

Vjosa Wild River National park

2023

ToR Lead Expert/International Coordinator

July 2023

1 BACKGROUND

In March 2023, the Vjosa Wild River National Park (VWRNP) was formally established, becoming the largest national park in Albania. The VWRNP covers the entire Vjosa River in Albania, from the Greek border to its mouth in the Adriatic Sea, as well as three main tributaries: Drinos, including Kardhiq, Bëngë and Shushicë.

Activities in 2023 include the preparation of key strategic documents for the effective management of the VWRNP, the preparation of legal and financial bases for the development of a governance model that will contribute most effectively to achieving the objectives of nature protection and promoting those forms of uses of natural resources that foster the development of local communities without adverse impacts on the natural environment, the implementation of activities to support the management of the park (such as involving the public and stakeholders in the management processes, promotion of the park, its sustainable financing and fundraising, capacity development, and the promotion of inter-sectoral dialogue). Preparations will also start this year for the extension of the park's boundaries, which will later include all free-flowing tributaries and the Vjosa delta area, and the establishment of a transboundary protected area across the entire river basin, including river Aoos and its tributaries in Greece.

2 OBJECTIVE

The Lead Expert/International Coordinator leads the process of developing the legal, organisational and financial basis on which the VWRNP will be effectively managed and governed in a way that follows the IUCN Standards for Protected Areas and enables sustainable development for local communities.

3 SPECIFIC TASKS

The International Coordinator is tasked with strengthening and advising on institutional capacity, programming, and partnerships for the integrated planning, governance and management of the Vjosa Wild River National Park (VWRNP),

- Advising the Working Group and relevant government agencies in Albania on the strategic planning and management decisions of the VWRNP, which will be aligned with international (IUCN) protected area standards.

The International Coordinator is:

- Responsible for ensuring that the content of the reports meets the objectives;
- Responsible for writing the TORs and selecting the experts;
- Responsible for writing the introduction/selected chapters of the Integrated Management Plan (IMP);

- Responsible for soliciting the necessary input from scientists and civil society;
- Responsible for expert input to the management plan and boundary working groups

Tasks will be carried out in close collaboration with the National Coordinator, the Ministry Focal Point, NAPA, the Lead National Expert, the Partnership Manager as well as other experts working under the auspices of the Steering Committee. The work requires frequent trips to Albania for meetings and field visits.

4 DELIVERABLES AND TIME FRAME

Deliverable 1: Review and revision of the content of the Integrated Management Plan for the Vjosa Wild River National Park

Specific tasks include:

- review and revision of the content of the IMP,
- coordination of work with the main authors of the chapters,
- preparation of summaries,
- writing individual chapter content, all in a way that ensures compliance with IUCN standards

Deliverable 2: Revised draft strategic documents, action plans and capacity development programmes (9 months after signage of the contract)

Specific tasks include:

- Review of the technical studies on management, sustainable and eco-tourism, interpretation and visitor's experiences, boundaries and zoning in accordance with the international and quality standards
- Review of the legal, organisational and financial basis for the development of a governance model for the VWRNP that is effective and in line with international (IUCN) standards such as the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas.

The anticipated start date of the work is August 31, 2023. Anticipated duration of the contract: 165 work days through April 9, 2024

5 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERTISE OF THE CONSULTANT

Required Qualifications

- PhD or at least an MSc in protected areas or environmental management or a similar field.

- At least 10 years of experience in a leadership position in protected areas planning and management.
- Demonstrated experience working in Southeast European countries in the field of protected areas and biodiversity planning and management.
- Proven experience in capacity building and policy development related to protected areas.
- Internationally recognized experience with IUCN protected area standards and advisory services.
- Demonstrated experience coordinating large teams of experts and/or projects.
- Proven experience with river and wetland restoration, development of management plans (at least three) and financial plans (at least one) for protected areas at the site level.
- Previous experience with projects on establishment of protected areas in the region will be an advantage.