



CRITICAL ECOSYSTEM
PARTNERSHIP FUND



Sustainable Tourism Management Plan For National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan



The Sustainable Tourism Management Plan has been developed within the framework of the SEA-Med Project in Albania (Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas - Karaburun–Sazan Marine Protected Area) with the support of CEPF (Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund) and in collaboration with WWF Mediterranean.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ATA	Agency of Tourism
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IBA	Important Bird Area
INCA	Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania
MCPA	Marine and Coastal Protected Area
MNP	Marine National Park
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MP	Management Plan
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NAPA	National Agency of Protected Areas
NMP	National Marine Park
PAs	Protected Areas
RAPA	Regional Administration of Protected Areas
STMP	Sustainable Tourism Management Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

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Executive summary

The Sustainable Tourism Management Plan of Karaburun-Sazan Marine National Park is elaborated within the framework of the Project “Sustainable Economic Activities of Marine Protected Areas in Mediterranean”. The project is a regional initiative of WWF Mediterranean, implemented in 7 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) of 5 Mediterranean countries (Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Turkey and Tunisia) and it aims to support MPAs in advancing towards a state of financial and operational self-sufficiency. In Albania the project started in 2013 and it is focused on the only existing Marine National Park (MNP), Karaburun-Sazan.

The Sustainable Tourism Management Plan (STMP) has been developed through participatory approach, which was for the first time applied during the development of the Karaburun-Sazani Management Plan. Stakeholder workshops were organized and additionally capacity building trainings were provided for stakeholders and the core team. The plan is designed based on the feedback from the stakeholder workshops, by referring to the Management Plan and other strategic documents. The plan is to be used by park administration staff and local government institutions.

The Sustainable Tourism Management Plan is based on the structure of the Management Plan, and is following the Standard Structure of Protected Areas Management Plans in Albania.

The first part of the STMP gives short information on the park and tourism situation in and around the park, by describing natural and historical values, tourism trends, statistics and visitor experience. It also gives an insight on the legal status, policies, legislation relevant to the situation and provides a description of stakeholders as well.

The second part of the plan describes values, threats and current institutional framework. Then it deals with the vision for tourism development, five themes,

objectives and activities for each theme, by describing potential stakeholders and prioritizing actions.

Vision for 2025

In 2025, Karaburun-Sazan will be a Marine Protected Area (MPA) that safeguards its natural resources, biodiversity and historical values through a sustainable tourism development. This will have positive impacts on the local community, who supports and shares the benefits of a sustainable tourism development in and around the MPA. This vision will be reached through effective management and a participating local community that is aware of the MPA, its values and the importance of its protection to ensure sustainable tourism in the long run.

The STMP is a document that describes sustainable and nature based tourism development inside the Marine Protected Area and its surrounding territory. It was developed after the adoption of the Management Plan and is considered as a complementary document for the tourism component within this territory, developed using the same participatory approach as Management Plan. The Plan is designed with a vision of the sustainable tourism in the next 10 years, but its implementation is planned for 5 years. Changes of the situation at the site must be reflected in the revision of the plan, but without changing the vision, goals and objectives.

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Management themes, goals and objectives are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Management themes, goals and objectives

THEME A: Touristic Offer
GOAL A: Develop, professionalize and diversify the touristic offer in Vlora, Orikum and Karaburun-Sazan MPA including sustainable tourism practices and nature-based activities
Smart Objective A.1: By 2020 a diversified and quality touristic offer in Vlora, Orikum and Karaburun-Sazan MPA is visible, accessible and bookable
Smart Objective A.2: Within the next 5 years touristic operators and businesses are trained and informed about sustainable tourism practices and nature-based activities in the area and supported to collaborate and coordinate their activities
THEME B: Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations
GOAL B: Support the local administration, the conservation partners and the tourism sector to improve the touristic infrastructure, to ensure an easy access to selected sites of the MPA and to agree on regulations preserving the natural and cultural values of the area
Smart Objective B.1: The accessibility to selected, elaborated sites of the MPA is ensured within the next 5 years while code of conducts and regulations are set up to avoid negative impacts within the MPA
Smart Objective B.2: Within the next 5 years the process of the development of visitor infrastructure and implementation of up-to-date environmental standards, techniques and models has been supported
THEME C: Marketing, Information and Communication
GOAL C: Improving the communication among relevant stakeholders and tourists and supporting the marketing efforts to achieve a broader understanding of Vlora, Orikum and Karaburun-Sazan MPA as a sustainable tourism destination
Smart Objective C.1: By 2020, the level of information about nature-based tourism activities and sustainable tourism in Karaburun-Sazan and its surrounding area among tourists and locals has increased
Smart Objective C.2: By 2020, Karaburun-Sazan MPA and the surrounding touristic area is promoted and on its way to become known as sustainable tourism destination at national and international level
THEME D: Awareness Raising, Education and Training
GOAL D: Raise awareness and improve the knowledge on the values and benefits of the MPA and its resources
Smart Objective D.1: By 2020, the knowledge on natural and historical values of the MPA, its touristic potential and offer among the local community and tourists has increased
THEME E: Cooperation and Management in and around the MPA
GOAL E: Ensure a cross-sectoral cooperation on touristic issues related to the MPA and an effective management through setting-up mandatory responsibilities
Smart Objective E.1: Within the next 5 years, the cooperation among stakeholders of the tourism sector, local administration and nature conservation has been strengthened and institutionalized
Smart Objective E.2: Within the timeframe of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan, its implementation and monitoring has been regulated and models of financing nature conservation through tourism have been elaborated



For each activity an estimate of financial costs is given in the financial plan. The overall cost of suggested activities goes up to EUR 475.000 over the period of 5 years. After the financial plan, the monitoring and evaluation of management is described.

1 Background

1.1 Location and Landscape

The National Marine Park (NMP) Karaburun-Sazan is situated at the border between Adriatic and Ionian Sea, in Orikum Administrative Unit, Vlora County, Albania (Figure 1). Vlora County lies in the southwestern part of Albania and borders the Adriatic and Ionian seas with a total surface of 2706 km², 244 km costal line and population of 374,168 habitants (2010).¹

The coastal area near Vlora County is one of the most beautiful and rich in nature, history and culture in Albania. This region is well known for the diverse relief that directly impacts the climate of this region. Wild natural beauty mixed with cultural landmarks (folklore, culture, social education centers, spiritual cult objects, traditional customs, and songs) and historical heritage (settlements, archaeological remains) offer a great potential for tourism. This region is one of the most important touristic destinations in Albania.²

Karaburun Peninsula, with a territory of 313 km², was declared a natural reserve on 27 July 1977. It is under the Orikum Administrative Unit since the last administrative reform from January 2014. The new Orikum Administrative Unit includes Orikum Town and all other villages located in western lowland, alpine habitats of Çika and Qores Mountain, including Llogara National Park, Pashaliman military bases and Karaburun-Sazan Marine Protected Area (MPA).³

On 28 April 2010, the marine natural ecosystem near Karaburuni Peninsula and Sazani Island was proclaimed NMP of Karaburun-Sazan. Since February 2015, the National Agency of Protected Areas in Albania (NAPA), under the Ministry of Environment (MoE), is the highest institution responsible for the management, promotion, monitoring and

¹ General Directory of Civil Status, Ministry of Internal Order, 2011

² <http://www.qarkuvlore.gov.al/>

³ <http://www.reformaterritoriale.al>

sustainable development of protected areas (PAs) in Albania. The Karaburun-Sazan Marine Protected Area (MPA) is under the administration of Vlora Regional Administration of Protected Areas (RAPA), which is the local representative of the National Agency of Protected Areas. The Karaburun-Sazan MPA is an IUCN Category II (National park).⁴

National Marine Park
Karaburun-Sazan

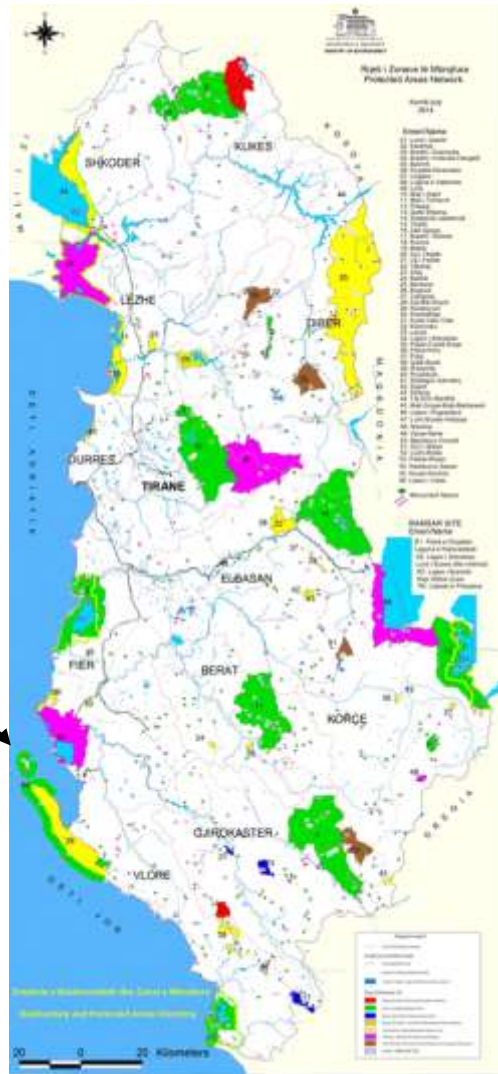
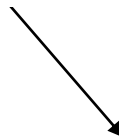


Figure 1: Map of Protected Areas

Source: <http://mcpa.iwlearn.org/>

⁴ IUCN is the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The total area of Karaburun-Sazan National Marine Park is 12,570.82 ha, with 9,848.95 ha around Karaburuni peninsula and 2,721.87 ha around Sazani island. The borders are defined as the map above of Karaburun-Sazan MPA shows (Figure 1).

In the western side, the coastline of Karaburuni Peninsula extends to Rreza e Kanalit. The slopes of Karaburuni peninsula are locally very steep on the western side and culminating in the central part. The western coast of the peninsula is incised by caves and deep canyons ending rarely by gravel or sand pocket beaches. It is characterized by high vertical cliffs that continue underwater at great depths. These cliffs are quite eroded and numerous caves, mostly underwater, can be seen where freshwater springs often percolate.

Sazani Island (16 km long and 3-5 km wide), in front of Vlora and north of Karaburuni Peninsula, has an ellipsoid form oriented NNW-SSE and culminates at 345 m with Gryka e Djallit.

The western side is characterized by high vertical cliffs that are incised by deep canyons extended by caves that appear mostly underwater as observed in Karaburuni Peninsula. The most important canyons are Cape of Pëllumbave and Gryka e Ferrit.

On the eastern side, the coastline is lower and is formed in the SW by slanted folds of limestone plunging into the sea. Most settlements are built in the center of the island in prolongation of the canyon of Gryka e Ferrit, crossing the island up to the well-protected harbor on the bay of Shën Nikolla.

The area around the Karaburun Peninsula, Sazani Island and Vlora Bay is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with mild winters and abundant precipitation and hot and dry summers. Mean annual precipitations vary between 1000 and 1200 mm and occur mostly in winter, from November to April. The annual solar radiation for the area is about 1540 kwh/m² with a peak in July (216.5 kwh/m²).⁵

⁵ UNDP/GEF and Ministry of Environment, 2005



Figure 2: Map of the Karaburun-Sazan MPA

Source: <http://mcpa.iwlearn.org/>

1.2 Karaburun-Sazan Marine and Coastal Protected Area

On 28 April 2010 by the Council of Ministers, the marine waters around Karaburun Peninsula and Sazani Island were proclaimed as National Marine Park of Karaburun-Sazan, upon the proposal of the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration.

The NMP Karaburun-Sazan is designed to provide a pragmatic approach aiming at establishing equilibrium between sustainable economic development and natural resource conservation ensuring long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to support coastal communities' development. The main objectives of its designation are:

- To protect and maintain the biological diversity and other natural values of the area in the long term.
- To promote sound management practices for sustainable production purposes.
- To protect the natural resources from being alienated for other land-use purposes that would be detrimental to the area's biological diversity.
- To contribute to the regional and national development, through sustainable tourism practices.

The whole area displays the highest biodiversity values in the country (NEA, 1999) due to its diversity of habitats and its richness in flora and fauna species. Many of them have a conservation concern at international, national and regional level.

The coastal area of Karaburun Peninsula and Sazani Island is mainly rocky and in some places important calcareous limestone cliffs are covered by typical Mediterranean vegetation. Rocky coasts are usually covered by a typical Mediterranean maquis, which is still quite abundant on Sazani island and along Rreza e Kanalit - Karaburuni. The coastal wetlands and dunes are covered mainly by halophytes, psamophytes and other

brackish and freshwater associations. This entire rocky coast presents exceptional scenic quality especially by boat when visiting caves, canyons and small bays, e.g., Shpella e Haxhi Alisë and Duk Gjoni caves (Fremuth, 2000; Pergent, 2002; Qiriazhi and Sala, 2006; Sala *et al.*, 2006; Tilot and Jeudy de Grissac, 1994).

The underwater landscape is also of exceptional quality with cliffs, submarine caves and associated fauna and flora, and in some places archaeological remains (Tilot and Jeudy de Grissac, 1994; Upton, 2006). For the development of nautical activities, such as scuba diving, this area is certainly the best and most impressive part of Albanian coast. The biological diversity is relatively high in the marine waters of the area with rare and diverse species and habitats. Posidonia habitats host relatively the most important biodiversity of benthic macro fauna including sponges, cnidarians, bryozoans, mollusks, annelids, crustaceans, echinoderms and ascidians (Beqiraj *et al.*, 2008).

Three globally endangered marine turtles, with high threatening status⁶ are present in Albanian waters. The area is also a potential monk seal habitat (monk seals were reported in Karaburuni in 1982 and Sazani in 1991). Presence of charismatic species like cetaceans, the short-beaked common dolphin, bottlenose dolphin and the sperm whale has been occasionally registered in the area.

According to Birdlife International (2014), the area of Vlora bay, Karaburuni peninsula and Cika mountain is listed as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) for Albania⁷. About 70 species of water and seabirds have been recorded among which the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) and the pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*).

The Sazani Island is a natural recreational/touristic zone with remarkable cliffs and landscapes. It does not have a protection status, but is a military territory, and as a result has been protected from uncontrolled and intensive human activities of the last 25

⁶ IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, 2014

⁷ IBA assessment was done in 2000

years. Actually, the National Coastal Agency is working to provide a special touristic attention to the area. In 2014, in collaboration with Conservatoire du Littoral, a Management Plan was prepared for the Island and from May of that year it has been opened for touristic visits, based on the Prime Minister decision.

In 2014, 4 years after the NMP establishment, the Management Plan (MP) of Karaburun-Sazan Marine and Coastal Protected Area (MCPA) has been developed within the framework of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) project “Improving Coverage and Management Effectiveness of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas” (MCPA Project).

The Management Plan was developed jointly by WWF MedPO and Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA). It is a strategic planning document of the Management Administration for the next 10 years. The plan gives insight into and evaluates values, threats and current institutional framework; it defines management through vision, themes, objectives and activities, including zoning; it also contains financial plan, and monitoring and evaluation of management.

The Management Plan is addressed to all stakeholders of the Karaburun-Sazan MCPA and especially to the Protected Area administration which actually is the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA, recently established) with its local representative, Vlora Administration of Protected Areas (Regional Administration of Protected Areas, RAPA). The Management Plan has been developed through participatory approach, including four stakeholder workshops, a number of meetings, questionnaires, etc. For the first time the Management Plan has been prepared in a way that stakeholders were consulted during the process of Management Plan development and not at the end of the process. The approach raised interest among stakeholders who actively participated and contributed to the process. On 24.11.2015, the Management Plan was approved by the Ministry of Environment.⁸

⁸ Management Plan of National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan



In February 2015, under the authority of the Ministry of Environment, the National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA) was established as the highest institution responsible for protected areas in Albania. The main mission of the Agency is to protect, conserve and safeguard nature and biodiversity, through the management of protected areas network. The management also includes information distribution, environmental education, public awareness and support of sustainable economic activities inside PAs. NAPA has 12 Regional Administrations all over the country. In November 2015, the NAPA adopted the short and midterm strategic program 2015-2020.

Vlora Administration of Protected Areas manages 6 PAs in Vlora Region, including Karaburun-Sazan MPA, with a staff of 26 persons. Two specialists and 5 rangers are responsible for monitoring and administration of Karaburun-Sazan MPA⁹.

In January 2015 the process of developing the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan of Karaburun-Sazan (STMP) started within the SEA-Med. The STMP aims to complete the sustainable nature based tourism profile development in the area, being in line with the MP.

In August 2015, a business plan was completed that aims at addressing funding sufficiency for carrying out basic conservation needs. The business plan was developed by VertigoLab within the framework of the above mentioned MCPA Project of UNDP Albania. This document includes a detailed analysis of the park's projected incomes, expenses and a financial gap, as well as a selection of financial mechanisms to fill the identified gaps.

In December 2015 the study on Sustainable Financial Mechanisms of K-S aims to find new mechanisms on how to generate additional revenues in Karaburun-Sazan MPA, to cover existing and new costs related to nature based activities and other environmental services. This study is based on evaluating existing environmental services of the MPA

⁹ National Agency of Protected Areas (www.akzm.gov.al)

and a proposal of new financing mechanisms in order to make the MPA self sufficient in the future.¹⁰

1.3 Tourism and Infrastructure

Tourism is considered as one of the three most important economic sectors in Albania, with a steady increase of number of tourists and touristic infrastructure from 2009 (INSTAT). Based on the official data of the Department of Border and Emigration, in the General Directory of Police State, number of arrivals to Albania, for the first 9 months of 2014 was 2.911.419 visitors in total. This data does not include foreigners that are in transit through Albania. Compared to one year before, the increase is 13%. 90% of visitors are coming for holidays mostly from Kosovo, Macedonia, UK, Germany, Italy, Netherland and Sweden. The trend from last year is the presence of visitors from the Czech Republic, Slovenia and other Balkan countries.¹¹

Moreover, despite efforts to diversify the tourism offer, tourism development in Albania has been mainly geared towards a “sun-sand-sea” model and concentrated in the coastal areas. Development of second houses, hotels and associated infrastructure has rapidly claimed coastal land, triggering irreversible consequences for coastal habitats and compromising ecosystem services that are vital for the well-being of local communities. These impacts are further aggravated by the spatial-temporal distribution of tourist arrivals, which are concentrated within the summer season and in coastal areas by tripling the local number of inhabitants. During the past 20 years, tourism development has not reached the Albanian people's expectations for the sustainable use of natural, cultural and historical potentials. Lack of tourism planning and capacity, problems related to services, deficiencies in infrastructure, lack of coordination between

¹⁰ Financing of Albanian MPAs – Case study of the National Marine Park of Karaburuni Peninsula and Sazani Island

¹¹ Albanian Institute of Statistics (www.instat.gov.al)

central and local government are the main problems of the tourism sector over the years.

The Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism has developed the Draft National Strategy of Tourism 2014-2020 and the Action Plan of the Strategy of Tourism 2014-2020, as a key strategic document of the tourism sector in Albania. This strategy represents and reflects the initiatives, policies and objectives of the government and highlights the importance of tourism as a key sector for the economy. The strategy reflects the government's program of reforms in all sectors, with the aim to direct the tourism sector into sustainable development and to stop the chaotic, unplanned and uncoordinated tourism development.¹²

Vlora Region

Balnear tourism¹³ is the main type of tourism in marine and coastal areas of Vlora Region. Novosela and Zverneci (in the Adriatic Sea), Vlora Bay, Karaburun Peninsula, Palasa, Dhermi, Jala and Himara Beaches and Saranda City (Ionian Sea) are important touristic destinations in the Region. The area from Sazan up to Dhermi offers ideal wild sites for sporting activities and small gravel beaches. Borshi Area from Qeparoi up to Lukove is unique for long coast beaches, accompanied with planted areas with citrus fruits and olives, mostly preferred by family tourists. The area of Butrint and Orikum are wetlands, but are at the same time important archaeological sites for the country. Porto Palermo is an attractive bay with the remains of the ancient town of Panormese and the castle. Moreover, this region offers the opportunity for green tourism especially in the well-known Llogora National Park.

Being the main tourist destination in Albania, local authorities of Vlora Region have shown a continuous interest for being part of an integrated coastal tourism development. The Strategic Plan for the Vlora Region, produced in 2011 by UNDP, identified tourism

¹² The National Draft Strategy of Tourism

¹³ Sea and beach tourism

as a priority economic sector to be promoted and used for diversification of the local economy. Still, after 5 years, beside local government, private sector and CSOs commitments, the touristic offer is unsustainable, as this sector is still lacking investments (infrastructure and human resources). Central government has made some positive efforts, mainly in revitalizing small coastal villages, promotion of sustainable touristic activities, controlling and stopping unsustainable constructions at coastal sites. In Vlora city a new avenue “Lungo Mare” along the coast inside the city and the main road is recently under construction. It was very important to revitalize the city and tourism development, but risks raising the number of tourists in this region and tourism pressure in the area. We recommend authorities to extend touristic activities and events along the year to prevent traffic jams in the city and human pressure to resources.

Other big investments are crucial in Vlora, Saranda cities and other small towns. These touristic sites are located near sensitive habitats, but there are still no crucial investments like waste management or water purification plants. Waste and water management are big problems, especially during touristic season, when the population is doubled or tripled into these destinations.

Orikum

Orikum is a small town and is part of the Vlora Region. It is the closest urban center to the Karaburun-Sazani MPA. It is very important for tourism sector, which is one of the most important economic activities. Investments made in the area and rich attractions have turned tourism sector into a good potential for local economy of the small town. Near Orikum there are about 530 rooms in 60 hotels (of all types), 170 beach cabins, and about 120 restaurants, while the total number of beds reaches 2.500. This statistical data does not include family tourism, which is as well an important sector for the local touristic offer.¹⁴ In the recent years Orikum is visited by a larger number of foreign visitors (94% European, 3% Americans, and 3% from other countries). The largest number of tourists is from Kosovo and Macedonia, followed by tourists from Great

¹⁴ Orikum Municipality Report, Directory of Tourism and Development Program

Britain, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, etc. Trends from last year are visitors from the Czech Republic, Slovenia and other Balkan countries.¹⁵

Karaburun-Sazan MPA

The recently established Karaburun-Sazan NMP (and its associated terrestrial parks of Llogara and Karaburun Peninsula) offers a unique opportunity for sustainable nature-based tourism in the region. During the last two years it has been one of the most interesting destinations for recreational activities in south of Albania. It still offers pristine and unexploited nature but it is difficult to reach by land. Tourists reach it through excursion boats which are the latest bloomed business in the area. Tour boating, sun bathing and enjoying simple local food are the most preferred activities tourists practice during their daily visits. Diving, snorkeling, hiking and “pescaturismo” (fishing tourism) are also practiced, but randomly or by few professionals. These activities are not regulated and are mostly offered by hotels or locals.

As the Karaburun-Sazan MPA is still in the early phase of developing sustainable tourism, there is a need for touristic infrastructure development at the site. Information boards are important in and around the MPA to inform tourists on values, zoning and available nature-based activities; safe anchoring sites to reduce anchoring pressure in just one harbor; as well as supporting infrastructure to encourage other touristic activities in the area.

As indicated in the MP of Karaburun-Sazan, during the last two years some efforts were started by different actors working on-site to complete touristic infrastructure. UNDP, WWF, NAPA and other donors are investing in visitor infrastructure and tourism development in the area.

¹⁵ Oriku Municipality Report, Directory of Tourism and Development Program

In 2015, INCA succeeded to join UNDP and WWF funds and develop different touristic infrastructure in Karaburun-Sazan. The project aims to support local operators (excursion boats, diving and hiking operators) and tourists with investments in infrastructure in the area, to establish nature based sustainable tourism practices and ensure good management of natural resources in the Karaburun-Sazan MPA. This touristic infrastructure consists of 2 tourist information boards in the cities (Vlora and Orikum), implementation of two terrestrial trails on Karaburun Peninsula (Pashaliman-Pllaja e Ravenes-Gjiri i Bristanit; and Pashaliman- Shen Vasil - Shen Jan); implementation of an underwater trail (Shen –Vasil); MPA border demarcation (with buoys) and reparation of the old military dock.

In the area is a big interest from tourist operators and government (NAPA) to improve the touristic offer and the MPA infrastructure, so other investments are also ongoing. An Information Center, in Radhima near the National Road, will be constructed with the help of donators and will be managed by the RAPA staff; other information tables and promotion of eco-touristic activities will be placed by NGOs and tourism operators.

1.4 Sustainable Development

Even if it is still in the early stages of implementation, Albania has been including aspects of sustainable development into its strategies for several years now. Programs and strategies on local, regional and national level show different approaches of how to better include sustainable concepts and practices.

The Strategic Plan of Vlora Region (2011) ¹⁶ states:

- *Vlora Region has chosen tourism as the leading sector of its economy and the principal catalyst of economic growth.*
- *Tourism is recognized as the main opportunity for regional development; the challenge is to make it sustainable and integrated, in order to preserve the regional identity and resources.*

¹⁶ Strategic Plan of Vlora Region (2011, pp. 4/68/70)

- *Vlora Region should become a territory in which sustainability covers all sectors of human activity (tourist accommodation, transports, solid waste management, water and wastewater management, productive activities, building activities, etc.) and in which all development policies and initiatives are coordinated and synergic. In this framework, the Region should decide to meet the growing global demand of cultural tourism, ecotourism and rural tourism and consider environmental protection not as a limit but an opportunity to foster innovation, socioeconomic development and professional growth.*

With this vision and commitment, a sustainable tourism development is introduced to local and regional stakeholders as well as to the local community.

The draft National Strategy of Tourism Development in Albania¹⁷ states the following on nature based tourism / ecotourism / rural tourism development:

So far, Albania is appreciated by many operators and international visitors for the beautiful landscape / nature, which are also considered as strengths of Albania. As is estimated in a study by German speaking tour operators, pristine nature and landscape of Albania are considered the biggest property after its mystical and unknown character. Nature tourism and rural tourism in Albania present the following situation:

- *Diversity of climatic, geographical and physical properties of its territory, represented by a range of mountains, lakes, rivers and lagoons, accompanied by a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna present in many natural parks and nature reserves in the country, are the immense potential for nature tourism development and rural tourism in Albania.*
- *Local communities living near natural resources, who still maintain a traditional lifestyle and have a rich cultural heritage, are an added value to these natural resources for development of nature based tourism and rural tourism in Albania.*
- *Natural areas and rural sites in Albania offer opportunities for rural tourism development, ecotourism and activities in nature (rafting, parachute jumping, mountain biking, fishing, trekking, mountain climbing, walking in nature (hiking), strolling horses with saddle, study tours, etc.). Some of these activities are the main reason foreign visitors are visiting these natural areas.*
- *There are a significant number of tours organized in nature, especially in hilly and mountainous areas of Albania, as for example in Theth, Vermosh, Valbona and Tropoje, in the Northern Alps, Debar and area of Bulqiza, mountainous of Tirana, Elbasan and Librazhd, mountainous area of*

16 National Strategy of Tourism Development in Albania (2014-2020, pp 15)

Korca, Tomori, Llogara and Karaburun and mountainous area of Gjirokastra Vjosa and Osumi rivers, in mountains of Shashica, Llogara, Dhermi, Saranda.

- *The initiative for developing a tourism offer for nature and rural tourism, developed with the support of German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in 2007 for local community involvement in Theth village, led to the establishment of a network of inns (home reception and tourists). The initiative also supported some marketing activities and marking of walking paths. The impact was impressive: the number of tourists grew from 300 in 2006 to 12,000 tourists (foreign tourists 80-85%) in 2011.*
- *Demand for outdoor activities is growing, so demand for nature based tourism in Albania is expected to increase, as perceived by tour operators.*

1.5 Policy and Legislation

The tourism policy framework, developed by the Albanian government, reflects sustainability principles, but in practice more should be done in legislation and implementation. The draft of the “National Strategy for Tourism 2014-2020”, the former national “Strategy for tourism development 2002-2013”, and the “Strategy and Action Plan for Development of Natural and Cultural Tourism” shall be considered as the main policy documents to be referred in the tourism sector, so far . The draft of the “National Strategy for Tourism 2014-2020” and the “Action Plan of the Strategy for Tourism 2014-2020” have been developed by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism as key documents for developing sartorial strategies of the “after 2013 period”. This strategy represents the initiatives, policies and new objectives of the new government and highlights the importance of tourism as a key sector for the economy. The strategy reflects the government's program of reforms in all sectors, with the aim to orient the tourism sector into sustainable development and to stop the chaotic, unplanned and uncoordinated tourism development (The Draft National Strategy of Tourism 2014-2020).

Nature based tourism development has implications and in one way or another depends on other sectors such as the nature conservation sector, waste and water management,

energy and infrastructure. Knowing that, the Albanian government sometimes with the help of international donators, has done few attempts to fix these sectors, first by addressing and reflecting these needs in different national and local level documents and by implementing few of them. Some of the documents that address these needs are:

- *Strategic Plan for Vlora Region "The Zero Emission Territory" 2011, Auleda, UNDP ART GOLD2;*
- *Strategic plan for tourism development - Qender Komune (2009);*
- *Local Development Plan, Orikum (June 2009);*
- *Strategy and Action Plan for the Development of the Albanian Tourism Sector Based on Cultural and Environmental Tourism (2005);*
- *Strategy for Tourism Development (2007-2013);*
- *Investigation Report on the Bank-financed Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Clean-Up Project (ICZMCP) in Albania", World Bank ;*
- *The Lumi Vlore project – ALBANIA ART GOLD 2 (AGA 2) PROGRAMME;*
- *The Development Plans of Qender and Orikum Communes (2009)*

Actually, the government is investing through big projects, especially in South of Albania that is mostly affected by tourism sector. Two big investments of the government are: improving and restoring infrastructure of energy supply in South and construction of an important road in Vlora that connects two important parts of Albania (Central and South). Partly the government is investing to maintain locally fresh water supply and is especially working to improve local infrastructure of inhabited towns along the coast.

According to international tourism specialists, additional strategies and legislation have to be taken into account and produced accordingly before doing investments. Still, waste and water management infrastructure reflects weak attempts from the government to be improved and a lot more should be done especially with waste management to stop and manage them.

The Law on Tourism

The Law on Tourism No .9734 has been in power since 2007 and the scope of this law is to determine the principles and rules governing the tourism sector and also to develop standards for tourism services and products. Although it has been in power for many years, it did not bring practical effects because it was missing enforcement procedures, powers and regulations. For example, it reduced the effectiveness and operation of institutions responsible for tourism like the National Agency of Tourism and Office of Touristic Services.

On October 2015 the new Law on Tourism, No. 93/2015 was approved after a long period of comments and discussions with government and actors. The main scope of this law is promotion of Albania as a new touristic destination in national and international tourism markets, by supporting the sustainable tourism development, quality of service and respecting needs of local communities and future generations.

Articles No. 26 and 27 of this law indicate that tourism planning at national or local level is an element of territorial planning. It should be done in accordance with the Law on Territorial Planning and Development and other provisions related to activities that require development of tourism development plans.

Article No. 29 aims protection, conservation, sustainable use and development of natural resources. It considers that development and operation of touristic enterprises in priority areas for tourism development should be done in accordance with the national sectorial plans of tourism, categories and management plans of protected areas and with the legal provisions in force on planning and development of the territory by referring to planning documents.

According to *Article No. 22* categorization of touristic resources is done based on:

a) Natural touristic resources: natural landscapes, protected areas, geographical and biological attractions, climate and marine conditions, hydrology, natural and geo monuments that are interesting for visitors.

b) Human touristic resources:

- i) Material human resources that include historical buildings, relicts and craftworks
- ii) Non-material human resources that include different cultural activities

The new Law on Tourism mentions protected areas as part of sustainable tourism development.

Law on protected areas

“Law on Protected Areas” and “Law on Biodiversity Protection” are two major laws worth to be mentioned on Protected Areas.

Establishment and management of protected areas is regulated by Law No. 8906, dated 6.6.2002, “On protected areas” (hereinafter the PA Law). This law, which was amended in 2008, aims at the declaration, preservation, management and usage of protected areas and their natural and biological resources. In addition, the objectives, as formulated in Article 1, include “the facilitation of conditions for the development of environmental tourism, for the information and education of the general public and for economic profits, direct or indirect, by the local population, by the public [state] and private sector”.

The 2008 amendment of the PA Law introduces the principle of internal zoning. According to Article 4/2, the territory of the protected area can be divided into subzones, in accordance with the importance of habitats and ecosystems which they are part of.¹⁸

Internal zoning of the Karaburun-Sazan, based on management objectives, has been jointly proposed by stakeholders during the development of the MP, and is part of the

¹⁸ Protected Area Gap Assessment - Marine biodiversity and legislation on marine protected areas (2010)



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MP for Karaburun-Sazani. The figure below shows the zoning map of the National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan.



Figure 3: Zoning map of the National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan

Source: Management Plan for National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan

Zoning of the MPA has been done following the Guidelines on the approach and criteria for zoning of the territory within a protected area (GIZ/GOPA 2013),¹⁹ which were adapted to the specific conditions of the marine environment.

The total surface of the MPA is divided between the Core Zone (CZ), Recreational Zone (RZ), Effective Management Zone (EMZ) and Sustainable Development Zone (SDZ). Human activities are regulated in each management zone.

- Scientific research is allowed with special permit by PA administration for all zones. In CZ and EMZ, special permit and only limited numbers of scientists are allowed.
- Monitoring is allowed with special permits by PA administration for all zones. In CZ limited monitoring with special permit can be allowed.
- Diving is not allowed in CZ. In the other zones, diving should be specified and allowed only with guides.
- Swimming and snorkeling (beaches and sun bathing) are not allowed in CZ and EMZ.
- Visits are allowed in CZ only with guided tours at specified routes.
- Wildlife watching is not allowed in CZ. A code of conduct for wildlife watching should be designed and respected.
- Fishing is not allowed in CZ and EMZ. Special permit for fishing (based on the Law on Fisheries) are necessary in the other areas. Only sport and traditional fishing is allowed.
- Boating (excursions) is not allowed in CZ. Special permit by PA administration for boats accessing the area should be required. In order to balance tourism and conservation, a carrying capacity study for boats should be done.
- Anchoring is not allowed in CZ and EMZ. Anchoring is allowed in RZ and SDZ, after a mooring buoys are established.
- Kayaking is not allowed only in CZ.

¹⁹ GIZ/GOPA (2013) Guideline on the approach and criteria for zoning of the territory within a protected area. GIZ/GOPA, 21 pp.

- Water sports are not allowed inside the CZ. Use of jet skis is prohibited in every zone inside the MPA.
- Infrastructure development is not allowed in CZ and EMZ. Infrastructure development should be in accordance with Development Plans and Management Plan. No permanent buildings, only “light” infrastructure is allowed (moorings, small docks, platforms).²⁰

The Law No. 9587 on “Biodiversity Protection”, dated 20.07.2006, aims at preserving and protecting biological diversity by regulating the sustainable use of its elements through the integration of the main elements of biodiversity in the strategies, plans, programs and all levels of decision-making. As the scope of the law on biodiversity includes aquatic and marine areas, it is a relevant instrument for the establishment of marine protected areas.²¹

²⁰ Management Plan for National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan

2 Development of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan

2.1 Planning Process

The STMP of Karaburun-Sazan MCPA is elaborated by Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania (INCA) within the contribution of the project “Sustainable Economic Activities in Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas” (SEA-Med). The plan was developed based on the participatory approach of stakeholders and the whole process was supervised by experts on sustainable tourism and nature conservation. Stakeholders were engaged in capacity building trainings and consultation workshops for the main topics of the plan.

The participatory approach has been practiced for the first time while preparing the Management Plan of Karaburun-Sazan MPA and is considered a successful and helpful experience in terms of sharing information between stakeholders, raising capacities and providing a good quality plan. As the STMP of Karaburun-Sazan MCPA is a follow-up document of the Management Plan, it was considered important to be developed it using the same approach as the plan.

The document has been developed based on desk research, preliminary assessments and feedback from workshops (working groups and consultation sessions). In total 4 preliminary assessments that are integrated in the plan have been developed:

- (i)** Assessment of nature-based tourism business operative in Vlora and Orikum municipalities, 2014
- (ii)** Assessment of sustainable tourism-related certification schemes available in or appropriate for Albania, 2014
- (iii)** Visitor survey in Vlora bay and Karaburun-Sazan MPA, 2015
- (iv)** Business approach on certification schemes in Vlora bay and Karaburun-Sazan MPA, 2015

In total two national trainings and three local consultation workshops were organized from October 2013 to December 2015 by engaging around 50 participants each.

These include the following:

- (i)** MPA 101 (October 2013)
- (ii)** 1st national Training on Sustainable Tourism (22-24 January 2015)
- (iii)** The first workshop with local stakeholders (29 April-2015)
- (iv)** The second workshop with local stakeholders (2 July 2015)
- (v)** The final workshop (18 December 2015)

In addition to these trainings and workshops, planning team participated to 3 regional training workshops of the SEA-Med project, organized by WWF in order to raise the capacities of the planning teams to better develop the STMPs. The 3 training workshops dealt with: *(i)* process for the development of the STMP and defining objectives; *(ii)* resource analysis with a goal of addressing negative impacts and identifying management activities; and *(iii)* consolidation of the plan, best practice examples, introduction into marketing and communication of MPAs.

Consultation workshops content was based on the Management Plan of Karaburun-Sazan (Tourism chapter), Regional SEA-Med Workshops and the prospective of participants on the future of tourism development in this area for the next 10 years. Workshops were designed with diversified sessions like: basic theoretical concepts on sustainable tourism, working groups, open discussions, presentation of case study from different invited speakers. Workshops were coordinated by INCA staff and supervised by the international expert.

On 22-24 January 2015, in Vlora the first national stakeholder training within the stakeholder consultation process was organized. This meeting gathered main institutional stakeholders that operate in tourism sector from national, central and local government, such as the General Directorate of Tourism, National Agency of Tourism (both part of the Tourism Agency), Vlora Regional Council, representatives of Vlora and Oriku Municipalities, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, professors and



students of Vloa University, private businesses operating in tourism, international invited speakers and tourism experts. This training was especially important for institutional representatives, to help them get familiar with basic concepts of tourism sustainability in Albania, Vloa Bay, and Karaburun-Sazan MPA. Beyond capacity building, participants were involved in working groups' sessions on best potentials of developing tourism, especially in Vloa Region, based on respective institutional approach and strategies of their institutions. A case study from Brijuni National Park, Croatia and Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, Germany were presented during the workshop.

On 29 April 2015, within the local stakeholder consultation process, the first local workshop with stakeholders was organized. This workshop gathered representatives from NAPA and RAPA staff (the newly established institutions in February 2015) appointed as the highest institution responsible for the management of PAs in Albania. Local stakeholders that operate in tourism and environmental sector were also present at the meeting, such as: Vloa University, Environmental Regional Inspectorate, Regional Directorate of National Culture Vlore, Vloa Regional Council, Orikum Municipality, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, private businesses operating in tourism, local NGOs etc. During this workshop the main issues of the STMP were discussed and feedback was received from participants through working groups by discussing/consulting the sustainable tourism vision of the Karaburun-Sazan MPA, SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) of sustainable tourism and impact analysis of tourism activities and infrastructure. A representative from the GIZ (German Development Program) was invited to this workshop to share the experience of sustainable tourism development in the Alps of Albania.

The second local workshop with stakeholders was organized on 2 July 2015, in Vloa City. This workshop gathered participants from UNDP, Agency of Protected Areas (national and regional staff), representatives of Public and Private Vloa University, Vloa Regional Council, Regional Environmental Inspectorate, Regional Directorate of



National Culture Vlore, Orikum Municipality, Vlora Chamber of Commerce, tour operators, professional divers, tour boat operators, fishermen, local NGOs etc. During this workshop participants discussed and worked in groups on defining themes, potential objectives and some activities of the STMP of Karaburun-Sazan, based on the previous results and work of experts.

On 18 December 2015 the final workshop was held in Orikum. The scope of the workshop was discussing the final draft structure of the plan among participants. It gathered participants from the Ministry of Environment, UNDP, National Agency of Protected Areas, and Vlora Administration of Protected Areas. According to participants, the general structure, themes, objectives and activities provided were in line with all relevant national and local documents, but a real challenge may be the implementation of the plan due to the limited financial resources and weak legislative mechanisms.



National training on Sustainable Tourism



National training on Sustainable Tourism



1st Stakeholder Participation Workshop



1st Stakeholder Participation Workshop



2nd Stakeholder Participation Workshop



Final consultation workshop

Figure 4. Stakeholder Participation Process



2.2 Stakeholders and stakeholders' participation

The process of developing the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan was based on the stakeholder participation process and contribution.

Before starting the process of stakeholder engagement, both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders were identified and subsequently analyzed. The table below reflects stakeholder categories based on the relation between each stakeholder and for each stakeholder the level of engagement.

Table 2: Stakeholders, their relations and level of engagement

Stakeholders	Relation between Stakeholders	Level of engagement
Ministries/National authorities		
<i>Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship</i>	Responsible for setup, implementation and monitoring of the National Tourism Strategy; legal framework for tourism development, related planning and development process; support for regional administration and tourism organization at the national, regional and local level	Keep satisfied / high power; high responsibility related to tourism issues
<i>Ministry of Environment</i>	Responsible for legal framework for PA management; authority to design the PA standards; supervises PA management	Keep satisfied / engage closely / high power and responsibility related to PAs
<i>Ministry of Defence</i>	Military base located at Karaburun peninsula and Sazani island	Monitor
<i>National Agency of Protected Areas</i>	National Agency of Protected Areas (NAPA), as the highest institution responsible for management for protected areas	Engage closely / high power, high responsibility
<i>National Spatial Planning Agency</i>	Develop planning standards and supervise implementation of spatial planning instruments	Keep informed
<i>National Coastal Agency</i>	Coastal protection, promotion and monitoring of projects for the development of the coastal zone	Keep satisfied / engage closely, role and quite high power in promoting and protecting the coastal areas
<i>National Urban Planning Inspectorate</i>	Law enforcement related to spatial planning and constructions	Keep informed
<i>National Tourism Agency –</i>	Carry on the functions related to	Engage closely / keep informed –

Stakeholders	Relation between Stakeholders	Level of engagement
NTA	promotion and marketing in tourism, e.g. production and distribution of promotional publications, official tourism portals, familiarization tours, PR, tourism trade fairs, etc.	importance in taking and evaluating touristic data and developing touristic strategies and information packages
State organisations		
<i>Vlora Administration of Protected Areas</i>	Responsible for the management of PAs (including Karaburun-Sazan)	Engage closely – moderate power and high interest
<i>Fisheries Inspectorate Vlora</i>	Responsibility for surveillance of fisheries activities, including the NMP	Monitor – could have power, but low interest at the moment
<i>Border Police and Immigration</i>	Responsibility in NMP as well (controlling access to the area)	Keep satisfied / monitor – have power, but low interest at the moment
<i>Regional Tourism Service Office</i>	Responsible for helping tourists	Engage closely – low power, but not active entity for the moment
Local/Regional administration		
<i>Vlora Prefecture</i>	Supervises legal framework implementation and controls local government authorities	Keep satisfied – high power over some issues, moderate interest
<i>Vlora County Council</i>	Develops and implements regional policies and coordinates with central and local government authorities	Keep satisfied – high power over some issues, moderate interest
<i>Vlora Municipality</i>	Decides over local development (businesses); NMP visitors are mostly staying in Vlora	Keep satisfied / engage Closely – high power over some issues, moderate interest
Public entities / enterprises		

Stakeholders	Relation between Stakeholders	Level of engagement
<i>Harbor District Vlora</i>	Port authority in Vlora, at the moment does not provide moorings for nautical tourists	Keep satisfied – engage closely
<i>Harbour Master Vlora</i>	Once the entrance into the NMP is regulated, it could become more important	Keep satisfied – engage closely
User associations & Tourism Services		
<i>Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vlora</i>	Association of private businesses in Vlora, potential for promotion	Engage closely – low power but low interest at the moment
<i>Organisation of Touristic Operators</i>	Tourism agencies	Engage closely – important for tourism development; directly engaged with the NMP
<i>Marina of Orikum</i>	Private marina, cca 600 berths, fully equipped, organizes regattas	Engage closely / keep informed – low power and potentially moderate interest
<i>OaziBlu</i>	Diving CSO	Engage closely – important for tourism development; directly engaged with the Management Plan development as well
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)		
<i>Adriatik</i>	One of the oldest local NGOs working for the Karaburun-Sazan MPA designation and development.	Keep informed near to engage closely; they are important for implementation of the STMP
<i>Ekspedita Blu</i>	Sportive diving organisation	

Stakeholders	Relation between Stakeholders	Level of engagement
<i>INCA - Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania</i>	NGO that contributes to the protection of natural environment and biodiversity in Albania and in the region.	
<i>S.E.E.P Vlore - Social Education & Environment Protection</i>	Local NGO actively involved in the field of social and environmental education. Part of the network of Environmental Organizations in Vlore "Green Vision"	
<i>CRCD Vlore – Center for Research Collaboration and Development</i>	Local NGO that aims to contribute in the field of sustainable socio-economic, environmental, cultural and technical development and promote adoption of the European model in the Republic of Albania.	
<i>Legambiente Vlore/Albania</i>	Local NGO that promotes and organizes volunteer participation to protect natural environment and culture.	
Research institutions		
<i>University "Ismail Qemali"</i>	Natural science and Tourism Departments, conducting research in the MPA	Moderate position – important role and contribution in tourism, moderate interest
<i>Univeristy "Panvarsia"</i>	Business and Tourism Departments, conducting research in the MPA	Moderate position – important role and contribution in tourism, moderate interest
International organizations / Donors / Development Aid		

Stakeholders	Relation between Stakeholders	Level of engagement
<i>European Union Information Centre Vlora – EUIC Vlora</i>	Facilitates the dissemination of information on EU and Albania	Keep informed near to engage closely; low power high interest
<i>European Commission</i>	Supporting biodiversity conservation in the country	
<i>UNDP</i>	Supporting the establishment and management of the MPA	
<i>World Bank</i>	Supporting biodiversity conservation in the country	
<i>WWF</i>	Supporting capacity building, establishment and management of protected areas	
<i>MedPAN</i>	Supporting MPA regionally (capacity building and management)	

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MATRIX

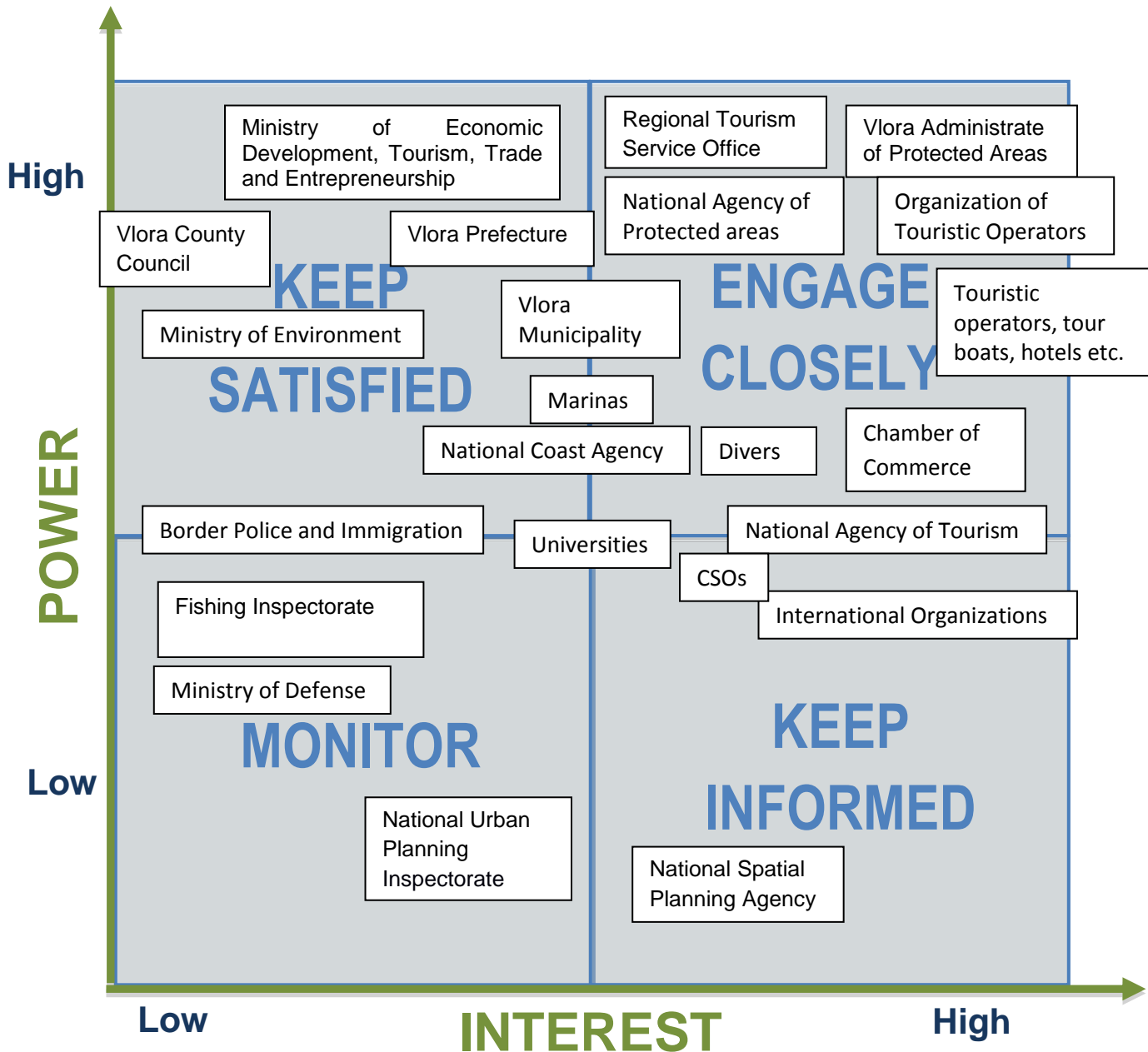


Figure 5: Stakeholder engagement matrix

As described in Chapter 2.1 the whole process was based on stakeholder participation, involvement and contribution.

During the process of developing and implementing trainings and workshops, organized from January to December 2015, more than 150 stakeholders from around 25 different national and local institutions were involved. There was a wide representation of different stakeholders with active participation in workshops and trainings.

During these workshops, for the first time in several years tourism actors sat together and discussed not only the issue of STMP, but also other issues as well like waste water, sewage etc.

Implementation of such process helped capacity building of participants and contributed to a good plan. Participants, especially tourism operators, have addressed a lot of other problems to the workshop organizers, as these workshops were the only option they had to address them. It is important to keep the process going. The STMP process has initiated different discussions, which are important for the further development of the area.

2.3 STMP as part of SEA-Med Project and of Management Plan Karaburun-Sazan NMP

The SEA-Med Project is a five country project lead by WWF-Med Programme Office, implemented in the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas (Croatia, Turkey, Albania, Libya, Algeria and Tunisia). Albania is represented with Karaburun-Sazan MPA. The project in Albania is implemented by INCA and this project is the first implemented by a CSO on the site, after establishment of the Marine Park in 2010.

The SEA-Med project in Albania is being implemented for almost three years and is focused on establishing sustainable nature-based tourism in Karaburun-Sazan MPA through stakeholder engagement. The project aims to develop a Sustainable Tourism Management Plan (STMP) for the Karaburun-Sazan MPA and set up an Albanian

conservation community capable to contribute and benefit from the participatory planning and management of economic activities in Vlorë Region. To reach these goals the project implementation is based on four main pillars:

- (i) Development of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan of Karaburun-Sazan MPA through stakeholder participation;
- (ii) Promotion of Karaburun–Sazan Marine Protected Area and nature-based touristic activities;
- (iii) Capacity building among Stakeholders
- (iv) Support the establishment of touristic nature-based activities.

In order to guide the promotion of the site as a new touristic destination a Communication Strategy has been developed for the period 2014-2016. Based on the strategy, some promotional activities have been undertaken, especially during summer season, in collaboration with Orikum Municipality, tourism operators and other NGOs. In this context a Cooperation Agreement was signed with The National Agency of Tourism in Albania in 2014 in order to start the collaboration and provide institutional support for the future.

Capacity building among stakeholders was an important issue of the project. From October 2013, the series of trainings on basic concepts of MPA management and sustainable tourism was conducted with national and local participants from the Ministry of Tourism, National Agency of Tourism, Vlorë University, Orikum and Vlorë Municipality, Regional Council, NGOs, tour operators, etc. As in the last two years, Albania has been facing many institutional changes, some of the actors involved in this process from the beginning have changed and new institutions were created. Due to high turnover of the staff and newly created institutions, engaging stakeholders has been quite a challenge for INCA as a NGO.

The SEA-Med project, through the Small Grants Initiative, is implementing touristic infrastructure on the site, based in the Management Plan of the Karaburun-Sazan, in



order to incentivize tourist operators to improve the touristic offer and diversify touristic activities. After deployment of touristic infrastructure, in order to ensure sustainability of investments, a cooperation agreement will be signed with the NAPA for the future maintenance and management of facilities.

One of the main pillars of the SEA-Med project was the development of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan through participatory approach. INCA, before starting the process of preparing the STMP, in collaboration with WWF, developed the Management Plan of Karaburun-Sazan (MP) using the same approach. This process was not only an important step and reference document for the Karaburun-Sazan MPA, but also a very important experience for the leading organization INCA. The STMP is a document that bases its content on the outcomes and data of the Management Plan and provides a better in-depth analysis of the sustainable tourism development in the area, that has to be further considered/tracked.

3 Baseline Information

3.1 Socio-economic Features

Vlora and Orikum areas are generally characterized by diverse economic conditions and levels of development. Coastal urban areas are more developed than rural areas in mountains or river valleys. Vlora Region is one of the least poor cities in Albania – due to incomes generated from tourism and a higher level of remittances.

According to INSTAT, the estimated population in Vlora region during 2015 is 183.100 inhabitants in total. 126.320 live in urban areas, while 56.780 live in rural areas. In Karaburun-Sazan MPA there are no permanent settlements or villages and therefore no inhabitants registered, but the nearest town is Orikum, with 11.954 habitants registered in 2011.

Since political changes, from communism to democracy in early 1990s, there has been an increase in mobility of population as a whole. Migration is characterized by some movements mainly for economic reasons. More than 60% of inhabitants of Orikumi Municipality have emigrated abroad. 75% of emigrants are working in Italy, 20% in Greece and the remaining 5% in USA and other EU countries.²²

Actually, the economy of the area is based on these main sectors: (i) construction and services; (ii) livestock; (iii) agriculture; (iv) fishing and aquaculture; (v) tourism; (vi) infrastructure. Tourism, mostly costal tourism, is likely to constitute the main sector in Orikum area over the next decade, thus contributing to the economic growth and prosperity of local residents. In the last years the construction sector used to be a growing sector, which oriented somehow the tourism market profile into family tourism, but actually development of construction sector has stopped due to implementation of the Law on Territory and Planning which orders all local authorities to prepare and

²² Socio-Economic Study MCPA Karaburun-Sazan- Madlina Puka- December 2012

approve the General Local Plans. Oriku Municipality has an approved Master Plan from the National Territorial Council of Planning (2003) but the master plan is out of function due to the new law which has suspended all the existing plans and calls for a review and unification of all of them.

Agriculture and farming activities are not considered as a main source of income in Oriku, because of the difficulties to access markets, the lack of farm mechanization and the limited land area suitable for farming. However, the majority of the local population is living from livestock and some 74% of the total family incomes in the Municipality of Oriku is coming from stockbreeding.²³

3.2 Natural Attractions

Both marine and terrestrial parts of Sazani Island and Karaburuni Peninsula have high values of biodiversity and natural habitats. Main features and characteristics of the area are: Mediterranean maquis and rocky coasts, coastal and marine habitats, fish species and commercially important crustaceans, and charismatic species.

Mediterranean maquis and rocky coasts

These formations are attractive for visitors and have additional values due to the well-developed vegetation, which covers almost the whole peninsula from the mountaintop until the coast. Forest of *Quercus ithaburensis* subsp. *macrolepis* (known as Valona oak) in the Karaburuni peninsula is the best preserved forests of this oak tree in Albania and it is a relict species, together with the laurel.

A considerable number of terrestrial plant species in the island and peninsula belong to the Red List of the Albanian Flora 2007.

²³ Socio-Economic Study Karaburun-Sazan- Madlina Puka-December 2012

Coastal and marine habitats

The mediolittoral is characterized by calcareous algae of *Lithophyllum sp.*, *Lithophyllum byssoides*, present in both Sazani Island and Karaburuni Peninsula. It is a characteristic species of Western Mediterranean and Adriatic Sea.

The infralittoral is represented by seagrass communities (also called seagrass beds or meadows), composed by mainly by *Posidonia oceanic* (priority habitat) and *Cymodocea nodosa*. Patches of *Posidonia oceanica* meadows occur at 6-10m depth and deeper in sheltered sites of the rocky coastline of Rreza e Kanalit-Karaburuni and Sazani Island (Kashta et al., 2005; Kashta, 1992-93).

On the hard beds and rocks of the infralittoral the most important group is that of the brown algae *Cystoseira*. The *Cystoseira* communities together with the *Posidonia* meadows are the main supporters of biodiversity in shallow water.

In the circalittoral zone, on hard substrata, the most important biocenosis is the coralligenous, with calcareous red seaweeds, gorgonians and bryozoans. This biocenosis is well developed on the western side of Sazani Island and Karaburuni Peninsula.

Other important and interesting biocenosis is those of semi-dark caves, where the red coral and several species of sponges live. Four underwater caves at the tip of the Karaburuni peninsula have been studied (Belmonte et al., 2006) and have shown very specific fauna different from the other side of the Adriatic. In Haxhi Ali cave in particular a population of Polychaeta and abundant fishes, echinoderms, worms, crustaceans are present. At about 40 m depth, red cartilaginous algae *Fauchea sp.* are exuberant and very often seen with brightly colored sponges.

Some of these caves are monumental (up to 50 m high) with stalactites along the walls and hosting freshwater fauna (kingfishers, mosquitoes, bats), such as the one located in the Bay of Veriu.

Fish species and commercially important crustaceans

Pelagic fish communities are composed of *Merluccius merluccius*, *Trachurus trachurus*, *Parapenaeus longirostris*, *Mullus surmulletus*, and *Exocetus volitans*. On rocky substrates closer to the coast the following communities are present: *Diplodus sargus*, *D. vulgaris*, *D. annularis*, *Serranus cabrilla*, *Spicara maena*, *Coris sp.*, *Thalassoma pavo*, a school of *Boops boops*, in cavities there are *Anthias anthias*, *Phycis phycis*, large groupers *Epinephelus sp.* and moray eels. Other interesting species of large size, such as *Mola mola* and *Xiphias gladius* have also been recorded.

The area is also important for fisheries. Professional and artisanal fishing exist along the coasts of Rreza e Kanalit-Karaburuni and Sazani. The fish fauna of commercial interest is made of several demersal species and groups, small and big fishes, crustacean and mollusks.

Charismatic species

Albanian marine and littoral habitats are frequently visited by the rare marine mammals. The Monk seal (*Monachus monachus*) is a very rare, occasional visitor to the Albanian coastal waters. The canyons and caves of the area, often inaccessible, represent an ideal habitat for monk seals, which is reported in some cases in Karaburuni peninsula and Sazani Island. The area is occasionally visited also by the common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*).

In the marine waters of this area the presence of the loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta* has also been recorded. This area seems to be an important migrating corridor for the loggerhead turtle. Rocky substrates, in particular the high cliffs of Karaburuni and Sazani, are ideal for nesting pelagic seabirds, e.g. *Laridae*. The most representative bird species in the Karaburuni peninsula are Egyptian vultures and peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrines*).

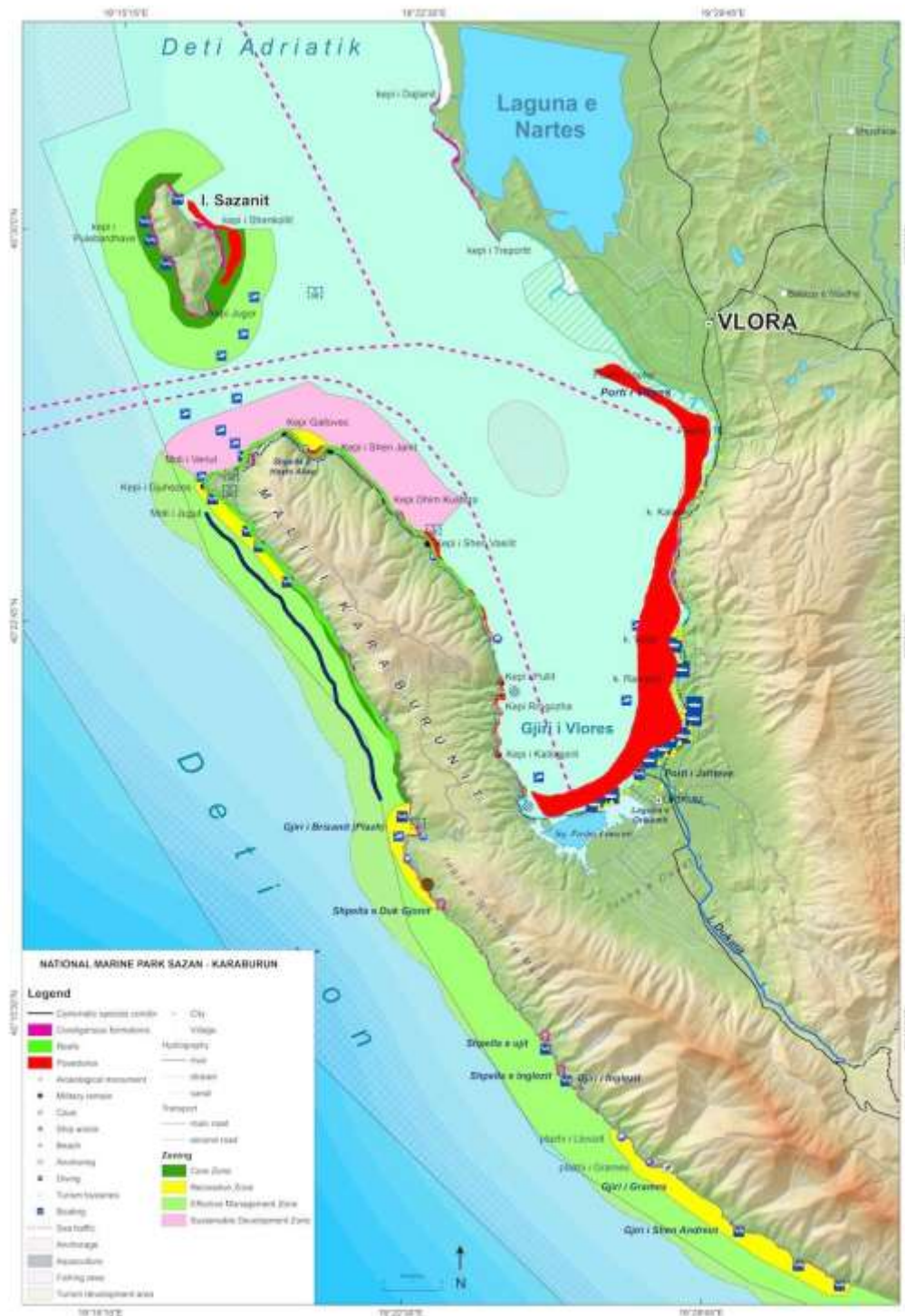


Figure 6: Map of the National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazani (values, threats, and zones)

Source: Management Plan of National Marine Park Karaburun-Sazan

3.3 Cultural Attractions

Karaburuni area and Vlora Bay are well known for their cultural and historical values in the region.

The whole Vlora Region is interesting regarding cultural heritage and traditions and it is part of the remarkable ethno cultural region, called “Labëri”.

Since ancient times, it was a port city called Aulona, known for trade in salt, wine and olive oil, and excelled in the Middle Ages as a center for iron works, arms and bitumen extraction. Today Vlora City and the surrounding areas offer a mixture of natural and cultural attractions, which are a great potential for a sustainable touristic offer.

In Vlora city there are three museums, the Museum of National Independence, the Museum of Historic Relics (or Museum of History) and the Ethnographic Museum. Additionally, the Mosques of Plumbi and Muradies are attractive old buildings in the city. The Region maintains the tradition of IsoPolyphony, which is a form of group singing by men mostly, classified by UNESCO in 2005 as a masterpiece of the oral and intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

The surrounding areas of Vlora Region offer some important and interesting cultural attractions like following:

- The ancient City of Oriku (IV century BC) is located on the Paleokastra hill, 24 km from Vlora city, near Oriku town. In the fifth century, BC, it has been an important port in the Adriatic area and important during the civil war of Cesar and Pompeu. The most part of the ancient Oriku lies under water in the nearby lagoon. In this area there are numerous caves, an amphitheater from the 1st century, the Tower of Abas Aliu and Marmiroi church.
- In Tragjasi, that lies 8 km from the coastal road Vlore-Sarande, the Castle of Gjon Bocari and the ruins of the old village of Tragjas are situated.
- Near the village of Ploca, along the road Vlora-Tepelene, a part of the archaeological area of Amantia city (V century BC) is situated.

- The medieval Castle of Kanina is situated on the hill (600 m over the sea level), in the Eastern part of Vlora city. The area contains ruins of different periods and offers an amazing view of Vlora Bay and Vlora City.
- The Complex of Zvernec, beside amazing nature offers the Church of St. Mary's Monastery of 17th century AD, Castle of Triport and ancient underwater wall (IV century BC).

In/near to Oriku Administrative Unit there are some of the above mentioned cultural attractions like: The Castle of Gjon Boçari in Tragjas, the Tower of Dervish Aliu in Dukat, the Church of Marmiro in Oriku and the Cave of Haxhi Ali in Karaburuni.

Oriku, has been an important economic and cultural center in the Mediterranean during the ancient Greek and Roman periods. Several archaeological and historical remains are present in Oriku lagoon, Vlora bay and Karaburuni, e.g. Grama bay and some caves that are interesting for tourists.

- Grama Bay is situated in the south-western coast of Karaburuni peninsula; it is a former famous harbor since antiquity. On the rocks of Grama Bay there are abundant inscriptions in old Greek and Latin languages, dating more than 2000 years. This bay is one of the richest "rocky diaries" in the Mediterranean.
- Underwater of Karaburuni holds a considerable number of sunken ships and many archaeological objects. There are numerous shipwrecks, mainly on the western coast (including from the two World Wars), as well as amphorae close to cape of St. Nikolla on the eastern coast of Sazani island. Three shipwrecks in Vlora bay and two ancient quarries (one located north of Pasha Liman has sculptured red heads from the classical period) on the eastern coast are reported in the area.

Historical and archaeological values of the area, combined with natural attractions offer a great potential for sustainable tourism development, by organizing packaged guided tours and developing alternative nature based activities like hiking, snorkeling, diving, bird watching, mountain biking etc.



Figure 7: Map of cultural attractions in Vlorë County

Source: Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania



Old Oriku – Orikum (INCA)



Haxhi Ali Cave - Karaburun Peninsula (INCA)



Wreck- Underwater (UNDP)



Star fish – Underwater (UNDP)



Red Coral- Underwater (UNDP)



Marmiroi Church- Orikum (UNDP)

Figure 8. Natural and historical attractions from the area

3.4 Tourism Offer

The potential for nature-based and ecotourism development has not yet been developed to a larger extent in Vlora Bay, Oriku area and Karaburun-Sazan MPA.

Existing recreational activities like diving, tour boating, hiking etc. within and around the MPA used to be poorly organized and the tourism offer is based mostly on “Sea, Sand & Sun”.

The most offered touristic services are accommodation (hotels, bungalows, rooms for rent and apartments), bars and restaurants. Vlora bay is characterized by a lot of hotels and restaurants built in the last 15 years (legally and illegally) and some tourist villages in Oriku and Rradhima, offering food and accommodation and other sea leisure activities.

According to the “Assessment of the tourism assets of Vlora county”, there are 86 hotels in Vlora Municipality (Administrative Units of Vlora and Oriku), namely 48 hotels in Vlora town, 24 hotels in Rradhima, 9 hotels in Oriku, 1 hotel in Tragjas and 4 hotels in Dukat. Also there are 104 guesthouses/rented apartments/rooms, from Vlora town to Llogara. According the report “Nature based activities for Vlora region”, there are about 75 registered facilities with a total capacity of 1.360 rooms and 3.530 beds that offer accommodation for visitors from Vlora to Llogara. Many unrecorded private rooms add up to these figures. Concerning the campsites, these records show that there are 2 campsites located in Oriku area and 1 campsite in Vlora town. From Vlora town to Llogara, there are respectively 146 restaurants and coffee bars.

The existence of a moratorium on sailing boats and lack of proper regulations have prevented the development of the charter boat business during the last years in the bay. On February 2013 the moratorium was abrogated and actually this business is experiencing a boost. During the peak season (June-August), daily trips are offered mostly towards Karaburun Peninsula and Sazani Island, by 3 big boats with a capacity of 32 persons - “Teuta”, 80 - “Black Pearl”, and 60 - “Regina Blu” and some other small ones with the capacity of 8-10 persons. The excursion boats depart from different parts of the bay, such as Triport, Vlora Harbour, Rradhima, and sometimes this service is

offered by hotels who own small boats. The boat rental business is also developing quickly where tourists may rent inflatable boats for daily trips to the MPA. Blooming of this business is becoming another issue of concern among park authorities as they are affecting nature protection and sustainable development.

Diving is poorly practiced by Albanians and attracts mainly international divers. There are a limited number of diving operators that provide diving service in the Karaburun area. Five associations located in Vlora, Orikum and Radhime offer diving lessons, equipment and diving guides. Their capacity varies from 3-4 divers up to 10 divers. There are two entities and two individual instructors offering scuba diving service to tourists in area of Karaburuni peninsula. Their activities include diving lessons, guided diving in different areas within the bay and professional diving services for different purposes. These are offered mostly to international tourists. Diving is not yet regulated due to lack of proper regulations, organization between operators, professional infrastructure and proper marketing.

The tour operators active in the area are mainly working independently and they are not organized through associations for cooperation and coordination of tourism issues.

In Vlora town there is only one travel agency offering licensed tourism transport to different places of Karaburun peninsula (Grama and Shen Vasil beaches, Haxhi Ali cave), Dhermi and Himara. In Vlora town 12 other travel agencies are operating and none of them offers excursions in the Vlora region, but they mostly offer travel services and sell tourism packages for other abroad destinations. Some of the hotels in Vlora bay offer hiking on demand, but it is not a licensed activity. Two operators offer parachuting or skydiving. Only two rent-a-car companies operate in Vlora town.

The number of tourists in Vlora bay and visitors to Karaburun-Sazan MPA is rather unknown but it is considered to be approximately 1 million during the summer season in whole Vlora region. There are no official mechanisms to measure the number of tourists. There is a considerable lack or fragmented data in public administrations related to



tourism. Actually, considering the above facts and a lack of a touristic information center in Vlora city, the Vlora Administration of Protected Areas is planning to set up an information center (which will be co-financed through international assistance). The information center will help tourists get informed on the MPA and touristic activities and it will also collect information on the number of visitors.

In general, touristic offer in Vlora bay is poorly organized and not stable. During summer season, the Karaburun-Sazan MPA is visited by tourists through daily tours, but they still visit it out of curiosity or for sun bathing.

To help the development and the establishment of other nature based activities, a series of important documents have been produced in the last 5 years by different governmental and non-governmental institutions. In 2011, the Strategic Plan of Vlora Region considered the development of tourism based on natural and historical resources, as a leading sector and the principal catalyst of the local economy. Afterwards, especially for the area of Karaburun-Sazan MPA, INCA with the support of different donors developed two reports on the “Potential of Ecotourism in the area of Karaburun-Sazan Marine National Park” (2012) and the “Assessment of nature-based tourism business operative in Vlora and Orikum municipalities” (2014). In 2013, UNDP developed the report “Overview on tourism and ecotourism potential to Karaburun-Sazan Marine Coastal Protected Area” and in the same year GIZ developed the “Assessment of the tourism assets of Vlora County.”

All the studies make an analysis of the tourism market and inventory of the actual tourism services and suggest development of best sustainable tourism models in the area, through engagement of proper stakeholders and establishment of different mechanisms.

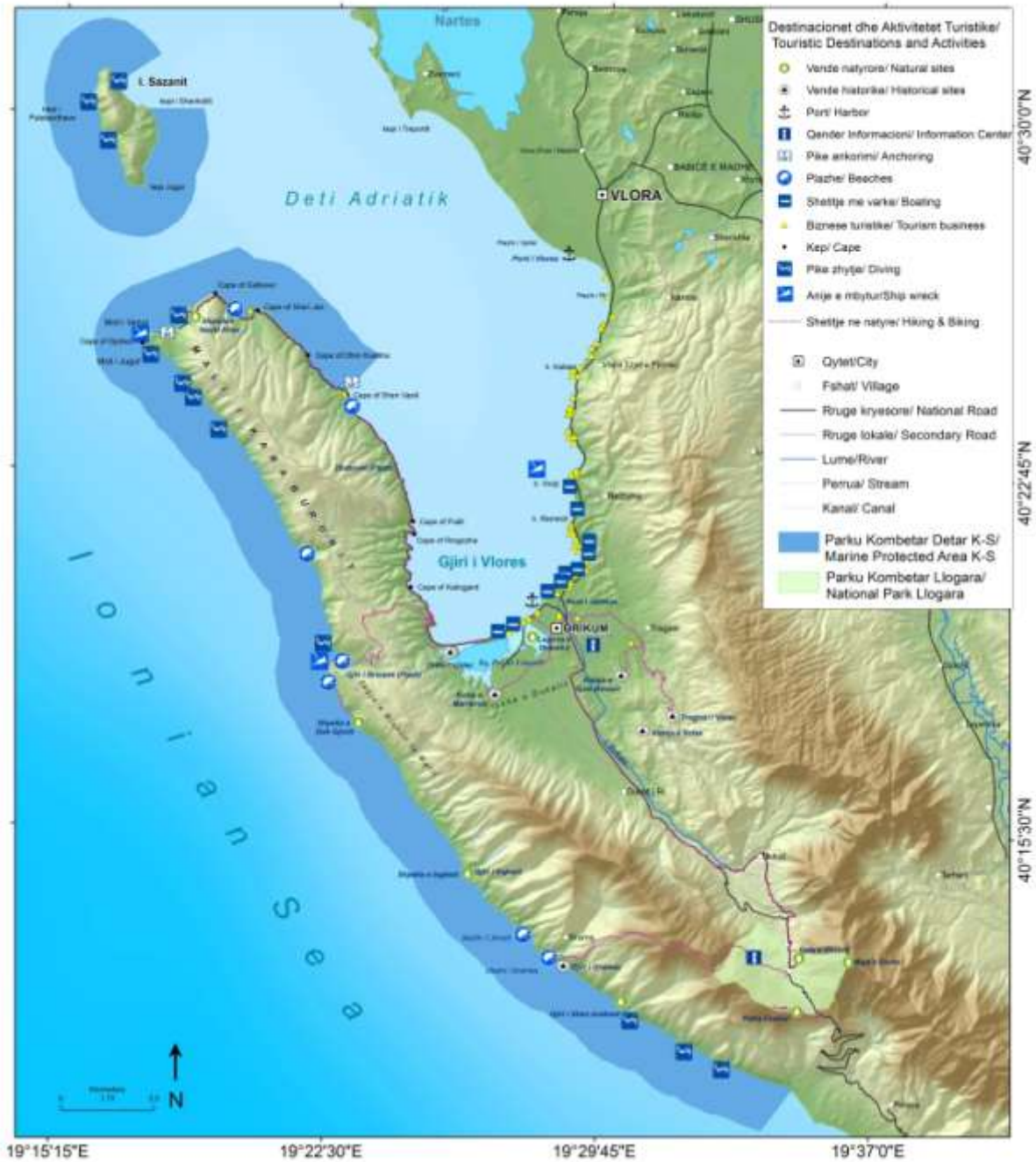


Figure 9: Map of Nature Based activities distribution in the Karaburun-Sazan MPA

Source: Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania



St. Vasil Bay - Karaburun Peninsula



Tour Boats – Karaburun Peninsula



Hiking – Karaburun Peninsula



Camping- Karaburun Peninsula



Diving-Karaburun Peninsula



hiking trail – St.Vasil Bay

Figure 10. Nature based Touristic activities in Karaburun-Sazan MPA

3.5 Visitor Experience

In 2015 INCA developed the study "Visitor Survey in Vlora Bay and Karaburun-Sazan MPA", to assess the level of visitor satisfaction on the actual tourism offer in Vlora bay, Orikum area and Karaburun-Sazan MPA.

The study is based on the outcomes of the questionnaire prepared by a socio-economic expert and under the supervision of the international tourism expert. Now that the study is completed, the questionnaire is available and can be used as a model for all interested institutions responsible for tourism. Since official tourism statistical data is very fragmented in time and type of data, INCA designed the questionnaire as an integrated platform that, if used annually, it would generate a complete dataset on tourism in Vlora bay.

In total, 601 interviews, with 451 national tourists and emigrants and 150 international tourists were conducted. The selection was made randomly from Vlora city to Orikum in three weeks during the summer season 2015.

The model of the questionnaire can be found in Annex A.

According to the study:

- The Vlora bay is generally frequented by different national and international tourists. National tourists are mostly coming from different cities of Albania, dominated by Tirana. The highest number of international tourists is from Italy with 11.6%, followed by tourists coming from Kosovo and other different European countries and USA as well.
- 40.9% of tourists are 18-28 years old and 27.3% are 29-39 years old. This indicates that Vlora bay during summer season is frequented mostly by young people that are 18-39 years old.
- 98.3% of interviewed tourists stay for 4-7 days. The rest, mostly families, stay up to 30 days.

- Most of tourists prefer accommodation in houses/apartments and rented rooms. These kinds of accommodations, as opposed to hotels, most of the time are not registered or controlled by the local authorities, hence the quality of the services cannot be checked and controlled.
- 50.6% of respondents were travelling with their families. This shows that the Vlora Bay is more preferred for the family tourism.
- Most of the information on the destination is transmitted through recommendations from friends, and less through internet.
- Among nature based activities that tourists plan to do in Vlora Bay, swimming was in the first place, then boat trips and scuba diving. Other activities were less preferred because they are not very much developed and promoted in the area.
- About 72% of respondents have information on the existence of the Karaburun-Sazan Marine Park. They are informed mostly through the television, tourist guides (foreign tourists) and internet. 33% of Albanian and 45% of foreign respondents have visited the Karaburun-Sazan MPA.
- The most preferable activities for respondents are cave exploration, tour boats, swimming and diving.
- Respondents had a level of dissatisfaction related to the need to improve infrastructure, cleanliness and touristic services in Vlora bay.

4 Sustainable Tourism Management Plan

4.1 Vision for 2025

Vision for 2025

In 2025, Karaburun-Sazan will be a Marine Protected Area (MPA) that safeguards its natural resources, biodiversity and historical values through a sustainable tourism development. This will have positive impacts on the local community, who supports and shares the benefits of a sustainable tourism development in and around the MPA. This vision will be reached through effective management and a participating local community that is aware of the MPA, its values and the importance of its protection to ensure sustainable tourism in the long run.

Vision is a long term objective for the development of the destination in the next 10 years. All management objectives and management activities contribute to achieving the long term vision of the area.

This vision has been elaborated at the beginning of the SEA-Med Project and it has been additionally framed during the stakeholder consultation process, by referring to the vision of the Karaburun-Sazani Management Plan. The defined vision is comprehensive and takes into account stakeholder interests, by preserving at the same time natural resources and encouraging sustainable development.

4.2 Sustainable Management Plan Themes, Objectives and Activities

The content of the STMP is designed based on 5 themes, associated with respective objectives and activities. Indicators of objectives enable monitoring of achieving management objectives. Objectives are being achieved through the implementation of planned management activities. Indicators of activities implementation enable monitoring of the STMP implementation.

The chapters below contain activities, timeline for their implementation in the next five years and implementing partners. Considering that the STMP has been developed using a participatory approach, some activities are planned to be implemented even without the MPA authority (RAPA), especially the ones relevant for tourist agencies. Due to limited human and financial resources, activities are prioritized.

STMP themes are:

- Theme A: Touristic Offer
- Theme B: Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations
- Theme C: Marketing, Information and Communication
- Theme D: Awareness Raising, Education and Training
- Theme E: Cooperation and Management in and around the MPA

4.2.1 Theme A: Touristic Offer

The sustainable nature based touristic offer in Vlora Bay is poorly organized and not exploited, although the area offers such opportunity. Studies indicate that existing recreational activities within and around the Karaburun-Sazan MPA are randomly developed. A moratorium on sailing of private boats, which has been lifted in the recent years and lack of proper regulations have prevented development of the charter boat business. Diving and snorkeling is practiced mainly by international and professional divers and the activity is not yet regulated. Hiking in the surrounding sites is sometimes offered by hotels as an additional service. In short, the tourism offer in Vlora Bay and Orikum is mainly sea, sun and accommodation.

Developed studies show that touristic operators have a good approach toward conservation and nature-based touristic activities, but they lack the will for implementing them; lack confidence on the sustainability of the tourism market; are not qualified in tourism and don't know the tourism market; and no collaboration between operators and tourism operators associations exist so far.

Diversification and professionalization of the touristic offer is necessary to help address above mentioned issues. It can be done through a good promotion, developing touristic packages with nature-based activities in Karaburun-Sazan MPA or including them in existing national and international ones, promoting certification schemes like Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC), European Tourism Indicator System for Sustainable Tourism Destinations (ETIS), Label Guide by Ecotrans (<http://destinet.eu/who-who/civil-society-ngos/ecotrans/publications/guide-through-label-jungle-1/>) and Authentic Albania Quality Mark, organizing trainings with touristic operators and establishing collaboration mechanisms with other national and international tourism operators.

THEME A: Touristic Offer

GOAL A: Develop, professionalize and diversify the touristic offer in Vlora, Orikum and Karaburun-Sazan MPA including sustainable tourism practices and nature-based activities

Smart Objective A.1: By 2020 a diversified and quality touristic offer in Vlora, Orikum and Karaburun-Sazan MPA is visible, accessible and bookable

Objective Indicator A.1: Type of touristic offer available (what is offered, who is offering it), level of accessibility (how visible, accessible and bookable offer is) and visitor satisfaction with the offer

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Lead and Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
A.1.1	Develop touristic packages including activities related to Karaburun-Sazan MPA	At least 2 bookable MPA-packages are created	High	x	x				Tour Operators, Local Tourism Association (potential), Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Regional Tourism Office, ATA
A.1.2	Create exemplary touristic packages including nature-based activities	At least 2 packages are created	High	x	x				Tour Operator, Local Tourism Association (potential), Regional Tourism Office, National Tourism Agency, Chamber of Commerce, Regional Administration of Protected Areas
A.1.3	Promote and encourage certification schemes among tourism service providers in order to assess and secure sustainability of tourism businesses	Promotional events are organized by tourism operators on certification schemes	Medium		x	x	x		Tour Operators, ATA, National and International Certification Agencies
A.1.4	Promote sustainable tourism activities in Karaburun-Sazan MPA	Information distributed through selected	High	x	x	x	x	X	Regional Tourism Office, National Tourism Agency, National Agency of Protected Areas, National Coast

	through different communication means (social media, fairs, TV, radio etc.)	communication means								Agency, Media, CSOs
A.1.5	Initiate collaboration with international tour operators to include Karaburun-Sazan-packages into their offer	International tour operators are approached via E-mail, at fairs etc.	Medium					x	X	ATA, Local Tourism Associations (potential) , International Tour Operators

Smart Objective A.2: Within the next 5 years touristic operators and businesses are trained and informed about sustainable tourism practices and nature-based activities in the area and supported to collaborate and coordinate their activities

Objective Indicator A2: Percentage of touristic operators and businesses that were trained on sustainable tourism practices and nature-based activities, ways how they cooperate (type of way, frequency, number of operators and business)

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
A.2.1	Provide a set of training programs for local and national tour operators on sustainable tourism practices, quality standards, certification schemes, tour packaging nature-based activities, MPA values & resources	2-3 Training programs are developed and trainings are offered and conducted	High	x	x	x	x	x	Tour operators, CSOs, International Tourism Agencies , Vlora Municipality,
A.2.2	Establish collaboration mechanisms with local and national tour operators and tourism businesses	A proposal for collaboration mechanisms is developed and communicated	Medium		x	x			ATA, Local Tourism Association (potential), CSOs, Tour Operators



4.2.2 Theme B: Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations

In the recent years coastal areas are characterized by increased number of constructions, mainly hotels, second houses and restaurants which are compromising ecosystem services and conservation. The same can be found in Vlorë Bay. In the last 20 years, city's population has been doubled and water purification and waste management plants are urgently needed. During summer season tourists are tripling the population in the city and surrounding areas. Main problems of the tourism sector are lack of tourism planning and capacity, problems related to services, deficiencies in infrastructure, as well as lack of coordination between central and local government. Unsustainable urbanization and uncontrolled tourism development is compromising protected areas habitat quality and tourism impact is becoming visible. Until recently, protected areas, including Karaburun-Sazan MPA, were under the administration of the Forestry Directorate. They had basic management competences and the staff was not specialized for the management of MPAs, so borders and zoning of protected areas were not respected in general. Actually, National Agency of Protected Areas and their local representative, Regional Agency of Protected Areas, new institutions which were only established recently (2015), are responsible now for the management of these sites, focusing on conservation, sustainable development and promotion.

The STMP highlights these issues that are actually compromising sustainable tourism development in Karaburun-Sazan MPA and addresses actions that may help stakeholders (local RAPA administration, tourism authorities, local operators etc.) find solutions, by prioritizing them.



Firstly, it is recommended, that RAPA starts managing the situation in the MPA, by setting up clear regulations for users, ensuring law enforcement, deploying proper infrastructure (zoning and information center) and introducing fee system, in order to secure conservation of the site. As the MPA is not declared for strict preservation (except for the core zone which covers only 6.29% of the area), supporting RAPA and tourist operators deploy sustainable touristic infrastructure can help the establishment of nature based touristic activities, which are appropriate for the MPA status and respect the zoning system. Outside of the MPA borders stakeholders should address the following issues that affect the MPA as well: regulate and control tour boats operation, lobby the government for water purification plants, waste management and recycling initiatives.

THEME B: Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations

GOAL B: Support the local administration, the conservation partners and the tourism sector to improve the touristic infrastructure, to ensure an easy access to selected sites of the MPA and to agree on regulations preserving the natural and cultural values of the area

Smart Objective B.1: The accessibility to selected, elaborated sites of the MPA is ensured within the next 5 years while code of conducts and regulations are set up to avoid negative impacts within the MPA

Objective Indicator B.1: Accessibility of the MPA (access is enabled and how it is regulated), code of conduct is developed and respected (number of warnings/fines), surveillance and law enforcement are regular (type and number of offences, percentage of irregularities from regular surveillance activities, etc.)

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
B.1.1	Facilitate clear and easy procedures for MPA-access of tour operators (by sea and land)	Regulations for MPA-access are set up and communicated	High	x	x				National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Ministry of Defence, Tour operators, Fishing Inspectorate
B.1.2	Facilitate access for tourists to the MPA by land and sea	Regulations for MPA-access are set up and communicated	High	x	x				National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Tour operators, Media
B.1.3	Introduce appropriate user fees (e.g. entrance fees) to support nature conservation through tourism	Different types of user fees are analysed and considered; a concept on their implementation is drafted	Medium		x	x	x		National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Tour operators
B.1.4	Develop and implement a code of conduct for touristic activities within	Measures are developed and implemented to	High	x	x	x			National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Administration of Protected

	Karaburun-Sazan MPA	prevent or minimize negative impacts of touristic activities within MPA							Areas, Tour Operators, Tourists
B.1.5	Secure monitoring and law enforcement to avoid negative impacts of touristic activities inside Karaburun-Sazan MPA	Responsibilities are determined, fixed and agreed within NAPA	High	x	x	x			National Agency of Protected Areas

Smart Objective B.2: Within the next 5 years the process of the development of visitor infrastructure and implementation of up-to-date environmental standards, techniques and models has been supported

Objective Indicator B.2: Number and type of existing visitor infrastructure, visitor satisfaction with the use of infrastructure, investments in the wastewater treatment (type, number, funding), number and type of environmental sustainability standards promotional activities and implemented standard (type of service provider, type of standard, number of investments)

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
B.2.1	Develop and implement relevant infrastructure for specific nature-based tourism activities in and around Karaburun-Sazan MPA (e.g. mooring buoys or mobile harbours, underwater and terrestrial trails)	Nature-based tourism infrastructure is analysed, gaps are identified, infrastructure is built	High	x	x	x	x	x	National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Tour Operators, CSOs, Local Tourism Association (potential), Donors
B.2.2	Assess accommodation capacities to see the potential and need for improvements in terms of sustainability (e.g.	List of accommodation is compiled and gaps in terms of sustainability are	Medium	x	x	x			CSOs, Tour Operators, Local Tourism Associations (potential), Donors

	water reduction, energy savings, recycling)	marked							
B.2.3	Initiate a discussion on water treatment and sewage management for tourism stakeholders	Meeting with representatives of Vlorë County Council and Vlorë Municipality is organized	High	X					National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Agency of Protected Areas, County Council, Vlorë Municipality, National Spatial Planning Agency, Environmental Agency, Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship, Ministry of Urban Development
B.2.4	Assess the means of transport used for arrival, departure and local mobility of tourists to design more sustainable alternatives and activities (bike rental, car sharing, bus and train services)	A tourist survey on their means of transport is done	Low		x	x			National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Agency of Protected Areas, CSOs
B.2.5	Setting up of an information centre on Karaburun-Sazan in Oriku Municipality	MPA-Information Centre is officially opened to the public	High	x					National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Agency of Protected Areas, Tour Operators, Vlorë Municipality, County Council,
B.2.6	Promote environmental sustainability among service providers	Promotional activities have been implemented, such as a presentation of the environmental sustainability tools or investments	Low		x	x			National Agency of Protected Areas, Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Local Tourism Association (potential), CSOs, Donors, Tour Operators

4.4.3 Theme C: Marketing, Information and Communication

Vlora city has always been considered as an important touristic destination in Albania, for its natural, historical and diversity of attractions, but still there is no organized touristic offer at regional, national or international level. Attempts are constantly made by governmental, non-governmental or private agencies, but no significant steps are undertaken in this regard. The new government (2013) considers sustainable tourism as one of the most important economic sectors in the country and is obviously pushing for new marketing attempts. Tourism institutions are working to promote Albania on international touristic market. However, findings show that tourism institutions and other relevant structures are still missing the synergy and common understanding; protected areas, as important sustainable tourism destinations, are not mentioned in the National strategy of Tourism.

In the case of Karaburun-Sazan MPA, it should be promoted as an authentic nature based touristic destination at national and international level. More work should be done at local level related to communicating values, promoting nature-based touristic activities and creating regional touristic packages that include Karaburun-Sazan MPA.

THEME C: Marketing, Information and Communication

GOAL C: Improving the communication among relevant stakeholders and tourists and supporting the marketing efforts to achieve a broader understanding of Vlora, Orikum and Karaburun-Sazan MPA as a sustainable tourism destination

Smart Objective C.1: By 2020, the level of information about nature-based tourism activities and sustainable tourism in Karaburun-Sazan and its surrounding area among tourists and locals has increased

Objective Indicator C.1: Percentage of users (visitors, service providers, local inhabitants) that are better informed on nature-based tourism activities and sustainable tourism (surveys)

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
C.1.1	Develop and display information on Karaburun-Sazan MPA, its values, interesting sites and nature-based activities (diving, hiking, tour boating etc.) through leaflets, boards, websites, etc to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism	Information on MPA and potential activities is compiled and published	High	x	x				Regional Administration of Protected Areas, National Tourism Agency, CSOs, Tour Operators, Donors, Media
C.1.2	Create content on sustainable tourism of Karaburun-Sazan MPA in the planned information center (interior design and education) (e.g. offer, tour operators, accommodation and transport) (B.1.6)	Content is created and displayed in the MPA information center	High	x					Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Local Tourism Association (potential), Tour Operators, Donors

C.1.3	Promote and support nature-based touristic initiatives and activities by initiating a local event or open day	A preparatory meeting with tour operators and local authorities for local event or open day is organized every year	Medium	x	x	x	x	x	Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Local Tourism Association (potential), Tour Operators, Vlora Municipality, County Council
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Smart Objective C.2: By 2020, Karaburun-Sazan MPA and the surrounding touristic area is promoted and on its way to become known as sustainable tourism destination at national and international level

Objective Indicator C.2: Percentage of visitors that come to the area due to the campaigns and fairs and that recognize the MPA as a sustainable tourism destination (visitor surveys)

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
C.2.1	Develop promotional campaigns on Karaburun-Sazan MPA and its sustainable tourism offer (for social media, TV, radio, web)	MPA & Tourism Campaign is developed and ready to run	High	x	x				Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Regional Tourism Office, Vlora Municipality, Tour Operators, CSOs, ATA, Local Tourism Association (potential), Local community
C.2.2	Support the promotion of local products, food and services to tourists (e.g. via new brand, local tours, manifestations, local fairs or events)	Meeting co-organized with hotel- and restaurant owners and local administration and ideas discussed	Low				x	x	Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Tour Operators, CSOs, Local Tourism Association (potential), International Organizations, Local Community
C.2.3	Promote Karaburun-Sazan MPA and its surrounding area as a sustainable tourism destination in national	PR plan for promoting sustainable tourism in Karaburun-Sazan MPA is developed	Medium		x	x	x	x	National Agency of Protected Areas, National Tourism Agency, Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Vlora Municipality, County Council, Chamber of Commerce, ATA, Tour Operators, Local Tourism Association

	and international fairs								(potential)
C.2.4	Develop a marketing strategy for Karaburun-Sazani MPA	The document produced and used by relevant stakeholders	High	x	x	x	x	x	Regional Administration of Protected Areas, CSOs, International Organizations, University
C.2.5	Assess and identify new marketing methods for tourists, who are interested in eco-/ nature-based tourism	Meeting on marketing issues organized for tour operators, new marketing methods identified	Low			x	x		Regional Agency of Protected Areas, CSOs, International Organizations, Tour Operators, Local Tourism Association (potential)
C.2.6	Authorities like Municipality or County Council coordinates development of an event calendar and shares it with institutions, businesses and operators to foster collaboration among them	Event calendar is set up and updated yearly, jointly with tour operators and institutions	High	x	x	x	x	x	Vlora Municipality, Vlora County Council, Regional Agency of Protected Areas, Tour Operators

4.2.4 Theme D: Awareness Raising, Education and Training

Karaburun-Sazan MPA is the first MPA in Albania, recently established (2010), hence its acknowledgement by the wider public, related institutions and tourists should be accomplished.

Awareness raising and education are important tasks of the MPA authority (RAPA). Visitor Survey in Vlora Bay and Karaburun-Sazan MPA showed that about 72% of visitors have information on the existence of the Karaburun-Sazan Marine Park. Considering the fact that the Karaburun-Sazani MPA has been established in 2010 and management authority in 2015. Most of the visitors are aware of the MPA. The survey states that visitors are informed mostly through the television, tourist guides (foreign tourists) and internet. This means that the efforts made in public until now have been fruitful.

Education regarding MPA values has mostly been lacking. This is again due to the fact that the MPA authority (RAPA) has only recently started operating. Regional administration of PA and tourism sector representatives should be trained on the MPA values and tourism potential. Awareness raising campaigns should be undertaken among local population and tourists on natural and historical values and sustainable tourism potential. The Regional Administration of Protected Areas can organize education activities on sustainable and responsible tourism for tourists and local population.

THEME D: Awareness Raising, Education and Training

GOAL D: Raise awareness and improve the knowledge on the values and benefits of the MPA and its resources

Smart Objective D.1: By 2020, the knowledge on natural and historical values of the MPA, its touristic potential and offer among the local community and tourists has increased

Objective Indicator D.1: Percentage of users (visitors, service providers, local inhabitants, etc.) that recognize and/or contribute to the conservation of the MPA values and benefits

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
D.1.1	Develop and implement a communication campaign on Karaburun-Sazan-MPA and its natural/historical values to raise awareness among local population and tourists	Communication campaign is produced and used as a guideline	High	X	X	x	x	x	Regional Administration of Protected Areas , CSOs, International Organizations, National Agency of Tourism, Media
D.1.2	Develop and organize capacity building trainings on MPA values and sustainable tourism development, with regional administration of PA and tourism representatives	Trainings and workshops are organized	Medium	x	x				National Agency of Protected Areas , Regional Administration of Protected Areas, Local Community, Tourism Operators, Local Tourism Association (potential)
D.1.3	Use and promote participatory approach to involve different stakeholders on MPA- and tourism-related projects	Pre-season meetings for all interested tourism and MPA-related stakeholders are organized	High	x	x	x	x	x	Regional Administration of Protected Areas , Regional Tourism Office, Vlora Municipality, Vlora County Council, Chamber of Commerce, Tour Operators, Environmental Inspectorate, Marinas Authorities, Border Police etc.



4.2.5 Theme E: Cooperation and Management in and around the MPA

The administration of protected areas (NAPA) was established in February 2015 as the highest authority responsible for the administration and management of protected areas in Albania. The local representative, Vlora Regional Administration of Protected Areas is responsible for the Karaburun-Sazan MPA management. The new institution, should start collaboration and coordination of activities with tourism institutions and tourism operators in order to contribute to conservation, assist in establishment of nature based touristic activities, and control/manage touristic activities. Related activities can include regular meetings with local stakeholders before and after tourist season, establishing and supporting cooperation with different authorities, including police, inspections, military, local and regional authorities, etc.

Attempts should be made by PA staff, to set up contacts with other Mediterranean MPAs, with a goal of capacity building and sharing experiences like WWF Med-PO. The local PA administration should apply for grants to establish a long-term financing mechanism to support nature conservation through tourism.

THEME E: Cooperation and Management in and around the MPA

GOAL E: Ensure a cross-sectoral cooperation on touristic issues related to the MPA and an effective management through setting-up mandatory responsibilities

Smart Objective E.1: Within the next 5 years, the cooperation among stakeholders of the tourism sector, local administration and nature conservation has been strengthened and institutionalized

Objective Indicator E.1: Percentage of actively involved stakeholders in processes related to planning and development of the destination, number and type of joint activities undertaken

Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners
				1	2	3	4	5	
E.1.1	Establish coordination mechanism with tourism and environmental institutions, local authorities and touristic operators	Cooperation agreements and Memorandum of Understanding are signed between institutions or organizations	High	x	x	x			National and International CSOs, National and International Donors , International MPAs, National Agency of Tourism , Local Institutions, National Agency of Protected Areas , Regional Administration of Protected Areas,
E.1.2	Strengthen the joint vision for a sustainable tourism development with local and national stakeholders by jointly improving the STMP	Yearly meetings are organized on the implementation status of the current STMP	High	X	X	X	X	x	Regional Agency of Protected Areas, Local Tourism Office, Vlora Municipality, County Council, Chamber of Commerce, Tour, Environmental Agency, Fishing Inspectorate, Operators Representatives, Local Tourism Association (potential)
E.1.3	Initiate collaboration with other Mediterranean MPAs by sharing experiences on sustainable tourism	Set up meetings from distance (Skype) or meet at an existing event with relevant partners of SEA-Med	Medium	X	x				SEA-Med Team, Mediterranean MPAs, Regional Administration of Protected Areas , CSOs

	development	project as first contact persons								
E.1.4	Support local group meetings to enable conservation and management of natural resources inside the MPA sustainably	Meetings with local groups are organized on conservation and management of natural resources	Medium	x	x	x	x	x		Regional Administration of Protected Areas , Tour Operators, Local community, CSOs , Universities, fishermen, Fishing Inspectorate, Local Tourism Association (potential)
Smart Objective E.2: Within the timeframe of the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan, its implementation and monitoring has been regulated and models of financing nature conservation through tourism have been elaborated										
Objective Indicator E.2: Regular monitoring and reporting of STMP implementation (annual reporting), type and scope of nature-based touristic activities actively supported by government, type and number of developed and implemented financing mechanisms for nature conservation through tourism, no. of projects applied and implemented related to sustainable financing										
Activity-No.	ACTIVITY	Implementation Indicators	Priority	Timeframe (year of implementation)					Partners	
				1	2	3	4	5		
E.2.1	Work on prioritizing nature-based touristic activities through state politics (e.g. taxing system)	Meetings with the Ministries of Tourism and Finance are organized	Medium			x	x	x		National Agency of Protected Areas , Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship
E.2.2	Define potential donors and apply for grants to establish a long-term financing mechanism to support nature conservation through tourism	Relevant financing mechanisms are discussed and prioritized and a list of potential donors and current grants is compiled; Projects are submitted for financing	High		x	x	x	x		National Agency of Protected Areas , Regional Agency of Protected Areas, National and International Donors, Tour Operators

5 Finances and Monitoring

5.1 Financial Resources

In order to implement the STMP it is necessary to secure financial resources, which are planned to be secured from different sources.

Implementation of the activities will be financed by NAPA/RAPA, regional and local authorities, private sector, etc. External funding sources are planned to be secured from national and international funds of different donor agencies, including the EU. Potential financing sources are also different trust funds, donations, etc. related to nature conservation and sustainable development.

The overall costs of the suggested activities in the STMP might not exceed 475,000€ (as an estimation). **Table 5** shows a detailed description of the cost and origin of funding for every activity. **Table 3** summarizes costs per theme. Theme 2 “Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations” results with the highest cost. While **Table 4** summarizes costs based on priority actions.

Finances are presented according to activities, where for each activity a source of funding and a total cost estimate is given. Finances are also grouped and presented by objectives, priorities and funding sources.

Table 3: Cost of management activities per theme

Themes	Cost (Euro)
Touristic Offer	54,000
Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations	230,000
Marketing, Information and Communication	142,000
Awareness Raising, Education and Training	26,000
Cooperation and Management in and around the MPA	23,000
Total	475,000

Table 4: Cost of management activities per priorities

PRIORITY	COST (EUR)	Percentage
High	308,000	64.8 %
Medium	104,000	21.9 %
Low	63,000	13.2 %
Total	475,000	100 %

Table 5: Financial resources for management activities

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
Theme A: Touristic Offer					
A.1.1	Initiate collaboration with international tour operators to include Karaburun-Sazan-packages into their offer	International tour operators are approached via E-mail, at fairs etc.	External budget	2,000	Basic operational meeting costs
A.1.2	Develop touristic packages including activities related to Karaburun-Sazan MPA	At least 2 bookable MPA-packages are created	External budget	5,000	Meetings, promotional materials
A.1.3	Create exemplary touristic packages including nature-based activities	At least 2 packages are created	External Budget	10, 000	Initial coast of setting up the certification scheme.
A.1.4	Promote and encourage certification schemes among tourism service providers in order to assess and secure sustainability of tourism businesses	Promotional events are organized by tourism operators on certification schemes	State budget	In kind contribution + 2,000	Ministry, Agency, INCA, International organizations – in kind contribution; and 2.000 EUR for operational costs for meetings over 5 years
A.1.5	Promote sustainable tourism activities in Karaburun-Sazan MPA through different	Information distributed through selected communication means	External Budget	20,000	Meetings, travel expenses, promotional tools

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
	communication means (social media, fairs, TV, radio etc.)				
A.2.1	Provide a set of training programs for local and national tour operators on sustainable tourism practices, quality standards, certification schemes, tour packaging nature-based activities, MPA values & resources	2-3 Training programs are developed and trainings are offered and conducted	External budget	20,000	Different trainings developed
A.2.2	Establish collaboration mechanisms with local and national tour operators and tourism businesses	A proposal for collaboration mechanisms is developed and communicated	External budget	5,000	1000 Euro, basic operational cost for a meeting per year in 5 years.
Theme B: Infrastructure, Accessibility and Regulations					
B.1.1	Secure monitoring and law enforcement to avoid negative impacts of touristic activities inside Karaburun-Sazan MPA	Responsibilities are determined, fixed and agreed within NAPA	State budget and External Budget (communication , expertise)	10,000	Expertise, communication and operational costs in 5 years
B.1.2	Facilitate clear and easy procedures for MPA-access of tour operators (by sea and land)	Regulations for MPA-access are set up and communicated	State Budget External Budget-communication , international expertise	2,000	National expertise RAPA and other stakeholders can help implementation
B.1.3	Facilitate access for tourists to the MPA by land and sea	Regulations for MPA-access are set up and communicated	External budget	5,000	National expertise
B.1.4	Introduce appropriate user fees (e.g. entrance fees) to support nature conservation through tourism	Different types of user fees are analysed and considered; a concept on their implementation is drafted	External budget	3,000	Expertise and brochure production

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
B.1.5	Develop and implement a code of conduct for touristic activities within Karaburun-Sazan MPA	Measures are developed and implemented to prevent or minimize negative impacts of touristic activities within MPA	State budget/external budget	In kind contribution	National Agency of Protected Areas, Border Police, Delta Force
B.2.1	Develop and implement relevant infrastructure for specific nature-based tourism activities in and around Karaburun-Sazan MPA (e.g. mooring buoys or mobile harbours, underwater and terrestrial trails)	Nature-based tourism infrastructure is analysed, gaps are identified, infrastructure is built	External budget UNDP, WWF, CEPF State budget	100,000	Feasibility studies, basic in land and marine sustainable touristic infrastructure deployment
B.2.2	Assess accommodation capacities to see the potential and need for improvements in terms of sustainability (e.g. water reduction, energy savings, recycling)	List of accommodation is compiled and gaps in terms of sustainability are marked	State budget/External budget	5,000	RAPA or other local tourism institutions involved in implementing External budget planed for the survey development and operational cost
B.2.3	Initiate a discussion on water treatment and sewage management for tourism stakeholders	Meeting with representatives of Vloa County Council and Vloa Municipality is organized	State budget	2,000	Operational cost for meetings in 5 years
B.2.4	Assess the means of transport used for arrival, departure and local mobility of tourists to design more sustainable alternatives and activities (bike rental, car sharing, bus and train services)	A tourist survey on their means of transport is done	External budget	3,000	RAPA or other local tourism institutions involved in implementing External budget planed for the tourism survey development and operational cost
B.2.5	Setting up of an information centre on Karaburun-	MPA-Information Centre is officially	External and internal budget	50,000	

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
	Sazan in Orikum Municipality	opened to the public			
B.2.6	Promote environmental sustainability service providers	Promotional activities have been implemented, such as a presentation of the environmental sustainability tools or investments	External budget	50,000	
Theme C: Marketing, Information and Communication					
C.1.1	Develop and display information on Karaburun-Sazan MPA, its values, interesting sites and nature-based activities (diving, hiking, tour boating etc.) through leaflets, boards, websites, etc to encourage sustainable and responsible tourism	Information on MPA and potential activities is compiled and published	State budget – MPA website External Budget- leaflets, boards etc.	17,000	Website – 2,000 EUR Design, production, reproduction of leaflets- 5,000 EUR Production of boards – 10,000 EUR
C.1.2	Create content on sustainable tourism of Karaburun-Sazan MPA in the planned information center (interior design and education) (e.g. offer, tour operators, accommodation and transport) (B.1.6)	Content is created and displayed in the MPA information center	External Budget (INCA , UNDP and other donors	30,000	Short Videos, leaflets, brochures production.
C.1.3	Promote and support nature-based touristic initiatives and activities by initiating a local event or open day	A preparatory meeting with tour operators and local authorities for local event or open day is organized every year	External budget	40,000	10. 000 Euro per year (operational expenses and organization of open days), for 4 years
C.2.1	Develop promotional campaigns on Karaburun-Sazan MPA and its sustainable tourism	MPA & Tourism Campaign is developed and ready to run	External budget	15,000	5.000 Euro, hiring Tv or radio time and developing web promotional campaigns in a year, during the

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
	offer (for social media, TV, radio, web)				first 3 years
C.2.2	Support the promotion of local products, food and services to tourists (e.g. via new brand, local tours, manifestations, local fairs or events)	Meeting co-organized with hotel- and restaurant owners and local administration and ideas discussed	External budget	5,000	Meetings and other operational services related to meetings 1.000, for 5 years
C.2.3	Promote Karaburun-Sazan MPA and its surrounding area as a sustainable tourism destination in national and international fairs	PR plan for promoting sustainable tourism in Karaburun-Sazan MPA is developed	External budget	15,000	Preparation of PR and participation in different fairs
C.2.4	Develop a marketing strategy for Karaburun-Sazani MPA	The document produced and used by relevant stakeholders	External budget	10,000	National expertise
C.2.5	Assess and identify new marketing methods for tourists, who are interested in eco-/nature-based tourism	Meeting on marketing issues organized for tour operators, new marketing methods identified	External budget	5,000	Operational services for meetings in 5 years
C.2.6	Authorities like Municipality or County Council coordinates development of an event calendar and shares it with institutions, businesses and operators to foster collaboration among them	Event calendar is set up and updated yearly, jointly with tour operators and institutions	External Budget	5,000	1.000 Euro, for informal meetings and other basic operational costs, during a year, for 5 years
Theme D: Awareness Raising, Education and Training					
D.1.1	Develop and implement a communication campaign on Karaburun-Sazan-	Communication campaign is produced and used as a guideline	External Budget State Budget- information tools on the	15,000	3.000 Euro for media coverage and media advertisement in a year, for 5 years.

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
	MPA and its natural/historical values to raise awareness among local population and tourists		Vlora-RAPA		
D.1.2	Develop and organize capacity building trainings on MPA values and sustainable tourism development, with regional administration of PA and tourism representatives	Trainings and workshops are organized	External Budget	6,000	Design the program and implement one day training twice a year, during the first two years. 2.000 Euro/training. Designing the content 2.000 Euro In kind contribution from national institutions for experience sharing.
D.1.3	Use and promote participatory approach to involve different stakeholders on MPA- and tourism-related projects	Pre-season meetings for all interested tourism and MPA-related stakeholders are organized	External Budget	5,000	At least two pre season meetings are organized with local representatives. 1000 Euro is basic operational expenses included in a year, for 5 years
Theme E: Cooperation and Management in and around the MPA					
E.1.1	Establish coordination mechanism with tourism and environmental institutions, local authorities and touristic operators	Cooperation agreements and Memorandum of Understanding are signed between institutions or organizations	State Budget External Expertise	10,000	2,000 Euro, operational expenses (press conference, round tables etc) for a year in 5 years. In kind contributions from operators or governmental institutions.
E.1.2	Strengthen the joint vision for a sustainable tourism development with local and national stakeholders by jointly improving the STMP	Yearly meetings are organized on the implementation status of the current STMP	State Budget	5,000	1000 Euro stakeholder members meetings and operational expenses for a year, in 5 years.
E.1.3	Initiate collaboration with other Mediterranean	Set up meetings from distance (Skype) or meet at	External Budget /State budget	5,000	Lump sum

Act. No.	Activities	Implementation Indicators	Source of funding	Implementation expenses (EUR)	Explanatory notes
	MPAs by sharing experiences on sustainable tourism development	an existing event with relevant partners of SEA-Med project as first contact persons	SEA-Med, UNDP		
E.1.4	Support local group meetings to enable conservation and management of natural resources inside the MPA sustainably	Meetings with local groups are organized on conservation and management of natural resources	State budget	3,000	1.000 Euro, for meetings and operational expenses, for 3 years. In kind contribution of RAPA Staff members and other local institutions.
E.2.1	Work on prioritizing nature-based touristic activities through state politics (e.g. taxing system)	Meetings with the Ministries of Tourism and Finance are organized	State Budget	In kind contribution	NAPA, RAPA, etc.
E.2.2	Define potential donors and apply for grants to establish a long-term financing mechanism to support nature conservation through tourism	Relevant financing mechanisms are discussed and prioritized and a list of potential donors and current grants is compiled; Projects are submitted for financing	State Budget	In kind contribution	NAPA, RAPA, etc.

5.2 STMP Monitoring

The Goal of the STMP implementation monitoring is to check whether the Sustainable Tourism Management Plan is being effectively implemented and whether set objectives are achieved. Monitoring also enables collecting information through observing impacts of management, based on which management activities will be adapted. Based on the results of monitoring impacts of the Management Plan, regular amendments of the implementation monitoring program will be recommended, to adapt activities of the next year. After five years, the MP implementation and achieved results will be analyzed and a revised or new Sustainable Tourism Management Plan will be developed.

Therefore and regarding the STMP activities for the next 5 years, concrete plans for monitoring and evaluation have been developed and will be implemented.

Table 6 lists the activities needed to monitor the implementation of the STMP and makes a link to STMP activities that are related to that particular monitoring activity.

Table 6: Monitoring of STMP implementation

OBJECTIVE	
Monitor and collect / document results of the management activities and achievement of management objectives.	
M.1 Keep a record of organized workshops and capacity building trainings on sustainable tourism and the relevant number of participants	A.2.1, D.1.3
M.2 Keep a record of attended and held meetings on nature based tourism with different stakeholders and relevant outcomes	A.1.5, C.2.2, D.1.4, E.1.2, E.1.4, E.2.1
M.3 Keep a record of participation in promotional, education and awareness raising activities on the MPA and tourism development (media, fairs, etc.)	C.2.3, C.2.7, D.1.1, D.1.2
M.4 Promote, monitor and record the business certification process	A.1.3, C.2.4
M.5 Keep record of the number of collaboration mechanisms established between actors	A.2.2, A.2.3, E.1.1, E.1.3
M.6 Keep a record of developed rules and accessibility procedures in the MPA for	B.1.1, B1.2, B.1.3, B1.4, B.1.5

tour operators and tourists	
M.7 Keep a record of supporting documents for STMP (research, studies, etc.)	C.2.5
M.8 Monitor and record the number of nature based touristic packages set up and in operation in Karaburun-Sazan MPA	A.1.1, A.1.2
M.9 Maintain an updated list of records on the conditions of the existing infrastructure and inventories of new infrastructure	B.1.6, B.2.1, B.2.2, B.2.3
M.10 Keep a record of the number and type of informative materials produced on the MPA and tourism.	B.2.4, C.1.1, C.1.2, C.1.3, C.2.1
M.11 Prepare a full assessment of the Management Plan in its fifth year of implementation and draft a revised version	

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Annex A: Model of the questionnaire for tourist's satisfaction

Section A: GENERAL INFORMATION	
A1 AGE <i>[INT] Don't continue if it is less than 18 years old</i>	_____
A2 Resident country	_____
A3 GENDER <i>[INT] Don't ask, mark</i>	X Female X Male
A4 Location of the questionnaire	_____
A5 How long are you planning to stay on vacation here?	1. Several days How many nights are you planning to stay? _____ 2. Several hours How many hours are you planning to stay here? _____ 3. Refuses
A6 Where is your accommodation in Vlora Bay?	1. Oriku 2. Radhime-Jonufer 3. Uje I ftohte 4. Other _____
A7 What is your accommodation?	1. Hotel 2. Studio /private accommodation 3. Camping 4. Yacht 5. Your own flat /weekend house 6. Relatives /friends 7. Home/rooms rent 8. Other _____
Section B. TRAVEL INFORMATION	
B1 Are you traveling alone or in company?	1. Alone 2. Couple 3. With my family 4. With friends 5. Other _____
B2 What means of transportation did you use to come in Albania? <i>[INT ask only if he/she is a foreign guests or Albanian that live abroad]</i>	1. By car 2. By bus 3. By plane 4. By yacht/sail boat 5. By bicycle 6. By motorcycle 7. Other _____
	1. By car

<p>B3 What means of transportation did you use to come here to your location now?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. By bus 3. By plane 4. By yacht/sail boat 5. By bicycle 6. By motorcycle 7. Other _____
<p>B4 How many times have you been in.....?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Albania (<i>ask only foreign guests</i>) 2. At this location _____(<i>specify the place here</i>) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Never b) Once c) Twice d) More than twice a) Never b) Once c) Twice d) More than twice
<p>B5 Why did you choose this site for vacations?</p> <p>(Up to 3 answer)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sunbathing and swimming 2. Rest and relaxation 3. Recreation 4. Sport 5. Nature 6. Local gastronomy 7. Visit friends/relatives 8. Culture 9. Other _____
<p>B6 How did you get informed about Vlora Bay attractions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brochures, ads, posters 2. Travel guides 3. Newspaper 4. Radio, TV, Film etc. 5. Recommendations from friends/relatives 6. Recommendations from travel agencies 7. Internet 8. Other _____
<p>B7 How did you get informed about the touristic activities in this area?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brochures, ads, posters 2. Travel guides 3. Newspaper 4. Radio, TV, Film etc. 5. Recommendations from friends/relatives 6. Recommendations from travel agencies 7. Internet 8. Other _____
<p>B8 What kind of activities are you planning to practice here?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming/sunbathing/bathing 2. Diving 3. Fishing 4. Underwater fishing 5. Hiking 6. Trekking 7. Camping 8. Boating 9. Shopping at stores/souvenir shops 10. Visits to restaurants 11. Other _____
<p>B9 Do you like the nature here in Vlora Bay?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes –What do you like?

	2. No –Why?															
B 10 Do you know that Karaburun-Sazan is Marine Protected Area?	1. Yes 2. No (go to B 15)															
B11 Where did you get this information?	1. Brochures, ads, posters 2. Travel guides 3. Newspaper 4. Radio, TV, Film etc. 5. Recommendations from fiends/relatives 6. Recommendations from travel agencies 7. Internet 8. Other _____															
B 12 Have you ever visited the Marine Park (Karaburun -Sazan)	1. Never 2. Once 3. Twice 4. More than twice 5. Refuse															
B13 What kind of activities do you like to practice in the Karaburun-Sazan MPA	1. Diving 2. Boating 3. Swimming 4. Cave explorations 5. Hiking 6. Other _____															
B14 What is the overall satisfaction with your visit to this tourist destination?	1. Completely satisfied 2. Somehow satisfied 3. Little satisfied 4. Completely dissatisfied 5. Refuse															
B 15 Please indicate to what extent do you agree with the following statements 1. I will recommend this tourist destinations to my friends and relatives 2. I will return to this tourist destination	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Completely disagree</th> <th></th> <th></th> <th></th> <th>Completely agree</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Completely disagree				Completely agree	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Completely disagree				Completely agree												
1	2	3	4	5												
1	2	3	4	5												
B16 What do you want to improve in this touristic destination [INT more than one answer]	1. services 2. cleanliness 3. infrastructure 4. More information about the area (for example: history, culture, gastronomy, places to be visited etc.) 5. More nature based activity (for example hiking, cycling, guide to see endangered species in their natural habitats etc.) 6. More culture based activity (festival, fair etc.) 7. Other _____															
C.DEMOGRAFICH INFORMATION																

<p>C1 LEVEL OF EDUCATION? [only one answer]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Elementary school 2. High school 3. College 4. Faculty and higher 5. Refuse
<p>C2 Which is your civil status?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Married 2. Single 3. Divorce /widow 4. Refuse
<p>C3 OCCUPATION [only one answer]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employed 2. Unemployed 3. Retired 4. Student
<p>C4 Average monthly income in your household? [only one answer]</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. NO income 2. Up to 100 € 3. 101 € -1000 € 4. 1001€ -2000€ 5. 2001€- 3000€ 6. 3001€-4000€ 7. 4001-5000€ 8. More than 5000 €