

STAKEHOLDERS

In order to achieve sustainable management of PAs in the region, WWF Adria is working with diverse stakeholders from various levels (local, national and international) and decision making powers (duty bearers and right holders).

The duty bearers, by providing them with a clear and transparent way to fulfil their obligation to uphold the rights of rights holders (to mutual benefit). Due to the fact that PAs in the region are managed by governments, WWF Adria has a long history of working with the ministries in charge of PAs management in all of the 8 countries in the region, considering them as the main partners and target audience on local, national, regional and international levels.

Civil Society Organisations (CSO) active in the field of natural resource management, community empowerment, and economic development. Through the **natureforpeople.org** platform they have showcased their best examples.

Business sector – PAs are touristic hot spots. WWF Adria works mainly with the tourism sector through activities such as wildlife observation and improving sustainability. Businesses, if they show social and environmental responsibility, will have greater opportunities for expansion and growth.

The rights holders (public) and local communities in PAs, that need to have long term access to resources and secured livelihood. All the right holders in PAs, with emphasis on vulnerable groups, are and will be empowered and encouraged to actively participate in PA management.

Protected area network organisations - Parks Dinarides, with 80 member PAs in the region, are sharing knowledge and experience among their members.

Academia - scientific institutions are fundamental for the sustainable management of any resource. They provide scientific advice which is key for evidence-based management of any resource. WWF uses this to help inform both the stakeholders, who use a certain resource, and citizens, who support conservation efforts of CSOs.



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Why we are here.

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

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WWF

FACTSHEET

2018

WWF Adria Protected Areas Programme (Governance)



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Biokovo Nature Park, Croatia

Protected areas in the Adria region in brief:

- There are **18.000 km²** of protected areas in the region, nationally classified as national or nature parks
- Three of these are **UNESCO world heritage sites** (Plitvice lakes, Durmitor, Skocjan caves)
- PAs compose around **8% of the region**, although this percentage varies amongst the countries (min 1,72% - max 16%)

VISION

The Adria region is rich and diverse in species, habitats and cultural heritage. The area is interspersed with numerous protected areas (PAs), which are typically inadequately managed. Most protected areas in the Adria region are both rich in biodiversity and sites of intense human activity. Therefore, they are “natural laboratories” for finding model solutions to reconciling development challenges while safeguarding natural capital. Evaluation of the ecosystem services that protected areas provide is of long-term importance to the local and national economy, and for the survival of the biodiversity.

The long tradition of top-down decision-making in the Western Balkans, despite the EU accession process, remains the dominant management strategy. The low level of public engagement and the lack of their awareness towards their rights and responsibilities in democratic society remains an issue. In at least half of the countries the PA management is dependent on exploitation of their own natural resources.

WWF Adria's vision for the region is to have sustainable protected areas which are managed according to the principles of accountability, transparency, equality and inclusion in governance.

FACTS:

- Tourism and recreation is recognised across the region as the activity with the highest economic potential. It's followed by the economic potential of water, wood, and jobs in PAs.
- WWF has reached out to more than 1300 stakeholders through the process of analysing benefits from 58 PAs in the region.
- In 66 PAs more than 900 local stakeholders participated in measuring interaction between the PA management and the local community. The ratio of women and men involved was 30% to 70%.
- In the majority of Adria countries, PA management is dependent on exploiting their own natural resources.
- The distribution patterns of benefits show a relatively high centralization of benefits to the business and government sectors.
- There is low recognition of regulating ecosystem services (e.g. flood prevention, water purification, climate mitigation) across the region.



Local communities are supported to take part in the decision making process

Summer camp in Germia, Kosovo

RESULTS WWF ADRIA WANTS TO ACHIEVE

- Good institutional cooperation between nature conservation and other relevant sectors (e.g. tourism, energy, water management, agriculture, fisheries, education).
- Integration of PA values and benefits into sectoral strategies and plans (forestry, water management, spatial planning, energy, education, and others).
- Establishment of a comprehensive legal framework for participatory management of PAs.
- In some countries, shift focus of PA management bodies to activities on nature conservation and sustainable development of PAs, and less on exploitation of natural resources (e.g. forestry, mass tourism).
- Development of an enabling institutional framework for PA management allowing for integrative management practices and effective inclusion of local stakeholders and businesses.
- Improved governance models for PAs which would ensure a more equitable flow of benefits.

Key facts:

The Adria region hosts almost **unspoilt forests and healthy populations of large carnivores** (bear, lynx, wolf), and important **freshwater ecosystems**, including the most extended network of subterranean rivers and lakes in Europe, and wetlands of international importance

PAs are securing **health, social cohesion and cultural traditions**

With very few exceptions, PAs are managed by the government in all **8 countries**

Large and well-preserved forests

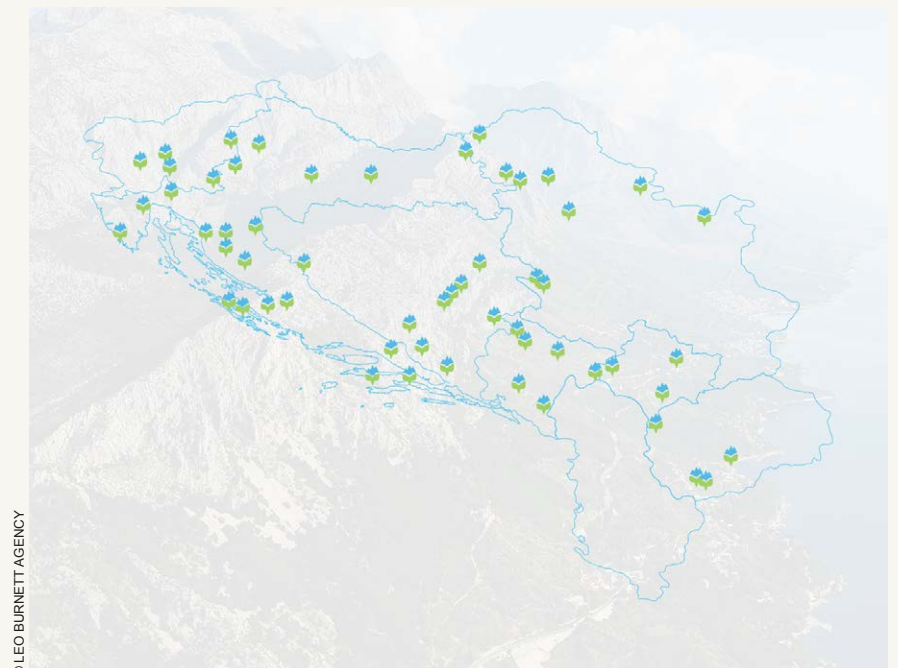
with high flora diversity of species and a high rate of endemism (10-20% of all the plants are endemic to the region)



INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

WWF Adria's work on protected areas focuses on the following strategies:

- **Improving policies** that govern the management of protected areas through advocacy and participation in formal working groups.
- **Empowering local communities / civil society** to actively participate in policy processes, through raising awareness, capacity building, and showcasing the benefits of participation.
- **Raising awareness on the value of protected areas** by showcasing benefits that protected areas bring both to nature and to humans, through the natureforpeople.org website which also shows examples of WWF Adria's partners.



Map of protected areas, members of the Parks Dinarides network



Tara National Park, Serbia



Una National Park, Bosnia and Herzegovina