exchange experiences and practices, and the Albanian PMU is developing ToR and procedures to hire a part-time local expert to implement CEPA activities. The Project is also training eight teachers in the use of environmental information and education tools in cooperation with Green Pack programme of the Regional Environmental Centre. Through its own small grants programme (projects \leq US\$ 10,000), the Project is mobilising community awareness and participation. Thirty-three (groups of) applicants were helped with the principles of grant applications, and from these, six NGOs implemented pilot demonstrations of small-scale projects addressing improvements in forest ecosystem management; information and public awareness; improvements in the fishery sector; and clean-up and waste management improvements. The procedures for a second small grant exercise are being initiated. In **FYR Macedonia**, A small grants programme was implemented in 2008. Nine NGOs implemented projects to a total value of MKD 1,785,302 (c. \$US 40,000) and a further call for proposals may be considered in 2010.

Output 4.4: Pilot species and habitat conservation initiatives

94. **Transboundary:** The Habitats and Species Conservation Action Plan was significantly delayed because the winner of tender was subsequently found to have been ineligible since one of the members of the winning team was in a position where he could have influenced the ToR. The tender is due to be re-launched in May 2009 (see paragraph 81). Since this is the pivotal activity of this Output on which all other activities depend, no other progress has been possible.

95. **Albania:** Work with the Albanian Association of Mammals and Birds has established protection of a colony of 4,000-5,000 bats in Treni Cave, 90% of which are Schreibers's long-fingered bat (*Miniopterus schreibersi*). A report by the national NGO Transboundary Nature indicates the presence of at least 108 species of woody plants in Prespa National Park. The Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score for Prespa National Park was 34 in 2008, up slightly from 31 scored in the baseline assessment in 2007.

Output 4.5: Tri-national ecotourism and visitation strategy and management plan designed and approved by stakeholders

96. **Transboundary:** The Project has cooperated with the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) to develop a regional Ecotourism Strategy²⁴. An international consultant was engaged to assess ecotourism possibilities in the Prespa region and prepare the ToRs for the Tri-lateral Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. The key issues for tourism development, initiatives and projects in the three countries were identified during the Stakeholder Consultancy Workshop on Tourism Development held in Bitola (24th October 2008), and the consultants' preliminary recommendations were presented to the 11th PPCC Meeting (November 2008). The Tri-lateral Tourism Strategy and Action Plan is expected to be undertaken during the forthcoming six months, with the tender announced by the end of June 2009. The project will also support and coordinate this process including facilitating capacity building trainings and workshops for leaders in the tourism sector, representatives from the national parks, municipalities and other stakeholders.

Output 4.6: Supplementary diagnostic analysis fills gaps in existing analysis and supports preparation of SAP

97. **Transboundary:** Currently, the Project is undertaking a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) for the Prespa Park that will lead to an agreed and updated Strategic Action Plan (SAP) to replace the one developed in 2002 for the Prespa Park. The TDA is a scientific and technical fact-finding analysis to scale the relative importance of sources, causes and impacts of pressures in the

²⁴ **Consolidated comment:** SNV developed a Tourism Action Plan for Prespa National Park in Albania in 2007–2008 but not as part of the GEF Prespa project.

basin, and is a necessary precursor to develop the SAP as a negotiated policy document identifying legal, policy, and institutional reforms, and investment needs to mitigate the stresses on the ecosystem. An international consultant leads the process and the Regional Environmental Centre Budapest won the tender to provide national consultants to collect and collate the data. It is reported that there is little Greek buy-in to the process. Instead of being one of the first transboundary activities undertaken by the Project, which a TDA and SAP would normally be, the TDA did not begin until late 2008, for reasons unknown to the MTET²⁵. In October 2008, a review of the current SAP, its development process, current implementation status and challenges were identified in a report that was presented to the Inception Workshop held on 26th November 2008. The First Stakeholder Workshop was held on 3-5th February 2009 with more than 40 participants from all three countries. Several workshops will be organised and the participatory approach will be applied until the end of August 2009 when the final version of the TDA is expected to be produced and the SAP will then be finalised by the end of 2009.

98. The Preliminary water balance model for Prespa Lake will be prepared by group of national experts funded by NATO.

Output 4.7: Strategic Action Program for Prespa Lakes Basin developed and negotiated and committed to by highest levels of Government in AL, GR and MK"

99. **Transboundary:** The Strategic Action Plan will be prepared by the end of 2009 (see paragraph 97), and the Donor Conference will be organised shortly after to facilitate the interest and readiness of the donor community financially to support the proposed actions and measures on integrated ecosystem watershed management in the Prespa region. As above, this entire process appears to the MTET to have been unduly delayed.

Outcome 5: Lessons learnt and adaptive management of project

100. Issues of management and monitoring are covered in numerous other parts of this report, e.g. paragraphs 15 *et seq.*, 31 *et seq.* and 135.

KEY ISSUES

101. As can be seen from the foregoing part of the evaluation, the MTET believes that this is generally a good project, well implemented technically if less so managerially, in quite challenging circumstances. The aim of this section is to concentrate on those key and often difficult cross-cutting issues that the Project, at its halfway stage, now needs to address. It is important that the reader keeps in mind that this section is not intended to show this Project in a poor light, rather to improve it.

THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

PPCC Maturation

102. Despite it not being an objective indicator, the maturation process of the PPCC has come to dominate the thinking of the Transboundary component, and is clearly a major strategic target for the Project. The technical assessment report by Professor Bogdanovitch highlighted the current weaknesses of the PPCC, largely that “no legal act was adopted ever, which could be considered as a constitutive instrument (a clear decision or statute) of the PPCC”, nor “who was supposed to control the work/activities/operations of the PPCC and assess its success in achieving projected goals (or fulfilling its mission)” nor “to whom the PPCC must report? And finally, who would have [the] legal duty to receive the PPCC decisions/conclusions/recommendations, and react on such input?”. The

²⁵ **Consolidated comment:** The ITA initiated recruitment process for international consultant in May 2008 and the contract was signed in July 2008. The TOR for the selection of a company was submitted at the end of September 2008 and announced on 2nd October 2008 with a deadline of 23rd October. The contract with REC Budapest was signed on 19th November 2009.

same report goes on to lay out a comprehensive systematic process over a three-year period for achieving a trilateral agreement that will provide the PPCC with appropriate legal status and sustainable finance. Although this report received an unfavourable reception when presented to the PPCC meeting Pyli, Greece on 22nd November 2008 the report has been submitted to the governments of all three littoral states and endorsed as the way forwards by two of them. However, given the political climate between FYR Macedonia and Greece, it is the unanimous opinion of stakeholders and members of the PPCC interviewed by the MTET that such an Agreement is currently impossible, with optimistic estimates suggesting that such an Agreement would be unlikely within one to two years, to the more pessimistic view that such an Agreement is at least ten years away. Given these challenging circumstances, other substantive options towards the maturation process, notably lacking in the Bogdanovitch report, should be examined.

103. With that in mind, and with the clear acknowledgement that the MTET has no jurisdiction over decisions affecting the organisation and operation of the PPCC, the MTET here attempts to progress this discussion by bringing some fresh perspectives and others garnered from stakeholders themselves, and within the context of the intimate links between these issues and the delivery of the Project. While the PPCC is perfectly within its rights to ignore any recommendation made by the MTET, it is harder for the Project to do so. Therefore, the MTET has couched the following discussion in terms of suggestions rather than recommendations to avoid possible conflict between the Project and the PPCC. However, in the event that these suggestions fail to progress the maturation process either directly or indirectly, the MTET retains a duty to direct the Project and therefore it suggests that, under such circumstances, the Project acknowledges that it cannot take the maturation process any further due to significant external barriers and concentrates its efforts instead on those activities and indicators on which progress can be made, in particular the various technical working groups which in their own way will still facilitate the maturation process. After all, as the Consultant Report *Enhancing Transboundary Cooperation In Water Management In The Prespa Lakes Basin* by Dr. McIntyre makes clear, “*the PPCC does enjoy a de jure (formal legal) and de facto (based on the factual practice of the littoral States) mandate to pursue effective performance of its stated functions and to establish such subordinate bodies as are necessary for such performance*”. The MTET wishes to make it absolutely clear that this is not a “take-it-or-leave-it” situation, and is not attempting to pressurise the PPCC into a course of action that it may be reticent to take; it is purely providing the Project with hard-headed, pragmatic advice that all evaluations are tasked with doing.

104. The following suggestions are predicated upon the supposition that effective action on the ground will determine the success or otherwise of the PPCC and hence the practicality of the changes is possibly more important than the legal details. Given that both Albania and FYR Macedonia are likely to become EU member states in the not too distant future, from which time the three littoral countries will be obliged to cooperate on the Prespa Basin under the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), the measures currently under consideration are likely to be only temporary. Thus, speed of implementation is a factor, and the MTET believes the three-year timeframe envisaged under the Bogdanovitch report may be just too long in a situation crying out for a dynamic response, as well as the fact that it exceeds the Project’s lifespan. Strategically, the MTET’s suggestions for strengthening the PPCC include:

- a) Since no trilateral agreement on the PPCC appears realistically possible at this time, two bilateral agreements covering the same range of issues could serve the same purpose if they are worded the same, on the premise that if A=B and B=C then logic dictates A=C even if there is no such signed agreement between the latter two. Bilateral treaties may actually be easier to negotiate than a trilateral one, and would be seen by several stakeholders as a major Project success if they could be achieved.
- b) There appears to be a range of views amongst the stakeholders as to what the PPCC should be, from the full-blown management decision-making body for the whole of Prespa (similar to that role played by protected area management boards) to that of a purely coordination and information management body. While the former is definitely unrealistic (Prespa Park is not a real protected area and there is no example internationally of any sovereign government giving

up decision-making rights to any part of its territory to a transboundary commission or similar), the latter is perhaps a little overly-conservative. An option is for the PPCC to become a coordination and advisory body where it decides on the technical requirements for the basin itself, agrees an advisory note or similar, and the three governments undertake to implement that advice through appropriate national legislation, for example in the same way that EU member states implement EU Directives through their national legislation. The trilateral, or bilateral agreements, ensure that there is recourse in case one government fails to deliver on such implementation.

- c) Alternatively, the role of the PPCC could be reduced to (maintained at?) local coordination and information exchange, and issue raising and action taken at the thematic level through a series of thematic working groups, but with each given an appropriate mandate through its own pair of bilateral agreements – e.g. monitoring, fisheries, water management planning. Although more complex because of the number of agreements needed, it may be easier to achieve these since each set of bilateral agreements would be simpler to negotiate, a precedent is already in operation through the transboundary Water Commission established by Albania and Greece under the Helsinki Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention 1992), and the technical working groups established under the Project could provide the organisational foundation.
- d) At present the PPCC appears to be working only from its own experience and within its own regulatory framework. The Project should help to make the PPCC members aware of other functioning transboundary organisations and, importantly, study the processes by which they managed to get to their current mandates. In particular, help should be given to the PPCC to examine what steps such organisations took and what decisions were taken to decide those mandates. The Project should facilitate this process not just by arranging study visits as it has done (and perhaps another with a greater focus on the steps needed to reach an agreed mandate might be relevant) but by inviting key players from established transboundary bodies to a PPCC meeting where members can learn from relevant experiences. Provision of examples of drafts and working papers from this development process for members to study would be especially useful.

105. Operationally, the MTET's suggestions for strengthening the PPCC include:

- a) The size of the PPCC should be increased by one person from each country representing the protected areas, preferably the Director of the National Parks in Albania and Greece, and by a single person agreed from amongst the three protected areas in FYR Macedonia (Ezerani (when properly established) Galicica and Pelister). The latter may be an agreed person or may be rotated by agreement amongst the three. In the current organisation of the PPCC, the views of the Ministries' representatives will not necessarily reflect those of the protected areas; the municipalities have a development constituency; and the NGOs have their own agenda. Since the protected areas collectively in terms of land use represent one of, if not the largest stakeholder interests in the Prespa basin, and their views will reflect both the conservation and nature-based tourism needs of the area, their involvement is generally thought to be positive, particularly when the capacity of the protected areas is increased upon completion of the KfW projects.
- b) The addition of another non-executive member akin to the MedWet representative could be considered. A representative from the European Commission Directorate-General for Environment, perhaps from the Water Management or Habitats Committees, or from the Sustainable Development Directorate, might be helpful in providing a relevant EU viewpoint, especially in the light of increasing pre-accession activities and coordination by Albania and FYR Macedonia. Such involvement may also help with the negotiation of bilateral (or trilateral) treaties, and Council Decision of 27th June 2006 which makes specific reference to *“river basins ... shared between Greece on the one hand and Albania FYROM ... on the other hand”* would provide a framework for this. The MTET also suggests that if this suggestion is accepted and acted upon that the PPCC further consider making this member the full-time Chair

of the Committee to tackle the widely held view that the PPCC is drifting and that there is “*no-one running the show*” (see paragraph 106).

- c) Contrary to the suggestion in a working paper to the cancelled Third Extraordinary Meeting of the PPCC originally suggested for April 2009 which suggested that PPCC meetings should be limited to once a year because of work overload for the rotating Chair, increase the frequency of PPCC meetings and reduce their size to just the core members and any experts co-opted for a given meeting. The arrangements for the PPCC meetings have, by the consent of many, become too large. If the PPCC is to become action-oriented rather than just a large talking-shop, it needs to become streamlined. With more frequent meetings, the size of the agenda can be reduced and clarified so that priorities get dealt with more effectively and decisions taken. The current predilection for presentations can be replaced through written reports circulated with other working papers thereby giving the Committee more time to discuss and negotiate issue. Transparency does not require the attendance of many tens of observers – publishing the minutes on the PPCC’s website and inviting key stakeholders to relevant meetings will act just as effectively.
- d) While the suggestions outlined in c) above may run contrary to the ethos of many NGOs, the current arrangements seem to be based more on the model used by the international Conventions for their Conferences of the Parties – infrequent big meetings with large numbers of interested observers. However, such meetings are usually triennial, not twice a year, and in between there are many smaller, decision-making meetings. The MTET sees no reason why the same model cannot be adopted for the PPCC with large meetings held once every few years but with the regular meetings smaller and more dynamic. Apart from increased efficiency, the cost of such meetings will be cheaper and hence it is more likely that this cost will be funded by the three littoral governments, as many hope, in the near future. This is hugely important in getting the governments to commit funds. The PPCC has itself recognised this, since at its ninth regular meeting in Korça in November 2006 it discussed GEF funding of countries’ representatives at PPCC meetings henceforth would be limited to 15 persons per country, including the PPCC and Secretariat members, but no formal decision seems to have been adopted.
- e) Introduce a two- or three-year maximum term for NGO membership on the PPCC so that all NGOs with a stake in the Prespa Basin have a chance at representation. In the case of the Macedonian coalition of NGOs, the same representative has been present for at least the past four years (not to all of the coalition NGO’s partiality), while SPP have been represented since the first meeting. Local democracy ensures that the seats granted to the local municipalities change with elections – similarly, there should be no absolute right for one NGO, no matter how involved they have been in the process, to have a permanent seat on the PPCC.

PPCC Secretariat

106. It is clear to all concerned that the PPCC Secretariat is not functioning and as a result the viability of the PPCC itself is jeopardised, with several members expressing views paraphrased as they are getting tired, nothing is happening, and why are they doing this?. It is also clear to a number of international consultants that the PPCC is effectively non-existent in terms of decision-making and that the maturation process has effectively stalled with little eagerness displayed by members to push things forwards. As one consultant, “*no one is running the show*”. The PPCC Secretariat is supposed to be operated and funded by three NGOs, one from each country, but again the discrepancies between the three countries have effectively been ignored when the same levels of responsibility are shared between an experienced, middle class, technically competent, internationally-funded NGO and two inexperienced, poorer, technically challenged, NGOs funded largely by personal donation and voluntary contributions. As a result, the Albanian and Macedonian NGOs appointed by their respective governments have been unable to shoulder their responsibilities because of a lack of funding and limited technical capacity. To all practical purposes, the SPP have been functioning alone as the Secretariat, a role they recognise as being untenable since as a Greek national NGO they have no mandate to act in Albania and FYR Macedonia without counterparts. Furthermore, SPP has its

own agenda which will not always be congruous with that of the PPCC. The MTET believes this arrangement must change, and that a professional Secretariat of some description must be installed if the maturation process is to progress.

107. It is clear that the MTET is not alone in this view, with consultants and stakeholders intimating the same. The SPP itself clearly agrees and, together with their main donor WWF-Greece²⁶, have also indicated formally that their funding of the Secretariat will cease as of June 2010. SPP produced two options for future funding in Working Paper 5 for the 11th Regular Meeting of the PPCC held in Pyli, Greece, in November 2008 – one a short-term fix suggesting looking for external donors to fund PPCC operations and the Secretariat, and one a “wait-and-see” approach with a reassessment at the end of the Transboundary component in Spring 2010 (an error since the component will end with the rest of the Project in December 2011). The MTET believes that neither of these options will work – the former providing no sustainability, the latter disengaging the PPCC from the very process it is central to. Some stakeholders accused UNDP of not viewing the GEF Project as part of a longer-term process, a viewpoint that the MTET has some sympathy with, but in many ways this is understandable since the management requirements of delivering a large project and meeting all of its reporting targets inevitably focuses the mind with its concomitant narrowing of vision. However, if true, they are clearly not alone in this as such a “wait-and-see” approach suggests – the GEF project exists to help the PPCC strengthen its mandate, operations, and financial viability but to do so, the PPCC has to be engaged and committed into that maturation process throughout, not waiting and observing from the outside as this option would suggest.

108. While some see the declaration by the SPP to cease funding the Secretariat after June 2010 as a major problem, the MTET sees it as a positive step since it will focus the minds of the three governments on the key issue at hand – do they want the PPCC to continue to function or not? Many stakeholders, both within and without the PPCC, indicated to the MTET that they view the SPP as an obstacle to progress, not because they have a problem *per se* with the SPP, but because they believe that the Greek Government is hiding behind them. After all, why does the Greek Government need to commit to a process that the SPP is politically more committed to, technically competent at, and able and willing to finance? This also exhibits itself in the fact that SPP is always present at the Project’s technical working groups while the Greek Government remains unrepresented ostensibly on the grounds of lack of finance (but see paragraph 128). As the SPP note in their Working Paper 5, *“However important ... project activities cannot produce good or sustainable results if they are not supported, formulated and ultimately owned by the Prespa Park stakeholders”* and the MTET believes that until the process garners the full support of all three littoral governments, this will not be the case. The MTET further believes that the cessation of funding of the Secretariat by the SPP is a risky but brave strategy to force the issue, and the MTET provides its own suggestions for moving the Secretariat forwards, together with the Transboundary component of the Project in the light of the ITA’s departure, below (see paragraph 125).

Three Projects or One?

109. The design and implementation of this Project has left much to be desired in terms of its cohesiveness. The original idea of an overarching transboundary set of activities with nationally-focussed ones nested within it was always undermined by the fact that the implementation arrangements provided for two strong national PMUs with a much weaker Transboundary Unit which was given a coordination role but no overall project management role – the national components being required to coordinate their activities with those of the TBU but not actually report directly to it. The laxity of the system was further exacerbated by the fact that each component started at different times, the haste to be seen to be doing something and getting on with things has manifestly detracted from getting the right balance to the Project, and although recruitment difficulties were to blame with the Transboundary component actually commencing last of all – some 10-11 months after the Macedonian component, not starting any of the Project until this most central of Project staff was on board would

²⁶ And through them the Mava Foundation.

have helped enormously. The financial management system employed by UNDP has the Project entered on it as three separate entities, and different components are managed from different UNDP offices for nationalist reasons²⁷. And as if this was not enough, the International Transboundary Advisor, whose role was already fatally weakened, had a contract for only two of the Project's five year lifespan, optionally renewable for a short period. With his departure, and UNDP's decision never to have funded the post of Executive Secretary, it is not surprising that instead of having a cohesive single project one effectively has three.

110. Is there anything that the Project can do now to counter this? The MTET thinks this is unlikely, each component already being too far gone along its own independent pathway to make a change of course sensible or practical. Even the arrangements suggested by the MTET elsewhere (paragraph 126) are not conducive to provide the centrifugal force necessary to pull all components under one coordinated whole. Finally, does it matter? Undoubtedly if it had been set up with greater vision at the outset – the design or the commencement of implementation – the Project would have had a chance of building a stronger transboundary approach and perhaps of tying the PPCC in to a stronger centralised role. But this is just supposition by the MTET, since there are clearly other powerful factors at play. So, does it matter now – the MTET thinks not. As long as each component focuses on achieving its aims, and the new Transboundary Unit/Secretariat is supported in achieving its aims as fully as possible, the Project can still achieve successful delivery. And the reporting arrangements are such that despite what is present on the ground, it still appears to be one Project to GEF.

Inadequate Attention to Communication

111. The MTET is shocked to find that in a project focussed upon increasing transboundary cooperation, so little attention has so far been given to communication. It should have been apparent from the outset that one of the major weaknesses of the PPCC and its Secretariat was its failure to undertake both internal and external communication in a serious way. Why, then, did it take the best part of two years before a professional communications consultant was hired, and why was this for only five months? Perhaps this is because communications were under-developed and under-resourced in the Project's design, perhaps because communications are under-valued within the UNDP-MK's office²⁸. Whatever the reason, the new Communications, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Strategy needs implementing promptly – and by a professional communications specialist. The MTET agrees with the point raised in the CEPA Strategy, namely that “*a post of Transboundary Information and Knowledge Manager be introduced as soon as possible, regardless of long-term plans*”. This post should be established in addition to any option selected for strengthening the PPCC Secretariat (see paragraph 126).

The MTET recommends that a. professional communications specialist be hired to implement the Communications, Education and Public Awareness Strategy and to manage transboundary information and knowledge effectively.			
Responsibility	Task	Time frame	Deliverable
TBU/UNDP-MK	Draft a ToR for the communications specialist, preferably with input from the former International Communications Consultant	Immediately	ToR
UNDP-MK/ UNDP-GEF	Allocate an adequate budget for it to be full-time until the end of Project, even if this means re-allocating budgets of other	Immediately	Agreed budget allocation

²⁷ Consolidated comment: The PDF B was managed by one CO but it was not well perceived by the key stakeholders in the other country. Therefore, it was decided that UNDP MK will manage TBU and Macedonian national component, and UNDP AI will manage Albanian national component.

²⁸ The Communication Department in the UNDP-MK office appears to be staffed by two persons who are managing the communications of all Projects run out of the office, and hence are extremely over-worked. Why? Each Project apparently pays to have a communications service from the office and yet most of this budget appears to go towards supporting the Res. Rep. coordination function! Surely this needs reviewing. It might be better if each Project kept its budget and used it on a dedicated communication officer.

	components		
UNDP-MK	Advertise post and recruit suitable applicant	As soon as possible – the post should not be dependent upon the recruitment of any other staff.	Communication Specialist in post.

112. Interestingly, there also seems to be a lack of support from UNDP for the concept of the Prespa Park. An important part of the maturation process of the PPCC is building the brand of the idea that the PPCC represents, i.e. the Prespa Park. While the MTET agrees with UNDP that the Prespa Park does not exist as a “Park” in reality, i.e. it is a virtual park and for the foreseeable future is likely to stay that way, the idea as a concept has great value in focussing attention on the process of transboundary cooperation in the area and concentrating minds on the issue that a given person’s or organisation’s behaviour can no longer be viewed in isolation, but that such behaviour has effects elsewhere. Building this identity is crucial to the sense of belonging and ownership and pride in the area which in turn is a foundation for behavioural change; and that local people are beginning to relate to the idea of the “Prespa Park” is now apparent in some cases. With this in mind, UNDP needs to become more supportive of the Prespa Park brand and maximise its visibility. If the Prespa Park and transboundary cooperation flourishes but UNDP or GEF’s visibility is not particularly high, the outcome of the GEF money spent will have been successful. Surely at the end of the day this is more important than having a high UNDP-GEF visibility but a brand, concept, and process that is largely unsuccessful? The MTET believes that the CEPA Strategy has got the balance right and supports fully the ideas and concepts within it towards this end.

113. Branding brings us on to two further related points – the low visibility of GEF in the Project and in projects in general. This is of most immediate concern in Albania where the GEF logo is actually absent from almost all aspects of the Project. There is no GEF logo on the plaque on the wall outside the Albanian PMU’s office door; nor was there a GEF logo on the main banner used at the Inception Workshop in the country. The Project team make light of this – but it is a GEF requirement of the grant and cannot just be ignored. The MTET recommend that this is rectified immediately.

The MTET recommends that the GEF logo be included appropriately on all signs, banners, and publications in Albania.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU-AL	Produce and affix a new office door sign including the GEF logo.	Immediately	New sign
PMU-AL/ UNDP-AL	Ensure that the GEF logo is included appropriately on all Project materials, in line with GEF grant requirements and the guidelines produced in the CEPA Strategy.	Immediately	Correct visibility for GEF

114. The second issue is somewhat more nebulous, but important nonetheless. The MTET is concerned over the lack of an obvious link between many aspects of the Project and global biodiversity conservation. While awareness of the “Prespa Project” is widespread within the region, there is almost no recognition on the ground that it is a GEF-funded project and even less understanding of what GEF is and what it’s aims are. This absence of a clear GEF identity itself detracts from the “globally-important biodiversity” message. This is common to many GEF projects, not just this one, and yet is even more ironic here since the PMU in Albania are one of the few management teams that the MTE Team Leader has come across who have a clear understanding of this factor. While the causal links between the integrated ecosystem management activities and the underlying gains for biodiversity conservation are well made in the Project Document, on the ground these have to all intents and purposes been lost, and in most instances the Prespa Project appears more of a social development project rather than a biodiversity conservation one. Almost all stakeholders view the Project as, and refer to it as, the UNDP project, thereby equating it to being a standard social development project as per any of the bilateral or multilateral donors. This lack of identity as a GEF project is much more than a point about flag-waving for GEF. GEF projects are special in that the international community is funding the incremental costs associated with the extra efforts needed to

manage and conserve globally-important biodiversity. The MTET finds no evidence that the beneficiaries or other stakeholders showed any understanding of this global dimension of the wildlife around them, and it is unclear whether Project staff have ever raised it with them. In the view of the MTET, this represents a major missed opportunity. Organisations such as RARE²⁹ work from the point of view of stressing the global importance of species or habitats in an area and instilling pride in the local communities (villagers, schools, businesses) that they have these species present through focussed Pride campaigns, and then building social development around this necessary to support the long-term conservation. More needs to be made of this approach in the design of GEF projects in general, a point the MTE Team Leader has been making for years without being heard, but if nature-based tourism is to become an important sector for the Prespa Basin then such an approach will be critical to any plan for where the main attraction for the tourists is the special species or habitat itself that they come to see, not the supporting cast of the infrastructure and social community although these can themselves add to the experience.

THE PLANNING CONTEXT

Project Oversight

115. The MTET also feels that the oversight arrangements for this Project are flawed – understandable, but flawed nonetheless. Given that one of the main aims of the Project is to strengthen and mature the PPCC, two questions immediately arise: a) if the PPCC's capacity needs strengthening, how can it have enough capacity to oversee a US\$15 million project; and b) how can a beneficiary of the project (i.e. the PPCC) oversee the project from which it is benefiting? Conflict of interest springs to mind. While the PPCC undoubtedly acts as an effective forum for coordinating views at the Prespa level, a Project of this sort actually requires an inter-Ministerial committee to steer it since many of the activities need coordination at a more central national level, and international level, than the PPCC can achieve. Given that several Ministries from all three countries' Governments are actually involved in the activities of the Project, and that moves to legalise the PPCC through some means will at some stage need to involve the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the MTET recommends that UNDP-GEF take another look at the Project's oversight arrangements and perhaps establish a Project Steering Committee more relevant and effective in meeting the Project's needs. While the MTET recognises that this may dismay the NGO stakeholders, the MTET is not suggesting doing away with the Project still reporting and discussing its progress regularly to the PPCC as it has done until now, but is suggesting that a body with decision-making authority and a stronger power to coordinate between governments is more appropriate to the Project's requirements. Finally, objections raised in some quarters about UNDP chairing the existing Project Oversight Committee when it is the executing agency, in fact this is quite normal for GEF projects since most often the executing ministry chairs the steering committee for a nationally-executed (NEX) project, hence the MTET finds nothing untoward with UNDP chairing the oversight committee for a directly-executed (DEX) project.

The MTET recommends that the Project's oversight arrangements are re-examined with a view to ensuring maximisation of their relevance and effectiveness in meeting the Project's requirements.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-GEF/ UNDP	Examine the efficacy of the Project's oversight arrangements and determine the need for revision.	Immediately	Confirmation of existing arrangements or their revision.
UNDP	If revision is deemed necessary, undertake required consultations with new members, prepare documentation, and obtain necessary commitments, signatures.	As necessary	As necessary

Project Timing

116. UNDP-GEF signed the Project Document with the Government of FYR Macedonia on 17th April 2006 and with the Government of Albania on 25th September 2006, thereby commencing the

²⁹ <http://www.rareconservation.org/>

Project. The NPM for Albania did not begin work until 1st January 2007 and the ITA was finally recruited on 1st April 2007. However, by design or serendipity, these delays at start-up, have been fully compensated by having the official end date, as per the PIR 2008, set at 31st December 2011 which is effectively a full five years (or more) for all components. Although progress in 2006 and 2007 in FYR Macedonia was slow, current management of both national components is progressing well enough that the MTET believes the existing end date is realistic to achieve full implementation of the activities. Therefore, no compensation periods or extensions to the project are deemed necessary.

Coordination with KfW

117. During the PDF-B, the plan was that the German Development Bank KfW would co-fund the GEF Project. In FYR Macedonia, differences in the budget cycles and project approval processes of the two organisations have meant that the KfW project commenced prior to the GEF Project. As such, KfW activities have effectively become parallel financing rather than co-funding, and there is little overlap between the KfW focus on strengthening the protected areas and the GEF activities, though of course they remain complementary.

118. In Albania, the converse is true and the KfW project has fallen behind the GEF Project. Here, many of the GEF activities overlap much more with the KfW project and are dependent upon aspects of it before they can commence in any meaningful way. Thus, to date, the Albanian component of the GEF Project has simply sat and waited for the KfW Project to begin. The latest position is that the KfW project is due to start in September 2009 after the national elections are over, but still a considerable way behind initial plans. While there is every indication that this start date may be realised, the MTET believe that the Project should not be in the same waiting situation come September should there be further delays to the KfW project. Thus, the MTET recommends that the Albanian PMU draws up contingency plans with UNDP-AL as to how it intends to implement its own activities, or amend or even re-design them, in the event of any further delay to the KfW project. While such detailed planning may prove a waste of time and effort should KfW commence work in September, it would be foolhardy to let September arrive and to be no nearer having a contingency plan to fall back upon. The GEF Project should not think it has to be tied to KfW anymore than KfW felt tied to the GEF Project in FYR Macedonia. Such alliances are always full of the best of intentions – sometimes the best laid plans fail to materialise through no-one's fault. The GEF Project needs to know what it will do in such a situation.

The MTET recommends that the Albanian component of the Project develops a contingency plan as to how it intends to implement or amend those activities to be conducted in concert with the KfW project should there be further delays to that project's commencement beyond September 2009.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP-AL	Develop a contingency plan for those activities dependent on the KfW project to be put into effect in September 2009 if the KfW project is delayed beyond this date	Immediately	Contingency plan

Sustainability

119. The sustainability of the Project is mixed. There is an ostensibly reasonable institutional foundation but one which is dependent upon long-term government financing, the prospects for which, based on precedent and current performance, look particularly slim. Socially, there appears to be widespread popular support amongst the local people who in places are well motivated towards the Project's objectives. Given that the MTET has to provide a single ranking, it does so evaluating the likely sustainability of the Project as **Marginally Unsatisfactory**.

Institutional Sustainability

120. The institutional sustainability of the Project is difficult to call. The main institution, the PPCC, is in some ways poised on a knife-edge since its continuation is tied inextricably to the sustainability of its funding, a recurring theme of this report. There appears to be fatigue, or at least disillusionment, setting in some quarters of the PPCC, but that seems to be more a result of frustration over the

slowness of the maturation process and determining its associated financing than to a lack of belief in the need for the PPCC. If the Project eventually finds a way to strengthen the mandate, organisation, and funding of the PPCC, or if at least can set the process on a solid course, it will have achieved a measure of success and the PPCC will continue to operate – at least until such time as Albania and FYR Macedonia join the EU at which time EU Law will provide it, or a successor, with a stronger institutional mandate.

121. At the local level, the Project has worked hard with a number of stakeholders. To date, the Municipality of Resen has been a strong supporter of the Project and its activities, and independently was instrumental in the signing of an MOU to cooperate with Liqenas Commune (Albania) and the Municipality of Prespa (Greece). However, the local elections of early April 2009 brought a new Mayor to power and the MTET can only hope that he proves as stalwart a supporter³⁰. But given that politics are fickle, the Project will have to work hard to ensure that he becomes so. In the villages where the Project is working, e.g. Nakolec, and the NGOs with which it works closely, e.g. the Union of Agricultural Producers, support for the Project and its activities is strong and these bodies and people are vociferous in its praise thereby helping to spread the message and raise awareness of the issues around the lake. Perhaps the acid test for the PMU of the Macedonian component will be the result of the work with the villagers or Ezerani who are extremely hostile to the nature reserve on their doorstep and the restrictions that it brings. In Albania, the situation is more mixed. Support is strong with Proger Commune where assistance with a wastewater collection system is current, but is weak among the leadership of Liqenas Commune who accuses it of being too remote from its focal area, not being relevant to his villagers, not employing local people, and not bringing enough money to the area. Undoubtedly some of this is due to unrealistic expectations and to misunderstandings as to how a GEF project operates, but some is also due to the Mayor wanting to play the ethnic minority card. If the Project cannot win him over, mayoral elections are due before the end of the Project and it is some peoples' expectation that a new mayor could be in office at that time. Work with the NGOs, particularly the fishermen, has some support, but the overwhelming focus of poor fishermen is on the size of their catch and it remains difficult to see how the Project will be able to shift this to a more integrated ecological management approach, despite its best endeavours.

Financial Sustainability

122. This is the nub of everything. The long-term financial sustainability of all the Project's (and others') efforts is tied effectively to the political will of the governments of the three littoral states to provide funding for the entire transboundary process – in essence the operational and secretariat costs of the PPCC, and if it is to be properly successful, the technical working groups or their successors. Although not wishing to be pessimistic, the outlook for such financial sustainability does not look bright. A similar bilateral process for Lake Ohrid between Albania and FYR Macedonia is not fully funded nor fully operative, e.g. an agreement for joint monitoring is not active despite equipment supplied by a World Bank GEF Project; while the reticence of the Greek Government to even provide the funds it committed to the current Project (see paragraph 128), displays a current absence of political interest to a process that ironically it started.

123. At a local level, things are a little brighter. The Municipality of Resen has indicated that it will continue to fund some activities and might even support the PPCC Secretariat through in-kind means if need be. The Regional Council of Korça has also provided the Project with support that may continue at some level, and a duty to help the local communes if they requested it was described by one official. Most of the local NGOs remain weak both in terms of capacity and finance. The MTET urges the Project to build the capacity of these organisations in a much more fundamental way than providing small grants to undertake small-scale and largely irrelevant activities. Providing an NGO with the skills and knowledge to find funding from international donors is likely to prove much more effective in the long-term than providing it with funds to clear rubbish from a stream or provide a collection of dried plants to a protected area. The one brilliant exception that of the Union of

³⁰ Consolidated comment: The CO already had a meeting with the new Mayor who confirmed his strong commitment to the project.

Agricultural Producers who have been equipped with a laboratory and enough capacity that they are working towards being financially independent through the services they provide their members.

Social Sustainability

124. The prospects for social sustainability of the Project's achievements appear moderate. Some work has been undertaken in awareness raising but this is largely through the production of leaflets, calendars, and give-away items, none of which are really effective in getting across the central message of the need for integrated ecosystem management. However, a recently produced Communications, Education and Public Awareness Strategy which identifies the fact that "*on the basin and/or sectoral levels neither threats nor required behavioural changes (and consequently target groups and communications means) have been adequately identified and defined*" lays out the actions necessary to rectify this and its implementation is likely to go some way to addressing the MTET's concerns. The messages the Project needs to communicate are not easy, since integrated ecosystem management is not a concept that is simple to explain, but by concentrating on simple issues, and in particular those that directly affect people's lives, the Project has made some progress. By and large, the populace has responded positively to the Project's initiatives for improving farming and fishing, for dealing with wastewater and for improving planning. Furthermore, the promotion of Prespa Park as a brand has found a resonance amongst some local people who now see themselves and those across the borders as being part of something larger. This may be a small step, but nonetheless, it is an important one.

THE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

The International Technical Advisor and PPCC Secretariat – Where Next?

125. The International Technical Advisor decided not to renew his contract for personal reasons at the end of March 2009³¹. This now presents the Project with a challenge – should he be replaced, or should the role be pursued in a different way? While the manner of the ITA's departure left something to be desired and the reasons for it are irrelevant to an examination of future action, one earlier decision is not. At some point it is apparent that UNDP decided not to allow the Project to fund the post of Executive Secretary to the PPCC. While it remains unclear to the MTET as to the reasons behind this decision, it believes that cost probably played a big part in the decision given UNDP-MK's seeming obsession with what they deem as the high cost of international consultants³². Nonetheless, it appears at first as if the two positions were merged in outline and then a conflict of interest between the two roles being undertaken by one person was identified with the ITA reporting to UNDP and the Executive Secretary reporting to the PPCC (but if that is the case the MTET fails to understand why this should be seen as a conflict of interest when the PPCC acts as the Project Oversight Committee, but see paragraph 115). Whatever the reasoning, in short, the MTET believes this to have been the single biggest mistake made during the implementation of the Project. While it is true that the Project Document was at best ambiguous and at worst contradictory over this position (see paragraph 12), and UNDP dismisses the idea of the ITA and Executive Secretary being two positions as "*clearly an error in drafting*"³³ and a "*drafting error*"³⁴, but the wording remains extremely clear in the Logframe endorsed in the Inception Report dated November 2007 which the Project continues to work to – under Output 4.1.3. "*Strengthen the PPCC members' capacity to organize discussions, guide deliberations, and come to informed decisions*", the "*Indicative specific tasks*" states "*Executive Secretary hired to*

³¹ Consolidated comment: It should be noted that the decision for extension of the contract of the ITA does not depend only on his personal wish but it is subject to regular annual performance review as well. MTE response: The performance review was presumably acceptable or UNDP would not have been willing to offer him a two-month extension which he turned down.

³² Consolidated comment: Project cost for salary and travel of the ITA in 2007 were 54.40% of the total yearly budget expenditures, and 31.97% in 2008. MTE response: But were these higher than had been budgeted for in the Project Document?

³³ See footnote 9, page 119 Inception Report dated November 2007.

³⁴ Minutes of the POC Meeting, 7th March 2008, table 1.

strengthen the PPCC and Secretariat". Logic would also suggest that, since this long-term post was envisaged, the best means of ensuring its effectiveness and sustainability would have been to fund the post in parallel with that of the ITA such that when the latter worked himself out of a job (as the ToR put it), the capacity of the Executive Secretary would have been built to the extent that he/she could have worked both roles until the end of the Project and thereafter continued full-time as Executive Secretary to the PPCC with the Project having leveraged continued funding for the post from the littoral state governments. Indeed, this was exactly the scenario envisaged by the SPP during the Project's design. That this has not transpired, and concurrently the PPCC Secretariat is not functioning effectively (see paragraph 106), raises an opportunity of tackling both problems simultaneously to develop a sustainable exit strategy.

126. There are a number of options that could be considered:

- a) Replace the ITA with an international consultant for the remainder of the Project. This is perhaps the most straightforward choice, and the Project's budget could be squeezed to fund such a post for the remaining two years, but such an option is flawed. First, while it would enable the Transboundary component of the Project to be completed, it provides no long-term solution to the PPCC Secretariat. Second, recruitment of the original ITA took an extremely long time, and there is no reason to believe that this time around it would be any easier. Therefore, the Project would need to allow at least six months before having another ITA in place, and six further months to enable him/her to get up to speed in an extremely complex role, by which time only just over a year may be left for him/her to accomplish anything. Furthermore, during this time, the Project would still have a large number of activities underway which would have to manage in some way, and if they could be managed during this period, why would a new ITA be needed? The MTET believes that this option is not viable.
- b) Replace the current PPCC Secretariat with one drawn from the municipalities rather than the NGOs. One of the current strengths of the Prespa process is the independent MOU signed by the mayors of the main three municipalities around the Prespa Lakes. Building on this, personnel could be drawn from the three municipalities to fulfil the role of the PPCC Secretariat, say on a part-time basis with the municipalities funding this role through their existing salaries. The MTET identified some willingness and ability to do this during its mission. The new Secretariat would then also take over the administration of the Project's existing transboundary activities, supported wherever necessary through technical input derived from a retainer contract signed between the Project and a technically capable international organisation (e.g. the Regional Environmental Centre). The main benefit of this option is that it would build capacity for the Secretariat locally and develop a sustainable source of local funding, but in reality, it is beset with problems, not least as to whether the existing capacity of municipality staff is sufficient to fulfil this role (particularly in completing the Project) and the complication of bringing in an extra layer of external technical management. Again, the MTET does not believe this to be seriously viable.
- c) Replace the current PPCC Secretariat with fully professional national staff. The intention here would be to recruit three nationals with at least a Masters-level education from the three littoral states as professional technical administrators to fulfil the role of Transboundary Management Unit and the PPCC Secretariat simultaneously. The lead person (75% management, 25% technical, and nominally the Executive Secretary) would need to be Macedonian because the UNDP Primary Project Resident Representative is UNDP-MK and this cannot be changed³⁵. The other two, one Albanian and one Greek³⁶ would be largely technical (25% management, 75% technical). All three would be based in their respective capital cities since the majority of the decision-making is undertaken by government – the MTET seeing no reason why the Secretariat needs to be based locally³⁷. Modern communication technology enables close

³⁵ The existing Transboundary component Project Assistant should be encouraged to apply.

³⁶ Paid for by the Greek Government since Greece is not a GEF beneficiary country.

³⁷ This does not run contrary to the idea that transboundary watershed problems are best resolved by those who live and work in the watershed. The Secretariat serves the PPCC, it is not resolving issues itself. Within the PPCC, the sovereign

coordination – a virtual Secretariat for a virtual Park (see paragraph 112). A contract should be let for an international consultant experienced in the transboundary administration of waterbodies to act as a mentor part-time and to provide a quality control overview (perhaps a few days per month). The Macedonian team leader would report on administrative and procurement issues to UNDP-MK, but on all technical aspects to the UNDP-GEF Regional Technical Advisor in Bratislava. Finally, an intensive capacity-building exercise would be provided by the Project to the team, with exchange visits made to and from other transboundary administrations, e.g. International Commission for the Protection of the Danube, and the Estonian-Russian Transboundary Water Commission (Lake Peipsi/Chudskoye (Estonia/Russia)), to cover issues such as finance, politics, international law, internal administration and help the team apply these in a local context. UNDP-GEF would seek a signed undertaking from the three Governments to continue funding the costs of the Secretariat after the completion of the Project, in line with commitments in the Project Document.

The MTET recommends that the Project replaces the position of International Transboundary Advisor and the current PPCC Secretariat with fully professional national staff (see option c immediately above).

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-GEF/ UNDP-MK	Agree validity of option.	Immediately	Agreement
UNDP	Agree validity of option for Secretariat with PPCC through consultation or special meeting of POC	Immediately	Minutes agreeing to option.
UNDP	Organise recruitment of two national staff (AL and MK)	To be in post by 1 st Sept 2009	Staff with signed contracts
UNDP-GEF	Request Greek Government to recruit Greek national	To be in post by 1 st Sept 2009	Staff with signed contracts
UNDP-MK	Recruit part-time international consultant as mentor and for quality control purposes.	Immediately (since my need to take ITA role temporarily in case of delays to above recruitment)	Signed consultancy contract

Country Driven-ness and Coordination

127. The MTET is pleased to be able to report that there appears to be considerable country buy-in to the Project at all levels of both the Albanian and Macedonian Governments, although the acid test remains over the continued funding of a number of activities once the Project ends, most importantly the funding of the PPCC and its Secretariat. Strong political will is demonstrated from both these countries by their endorsement of the Bogdanovic report's recommendations to develop a trilateral agreement to give a legal mandate in international law to the PPCC, and in the broad support their Ministries give to the Project's technical working groups.

Where is the Greek Government money?

128. The same degree of buy-in cannot be said to be evident on the Greek side. Despite initiating the Prespa transboundary process through the Prime Ministers' meeting in Aghios Germanos in 2000, and lobbying hard to be included in the GEF Project through parallel activities, and more importantly committing to finance both these activities and the participation of Greek Government representation in transboundary technical meetings, most stakeholders interviewed indicated that lack of Greek Government financing to cover this involvement was a major obstacle to continuing progress. In particular, the absence of representatives of Greek Ministries at several of the technical working

governments are the key decision-makers hence logistics and ease of communication suggest the capitals as the preferred location. Furthermore, if a single office is selected (locally in Prespa or in just one capital city) two of the staff automatically become "international" requiring more complicated recruitment and higher pay scales which puts the option outside of the Project's existing budget.

groups is understood to be jeopardising their viability. Albanian and Macedonian Government representatives are understandably less than enthusiastic with attending meetings where decisions have to be made only to find their Greek counterparts are absent and the only representation on the Greek side comes from an NGO which, with the best will in the world, is not empowered to take decisions on behalf of the Government. Indications are that if this issue is not resolved quickly, then Albanian and Macedonian Government representatives will stop attending these meetings, since Project staff are already calling in favours to keep them attending at present. Similarly, the SPP have given notice that they will cease to fund the PPCC Secretariat from 2010 believing that, after ten years, this is for governments to fund, not an NGO.

129. So where is the Greek Government's money that was committed to this Project? There appears to be some genuine confusion and surprise on the Greek side. During the PDF-B phase, GEF supported the attendance of some Greek representatives at various meetings and the Greeks expected those arrangements to continue – and to some intents and purposes still do. There remains surprise that during the implementation of the main project, Greek attendance at the technical working groups can occur only if they pay the costs associated with that attendance. A representative of the Greek Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning claims that the Project Document apparently says that this will be so, but the MTET cannot find any such reference. What is clear is that on the signature page for the DEX transboundary component, the Greek Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning is named as a Project partner organisation with allocated resources of US\$ 535,000 and a further US\$ 299,000 committed in in-kind contributions.

130. The MTET is in no doubt that the Greek Government is aware of the rules pertaining to GEF funding. These are wholly unambiguous – an EU member state or other donor country is not eligible for GEF funding for any activity under any circumstances whatsoever. To claim otherwise is disingenuous. That GEF did fund some of the Greek representatives' attendances at meetings during the PDF-B is without doubt true, and without doubt against the rules but done with the best intentions of ensuring full participation, but that in itself should not be used as an excuse not to provide the funds committed to the implementation phase in the Project Document. The MTET is aware that Greece is keen to be involved in wider GEF-initiated transboundary water projects in the region, but a basis for such wider cooperation should surely be the honouring of the commitments already made to existing GEF projects to – if not what is the value of a signature on a Project Document? The Regional Technical Advisor has already written (19th May 2008) to the Greek Minister of Environment and Physical Planning (Mr. G.A. Souflias) requesting the commitment of these funds, but apparently has not received a reply. The MTET recommends that the RTA again requests the release of these funds so that the Project can complete its activities in a timely and effective manner and, if they remain not forthcoming, applies the requisite degree of pressure via the GEF Secretariat or Council to this end.

The MTET recommends that UNDP-GEF again requests the Greek Government to honour the financial commitments it made to the Project and applies the requisite level of pressure through its office until this is achieved.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-GEF	RTA to write again to the Greek Minister of Environment and Physical Planning or the Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting the commitment of funds pledged.	Immediately	Letter to the Greek authorities
UNDP-GEF	GEF to take action appropriate to securing the funds in the event of no reply or a negative reply to above request.	By start of 3 rd Q 2009	Funds secured

Project Management

Project Management Team

131. The MTET finds that, after initial difficulties, the Project now has two very good national component management teams that are largely well-regarded among the country stakeholders. Both are led by competent managers who are mostly delivering national activities on-time and within

budget. Technically the Project teams appear extremely competent, with most activities implemented within solid conceptual frameworks, focussed clearly on the targets at hand and delivered in a cost-effective manner. As units, the teams appear happy, efficient and dedicated to the Project's aims, despite the challenges they often have to meet. One of the best compliments that the MTET can pay them is that they all seem to care about what they are doing. In the case of the Albanian team, it is also particularly refreshing to come across a group of people who clearly understand that they are not simply implementing a standard development project where the beneficiaries are the organisations and local people who are often the focus of activities, but that the Project is aimed beyond these at the biodiversity which these people affect – see paragraph 114 for wider discussion. In the case of the Macedonian team, their jobs would have been easier if they had been involved from the beginning rather than having to work with inherited systems, but they are doing an excellent job, working hard not to impose from above but designing everything with grass roots' and local administration involvement together with Ministerial priorities.

International Transboundary Advisor

132. The International Transboundary Advisor reported directly to the UNDP-MK office. This seems inappropriate to the MTET. How can a regional transboundary project report to one of the constituent country offices, especially when that office is in one of the countries at political loggerheads with another within the transboundary process? It appears that this was something of an experiment to see if regional projects could be managed technically from a country office. The MTET believes that if this was the case, the experiment has failed and that the lines of technical reporting for a regional project, as opposed to those for administrative purposes, should be directly to the Regional Technical Advisor, in this case in Bratislava. As the Project moves forwards, the MTET recommends that the replacement option for the ITA (see paragraph 126) should report directly to the RTA.

The MTET recommends that the replacement option for the International Transboundary Advisor should report technically directly to the Regional Technical Advisor in Bratislava.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-GEF/ UNDP	Agree appropriate lines of technical and administrative reporting for the ITA replacement option.	Immediately	Agreement

133. It appears that the tenure of the ITA was testing for all concerned, plagued as it was by disagreement between the ITA and the UNDP-MK office. This evaluation is certainly not the forum in which to discuss this professional and personal conflict in detail, suffice it to say the rigidity of the UNDP bureaucracy emanating from the UNDP-MK office as well as the hot-blooded temperament of the ITA meant that a clash of wills was effectively inevitable. The dispute, originally professional but by all accounts deteriorating and becoming progressively more acrimonious and personal, clearly has consumed a great deal of time and effort on both sides unproductively, and was unhealthy for all concerned. However, despite it being a major issue in project management terms, the MTET finds that it has had little overall effect on delivery of the Project where much larger challenges are of greater consequence. The root of the problem would seem to lie in a clash between the ITA's NGO background where he learned his craft together with its unconstrained culture towards problem-solving and that of the greater rigidity present within a large international organisation such as UNDP, exacerbated by the ITA's championing of the PPCC at the expense of other organisations and his unwillingness to accept "no" as an answer. There is near unanimity among the Project's stakeholders that, despite the ITA being committed to the role, dedicated to the Prespa region, and having an excellent grasp of the Project's vision and a mastery of its technical aspects, he neither possessed adequate project management skills nor the political *nous* to deal with the requirements of coordinating a wide and disparate range of stakeholders and balancing the various expectations that the Project had engendered. Furthermore, he frequently undermined his own authority through emotional responses to criticism. Clearly the situation did not bring out the best in him (and the MTET Leader knows his qualities personally) and by all accounts he subsequently withdrew into himself with an increasing tendency to spend most of his time in the office producing interminable documents which was time that could have been better spent with stakeholders facilitating transboundary activities.

134. To be fair, and to ensure a balanced view, the MTET takes considerable issue elsewhere (see paragraph 136) with the pointless rigidity of the UNDP-MK office system, and is also aware that a number of decisions taken by UNDP could have been better taken in a clearer atmosphere to the benefit of the ITA/TBU, for example, despite the Project Document specifying the TBU to comprise the ITA and one assistant, bad design remains bad design (see paragraph 10) and allocating more human resources to the TBU, especially in the light of its extremely late start-up, would undoubtedly have helped deliver the activities more effectively. Similarly, the point blank refusal to countenance provision of a part-time driver for the TBU is inexplicable since it would have cost less than a return taxi journey from Resen to Tirana each month, been more cost-effective since the ITA could have spent the time working instead of driving and, given the dangerous roads involved especially in winter, would have been far safer. Finally, the MTET has not had the time to delve into the details of why a fixed UNDP procedure for staff performance evaluation should, in the case of the ITA, run six months late so that it was undertaken after he vacated the position³⁸. The MTET recommends that the Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP-MK Office looks into this retrospectively and acts on her findings.

The MTET recommends that the Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP-MK Office examines the staff performance evaluation of the ITA retrospectively and acts on her findings.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-GEF/ UNDP	Examine the UNDP-MK CO staff performance evaluation of the ITA to ensure procedures were followed impartially and correctly and to investigate any grievance that the ITA alleges.	End Q3 2009	Report on ITA performance evaluation

Adaptive Management

135. The adaptive management showed by the Project has been only moderately effective. Steps were taken to replace the original NPM of the Macedonian component through non-renewal of his contract when initial delivery of the Project was deemed too slow (he resigned first) and a very good replacement found but only after a lengthy recruitment. In between time, the UNDP-MK office coped well with the demands. However, no decisive steps were taken by anybody in the UNDP or UNDP-GEF offices to resolve the long-running and escalating dispute between the ITA and UNDP-MK's Head of Environment, a situation that should have been solved at a very early stage³⁹. Externally, the Project is dealing with a number of issues as best it can, some, e.g. the deteriorating political climate between Greece and FYR Macedonia, and the long delay in the Macedonian Government's new Law on Waters (expected 2005 and produced with revisions in early 2009), it can do nothing about although it has attempted to find ways around; others, e.g. the lack of Greek funding (see paragraph 128) and the delay with KfW's project in Albania, it has done very little so far to address, a situation the MTET hopes will soon change. It has, however, dealt with some other issues robustly, e.g. UNDP's defence of the Project's position with regard to hostile criticism from the Mayor of Liqenas (including the fact that the Project has no presence within Albanian Prespa is because of difficulties of geography⁴⁰, a point with which the MTET strongly agrees), and with others imaginatively, e.g. an MOU with SPP regarding new co-funding for the technical study for the monitoring and conservation work being undertaken by Tour du Valat, and the Macedonian components successful suggestion to

³⁸ Consolidated comment: The performance evaluation for ALD contract holders should be done two months prior to the end of the contract and not six months prior the end of the contract. In February (as he was on annual leave from 23 December 2008 till 31 January 2009) the ITA was offered two months extension till the mid-term evaluation of the project is completed, but he refused. At the same time, the process for getting feedback on the ITA's performance from the main project partners was initiated and completed. The ITA's supervisor has to present the evaluation to the SRG that is composed by CO senior managers.

³⁹ Consolidated comment: Action was taken by the DRR who initiated regular quarterly meetings with the ITA and Head of Cluster to review the project progress and delivery, and to resolve the disputable issues. MTE response: The MTE agrees that the process may have been initiated – but the dispute(s) was/were evidently not solved.

⁴⁰ The Project's field office is based in Korça which, although not in Prespa and although further from Liqenas and Proger than either is from each other, is actually quicker to travel to either commune from than it would be to travel from one commune to the other.

the Government to combine the required spatial land-use and water-use plans into a single watershed management plan thereby saving time, costs, and other resources.

Project Management Issues

UNDP Bureaucracy

136. All project implementation teams and stakeholders complain about what they see as excessive UNDP bureaucracy, so much so that MTET Leader has become largely inured to it; it is taken as a standard complaint. However, the case of this Project, the levels of bureaucracy are so high, and the rigidity with which they are applied by personnel from the UNDP-MK office are tight, that the MTET takes issue with them – because they are having a detrimental effect on delivering the Project. Many of the policies introduced and applied by the UNDP-MK office, possibly for the best of reasons, in no way take account of the realities of project implementation on the ground. Some examples⁴¹:

- a) There is a UNDP global policy of requiring three CVs for any consultancy contract let above the value of US\$ 2,500. In UNDP-MK, this has been reduced to US\$ 1,000. Why? What purpose does this serve? This means that a 3-5 day consultancy, often required at short notice to solve some technical issue and which could be let directly under global rules, now has to go through a Procurement/Recruitment Evaluation Commission which has to be chaired by a UNDP officer (for this Project usually Head of Environment Programme), and have three other members plus a secretary. Given the office is very busy with many projects and many procurements, getting the officer to chair such committees is a major bottleneck and this process therefore frequently defeats the object of the consultancy itself⁴².
- b) Many of the beneficiaries, fishermen and farmers, are poor and live rural lives. They are invited to workshops or other project activities and are told they will have their travel expenses paid – often just a few dollars but of importance if one is poor. The New York Headquarters policy for handling cash enabling small cash transactions are published on the Internet. However, instead of following these and providing the Project with a cash sum to facilitate these payments (with the requisite receipts and other proofs of payments as normal) the UNDP-MK office insists on paying these amounts only through bank accounts! Many of the people involved do not have bank accounts, do not know how to open one, do not have the required proof of identity, and would in any case have to travel to towns unpaid to open them. This situation is clearly absurd. The upshot is, of course, that once the beneficiaries/stakeholders have been exposed to this requirement, they simply decline to attend further Project activities, thereby negating the whole point of the Project.
- c) Atlas charges a fixed fee of US\$ 16 per transaction made for any project, with the fee being paid to the UNDP office concerned. It would therefore be in any UNDP country office's interest to ensure the maximisation of the number of transactions made when dealing with a given project – money that can be used to offset the country office's running costs even if not in the best interest of the project concerned. This may be a cynical view, but it strikes the MTET that there is a conflict of interest here, and given the example above where UNDP-MK office policy maximises the number of transactions in spite of global policy allowing a contrary course of

⁴¹ Consolidated comment: Given that on numerous occasions the MTET team Leader openly criticizes the UNDP procedures it would have been only fair that he spent some time studying the UNDP processes and procedures. We would have been glad to explain how the Organization operates and why certain mechanisms are in place but Operations Unit never met with the MTET. For instance, the CO has its good reasons to impose a limit on the purchases and implement its \$1,000 rule. This was a follow up to the MCT Mission and was reviewed by the Internal Audit Mission. Similar are the comments on the petty cash disbursements and the UNDP GMS policy. MTE response: 1) The issues of bureaucracy were raised throughout the mission by the MTE. No offer to meet the Operations Unit was made by UNDP – although granted, the MTET team (perhaps naively) did not request such a meeting. 2) Bureaucracy can always justify its own existence as here. The point the MTE repeatedly makes is that the procedures may be sound from a UNDP operational viewpoint – but are seriously hampering the Project implementation on the ground. A balance needs to be struck.

⁴² Consolidated comment: For consultancies of less than US\$ 1,000 only a Note to the File from a Project Manager is required, and no evaluation committee is established. The Head of Environment is only endorsing the recruitment by co-signing the Note.

action, the MTET feels justified in its cynicism. To be fair, senior UNDP-MK personnel are now aware of this and are indicating that the system will be changed.

- d) The procurement process is extremely lengthy and convoluted⁴³, and places serious demands on Project personnel for logistics and technical involvement. The UNDP procurement unit comprises only one person who is very overloaded and if the Project is in a hurry, the PMU staff have to get involved to push things forward. The Project reports that the Procurement Officer is infrequently present, frequently comes to the Project staff to complete activities that she should herself be doing.
- e) Similarly, the process for paying invoices is also lengthy and convoluted⁴⁴. Again, all things pass through the Procurement Unit (why is there only one Procurement Officer in the UNDP-MK office when there are six security staff?⁴⁵). As a result, even simple payments can take two months to process while larger payments can take even longer⁴⁶, thereby undoing months of good work garnering trust with stakeholders because of the associated ill-feeling generated. The suggestion has been made that perhaps requests for the MoEPP authorisations for payment could be made in bulk at the start of each week rather than individually, but the MTET understands that a single signature at the start of each year may suffice.

The MTET recommends that the UNDP-MK reviews its procedures and staffing levels to better service project implementation and streamline procedures enabling Project staff to spend more time on technical activities and less on bureaucratic procedures.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-MK (DRR?)	Review policies and procedures with office and Project staff.	Immediately	Revised policies and procedures in operation

137. The MTET is aware that recent changes in the position of Deputy Resident Representative have taken place in the UNDP-MK office and that many of these problems are being addressed. However, the MTET is concerned that the previous incumbent has taken up the DRR post in UNDP-AL. It is reported to the MTET that the Project team of the Albanian component was appointed directly without recourse to tender, because they had requisite experience of successfully implementing another GEF project – indeed it appears that the start-up of this component may have been delayed awaiting their availability on completion of the that project. Now it is rumoured that after the annual staff performance review in UNDP-AL, all Project staff positions in Albania will be put out to tender and current incumbents required to re-apply for their jobs. To the MTET, this appears to be following policy for policy's sake. The current team are performing well and should not be distracted from implementing the Project by the additional demands and uncertainty associated with re-applying for jobs. While the MTET fully understands and supports the need to tender for project staff, to do so in the middle of a Project in a country where capacity is generally low, is at best distracting and at worst highly disruptive. There are policies covering waivers and similar – these should be invoked in this case.

⁴³ The approximate steps are: TOR developed → sent to MoEPP and stakeholders for comments → Finalise TOR → Procurement Unit → proposes method → prepare announcement/criteria (criteria are prepared by the Project Manager and agreed by the Head of Practice) → announcement made → await and receive offers → PMU/Programme Officer agree composition of Evaluation Commission → EC meeting held → circulate minutes → review/comment on minutes → if small: Procurement Unit → docs to Res. Rep./DRR for signature → make purchase/details/contract → signed by RR/DRR → purchase made. If large (value of the contract above 30,000\$): Procurement Unit → contract asset procurement committee (CAP) → minutes → sign → docs to Res. Rep./DRR for signature → make purchase/details/contract → signed by RR/DRR → purchase made. If value over US\$ 100,000 needs to go to Regional CAP in Bratislava.

⁴⁴ The approximate steps are: Request for Direct Payment → MoEPP, signed and stamped by NPD or NPC → UNDP archive (registry) → delivered to UNDP-MK signed by Hd. Env. Programme → Project. Assistant makes requisition → sent to Procurement Officer to open Purchase Order (for work) → returned to Hd. Env. Programme for approval in ATLAS → Procurement Officer to dispatch → Project Assistant (receives) → Finance Dept. for several steps leading to a Voucher for payment → Payment Order → bank → payment made!

⁴⁵ And why if there is a Phase 1 security level in Resen was the MTET not briefed?

⁴⁶ Consolidated comment: The CO maintains procurement monitoring tool which reflects all stages of the procurement process and dates of initiation and completion for each of the stages.

The MTET recommends that UNDP-AL ensures that the Project staff of the Albanian component remain in post subject to satisfactory performance evaluations.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-AL	Ensure Project staff do not have to re-apply for their jobs by invoking waivers or other procedure necessary to avoid a tender procedure.	As appropriate	Avoidance of staff posts being tendered midway through Project.

UNDP micro-management

138. There also appears to be a tendency towards UNDP-MK micro-managing the Project. This is hard for the MTET to explore, but the number of hours allocated by the UNDP-MK office to the Project appears extremely high. Undoubtedly some of this is due to the fact that the ITA was late on board and there was a gap between successive NPMs of the Macedonian component (see paragraph 23) and yet One example that comes to mind is the fact that there are a number of ToRs for the Transboundary component (communications, tourism, water specialist, habitats and species plan) that were ready to be tendered at the point the ITA departed the Project⁴⁷. Apparently they have been through the requisite consultation procedures and are ready for advertisement, but since the ITA has left the Project, the UNDP-MK office is challenging them as to their compatibility with the national components⁴⁸. To be fair, the MTET did not get around to checking with UNDP-MK why this should be so, but nonetheless, this degree of supervision appears to be slightly excessive.

Back-ups

139. The Project has no written policy on computer back-up procedures, nor does UNDP appear to have a policy on this, considering projects not to be part of their IT system. Within the Project, the three PMUs have different operational procedures. In Albania (Tirana) all important files relating to finances, reports, workshops and similar are copied onto the NPM's computer which then acts as a sort of master. Every month, the NPM backs-up the new material on this computer onto CDs which are stored in her office. Her laptop holds a partial copy of most of these files. In Macedonia (Resen) copies of important files are again made to the NPM's computer. However, the NPM claims there is little time for copying files and thus only important files are backed up onto CD on an *ad hoc* basis. Again, back-up CDs are kept in the office, and again some files are also duplicated onto laptops which are kept at home. The Transboundary unit (Resen) has adopted a more rigorous approach and both the ITA and Assistant have separate external hard drives onto which the content of each hard drive is backed-up every Friday. Both computers use the same agreed filing system and this is duplicated for the hard copy analogue system. Again, both external hard drives are stored in the office. Although these represent the rudiments of a back-up procedure, in all three cases, the major consideration is protection against a computer virus or a hard disk crash. The eventuality of fire has never been considered. Should there be a fire in any of the offices, all data pertaining to that component of the Project would be lost. Given the value of the data (in terms of the number of man-hours taken to collect it and possibly the irreplaceable nature of some of it), a rigorous system of back-up should be initiated with immediate effect. Back-up discs should be stored in a fireproof safe or in a building separate to that housing the working computers.

The MTET recommends that a rigorous system of computer back-up, especially for the GIS, be instigated with two back-up copies being stored in separate locations and backed up alternately. It would be preferable if one of these was stored within a fire-proof safe within the office. Similarly, back-up lists of computer passwords should be stored securely.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
TBU/PMUs	Determine and implement a policy for backing up all project computer data on a regular basis	Immediately	Revised back-up procedures in operation

⁴⁷ Consolidated comment: The ITA submitted the TOR on 30 March i.e. on the last day of his contract although at least some of them were prepared earlier. For more than four months not a single TORs from the TBU have been submitted to the CO i.e. no single procurement/ recruitment was initiated although the ITA was reminded that he is lagging behind the work plan.

⁴⁸ Consolidated comment: Most of the TORs that were ready have already been announced or will be announced by the end of June 2009.

PMUs	Purchase a fire-proof safe for keeping one set of computer back-ups and other valuable project information in	As soon as possible	Fire proof safe installed in each office (Resen can share a big one).
PMUs	Alternative to a fireproof safe would be to ensure two copies of data are kept separate from each other and from the Project office, and that these are backed up alternately – Week A and Week B.	With immediate effect.	Multiple back-ups of computer data.

Technical Management

Project Indicators

140. There are a number of minor technical issues concerning the Project's indicators that should be clarified. One of the major criticisms of the Project is the extreme complexity and burgeoning number of its indicators. The MTET does not understand why work done by the ITA during the inception phase and later has not managed to simplify this. While the MTE represents one of the few stages in a project when the logframe can be altered, the MTET feels that all the Project's teams are now familiar with, and working successfully with, the existing logframe that any attempt to change it now might actually be counter-productive. Thus, it has resisted the temptation to interfere but makes the following recommendations to change the wording of some indicators to increase clarity.

141. In addition, the International Consultant carrying out the METT analysis for the Albanian component made a number of suggestions to change some of the indicators, and without getting approval from anywhere, the Albanian PMU have adopted these recommendations and worked to these rather than the authorised version in the logframe. In places below, the MTET makes reference to some of these and recommends their formal adoption.

The MTET recommends that the Project indicators are re-examined and minor changes effected.			
Responsibility	Task	Time frame	Deliverable
PMU/UNDP-GEF Bratislava	Agree and adopt the amendments to the logframe indicators as below [Underlines shows changes]	Immediately	Agreed revision to logframe
Indicator #	Suggested change	Reason	
1.	a) US\$2 million <u>additional to project funding</u> allocated for IEM <u>by governments or other donors</u> by end of project	Ambiguity	
2.	b) Key local stakeholders trained <u>to a recognised level of competence in techniques and disciplines advancing the IEM approach within the Prespa basin</u>	Ambiguity	
5.	Spatial plans completed in MK and GR* by EoY 2 and approved by EoY3. <u>LEAPs completed in AL by EoY2 and approved by EoY3.</u>	Indicator missing	
15.	Establishment of a protocol and system for the recording-monitoring of quantities of agrochemicals (including a system of soil and water analyses) applied in the three countries <u>MK</u> by EoY 2. <u>In AL, # of farmers producing certified organic products.</u>	Indicator as it stands is irrelevant in Albania where , pesticide use is assessed as almost insignificant. Note, “#” will need to be set now at an appropriate target level by PMU/ UNDP-GEF	
17.	In MK, 50% reduction in quantities of pesticides and fertilisers by EoY 2 in the three countries for the registered farmers. In AL, <u>In AL, # of farmers producing certified organic products.</u>	Indicator as it stands is irrelevant in Albania where , pesticide use is assessed as almost insignificant. Note, “#” will need to be set now at an appropriate target level by PMU/ UNDP-GEF	
18.	Increase by 50% of number of registered farmers by EoY4. <u>Suggest deletion of this indicator</u>	The baseline is not defined but effectively zero. Therefore the indicator is inadequately worded. Registered in what?	

24.	Reduced Reduction in monitored farms by significant percentage (more than 35-40%) by EoY 3	Grammar
31.	Significant increase in quality of life measurement from survey of participating local communities. <u>Suggest deletion of this indicator</u>	Indicator largely meaningless and can be measured only subjectively and qualitatively.
33.	Improved collection of fishery data in all three countries by EoY2 <u>Suggest deletion of this indicator</u>	Indicator is weak since no qualitative description or quantification of what counts as improvement, and improved data collection does not in itself affect main indicator which is "Allowable fish catch". Also, there is no legislation in Albania determining fish catches.
88.	Ensure the capacity and viability of Info Centres in all 3 sides countries; Network these Info Centres	Grammar.
90.	As good or better than Block B delivery rate. <u>Suggest deletion of this indicator</u>	There is no reason for there to be any link between the delivery of PDF-B and the full project, nor any way of measuring the delivery of the PDF-B..

Restoration of Golema Reka

142. The restoration of Golema Reka within the town of Resen has angered some stakeholders who see it as not within the spirit of what the Project Document proposed, and pleased others, notably the Municipality of Resen, for solving a major problem for them. The MTET concludes that as with most things, the truth lies part way between the extremes. The site selection process for the restoration appears to have been undertaken well – a full river study concluded that the upper part of the river had few problems, the lower had no room because of intensive agricultural production to undertake large scale restoration, and the middle section which was largely urban actually had the largest source of nutrient input to Macro Prespa, reducing which was the main aim of the restoration. Thus, the most practical and cost-effective solution was to work within the urban area. The scheme implemented, involving rubbish removal, an interceptor system to carry sewage and factory wastewater away to the local sewage works, and refurbishment of the area to act mainly as an urban recreation area has been undertaken well. Where the MTET criticises the design is in the fact that it has not taken cognisance of the wealth of good examples of biodiversity-friendly urban schemes that are documented in the literature and on the web; nor does it seem that Project stakeholders who could have provided pointers were contacted, e.g. MedWet, Ramsar, WWF-Greece. Indeed, quite the contrary since as one of the persons involved said *"It turned into a battle between the engineers and the biologists – and the engineers won"*. This appears to the MTET to be a sad indictment of the process – a GEF project like this is ultimately about the biodiversity, not development *per se* (see paragraph 114), and for the biodiversity aspects of a scheme like this, even though wholly co-funded by the Swiss Development Agency (who it is noted indicated that they were very pleased with the scheme), to be ignored suggests a lack of understanding of the Project's overall aims⁴⁹. Yes, the primary objective has been achieved –

⁴⁹ Consolidated comment: This statement is too strong and it does not take into consideration the situation analyses taken before decision on the design was made. The adequate understanding of the requirements of the river restoration is clearly stated in the announced TOR for the river restoration design for Golema Reka, which strongly introduces the ecosystem oriented restoration principles. However, after a comprehensive assessment of the current situation, including the analysis of the multitude of barriers and constraints for adopting a full-scale river restoration plan, the selected alternative was considered to be balancing technical and environmental requirements. It would be of a particular importance if the MTE report refers to all the barriers/constraints for applying completely the well known international best practices in river restoration (eg, requirements of the national laws, existing structures on the site and extremely high costs for demolishment of these structures, etc). The designers' team developing the technical documentation (comprised by engineers and ecologists/biologists) had access to internationally recognized river restoration manuals/guidelines, but all the attempts for radically modifying the design in accordance to these ecosystem principles weren't considered technically, socially, economically and financially feasible. A note has to be made, that the project made all the efforts to get the best possible option for improvement of the overall status of Golema Reka, and that the original idea wasn't to have an engineering solution. Reference has to be made also to many other activities which do not involve direct intervention in the riverbed, but are rather river basin level activities, which will undoubtedly further support the restoration of the river ecosystem (for e.g.

reduction in nutrient input into the lakes; no, the scheme cannot be regarded as anything near demonstrating best practice, so sadly a missed opportunity. Given this, the River Restoration Manual developed as part of this activity and based heavily on the scheme should be re-examined and re-written where necessary to better emphasise and illustrate global best practice for biodiversity-led river restoration⁵⁰.

143. The scheme is not yet finished. The MTET notes that the main river channel has been designed with symmetrical berms on either side, each edged by a retaining flood wall. The intention appears to be to grass these two berms and enable public access to both for recreation purposes. The MTET recommends strongly that this course of action be stopped and that the berm on the right bank of the river (as looking downstream) be planted with willows and other trees and waterside plants to encourage some plants and animals to colonise the area, the whole acting as a limited corridor for riparian species to pass through the urban centre. Public access to this bank should be denied. Furthermore, the MTET recommends that Phase II of the Golema Reka Restoration Scheme, to take place upstream of and contiguous with the first phase, should be designed with biodiversity at the forefront of the scheme's aims, even though this section of the river is similarly constrained between concrete flood walls. Best practice urban schemes should be consulted and the principles applied as far as possible to provide a model in the area for replication.

The MTET recommends strongly that the right bank of the Golema Reka Restoration Phase I be planted to favour biodiversity and that public access be denied.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP-MK/SDC	Provide a contract variation to enable measures favouring biodiversity to be implemented by the contractor	Immediately	Contract variation and on-site delivery of measures

The MTET recommends that the River Restoration Manual be re-examined and re-written to better reflect global best practice and to provide a more biodiversity-sympathetic emphasis to river restoration.

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
PMU/UNDP-MK/SDC	Re-write the River Restoration Manual	Immediately	New edition of the River Restoration Manual

watershed management plan, resolving problems related to waste and wastewater management, agrochemicals use, erosion control, cropping patterns, establishing in-stream flow targets and etc.). The river restoration as a concept does not only involve physical interventions in the riverbed, but also measures for controlling the pollutants load to the river. Therefore, the interventions in Golema Reka so far cannot be viewed in isolation of many other activities implemented by both GEF and SDC projects. MTE response: To paraphrase the opening remark of the comment, this comment is too strong. The MTET agrees with everything the comment makes clear and has tried in the first half of the paragraph to acknowledge the constraints the Project worked within and the benefits it has brought to Golema Reka and indicates that the primary task – that of reducing the pollution load – has been “undertaken well”. The only issue the MTET was concerned about was the finished product which, at the time of viewing, appeared to be a missed opportunity for greater inclusion of biodiversity. The MTET understands that the first of the recommendations under this paragraph will be implemented, hence there would seem to be no contention over substance – perhaps just over wording for which the MTET apologises.

⁵⁰ Consolidated comment: The Manual is under development. A company was selected to prepare this document based on best international practices for riverbed restoration.

The MTET recommends that Phase II of the Golema Reka Restoration Scheme should be designed with biodiversity at the forefront of the scheme's aims, and that the principles of best practice for urban schemes should be applied to provide a model in the area for replication.			
<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Task</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Deliverable</i>
UNDP-MK/SDC	Agree that promotion of biodiversity issues should be a key aim of the Golema Reka Restoration Scheme Phase II	By start of Phase II	Include such aim in terms of co-funding agreement
PMU	Furnish themselves with an understanding of global best practice and adapt for local conditions, or let consultancy to advise	By start of Phase II	Capacity to ensure biodiversity issues are adequately designed into scheme
PMU	Ensure ToR for design includes such adapted best practice and follow this through all design and implementation stages	As appropriate	Scheme that can be promulgated as best practice for biodiversity

Ezerani Strict Nature Reserve

144. As with the PPCC above, the technical details of Ezerani Strict Nature Reserve do not fall within the MTET's jurisdiction. However, the MTET discussed this during the interviews with members of the Department for Nature Protection, MoEPP. While it clearly remains MoEPP's decision as to the final status of this reserve, and the Ministry has a consultancy team re-valourising it and advising on its future status, this decision has a bearing on the Project since it is tasked with developing a management plan and appropriate administrative arrangements. Ezerani was initially designated a Strict Nature Reserve (IUCN Category I), i.e. "*available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring*". However, the MTET feels that this would be an inappropriate designation to continue with for a number of reasons:

- a) It is a very small area that is clearly a dynamic wetland habitat representing the stages of succession from open lake shore to wet forest (alder and willow);
- b) It has people living and working in close proximity to it;
- c) There is a history of conflict and adverse reaction to the Reserve locally; and
- d) The Reserve has high potential for tourism.

For all of these reasons, IUCN Category IV (*...subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species*) is much more appropriate categorisation enabling a much more flexible management response and input than Category I allows. The area is too small for a buffer zone to be effective – active management of most of the area will be needed to maintain its biological values, and the proximity of people and the realisation of tourism as a financing agent will require careful zoning. Finally, for the reserve to be successful the current hostile attitude of the local people towards it, a legacy of previous bad management, will need to be reversed. A stringent interpretation of the exclusion principles inherent in a Category I reserve is hardly likely to make that possible, therefore the MTET suggests that the MoEPP removes the "Strict" from Ezerani's title and urges the Project to work with the Ministry towards this end. The success of the management plan, and the Project's delivery of it, are at stake.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approximately in order of importance as perceived by the MTET.

- The Project replaces the position of International Transboundary Advisor and the current PPCC Secretariat with fully professional national staff.
- UNDP-GEF again requests the Greek Government to honour the financial commitments it made to the Project and applies the requisite level of pressure through its office until this is achieved.

- The Project's oversight arrangements are re-examined with a view to ensuring maximisation of their relevance and effectiveness in meeting the Project's requirements.
- The replacement option for the International Transboundary Advisor should report technically directly to the Regional Technical Advisor in Bratislava.
- UNDP-MK should review its procedures and staffing levels to better service Project implementation and streamline procedures enabling Project staff to spend more time on technical activities and less on bureaucratic procedures.
- UNDP-AL ensures that the Project staff of the Albanian component remain in post subject to satisfactory performance evaluations
- A professional communications specialist should be hired to implement the Communications, Education and Public Awareness Strategy and to manage transboundary information and knowledge effectively.
- The Albanian component of the Project should develop a contingency plan as to how it intends to implement or amend those activities to be conducted in concert with the KfW project should there be further delays to that project's commencement beyond September 2009.
- A rigorous system of computer back-up, especially for the GIS, should be instigated with two back-up copies being stored in separate locations and backed up alternately. It would be preferable if one of these was stored within a fire-proof safe within the office. Similarly, back-up lists of computer passwords should be stored securely
- The GEF logo should be included appropriately on all signs, banners, and publications in Albania.
- The Project indicators should be re-examined and minor changes effected.
- The Deputy Resident Representative of the UNDP-MK Office should examine the staff performance evaluation of the ITA retrospectively and act on her findings
- The right bank of the Golema Reka Restoration Phase I should be planted to favour biodiversity and public access should be denied to that bank.
- The River Restoration Manual should be re-examined and re-written to better reflect global best practice and to provide a more biodiversity-sympathetic emphasis to river restoration⁵¹.
- The training and capacity building programme for the Watershed Council members and stakeholders should be upgraded.
- Phase II of the Golema Reka Restoration Scheme should be designed with biodiversity at the forefront of the scheme's aims, and that the principles of best practice for urban schemes should be applied to provide a model in the area for replication.
- The Project should incorporate Strategic Environmental Assessment within the process of developing the Watershed Management Plan as a demonstration of best practice.
- A capacity building programme covering the procedure for the approval of the Environmental Impact Assessments should be established for appropriate environmental staff in the Municipality of Resen and other key stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

• **Secure funding from partner governments before commencing implementation**

How is it possible to start a project without securing the financing committed in the Project Document? This should be the first and most important action of any inception period.

⁵¹ Consolidated comment: The Manual is now under development. See the comment 50.

Commitment, with phased payments if possible, should be agreed at the outset and if not obtained, contingency plans or changes to the planned activities should be made.

- **Pivotal activities should be identified during the inception and their implementation prioritised**

This should have occurred in this Project, particularly with three activities – the species and habitats conservation plan, the transboundary diagnostic analysis and strategic action plan, and the communication and public awareness strategy. These may be pivotal because they are critical to a raft of other activities that can follow on only when they are complete, as with the species and habitats conservation plan; because the activities they generate will need considerable time for the Project or others to implement, as with the strategic action plan; or are critical to developing a level of awareness or an identity to better facilitate project activities, as with the communication and public awareness strategy. Delays to any such pivotal activity can have major repercussions for a project and the more time that can be made available by having these activities undertaken as early as possible in the project, should something untoward occur the more time there is to recover from a difficult position.

- **A thorough re-assessment of the situation at the outset pays dividends.**
- **Recognise changed enabling environments during the inception period and alter a Project's logframe to take account of reality**

These two lessons are closely related. The first comes from the *Conservation of Tugai Forest and Strengthening Protected Areas System in the Amu Darya Delta of Karakalpakstan* (Uzbekistan – Atlas ID 46600 Pims-2109) evaluated by the MTE Team Leader in 2008, which in addition to taking time to study lessons from other projects, did not rush into the implementation process immediately upon full operational status being achieved but instead (and despite the fact that the Project had already incurred a four-month delay in the staff recruitment process) it took time to calmly study the situation, collect the experience from as many sources as possible and then start planning implementation process, revisiting carefully the current legal, policy and institutional conditions and studying the experience accumulated within the country of activities similar to those that the Project intended to implement. Throughout that project, this process stood it in good stead. Contrast this to the current Project which rushed into implementation as soon as possible, exacerbating an already weak set of management arrangements by starting the different components at different times; and the main coordinating one last! No reassessment was made of the enabling environment so the fact that a marked deterioration in political relations had occurred was never examined in terms of what that meant practically for the implementation of activities and what constraints it would impose, and hence how the logframe might be changed to take account of this – even though this is one of the only two times a logframe can be changed. No time or resources were made available to the management team(s) to study the experience of other transboundary projects or to visit other transboundary institutions to understand the steps they had taken to become institutionalised and how they currently operate and overcome problems inherent to a transboundary context⁵².

- **Do not ignore identified risks during the design of a project**

The analysis of risk during project design often throws up potentially large and difficult issues that can appear to be critical barriers to project implementation. The temptation in these cases is to reduce the risk and pretend that they are unlikely to occur or to develop for the worse. Unfortunately, this doesn't work – the ignored risks have a habit of coming back to bite a project and cause exactly the critical barriers that the designers sought to play down. The period during project design is the period that has most time to deal with these risks, either accepting them and designing the project's activities in such a way as to negate them, or providing contingency directions for the eventuality that the risk becomes critical. In the current case,

⁵² Consolidated comment: Not fully true. The ITA participated at workshop in South Africa and at workshops organized by GEF IW Learning and by GWP Med, PPCC members participated at a study tour in Vienna where the main host was the Danube Commission; project staff and representatives from the key institutions participated at several international workshops on watershed management.

ignoring the risk that political relations between littoral countries will deteriorate, or not improve enough to facilitate the signing of a Trilateral Agreement legalising the PPCC, has led to a case of near-stagnation of this priority activity. Contingency aims, and the activities to enable them, such as those suggested in this evaluation would have enabled the Project to progress much more successfully.

- **Take management decisions on staff early**

The Project has suffered from a number of unfortunate staffing problems. In one, UNDP-MK waited until the renewal of the Macedonian NPM's contract was due before letting it be known that it would not be renewed (and the incumbent resigned just prior) – a whole year before action was taken over a manager who clearly could not deliver his part of the Project. In another, a major disagreement between the ITA and the UNDP-MK office was allowed to spiral out of control, becoming deeply acrimonious and counter-productive to the efficient delivery of the most crucial part of the Project. Although the MTET cannot find that it affected implementation detrimentally, it clearly did not help. This situation was allowed to run for two years. In both cases, the MTET feels this is too long and more radical action is necessary. While acknowledging that there are certain legal aspects of employment law that have to be adhered to, UNDP needs to recognise that there is another currency apart from money operating in any project, and that is time. If necessary, under-performing staff, or those not willing to accept the realities of the system with which they are working, should be replaced at the earliest opportunity, even if that means some form of compensation needs to be paid.

- **Manage stakeholder expectations**

Expectations vary greatly between the stakeholders involved in any project, and managing them is crucial to success. Those of local administrations and NGOs are usually highest, particularly when they see the amount of money involved, and come to think all of their aims or requirements will suddenly be met. This is natural, and common to most projects. However, projects should do more, particularly during the inception phase, to explain the likely level of deliverables, promote a clearer understanding of incremental cost, raise awareness of the fact that much money will be needed for enabling activities such as consultancy studies, planning, etc. and that no project despite the best of intentions ever manages to deliver everything that is aims to.

ANNEX I : MID-TERM EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

UNDP-GEF Project: “Integrated Ecosystem Management in the Prespa Lakes Basin of Albania, Macedonia and Greece”

INTRODUCTION

The Prespa Lakes Watershed is shared among the three neighbouring countries Albania, Macedonia and Greece. It is considered to be an ecosystem of global significance and has been identified as one of Europe’s major trans-boundary “ecological bricks”. The entire Prespa region hosts unique habitats that are important from both a European and global conservation perspective. The health of the trans-boundary ecosystem can only be maintained in the long run through trans-boundary consensus and effective trans-boundary action. At the same time, effective trans-boundary action is only as good as the ability of each littoral country to effect change within their respective national sectors of the Prespa Lakes basin: to change how protected areas, land, forests, water, fisheries, waste, and small scale wastewater treatment are managed.

Resource management practices, from water and land-use planning to agriculture, forestry and fisheries are failing to maintain and restore ecosystem health of the trans-boundary Lakes Prespa Basin. Productive sectors fail to incorporate ecosystem health objectives into their daily management practices; protected areas are not able to serve as the refuges of ecosystem health that they should be. Knowledge, experiential, and incentive barriers hamper people’s ability to know of, understand, and adopt new practices. Up to date information on key species and habitats does not exist and modest monitoring of key ecosystem health parameters is not done. As a result, key habitats are being lost or degraded, globally significant species are threatened, and stakeholders are ill-prepared to manage a dynamic, ever-changing aquatic ecosystem like the Prespa lakes. Therefore, the project strategy is to catalyse the adoption of ecosystem management practices by stakeholders in the Prespa Basin by mainstreaming ecosystem conservation objectives and considerations into relevant productive sector practices and demonstrating proof of concept by piloting new approaches to mitigate productive sector impacts on the Prespa ecosystem. The project also aims to strengthen the conservation of significant biological diversity and water quality through improved monitoring, targeted research and enabling protected areas to serve as effective refuges for ecosystem health within the Prespa landscape.

Building on this strengthened national-level foundation in the Prespa Basin, the project is designed to strengthen ongoing trans-boundary cooperation in resource management and conservation by empowering the existing trans-boundary institution and piloting trans-boundary management and conservation activities. Finally, the project should produce and secure funding for a Strategic Action Programme endorsed at the highest levels of Government within the three littoral states.

The project is implemented under Multiple Execution (MEX) modality, and two national components which are implemented under NEX modality (national execution) are entered as separate projects and linked with the trans-boundary component which is implemented under the DEX modality (direct execution) in parent – child relations (DEX component = parent).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the focal point for coordinating UNDP’s technical cooperation in Albania and in Macedonia. The Ministry of Environment Forest and Water Management –Albania and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning–Macedonia serve as the Designated Institutions (DI) responsible for coordinating project implementation of the national components of the project. The Project Management Unit for the Macedonian NEX component is based in the city of Resen, within the Prespa Lake Watershed, and is staffed with a Project Manager, one Project Specialist and a Project Assistant, with one additional Project Specialist based in Skopje, the capital of

Macedonia. The Project Management Unit for the Albanian NEX component is based in Tirana and is staffed with a Project Manager, a Project Specialist and a Project Assistant. In addition, there is a Local Project Coordinator based in Korcha near to the Prespa Watershed. In GR-Prespa, there is no PMU *per se*, but the Ministry of Environment -GR has designated the Management Body for the Prespa Protected Area to serve as the project enabling committee to coordinate project-related activities in Greek Prespa. The trans-boundary Unit is staffed by one International Trans-boundary Advisor and a Project Assistant and is based in Resen, Macedonia. Prespa Park Coordination Committee, a trilateral body established by the Governments of the three littoral states, serves as a Project Oversight Committee (Project Board).

In accordance with UNDP/GEF M&E policies and procedures and in line with the project document, an independent Mid-Term Evaluation should be undertaken at the end of the second year of implementation. The Mid-Term Evaluation should determine progress being made towards the achievement of outcomes and identify course correction if needed. The Evaluation should focus on the effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of project implementation; highlighting issues requiring decisions and actions; and presenting initial lessons learned about project design, implementation and management. Findings of this review would be incorporated as recommendations for enhanced implementation during the final half of the project's term.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The objectives of this evaluation is (a) to identify project design and management issues, (b) assess progress towards the achievement of the targets, the results and impact, and use of resources (c) identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and (d) to make recommendations regarding specific actions and project adjustments that might be taken to improve the project, and support needed to achieve intended impacts at the end of the project. It is expected to serve as a means of validating or filling the gaps in the initial assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency obtained from monitoring.

This evaluation is initiated and managed by the UNDP Country Office Macedonia in close cooperation with the UNDP Country Office Albania, the Ministries of Environment of Macedonia and Albania, which are the executing agencies for the respective NEX component of the project, as well as the Prespa Park Coordination Committee which serves as a Project Oversight Committee for the project. The Project Management Units in Macedonia and Albania are expected to provide assistance and support to the evaluators by arranging for meetings with stakeholders including, local governments, other agencies, Civil Society Organisations, etc.

Specific issues to be addressed include but are not limited to:

(A) PROJECT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Does the project document clearly define:

1. The problem to be addressed by the project.
2. The project strategy.
3. Linkages among objectives, inputs, activities, outputs, expected outcomes and impact.
4. How useful are the outputs to the needs of the direct beneficiaries? Do the outputs contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the project?
5. Identification of stakeholders, agencies and operational partners.
6. Stakeholders participation
7. Replication and Scaling up approach
8. Linkages between the project and other interventions within the Prespa region

9. Extend to which project design, implementation and monitoring are taking into consideration the cross-cutting issues such as gender, human rights, capacity building, institutional strengthening
10. Implementation and management arrangements, especially in regards to the trans-boundary component of the project.
11. How adequate are the quantity and quality of project inputs relative to the targeted outputs?

How relevant is the project to:

1. The development priorities of the Governments of Albania and Macedonia?
2. The UNDP/GEF area of focus?
3. The expectations of the stakeholders?
4. The needs of the beneficiaries?

(b) Progress towards achievement of the targets, the results and impact, and use of resources

IMPLEMENTATION EFFICIENCY / EFFECTIVENESS

1. How well has the project been using its resources (including human and financial) to produce outputs and carry out activities?
2. How timely have the project inputs been deployed in relation to the annual work plans?
3. What is the project status with respect to planned outputs in terms of quantity, quality and timeliness? What factors impede or facilitate the production of such outputs?
4. How well has the trans-boundary component supporting the achievement of the objectives of the national components and vice versa;
5. To what extent are local expertise and technologies and resources used?

Results/ Impact/Use of Resources

1. What results and impacts have been achieved by the project as compared to the Objectives? Please note that the indicators as described in the project logframe should be used to assess results/ impacts.
2. How well has been the financial planning, including actual project costs by objectives, outputs, activities, as well as the cost-effectiveness of achievements
3. Have mechanisms been put in place to ensure the sustainability of project results?
4. What has been the impact of the capacity building efforts?
5. How successful has the project been in maintaining interest of other donors?
6. How successful has the project been in mobilizing additional resources for complementary activities in the Prespa Watershed?

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

How appropriate are the execution and implementation modalities, with special focus on the execution and implementation of the DEX component i.e. the trans-boundary component?

1. How well was the project managed?
2. The efficiency of programme organisation and management with respect to its size and composition, organisational structure, qualifications of the project team members, and the team performance;
3. The efficiency of programme organisation and management with respect to its size and composition, organisational structure, qualifications of the project team members, and the team performance
4. The effectiveness of programme implementation and management arrangement, including the roles of the national Executing Agencies, Prespa Park Coordination Committee in its capacity as a Project Oversight Committee;
5. Quality of relationships developed among relevant projects partners;
6. Effectiveness of activity planning, design and implementation

7. How adequate are monitoring and reporting mechanisms?
8. How adequate is the support provided by the UNDP Country Offices?
9. Is there adequate government commitment to the project?
10. Do the stakeholders have a sense of ownership of the project?
11. What efforts are being made by the host institution to ensure the participation of different stakeholders in the implementation process? and
12. What is the extent of their participation?
13. Are there any conflicts of interest among stakeholders? If yes, steps taken to resolve them.

(c) Lessons Learned

The team should record any significant lessons that can be drawn from the experience of the project and its result, in particular anything that worked well and that can be applied to other projects and anything that has not worked so well and should be avoided in future.

(d) Recommendations

The evaluation team should come up with recommendation on how to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, impact and management arrangements of the project. Particular attention should be put on the management of the trans-boundary component, providing brief assessment of possible options and recommending the best option given the duration of the trans-boundary activities and available funds.

PRODUCTS EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION

The team should produce an evaluation report with findings, assessment of performance, lessons learned, recommendations, description of best practices both on national (Macedonia and Albania) and trans-boundary levels; as well as an “action list” of particular importance for the project.

At the end of the evaluation, the consultants will submit the draft evaluation report to UNDP CO Macedonia and to the Regional UNDP/GEF Coordinator responsible for the Prespa project in Bratislava. UNDP CO Macedonia will share the report with UNDP Albania, and the key national partners in the implementation of the project. Based on the comments on the report submitted by UNDP, the consultants will finalize and submit the final version of the report to UNDP CO Macedonia and Regional UNDP GEF Coordinator responsible for the Prespa project in Bratislava, within two weeks of receipt of comments from UNDP.

Scope of Review

Topics

The mid-term review will assess the progress, achievements, and challenges to date for each of the three components of the project (two national components in Macedonia and Albania, and the trans-boundary component), plus aspects of project management.

Geography

The mid-term review will in general assess progress made in Albania and Macedonia i.e. the Prespa Lakes watershed, and contributions made to the Greek part of the Watershed to the extend possible. For this purpose, travel to the project site including the three littoral states (Albania, Macedonia and Greece) will be necessary.

Actors

The mid-term review will solicit feedback and inputs from all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project in Macedonia and Albania, and Greece (to the extend possible and relevant for the evaluation). They include the national, and local governments, Prespa Park

Coordination Committee members, NGOs and other civil society organisations, community members, development partners, donor agencies, and UNDP. A complete list of stakeholders to consult with is laid out in [Annex 1](#).

METHODOLOGY OR EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation approach will combine methods such as documentation review (desk study); interviews; and field visits. All relevant project documentation will be made available to the team by the project management team, facilitated by UNDP. After studying the documentation the team will conduct interviews with all relevant partners including the key partners and beneficiaries. Validation of preliminary findings with stakeholders will happen through circulation of initial reports for comments or other types of feedback mechanisms.

Throughout the period of the evaluation, the consultants will liaise closely with the UNDP Resident Representative, UNDG/GEF Regional Coordinator responsible for the Prespa project, the concerned agencies of the Government and the counterpart staff assigned to the project. The consultants can raise or discuss any issue or topic it deems necessary to fulfill the task, the consultants however is not authorized to make any commitments to any party on behalf of UNDP or the Government.

Tasks and Milestones

The mid-term review will be conducted within six weeks (30 working days), according to the following activities and time frames:

1. Desk Review
(to be conducted within the first week)
 - a. Familiarize with the project through related documentation and publication.
 - b. Develop workplan and discuss with UNDP for approval.
2. Consultations
(to be conducted within four weeks)
 - a. Conduct interviews and/or Focus Group Discussions with national and local stakeholders
 - b. Conduct statistical surveys/polls to stakeholders, where appropriate.
 - c. Present and discuss initial findings with UNDP, and the key national stakeholders in Skopje, Macedonia (and in Tirana, Albania)
3. Reporting
 - a. Submit draft report to and solicit comments/inputs from UNDP (within five weeks)
 - b. Submit final report UNDP. (within six weeks)

EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team will be composed of one international, and two national consultants, one from Albania and one from Macedonia. The consultants should not be associated with the project in any way and must not be serving as Government officials. The international consultant will act as team leader and is responsible for delivering the final report. The national consultant will report to the international consultant.

As a minimum the Team should have the following qualifications:

- Advanced degree in their respective fields, or at least 10 years of professional experience in the respective field.
- Extensive experience with evaluations of GEF funded OP 12 projects or/and International Waters or/and Biodiversity projects (at least 10 years for the Team Leader and 5 years for team members)
- Experience with evaluation of trans-boundary projects or/and MEX (Multiple Execution) Modality

- Experienced in project cycle management
- Advanced skills in analysis, reporting, facilitation of meetings, and team coordination
- Knowledge of the region and its key development issues or comparable experience in other developing countries shall be an asset

Implementation Arrangements

The total duration of the evaluation will be six weeks (30 working days) starting from mid-February/beginning of March 2009.

Management, Logistics and Accountability

The mid-term review team will work under the supervision of the Regional UNDP/GEF Coordinator responsible for the Prespa project and UNDP Macedonia Programme Officer, Head of Environment Practice. All practical support for the mid-term review, including facilitation of travel, accommodation, scheduling of activities (as agreed in the workplan), and supporting documents will be arranged and provided by the project management unit and UNDP.

Although UNDP is administratively responsible for the conduction of the mid-term review, UNDP shall not interfere with analysis and reporting, except where requested and at opportunities for comments/feedback. UNDP will share the final version of the mid-term review report with the National Executing Agencies.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The consultant fee will be as per UNDP norms and will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

- I on signing of contract – 20% of the total value of the contract
- II on submission of draft report – 50% of the total value of the contract
- II. on acceptance of final report – 30% of the total value of the contract

ANNEX

Evaluation Report: Sample Outline

Executive summary

- Brief description of project
- Context and purpose of the evaluation
- Main conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned

Introduction

- Purpose of the evaluation
- Key issues addressed
- Methodology of the evaluation
- Structure of the evaluation

The project and its development context

- Project start and its duration
- Problems that the project seek to address
- Immediate and development objectives of the project
- Main stakeholders
- Results expected

Findings and Conclusions

- Project formulation
 - Implementation approach
 - Country ownership/Driveness
 - Stakeholder participation
 - Replication approach
 - Cost-effectiveness
 - Linkages between project and other interventions within the sector
 - Indicators
 - Management arrangements
- Implementation
 - Financial Planning
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Execution and implementation modalities
 - Management by the UNDP country office
 - Coordination and operational issues
- Results
 - Attainment of objectives
 - Sustainability
 - Contribution to upgrading skills of the national staff

Recommendations

- Corrective actions for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project
- Actions to follow up or reinforce initial benefits from the project
- Proposals for future directions underlining main objectives

Lessons learned

- Best and worst practices in addressing issues relating to relevance, performance and success

Annexes

- ToR
- Itinerary
- List of persons interviewed
- Summary of field visits
- List of documents reviewed
- Questionnaire used and summary of results
- Co-financing and Leveraged Resources

ANNEX II : ITINERARY OF ACTIVITIES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION MISSION

Key: SP (Slavyanka Andonova); PE (Phillip Edwards); AV (Andrian Vaso).

* = Member of Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC). † = Member of PPCC Secretariat.

Date		Activities
Wed	25 th March	pm: Document review (PE).
Thu	26 th March	All day: Document review (PE).
Fri	27 th March	All day: Document review (PE).
Sat	28 th March	am: Document review (PE).
Mon	30 th March	All day: Document review (PE).
Sun	5 th April	pm: Evaluation team leader (PE) arrives in Skopje.
Mon	6 th April	am: 1. Initial MTE team meeting PE and SP. pm: 1. Meeting with UNDP-MK Head of Environment Programme (Ms. Anita Kodzoman).
Tue	7 th April	am: 1. Meeting with Project Director for MK national component and State Secretary for Environment, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, FYR Macedonia (Ms. Lidija Zafirovska) and Project Coordinator for MK national component and Head of Division of Instrument for Pre-accession, MOEPP (Ms. Darinka Jantinska*). pm: 1. Meeting with Resident Representative for UNDP-MK (Ms Maria Luisa Silva Mijias). 2. Document review. 3. PE travel to Athens.
Wed	8 th April	am: 1. Meeting with Senior Advisor, MedWet (Dr. Thymio Papayannis*) (PE) 2. Meeting with Worldwide Fund for Nature-GR/ Society for the Protection of Prespa Transboundary Monitoring Project Coordinator (Mr. Miltos Gletsos) (PE). pm: 1. Meeting with WWF-GR ex-Freshwater and Protected Area Policy Officer (Ms. Panagiota Maragow) (PE).
Thu	9 th April	am: 1. Meeting with Head of Department of Management of Natural Environment, Ministry of Environment (Mr. Spyros Plessas*) and Environmental Scientist in Department of Management of Natural Environment, MOE (Ms. Caterina Styloginni) (PE). 2. Telephone meeting with Mayor of Municipality of Prespa (Mr. Lazaros Naplantidis) (PE). pm: PE travel to Aghios Germanos.
Fri	10 th April	am: 1. Meeting with Director Society for the Protection of Prespa (Dr. Myrsini Malakov*) and Ms. Vivi Roumeliotov† Policy and Sustainable Development Coordinator, SPP (PE). 2. Meeting with Transboundary Officer, Prespa National Forest Management Board (Ms. Leto Papadopoulou). pm: Field visit to Micro and Macro Prespa with Policy and Sustainable Development Advisor and Wet Meadows Management and Monitoring Expert, SPP (Mr. Yanis Kazoglou) (PE).
Sat	11 th April	am: Document review (PE). pm: PE and SP travel to Bitola separately. 2. Meeting with National Project Manager for MK component (Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski) and Project Specialist (Mr. Nikola Zdraveski).
Sun	12 th April	am: Field visit to Ezerani Strict Nature Reserve (PE). 2. Field visit to Nakolec. 3. Meeting with President of Nakolec village (Mr. Gzim Sulejmani). pm: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for MK component (Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski) and Project Specialist (Mr. Nikola Zdraveski).
Mon	13 th April	am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for MK component (Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski) and Project Specialist (Mr. Nikola Zdraveski). 2. Meeting with Transboundary Project Assistant (Ms. Gordana Cvetkoska) (PE). 3. Meeting with Head of Department for Economic Development and Trans-boundary Cooperation, Municipality of Resen (Ms. Daniela Apostolovska). pm: 1. Meeting with President of the NGO Coalition for Perspective Prespa Region (Ms. Sonia Fuzevska) and Coalition member (Mr. Ljupco Krstevski). 2. Meeting with

Date		Activities
		Coalition members (Mr. Tome Petkovski* and Dr. Sonja Spirovska†).
Tues	14 th April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for MK component (Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski) and Project Specialist (Mr. Nikola Zdraveski). 2. Travel to Ohrid (PE & SP). Meeting with Head of Department on Fisheries, Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid (Dr. Zoran Spirkovski) and Head of Department of Limnology, Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid Mr. Trajce Naumovski). 3. Time wasted waiting for an abortive meeting with the former National Project Director and State Secretary (Mr. Dejan Panovski).</p> <p>pm: 1. Travel to Resen. 2. Meeting with National Project Manager for MK component (Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski) and Project Specialist (Mr. Nikola Zdraveski) (extended by PE). 3. Meeting with Director of Public Enterprise “Proleter”, Resen (Mr. Muzafer Murati) (SP).</p>
Wed	15 th April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with President of Union of Agricultural Producers (Mr. Naumce Toskovski) and Union’s Laboratory Manager (Ms. Frosina Gorgievski). 2. Meeting with Head of local Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Resen (Mr. Sasko Andreevski). 3. Meeting with Environmental Inspector, Sector of Urban Planning, Environmental and Planning Services, Municipality of Resen (Ms. Adriana Georgievska) and Junior Associate (Permits), Local Economic Unit, Municipality of Resen (Ms. Meri Trajkovska). 4. Field visit to Golema Reka.</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for MK component (Mr. Dimitrija Sekovski) and Project Specialist (Mr. Nikola Zdraveski) (extended by SP). 2. Skype meeting with International Consultant for Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (Mr. Peter Whalley) (PE). 3. Skype meeting with former International Consultant for PPCC Maturation Study (Prof. Slavko Bogdanovic) (PE). 4. Skype meeting with former International Communications Specialist (Ms. Sonja Seizova) (PE). 5. Meeting with President of Fisherman’s Association “Prespanski Krap” (Mr. Sali Zulal) (SP).</p>
Thurs	16 th April	<p>am: 1. Travel to Skopje. 2. Meeting with Head Department for Nature Protection, MOEPP (Mr. Vasil Anastasovski); Head of Division for Nature Protection, MOEPP (Mr. Sasko Jordanov); Head of Division for Biodiversity, MOEPP (Mr. Aleksandar Nastov); consultant Biodiversity Expert (Dr. Svetozar Petkovski) and consultant for Ezerani Reserve (Prof. Ljupčo Melovski). 3. Meeting with Head of Department on Waters, MOEPP (Mr. Ilber Mirta). 4. Meeting with Head of Department for Water Management, MOAFWE (Mr. Boyan Durnev). 5. Meeting with Director, KfW Office, Skopje (Mr. Petar Gjorgjiev) and Project Coordinator, KfW Office, Skopje (Ms. Natasha Radovanović).</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with National Programme Officer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Dr. Stanislava Dodeva). 2. UNDP-MK Head of Environment Programme (Ms. Anita Kodzoman). 3. Travel to Resen (PE).</p>
Fri	17 th April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with Transboundary Project Assistant (Ms. Gordana Cvetskovska) (PE). 2. Telephone meeting with International Transboundary Advisor (Mr. Alvin Lopez) (PE).</p> <p>pm: Report writing (PE).</p>
Sat	18 th April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with Transboundary Project Assistant (Ms. Gordana Cvetkoska) (PE).</p> <p>pm: Report writing (PE).</p>
Sun	19 th April	<p>am: Free (PE).</p> <p>pm: Report writing (PE).</p>
Mon	20 th April	<p>am: 1. Document review. 2. Travel to Tirana.</p> <p>pm: 1. Travel to Tirana.</p>
Tues	21 st April	<p>am: 1. Initial MTE team meeting PE and AV. 2. Meeting with National Project Manager for Albanian component (Ms. Violeta Zuna) and Project Technical Expert (Mr. Eno Dodbiba). 3. Meeting with UNDP-AL Cluster Manager (Ms. Adriana Micu)</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with Project Manager, Regional Environment Centre (Mr. Eduart Cani). 2. Meeting with Project Agriculture Advisory Consultant (Mr. Artur Galanxhi). 3. Telephone meeting with former PPCC member and former Director, Nature Protection Directorate, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Mr. Zamir Dodej). 4. Meeting with National Project Director for Albanian component and General Secretary for Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration and GEF Focal Point (Mr. Pellumb Abeshi*).</p>

Date		Activities
Wed	22 nd April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for Albanian component (Ms. Violeta Zuna). 2. Meeting with Chief of Water Resources Sector, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Mr. Skender Hasa). 3. Meeting with Head of Forestry Sector, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Mr. Kozma Kocani). 4. Meeting with Fisheries Specialist and Transboundary Expert, Directorate of Fisheries' Policies, MoEFWA (Mr. Rezart Kapedani). 5. Meeting with Project Finance and Administrative Assistant (Ms. Emma Moçi).</p> <p>pm: 1. Travel to Elbasan. 2. Meeting with Head of Shkumbini River Basin (Mr. Platon Gani). 3. Travel to Korça. 4. Meeting with National Project Manager for Albanian component (Ms. Violeta Zuna) and Project Technical Expert (Mr. Eno Dodbiba).</p>
Thurs	23 rd April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with Local Project Coordinator (Mr. Ardit Konomi). 2. Meeting with Chief Inspector, Fisheries Department in Korça Region (Mr. Pellump Hoxha). 3. Meeting with Head of Projects Coordination Office, Korça Regional Council (Mrs. Eva Dhimitri). 4. Travel to Liqenas. 5. Meeting with Mayor of Liqenas Commune (Mr. Edmond Themolko*) and Vice-mayor of Liqenas Commune (Mr. Vasil Steriovski).</p> <p>pm: 1. Travel to Korça. 2. Meeting with Head of Agricultural Faculty of Korça "F.S. Noli" University (Prof. Kristaq Teneqexhi). 3. Meeting with Chair of NGO "Transboundary Wildlife Association" (Dr. Kristaq Shore).</p>
Fri	24 th April	<p>am: 1. Field visit to Micro Prespa and Prespa National Park including travel to Gorice. 2. Meeting with "Director" of Prespa National Park (Mr. Pande Kostofski). 3. Meeting with Head of NGO "Association of Forest and Pasture Users of Prespa" (Mr. Vasil Jankulla).</p> <p>pm: 1. Travel to Proger. 2. Meeting with Mayor of Proger Commune (Mr. Artur Argolli) and Director of Public Services, Proger Commune (Mr. Nardi Hohxa). 3. Travel to Tren Village. 4. Meeting with Head of "Fisherman's Association of Small Prespa" (Mr. Ylli Kape). 5. Meeting with National Project Manager for Albanian component (Ms. Violeta Zuna).</p>
Sat	25 th April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for Albanian component (Ms. Violeta Zuna) and Project Technical Expert (Mr. Eno Dodbiba).</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with National Project Manager for Albanian component (Ms. Violeta Zuna) and Project Technical Expert (Mr. Eno Dodbiba). 2. Travel to Bitola.</p>
Sun	26 th April	<p>am: Free (PE)</p> <p>pm: 1. Travel to Skopje (PE)</p>
Mon	27 th April	<p>am: 1. Meeting with Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP-MK (Ms. Ann-Marie Ali). 2. Meeting with National Coordinator, GEF Small Grants Programme FYR Macedonia (Mr. Zlatko Samardziev).</p> <p>pm: 1. Meeting with GEF Regional Technical Advisor (Mr. Vladimir Mamaev).</p>
Tues	28 th April	<p>am: De-briefing.</p> <p>pm: Evaluation team leader (PE) departs Skopje</p>

ANNEX III : PERSONS INTERVIEWED

* = Member of Prespa Park Coordination Committee (PPCC). † = Member of PPCC Secretariat.
(T) = telephone/skype interview. Alphabetic order.

UNDP / GEF

Ann-Marie Ali	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP-MK
Anita Kodzoman	UNDP-MK Head of Environment Programme
Vladimir Mamaev	GEF Regional Technical Advisor, Regional Coordination Centre, Bratislava
Adriana Micu	UNDP-AL Cluster Manager
Maria Luisa Silva Meias	Resident Representative for UNDP-MK
Zlatko Samardzhev	National Coordinator, GEF Small Grants Programme FYR Macedonia

Project Staff

Aleksandar Blazeski	Project Assistant for MK national component
Gordana Cvetkoska	Transboundary Project Assistant
Eno Dodbiba	Project Technical Expert for AL national component
Aleksandar Ivanovski	Project Specialist for MK national component
Ardit Konomi	Local Project Coordinator for AL national component
Alvin Lopez	Former International Transboundary Advisor
Emma Moçi	Project Finance and Administrative Assistant for AL national component
Dimitrija Sekovski	National Project Manager for MK national component
Nikola Zdraveski	Project Specialist for MK national component
Violeta Zuna	National Project Manager for AL national component

Project Consultants

Slavko Bogdanovic (T)	Former International Consultant for PPCC Maturation Study
Artur Galanxhi	Project Agriculture Advisory Consultant, AL national component
Sonja Seizova (T)	Former International Communications Specialist
Kristaq Teneqexhi	Head of Agricultural Faculty of Korça “F.S. Noli” University and short-term consultant to AL national component
Peter Whalley (T)	International Consultant for Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis

Government Departments

Pellumb Abeshi*	General Secretary for Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration and GEF Focal Point and National Project Director for Albanian component
Vasil Anastasovski	Head Department for Nature Protection, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia)
Zamir Dedej	Former PPCC member and former Director, Nature Protection Directorate, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Albania)
Bojan Durnev	Head of Department for Water Management, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (FYR Macedonia)

Skender Hasa	Chief of Water Resources Sector, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Albania)
Darinka Jantinska*	Head of Division of Instrument for Pre-accession, MOEPP and Project Coordinator for MK national component
Sasko Jordanov	Head of Division for Nature Protection, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia)
Rezart Kapedani	Fisheries Specialist and Transboundary Expert, Directorate of Fisheries' Policies, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Albania)
Kozma Kocani	Head of Forestry Sector, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration (Albania)
Ljupčo Melovski	Consultant to Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia) for Ezerani Reserve
Ilber Mirta	Head of Department on Waters, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia)
Aleksandar Nastov	Head of Division for Biodiversity, MOEPP (Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia)
Trajce Naumovski	Head of Department of Limnology, Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid (FYR Macedonia)
Svetozar Petkovski	Consultant to Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia) on Biodiversity
Spyros Plessas*	Head of Department of Management of Natural Environment, Ministry of Environment, Greece
Zoran Spirkovski	Head of Department on Fisheries, Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid (FYR Macedonia)
Caterina Styloginni	Environmental Scientist in Department of Management of Natural Environment, Ministry of Environment, Greece
Lidija Zafirovska	State Secretary for Environment, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (FYR Macedonia) and Project Director for MK national component

Local Administration

Sasko Andreevski	Head of local Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Resen (FYR Macedonia)
Daniela Apostolovska	Head of Department for Economic Development and Transboundary Cooperation, Municipality of Resen (FYR Macedonia)
Artur Argolli	Mayor of Proger Commune (Albania)
Eva Dhimitri	Head of Projects Coordination Office, Korça Regional Council (Albania)
Platon Gani	Head of Shkumbini River Basin (Albania)
Adriana Georgievska	Environmental Inspector, Sector of Urban Planning, Environmental and Planning Services, Municipality of Resen (FYR Macedonia)
Nardi Hohxa	Director of Public Services, Proger Commune (Albania)
Pellump Hoxha	Chief Inspector, Fisheries Department in Korça Region (Albania)
Muzafer Murati	Director of Public Enterprise "Proleter", Resen (FYR Macedonia)
Lazaros Naplantidis (T)	Mayor of Municipality of Prespa (Greece)
Vasil Steriovski	Vice-mayor of Ligenas Commune (Albania)
Gzim Sulejmani	President of Nakolec village (FYR Macedonia)
Edmond Themolko*	Mayor of Ligenas Commune (Albania)

Meri Trajkovska	Junior Adriana Georgievska Associate (Permits), Local Economic Unit, Municipality of Resen (FYR Macedonia)
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International Organisations

Eduart Cani	Project Manager, Regional Environment Centre
Stanislava Dodeva	National Programme Officer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Petar Gjorgjiev	Director, KfW Office, Skopje
Miltos Gletsos	Worldwide Fund for Nature-GR / Society for the Protection of Prespa Transboundary Monitoring Project Coordinator
Panagiota Maragow	Ex-Freshwater and Protected Area Policy Officer, Worldwide Fund for Nature-GR
Thymio Papayannis*	Senior Advisor, MedWet (The Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative)
Natasha Radovanović	Project Coordinator, KfW Office, Skopje

NGOs

Sonja Fuzevska	President of the NGO Coalition for Perspective Prespa Region (FYR Macedonia)
Frosina Gorgievska	Laboratory Manager of Union of Agricultural Producers
Vasil Jankulla	Head of NGO “Association of Forest and Pasture Users of Prespa” (Albania)
Ylli Kape	Head of “Fisherman’s Association of Small Prespa” (Albania)
Yanis Kazoglou	Policy and Sustainable Development Advisor and Wet Meadows Management and Monitoring Expert, Society for the Protection of Prespa
Ljupco Krstevski	Coalition member of the NGO Coalition for Perspective Prespa Region (FYR Macedonia)
Myrsini Malakov*	Director Society for the Protection of Prespa
Tome Petkovski*	Coalition member of the NGO Coalition for Perspective Prespa Region (FYR Macedonia)
Vivi Roumeliotov†	Policy and Sustainable Development Coordinator, Society for the Protection of Prespa
Kristaq Shore	Chair of NGO “Transboundary Wildlife Association” (Albania)
Sonja Spirovska†	Coalition member of the NGO Coalition for Perspective Prespa Region (FYR Macedonia)
Naumce Toskovski	President of Union of Agricultural Producers
Sali Zulal	President of Fisherman’s Association “Prespanski Krap” (FYR Macedonia)

Protected Areas

Pande Kostofski	“Director” of Prespa National Park (Albania)
Leto Papadopoulou	Transboundary Officer, Prespa National Forest Management Board (Greece)

ANNEX IV : SUMMARY EVALUATION OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS BY OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The initial Project logframe was revised several times during the inception period, and the final version approved by UNDP-GEF on 12th November 2007. The present evaluation matrix uses this revised logframe but has separated the indicators out in order to facilitate the evaluation process, and given each a number for ease of reference.

KEY:

GREEN = Indicators show achievement already successful or full expectation of achievement by end of Project.

YELLOW = Indicators show some progress – achievement expected by end of Project with increased effort.

ORANGE = Indicators show poor progress – possibly unlikely to be achieved by end of Project

RED = Indicators show poor or no progress – unlikely to be achieved by end of Project

	= Albanian component		= Macedonian component		= Transboundary component		= 2 or more components
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Project Goal: The conservation of globally significant biological diversity and trans-boundary water resources of the Prespa lakes Basin.

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
1	Objective (*) to catalyse the adoption by AL, MK and GR of integrated ecosystem management (IEM) practices in key sectors in the Prespa Lakes Basin, to conserve globally significant biodiversity and conserve trans-boundary waters.	a) Financial resources for IEM approach made available	a) Not available from public funds	a) US\$2 million for IEM by end of project	Indicator is ambiguous, but MTET assumes money is extra to Project funding. No indication of any extra funds being available for IEM by end of project.	MK: New legislation requiring IEM practices in country is underway but hard to say how much of spend will be for Prespa						
2		b) Human resources for IEM approach	b) Not trained	b) Key local stakeholders trained	AL: training – 14 people from PA administration on PA management and planning; 7 people from two communes on computer literacy; 12 people from local NGOs on project preparation; 27 fishermen	Indicator ambiguous – how define trained? To what level? In IEM or other disciplines? Only in MK are certificates available but only for agriculture from Faculty of Agriculture, State University. Farmers						

⁵³ No Mid-term targets defined in the logframe

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					on fishery management; 30 farmers on improved use of pesticides; plus 3 people from local authorities participated in transboundary study tours. <u>MK</u> : training of 25 farmers in pesticide management almost complete; another 25 about to start. <u>TBC</u> : Training of 4 people for PA management planning and 15 people from AL and MK in Watershed Management.	trained following scheme concepts and standards – legislation passed but awaiting certification implementation structures.						
3		c) Management tools for IEM approach	c) Not defined	c) Incentives, information, communication provided	<u>AL</u> : LEAP documents prepared and approved. Sectoral studies (inc. mapping) accomplished. Logistic support provided to the fishermen to enable better fishing practices. <u>MK</u> : plans underway for fisheries management, spatial land use planning, watershed management, and protected areas. Forestry completed but not yet adopted by MK govt. Definitions – e.g. conservation landscape available for inclusion. Incentives through reduced production costs; organic certification scheme nearing completion.							

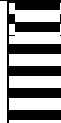
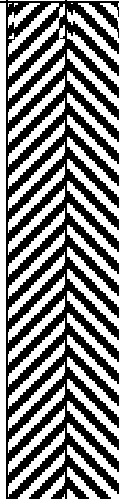


#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					<u>TBC</u> : Transboundary eco-tourism strategy under development. Transboundary integrated monitoring system under development.							
4		d) Demonstration of IEM approach	d) None	d) At least 5 visible demonstrations in AL, MK and GR* in key sectors related directly to conservation of significant biodiversity and transboundary waters	<u>AL</u> : Main LEAP recommendations are being implemented. IEM fishery sector actions are current. 6 small grants pilot projects and actions accomplished. Trade show on agro-businesses organised in 2008 followed with participation of farmers in apple festival in MK. <u>MK</u> : Most demonstrations awaiting adoption of key plans – e.g. forest management, watershed management. Small areas of demonstration apple farming in existence. Excellent demonstration small wastewater plant under construction. <u>TBC</u> : Pilot study for integrated monitoring system to be initiated in September 2009.							
5	Outcome 1: (*) Stakeholders establish land and water use management basis for	Spatial plan (MK, GR*)/LEAP (AL) incorporate ecosystem management objectives in	No LEAP in place; Spatial plan in MK and GR under way.	Spatial plans completed in MK and GR* by EoY 2 and approved by EoY3.	<u>AL</u> : LEAPs for Ligenas and Proger communes completed and approved in December 2007 by the	<u>MK</u> : Supposed to be approved by Dec 2008 but Parliamentary Review comments delayed						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
	maintaining and restoring ecosystem health in the Prespa Lakes Basin.	detail.			respective authorities. <u>MK</u> : Spatial plan for Ohrid and Prespa in final stages of Parliamentary approval.	because of national elections.						
6	*	Water management in the Prespa basin is aligned between the 3 littoral countries, considers ecosystem health needs and follows the principles of integrated basin water management	No assessment of current water uses; good ecological status not considered; no basin specific water management plans; no trilateral coordination mechanism	Establishment of the trilateral Working Group on Water Management (WMWG) by EoY 2. Approved and aligned water management plans with targets regarding water quality, integrated water uses, and ecological status; regulations for local water use management adopted by EoY 4	TBC: ToR for WMWG completed. Nomination of WMWG members to commence when Govts decides. First meeting expected July 2009.	<u>TBC</u> : Although apparently delayed, TBC started April 2007 – hence almost on time. Some concern remains re agreement and approval of plans.						
7		Main sectoral laws incorporate ecosystem health objectives/priorities; strengthened regulations for water, spatial planning and environmental management at local level.	Water, Ag, Forest, Fishery Law do not prioritize ecosystem health.	In-stream flows for fish become priority use of water; Ag/pesticide certification criteria strengthened for aquatic ecosystem health; Forest law incorporates maximizing ecosystem services as priority objective; Regulations for local water use management, spatial plan enforcement and	<u>AL</u> : 4 sectoral reports produced incorporating ecosystem health priorities into Water, Agriculture, Forest, and Fishery law ⁵⁴ . Coordination with MoEFWA on new water law (as per WFD and <i>aquis communautaire</i>). <u>MK</u> : Govt. adopted new Law on Plant Protection harmonised with EU <i>aquis</i> in late 2007. New Forest Law in final stages of Parliamentary	<u>AL</u> : In coordination with delayed KfW project, the Prespa Park Management Plan will be developed. <u>MK</u> : New Law on Plant Protection (2008) requires harmonisation with EU law. State has granted 5 year period of grace to comply – outside influence of Project. Project had no input to the new Forest Law, but assisted Forest Enterprise						

⁵⁴ They inc. analyses of the existing regulatory and institutional framework with relevance to site productive sectors (water, forest, agriculture. and fishery), identification of the cross-cutting issues thereof with the need for maintenance and conservation of ecosystem health, provisions for the future watershed management perspective, insight and recommendations for the human and financial resources with implications on enforcement and control.

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
8	*	Three priority streams (Ag. Germanos, Brajcino & Krani) and 1 tributary of Golema River (Leva stream) maintain environmental in-stream flow and water quality as appropriate for endemic trout (MK-GR*).	Baseline tbq; Currently, lower parts of these rivers may run dry in summer months and water quality is reduced by agricultural run-off and waste water.	environmental management adopted by EoY 3.	approval. Watershed management plan for Prespa Basin is pioneering regulations including in-stream flows which will act as model for others nationwide.	in preparation of management plans through guidelines and action plan.						
				Environmental flow requirements established by EoY 3.	AL: n/a. MK: To be included in Watershed Management Plan. Expected to be in place by EoP, but not EoY3.	MK: New Law on Waters (2008) greatly delayed (expected 2005) because of institutional responsibility issues between MoAFWE and MOEPP. Could not move forwards until legal basis established.						
9				Environmental flows maintained by end EoY5.	AL: n/a. MK: Expected to be in place according to plan by EoY5 and maintained for at least 6 years of Plan's lifetime.							
10				Water quality improved through reduction of agrochemicals use by EoY3 and application of small-scale waste water treatment by EoY4.	AL: n/a. MK: Project built upon progress made by UNDP project ⁵⁵ by extending monitoring system for pesticide use and control. Waste water treatment plant under construction in Nakolec.	MK: Expert opinion is that agrochemical use is down but difficult to assess accurately quantitatively. Completion of treatment plant expected in May 2009, but commencement of operation delayed because of bad weather delaying construction of associated waste water collection system.						

⁵⁵ Reducing Environmental Impacts of Agriculture in the Prespa Region (Feb 2005-May 2006)

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
11				Species action plan endorsed and implemented by EoY 2	<u>TBC</u> : Species and Habitat Conservation Action Plan ToR completed; 2 nd tender to commence May 2009.	<u>TBC</u> : Initial tender cancelled because of ineligibility of winning tender.						
12	*	Strengthened local management of important riparian habitat of both lakes in AL, MK and GR*.	No conservation or management of shoreline habitat in AL and MK; Active conservation management of wetland habitats in Lake Micro Prespa, GR*.	Approved protected area management plans in the 3 countries and definition of institutions for their implementation by EoY 3.	<u>AL</u> : No PA management plans or institutions. Direct interventions through small grants on forestry and fishery habitats. Further national monitoring activities are planned for 2009. <u>MK</u> : Reassessment of natural values of Ezerani Strict Nature Reserve to be completed in May 2009. This will provide details for Management Plan – commencement due by end of Q2 2009.	<u>AL</u> : Project activities awaiting delayed start of KfW project. <u>MK</u> : Reassessment became a legal requirement under Law on Nature (2005), thereby delaying establishment of Plan.						
13				Other important riparian habitat to be defined by EoY2 and 50% of these areas managed well by EoY 4 (MK+AL). 100 ha of wet meadows in GR* by EoY 4.	<u>AL & MK</u> : Such habitat to be defined by Species and Habitats Action Plan (above). No progress yet on management.	Delayed because of procurement problems for Species and Habitat Conservation Action Plan (see above).						
14		Replication: Watershed planning manual adopted as official manual by MoEPP and MoEFWM for rest of country.	No manual; replication not facilitated.	Manual integrated into watershed planning nationwide by EoY 4.	<u>AL</u> : The final draft of a best practice watershed management manual for Prespa National Park (Prespa basin) with case studies from the Balkan countries was completed in March 2009 and is now being edited.	<u>AL</u> : This manual will feed into the institutional legal process to be followed by MoEFWA regarding watershed management. Practical guidelines to be approved by MoEFWA to assist the process have been affected by the delay						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					MK: Government agreed Prespa Plan to act as pilot and model for replication nationwide once completed.	in establishing the management committee of the Prespa National Park.						
15	Outcome 2 (*): Stakeholders modify productive sector resource management practices to reduce pesticide inputs, increase habitat heterogeneity, and improve the status of target species and communities in the Prespa Basin.	Reduction in frequency and quantity of pesticides and fertilizers applied each season in the 3 countries.	Baseline of 10-15 applications/ season of pesticides in apple cultivation in MK;	Establishment of a protocol and system for the recording-monitoring of quantities of agrochemicals (including a system of soil and water analyses) applied in the three countries by EoY 2.	AL: According to METT assessment, pesticide use is almost insignificant (further verification is current for the KfW study). MK: Protocol being developed as part of agricultural training for farmers based upon global good agricultural practices.	AL has already proposed replacement of this indicator with “# of farmers producing certified organic products in Albania”; see paragraph 141.						
16			Baseline of quantities of pesticides / season and fertilizers in MK tbe by EoY1;	Registration of # per country (with # tbd by EoY1) in a cultivation model implementing Integrated Production Management.	No formal definition of the number for indicator purposes has been made. AL: Training of 30 farmers on prognosis and early warning in the agriculture sector is underway. MK: 25 farmers trained. Training of additional 25 farmers commences in May 2009.	MK: 25 is the optimal number of farmers per training course. Second course delayed by national elections.						
17			Baseline of quantities and number of applications/ season of pesticides and fertilizers in AL and GR* tbd by EoY1.	50% reduction in quantities of pesticides and fertilisers by EoY 2 in the three countries for the registered farmers.	AL: No reduction, but the total applied in AL Prespa is almost insignificant (baseline assessment estimates annual application of pesticides at 720 kg. MK: Conditional – on average, a reduction of 3	Inadequate indicator. In AL it has been proposed to replace this with “# of farmers producing certified organic products”. In MK, quantity of pesticides varies between years according to weather conditions, e.g. increased fungicide use in						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					applications per year.	wet years.						
18				Increase by 50% of number of registered farmers by EoY4.	AL: n/a. see reference to METT report and comment 3 indicators above. MK: 25 registered; 25 more about to begin training.	Baseline not defined but effectively zero. Therefore indicator inadequately worded. Registered in what?						
19				A tri-lateral protocol for recognition of Prespa Park products in place by EoY 5.		WWF-GR funded activity. Complete for beans in GR, but applicability to MK and AL extremely limited both legally and practically.						
20	*	Reduction in the number of harmful pesticides utilized in MK-Prespa, AL and GR*	KfW figures; 10 of the 15 in use are toxic to aquatic orgs (for these 10, apart from toxicity, their degree of dispersal in the environment and residual lifespan should be determined by EoY1); Problem intensified by improper disposal of pesticide containers	Only 5 of the pesticides in use are harmful by EoY 2; the remaining phased out by EoY 3.	AL: pesticide usage negligible, use of harmful ones not known. Project taking no action – see references to METT report above. MK: New Law on Plant Protection adopted by Govt, but targets not yet achieved.	State has decided to delay commencement of implementation of pesticide for 5 years – beyond further influence of Project so level of achievement not evaluated.						
21				A system for proper disposal of containers in place and implemented effectively by EoY3	AL: Same as above. MK: Study completed, co-funding obtained from SDC and GEF SGP for implementation of collection facility and disposal site.	Commission established to introduce system and identify collections sites. Pilot expected to be operative by end of 2009; upgraded by end of Project.						
22	*	# of farmers applying integrated pest management practices in MK and AL.	Number of farmers in MK currently applying Integrated Pest Management? (To be determined by EOY1).	20 farms by EoY 2 (5 in AL and 15 in MK); 50 by EoY 4 (10 in AL and 40 in MK)	AL: Same as above. MK: 25 farmers currently applying IPM practices, monitored by the Project.							

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
23	*		90 out of a total of 200 farmers in GR* currently applying Integrated Pest Management.		Training of 25 more to commence May 2009.							
24		Reduced costs for water, pesticide and fertilizer inputs for local farmers in MK, AL and GR*.	Costs tbd in first six months.	Reduced in monitored farms by significant percentage (more than 35-40%) by EoY 3	<u>AL</u> : Same as above. <u>MK</u> : Current monitoring shows 20-35% but reduction will vary according to two key factors – a) the microclimate within Prespa Region which dictates number and amount of pesticide applications; and b) actual weather conditions present in any given year.	Baseline costs determined by experts working with the scheme, prior to training courses, but not within first 6 months. In some cases, soil analysis shows no need to add fertilizer for the next 4 years. Reductions will become apparent only after this time.						
25		Cost savings to specific farmers from use of fertilizer made from waste apples in MK.	Costs and technique to produce fertilizer made from waste apples tbd in first six months.	Reduced in participating farms by significant percentage by EoY 3.	<u>AL</u> : n/a. <u>MK</u> : initiatives for composting at household level undertaken by UNDP/SDC and GEF SGP, but at farm/central level postponed.	<u>MK</u> : Municipality requested cessation of GEF activities given opportunity to obtain funding from Italians for centralised organic waste re-cycling project to serve whole of Prespa region.						
26		Transboundary cooperation and transfer of best practices in agriculture (between farmer's associations) in AL, MK and GR*	Environmentally friendly agricultural techniques are applied at pilot levels in all three countries	Establish and support Network of Regional Farmer's Associations in the framework of PPCC meetings by EoY 3.	<u>AL</u> : Exchange of experience through study tour in MK and GR. Training visits in MK on use of agromet. stations. Networking of agriculture stakeholders encouraged through joint event exchange (eg. Apple festival). <u>MK</u> : Informal	Apparently this indicator does not exist in the AL logframe. Difficulties because farmers in different countries concentrate on different crops. Network includes farmers' associations, agricultural extension agencies, universities.						






#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
27	*				establishment of network between farmers' associations in all 3 countries as far as possible.							
28		% of wood community forest (CF) contribute to two communities' needs for fodder and fuel wood in AL.	CF provides none of the fuelwood and fodder needs.	CF provides 50% of 2 target villages' (AL) needs by EoY 4.	Currently, CF covers 30% of Prespa Park Forest area and provides the actual needs for fodder and fuel wood for 12 villages.	Remainder of area is protected area.						
29		# hectares of forest under improved biodiversity-oriented management in MK, GR*, AL Prespa.	No ha of forest under this kind of management	2,000 ha in MK by EoY 3. 3,000 ha in AL by EoY 3; and 1,000 ha in GR* by EoY 3.	<u>AL</u> : Currently no biodiversity oriented management of forest area exists. <u>MK</u> : 2,000 ha included in Forest Management Plan prepared by Govt and adopted. in February 2009.	<u>AL</u> : Biodiversity-oriented management of forests will be introduced when the delayed KfW project preparing the management plan for Prespa National Park begins. <u>MK</u> : Project will now assist Forest Enterprises in implementation of Forest Management Plan.						
		Eutrophying inputs (N, organic material) to Macro Prespa reduced m ³ through small-scale wastewater treatment pilots.	One wastewater treatment plant in MK and none in AL. Relevant project underway in GR* Prespa (Current input to be determined by EoY1)	Two pilots reduce inputs by 1,000 m ³ by EoY 3.	<u>AL</u> : Improvement of existing wastewater system in Proger about to start using REC grant. Additionally, 30% solid waste reduction (weight) due to improved management system, recycling and composting practices in Ligenas and Proger communes, funded by SIDA programme. <u>MK</u> : Waste water plant at Nakolec due for completion in May 2009.	<u>AL</u> : No village near lakes is large enough to take a wastewater plant. However, solid waste disposal in tributary rivers provides eutrophying inputs to lake. Thus, using €30,000 SIDA funds this activity was implemented under direct supervision of UNDP-GEF project. <u>MK</u> : Govt. has indicated intent to replicate the demonstration scheme in						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
30					Capacity will be 250m ³ (500 people).	Nakolec according to Project Document.						
		Replication of those pilots reduces eutrophying input in two other places w/in Prespa.	No pilots to replicate currently.	Replication in at least 2 other places by EoY 4.	<u>AL</u> : Constructed wetland facility is expected as an alternative solution in Gorica/ Ligenas, in cooperation with UNDP ArtGold programme and government structure. <u>MK</u> : None yet.	<u>AL</u> : This would also act as a replication of the ArtGold programme in Narta Lagoon area. <u>MK</u> : Replication is responsibility of govt and municipality through co-financing.						
31	*	Improved overall quality of life in villages with small-scale wastewater treatment.	Community survey measures quality of life baseline first 6 months.	Significant increase in quality of life measurement from survey of participating local communities.	<u>AL</u> : Not yet applicable. <u>MK</u> : Not yet applicable. Baseline condition established during PDF-B. Meaningless indicator	<u>AL</u> : Quality of life survey will be conducted before sewerage improvements in Proger (REC) and at end of Project.						
32		Decline in sales of detergents containing phosphorous in Resen municipality.	Baseline TBD in first six months.	Decline of 50% by EoY 3; 75% by EoY 4.	<u>AL</u> : n/a. <u>MK</u> : Indicator irrelevant following countrywide ban on detergents containing phosphorous.	Performance rating n/a.						
33		Allowable fish catch linked to population size estimates in both lakes in MK, AL and GR*.	There is no limit on fish caught during regular season; Fishery authorities from the 3 countries are usually deciding jointly a yearly spring "closed period" for fishing since 2004.	Improved collection of fishery data in all three countries by EoY2.	<u>AL</u> : A Fishermans' Association is being formed by the Project. Together with strengthening of the existing OFM this will lead to improved fisheries data. <u>MK</u> : Not achieved. Data collection to be part of Fisheries Management Plan.	<u>AL</u> : There remains no limit on fish catch in AL. <u>MK</u> : Complicated by full ban on legal fishing in MK. Indicator weak since no qualitative description or quantification of what counts as improvement.						
34				Sharing of data by all three countries by EoY2.	<u>AL</u> : Available information shared within sector within country, but trans-boundary sharing awaits Fisheries Management							

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
					Plan. MK: Not achieved. Dependent upon proposals contained in Fisheries Management Plan.							
35				Allowable fish catch is linked to population size estimates and other indices (# of fishing boats, territory of fishing area in each country) for five species by EoY 4.	AL: No limit on fish catch. MK: GEF consultant currently preparing proposals for programme of measures necessary to bring about transboundary Fisheries Management Plan which will include definition of size of allowable fish catches.	AL: Actual annual catch is 200-250 tonnes of fish in both Prespa lakes. MK: Current fish catches determined by new Fisheries Man. Plan from Hydrobiological Institute. Although lacks data, Plan is necessary to select new concessionaire. Govt. has agreed to revise this Fisheries Plan in light of findings from GEF studies when complete.						
36				Regular contacts between fisheries authorities of the three countries to reach common decisions on allowable fishing tools, closed seasons and other sustainable management measures;	TBC: Contact limited to determining close-season for various species, save for 2008. Expected to increase following production of Fisheries Plan(s).							
37				Harmonised by-laws on fisheries amongst the 3 littoral states.	TBC: Also dependent upon progress on Fisheries Plan(s) – see above.							
38		Change in awareness among local people regarding the Prespa ecosystem.	Baseline to be established by EoY1.	20% improvement by end of EoY (EoY) 2; 50% by EoY 4. (To be assessed based on specific methodologies	AL: No baseline established in EOY1 nor subsequent surveys. Instead, Albania has proposed replacement of	AL: Local media broadcasts programmes on Prespa area; 4 th issue of IUCN SE Europe e-bulletin published						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				developed)	this indicator with: "Inhabitants and stakeholders are aware/unaware of Prespa values and informed on project activities". TBC: Baseline established for Communication and Education and Public Awareness Strategy in mid-2008.	information on the progress of project and events related to nature conservation ⁵⁶ ; capacity and material support to the info. centres in Zagradec and Gorica; educational programmes, brochures, newspaper articles and school book. TBC: Small delay on baseline since TBC started April 2007. However, only just started to implement strategy and no plans for re-assessment of awareness in 2009 (i.e. EoY2).						
39	Outcome 3 (*): Stakeholders conserve priority biological diversity across the Prespa Basin and make key protected areas (PNP, GNP, ENR and PPA-GR*) fully operational.	Transboundary monitoring of important biotic and abiotic factors functioning/not functioning.	No monitoring system in place in AL and MK; In GR*, the Society for Protection of Prespa (SPP) has experience in monitoring several biotic and abiotic parameters.	Establishment of monitoring and conservation working group (MCWG) in first six months;	TBC: MCWG membership agreed by July 2007.							
40				MCWG operational by EoY1.	TBC: First meeting 30/10/07.							
41				Participatory field survey protocols standardized by EoY1.	TBC: Currently still being worked on. Species and indicators to be monitored agreed. Methodologies and institutional arrangements still under discussion.	TBC: Year-long Monitoring System Study expected to be completed Sept 2009 Indicator timescale unrealistic, does not take cognisance of complexity of task.						

⁵⁶ Three articles related to Prespa Park project: 1) Forest biodiversity assessment prepared by Mehmet Meta and Stavri Pillaha; 2) Supporting local environmental planning for the communities around Prespa lakes; 3) Transboundary component of GEF UNDP Prespa Park Project launched

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
42				Assessment of terrestrial & aquatic habitats for priority bird and mammal species by EoY 2.	<u>TBC</u> : Late. Currently still being worked on by Tour du Valat. Proposals made, workshops held, but final agreement by 3 States still to take place.	<u>TBC</u> : Species and Habitats study was to have been run in conjunction but this was delayed because of procurement issues. Will still take cognisance of priorities selected by MCWG.						
43				Capacity building and training programmes underway by EoY1.	<u>TBC</u> : Development of monitoring programmes in MK and AL involves capacity building of MCWG members throughout.	Indicator does not state who such training programmes should be for.						
44				Monitoring system in place and generating useful data by end of EoY 2 (including GIS).	<u>TBC</u> : Monitoring system not yet in place – dependent upon completion of first phase of MCWG work (establishment of institutional arrangements and protocols).	<u>TBC</u> : Again, indicator is over-ambitious and does not recognise the difficulties of agreeing monitoring protocols across three countries with different capabilities.						
45		Pilot application of the transboundary monitoring system and assessment of methods, training and capacity needs and analysis/interpretation of data.	Evaluation of applied original monitoring system (see above)	Revised monitoring system in place and generating useful data by end of EoY 4	<u>TBC</u> : Delayed. Dependent upon pilot programme above.	<u>TBC</u> : Probably unlikely to be achieved – pilot not due to start until maybe Jan 2010 – this may need 12 months to cover full seasonality of revisions according to sharing, verification, analysis, and quality control of data, etc. will take time.						
46		Presence/absence of up-to-date information on extent/condition of priority	Information spotty, dated, and focused on single species.	Updated data by EoY 2; establishment of reference conditions	<u>TBC</u> : Nothing yet. <u>AL</u> : 108 species of	<u>TBC</u> : Habitats and Species Conservation Action Plan delayed						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
47		species and habitat distribution, abundance, and condition.		for selected species by EoY 3.	trees/bushes identified and catalogued through project SGP, and deposited with Prespa National Park Administration, but no info on distribution, abundance, or condition.	because of ineligibility of winner of initial tender. To be re-launched May 2009.						
		Number of species action plans developed and approved	Few species action plans; Information very good for some species, spotty or lacking for others	Species action plans developed and agreed in the Prespa basin by EoY 4.	TBC: Nothing yet.	TBC: See immediately above.						
48	*	Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score for PNP, GNP, and ENR, PPA-Greece*.	X (TBD at project inception)	X + 20% by mid term; X + 40% by project end.	AL: Prespa National Park Baseline METT score established in Dec. 2007 = 31. Feb 2009 METT score = 34. MK: Ezerani Nature Reserve – first score to be established April 2009. Galicica NP – no GEF money spent.	AL: Main PA strengthening component under KfW funding – not yet started. MK: ENR – no management body in place so score April 2009 will be same as that at start of Project. Galicica NP – no GEF input so no need for Project to monitor. Info available if needed.						
49	*	ENR and PPA-GR* are/are not gazetted and boundaries are/are not clearly marked on maps or on the ground	Not gazetted; Not clearly marked	ENR and PPA-GR* are gazetted and boundaries are clearly marked on the ground by EoY4.	AL: n/a. MK: Reassessment of natural values of Ezerani Strict Nature Reserve commenced April 2007 due to be completed May 2009.	MK: Reassessment became a legal requirement under Law on Nature (2005). Study will be forwarded to MOEPP and decisions made thereafter re boundaries and management arrangements.						
50	*	The management authorities of ENR, PNP-AL, GNP and PPA-Greece*	Staff numbers are inadequate for critical management	The respective management authorities have	AL: Some improvement on administrative structure of the Prespa National Park							

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
51	*	are fully equipped and operational to carry out basic management activities	activities; relevant funding lacking	adequate scientific and administrative personnel for critical management activities by EoY 5.	administration carried out as a precondition for KfW project start-up. <u>MK</u> : See immediately above.							
		# hectares of priority habitat for birds, fish, rare plants, and mammals under improved conservation management.	No management plans; no active management; no specific # of hectares under special management;	Target number of hectares under improved management to be determined and implemented based on recommendations of the species action plans.	<u>AL</u> : No actual management plan in place. <u>MK</u> : No progress.	<u>AL</u> : Due to delay starting the KfW project. <u>MK</u> : currently awaiting delayed Habitats and Species Conservation Action Plan.						
52			Approved management plan (2001) for wet meadows of Micro Prespa in GR* which is being revised through SPP LIFE-Nature project GR*.									
53		Golema Reka River (MK) restored	Degraded Golema River in need of solid waste removal, stream habitat and substrate protection and reduction of pollution (including pollution from fish farms near Krusje springs)	Analysis of situation by EoY 1; Approval of final plans by EoY 2; Pilot demonstration restoration by EoY3.	<u>AL</u> : n/a. <u>MK</u> : Undertaken with SDC funding. Phase I nearly complete. Extended Phase II being planned.	<u>MK</u> : engineering solution only which, while reducing nutrient inputs into Lake Prespa, has missed opportunities to demonstrate best urban ecological practice.						
54	*	Within the key protected areas human activities (e.g. including forestry, fishing, building) may/may not be practised in an uncontrolled and/or unsustainable way (MK, AL, GR*)	No adequate control mechanisms for unsustainable human activities in the protected areas.	Wardening and control mechanisms (effective EIA process; law enforcement etc.) for controlling unsustainable human activities in protected areas exist and are effectively	<u>AL</u> : Applies to Prespa National Park – but administration authority not yet legally established. <u>MK</u> : Applies only to Ezerani NR in MK. Awaiting results of revalorisation study.	<u>AL</u> : Authority will be established under KfW Project. <u>MK</u> : Reassessment became a legal requirement under Law on Nature (2005).						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				implemented; Expansion of scheme outside key protected areas (i.e. Trout streams)								
55	Outcome 4 (*): Stakeholders build upon ongoing trans-boundary cooperation in the Prespa Basin by strengthening the trans-boundary coordination mechanism and piloting trans-boundary conservation and water management.	PPCC is/is not a legal entity under International Law	PPCC is an informal institution with no legal basis.	PPCC is legal entity as agreed to under trilateral agreement.	TBC: External political factors pose a serious barrier to progress in achieving a trilateral agreement.	The project's technical report on the maturation of the PPCC, its status and future role has been agreed by the Albanian stakeholders and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and by the Macedonian MoEPP. The marginally satisfactory rating reflects the fact that the Project has done all it can.						
56		Declaration for the Prespa Park is/is not followed by specific tri-lateral agreement	No trilaterally agreed plan exists for the Prespa Basin	Agreed Strategic Action Programme/ Plan for Prespa basin with long-term operational objectives, commitments and ways to strengthen transboundary management (output 4.7)	TBC: Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis initiated in Nov 2008, national reports agreed Mar 2009. SAP due end of 2009.	TBC: Timetable for production of SAP may be optimistic. Endorsement of SAP may face similar challenges as trilateral agreement.						
57		Governments commit/ do not commit to funding full time executive secretary position for Prespa Park Coordination Committee.	No such position or funding exists.	Commitment by EoY. 3. Funding by EoY. 4.	Executive Secretary position not supported by UNDP, thus nothing for Governments to fund. No independent initiative from States to meet this requirement.	Rating reflects UNDP's decision rather than Projects lack of performance.						
58		Status of agreement of transboundary water management to achieve	No common agreed targets of water management	Establishment of the trilateral WMWG by EoY 1; monitoring;	TBC: ToR finally agreed in Nov. 2008. Delay in approach to countries for	TBC: Innaugural meeting planned for July 2009.						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
		good ecological water status in the water bodies of the Prespa Park. Coordination mechanism established through regular operation of Working Group on Water Management (WMWG).		agreement of targets for TB water management by EoY4	WMWG members – nominations expected imminently.							
59	*	Three states agree/ disagree on transboundary habitat conservation priorities that reflect ecological management objectives for sustainable use and conservation of species and ecosystem health and agree upon specific programmes	Management regime is not aligned regarding basin-wide important species and habitats	Three states agree on transboundary habitat conservation priorities that reflect ecological management objectives. Two habitat-related pilot projects agreed by EoY 1.	TBC: No progress – awaiting development of the Species and Habitat Conservation Action Plan.	TBC: Initial tender cancelled because of ineligibility of winning tender. Re-tender to be announced May 2009. Nonetheless, even the initial tender was significantly behind schedule.						
60				Relevant management activities implemented by EoY 3.	TBC: No progress – as immediately above.							
61		Inhabitants and stakeholders in the 3 countries aware/ unaware of Prespa values and informed on project activities	Environmental education/nature interpretation programmes executed by SPP in GR*-Prespa during recent past; SPP Information Centre on Transboundary Prespa Park operating in Aghios Germanos; Info Centre in Zagradec, Micro Prespa (AL).	Increased awareness of stakeholders on values of Prespa and project activities – 20% by EoY 2 and 50% by EoY 4.	TBC: EoY2 target not achieved. Communications and Education and Public Awareness strategy completed Oct 2008 and endorsed by PPCC in Nov 2008. Implementation underway from that point.	TBC: Baseline awareness survey undertaken June 2008 (i.e. EoY1).						
62		Three states agree on trans-boundary fish conservation priorities that	Management regime does not reflect ecosystem objectives,	Three states cooperate on enforcement;	TBC: Fisheries consultant will submit report of baseline study to next	TBC: Workshop will agree next steps including formation of a Fisheries						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
63		reflect ecological management objectives for sustainable use and conservation of native species and aquatic ecosystem health and agree upon specific programme of measures for cooperative fish management.	though three countries ban fishing during spawning season.	monitoring; and research by EoY 3.	regional technical workshop in May 2009.	Working Group. Again, indicator is optimistic in realities of getting three States to agree.						
		Robust shared database on priority ecosystem and species health parameters.	No shared database w/ updated information; cross-boundary discussions occur w/no support data.	MCWG or relevant Sub-working Group defines parameters and rules for access to database.	TBC: MCWG established in Oct 2007. Monitoring study underway funded by SPP. Expected to be finished by end of 2009.	TBC: UNDP MK signed MOU with SPP for funding and responsibilities. SPP contracted Tour du Valat to undertake study.						
				Shared database populated with reliable data supports cross-boundary discussions.	TBC: Awaits completion of the above study.							
		NP and forest managers formulate transboundary management actions for priority transboundary forest biotopes [mountain meadows and rangelands of Galicica/Mali I Thate, juniper forest on Kalammas peninsula, Varnous Mountain – PPA (GR*) /Pelister PNP (MK)].	No consensus among managers regarding cooperative transboundary management of forest biotopes	Identification and prioritization of habitats by EoY1 according to the NATURA 2000 methodology or any other compatible one.	TBC: Has not occurred – awaiting development of the Species and Habitat Conservation Action Plan.	TBC: Initial tender cancelled because of ineligibility of winning tender. Re-tender to be announced May 2009. Nonetheless, even the initial tender was significantly behind schedule.						
				Establishment of protection corridors (where feasible) in case of non-adjacent PAs by EoY 1.	TBC: No progress – as immediately above.							
67				Development of management plans by	TBC: No progress – as immediately above.							

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
68				EoY 2.								
				Common monitoring of actions agreed and implemented by EoY 2.	TBC: No progress – as immediately above.							
69				Pilot application of management actions by EoY 3.	TBC: No progress – as immediately above.	MTET cannot see Project having enough time to complete pilot actions.						
70	*	Rare waterbird conservation through transboundary protection of breeding and nesting habitats in MK, AL and GR*.	Reedbed and wet meadows under some management in GR*, but not in MK and AL; No sufficient wardening applied in MK, AL and GR*.	Sub-Working Group on Birdlife formulates transboundary conservation actions for water birds in both lakes by EoY1.	TBC: Not achieved. Sub-working Group not yet established. Should be a component of MCWG.							
71				Pilot conservation actions applied by EoY2; monitoring of pilot actions.	TBC: Not achieved – as immediately above.							
72	*	Imperial eagle nesting habitat enhanced/protected, along with other important raptor and vulture nesting habitats enhanced/protected simultaneously (e.g. Golden Eagle, or rare nocturnal species) in MK, AL and GR*.	Ecological needs of eagle not understood by protected areas, forest managers or MoEPP.	Sub-Working Group on Birdlife formulates transboundary conservation actions for forest raptor species following by EoY1.	TBC: Not achieved – as immediately above.							
73				Pilot conservation actions applied by EoY2;	TBC: Not achieved – as immediately above.							
74				At least two different potential eagle-nesting areas under special management by year 3	TBC: Not achieved – as immediately above.	MTET cannot see Project having enough time to complete pilot actions.						
75	*	Bat colonies protected and monitored in MK, AL and GR*.	Bat colonies known to a good extent, but not protected or	Priority bat colonies protected and monitored by year 3.	AL: In cooperation with SGP there are 4,000-5,000 individuals under	MK: Galicia NP are working on bats with KfW funding – findings to be						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
76	*	Ecological requirements for endemic trout understood and protected.	monitored.		protection in Treni Cave, 90% of which are Schreibers's long-fingered bat (<i>Miniopterus schreibersi</i>). <u>MK</u> : No progress within project.	included in their management plan.						
			Species Action Plan (through research carried out in GR* and MK) to be produced by summer 2007.	In-stream flows and water quality maintained in Brajcino, Krani, Leva and Aghios Germanos Rivers by end of year 3.	<u>AL</u> : n/a. <u>MK</u> : Greatly delayed. In-stream flows to be determined for Brajcino, Krani, Leva within Watershed Management Plan.	<u>MK</u> : ToR for Watershed Management Plan to be put to tender in May 2009.						
				Pilot action taken according to Species Action Plan by EoY 2.	<u>MK</u> : Has not occurred – awaiting development of the Species and Habitat Conservation Action Plan.	<u>TBC</u> : Initial tender cancelled because of ineligibility of winning tender. Re-tender to be announced May 2009. Nonetheless, even the initial tender was significantly behind schedule.						
				Habitat protection status ensured in both countries (i.e. establishment of closed seasons, fishing bans, establishment of protection zone, maintenance of riparian forests-avoiding erosion, etc.) by EoY 2.	<u>TBC</u> : Not achieved – awaits formation of Fisheries Working Group and possibly results of Species and Habitat Conservation Action Plan.	<u>TBC</u> : Fisheries consultant will submit report of baseline study to next regional technical workshop in May 2009. Workshop will agree next steps including formation of a Fisheries Working Group. Indicator is overly optimistic in realities of getting three States to agree common action.						
78				Efficient wardening for illegal angling in both	<u>AL</u> : This issue is expected to be addressed by the	<u>MK</u> : Currently MK has no fish concessionaire, so no						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				countries by EoY 2.	KfW programme. MK: National level response to improve policing and wardening.	direct stakeholder for Project to work with. Issue is being further addressed by the Species and Habitats Conservation Plan and the Fisheries Management Plan.						
80				Pollution problems ameliorated by EoY 4.	AL: As above, 30 % solid waste reduction (weight) due to improved solid waste management system, recycling and composting practices in Ligenas and Proger villages, cooperating with SIDA programme. MK: Pollution problems being ameliorated by other Project initiatives. No specific actions being directed at Brajcino; but SDC-funded waste management project active in three villages along Brajcino river.	MK: SPP and MK NGO produced a Brajcino Action Plan but not communicated to, or endorsed by, MK authorities. Work may be able to be incorporated Species and Habitats Conservation Action Plan.						
81	*	Reduction in level of threat to endemic fish posed by exotics in all 3 countries. Conservation of genetic diversity of endemic fish species in all 3 countries.	Not understood or even recognized as a problem in MK, AL and GR*. SPP holds long term data on native, endemic and introduced fish species.	Priority threats to endemic fish from exotics, habitat change, and over-fishing and re-introductions understood by EoY1.	TBC: Fisheries consultant will submit report of baseline study to next regional technical workshop in May 2009.	MK: Understanding of key issues now demonstrated at national level where new legislation is harmonised with ecosystem approach to fisheries; and fully understood by local communities.						
82				Absolute prevention of introductions of	TBC: Will be included in Fisheries Management	MK: Currently MK has no fish concessionaire, so no						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
				predatory fish species of potential commercial value interest.	Plan.	direct stakeholder for Project to work with, but issue highlighted for action when concessionaire appointed.						
83				Management action agreed by EoY 2.	<u>TBC</u> : No action yet agreed. Fisheries consultant will submit report of baseline study to next regional technical workshop in May 2009. Work plans will then be determined.							
84				Pilot measures underway to reduce them by EoY 4.	<u>TBC</u> : As above.							
85	*	Wetland vegetation in GR* and AL and MK are managed and their habitat values enhanced.	Wet meadows are under some management in GR* (with 100 ha of wet meadows in Micro Prespa) but not in AL	Wet meadows in GR* are restored and properly managed in GR*-Prespa (targeting at the maintenance of minimum 100 ha).	N/a to MK or AL.							
86				Pilot projects are starting in AL-Prespa.	<u>AL</u> : No action yet taken.	No time limit on indicator, but pilot projects will require at least two summers to show results so these need to be initiated quickly.						
87	*	Tri-national ecotourism management plan is/is not endorsed and promotion underway. Network of operational Information Centres in all 3 States.	No regional tourism management planning.	New tourism management and investment plan in place by year 5.	<u>AL</u> : Cooperation with SNV on ecotourism strategy. <u>MK</u> : Baseline study completed in 2008. ToR for eco-tourism strategy prepared and ready for tender.	<u>MK</u> : Baseline study was undertaken by international consultant. Transboundary workshops agreed ToR.						
88			SPP Info Centre	Ensure the capacity	<u>AL</u> : ????							

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
89			operational in GR*; operation of more Info Centres by Protected area authority-GR* imminent; Info Centre in Gorica.	and viability of Info Centres in all 3 sides; Network these Info Centres	MK: Concept and site for National Capital Resource Centre (MK) agreed with Ministry of Culture. Equipment purchased.							
		Continuing financial and institutional commitment from three littoral states (local and/or national commitments).	No long-term formal commitments.	Continuing financial and institutional commitments made to adequately staff and continue operations of key project-inspired processes and use of tools.	No indication that financial support from Govts. will be forthcoming for PPCC. MOU signed between 3 local municipalities of the countries limited effect evident in terms of management and finance. MK: Pesticide disposal to be paid by municipal tax. Natural Capital Resource Centre and Ezerani NR commitment sought to pay staff after project. Commitment through various plans – Watershed Management Plan, Strategic Action Plans and Spatial Plans – will have costed actions and sources of support – will be obligatory if passed by Parliament. Fisheries and Forestry – regulated by existing legislation. Agriculture – private sector with new incentives. Wastewater – locals pay costs; replication expected.							
90	Outcome 5: Lessons	Effective delivery rate	Block B delivery	As good or better than	Albania delivery till end	MTET sees no reason for						

#	Aim	Performance Indicator	Targets ⁵³		Delivery Status at Mid-term Evaluation	Comments	Rating					
			Baseline	End of Project			HS	S	MS	MU	U	HU
	learnt and adaptive management of project.			Block B delivery rate.	2008: about 44 %	there to be any link between the delivery of PDF-B and full project.						
91		Positive evaluations	First evaluation.	Improvement with each successive evaluation.		MTE is first evaluation.						

ANNEX V : LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT DEBRIEFING MEETINGS

Official de-briefing held on 28th April 2009

Project Staff

Ann-Marie Ali	Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP-MK
Vesna Dzuteska Bisheva	Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP-MK
Anita Kodzoman	UNDP-MK Head of Environment Programme
Vladimir Mamaev	GEF Regional Technical Advisor, Regional Coordination Centre, Bratislava
Samir Memedov	Programme Associate, Environment Programme, UNDP-MK
Georg Schoen	Programme Officer, Environment Programme, UNDP-MK
Phillip Edwards	Team Leader of Mid-term Evaluation Team

ANNEX VI: MAP OF LAKE PRESPA AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

