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The Butrint National Park Greater area

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1. Background

Albania is one of the smallest countries in Europe and its the climatic features, geographic position, its relief and geological, hydrological factors, favor a very high diversity of natural habitats and sub eco-system. Even though its richness in biological and landscape diversity, according to the UNDP-GEF, Small Grant Program Country Strategy (1999), Albania is considered to have the highest rate of biodiversity loss in Europe due to unsustainable development process going on. Consequently, the Albanian government has stated in the

National Report Biodiversity Strategy (1999) its intention to mainstream biodiversity conservation in national policies and development strategy and more recently, the Albanian government policy on environment protection has been widely included in the development and poverty reduction strategies and was embodied for the first time in the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP), approved in 2002. Furthermore, since 1993 several sector policy have been prepared such as the Action Plan for Biodiversity, Coastal Zone Management Plan, Green Strategy for Agriculture, Strategy for Tourism Development, and governmental bodies specialized in environmental protection were established. In this framework, concrete actions such as identifying and creating protected area, have been also carried out, such as the Butrint National Park¹, etc.

But, in spite of these recent efforts in defining an important political stance, developing a complete legal frame and improving institutional organization is still needed. Moreover the lack of territorial planning and management capacity at local and national level, the abandonment of rural habitats and the massive urban development, the very low public awareness on biodiversity conservation and on environment protection values and potential for economic development, are the crucial problems that have to be faced to better orientate the Albania sustainable development process towards the attainment of international standards and goals.

Tourism sector in Albania

Even in the light of the fact that, currently, tourism accounts for 10.7% of world GDP and that 617 million tourist were travelling spending \$448 billion. By 2020, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) predict that tourism will triple, with 1.6 billion tourists travelling abroad annually, spending more than \$2.000 billion².

Tourism has been identified as one of the most important sector to be supported, since it has been recognised as one of the main instrument to provide a significant potential for poverty reduction, a concrete opportunities for economic growth and development and an important instrument to promote a sustainable exploitation of natural and marine resources.

Actually, as a result of the Hoxa government's isolationist policies, Albania had no tourist industry until recent years. During the 90' Albania, in particular the southern coastal areas and some archaeological and natural sites, have become tourist destination for internal and international visitors, but in the same time the unsustainable exploitation of natural, coastal and marine areas endangered local resources. Actually the abandonment of agricultural activities and the massive investment in building sector and tourist services on the coast, most of all hotel and restaurant, have already caused a landscape degradation and could have an harmful impact on natural ecosystem in the long term.

Local government authorities and private sector actors are increasingly tempted to focus on mass tourism and, in some cases elite tourism. Further, the short-term economic interests of landowners, real-estate developers and public administrators to exploit tourism generated incomes, hamper the capacity to develop a long-term alternative and common vision for sustainable tourism.

Moreover tourist promotion activities are managed in a very uncoordinated manner. Lacking real leadership in tourism marketing, these activities are mainly conducted by private operators, the municipal authorities and a small number of national and international travel agencies. In this sense the Butrint National Park is a significant example, actually the Park has successfully engaged in some activities to attract groups of tourists and schools, and organized some outreach events which have raised the profile of the Park and attracted many visitors, but these efforts are often disconnected from those of other actors and remain isolated initiatives that don't contribute to the development of a real strategy to relaunch the entire area and don't involve the local communities who are rarely just passive spectators.

Only in these last years international donors have started to support the Albanian Government in improving its territorial planning and management capacities and in defining a Sustainable Tourism Strategy, on the

¹ The protected areas in Albania are: 13 National Parks (Bredhi i Drenoves, Bredhi i Hotoves, Butrinti, Dajti, Divjaka, Logara, Lura, Prespa, Qafe – tane, Thethi, Tomorri, Valbona, Zall – Gjocaj), 4 protected landscapes (Berdheti, Biza, Nikolica, Ohrid) , 4 Nature Reserve (Karavasta Lagoon, Kardhiqi, Lumi i Gashit, Rajca), 26 Administrated Nature reserve, 4 Natural Monuments (Bredhi i Sotires, Dhrovjan - Syri i Kalter, Vlashaj, Zheji) and other protected areas.

² "Tourism and the conservation of Butrint: Managing development in the Saranda region of Southern Albania". - Jenny Holland and Antonis Andonopoulos, august 1999 -

other hand very little has been done, and very little can be expected, on local population consciousness and awareness about the impact and positive effects of environment conservation and protection and of sustainable tourism services development.

2. The Butrint National Park case and the World Bank programme

The Butrint National Park is one of the most authentic and complete repositories of Mediterranean history and it is Albania's one and only World Heritage site. For centuries, layers of earth and vegetation have covered the ancient city from view and have protected it from the ravages of time. Since 1928, archaeologists have been carrying out excavations that are helping to recover this ancient city. They have uncovered historically significant structures, dating from ancient times to the nineteenth century, that testify to Butrint's long-lasting commercial and military importance. By the fourth century B.C.E., Butrint had become one of the major maritime and commercial centres of the Greek world. Consequently had been under the rule of the Romans, Byzantines, Venetians. The city was abandoned in the late Middle Ages after marshes formed in the area. The present archaeological site represents each period in the city's development.

Today Butrint National Park is a protected area of 29 square kilometres, comprising a diverse landscape of lakes, lagoons, open plain, hills and mountains. The varied habitats support a rich diversity of species, including 14 listed as 'Globally Endangered'³. At least ten archaeological sites in the Park indicate human occupation of the area over more than 3000 years. At the Park's centre is the ancient city of Butrint - a spectacular archaeological site that has been attracting visitors and archaeologists for over 2000 years. It was designated a World Heritage Site in 1992. The World Heritage Site was enlarged in 1999, and the 29 km² area was established as a National Park by the Albanian government in March 2000. Legislation recognizing the conservation value of the Park has been prepared and is under review by the central government. In November 2002, the area from Cuka Channel to the Greek border, encompassing Butrint National Park and the Stillo Peninsula was designated as an area of special significance for wetlands and waterfowl under the Ramsar Convention⁴. This larger area is situated on a relatively undeveloped stretch of the Ionian coast and can be considered the 'greater park area', it includes the National Park proper, unprotected buffer zones outside of the Park boundaries and inhabited villages.

The beautiful morphology of the coast and the proximity to Saranda, to the Butrint National Park (both of them are very important Albanian tourism destinations) and Corfu gives to the area high potentials for tourism development and offers an important opportunity for eco-tourism development that can generate sustainable new income and sustainable economic growth in the region.

The Butrint archaeological site has been the most important tourism destination in Albania, for foreign tourist groups, domestic tourists, and school groups, since before the fall of communism. In the early 90s, visitor numbers rose steadily to a high of 20.000 in 1996 before the collapse of 1997; and then picked up again, with a steady and dramatic rise from 3.000 in 1999 to almost 30.000 in 2001. In 2002, visitorship has surpassed 40.000, an increase of 50% over 2001⁵.

Visitors to Butrint National Park in 2001 and 2002

Visitor group	% of total visitors (2002)	% of total visitors (2001)
School groups	9	14
Domestic visitors	48	46
Foreign groups	27	29
Foreign independent	3	2
Undetermined (free)	13	9

³ The more charismatic of these include: white-tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*), and loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*).

⁴ The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

⁵ Ravindra, Munju. Development of Eco- and Cultural Tourism: Recommendations for Action, Unpublished. 2002.

However, the current level of tourism, mostly domestic and focused on the summer season, is already creating pressures and “opportunities” that have led to unsustainable tourism development. It offers sea holidays oriented and alternatives model of tourism such as natural, cultural or sportive are not even known by the local community.

Short profile of the Butrint National Park surrounding area and development constraints

The area of Butrint is under the territorial jurisdiction of the Vlora Region and Saranda District Council. The administrative authority of the National Park surrounding area, is constituted by two Communes: Ksmaili and Xarra. This last one includes 5 villages and takes the name from one of these: Xarra, Vrina, Shen Delli, Murcia and Shkalla.

Vrina and Shen Delli are just on the Park south border; the other three are a bit faraway from the Park south border. All of them stands on the road that goes from Butrint to Konispol, the last village in the south of Albania, close to Greek border. The village of Ksamili is located at the north entrance of the Park, coming from Saranda and is the only village in the area surrounding the Park having a privileged position on the coast. In summer time there are tourism services focused on room renting, hotel, restaurants as well as boat touring. Ksamili position make the village an ideal “door” to get into the Park, thus having a significant potential to incubate new economic activities.



All the villages are recently developed. Actually, there were old human settlement already during the Ottoman occupation (1388 - 1430), in particular in the area of Xarra and Mursia, but only during the first half of the ‘900 there have been a first real population due to several families moving from different part of the country. Finally during Enver Hoxha time (1945 –1990), because of forced displacement of people and also voluntary movement of families, began to appear the villages as are today. Only the village of Shen Deli was developed in the recent years (1992-1995) following an internal migration from the north of Albania⁶.

Agriculture⁷ is the backbone of the local economy with a majority of the active population being engaged in farming activities. The other important employment sources are, breeding, fishing⁸, small and medium commercial business such as restaurants, bars, grocer’s shop, stores of construction and agriculture materials, and public employment. Recently the construction business is becoming the most important local economic activity. There aren’t tourist services at all.

The massive emigration is one of the most important factor that characterises all the villages life. During all the 1990s, due to the low economic growth and to a high rate of unemployment, entire families and the majority of young population emigrates to work outside Albania. Moreover due to a low quality of primary education and the lack of high schools in the area many young people migrate to go to university, usually in Gjirokastra or in Tirana (or in Greece and Italy) and often, after the studies, they don’t come back⁹.

⁶ The first three families who established in Shen Delli arrived from Dibra at the end of communist time, in 1990. In 1995 in the village, there were only some huts and only some families were living there. The arrival of other families has been regular during the last years. Apart from worst life conditions in northern Albania, one of the main reasons of family moving was the risk of “revenge”. The practice of revenge was used to manage conflicts between families, and it comes from the old traditional Law Code, Kanun, that is still present in many areas of northern Albania.

⁷ The main products in the area are watermelon, citrus fruit (mandarins and oranges), grape, olive and vegetables.

⁸ Mussels cultivation

⁹ Number of families and persons registered in the official register of the Commune of Xarra

The villages share common constraints that hamper the development of the agriculture sector, such as lack of enough land to expand and diversify the production; the cost of agricultural inputs make them unaffordable to a large segment of the population; massive imports from Greece and Italy make local products scarcely competitive on the national market. Moreover there is also a delicate problem linked to the confused and vague legal framework that regulates land property¹⁰.

There are constraints also concerning the fishing sector development linked first of all to the water condition. the legal framework is unclear and vague and not well known by the local community.

Moreover the general weaknesses of local basic utilities, resulting in irregular electricity provision, scarce water supply, abandoned irrigation system, bad roads, are common problems that need urgent solutions. There is not a sewerage system but there are private cesspools. In general in the villages there is not a waste collection and management system because of lack of financial resources to invest in the service consequently, in general, people burn the wastes.

About 15 years ago the surface irrigated by the existent irrigation system, was 2.500 hectares; today it is about 1.000 hectares due to the complete state of run-down. Finally there is no phone line except for Ksmili where there is a telephone service and about 400 subscribers.

More recently threats to the environment and biological diversity of the wetland complex have come as result of village expansion. The increasing rate of construction business led to a fast and disordered “booming” of the urban development in the area has been totally unregulated generating the environment and landscape degradation.

Moreover a naturalistic culture seems not developed at all.

From a social point of view, although the villages are similar in family structures, culture and traditions, (apart from the village of Shen Delli) and share similar potentials and problems, there are many difficulties in the relationship among the inhabitants of different villages linked to long-standing rivals (since the Enver Hoxa time), prejudices and ignorance. In the area there aren't community organization due to a strong resistance to getting organised in community based associations¹¹. Moreover, there is not “community consciousness”, also due to the fact that are rather new communities and the high mobility of the families and the massive migration flow make difficult the community development process.

The relationship between the Butrint National Park and the local community

The relationship between local population and the National Park is not homogeneous. The village of Murcia and Shkalla are more linked and influenced by the commune of Konispoli and by the near Greek border than by the Park. Instead the villages of Vrina, Xarra and Shen Deli have more interests in the National Park land and marine area, so that Ksamili Commune. Actually, the attitudes and the relationship between the National Park and communities depends on several variables, but the most critical seem to be the lack of clarity in the issue of land use and ownership. The inhabitants of the Vrina, Xarra and Shen Delli are users of part of the Vrina plan, of the Buffis and Butrint lakes and of the Vivary Chanel and Butrint bay marine and coastal area. They carry out there, most of all, agricultural and fishing activities.

<i>Villages</i>	<i>Number of families</i>	<i>Number of inhabitants</i>	<i>Percentage of emigrated families</i>
Xarra	515	2310	50%
Mursia	480	2290	65%
Vrina	297	1220	60%
Shen Delli	81	320	7%
Ksamili	1898	7400	50%

¹⁰ There are many conflicts about the definition of the land borders that the government gave in concession to the inhabitants and anyway people don't have the document of the property.

¹¹ Albanian people are strongly focus on family, and moreover, the history of the communist system had a strong impact on local mentality so that people don't accept easily to work with other or to associate with other persons or families.

This fact turns into an open conflict with the Butrint National Park that is not always easy to manage¹². On the other hand the Butrint National Park rules are almost unknown to the local population and there have ever been any information campaign or discussion with local inhabitants. So even in presence of some rules and of shared responsibilities among different local institutions in managing the various sectors of the area¹³ the local inhabitants keep on considering the Park Director as the only one responsible for the management of the area. Moreover the local inhabitants conceive the Park as the Park Director property and the natural eco-system local ownership is far from being well established and clarified. The local community would like to exploit natural corners, and isolated beaches where is not permitted to construct, to develop private economic activities like hotel or restaurant showing any familiarity, knowledge of the legal framework that governs the area and any sensitiveness and consciousness on environment threats that these initiatives could cause.

So then while the Park is a major asset for generating opportunities in tourism development, its creation has limited and confused the issues of land and natural resources use for communities adjacent to the Park.

Moreover the Butrint National Park, so as it is organised and managed has not real capacities and competences to lead a sustainable tourist development strategy of the area. A low level of Park staff and a very small number of Park personnel limits Park's potentials of dialoguing with the community and of promoting concrete opportunities for communities to benefit from the tourism reaching the Park.

On the other hand, communities and local authorities adjacent the Park show very low degrees of initiative and interest in sustainable entrepreneurial activities and a lack of willingness to get organized to generate small-scale tourism services through a sustainable use of natural and marine resources.

The local community's situation has been summed up well in the IDF funded report, Development of Eco- and Cultural Tourism¹⁴ as:

- lack of will (post-communism and post-anarchy exhaustion)
- lack of capacity (imagination, skills, knowledge, ideas)
- lack of capital (no funds to invest in skills development or in basic infrastructure,
- lack of partnership (no organized, cooperative efforts to develop ecotourism, or cultural activities)

World Bank programme "Communications for Cultural and Natural Resources Management" (CCNRM)

The most recent Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Albania was prepared in May 2002. An overarching goal of the strategy is the reduction of poverty through support to: i) improvement of governance and strengthening of institutions; ii) sustainable private sector growth; and iii) human development. More specifically the CAS emphasizes the fact that natural resources degradation threatens the country's development. In this general framework the Development Communications Division (External Affairs) at the World Bank has identified the project "Communications for Cultural and Natural Resources Management" (CCNRM), funded by the Italian Trust Fund for Culture and Sustainable Development (ITFCSD) in order to assist the Butrint National Park in managing its cultural and natural resources.

This project, has been identified by World Bank consultants and experts in the 2003 in the framework of general contents shared with the Albanian Government, within the Albanian strategy for tourism development. The project aimed at fostering the sustainable economic development of the region through increasing community based, eco - and cultural/archaeological tourism¹⁵ in a general framework of environmental protection and conservation. The main local partner identified by the World Bank has been The Butrint National park and in particular the BNP director.

¹² For example, the local inhabitants would like to reclaim the marshland for an agriculture and pasture use, whereas the Park is interested in preserve it.

¹³ The Park's rules give part of the administrative responsibility to the department of fishing and agriculture of Saranda Municipality as the referring institutions for the management of the marine eco-system resources. Besides Municipality of Saranda, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Municipalities, Communes and the Butrint National Park Direction shared different responsibilities in the management and government of the area.

¹⁴ Ravindra, Munju. Development of Eco- and Cultural Tourism: Recommendations for Action, Unpublished. 2002.

¹⁵ The CBT activities were identified to provide groundwork for the implementation of the Global Environment Facility - Butrint National Park Global Heritage Conservation Project (GEF MSP) and to build the capacity of both Park staff and local communities to plan, develop and manage concrete, sustainable tourism activities, within the parameters set forth by the Butrint National Park legislation and the RAMSAR designation.

The World Bank project has been developed following the following two main tracks:

- building local capacity for niche market community based tourism (CBT) in order to create income-generating opportunities and demonstrate the value of protecting the natural and archaeological attractions of Butrint;
- raising interest in Butrint National Park and its surroundings as an archaeological and eco-tourism destination, and therefore stimulating the demand and the market for sustainable tourism, through a communications and international marketing strategy.

During the month of August 2003 there have been a call for tender that, due to dictated Italian government's terms, has been opened only for Italian actors that were invited to submit qualifications related to the project sector. Three of the them who were short-listed, have been asked to present a proposal.

The project track related to the CBT development component has been assigned to CISP in the framework of the project “**Technical assistance for Community Based Tourism Development (CBT)**” and the second track, communication and international marketing strategy to Weber Shandwich¹⁶ in the framework of the project “**eco tourism promotion and marketing**”.

CISP experience in “Technical assistance for Community Based Tourism Development” in the Greater area of the Butrint National Park.

Background information

Further to the submission from CISP to the World Bank of a specific program proposal, CISP and the World Bank signed a contract for the implementation of “Technical Assistance for Community Based Tourism Development” in support of Butrint Archeological Site and National Park.

One essential component of the contract has been represented by the World Bank Terms of Reference for Technical Assistance for Community Based Tourism Development. These Terms of Reference have been assumed by CISP as the key ingredients of the overall program's design. Consequently a technical mission of CISP expert has been realized in order to design a project implementation plan in which Terms of Reference contents and recommendations has been incorporated.

Before the commencement of CISP expert field mission, CISP has had the opportunity to familiarize with the goals and expected results of the overall World Bank strategy in support of the Park as well as with the major constraints hampering the development of the Park's surrounding area. This process of familiarization has been made possible by:

- Several contacts and exchanges of information with World Bank Staff in Washington D.C.;
- Meeting with World Bank staff in Rome at the CISP HQs to further discuss the specific contents of the program;
- Various meetings with the Society Weber Shandwick Italy. These meetings have been finalized to explore ways of harmonizing and integrating the two program components;
- Studying various documents and papers elaborated in the framework of the World Bank initiative in support of the Park;
- Short field mission to Saranda and Butrint to familiarize with the Park's social and institutional environment. During the mission, the CISP team has had the opportunity to meet again World Bank staff from Washington and the Director of the Park.

The main aspect of the technical assistance for CBT development can be summarised as follows:

Objectives

- A) Develop community based tourism and related products, (e.g. handcraft crafts, local agricultural products with Butrint branding, Bed and Breakfast, natural and cultural trails, etc.), in and around the Park that minimizes the impact on natural and cultural resources and results in maximum benefits to the local communities;
- B) Unites the local communities behind conservation of the Park; and

¹⁶ International communication agency based in Italy

C) Provides information and educational experiences that highlight the Park's values.

Moreover the project has been oriented towards building the capacity of Park staff to: (i) conduct community outreach and generate good will with communities through multiple avenues and programs; (ii) assist communities in developing community based tourism and related products that supports the goals and values of the Park; and (iii) to promote local development linked to CBT and build constructive dialogue with local communities.

Strategic Approach

Considering the pilot experience, in order to assure a successful implementation of the program, the work has been designed in order to be: (i) realistically manageable given the time framework and the available resources and (ii) extremely "specific objectives and results oriented".

Moreover CISP has considered the high collaboration with the Butrint Park Director a fundamental aspect to favour the CBT component, as one of the principal aspect of the Park development strategy. In terms of institutional development, capacity building as been considered as the main priority and training activities have been addressed in particular to two local young consultants, which are expected to become part of the Park staff.

The networking activities with the all actors present in the area, international organizations, local associations, public and private actors and donors, committed in the sustainable development of the region has been considered as an important aspect to guarantee a wider technical assistance and to support the creation of a local fabric that could assure sustainable results.

Main Outcomes

The main outcomes achieved in the pilot experience of the CBT activities development have been:

- ❖ The concrete contribution in building a local community awareness of being protagonist of the conservation and promotion of the local natural resources and of the precious and vulnerable Butrint Park ecosystem, and of being integral part of the development process that has been set up.
- ❖ The visibility of the Butrint National Park among the community and the communication channels between the Park and the local families have been promoted and the perception of the Park as a special value and not a limit for the local economic and social development has increased.
- ❖ The dialogue opened with local communities and local authorities contributed to look at the development as an integrated eco - sustainable process aiming at creating a favourable environment for the setting up of small business and in the same time at creating a favourable tourist environment.

The activities of promotion of local handcraft products, of assisting the setting set up of tourist eco-friendly services and of technical training, together with information and sensitization initiatives and networking activities have given the following good results:

A) Income generating activities and services managed by the community members themselves in collaboration with the Butrint National Park:

- A "showing and selling area" called kasolle, for local hand crafts and agriculture product with the BNP branding has been set up in the Butrint National Park entrance. The kasolle is also an information point where tourist besides making shopping, can be informed about the project, about tourist service managed by the community, about other tourism activities offered in the area and they can write down their suggestions and opinions on their experience at the BNP . Local women have been trained and supported in their traditional handcraft activity and they have been given access to the kasolle for selling their products.



Local handcraft



The kasolle

- A boat tour service for tourists interested in visiting the marine area around the Park and other archaeological site accessible only by boat. Local fisherman have been trained to the services management and organisation.



Boat tour service itinerary



Training of local fishermen

- A pilot experience of bed & breakfast services has been set up with the involvement of few families of the villages of Xarra and Murcia.

B) The creation of a basic legal and rule framework in which develop the actual and future CBT activities and documentation of support to the tourism development

- Tourist service map of the “Butrint National Park Grater area” inclusive of all the potential tourist services, traditional and cultural events, alternative natural and cultural routes, villages and antique towns in the surrounding area.
- BNP guidelines on the management of the services set up, has been realised in order to assure an authentic and sustainable development according to international criteria and standard. The guidelines has been carried out in strict collaboration with the BNP director and taking into consideration the local community needs and potentials. The guidelines include mechanism to avoid environmental impact such as codes of conduct, waste collection disposal mechanism, environmental protection measures, to avoid community conflicts.

C) The creation of sensitization instrument and strategy addressed to a wide public of the area

- A special supplement to the newsletter managed by the students of the High School of Saranda, and focused on environment and activities in the Butrint Park has been distributed among the local inhabitants of Saranda, Ksamili and the villages of Xarra Commune.

D) The strengthening of the capacities and competences of local human resources

- Two young persons, already committed as tourist guides at the BNP, and other young collaborators of the Park has been trained in all the aspect of project management, on communications and on many issue related to protected areas and environment management and promotion.

Methodology adopted

Implementing the “technical assistance to the community based tourism” CISP have benefited, of the experience gathered in dealing with a number of institutions and entities in various countries whose mandate and operational tasks do not differ substantially from those which have dealt with in Albania (National Parks, local municipalities, Ministry of Culture, the Office for Tourism etc...). This enabled to built a methodology enriched by other experiences and to take into account a number of best practices developed in other contests.

Moreover the CISP presence in Albania since the 1998 has given the opportunity to better analyze and identify available resources and potentials of the territory, to evaluate the local entrepreneurial skills and critical needs and to identify strategies and activities to implement in order to support the development process launched by the World Bank project. Actually, the methodology adopted as seen the CISP, principally, as a catalyst and liaison among stakeholders with a particular attention in preserving the image of the Butrint National Park as the main actor of a local sustainable development.

Moreover the methodological approach aimed at developing a deep knowledge of local contest through working directly with the communities and in particular with women.

The intervention was focused on a day by day work with local communities members through the implementation of concrete activities, showing them that the protection and the sustainable exploitation of natural and marine resources is in no way antagonist *vis a vis* the promotion of local development.

The methodologies has been based on constant communication with local communities through a context analysis, interviews, organization of public events, activities with the schools, participation of the project staff to community meetings.

The CBT activities has been conceived in terms of group formation and orientation. To this end, CISP encouraged and assisted the establishment of community associative groups being inspired by traditional existing forms of work organization.

3. The added value of NGO involvement in World Bank supported projects

Premise

The World Bank supported program CCNRM fits with full rights in the strategy adopted by the World Bank of the last decades that foreseen an increasing of the NGOs involvement in the World Bank supported activities and project. The CISP involvement consists in the assignment of the CBT development implementation component through a contract of technical assistance that makes CISP as World Bank consultant.

It has been an experience of “positive partnership” in which the work and the professional and competences of an NGO has been crucial for a successful achievement of the objectives. Moreover the Italian Embassy and the Italian Cooperation, through the presence of CISP on the field had the opportunity to follow the process and to know the project’s progress. Finally through a dialogue with the World Bank referring officers and sector experts in Washington, the “partnership” gave the opportunity to establish an open dialogue about the project’s activities and about the different actors roles involved in the project implementation.

Lessons learnt

At this step of the “partnership with the WB”¹⁷, actually best practices cannot yet be established, but lessons learnt on the added value of working with and assigning to an NGO a substantial part of programme

¹⁷ The I project’s phase last 11 months and II project’s phases last 8 months

implementation, and of the efficacy of the relationship among WB, NGO, and local partners clearly emerge. Taking into account the ambitious World Bank program objectives, the very short time at disposal and the type of assignment, the main aspect of the NGO engagement, that contributed to the successful project outcome can be summarised in the following points:

- **Looking at “small but as much concrete results” made possible a concrete experience of community active participation to the development processes**

In the identification of an implementation plan and needs assessment, CISP identified small but as much concrete results that could involve the local community since the beginning of the project’s activities identification. This has been the key for an effectively shared definition of priorities, objectives and activities and in the same time the key to encourage and support bottom up local development process in which only local communities can be the protagonist.

- **“Capacity building approach”**

Basically, the local skills and potentials have been supported and stimulated adopting a “capacity building approach” and the day by day presence on the field of CISP’s staff gave the opportunity to face great challenges like community expectations. Actually a slow pace was identified which made possible a constant dialogue and confrontations with local population in order to favor a better and deeper transfer of knowledge and to better manage local inhabitants’ expectation.

- **“Field networking and effective co-operation”**

The presence of an NGO on the field guarantee the identification of the key community representatives and the establishment of a networking constituted by other active groups in the area, International agencies and NGOs, and Albania Community Based Organization that has been considered as a difficult but prior step to assure the development process long terms sustainability .

The networking and an effective communication make possible a work across stakeholders both in terms of information flow, both in terms of involvement of all of them in the decision making process and favour the appearing of development driving forces and of a common community vision of sustainable development.

- **Replicability and strategic potentials of WB and NGOs partnership in the tourism sector**

The partnership between WB and CISP in the tourism sector and in particular in the field of community based tourism development in the Butrint area has shown to have great strategic potentials in other countries as well, (especially African countries). In some countries however, the strong tourist potentials cannot be fully exploited due to structural deficiencies but the promotion of community based tourism activity, through the creation of small ‘groups’, could have a positive impact in improving sanitation of houses and villages.

4. Brief conclusive considerations

From the experience above described, emerges clearly that the “partnership” is limited to a successful implementation of the project but does not go beyond it. Even if there has been many cases of World Bank officers and experts asking to CISP staff suggestions and inputs to be included in future World Bank interventions, those contributions have been not actually considered in the identification and designing of new programmes in the environmental and sustainable tourism development. The GEF programme or the Coastal Zone Management Programme in Albania allocated very small or no resources at all to the community development even if the concrete experience of the CCNRM shows clearly the need of investing in this sector of the Albanian development process.

Moreover the coordination among the different branches of World Bank system proved to be very low and their activities showed to adopt a very low degree of integrated approach.

Even though the Italian Government through its Embassy in Tirana, has been informed about the project progresses, the triangulation WB, NGO and Italian government didn’t work at all. Actually there haven’t been any coordination or shared reflection on the program’s aspects, in particular on long term perspectives.

According with the above mentioned matters and with a perspective of a strengthened collaboration between NGOs and the World bank few important recommendations has to be done:

- To strengthen the role of the NGO in the policies and strategies identification and designing in the countries, through the identification of good mechanisms of capitalising the previous experiences
- To strengthen the coherence among roles of the World Bank, the donor government and the NGOs
- To strengthen the NGO capacity of networking *in loco* in the different operative sectors in which the World Bank intervene .

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